

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA



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COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS, in attendance

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE THOMAS J. GLEGOLA, presiding

Application of Pacific Bell)	PUBLIC
Telephone Company d/b/a/ AT&T)	PARTICIPATION
California (U1001C) for Targeted)	HEARING
Relief from its Carrier of Last)	
Resort Obligation and Certain)	Application
Associated Tariff Obligations.)	23-03-003

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Clovis, California
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CLOVIS, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 6, 2024 - 2:05 P.M.

* * * * *

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE GLEGOLA: We are on the record. The Commission will come to order.

Today is February 6, 2024. This is the time and place for one of two public participation hearings on two proceedings being reviewed by the California Public Utilities Commission.

As I said while off the record, the first proceeding is A.23-03-002. This is the application of AT&T California to Withdraw its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designation; and the second proceeding is A.23-03-003, and this is the application of AT&T California to withdraw as a carrier of last resort for much of its service territory.

Today's public participation hearings or PPHs are being held at the Clovis City Council Chambers. I very much want to thank the City of Clovis for allowing us to use this room today.

I also want to make sure that any members of the public that wish to comment today know that they may comment on both proceedings when it is their time to speak.

My name is Thomas J. Glegola. I am the

1 assigned administrative law judge or ALJ assigned to
2 this proceeding. The honorable John Reynolds is the
3 assigned commissioner; and Commissioner Reynolds is with
4 us today.

5 Commissioner, do you have any opening remarks?

6 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: Yes. Thank you,
7 Judge Glegola.

8 I would also like to thank the City of Clovis
9 for allowing us to host this hearing here, and I want to
10 offer my appreciation to everyone who spent valuable
11 time from their days to come and share your -- your
12 views and concerns with us about these two applications.

13 As you can all see, we have a very packed
14 house. I appreciate that. Everyone will have a chance
15 to communicate about these applications and their --
16 their impact. We are looking forward to hearing from
17 all of you.

18 For all of your awareness, in addition to the
19 two hearings we will be hosting today here in Clovis, we
20 also have a virtual hearing on March 19th, which will be
21 available on Admin Monitor and more information about
22 that is available on our website. You can also
23 participate via phone at that hearing, and we also have
24 a docket card for both of these proceedings where you
25 can file lengthier comments if you don't have time today

1 to share everything that you'd like to; or if you have
2 friends or neighbors who are unable to attend today and
3 would like to share their views about these proceedings.

4 I am Commissioner John Reynolds, the assigned
5 commissioner to these two proceedings. I would like to
6 talk -- touch on these applications very briefly as we
7 get started and before we start hearing your
8 perspectives.

9 So, first a little bit about the California
10 Public Utilities Commission. We are the regulatory
11 agency for all of California's investor-owned public
12 utilities spanning across energy, water and
13 telecommunications industries.

14 The Commission is headed by five commissioners
15 with each commission serving six-year staggered terms.
16 As a commissioner, I am assigned to a wide variety of
17 cases including these two requests by AT&T.

18 What do these requests or applications really
19 mean? AT&T has come before the Commission asking for
20 two separate requests. First, we have the request to
21 relinquish their eligible telecommunications carrier
22 designation.

23 An eligible telecommunications carrier is a
24 telephone company that operates in a specific geographic
25 area that receives financial assistance from the Federal

1 Universal Service Fund to provide affordable telephone
2 service to customers at all income levels.

3 AT&T is essentially requesting to no longer
4 operate as an ETC in California.

5 Second, we have AT&T's request for relief from
6 its carrier of last resort obligation and certain
7 associated obligations.

8 Carrier of last resort, we sometimes refer to
9 as COLR, so I may use carrier of last resort or COLR
10 interchangeably.

11 A COLR is a telecommunications service provider
12 that stands ready to provide basic telephone service,
13 which is commonly landline cell phone service, to any
14 customer requesting such service within a specified
15 area.

16 AT&T is the designated COLR in many parts of
17 the state and is the largest COLR in California. Where
18 AT&T is the default basic telephone service provider, it
19 must provide basic telephone service to any potential
20 customer in that service territory.

21 When we talk about basic telephone service, I
22 want to emphasize that this does not necessarily mean
23 that your particular home phone service today is a basic
24 service or that is provided by a landline copper or
25 fiber-optic wireline. There are lots of different

1 technologies in use in telecommunications networks
2 today. Your home phone service may, for example, be
3 provided by a, what we call, voice over internet
4 protocol, or VoIP.

5 The purpose of the public participation
6 hearings at the Commission is to hear from customers or
7 concerned Californians about proceedings before our
8 agency.

9 Today's public comments, in addition to the
10 comments made at all of the public participation
11 hearings we will be holding over the next few weeks,
12 will help us evaluate AT&T's requests in both cases.

13 It is crucial to our decision-making process
14 that we hear from you all, and I want to thank members
15 of the public again for attending this hearing.

16 Where are we in this case? After the public
17 participation hearings, which will conclude on March
18 19th with that virtual hearing that I mentioned, Judge
19 Glegola will hold evidentiary hearings at the
20 Commission's San Francisco hearing rooms.

21 After evidentiary hearings, AT&T and other
22 active parties to the case will file legal briefs.
23 After that process, Judge Glegola will issue a proposed
24 decision for the Commission to consider at one of its
25 official voting meetings and our current schedule

1 provides for that to happen later this year.

2 No decision has yet by made about AT&T's
3 requests. AT&T has made its request, but no changes can
4 occur without a vote on a proposed decision that is
5 supported by the majority of the five commissioners.

6 With that, I am going to turn it back to
7 Judge Glegola, and I look forward to hearing from you
8 all.

9 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Commissioner Reynolds.

10 So, as the commissioner said, my role as the
11 assigned administrative law judge in this case is to
12 review the application and evidence provided by the
13 parties litigating this case, and based on that
14 evidence, I will draft a proposed decision for the
15 commissioners to consider. That will happen later this
16 year.

17 I wanted to very briefly just talk about the
18 standards for both cases. Whether an eligible
19 telecommunications carrier may withdraw is determined by
20 Federal Statute, and it's very specific, and if you're
21 interested in it, it's 47 US Code Section 214(e), and it
22 states in part that an eligible telecommunications
23 carrier may withdraw its designation if other ETCs are
24 able to serve all of their relinquishing customers and
25 whether a carrier may withdraw, and how it does is

1 determined by Commission D.96-10-066; and AT&T was
2 designated a carrier of last resort by the California
3 Public Utilities Commission in 1996 as were many other
4 carriers. That D.96-10-066 was what adopted the rules.

5 If another COLR is not present in the service
6 territory of a COLR, as is the case here, AT&T must
7 apply to the Commission for permission to withdraw.
8 Also, part of this is the Commission must allow other
9 potential COLRs to bid on the opportunity to replace
10 AT&T.

11 So, if the CPUC grants AT&T's application --
12 again, only if it grants it. That hasn't happened --
13 AT&T then has the ability to withdraw service in any
14 community where its application is granted.

15 Both -- both applications are opposed. If you
16 would like more details about this application, there's
17 a -- you've probably seen a fact sheet back in the
18 lobby. You can also check it out online at
19 www.cpuc.ca.gov/PPH. You can find more information
20 about the positions of various parties in both places as
21 well.

22 Finally, AT&T should have mailed notice of
23 the -- its carrier of last resort application to all
24 landline customers, both those that rely on what we call
25 plain old telephone service and those that use voice

1 over internet protocol service.

2 So -- but before we have the evidentiary
3 hearings that Commissioner Reynolds discussed, we want
4 to hear from you. Your comments will help the CPUC
5 gather information and determine whether to grant,
6 reject or modify these applications.

7 In addition to considering any comments
8 received here today, we also will consider all comments
9 that have been submitted electronically or by other
10 means in this proceeding. The last time I looked, we
11 received over 1400 comments on AT&T's COLR application
12 and over 450 on its ETC application.

13 So, if you -- again, if you would like to
14 provide public comments today, please do so by signing
15 on a sheet that is just outside in the lobby, and if you
16 have a customer-specific question, or a question about
17 your bill or something else of AT&T, there also is a
18 representative of AT&T outside as well.

19 So, before I am done talking, I just want to go
20 over some ground rules.

21 Court reporters will be transcribing everything
22 that is said today. So, please remember to speak slowly
23 and clearly, otherwise our court reporters will have a
24 difficult job taking down everything that is said today.

25 Only one person at a time can speak as the

1 court reporters are unable to transcribe an accurate
2 record when more than one person is speaking, and we
3 will hear you best if you speak directly into the
4 microphone at the podium over there.

5 To ensure we have an accurate record, it may be
6 necessary for the court reporter or myself to interrupt
7 you if we're not hearing you. Very much apologize for
8 that, because none of us like doing that.

9 And if you are interested in the transcript, we
10 will have one available after this hearing.

11 So, we are ready to start hearing from members
12 of the public, and I would like to start with Sheriff
13 Allan Kelzer.

14 Is Sheriff Kelzer in the room? You may begin,
15 sir.

16 SPEAKER KELZER: Hi, good afternoon. My name
17 is Allan Kelzer. I'm a sergeant with the sheriff's
18 office. I am here on behalf of Sheriff John Zanon.

19 Before I speak, I would like to allow the
20 Public Information Officer to speak first and get some
21 messages out to the public. That would be Tony Botti.

22 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BOTTI

23 All right. Thank you, Sergeant Kelzer.

24 Good afternoon, everyone. We have a good
25 turnout here on a Tuesday afternoon.

1 I just want to first start by prefacing this:
2 We are not here to take sides on the landline issue. We
3 understand it's a controversial topic and many people
4 enjoy their traditional service, so what we are here to
5 talk about is that we are in favor of expanding
6 technology throughout all of Fresno County. We need to
7 get better wireless and broadband services to our
8 residence all across the 6,000 square miles that our --
9 that our county is made up of.

10 We know that we have many areas in the
11 foothills, the mountains, and then on the canyons on the
12 west side, very spotty cell signals, internet signals,
13 not only for people living out there, but for us as well
14 as we are out doing our patrols.

15 We do have an ongoing partnership with AT&T.
16 They provide us our cell phone service. We are actually
17 FirstNet customers. It's a partnership we've enjoyed
18 for several years now. What it basically does is it
19 gives us priority service as first responders, so if
20 signals were to go down, ours would hopefully be able to
21 stay intact and give us the -- the priority not to jam
22 up the lines, so that we can go out and perform rescues
23 or evacuations or anything of that nature.

24 One of the big things that would help with
25 getting the broadband-to-fiber cell phone towers, things

1 of that nature, into some of the more rural areas that
2 aren't, you know, enjoying that right now is that we
3 could get emergency alerts out to all of you especially
4 when we are talking about fires, and we are talking
5 about floods. We have an Everbridge program. I don't
6 know how many of you in the room are familiar with that.

7 I would encourage you that if you are not
8 signed up for Everbridge, to go to the website as
9 fresnosheriff.org, you will see an Everbridge logo on
10 there. You can sign up for free. You put in your
11 information, your name, whatever phone number you would
12 like to be connected or contacted by along with your
13 email. That is going to allow us, in the event of an
14 emergency, to push out a message directly to you so you
15 can get real-time information to make decisions that are
16 best for you and your family's safety.

17 Social media is another aspect that we have
18 utilized, of course, because many people follow us on
19 different things like Next Door, Facebook, Instagram
20 Twitter -- now X -- all of these types of things. It's
21 another avenue for us to push information out to you,
22 and if you don't have, you know, good service -- I am
23 sure most all of us have cell phones -- but when you're
24 out and about and something major comes in, you want to
25 be able to receive that message. I mean, the worst

1 thing that we can think of is that somebody gets injured
2 or loses their life, because they couldn't get a message
3 quick enough.

4 In 2024, we rely on wireless technology in
5 order to communicate with the public as quickly as
6 possible.

7 So, from that standpoint, we at the Sheriff's
8 Office and Sheriff Zaroni do support expanding
9 technology throughout the 6,000 square miles of Fresno
10 County, again, to communicate with the residents and
11 make them as safe as possible.

12 Thank you. Now I will defer to Sergeant Alan
13 Kelzer.

14 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER KELZER

15 Thank you, Tony. Once again, my last name is
16 spelled K-e-l-z-e-r, and I'm a sergeant with the Fresno
17 County Sheriff's Office. I have been on for 21 years
18 now, and we know that -- a lot of residents in the
19 county know that the County of Fresno is no stranger to
20 natural disasters -- fires, floods, the heavy rains that
21 we are getting -- we got a lot last year -- snowstorms
22 and so forth.

23 So, like what Tony was mentioning earlier, it's
24 been beneficial to get those emergency services out to
25 you in the most convenient way for you as possible.

1 Working the western part of the county, working up in
2 the mountain areas, and working in the metro areas --
3 I've worked every single area in Fresno County -- and a
4 lot of our job is driven based off of technology and
5 wireless capabilities, so we -- about this -- this last
6 week, for example, we handled over 3,000 calls for
7 service. 1500 of those -- or a little around that
8 number -- were dispatch calls.

9 Our staff uses a lot of different applications.
10 We have units such as Search and Rescue, SWAT, Vice, and
11 they use a lot of different search engines and web-based
12 applications to do their jobs, and we really rely on
13 that.

14 In the emergency aspect of things, we deal a
15 lot with -- up in the mountains, we deal with lost
16 hikers. We deal with injured hikers. We deal with the
17 natural disasters that I mentioned earlier and getting
18 in communication with those people, reaching out to them
19 either physically or through telecommunication means
20 is -- is vital; and we just want to, you know, make sure
21 that we continue to improve the -- the communication
22 between the community and us regardless of what areas
23 they're in.

24 So, thank you.

25 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much, Sergeant

1 Kelzer.

2 So, with that, could we have three people line
3 up? Given the number of people that we have speaking, I
4 am going to ask if folks could limit their comments to
5 one minute just so that we can get everybody, otherwise,
6 as you can imagine, we will be here for -- I don't even
7 know how long.

8 So, with that next up is Russ Peterson,
9 followed by Marlita Berilla, and then Barbara Yorgan.
10 And I apologize if I mispronounce any names.

11 I have got one, too, so I am -- I am trying to
12 the best I can.

13 Sir, please go ahead.

14 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PETERSON

15 As he said, my name is Russ Petersen. We live
16 down in Kern County about 30 miles northeast of
17 Bakersfield. A very rural area. No cell phone service,
18 which is the important thing for EMS purposes.
19 Coincidentally, Sunday at about 1:00 our landline went
20 down. We are still waiting for it to come up. They
21 said it might come up by Thursday at 10:00 p.m.

22 That's not very good service from AT&T by the
23 way. That's how I feel about it.

24 There are many people out there that rely on
25 landline service. There are no cell phone companies

1 that have displayed any interest in putting towers up.
2 They can't justify the expense for the people that live
3 there. There is -- T-Mobile, on their map, shows that
4 we are in an area that we can receive. We aren't, so
5 the maps that you see aren't necessarily accurate.

6 So, I -- I think my name is about up. So, I --
7 we are asking that we have some type of service, and I
8 noticed the ETC can take over if AT&T pulls out, so I
9 would like to know if -- what your -- if any of these
10 ETC companies have shown an interest in taking over what
11 AT&T has been doing?

12 Thank you.]

13 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER YORGANJIAN

14 My name --

15 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

16 SPEAKER YORGANJIAN: -- is Barbara Yorganjian.

17 There are huge health hazards in relation to
18 cell phones, enormous health hazards. Okay. My most
19 immediate concern is human tracking, the spyware. And
20 the world is getting into all this spyware, because they
21 want to monitor our motions; where we go, what we do,
22 what we say. I mean people can't walk without having a
23 cell phone around, and it picks it up, and the next
24 thing you know, they're getting actually what we talked
25 about.

1 I really object to this. It's a violation of
2 my freedom, it's undemocratic, and unconstitutional. I
3 do not want to be monitored. It's nobody's business
4 where I go, what I do, how I talk on my -- in my home.
5 The health hazards are enormous. They have found ten
6 times more bacteria in cell phones than on toilet seats,
7 and E. coli, staph, and more human fungi viruses. You
8 don't have that on a landline phone. And medical
9 facilities, it's a huge hazard.

10 How did we ever live without this before? I
11 think that's what we need to ask. People ask me, "How
12 do you live without a cell phone?" I have for decades.
13 We had emergency services and communication before.
14 This is an addiction. And the amount of money that the
15 industry pays -- 18 billion on ads worldwide, 18 million
16 to political contributions to Congress -- and not a
17 single risk is mentioned in their ads; not one. There
18 are so many hazards associated with this. And people
19 are comfortable in their comfort zone, and they don't
20 want to hear how bad this is. How do you treat an
21 addict? This is cell phone addiction.

22 And so -- but, my huge concern is not only the
23 health aspects, but my privacy. I don't want to be
24 tracked, and this is part of human tracking. So I want
25 my landline phone. I don't want to be without it.

1 (Applause.)

2 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much.

3 Could we have Barbara Yorganjian?

4 SPEAKER YORGANJIAN: That was me.

5 ALJ GLEGOLA: Oh, that was you. Thank you.

6 Could we then have -- we have -- the next three
7 are Rian (sic) Garren, Joann Caufield, and Margaret
8 Billia (sic).

9 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GARREN

10 My name is Brian Garren.

11 ALJ GLEGOLA: Okay. Please continue,
12 Mr. Garren.

13 SPEAKER GARREN: You were close.

14 I have a landline. I've had it for -- well,
15 forever, actually, but mostly because it's the most
16 reliable service we have. Right? I used to live in
17 Madera Ranchos, and spotty cell service, at best. I --
18 and --

19 (Reporter clarification.)

20 SPEAKER GARREN: So I was saying, I -- I have a
21 landline. We've had it for -- mainly, because it works.
22 It's -- it's -- it's an emergency phone. It's connected
23 to many devices in our home, medical devices. And it --
24 if the power goes out, it still works. And cell service
25 is -- is -- is spotty, even in Madera Ranchos, where we

1 lived. So I would -- I'd appreciate continuing to -- to
2 have a landline, just for safety reasons.

3 And -- and I'd like to ask the question, as --
4 as the first gentleman asked, who is going to take over
5 if AT&T pulls out? There's no mention of anybody even
6 interested in -- in being out there with us. And -- and
7 I know in our area, they won't give us any fiber, and
8 they're not interested in putting cell towers in out
9 there, just because we're such a small community. So
10 they bypassed us.

11 So that's my comment. Thank you.

12 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we have our
13 next speaker, please?

14 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CAUFIELD

15 Hi. I'm Joann Caufield, and I live in cattle
16 country up by Watts Valley Road, acres and acres. I'm
17 alone. My closest neighbor is not even close.

18 So last year, my -- I had a stroke. The
19 landline saved my life. How did it save my life? Cell
20 service doesn't work. I had one bar. To use the cell
21 service at my house, you have to go down my driveway
22 half mile and out a half mile out on Watts Valley Road.
23 Then you get cell service.

24 Also, I have ClearCaptions. I'm hard of
25 hearing. ClearCaptions works through my landline. So

1 without my landline, I mean I have no -- who -- who --
2 how do I call? If I had another stroke, what do I do?
3 You know, can't run out in the middle of the road when
4 you're having a stroke, and down a half a mile. So I'm
5 really concerned. I've been alone for 27 years up
6 there, and like I say, my -- my closest neighbor's not
7 close. It's a few miles down the road. So, you know,
8 I -- I'm -- I'm at a loss. I can't believe that they
9 could do this to us, and get away with it. So that's
10 where I'm at.

11 (Applause.)

12 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BILLALBA

13 Hi. My name is Margaret Billalba,
14 B-i-l-l-a-l-b-a.

15 Most of my points have been spoken to already,
16 but one of the things that I'm -- I'm concerned about is
17 the taxes that we've paid on all of the -- the work
18 that's been done over the years. Now, we've had our
19 landline since 1961. But, the -- what happens to all of
20 the fiber-optics, all of the landline, all of the -- the
21 wiring and everything that's been put in? Who's going
22 to pay the taxes on that stuff? Is it going to be used,
23 will it be sold, used by another carrier? Has another
24 carrier even shown any interest in stepping up and
25 taking the place of the services that AT&T has been

1 providing?

2 And I, again, live in the country. Every time
3 a pregnant bird lands on the line, the -- the line will
4 go out for a -- a particular time. And so, anyway,
5 excuse me, please.

6 When the power is out, PG&E calls. They let us
7 know what's happening, how many homes are involved, and
8 how long they expect the outage to be; and then there
9 are updates. Also, when something happens, we can
10 always reach 911, we can call PG&E.

11 The cell phone service is not always reliable.
12 Last summer, I called and inquired about this. And not
13 to paint everyone with the same brush, but the -- the
14 gentleman from AT&T told me "Look, lady. You need to
15 get with it. These days, everything is a cell phone,
16 and you need to -- you need to learn all of these
17 things, and put your life in -- in the hands of the cell
18 phone service." That's bologna. That's bologna. You
19 lose your phone, you've lost -- if you -- if you've tied
20 your life to your phone, and somehow, the -- the phone
21 disappears, is misplaced, stolen, whatever it happens to
22 be, you're sunk, you know.

23 This is a basic service, and being able to
24 contact someone on an emergency basis is just one of the
25 basic fundamental things that we need to be able to do.

1 This country is not flat. There's a -- our topography
2 is not flat. And he -- this -- this man actually told
3 me "You don't understand. This is what the shareholders
4 want." Because I asked him "Where did this come from?"
5 And he said that the shareholders have decided they want
6 more money, and this is a good way to eliminate -- to
7 achieve that, by eliminating this service.

8 I do -- do not agree in any way, shape, or
9 form. Thank you so much.

10 (Applause.)

11 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you for sharing your
12 thoughts.

13 Before we continue, I just wanted to -- because
14 a couple people have made this comment, I wanted to let
15 you know that one of the requirements on -- on the
16 Commission is to provide notice to other potential
17 replacements, and ask if they're interested. That
18 notice hasn't gone out yet. It will be. I'm the one
19 sending it.

20 And so the answer is, at this point, I don't
21 know whether anybody will apply to -- to replace AT&T.
22 But, that's -- that's going to be one of the questions
23 that we have to look at. That's going to be a pretty
24 important piece of evidence. So just wanted to throw
25 that out there.

1 Could we please have the next three people line
2 up to speak? First one is Steve Duty, the next one is
3 Dixie Phillips, and the last one is Chuck Kolbert.

4 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DUTY

5 All right. So I'm Steve Duty. I'm a
6 maintenance troubleshooter for AT&T, and I'm
7 representing CWA right now.

8 As I look over the room right now, I see my
9 customers; mostly elderly, rural. Okay? That is me.
10 That's what I take care of.

11 I think that we, as a business, are looking at
12 money rather than taking care of our customers.

13 (Applause.)

14 SPEAKER DUTY: Doesn't mean that -- that we, as
15 technicians, that's all we're looking at.

16 What I'm getting at is, yeah, we're pushing for
17 better coverage, cell-wise. But, the problem here
18 isn't -- it's not the cell service. It's -- it's that
19 these people can't get cell service where most of them
20 are. So in order for us to take care of them,
21 emergency-wise, most of them are for emergency. That's
22 why they have them; and for family. Can't tell you guys
23 how many times family will get in touch with us and ask
24 us, "Hey, did you -- did you see my parent?" "Yes.
25 Yes, I did. They're okay. You can call them now. We

1 got it." I know that we are behind on a lot of these
2 rural, and we're doing the best we can to keep up,
3 because we're very very busy.

4 But, I don't -- I don't want to see landlines
5 go away. Don't know of any company out there, honestly,
6 that can take over the footprint that we take care of,
7 and be able to maintain it. I don't know of any. And
8 I've been here a long time. So just -- I'm pushing for
9 you guys, too, and -- and I really hope you guys do the
10 right thing to take care of our people. And I don't --
11 our elderly -- hey, we're all going to be there; so
12 remember that.

13 (Applause.)

14 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we get our next
15 comment?

16 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PHILLIPS

17 Thank you. Good afternoon. This -- my name is
18 Dixie Phillips.

19 And my first thought is in what way do we, the
20 people, benefit from what AT&T wants to do?

21 And number two is who maintains the lines that
22 are already up there, telephone poles and the lines and
23 stuff? And when we do have a storm or a flood and a
24 fire, who are we going to call to come out and maintain
25 those lines?

1 And second, I like having a landline. I can
2 plug it in in several places in my house so that, if I'm
3 in the bedroom, in the patio, whatever, I still have a
4 landline out there, in case I do have an emergency. And
5 I don't have to plug in my landline to recharge it, like
6 I constantly would have to do with my cell phone; and
7 you look at it, and also, it's like you need to recharge
8 it.

9 So unfortunately, my family's, like -- like
10 they said, addicted to their cell phones. And my
11 grandson even has a job where he's head of a computer
12 cell phone department. But, they still call me on my
13 landline, which I do want to continue.

14 And who's going to take over? I mean are they
15 going to offer us the same service? My bill from one
16 month to another goes up. It never goes down. Nothing
17 ever goes down; see it where we go everywhere. So does
18 that mean that they're going to make the bill so high on
19 our landline that we just get to the point where we have
20 to choose between other bills or eating to have a
21 landline?

22 These are some of my concerns. Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Can we please have
25 our next commenter?

1 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER KOLBERT

2 My name is Chuck Kolbert. I live up near
3 Humphreys Station, or Blasingame Fire Station, for those
4 of you in the foothills.

5 My biggest concern is, if AT&T goes away, we
6 have no emergency phone line to call. Our cell phones
7 do not work at our house. We tried AT&T before they put
8 a tower in across the street on one of your officer's
9 property. It's an AT&T line, but I'm not going to
10 change back to AT&T, because I had such bad service from
11 them before from the cell phone.

12 The landline, at one point, Ponderosa was
13 interested in buying, if that helps you, your Honor, for
14 that area up there around the foothills. They put in
15 fiber-optics within a half a mile of our house, and they
16 were looking to buy some of the -- AT&T's lines, and
17 they wouldn't sell them.

18 Anyway, my thing is is cell service is not
19 going to be an option up there for 30 years, 'til they
20 get enough towers on every other corner to cover the
21 cell -- cell phones. You can call me all day long on my
22 cell phone, and I get -- does not ring at my house;
23 there's no -- no way, nowhere on my property, except
24 down -- near down the front gate, which is about
25 800 feet away, that my cell phone will ring. I can

1 text, but I can't send a picture or make a call.

2 Anyway, I'm for keeping the AT&T lines and
3 forcing them to upgrade and do whatever they need to do
4 to make it work right. Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

7 Could we have the following three people up:
8 First is Richard Herstein; next is Carol Nalbandian; and
9 the next is Mildred Anderson.

10 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HERSTEIN

11 Thank you. My name is Richard Herstein. I'm a
12 retired AT&T employee. I spent 17 years as a
13 maintenance splicer doing repair work up and down this
14 valley.

15 As being a -- inside with AT&T, right now,
16 they're putting the cart before the horse. We all know
17 technology is going to keep advancing. But, right now,
18 AT&T wants to sell you on the "A" phone -- the cell
19 phone service without providing that service. That
20 doesn't make a whole lot of sense, folks. They need to
21 get their facilities out there for you before they would
22 say, "Oh, we want to do away with copper."

23 Well, even if they do do away with copper, the
24 downside of that is there is no other company in this
25 world that can replace the service that they're giving

1 you now, because they -- there is no other company
2 geared up to cover this much area in California that
3 AT&T provides service to now. And some of you know that
4 AT&T doesn't have the best landline service in the
5 world, at times, especially with the weather, but they
6 do their best to get it to you as quick as they can;
7 because I know about that, because I did that for years.

8 So AT&T needs to think about this, and the
9 Commission needs to think about who's going to try and
10 replace it, because it's going to be hard to get a
11 replacement. Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Can we hear from our
14 next commenter, please?

15 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER NALBANDIAN

16 Hi. My name is Carol Nalbandian. And I don't
17 have much of a speech prepared, because frankly, I just
18 found out about this from the notices that they sent us
19 and an article in the newspaper.

20 And I live in the city, so frankly, I don't
21 have any problems. And I do love my landline, but I'm
22 not hooked to the hip with my cell phone. And I think
23 that most of the other people have said pretty much what
24 I could have thought of.

25 And my first thought, when I got this notice,

1 is why is AT&T doing this? Well, money, I'm sure, is
2 the problem. They're probably not making enough money
3 on their landlines, so they're going to try to see if
4 they can figure out a way that they can get rid of the
5 landlines, and put something else in there, and charge
6 everybody more.

7 But, my -- my other thought is, if they're
8 getting subsidies from the government right now to put
9 in -- to do the landlines, what are they going -- are
10 they going to have to give us money back, are they going
11 to keep the money, are they going to keep getting more
12 money? It's just -- like I said, I don't know hardly
13 anything about it. But, my other thought is, if they're
14 receiving subsidy -- whatever it is, millions, billions
15 of dollars -- to do this, why aren't they like
16 contractors, building contractors, who get government
17 money, have to provide a certain percentage of, say,
18 low-income? So why wouldn't they at least be required
19 to provide a certain percentage of landlines?

20 And just one last thing: I was reading this
21 notice that they sent to us, and it says here something
22 about the existing transitional landline phone customers
23 for at least six months after the PUC approves the
24 application. So they already think they have it in the
25 bag.

1 (Applause.)]

2 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Can we have our next
3 three commenters? First is Mildred Anderson. Next is
4 Carolyn Wong, and next is Mark Fletcher.

5 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ANDERSON

6 I'm Mildred Anderson, and my questions have
7 been responded to.

8 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you for much. For the
9 court reporters, please -- please note that Mildred
10 Anderson said that others have said the same thing that
11 she planned to say. Sorry.

12 Could we have our next commenter, please?

13 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER WONG

14 My name is Carolyn Wong from Tulare,
15 California.

16 I, too, have been called "old school" by AT&T
17 by a representative from San Diego, and I am proud to be
18 old school. I have my Princess line telephone plugged
19 into the side of my bedroom --

20 (Applause.)

21 SPEAKER WONG: -- I have been around for quite
22 a long time. My son lives in Washington D.C., and my
23 other one lives four hours away from me, so that
24 landline is really important to me in case of an
25 emergency.

1 If we have a natural disaster, I can grab my
2 little telephone, and I don't have to fumble with my
3 cell phone, unlocking it, trying to get to a keyboard to
4 call 9-1-1; and time matters, especially when someone is
5 breaking into your house, which happened to me.

6 I called the police department before I came
7 here, and I asked them fairly, I said, "In case of an
8 emergency, a 9-1-1 call, which call do you receive
9 faster, the landline or the cell phone line?" He said,
10 "Even though the cell phone lines have improved, the
11 landline. I have a direct contact, and I can pinpoint
12 exactly where you're at."

13 I think we all know, as we get a certain age,
14 time is important, especially strokes being our age; and
15 so, things -- it's very important.

16 And AT&T -- if you -- AT&T is always trying to
17 force you into -- I think I am saying this right -- a
18 VoIP line. All those lines are connected to
19 electricity. So, if they go down -- if the electricity
20 goes down, they go down, and you have no way of
21 contacting anybody; and at our age, we want to contact
22 our loved ones right off the bat, and if we have no --
23 if my cell phone goes down, I cannot contact anybody but
24 I can go to the Princess line or my wireless line and
25 get ahold of somebody, 9-1-1 or whatever. And AT --

1 there's no comparable communication device except a
2 landline, because it still works when the electricity
3 goes out. It still works, and all those other
4 alternatives that AT&T tries to force on us goes out.

5 And my alarm company, if they change over, I
6 have to rewire my alarm system because mine is connected
7 to my landline, and then I get another charge for
8 another box that I have to get for \$15 a month. And
9 it's not like the cell service that I get from AT&T is
10 perfect. If it was 100 percent perfect every single
11 time -- clarity -- I don't get the back talk when you're
12 talking. I have to walk around my house like this, "Can
13 you hear me now? Can you hear me now?" I walk -- I
14 literally walk all through my house. I get all my
15 10,000 steps in sometimes walking around trying to get
16 them --

17 (Applause.)

18 SPEAKER WONG: -- because I still get lousy
19 service even though they're putting towers in, so it's
20 not dependable; and I think part of it also is age
21 discrimination, because if you look around here, like
22 the gentlemen said, we are all a certain age. When you
23 get that age and you go -- all -- all you young guys
24 will be at that age, too -- you want to be able to call
25 somebody in an emergency, and it's -- it's traumatic for

1 us. We're not born -- I wasn't born during technology.
2 I had a typewriter with correction tape, and -- you
3 know, so I think I'm doing pretty darn good with my cell
4 phone but, you know, there's a lot of us. At 88 years
5 old, my mom was told, when she was alive, to like,
6 "well, just go on the internet and find it." We are not
7 cured that way, and there's a lot of us.

8 I really think part of this is age
9 discrimination. It's about money. They don't want --
10 their excuse is that they want to take care of these
11 copper lines. They get plenty of money, and -- and the
12 other thing is these -- these VoIP lines, they're not
13 regulated; and so, they can just do -- when they switch
14 us all over, they can just do whatever they want and
15 raise the price with no accountability, and I think it's
16 wrong.

17 So, I really hope that you don't allow them to
18 do that.

19 Thank you.

20 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Can we have our next
21 commenter, please?

22 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FLETCHER

23 Yes, I'm Mark Fletcher, and I am speaking on
24 behalf myself and my mother. She lives in a community
25 called Kings Mountain. It's in the Santa Cruz

1 mountains. It is a very rural community. They do have
2 a volunteer fire department, but -- and there is -- the
3 volunteer fire department asked to have cell phone
4 service put in, so they did put a tower there. It is a
5 Verizon tower; however, you can't even get Verizon
6 service there for them to -- to handle these emergency
7 calls.

8 I am -- it's an area where when there's wind,
9 the trees come down, they take out lines. It is
10 expensive to have a phone line there, a landline, but I
11 am very concerned that they may just say, we are not
12 going to do landlines here at all, and then what do you
13 do? How do you communicate? My name is 90 years old.
14 She needs to be in communication with her doctors. If
15 there's an emergency, you -- you have to call. Even
16 though there's a volunteer fire department, you need to
17 call 9-1-1, and if there's no landline, you can't
18 respond.

19 So, I urge you to -- to not allow this.

20 (Applause.)

21 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much.

22 Our next three commenters are Verna Dobrinin,
23 Kevin Miller and Erin Pectol.

24 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DOBRININ

25 I'm Verna Dobrinin and mine -- most of mine

1 have been answered.

2 Thank you.

3 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we have our
4 next commenter then, please?

5 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MILLER

6 Hi, my name is Kevin Miller. I'm the District
7 Director of Enterprise and Architecture for State Center
8 Community College District, serve about 70,000 students
9 -- Fresno, Madera, Tulare and Kings County. I am also
10 the board chair for the Fresno Coalition for Digital
11 Inclusion working on digital access for all of our
12 residents in the region.

13 I think everybody here today has covered, much
14 better than I can, the issues around public safety,
15 particularly in rural areas where -- where cell service
16 is not adequate or reliable, but I want to draw
17 attention to some of the other residents that are poorly
18 served by this, and that is our urban poorer and areas
19 of high density and historical underinvestment. Cell
20 service in those areas is -- is quite poor as well. You
21 can take a driving tour and areas of affluence have way
22 more bars than areas that do not; and so, that is a
23 challenge.

24 I think other commenters have mentioned about
25 location services working much better, obviously, on --

1 on their POTS lines. They know exactly what your
2 address is, and not necessarily quite so accurate with
3 -- with mobile services.

4 The other issue that I wanted to draw attention
5 to is because of the universal service requirement
6 around COLR, we know a -- kind of an unintended
7 consequence of that is DSL has become internet of last
8 resort for many of our residents. Throughout areas of
9 underinvestment, places without fiber, if you're within
10 10,000 feet or so of the central office, you can get
11 DSL. Many of our students are still using DSL. Exiting
12 the copper market means they have no internet, and as we
13 look at the FFA applications of various processes that
14 CPUC is running around grants and subsidies for
15 investments, these areas are not necessarily getting the
16 applications that they need to replace it with modern
17 fiber services, and that is really concerning to remove
18 service before we replace it with something better.

19 Thank you.

20 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

21 Can we have our next commenter, please?

22 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PECTOL

23 So, my name is Erin Pectol, I'm the area
24 manager for AT&T Design Engineering Group. I have the
25 responsibility from down in Tulare County all the way up

1 to San Jose County up through Stockton area, so.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hear you back
3 here.

4 SPEAKER PECTOL: So, what my team is
5 responsible for is we design -- along with our
6 construction counterparts, we design all of the AT&T new
7 infrastructure throughout the valley. The two most
8 common questions that we always receive from our -- from
9 either the commercial and residential developers and
10 also our customers is, "Do we have fiber?" And if not,
11 "When are we going to get it?"

12 So, as a customer of AT&T and a local resident,
13 I mean, I understand the concern for, you know, the
14 broadband services that we -- that we provide. AT&T is
15 committed to providing those types of services, so that
16 is basically what -- what I am here to say.

17 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

18 Our next commenters are Sherry Cruz, Eric
19 Johnson and Rita McPeters.

20 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CRUZ

21 All right. So, I am with the Fresno Center.
22 We are a nonprofit in Fresno. I am representing the
23 inner city area of Fresno, so I am sensitive to those
24 that may be on the outlier areas, but forgive me for
25 some of what I might say may not be in line with your

1 issues.

2 With that being said, the Fresno Center
3 supports AT&T's ongoing effort in providing high-speed
4 internet and wireless connection to the residents and
5 communities of the Fresno County region, and we
6 particularly have an interest in our youth, which I know
7 are in not represented here today, they are probably in
8 school. Have we had some youth here, we might hear some
9 different opinions about the need for high-speed
10 internet and access, so that they can get their homework
11 done, so that they have access at home to also provide
12 to their parents, or the parents can access the school
13 portal that they can then find out what is going on in
14 the school system, help their children with their
15 homework and access online tools and tutoring support.

16 We do support the modernization efforts
17 including moving away from old copper network to modern
18 and high speed fiber and wireless connectivity. Local
19 community organizations like us are also able to provide
20 that supportive education for those who need to learn
21 how to access Wi-Fi and provide education and services
22 at our center working alongside the community college
23 and school districts, so that those who are not sure how
24 to access and use not only their cell phone, we are
25 talking about laptops, Google and having access to

1 information that can also save your lives in
2 emergencies. That we would be there to provide that
3 support on the ground, and there are other programs and
4 services in our community that are not being discussed
5 today that can provide education, support, technical
6 support, so all folks can have that access to learning
7 the things that they may be afraid of at this time,
8 because it still feels so new for some. But for our
9 youth, this is essential for our parents, this is
10 essential so that they can go on with their high school
11 and, hopefully, access college experience, so that we
12 have well-informed, adjusted young people who are able
13 then to pay taxes and contribute to our community as
14 employees that are employed.

15 So, this is where we are standing on this, and
16 we want to also provide our support to AT&T to utilize
17 our center for any services that can also help move this
18 along so people aren't as fearful and have the support
19 that they need.

20 Thank you.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Boo.

22 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Can we have our next
23 commenter, please?

24 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: And everyone,
25 please try to -- try to keep to the allotted time, if

1 possible. We do want to hear from everyone in the room,
2 and we don't want folks to have to wait and -- and be
3 here longer than they need to be to be able to make
4 their comments.

5 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER JOHNSON

6 Good afternoon. My name is Eric Johnson. I
7 live here in Clovis. I want to thank the PUC for
8 providing this forum here today.

9 I'm a businessperson by background. I'm an
10 AT&T retiree. I'm also an advocate for education.
11 Providing communities -- similar to what the previous
12 speaker talked about, providing communities with access
13 to the best available technology is critical to today,
14 those students and their families being able to compete
15 in today's economy and also, really to succeed in
16 today's world at large with all the issues going around.

17 The more dollars that are spent on older
18 technology, in fact, are that many fewer dollars that
19 are spent on bringing in the new technologies; and in
20 bringing in new technologies, expanding them, being able
21 to resolve some of the issues that have been brought out
22 here today, as such, I would simply consider that --
23 that the PUC approve the applications that have been
24 brought forth today by AT&T.

25 Thank you.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Shame on you, sir.
2 Shame on you.

3 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Can we have our next
4 commenter, please?

5 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MCPETERS

6 My name is Rita McPeters, and I'm in the area
7 where AT&T is planning on taking our service out and
8 that is the whole area of Zip code 93706. It's bad
9 enough we don't get good service on everything else, but
10 the point is, there's a lot of older people that live in
11 my area. We do not want the cell phones because cell
12 phone is unreliable, and just like the lady said, when
13 you have a cell phone, you have to keep it charged up at
14 all times; and that internet service that they had, it
15 don't work as well either. So, don't tell me about how
16 good the internet is for that area. It is not that
17 good.

18 I will say, I have had that line -- landline
19 for a long, long time, and I love it because I can
20 always depend on it. When I had to use my cell phone, I
21 had so much problems trying to get in touch with AT&T
22 when there was a problem and it went down. I spent up
23 all my time on the cell phone, and I lost out on the
24 money that I had to go back and charge and put more
25 money on my cell phone.

1 So, cell phones, I don't like them. They're
2 not good, and they're not good for your brain either.

3 (Applause.)

4 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

5 Before we continue, I just want to check. I do
6 see some people standing. Are there -- is anybody
7 standing that wants a seat? Because I -- there are some
8 seats that are, I think, available but, if not, we
9 can -- we can get some more. We can just -- you know,
10 we can -- there's obviously seats that we can break
11 down. But on the other hand, I -- I have been told that
12 165 people have -- are -- are -- have taken time today,
13 so that's -- that's pretty appreciative. Well, we
14 appreciate that.

15 Our next -- our next three commenters are
16 Matias Bombal, Gayla Mott, and Greg Mott.

17 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BOMBAL

18 Good afternoon, your Honor, Commissioner.

19 Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Matias Bombal
20 and I'm a broadcaster; and I just want to say, this is
21 not just an issue in rural areas, as far as keeping
22 landline service and both items on this agenda today. I
23 drove here from Sacramento to be here today. Where, in
24 a major city and the capitol of our state, we had a
25 storm that knocked out power for two days, and I was

1 only able to reach my uncle via my 1928 Western Electric
2 rotary dial phone still connected to a POTS system on a
3 copper line.

4 (Applause.)

5 SPEAKER BOMBAL: Because the power was out, I
6 couldn't charge the phone, trees had blocked access to
7 my car -- luckily didn't lose it -- so I couldn't charge
8 the phone in the car showing you that the AT&T great
9 POTS system is still valuable and vital at times of
10 emergency not to mention privacy.

11 Now, as a broadcaster, we have been discussing
12 this issue quite a bit in Sacramento radio, and we had a
13 fascinating call from a 9-1-1 operator in Rocklin,
14 California. I won't read her whole note, it would take
15 90 seconds, but just -- she -- she intimates that a
16 landline will connect you to a specific address. Once
17 in a very blue moon is the address wrong. It's almost
18 always right, and that is really important because the
19 VoIP phones go over internet protocols, and you don't
20 really know where that call is coming from. The
21 operator has to ask where are you?

22 In the event that someone is having a stroke or
23 a heart attack, and they pick up that landline, they
24 know where the address is, and those operators are
25 trained to listen carefully in the background if there

1 is no response; and so, it is important.

2 I urge the PUC not to let AT&T shirk their
3 responsibility.

4 I thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

7 Can we please have our next commenter?

8 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GAYLA MOTT

9 My name is Gayla Mott. I live in Pollock
10 Pines, California. Thank you for the opportunity for
11 public comment on AT&T's two applications.

12 The two requests made by AT&T strike a sense of
13 alarm in one's mind. For California residents who live
14 in rural areas, the specter is daunting. The coverage
15 maps of the cell phone servers reveal -- reveals the
16 widespread areas of impact for the abandonment of the
17 current obligations for AT&T in California.

18 The power of our Bay Area home was buried, so
19 there was no loss of power to our home there. Upon
20 retirement to Pollock Pines, losses of our power have
21 occurred but our home had telephone service when every
22 other electrical device was unusable.

23 One winter, the neighborhood power was out as a
24 result of a snow tomorrow. A PG&E employee working on
25 restoring power asked to use the landline to make a call

1 since his cell phone was unable to receive an adequate
2 signal. Landline service is still necessary.

3 While many households have provided themselves
4 with other telephone service, the -- for many, the costs
5 of those programs is prohibitive especially when on a
6 fixed retirement income. Landline service is still
7 affordable.

8 In recent a Wall Street Journal crossword
9 puzzle, the given clue was: "AT&T guarantee of retro
10 service," the correct answer was: "The promised
11 landline."

12 We, and many others, sincerely hope the
13 promised landline will be an actual guaranteed service
14 even though it is retro technology. The safety of rural
15 California residents relies on it.

16 Thank you for your time.

17 (Applause.)]

18 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we have our
19 next commenter, please?

20 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GREGORY MOTT

21 Yes. My name is Gregory Mott. I'm also from
22 Pollock Pines. If you're not aware where that is, it's
23 the -- one of the last places to put on your chains, if
24 there's heavy snow. We're east of Placerville,
25 California, and we drove down from there this morning,

1 and we'll go back there.

2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

3 SPEAKER G. MOTT: The reason I want to speak --
4 and I -- I appreciate everything that everyone else has
5 said. That's -- that's exactly the problem. I
6 appreciate the comment of the Sheriff's sergeant.

7 As soon as we moved up there, we -- we made a
8 decision to move. We knew there'd be changes in our
9 life, but we did not worry about a lack of phone
10 service. There were two -- two landlines into this
11 person's house that we bought, so that wasn't even a
12 question.

13 As soon as I got up there, I got involved in
14 community emergency response team, which is a -- Federal
15 Government. The Sheriff's Department trained us for
16 emergency service to our area, and in the course of
17 doing that was -- I learned that -- the problem in the
18 areas, which I already knew; the geography is such that
19 radio signals do not bend. They don't bend around
20 corners. They don't bend over ridges. And so, it was
21 necessary, not too long before I moved up there in 2005,
22 for an individual to build a number of repeater stations
23 on the mountaintops so that the first responders had a
24 way to communicate down into the canyons and all over.
25 And I knew this from my work with a radio station that

1 had the same problem in Southern California. They could
2 hear us out at sea, but the people down at the bottom of
3 the mountain couldn't hear the signal.

4 Safety: We were evacuated for the Caldor Fire
5 for 11 days. We were evacuated, and we got most of the
6 things with us that we thought we might need, if
7 something terrible happened, because we received a call
8 on our landline alerting us to that possibility. No
9 cell phone at our house, service at all, so it was -- it
10 was no point. We have one flip phone that we carry with
11 us when we leave home.

12 Thank you, and I appreciate all the other
13 comments over there, and I support the -- the opinion to
14 not grant these applications.

15 (Applause.)

16 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Because I do see a
17 couple people standing, I just wanted to point out that
18 there are some seats over on this side, this -- just in
19 case folks -- folks want to sit.

20 Our next three commenters are Sheila Otteson,
21 Patricia Williams, and Shawn Heape.

22 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER OTTESON

23 My name is Sheila Otteson, and I hope you will
24 not go ahead with granting AT&T's proposals. But, in
25 the event that you do, I have some concerns.

1 I'm very concerned about the maintenance and
2 disposition of outdoor plant, if AT&T stops provision of
3 landline service. This includes aerial and underground
4 service. Perhaps you need to direct AT&T to establish a
5 fund to repair or remove poles, cable, and telephone
6 lines, if they're not purchased by another agency.
7 Examples of cases that might need repair, removal, or
8 remediation are the telephone cables that came detached
9 from poles at the corner of Clovis Avenue and Jensen
10 Avenue, south of Fresno, in December of last year. The
11 sighting lines appear to block portions of the
12 intersection traffic and a business driveway. We've
13 received news that on -- State Highway 132 was closed
14 due to 41 falling telephone poles with their attached
15 cables.

16 This should not be a problem for -- for our
17 taxpayers and our local depart -- I can't -- public work
18 department to take care of. I hope the "A" -- the CPUC
19 require AT -- AT&T, if they abandon these services, to
20 supply appropriate -- an appropriate entity their maps
21 of all their facilities, its underground facility
22 locations, and an inventory of the equipment and
23 facilities in place in areas it chooses to withdraw
24 service.

25 I'm also concerned that they -- we may need to

1 somehow -- you may need to set up a system so that the
2 Underground Service Alert can mark these facilities, as
3 needed.

4 I'm a landline customer of AT&T, and I rely on
5 it for its reliability during emergencies and power
6 outages. Just about a week or two weeks ago, our
7 Internet was out for over 24 hours. So that would
8 eliminate the Voice over -- VoIP. Until just
9 recently -- I live in Fresno, but until just recently,
10 we did not have more than one bar of cell service. The
11 sound quality on the landlines are so much better than
12 through cell phone or cell phone to cell phone. Really,
13 you need to think about quality of this old technology.
14 It has its uses. Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we have our
17 next commenter, please?

18 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER WILLIAMS

19 My name is Patricia Williams. My husband and I
20 live in Clovis, and we've been AT&T customers for many
21 many years.

22 We appreciate very much you allowing us to come
23 and make our comments, and I think, if you see nothing
24 else, you see a sea of people who have come out on a
25 Tuesday afternoon; and I dare say, 95 percent of them

1 are asking you, are pleading with you, not to allow AT&T
2 to take away our landline service.

3 My husband is hearing impaired. He has hearing
4 aids, and they are Bluetoothed connected to a cell
5 phone; but unfortunately, most of the time, he does not
6 hear well on a mobile phone. He also has many health
7 problems. And I'm a nurse, but I'm not going to be
8 there every -- every second of every day. And my
9 concern is, if I'm out of the house, and he has some
10 kind of an urgent need, and there's no landline, how is
11 he to call and actually be able to communicate with
12 anyone on his mobile phone?

13 I don't recall the name of the gentleman who
14 said that the old technology needs to give way to new
15 technology. And I would dare say that that implies that
16 perhaps new generations should take over for old
17 generations, and I am appalled at that kind of
18 inference.

19 (Applause.)

20 SPEAKER WILLIAMS: I -- I appreciate so much
21 all the comments that the people have made, and I think,
22 if nothing else, you know that we're passionate about
23 asking you not to grant AT&T the ability to take away
24 our landlines. Thank you very much.

25 (Applause.)

1 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we have our
2 next commenter, please?

3 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HEAPE

4 Hello. My name is Shawn Heape. I'm with CWA,
5 Communication Workers of America. We also work at AT&T.
6 We also represent the people of Frontier.

7 Frontier bought a bunch of bad landlines that
8 went upside down, and they are a rich company. Who's
9 going to buy us? How are they going to represent these
10 people here?

11 I'm once a young kid. I'm 50. I'm injured all
12 over the place. Right? I need my landline in order to
13 reach somebody in a rural area.

14 I also represent people in Lake Pillsbury.
15 You're going to go next to Mendocino. Those folks will
16 be there to talk about it. They don't even have power.
17 They're running off of a generator, for crying out loud.
18 And now, what are they going to do? They have no cell
19 sites up there. They have copper running through the
20 lake that they can call 911 when they need help. And
21 not to mention, it's a dirt road. It takes an hour and
22 a half to get down there; and if there's storms and
23 stuff, it's helicopters. These are people, like they
24 are here today, that are here to tell you please
25 reconsider.

1 One last question: What happened when DSL came
2 in back in 1999 when a majority of the people were hired
3 from these companies, because that was a big deal, DSL
4 for all these people? Long distance companies wanted to
5 get into that, and they were told we'll leave no child
6 blind -- behind on long -- on -- on the DSL, if we let
7 them get into long distance. What happened?

8 And I want to remind one more thing. Assembly
9 Bill 3295 was a big deal. That was just in 2016. All
10 the phone companies wanted to get on (sic) landlines
11 then. I've worked specifically with President Picker
12 and Commissioner Sandoval stopping that from happening;
13 not just for the jobs, because I'm a job person. I'm a
14 lineman for the county. I spent two days without going
15 to sleep clearing trees, trying to get these cell sites
16 and dial tones back up for you people out in the
17 community. And we're not done. We have a lot of work
18 to do together.

19 So hopefully, you could partner with us, and
20 come up with some solutions for these people to continue
21 to have dial tone, to continue to have services for all
22 these children in underdeveloped areas.

23 And I'm part of that. I live in Clearlake,
24 California. I drove here today to help you from
25 Clearlake, California.

1 And I'll see you again soon. Thank you.

2 (Applause.)

3 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Just wanted to
4 mention, if you have not spoken, and you want to, it
5 would be very helpful if you put your name on the list
6 that is outside. Just -- that way, I'm -- I'm seeing it
7 a lot quicker, and we know who's speaking, we know how
8 to spell their names. I may not know how to pronounce
9 some names, but I'll apologize for that, and probably
10 individually, as well, if I can.

11 Our next three speakers are Tom Kounas, Peggy
12 Bissell, and Ivy Nannini.

13 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER KOUNAS

14 Hi. My name is Tom Kounas. I'm a California
15 consumer. I have cell phones with multiple service
16 providers. I have three in my pocket right now. I
17 support the new technology; but, I also support the old
18 technology. And we -- just as we get new technology, we
19 shouldn't remove the old technology.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

21 SPEAKER KOUNIS: I subscribe to POTS landline
22 telephone services, and landlines are a necessity.
23 They're not a luxury.

24 I'm highly recommending requesting that the
25 California Public Utility Commissions (sic) deny the

1 pending application from any incumbent telephone company
2 in California that requests ending the obligation of the
3 state's carrier of last resort. There are many
4 disadvantages for landline customers if the carrier of
5 the last resort is abolished. There should be no
6 partial and no total COLR relief. All Californians must
7 have access to landline plain old telephone service,
8 also known as POTS. Californians and regulators, like
9 the CPUC, are here to protect all telephone customers,
10 and help resolve disputes, if they are not able to
11 resolve directly with the utility.

12 Many landline consumers, including myself,
13 oppose COLR relief because some (sic) of the
14 restrictions and limitations of alternate carrier
15 services, as follows: Voice over Internet Protocol,
16 also known as VoIP, often drop packets on the Internet
17 connection, sometimes causing calls to drop. Latency
18 issues can affect the quality of calls made through the
19 VoIP phone systems. Latency problems occur when there's
20 a poor Internet connection, causing delays, noise, and
21 echo. VoIP services are highly vulnerable to data
22 breaches and cyberattacks. General latency are other
23 call quality issues you may experience with cloud-based
24 phone calls. I've personally experienced FAX
25 transmissions issues using VoIP where the VoIP sender

1 and receiver did not communicate with each other,
2 because they use different types of technologies. Who
3 uses a FAX? I usually don't. But, I deal sometimes
4 with financial institutions that require me to send my
5 Social Security card, my driver's license, and all my
6 personal tax information either -- two choices, by U.S.
7 mail or by FAX. I am not going to send my driver's
8 license and personal Social Security card through the
9 U.S. mail with all the mail theft and -- and the -- the
10 identity theft going on. So I'll send it by FAX. I've
11 tried numerous times to use my VoIP system at home to
12 try to send FAXes, and it gets to so many pages, and
13 they drop packets, and then the calls don't go through,
14 and I can't transmit. I need to get my -- I thought,
15 oh, I'll get my landline, plug it in, and that fixed the
16 problem.

17 Cell service is not always reliable all --
18 alternative. Cell signal's also unavailable in homes
19 and businesses, parking garage, elevators, hospitals,
20 and essential facilities, like government or medical
21 offices.

22 Even -- I live in the city. And I drove
23 300 miles today to come to this meeting, because I felt
24 it was extremely important for the CPUC to hear that
25 it's not just about picking and choosing what rural

1 areas will keep it and what cities can't keep it, based
2 on an algorithm that a telephone company decides they're
3 going to determine who can and can't keep it. Living in
4 the city, I got cell coverage all around. I have
5 residents in my community that will tell me that as soon
6 as you walk in their house, they have no coverage. They
7 need their landline phones.

8 Some people even have sensitivity to EMF or
9 EHS, which is also known as electromagnetic
10 hypersensitivity, and they choose not to use cell
11 phones, cordless phones, or devices using Internet
12 modems or routers. Some people have sensitivity to
13 that.

14 Some people have special needs, and need analog
15 landline to be connected to heart monitors, life call
16 buttons, et cetera.

17 Some people, including seniors, still want a
18 land -- rely on landlines for Universal LifeLine
19 Telephone Service at discounted rate on a
20 lit -- limited income. Voice over IP and many providers
21 don't offer the Universal LifeLine.

22 There are some people who are confused using
23 the cell phone, whether it's a smartphone or a cell flip
24 phone, and they're used to their old traditional rotary
25 dialer touchtone phones.

1 Some homes and businesses have older wiring
2 that cannot support alternative services like the
3 Internet VoIP, and they've been denied getting newer
4 modern services because their home or multi-business --
5 their multi-business unit or their multi-dwelling
6 residential -- you can't run wiring through the
7 building, and the older wiring won't support it, and the
8 landline's the only option.

9 E911, or Enhanced 911, works best with the
10 landline phone connected to a phone jack that doesn't
11 require electricity.

12 Central offices have backup batteries, if
13 there's a power outage. Many --

14 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: Sir --

15 SPEAKER KOUNIS: Many VoIP phones --

16 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I apologize, sir,
17 but would you mind, please, wrapping your comment? We
18 have lots of other --

19 SPEAKER KOUNIS: Sure.

20 (Crosstalk.)

21 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: -- speaking, and
22 we want to make sure that -- that we have a chance to
23 get to everybody.

24 SPEAKER KOUNIS: Okay. Sure. So -- so, yeah.
25 A lot of people here have already addressed the issues

1 with the -- the landlines and the 911, you know, and
2 we -- you know, major earthquakes and other things. We
3 don't know what kind of reliability cell phones are
4 going to have.

5 So anyway, I just wanted -- I appreciate you,
6 you know, taking the time to listen to my comments.
7 Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much. Could we
10 have our next commenter, please?

11 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BISSELL

12 Hi. I am Margaret Peggy Bissell,
13 B-i-s-s-e-l-l, like the vacuum cleaner. My husband
14 likes to say that's the poor side of the family.

15 I am retired from AT&T after 38 years,
16 11 months, and 14 days. My mother retired from the
17 phone company with over 38 years. They cheated her out
18 of some of her seniority, and I testified on her
19 cheating of that at the state capitol.

20 I am a retired executive vice president of CWA
21 9408. I'm very proud of that, you guys. I'm sorry.
22 I'm very upset. I'm shaking. I'm so angry that this
23 could even come before you people. I'm now -- well, for
24 the last 18 years, I've represented retirees in our
25 local area, which is upwards to 700 retirees from

1 Porterville to Madera. Some of those are on daily calls
2 to me. Their calls start at five o'clock in the
3 morning, because they have nobody else to care for them.
4 And I'm their stopgap. I'm the person who gets the call
5 that says, "I'm okay today, Peggy. You don't have to
6 come find me." That's not going to happen with the cell
7 phone. The areas some of these ladies live in don't
8 work. I'm sorry. I'm going to go over just a bit.

9 The lady mentioned that she would gladly do
10 training for people. We have areas that don't have
11 Internet. They're so low-income, AT&T doesn't care to
12 invest in those areas. So that's not going to work.

13 I'd like to know what companies -- which AT&T
14 hasn't put anything before you guys that says, "We have
15 these companies interested in taking over our hard
16 lines." If you don't have that in place, you absolutely
17 cannot approve this. You can't. We have to have
18 somebody there to take care of them.

19 (Applause.)

20 SPEAKER BISSELL: My husband and his family are
21 west side farmers. They farm all the way from up on 152
22 to Dinosaur Point all the way into Coalinga. Cell
23 phones don't work all the way along there, either. You
24 know, it's not going to work.

25 I guess the last thing I have to say, to the

1 lady that has the princess phone, if you're in the
2 Fresno High area -- I'm not going to give you my -- guys
3 my address -- we have a pay phone that actually works at
4 our house with a phone booth. So we need a Superman
5 right now.

6 (Applause.)]

7 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

8 Can we have our next commenter, please?

9 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER NANNINI

10 Yes, my name is Ivy Nannini, and Peggy there --
11 she's a hard person to be behind, because she's covered
12 everything. I want to say thank you, Clovis, for giving
13 us this opportunity to talk. I am so proud of everybody
14 here today, and everybody that showed up. They came
15 from a lot further than I did. I live out on the other
16 side of 99 about five miles.

17 I -- I -- I don't think that it's safe to have
18 the -- the rats and the SARs and everything on your body
19 and all day. It's a proven fact that it's not healthy,
20 you know. A lot of these people are -- are older,
21 because they -- they're not surrounded by so much SARs
22 and radiation all day long. It's very unhealthy.

23 Also, I have fam -- a lot of family members
24 that are very disabled, you know. I lost two in the
25 last year, but the one that isn't, she relies completely

1 on -- on the landline phone, and so do I, really. I
2 don't like a bunch of information on the cell phones.
3 It's like -- and, you know, just the other day, I just
4 used one, if I am on the road, in case somebody has to
5 get ahold of me in an emergency, and it -- it -- it's
6 not a real expensive one but, you know, sometimes you
7 have to have one for emergencies, but otherwise, we
8 have -- I had one for over 30 years. All my family has
9 them. We've always lived in the rural area, and we
10 would like to be able to keep that.

11 If you guys would consider that, we would
12 appreciate it.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much.

16 Our next three commenters are Robert Longar,
17 Stan Santos and Dina Jackson.

18 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LONGAR

19 Good afternoon, Commissioner Reynolds, ALJ
20 Glegola and community members. My name is Robert
21 Longar. I am with the Communications Workers of
22 America, CWA District 9.

23 We would like to speak today with regard to
24 AT&T's current COLR obligations and their desire to
25 terminate these COLR designations that would jeopardize

1 telephone access for many communities. Consumers rely
2 on their home telephone service to access public safety
3 services, especially during emergencies, as you've
4 heard, and other urgent situations.

5 AT&T claims there are other options for
6 consumers, but they also fail to submit to the CPUC
7 proper evidence that would be meaningful opportunities
8 for telephone services. They claim that small telephone
9 companies with a fraction of the resources can somehow
10 cover wide ranges of California.

11 If this AT&T application is approved, then AT&T
12 will be able to just pick and choose which neighborhoods
13 and communities it wants to serve.

14 AT&T has already refused to fully maintain its
15 network, and by doing this, they are step-by-step trying
16 to withdraw telephone services from communities often
17 low income and rural areas. AT&T has spent the last
18 several years going around the county, in fact,
19 terminating its COLR requirements. They also sponsored
20 unsuccessful legislation here in California a few years
21 ago. All this time, money, and resources would have
22 been better spent maintaining their networks instead of
23 picking and choosing who they want to serve.

24 The AT&T application should be rejected, and
25 the CPUC should make every effort to make sure that AT&T

1 carries out its obligation to provide effective and
2 meaningful service to everyone in its territories.

3 Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

6 Can we have our next commenter, please?

7 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER JACKSON

8 Hello. My name is Dina Jackson, and I first
9 want to make a comment. One of the ladies said that it
10 looked like the application was already presumed to
11 pass, so I hope this is not an exercise in futility.

12 From what I hear, it's over 95 percent against
13 the landlines -- I mean, against eliminating the
14 landline.

15 I do have a landline that I have had for about
16 the past 40 years. I love my AT&T landline. I moved
17 from the Fresno High area where I had my landline up to
18 Tesoro Viejo. After three requests and three orders
19 placed, I found out AT&T has relinquished that area to
20 Ponderosa.

21 I have lots of cell phones in the house, but I
22 still love having my landline. I have a 90-plus year
23 old mother, who -- she loses her charger -- her -- her
24 phone -- her cell phone, even though we got her Consumer
25 Cellular, she loses that, she forgets to charge it, but

1 she will pick up that landline and make her phone call.

2 So, there's a lot of security in having the
3 landline. There's also a habit. You know, there's a
4 lot of people who are between 75 to 100 that they're
5 used to having that regular phone; and it seems like
6 in -- in -- in society, we are just kind of neglecting
7 that age group in a lot of areas.

8 So, besides the security and the habit, there's
9 also the -- the reliability. It is something that we do
10 and can rely on, and that cannot be ignored.

11 So -- oh, so, I just feel like we still need
12 the landline, even though I think we also need the cell
13 phones. I appreciate my cell phone, but at the same
14 time, I know that that landline is critical. It's
15 crucial.

16 So, I just want to say thank you. But I also
17 wonder -- and I mean I really almost hate to say this,
18 but will AT&T be liable when that person who was forced
19 to give up their landline has a devastating event
20 because of not having service? You know, I am in a
21 two-story house now and downstairs, my cell phone does
22 not work. If I get up on -- actually, it'll ring, but I
23 have to run upstairs to actually talk on it. So, I
24 thank Ponderosa for coming and putting in my landline.

25 Thank you. I -- I hope the application is

1 denied.

2 (Applause.)

3 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

4 Could we have our next commenter, please?

5 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SANTOS

6 Yeah, Stan Santos. Lifelong resident of
7 Fresno.

8 I worked for AT&T and began in Silicon Valley
9 in 1999 building controlled environment vaults, which
10 was the top-of-the-line technology. During that time,
11 it converted to fiber, to copper and then went to your
12 home as DSL. I think the top speed was maybe 12 megs,
13 which was smoking then.

14 I come to Fresno, and I retired in 2022. In
15 2022, I was still working in Firebaugh and Mendota
16 building DSL, which were not much better than the DSL I
17 was building 25 years before.

18 Now, there's discriminatory practices. I spoke
19 at dozens of these meetings, and I -- I don't know if
20 this will be my last one. Maybe I will be in a
21 wheelchair next time, but I have spoke between -- before
22 the CPUC, I have spoke before the State Assembly. I
23 have spoken before hearings at Congress about the same
24 thing. Discriminatory practices by AT&T specifically.
25 Now, Frontier and the rest are not too far behind.

1 Comcast is one of the worst.

2 But discriminatory practices and also forced
3 migration off the landlines, a reliable service.
4 They're decommissioning the facilities in the central
5 office and in the field, and they're making people turn
6 that phone off and have no option to go to except for a
7 cell phone; and for a lot of the elderly people, you try
8 to ask them where their cell phone is, and there's going
9 to be a pause for about 20, 30 minutes sometimes. No
10 offense. I am getting there.

11 But I am just saying, please, please, please,
12 do not allow this to happen. There should be a smooth
13 transition from one technology to the other. Until
14 fiber technology is ubiquitous and disbursed enough so
15 that people can get a -- get a connection anywhere and
16 everywhere, until that happens, then the landlines have
17 to be maintained and our forces cannot be out there
18 fighting with both hands behind their back. They're
19 trying to fix lines. They're trying to find ways to
20 patch the outside plan together while AT&T is ordering
21 other staff and technicians to decommission, to remove
22 cards, to shut down circuits.

23 It's discriminatory practices, and it's forced
24 migration. It should be illegal.

25 Thank you.

1 (Applause.)

2 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

3 SPEAKER SANTOS: I also have written comments,
4 and I can either submit them electronically or here, if
5 you want me to.

6 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I think you can
7 provide them to the public advisor, who is at the table
8 outside.

9 SPEAKER SANTOS: Okay. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: Of course. Thank
11 you.

12 ALJ GLEGOLA: So, next we have two additional
13 commenters. The first one is Pam Baugher, I think
14 that's how I -- I -- I may be corrected on that. The
15 last name is spelled B-a-u-g-h-e-r.

16 SPEAKER BAUGHER: You're doing just fine.

17 ALJ GLEGOLA: The second one is Eileen Graham.

18 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BAUGHER

19 Thank you. I am Pam Baugher from Bakersfield.
20 I have been an AT&T brat since I was a year old, and my
21 dad started working for the phone company as a cable
22 splicer. We -- my sisters and my brother and I have
23 been very loyal to AT&T over the years. Our landlines
24 are important for safety as it's been brought up before.
25 And remember when COVID hit and all the kids were sent

1 home? How was the internet access? It sucked. I mean,
2 that's just the nicest way.

3 I taught for Bakersfield city for 40 years. I
4 was on the school board when COVID hit and just trying
5 to get positive things like that. And if AT&T is
6 allowed to just shut down landlines, it's going to be
7 the same thing all over again. There won't be adequate
8 service. There's not enough cell service around.

9 My schools entered the 20th century in about
10 the year 2001 when we got phone service in our
11 classrooms. Now, cell service? No, they're all
12 landlines. That's 44 schools just in Bakersfield City
13 School District. How are all the schools going to try
14 to transfer equipment to (indecipherable) and go to
15 cell. That's going to be extremely expensive, so that
16 is a consideration as well.

17 And a lot of people don't want cells, and it's
18 not because we are all old. I know younger people who
19 don't or they can't afford one, stuff like that, and we
20 need to be considerate of everybody's needs.

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

24 Could we have the next commenter, please?

25 ///

1 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GRAHAM

2 Good afternoon, my name is Eileen Graham.

3 Thank you for having this meeting today.

4 I support what everybody has said about not
5 getting rid of AT&T. And I will tell you, as a retired
6 first responder -- I know from firsthand hand because I
7 did it -- that when somebody was -- would call in on
8 9-1-1 on a landline, I knew -- well, we knew exactly
9 where you were at. We would always confirm the address,
10 because there's always room for error, but never in my
11 30 years or 27 years that I worked in law enforcement
12 was 9-1-1 ever off.

13 If you call 9-1-1 on a cell phone, it would
14 bounce to a nearest tower, which generally went to CHP,
15 CHP would then have to transfer that call to the
16 appropriate area. You guys keeping track of the time
17 that is being wasted here? Okay. Then they would come,
18 and I would get -- we would get the call, and I would
19 have -- I would look at the screen, and there's nothing
20 there; and I would have to, like, interview them. Like,
21 "Where are you at? What's the problem?" You know, they
22 would tell the -- the other operator that we need an
23 ambulance or something like that, but I need a little
24 more information. Like, where do I get -- where are we
25 going to send this ambulance?

1 So, that's an issue that is probably very
2 life-threatening, and it's something you guys should
3 think about and, you know, if it -- I just -- I -- I
4 just don't like to see it happen.

5 Thank you.

6 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much.

7 So, that is all that -- on the list of folks
8 that want to speak that I have right now.

9 I did want to check. Does anybody want to
10 speak? We can take a quick break. Y'all can sign up,
11 and then we can come back into session.

12 You do, sir?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just have one thing I
14 want to ask about. What happens to all of the employees
15 from AT&T? Do they all just get laid off all over the
16 state?

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yep.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thousands? That's what
19 I was afraid of.

20 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I do want to point
21 out the --

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That was my --

23 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I appreciate --

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just thought I would
25 throw it out there, sir.

1 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I appreciate the
2 question. I do want to point out that we have -- we
3 have not made any decisions in this proceeding.

4 Just for everyone's clarity, as we go through
5 the process in this proceeding, we have a chance to take
6 evidence. Parties to the proceeding have a chance to
7 raise questions that are related to it and will have a
8 chance to delve into some of the -- some of the
9 potential consequences and facts surrounding the
10 proposal that AT&T has made.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just thought I would
12 throw it out there.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They're not abandoning
14 lines, they're abandoning people. All of these people.
15 That's what they're abandoning, and they don't care if
16 they live or die.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's what I figured.

18 ALJ GLEGOLA: Okay. Well, since there are --
19 no one else that wants to make a public comment.

20 Commissioner, do you have final comments?

21 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I want to
22 reiterate my appreciation for everyone coming to share
23 their perspectives with us.

24 It's really valuable to us as an agency and to
25 our process to hear from you about what you think about

1 AT&T's proposals. Again, I will reiterate that we have
2 made no decisions in this proceeding. Our proceedings
3 have kind of a lengthy process. Public participation is
4 one part of that process. We will also have evidentiary
5 hearings, legal briefs. There is -- there is more to
6 come yet in this proceeding before we are in a position
7 to make a decision, and no decision will be final until
8 we have a vote of at least three of the five
9 commissioners at the PUC.

10 I see that we have someone who has a hand
11 raised.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I do, because this lady
13 was nice enough to mention she was a 9-1-1 operator.

14 Okay. When I was having a stroke, I didn't
15 know where I was. That landline virtually saved my
16 life, because the operator knew exactly where I was at
17 that moment --

18 (Applause.)

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- and they got me right
20 to the hospital.

21 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: Okay. Thank you.
22 Thank you for sharing your stories. It sounds like
23 there is no one else who is present who would like to
24 make a comment, so I want to reiterate my thanks to
25 everybody. Is that correct, is there someone who would

1 like to make a comment?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, my husband has
3 dementia, and he doesn't have a cell phone, he doesn't
4 know how to --

5 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: Um --

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He doesn't have a cell
7 phone, he doesn't have -- he can't use a computer. The
8 only thing --

9 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: If I just can --
10 just to pause you for a moment. I apologize, because we
11 have a court reporter who is actually taking down what
12 people say.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: We can take a
15 brief break, so that you have a chance to sign up, and
16 then you can make a comment from the microphone so that
17 we can record your comment.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was just going to say
19 we need the landlines. We need those.

20 ALJ GLEGOLA: So, is that a sign that no one
21 else wants to speak? We can -- we can wait a few
22 minutes and sign up and then...

23 (Crosstalk.)

24 ALJ GLEGOLA: Okay. Well, it sounds like a no
25 then. So, I just want to say, again, I want to thank --

1 165 people showed up. I very much thank you for that.
2 For those who commented, we appreciate and note that you
3 took time out of your day. You could be elsewhere.

4 I also want to thank everyone who helped pull
5 this hearing off. That includes the City of Clovis, our
6 court reporters and all the staff at the Public
7 Advocates Office. Thank you for your help.

8 This concludes the 2:00 p.m. public
9 participation hearing for A.23-03-002 and A.23-03-003.

10 We are adjourned and off the record, and we
11 will be back at 6:00 p.m.

12 Thank you.

13 (At the hour of 3:45 P.M., this matter having
14 been continued to 6:00 p.m., February 6,
15 2024, the Commission then adjourned.)

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1 EVENING SESSION - 6:10 P.M.

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4 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE GLEGOLA: We are on
5 the record.

6 The Commission will please come to order.
7 Today is February 6th, 2024. This is the time and place
8 for the second of the two public participation hearings
9 that are held today in two proceedings being reviewed by
10 the California Public Utilities Commission.

11 As I mentioned off the record, the first
12 proceeding is Application 23-03-002. This is the
13 Application of AT&T California to withdraw its Eligible
14 Telecommunications Carrier designation.

15 The second proceeding is Application 23-03-003.
16 This is the application of AT&T California to withdraw
17 as a carrier of last resort from much of its service
18 territory; and there's also other items in that
19 application.

20 Today's public participation hearings -- or we
21 call them PPHs, for short -- are being held at the
22 Clovis City Council chambers. I very much want to thank
23 the City of Clovis for allowing us to use this room
24 today.

25 I also want to make sure and encourage members

1 of the public that wish to comment, please know that you
2 may comment on either proceeding or both at the same
3 time.

4 My name is Thomas J. Glegola. I am the
5 assigned administrative law judge to this proceeding.
6 The Honorable John Reynolds is the assigned
7 commissioner.

8 Commissioner, do you wish to make some opening
9 remarks?

10 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: Yes. Thank you,
11 Judge Glegola.

12 And good evening, everyone. Thank you for
13 being here with us. I appreciate you taking the time
14 out of your evening to -- to come and speak about these
15 proceedings.

16 I am Commissioner John Reynolds, the assigned
17 commissioner to the two applications the judge
18 mentioned.

19 Thank you, also, to the City of Clovis for
20 hosting us here today.

21 To get us started, I wanted to talk a little
22 bit about the PUC and about these proceedings.

23 The California Public Utilities Commission, or
24 the PUC, or the Commission, is the regulatory agency for
25 all of Californians' investor-owned public utilities,

1 spanning energy, water, and the telecommunications
2 industries. The Commission is headed by five
3 commissioners, with each commissioner serving staggered
4 six-year terms.

5 As a commissioner, I am assigned to a wide
6 variety of cases, including these cases that have been
7 requested by AT&T.

8 What do these requests mean? AT&T has come
9 before the PUC asking for two separate requests.

10 First, we have the request to relinquish their
11 eligible telecommunications carrier designation, or ETC,
12 for short. An ETC is a telephone company that operates
13 in a specific geographic area that receives financial
14 assistance from the Federal Universal Service Fund to
15 provide affordable telephone service to customers at all
16 income levels. AT&T is essentially requesting to no
17 longer operate as an ETC in California.

18 Second, we have AT&T's request for relief from
19 its carrier of last resort obligation. We sometimes
20 call that COLR, carrier of last resort, or COLR, for
21 short. A COLR is a telecommunications service provider
22 that stands ready to provide basic telephone service,
23 which is commonly landline telephone service, to any
24 customer requesting such service within a specified
25 area. AT&T is the designated COLR in many parts of this

1 state, and is the largest COLR in California. Where
2 AT&T is the default basic telephone service provider, it
3 must provide basic telephone service to any potential
4 customer in that service territory.

5 When we talk about basic telephone service, I
6 want to emphasize that this does not necessarily mean
7 that your particular home phone service is basic service
8 or that it is provided by landline copper or by
9 fiber-optic wireline. There are a lot of technologies
10 on the network today. Your home phone service may, for
11 example, be provided by Voice over Internet Protocol, or
12 VoIP.

13 The purpose of today's hearings are for the
14 Commission to hear from you, from customers or concerned
15 Californians, about the proceedings that are before us.
16 Today's public comments, in addition to the comments
17 made at all of the public participation hearings that we
18 will be held -- holding over the next few weeks, will
19 help the Commission evaluate AT&T's requests in both
20 cases. It is crucial to our decision-making process
21 that we hear from customers on the issues before us
22 today. And I wanted to thank you again for joining us
23 this evening.

24 Where are we at in these cases? After the
25 public participation hearings conclude, which will be on

1 March 19th, Judge Glegola will hold evidentiary hearings
2 at the Commission's San Francisco hearing rooms. After
3 hearings, AT&T and other active parties in this case may
4 file legal briefs. After that process, Judge Glegola
5 will issue a proposed decision for the Commission to
6 consider at one of its official voting meetings. And
7 our current schedule provides for that to happen later
8 this year. No decision has yet been made about AT&T's
9 requests. AT&T has made its requests, but no changes
10 can occur without a vote on a proposed decision
11 supported by a majority of the five commissioners.

12 And with that, I'm going to turn it back to
13 you, Judge Glegola.

14 And I look forward to hearing from all of you.

15 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Commissioner.

16 And I just want to add a couple other items
17 before we turn things over to members of the public.

18 First, if you are interested in -- in the
19 specific laws that we're looking or authorities that
20 we're looking to interpret or implement when an eligible
21 telecommunications carrier can withdraw, it is
22 determined by federal law, and standards are very
23 specific. It's in 47 U.S. Code § 214(e), and which
24 states, in part, that an eligible telecommunications
25 carrier may withdraw its ETT -- ETC designation if other

1 ETCs are able to serve all of their relinquishing
2 customers. When a carrier of last resort may withdraw,
3 and how it does, is determined under Commission Decision
4 96-10-006; and that was the decision that designated
5 AT&T as a carrier of last resort in 1996, as well as
6 many other carriers, and that is also when the
7 Commission adopted its carrier of last resort rules.

8 If another COLR is not present in the service
9 territory of a COLR that's looking to withdraw, such as
10 is the case here, AT&T must apply to the Commission for
11 permission to withdraw. As part of the rules, the
12 Commission also must allow potential COLRs to bid on the
13 opportunity to replace AT&T. That has not yet happened;
14 but, that's a key part of this proceeding.

15 If the Commission grants AT&T's application,
16 and only if it grants the application, AT&T then will
17 have the ability to withdraw service in any community
18 where its application is granted. Both applications are
19 opposed.

20 If you would like more details about these
21 applications beyond the high level overview that I or
22 Commissioner Reynolds have provided, I would encourage
23 you either to take and read a fact sheet, if there are
24 anymore available on the table in the lobby, or to go to
25 the Commission's website, specifically www.cpuc --

1 that's California Public Utilities Commission --
2 .ca.gov/pph; PPH, like public participation hearing.
3 You will find more information on this proceeding,
4 including the positions of various parties.

5 Finally, and I assume this is a -- a major
6 reason why so many people were at the previous hearing
7 that we had today, as well as this one, AT&T should have
8 mailed notice of its COLR application to all landline
9 customers, both those that rely on what we call plain
10 old telephone service and those that use Voice over the
11 Internet Protocol.

12 An in-person evidentiary hearing is scheduled
13 for the ETC application, and we need to reschedule one
14 for the COLR application.

15 In addition to all of the evidence that we're
16 looking for, of course, and as Commissioner Reynolds
17 already mentioned, we want to hear from you how this --
18 how these applications will impact you, your family,
19 your community. Your comments will help the Commission
20 gather information to determine whether to grant,
21 reject, or modify these applications. In addition to
22 considering the comments received here today, we also
23 will consider comments that have been submitted
24 electronically or by other means. The last time I
25 looked, we have received over 1400 comments on AT&T's

1 COLR application, and 450 on its ETC application.

2 Again, if you would like to provide comments at
3 the podium, please sign up with our Public Advisor's
4 Office at the table located in the back. And if you
5 have any customer questions, there are representatives
6 from AT&T here.

7 Okay. Before hearing from you, I want to go
8 over some ground rules. Court reporters will be
9 transcribing everything that is said, so please remember
10 to speak slowly and clearly; otherwise, our court
11 reporters will have a difficult job of taking down
12 everything that's said. Also, I'm not seeing the light
13 on that mic, so the first person that's up there may
14 need -- may need to turn that on. Only one person at a
15 time can speak, as our court reporters are unable to
16 transcribe an accurate record when more than one
17 person's speaking. We will hear you best if you speak
18 directly into the microphone. And to ensure we have a
19 accurate record, it may be necessary, at times, for
20 either myself or Commissioner Reynolds or our court
21 reporters to interrupt you. We don't want to interrupt
22 you. We -- we -- we really try not to. But, if we're
23 not hearing you, that means likely our court reporters
24 aren't hearing you, and that means what you're saying is
25 not being transcribed. After this public participation

1 hearing is over, we will have a written transcript of
2 this hearing ready later on.

3 And finally, a reminder to those who wish to
4 speak, if you have not already done so, please sign up
5 with the Public Advisor's Office. At this time, I'm
6 asking that you limit your comments to two minutes; but,
7 that may change.

8 So, with that, we are going to move to our
9 first -- our first public commenter, and that is
10 Eric Powane (sic). And apologies if I mispronounce
11 names. I'm going to try to do my very best, though.

12 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PAYNE

13 Good evening, Commissioner Reynolds and Judge
14 Pagalo -- Paga -- help me, here. Pago --

15 ALJ GLEGOLA: Glegola.

16 SPEAKER PAYNE: Glegola, yes. My name is
17 Eric Payne. I'm the executive director of the Central
18 Valley Urban Institute, and we are a policy, advocacy,
19 research, and action institute that serves seven
20 counties across the Central Valley, with our -- our
21 headquarters being in Fresno, and offices in Stockton
22 and Tulare. We represent the interests of low-income
23 communities across our region who are often on the
24 margins of the decision-making process; and so, we're
25 here today representing our constituents.

1 We recognize that -- what we know is there are
2 no other options for residents or businesses if the
3 request is granted. We recognize AT&T's history of
4 aggressive profiteering during the pandemic, and it
5 presents a dangerous roadmap for how a larger, more
6 powerful company would act if the behavior were allowed
7 to proceed with today's request from the applicant.
8 Given the party's record of raising consumer prices year
9 over year for customers and cutting benefits to workers
10 to pad their own profits and the unusual circumstances
11 of \$122 billion in revenue closing out fiscal year 2023
12 that will be paid out in the form of a nice dividend to
13 its shareholders on the backs of low-income communities
14 across the State of California, we respectfully ask that
15 the Public Utilities Commission reject AT&T's request to
16 negate their legal obligation to meet the basic needs of
17 low-income Californians, specifically rural residents
18 and businesses in our region, who have the most to lose,
19 with no lifeline in sight.

20 We wanted to thank you for your time and your
21 commitment to our region, and it is our -- it is our
22 position that we stand in strong opposition of both
23 requests. Thank you.

24 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much. Our next
25 speaker is the chairman of the Fresno County Board of

1 Supervisors, Chairman Nathan Magsig.

2 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MAGSIG

3 Commissioners, thank you for choosing Clovis.
4 Again, this is not your first time here. I've seen you
5 over the years, and really appreciate you making it
6 easier for my constituents and the residents of Central
7 California to come to share some of their concerns and
8 observations.

9 So I'm here today just to talk more generally
10 about the need for more connectivity in the rural parts
11 of the center part of California. I represent about
12 2800 square miles, which includes a lot of foothill and
13 mountain areas, and there are a lot of gaps in service.
14 And what that means -- schoolchildren who are trying to
15 access, you know, materials that are on-line -- there
16 are challenges with that. So I really believe that we
17 need to be working with our partners like AT&T, our
18 partners like T-Mobile, our partners like Verizon, in
19 expanding the network, and just connecting people in the
20 more rural parts of Fresno County and the Central
21 Valley.

22 I do think about a lot of the disadvantaged
23 communities that we have right here, as well, in the
24 Central Valley, and so many times, they are the ones
25 that are forgotten. And so, it's not just the east side

1 of Fresno County, but the west side, as well. Fresno
2 County has 15 cities. The metropolitan area, which
3 consists of the cities of Fresno and Clovis, generally
4 speaking, have pretty good connectivity; but, the
5 further out you get from the -- the center, the metro
6 center of Fresno County, the more difficult it is to
7 access Internet services.

8 I know that we're looking and talking a little
9 bit about copper, because there's still a lot of people
10 who rely on copper lines, landlines, and I would just
11 say that whatever is done moving forward, I would want
12 to see services to people that still rely on
13 landlines -- for their services to improve, and never
14 diminish.

15 So to the extent that both can be accomplished,
16 that we're able to enhance services and connectivity,
17 I'm fully in support of -- of moving forward, making
18 sure that California continues to be connected better
19 and better.

20 So I'm here just to speak on behalf of my
21 residents, also Fresno County, as a whole, and again to
22 thank you for being here today to allow the residents
23 of -- of Fresno County as well as the Central Valley --
24 giving them an opportunity to voice their concerns and
25 support. Thank you.]

1 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next commenter is
2 Barbara Yorgan.

3 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER YORGAN

4 I limited myself to about a minute earlier
5 today and everyone else went on three, four, five
6 minutes, so I came back to finish what I was going to
7 say.

8 ALJ GLEGOLA: Please do.

9 SPEAKER YORGAN: I'd like to read the articles
10 that I am going to be quoting from partly. It's "Mobile
11 Phones Are Hazardous Microbial Platforms Warranting
12 Robust Public Health and Biosecurity Protocols." It's
13 in Scientific Reports, June 2022; and the other one is
14 by Joel Moskowitz, "Cell Phone Radiation is Harmful, But
15 Few Want to Believe It."

16 Radio frequencies stopped being funded by the
17 government in 1990s. Why? That's a big why. Why did
18 they stop funding it? There's a lot of research that
19 has been done without their funding, and the results are
20 very, very problematic.

21 The 5Gs are of greater concern. It's going to
22 lead to 2.5 more antenna sites, and that's bad for the
23 environment. It's bad for people and bats and birds.
24 There's a preponderance of research of the adverse
25 biological health effects from long-term exposure.

1 I was in the store the other day, and he looked
2 about four months old, and the mother had the phone
3 right up to the kid's eyes. Not good.

4 There's an increase of -- it's called oxidative
5 stress, free radicals, stress proteins and can lead to
6 DNA damage and lead to cell death. Brain tumors such as
7 gliomas and acoustic neuromas are two types of brain
8 tumors. This is true for cell phones, cordless phones,
9 wireless devices, Wi-Fi and laptops, and medical
10 facilities have had antibiotic resistant genes, and if
11 you're wearing a mask, which they usually do in
12 hospitals and you're always on your cell phone, I think
13 you have a double whammo(sic) type of problem, because
14 the mask are contaminants.

15 The cell phone industry is either silent or
16 will downplay risks. We have inadequate biosecurity
17 measures in agricultural, native flora, marine fauna and
18 native flora livestock and aquatic farms because of
19 travel and global population infections, such as
20 influenza. These things travel.

21 There have been nosocomial bacterium disastrous
22 in premature babies with known outbreaks linked to phone
23 receivers. There was a woman who talked today about
24 increasing all of this in the schools for teens, I
25 consider that to be child abuse.

1 We need to reduce the reliance on this stuff.
2 I suggest that you take two cans and a string and teach
3 your little children how to talk on the phone with two
4 cans and a string. Teach them manual control. Teach
5 them to write their -- print their names, to write it in
6 script, to do math with their fingers without the use of
7 any cell phones and any computers. Read to them, bring
8 back the toys and games and activities we had when we
9 were children where you look -- you're using manual
10 dexterity. When you use your hands, it has a different
11 effect on your brain and your learning.

12 We -- the idea of wanting to increase this
13 stuff, I think we should just rollback. It's too
14 hazardous. It's -- it's very bad for child development.
15 I spoke with someone the other day, I wanted to send --
16 give her an article to look up. I told her, "I don't
17 have a cell phone. I can't fax anything to you. I
18 can't send any -- text anything to you." She kept
19 telling me to text her. I kept telling her, "I can't
20 text you."

21 Mentally, she just doesn't conceptually
22 understand that there are people who don't have cell
23 phones. I told her it's just a few words. Write it
24 down and go look it up. "I am at work." You don't have
25 a pen and paper that you can just write a few words down

1 and look it up? She said, "What do you want me to mail
2 it to you in an envelope?" This is how bad this has
3 become.

4 I consider this to be very dangerous, because
5 our minds are being controlled by technology, and it's
6 absolutely excessive, so I'm opposed to getting rid of
7 landline phones.

8 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

9 Our next commenter is Neal Haas.

10 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HAAS

11 Hi, my name is Neal Haas. I'm here to
12 comment -- I was here earlier at 2:00.

13 Basically, AT&T doesn't want to provide phone
14 services any longer, so they want to either convert to
15 fiber or cancel service to rural areas. I was trying to
16 figure it out because a lot of people were mentioning or
17 worried about them living in rural communities and no
18 longer having the landline.

19 So, is AT&T planning on canceling those, or are
20 they planning on selling off those areas? That is
21 really what I want to know. You know, we need to keep
22 cell -- or landline services available for everyone, not
23 force everyone to get a cell phone because a lot of the
24 rural communities do not have cellular coverage.

25 Thank you.

1 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

2 Our next commenter is Jeff McAdoo.

3 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MCADOO

4 My name is Jeff McAdoo. Thank you for being
5 here to hear us out, because we don't often get an
6 opportunity like this it seems like, you know, in the
7 Fresno/Clovis area, so thank you for recognizing our
8 area as being important, because it is.

9 So, the bottom line, I don't want to lose my
10 second course of communication. Obviously, I have a
11 cell phone, and I live by the cell phone but that
12 landline is very, very important; and it became very
13 important a month or so ago when I had to call 9-1-1.
14 They knew my exact location, and I didn't have to -- you
15 know, I knew -- obviously, I know where I live, but if I
16 am at somebody else's house, "what is your address?"
17 Well, I don't know, you know. You -- are you going to
18 go look outside when you're trying to do CPR on a
19 person? You need a landline, and I think most people
20 should have a landline, quite frankly; and I would like
21 a true landline.

22 It seemed like when I switched over to
23 something -- AT&T put in a U-Verse type thing, and then
24 when the power goes out, I don't have power to that
25 phone for very long at a time, whereas before, when I

1 had a wire right to it, you didn't to have to have an
2 external source of power.

3 So, for emergencies, I think that's very
4 important; and in today's day and age with the world
5 situation, we don't know what tomorrow might bring, so
6 it is more important to have a landline.

7 So, hang on a second here.

8 And then, I am not married to AT&T, quite
9 frankly. They're kind of forced upon us. If there was
10 a better company, I would be in favor of looking at what
11 they can offer before -- before we make that decision of
12 giving them the business.

13 So, AT&T it seems like, you know, they're --
14 they don't want to have this business, so they keep
15 raising the rates higher and higher and higher much
16 faster than the inflation rates; and so, they're --
17 they're trying to drive people away by raising prices.
18 Yeah, I mean, I pay over 100 bucks a month for just a
19 landline and internet service, and it shouldn't be that
20 high. It shouldn't be that high.

21 So, I don't know who the other providers you
22 would be looking at. I know that very close we have
23 Ponderosa, who -- you know, we have another place up in
24 the mountains, and they seem to do a very good job.

25 I don't know all the ins and outs, and I don't

1 know why -- if one of the reasons AT&T wants to pull out
2 is because they don't get the federal dollars anymore.
3 Are they too big to get the federal dollars? So, what
4 -- what's the criteria for them not to get it and, say,
5 a smaller company to get those federal dollars and maybe
6 reduce our rates at the same time.

7 Let me see. I jotted these down quickly here,
8 and that is about it. But I thank you for being here,
9 and I am all favor of continuing a landline, a true
10 landline.

11 Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, sir. Our next
14 commenter is Adam Mohler.

15 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MOHLER

16 Good evening. My name is Adam Mohler, and I am
17 a lifelong resident of Fresno County, and I have worked
18 for AT&T for over 24 years.

19 Over that period of time, I have -- I have had
20 the pleasure of working on several projects that truly
21 meet the needs -- the technological needs and data needs
22 of our customers. I have worked on broadband expansion
23 providing video services, 4G and LTE to cell sites,
24 fiber to homes, fiber to businesses, all of these
25 projects have had one thing in common, and that is

1 pushing our fiber network deeper into our footprint to
2 provide the services that people absolutely have based
3 on their -- their requirements today.

4 So, I am in favor of AT&T's application,
5 because I believe if this is approved, AT&T will have
6 the ability to build even more fiber to the businesses
7 and also to the residences that require these types of
8 services, but the best part to me is we are not planning
9 on leaving any existing consumers behind.

10 This is going -- going to allow existing
11 customers today to remain with AT&T until a similar
12 service is available for them. Hopefully, even a
13 transition into an IP-based service.

14 So, I appreciate your time. Thank you.

15 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next commenter is
16 Denise Romero.

17 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROMERO

18 Good evening Commissioners. I am Denise
19 Romero, and I am a proud resident of Fresno. I used to
20 live in Clovis, but I am in Fresno now, and I am a
21 principal of an elementary school in Fresno Unified who
22 has been supported by AT&T in a pretty impoverished area
23 part of Fresno, Central Fresno; and so, our students do
24 not have access in equity. This is an equity thing for
25 me when I look at giving opportunities to have more

1 fiber in our communities. We are -- we are one of the
2 biggest areas and really proud area, but I feel like we
3 don't have the equity here that you see, like, in the
4 Bay Area or in LA; and so, for me, I want a bright
5 future more my students, their families. AT&T has
6 provided laptops for -- it was about 50 of my students
7 and with that, they were able to provide a lower, like,
8 amount for my families to be able to access internet
9 services that they would not have been able to access
10 without the support of AT&T.

11 So, I do feel that if this is granted, they
12 will be allowed to provide more opportunities for fiber
13 within our communities, be able to give more access to
14 our families; and so, I really would hope that we can go
15 ahead and allow this to go through.

16 Thank you very much.

17 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

18 Our next commenter is Sandra Ekparian.

19 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER EKPARIAN

20 Good evening, Commissioners. My name is
21 Sandra D. Ekparian. I am here as a resident of Fresno,
22 and I am basically here on behalf of my mother. She's
23 91 years old, and she has cancer. And a while back,
24 because we have a landline, she punched in the phone,
25 9-1-1 automatically knew where my -- the address was,

1 called me right after that and came over. The ambulance
2 was there within minutes and she ended up having a brain
3 tumor. If she did not have that landline, she would not
4 be able to get that access as quickly as we did; and we
5 have had -- been there since 1970 in the same house, and
6 there's always been a landline with Pac Bell and whoever
7 back in the day, and she's been in the same house; and
8 so, I am just hire on behalf of that and also, I am --
9 my residence, I have my internet with my landline.
10 We've always been very happy with everything and --
11 except for the pack -- the fact that, yes, the prices do
12 change very quickly, too much, and that's really not
13 fair.

14 I believe as the man stated earlier, that is a
15 hardship especially for senior citizens, but I am
16 basically here for senior citizens as my mother, for my
17 mother, and when I told her about it; and I read the
18 letter to her, she was -- just got really upset about
19 it, and I just decided to come here. I have never done
20 this before, and I appreciate you listening to the
21 residents and all the attention to this situation.

22 So, I am all for landlines, and I believe that
23 it's just something that we need. I think there's other
24 things to focus on in Fresno and Clovis and elsewhere in
25 California. I mean, that's just something that -- it's

1 like a staple. I -- I just -- I am for it, and I hope
2 it ends up still staying.

3 Thank you.

4 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you for sharing.

5 Our next commenter is Sean Burdine.

6 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BURDINE

7 All right. Thank you for being here tonight
8 and the opportunity to speak. I find this topic very
9 concerning.

10 While I do not like the idea of government
11 compelling a company to enter a contract that it does
12 not want to enter, AT&T has already done so and is
13 currently engaged in a contract to provide a vital
14 service and utility to the people of California.

15 The company should be required to complete its
16 designated obligation until a proper replacement or
17 replacements are found that can continue the service and
18 maintain a continuation of this public utility. There
19 are many residents who already rely upon this landline
20 for their service, and this could cause a disruption of
21 that service for this vital utility.

22 Furthermore, I am very concerned this issue for
23 residents will be further compounded by increasingly
24 difficult times. We are all in difficult economic times
25 and looking to get worse. There are countless families

1 barely keeping their heads above water, and as money
2 becomes tighter, more families will lean on the utility
3 for help. Not only are these costs across the board
4 increasing including basics such as groceries and gas,
5 it's my understanding that AT&T will also likely be
6 ending the Access program, which allows for low-cost
7 internet options for low-income residents.

8 Losing this program will likely be the
9 difference for many homes on whether they can continue
10 to keep their heads above water and will need to find
11 ways to save money. It should then be that -- it should
12 be then expected for many homes to further rely upon
13 this landline to help save that money. I understand
14 economically why AT&T wants to leave this obligation,
15 but it does not appear they have currently met the
16 requirements to leave it at this time.

17 It is already acknowledged within the documents
18 that you provided that a replacement has not been found
19 for this continuation of service and leaving now would
20 negatively impact residents throughout California.

21 Thank you for your time.

22 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

23 Our next commenter is Josie Almade.

24 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ALMADE

25 Hi, I'm Josie Almade, and I recently learned of

1 this hearing today. I am from Fresno, and I was very
2 disappointed with AT&T because I have been a customer
3 for many years, and not once in those billing notices
4 that I get, were we ever notified of their interest in
5 leaving their obligation.

6 I am also disappointed because I am mainly here
7 to help support the elderly senior citizens. There are
8 a number of elderly senior citizens, and when I had my
9 parents, they were included in having a landline and
10 using it for 9-1-1 purposes or even contacting somebody
11 if they needed assistance or even family members.

12 My father was not one to use a cell phone. My
13 mother was, but it was also very limited. I also have
14 elderly cousins who will only use landlines. That is
15 all that she can really handle is a landline. A cell
16 phone is not something that she can really comprehend or
17 use. She lives alone, and she's not the only senior
18 that lives alone.

19 So, what is being done for these individuals?
20 Does AT&T not care? Is it more about the money and the
21 convenience versus what is needed for the people? What
22 about the non-English speaking customers? Was any of
23 this actually on the non-English speaking channels? I
24 don't know. Again, I barely heard of this myself.

25 What about those areas that don't have cell

1 phone service that was brought up earlier? Why was this
2 limited to in-person? Why wasn't Zoom an option for
3 some individuals that could have maybe seen or
4 participated in this with their loved ones? The weather
5 is terrible and yet, the only option was to come in
6 person today at 2:00 and 6:00? And, you know, some home
7 security systems are still tied into a landline. So, if
8 the landline is removed, then the only option is to go
9 with an automated in-home security, where not only you
10 can watch what is in your home from your phone, but who
11 else can watch the security of your home?

12 That's basically -- I just wanted to express
13 how I feel today, and I hope that AT&T is not permitted
14 to be relieved of their obligation.

15 Thank you.]

16 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I just wanted to
17 note for everyone that we will be having a virtual
18 public participation hearing on March 19th. If you or
19 your friends or neighbors or family would be interested
20 in participating in that, there is more information on
21 the PUC website about our PPH schedule. As Judge
22 Glegola outlined, that hearing will be held at
23 adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc, and there will be an
24 opportunity to dial in, as well.

25 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Commissioner.

1 So those are all the speakers that have signed
2 up.

3 Is there anyone else that wants to speak?

4 I see one person. If you could do me a favor,
5 and go to the podium, and if you could start by stating
6 your name, and then spelling it, and then -- and then
7 giving your remarks, we would appreciate it.

8 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LOBERG

9 My name is Lori Loberg. It's L-o-r-i
10 L-o-b-e-r-g. And I'm here -- we did get the notice.
11 Obviously, I know about it.

12 But, I'm here because I'm concerned about
13 landlines when there's a power outage. Landlines
14 provide that ability to call 911 or call family members.
15 Without that, people are stuck, especially if it's
16 weather, heavy snows. My mom lives up in the mountains.
17 It's heavy snow, trees come down, wind blows. It gets a
18 little scary. Landline is really really important.

19 Now, I've talked to AT&T on the phone. They've
20 been very nice, and they have explained the idea of the
21 Voice over IP. And, of course, when the Internet goes
22 down, then that goes down. But, they have a -- they've
23 explained that there's a -- it's like a tower that you
24 can rent the service for \$15 a month, and that is
25 supposed to kick in to provide service, the Internet

1 service, so that the Voice over IP will continue to work
2 for you when there is a power outage. Now, that sounds
3 good; but, I don't know how long that lasts. And so I
4 asked them that, and they said, well, they think it
5 lasts as long as you need it, until a tech can come out
6 and kind of reset it. Well, okay. Well, if I have a
7 battery backup, that lasts like two to four hours, or I
8 can connect something else. But, I asked, well, I --
9 "What if it's a week without power?" And she said,
10 "Well, I think it lasts a week; but, I think you should
11 just try it." Well, I don't to -- I don't want to put
12 my mom in danger, if there's a power outage, and she has
13 no access, because we're just trying it. So I'm not
14 convinced.

15 Now, maybe AT&T can help us understand what
16 that sort of a backup would be for this Voice over IP to
17 go with that Internet option; but without that, without
18 that, I don't think going without a lifeline is wise.

19 They also asked me, right off the bat, "Well,
20 is the line that you're talking about -- is that in
21 operation for an elevator or a fire alarm system?" And
22 I said, "No." And they said, "Because that definitely
23 needs a landline." And I thought, well, why is that so
24 important, and what about -- what about all these other
25 reasons why a landline is important?

1 So that makes me suspicious of what the Voice
2 over IP solution really is. AT&T has been trying to
3 push it. They've been raising the rates on landlines,
4 like everybody knows, and I just think that that's
5 something very very concerning. So I am opposed to
6 having them released from their obligation.

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: All right.

8 ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 ALJ GLEGOLA: Is there anyone else?

11 (No response.)

12 ALJ GLEGOLA: Seeing none, Commissioner
13 Reynolds, do you have any final remarks?

14 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I just want to
15 thank everyone again for joining us this evening.
16 Thanks to those who provided some comments. I
17 appreciate it. It is very helpful to our process. It
18 helps us better understand your perspectives on the
19 proposals from AT&T.

20 As I mentioned earlier, we have more process in
21 these cases. Nothing has yet been decided. But, we
22 will be taken -- taking into account the feedback from
23 members of the public at the hearings that we've held
24 today, as well as hearings that we'll be holding over
25 the next few weeks as we move forward in this

1 proceeding. Thank you, again. It's wonderful to be
2 with you all.

3 I see a hand raised. Is this -- is there an
4 additional comment you'd like to make?

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. The comment --

6 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I just want to
7 note that our court reporters need to be able to
8 transcribe everything that's said for the hearings, so
9 if you could use the microphone to offer comment.

10 ALJ GLEGOLA: And state your name, and spell
11 it, please.

12 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PAYNE

13 Eric Payne, E-r-i-c P-a-y-n-e.

14 I just had a quick question. For the -- for
15 the -- for the general public's knowledge, how might
16 somebody else -- how might they engage as a party to the
17 proceeding if they're representing a -- a nonprofit or
18 organization that -- that's here, or if they know of a
19 nonprofit or organization that would like to participate
20 in the proceeding?

21 COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: I welcome the
22 judge correcting me on anything here.

23 Our Public Advisor's Office, who is present
24 today, can assist with -- with becoming a party, and
25 understanding what that means, what are some of the

1 obligations and what are some of the opportunities to
2 participate as a -- a party in our proceedings. We have
3 a -- a generally fairly legalistic administrative
4 process, and parties typically participate in that. It
5 includes things like presenting evidence and legal
6 argument and briefs.

7 Judge, is there anything you'd like to add to
8 that?

9 ALJ GLEGOLA: And it would start with a motion
10 for party status, filing that, as well. But, the Public
11 Advisor's Office can give you some information, to start
12 out with.

13 So does that conclude your remarks? Okay.
14 Very well.

15 Okay. Well, thank you, Commissioner. Thank
16 you, everyone, for coming today. 165 people were here
17 at the 2:00 p.m. meeting, and roughly 65 were at this
18 one. I very much thank you for taking the time out of
19 your day. I know you could be elsewhere.

20 I also want to thank everyone who helped pull
21 this off, whether it's the folks at the City of Clovis,
22 our court reporters, folks at the Public Advisor's
23 Office, folks at -- that work for Commissioner Reynolds.

24 And again, thank you, all. I very much
25 appreciate you taking the time.

1 This concludes the 6:00 p.m. public
2 participation hearing for Application 23-03-002 and
3 Application 23-03-003. We are adjourned, and off the
4 record.

5 (At the hour of 6:58 p.m., this matter having
6 been continued to 2:00 p.m., February 22,
7 2024, the Commission then adjourned.)

8]

9 * * * * *

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING

I, ASHLEIGH BUTTON, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER
NO. 14013, IN AND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DO
HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT
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TRANSCRIPT OF THE TESTIMONY AND PROCEEDINGS HELD IN
THIS MATTER ON FEBRUARY 6, 2024.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE
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EXECUTED THIS FEBRUARY 12, 2024.


ASHLEIGH BUTTON
CSR NO. 14013


BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
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