BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS, in attendance
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE THOMAS J. GLEGOLA, presiding

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARING Application 23-03-003

REPORTERS' TRANSCRIPT
Indio, California
March 14, 2024
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INDIO, CALIFORNIA

MARCH 14, 2024 - 2:00 P.M.

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

Today is March 14, 2024. This is the time and place for two public participation hearings in two proceedings. I already mentioned this to folks while off the record, but the first proceeding is Application 23-03-002. This is the application of AT&T California to withdraw its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier designation. The second proceeding is Application 23-03-003. This is the application of AT&T California to withdraw as a Carrier of Last Resort from much of its service territory.

Today's public participation hearings, or PPHs as we like to call them, are being held at the Indio Council Chambers. I very much want to thank the City of Indio for allowing us to use this for today. I also want to thank everyone for coming here. I've seen the speakers list. I know that some people have traveled a long way. You may have endured stuff like wind, stuff like that, so thank you for making it.

My name is Thomas J. Glegola. I am the
assigned administrative law judge, or ALJ, for this proceeding. The Honorable John Reynolds is the assigned commissioner.

Commissioner Reynolds, would you like to make any remarks?

COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: Yes. Thank you, Judge Glegola. It's wonderful to be here with everyone. It's nice to see such a full room.

Good afternoon. I am commissioner John Reynolds, the assigned commissioner to the AT&T applications that we're looking forward to hearing from you about today.

I want to echo the thanks of Judge Glegola to the City of Indio for hosting us today. It's wonderful to be here. I'm going to talk a little bit about the California Public Utilities Commission and about these applications before we move ahead and hear from you today.

The Commission, or the CPUC, is the regulatory agency for all of California's investor-owned public utilities spanning energy, water, and telecommunications industries. The Commission is headed by five commissioners with each commissioner serving a six-year staggered term. As a commissioner, I'm assigned to vote on a wide variety of cases, including these two requests
And what do these requests or applications mean? AT&T has come before the CPUC asking for two separate requests. First we have their request to relinquish their Eligible Telecommunications Carrier designation.

An Eligible Telecommunications Carrier, which we sometimes call an "ETC," is a telephone company that operates in a specific geographic area that receives financial assistance from the Federal Universal Service Fund to provide affordable telephone service to customers at all income levels. AT&T is essentially requesting to no longer participate in that Federal Universal Service Fund by no longer operating as an ETC in California.

Second, we have AT&T's request for relief from its Carrier of Last Resort obligations. We sometimes refer to a Carrier of Last Resort as a "COLR." A COLR is a telecommunications service provider that stands ready to provide basic telephone service, commonly landline telephone service, to any customer requesting that service within specified area.

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

When we talk about the basic telephone service,
I do want to emphasize that this does not necessarily
mean that your particular home service is a basic
service or that it is provided by a landline copper or
fiber optic wire line. Your home service may, for
example, be delivered by Voice over Internet Protocol,
sometimes called "VoIP," another telecommunications
technology.

I'll briefly touch on the purpose of our public
participation hearings, which is why we're here today.
The purpose of a public participation hearing is to hear
from customers or concerned Californians about
proceedings before the CPUC. Today's public comments,
in addition to the comments made at all the public
participation hearings that we've held in this
proceeding, will help the Commission evaluate AT&T's
requests in both cases.

It is crucial for our decision-making process
that we hear from customers on the issues before us
today. I want to thank all of you for coming to this
hearing to share your thoughts with us.

I'm going to touch briefly on where we are in
the process of these two cases. After the public participation hearings conclude on March 19th, Judge Glegola will hold evidentiary hearings at the Commission's San Francisco hearing rooms. After hearings, AT&T and the other active parties to the case will file briefs. After that process, ALJ Glegola will issue a proposed decision for the Commission to consider at one of its official voting meetings, and our current schedule provides for that to happen later this year.

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

With that, I'm going to turn it back to Judge Glegola. I want to thank you again for being here with us, and I look forward to hearing from you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Commissioner Reynolds. Commissioner Reynolds provided a very high level overview. If you would like more details about the applications, a fact sheet is available at the back table, and you can also find other information online at www.cpuc.ca.gov/PPH.

Additionally, AT&T should have mailed notice of its COLR application to all landline customers, both those that rely on Plain Old Telephone Service and those
that use Voice over Internet Protocol service.

As Commissioner Reynolds mentioned, in-person evidentiary hearings for the ETC application are scheduled for later in April, and the schedule still needs to be determined for the COLR application. We've also received a very large number of public comments on our docket card. Roughly 5,000 people have commented.

So with that, we want to turn over to the public portion of our meeting. As Commissioner Reynolds said, your comments will help us gather information to determine whether to grant, reject, or modify these applications. In addition to considering the comments received here today, we will consider a number of other items -- the evidence, as well as the public comments that I've mentioned on the docket card.

If you have not already signed up but would like to provide comments today, you may do so by signing up at the Public Advisors' table in the back. And if you have a customer-specific question, I'll just note that AT&T has some customer service representatives here.

I do want to discuss some ground rules, and this is just to help us ensure that we have a clean transcript. The court reporters will be transcribing everything that is said here today. Please remember to
speak slowly and clearly, otherwise our court reporters will have the difficult job of taking down everything that is said here and not hearing. Only one person at a time can speak as court reporters are unable to transcribe an accurate record when more than one person is speaking.

We will hear you best if you speak directly into the microphone. Before beginning your comment, please state and spell your name. And to ensure we have an accurate record, it may be necessary for the court reporter or myself to interrupt you. We really don't want to do that and apologize ahead of time. We're just trying to make sure that we have a good record.

After this public participation hearing is over, the court reporters will prepare a written transcript of the hearing. The transcript will be provided to me and the five commissioners and will be available to the public. It will be posted on the docket card of this proceeding.

Again, if you have not already signed up but want to speak, the table just outside the door is where you can go.

With that, we will start with Ray Mueller from the County of San Mateo.

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STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MUELLER

Thank you. My name is Ray Mueller. It's spelled R-a-y M-u-e-l-l-e-r. Can you hear me?

ALJ GLEGOLA: Yes.

SPEAKER MUELLER: Thank you.

Your Honor and Honorable Commissioner, my name is Ray Mueller. It's my honor to serve as the District 3 Supervisor in San Mateo County. I have traveled great distance here today to oppose AT&T's applications.

The district I represent encompasses 340 square miles, including the San Mateo County coast from the Santa Cruz line to Pacifica to Daly City and all the Hillside regions adjoining it and spanning the areas of La Honda and Kings Mountain into the cities of Portola Valley and Woodside.

The rural and semi-rural areas of my district include some of the county's most vulnerable populations, and these areas do not possess reliable communications. In some areas, there is no cellular access at all, and other areas cellular access is unreliable. Constant disappearing act.

There currently are no broadband projects we are aware of underway to provide broadband fiber to the South Coast and Hillside areas, nor any new cell towers
planned in our South Coast and Hillside regions. San Mateo County coast was cut from the maps for funding last year. Today, residents, including our most vulnerable seniors and those with access and functional needs, rely on AT&T copper wire for day-to-day emergencies and, most importantly, during natural hazard events.

Even if the significant investment was somehow achieved providing cellular access and broadband access to these areas, cellular and broadband technology would remain unreliable for these residents primarily because the power grid is unreliable for the resident consumer, a dependency for such technology.

In natural hazard events during the winter storm systems these last two years, the power can be out for weeks. Copper wire is powered at the source point, far from local power outages. As such, it remains operational during these emergency events.

At the county, we depended on copper wire for reverse 911 phone calls during the CZU fires just a few years ago. It is an essential and irreplaceable component of our public safety system. Further, we cannot expect the deregulation of AT&T of withdrawing its COLR obligation to somehow solve the significant challenges created by the same withdrawal. After all,
the business market that currently exists has not solved
the digital divide in my district for over the last
26 years.

For all these reasons, we ask the Commission to
reject AT&T's application at this time. We simply don't
have the communications infrastructure to support it,
nor the reliable energy grid to allow for our
communication alternative technologies. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Supervisor.

Next, we have Michael Ziegenmeyer.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ZIEGENMEYER

Mike Ziegenmeyer, M-i-k-e
Z-i-e-g-e-n-m-e-y-e-r.

Good afternoon, your Honors. I'm here from
Northern California as well representing Sutter County,
3rd District Supervisor. My communities encompass Live
Oak -- I'm sorry -- Sutter, East Nicolaus, Meridian, and
East Rio Oso.

We have about a hundred thousand people in our
county. 25 percent of those individuals live in the
unincorporated areas where there's little to hardly any
cell phone service. Over 170 of those individuals are
65 and older and living alone.

When we first heard about this, the first thing
we -- the first thing that comes to mind is -- and I
think the fellow supervisor there mentioned -- power
outages, emergencies. What happens when there's an
emergency at school and they're trying to reach the
parent out in rural areas and they can't get ahold of
them because they don't have cell service?

Or just last month over 10,000 Californians
were without cell service. And what did they say in the
same post? "Use a landline in case of emergency." It
blows me away. I'm seriously astonished by it. You
can't make this up. But yet you want to get rid of
landlines.

I mean we've all heard this before, one --
nothing -- everything we're doing here in the state of
California makes zero sense, especially trying to, you
know -- AT&T trying to get out of this contract here,
this agreement, it's unjustly, it's unsafe, it puts
those living in those rural communities at risk.

I urge you guys to deny the request. I mean
it's just -- I've spoken with many superintendents, many
elementary schools, high schools, and they urge the same
thing. I sit on the area for agency committees as well.
I'm sure you've received many, many complaints on the
exact same subject.

You know over 30 percent of Californians --
almost 30 percent of Californians still utilize a
Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Cope, S-t-e-p-h-e-n C-o-p-e. I'm the chairman of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, and I'm here today to -- along with my council member, Jenny Alto, who's the secretary-treasurer, and we're here to support AT&T's application.

It's been long overdue that our -- our tribe has suffered with broadband. We're in an area where there's little coverage, very little coverage, and, you know, we need assistance. So we're trying to fix that, make it better for them.

We're also sensitive to the residents about the landlines. I know for a fact. My -- my mother-in-law is 103 years old, still lives at home, and she has a landline. I still have a landline, so I understand that.

But, I don't think there's the -- any changes, I think AT&T will continue to monitor those. Our tribe is looking forward to the broadband. It's looking forward to providing that, not only to their members -- our members, their children and their grandchildren, and
they're excited about it. We had a meeting two weeks ago with our elders. Our tribe is 149 members -- 148 members, I'm sorry, and 123 of them are elders, 60 and above, and they're excited about the new project. They're excited about the broadband coming, and they can't wait for it to get started. Thank you very much.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Chairman. Our next speaker is Supervisor Jeff Griffiths.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GRIFFITHS

Good afternoon, your Honor, Honorable Commissioner. My name is Jeff Griffiths. I'm a county supervisor in Inyo County, California, and I'm also the first vice president for the California State Association of Counties. CSAC will be providing its own testimony at the next hearing, and -- and also, a letter; but, our -- our positions are concurrent.

I represent the rural caucus, but as you can see from the supervisors who have already spoken, this is an issue that crosses urban, suburban, and rural communities. And of the -- the 29 counties that are in the rural caucus of CSAC, there is unanimous agreement that this is a -- a very difficult position to be imposed upon our people. We have vast areas that cover long distances where the only communication is landline telephone.
In my own county of Inyo County, we have Death Valley National Park. There are a thousand permanent residents there, including a federally recognized tribe, but there's also 1.7 million people who travel through that. There is no cell service in that park, and there's extremely slow and expensive and unreliable Internet, if any Internet at all, to the point where the park employees have to drive two hours to Pahrump, Nevada in order to access the Internet.

When disasters hit that area, landline copper telephone service is the only communication we have for 911 calls and for county services. With our extensive elderly population, the only way that we can communicate with these folks is through landline telephone service. Perhaps, in 10 or 20 years, when full build-out happens and it's -- it's ubiquitous, this could be considered; but, right now, it's -- puts our population in extremely vulnerable position.

I also have five federally recognized tribes in my area who rely heavily on the landline service. So I urge you to reject this application. Thank you.

(Appause.)

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we please have Supervisor Trina Orrill?

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STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ORRILL

Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you. My name is Trina Orrill, O-r-r-i-l-l. I am the 1st District supervisor from Inyo County.

I'm here today to express my ardent opposition to this application. Such a move would cause such detrimental impacts to most of our isolated and already disadvantaged communities. We have disabled, we have elderly, we have our economically disadvantaged, we have youth who live in these areas that are attending school that rely solely on hard telephone lines for emergencies, for communications, to receive health and human -- health and human service -- services from the county. And just as recently as last year, one of these communities was completely and totally physically cut off because of weather when the roads washed out. The only form of communication they had was a hard landline to know that we were bringing supplies, medicine for them, and that they were not forgotten. In the absence of that, they would have been isolated and unknown when they would be receiving help.

So I urge you to please reject this application, think about the impact on our most vulnerable. Thank you.

(Applause.)
ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we next have Scott Armstrong, please?

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ARMSTRONG

My name is Scott Armstrong, S-c-o-t-t A-r-m-s-t-r-o-n-g. I'm the regional broadband coordinator for County of Inyo and County of Mono. And thank you very much, Judge Glegola and Commissioner Reynolds, for the time.

As our supervisors have already stated, County of Inyo would like for the application for the relief from COLR rejected. Inyo County strongly opposes AT&T's application for relief from carrier of last resort obligations, because it could have detrimental impacts on some of Inyo County's most vulnerable populations, including disabled, elderly, and economically disadvantaged residents that call this place home, and they currently rely almost exclusively on landline telecommunication -- telecommunication service.

In addition to causing hardships for a thousand or so residents who live up and down the valley, and as mentioned, we have 1.7 million visitors to Death Valley every year, at least when it's open, AT&T's request also raises significant safety concerns for these communities; and those communities has -- have been
historically at risk because of natural disasters, and
often experience power outages. Cell phone service and
Internet service in the valley are notoriously
unreliable, at best, but they're generally unavailable,
in general.

During emergencies, customers and first
responders need access, reliable access, to 911, 211
service, including the ability to receive alerts and
notifications. POTS service is considered the most
reliable communications tool in that stake and that
arsenal.

AT&T is the carrier of last resort for the
Death Valley area. AT&T is the sole owner of POTS
infrastructure in that area. Inyo County believes that
it is essential for customers to retain resilient
communication services, such as POTS. Carrier of last
resort relief should not be granted without securing
widespread alternatives with uniform technologically
neutral minimum service quality standards. Thank you
very much for your time.

(Applause.)

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Before -- before
continuing, I do want to mention that we have, right
now, about 26 people signed up. So I'm going to ask --
and a few have just been added, because I think people
are trickling in. I'm going to ask folks to try to
stick to three minutes, if you can.

Our next speaker is Marc Ellis.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ELLIS

Hello. Thank you for allowing me to speak. My
name is Marc Ellis. That's M-a-r-c E-l-l-i-s. And I'm
from Reno, Nevada.

You're going to hear a lot of people talking
about what might happen, would possibly happen. I'm
going to tell you what does happen.

We do not have carrier of last resort in
Nevada. They're not going to go and rip the cable out
of the ground, they're not going to remove it from the
poles. They're just going to leave it where it is. And
as it slowly degenerates, technicians, like myself, are
going to have to go out there and fix it as best we can
as many times as we can until it just doesn't work
anymore, and then we will have to tell the customer --
not management, not the board, us, the technicians --
"I'm sorry, ma'am, I'm sorry, sir, I can't fix this
anymore. You're going to need to find somebody else."

I've got one other thing I'd like to bring up.
I'm also a -- what's called a -- I'm the lead on what's
called the Broadband Brigade. We -- we're doing the --
the BEAD project. There's two to $3 billion coming
to -- to California. So that gentleman that spoke earlier, you know, we want POTS, but we'd rather have POTS, it's not an either/or. It's a both. They are not the same thing. The Federal Government is giving two to $3 billion for California just for high-speed Internet. That doesn't mean POTS has to go away. They can coincide. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Yvonne Melton.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MELTON

Good afternoon. My name is Yvonne Melton, Y-v-o-n-n-e M, as in Mary, e-l-t-o-n, and I represent the Communication Workers of America, District 9. So we represent more than 40,000 telecommunication workers in California, including 7,600 at AT&T.

As the employees who build and maintain AT&T's critical telecommunications infrastructure and consumers who rely on high-speed and high quality Voice over -- Voice over, sorry, our members are deeply interested in this proceeding. CWA members oppose AT&T's request to be relieved of its carrier of last resort obligation and eligible telecommunications obligations.

We were reminded on February 22nd of the continued importance of landline telephone service when
AT&T's wireless network suffered hours-long interruption and disruption. CWA members know that, for many Californians, especially our elderly and rural residents, that land -- landline service remains the most reliable option, and we're afraid that, if AT&T gets its wishes, then no voice service provider will be obligated to provide service in AT&T's service area, further endangering our public safety and access to essential communication services.

We're also very concerned that, according to the analysis by TURN, The -- The Utility Reform Network, many low-income households may expect a 200 percent increase or more on their monthly bill.

AT&T is not just abandoning lines; they're abandoning people. So I urge the CPUC to demonstrate its continued commitment to ensure that every Californian has access to affordable reliable telecommunications service by rejecting AT&T's attempt to cut service to our most vulnerable residents.

(Applause.)

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Janet Fields.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FIELDS

Hello. Thank you for your time today. My name is Janet Fields, J-a-n, as in Nancy, e-t F, as in Frank,
i-e-l-d-s, as in Sam.

I am here today to speak against this. My mother is elderly. She just had her 83rd birthday, very independent, and she's very feisty, and she insists on listing alone -- living alone. She lives in a rural community where there is spotty cell phone service. My mother has a landline. My mother has a landline with predesignated dial on there. Number one's 911, in case something happens. Myself, my siblings, her grandchildren know that my mom has a landline phone, who can push dial number one in an emergency, and no matter what happens, if she passes out, they know where that call came from, and they know where to send help. My mother will not give up living alone. My mother has a cell phone. Service is spotty.

I am appalled by the fact that AT&T is putting profit afford -- in front of people. How can we stand behind a move like that? No one's going to move in and say, "Oh, let's -- let's -- let us go do this; we will take over." My mother will be left with no recourse, as the previous technician said.

I work in telecom. I know that -- that copper infrastructure is not working. It is not being repaired, because they don't care to spend the money. This is not for the good of people. This is not a good
move. It is a step backwards. I can't even see how you could consider even thinking about approving this. I stand in extreme opposition. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Violeta Aguilar.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER AGUILAR-WIRICK

Good afternoon, your Honor and Honorable Commissioner. My name is Violeta Aguilar-Wirick, A-g-u-i-l-a-r-W-i-r-i-c-k V-i-o-l-e-t-a, and I'm a small business owner and community leader in Riverside County, and I'm here to support AT&T's application, as I believe this will benefit our residents and businesses within Riverside County and the state.

Deploying more fiber and adding more cell sites is essential to this region. While we know we still have some folks using traditional copper for their home phone service, supporting migration efforts to state-of-the-art and newer technologies like fiber and Voice over IP is crucial, and while this transition happens, I appreciate AT&T's commitment to continue to maintain the copper network in areas where there are no other alternative choices.

Let's not forget, it was not long ago that we were all forced to work and go to school from home during the pandemic, and IP-based and next generation
wireless networks were helpful for (sic) able to survive. We saw kids in some of our most underserved communities doing their homework from the parking lot of fast food restaurants because they had no other access to Internet service.

It is crucial that we continue to take steps to bridge the digital divide, especially in our most underserved communities. I don't know if it has been quantified in (indecipherable) fiber and wireless coverage will do to advance the digital divide, but I am sure the impact is tremendous. Our communities deserve to have access to high-speed Internet for bandwidth-rich activities, such as on-line learning, remote work, telehealth, and as such, investment in this infrastructure is paramount to continue to bridge the digital divide; and while that happens, I commend AT&T's commitment to maintain service and communication as the infrastructure of the future is built. Thank you for your time and attention.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Jeremy Roldan. Sorry.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROLDAN

Good afternoon, your Honors. My name is Jeremy, J-e-r-e-m-y, Roldan, R-o-l-d-a-n. I am a resident of Riverside County.
I've personally witnessed the advancements in technology benefiting my family. My grandmother, who recently passed, had been ailing, and lived by herself, always determined to be self-efficient, to the point of stubbornness, as I imagine most of us would be at that age, but with a heart of not wanting to burden others. She felt she could live on her own. Thanks to technology, I was able to have a peace of mind, and still allow my grandmother to be independent. I was able to do so, thanks to my AT&T wireless service and the tracking capabilities of her smartphone that I had purchased for her. I knew where she was always as she ventured out conducting her day-to-day business; not only did I feel better about it, it made her feel safe.

It is moments like this that remind me of how telecommunications technology can benefit our lives in -- in unique ways. I know there are many more stories like mine where technology has positively affected lives. I would like to see more coverage, more reliability, and greater technological advances. This is why I am a huge proponent of investing in our future, building larger fiber infrastructures, and expanding the wireless reach. I am in favor of these applications. Thank you for your time.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Boo.
(Applause.)

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. And can I just ask folks in the audience, please be polite. And every -- everybody deserves to be heard.

So next is Bruce Barber.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BARBER

Good afternoon. My name is Bruce, B-r-u-c-e, Barber, B-a-r-b-e-r.

I started my marketing company 23 years ago, and the first client I had was MySpace Music. And the reason I bring that up is we're talking about a hundred year -- year-old technology and where California's going to be in the future. If we're talking about infrastructure and all these -- the different things that are affecting California and not going right, going left, if somebody's willing to invest in innovation and bring California to the forefront of technology in a certain area, we should embrace that and support what they're doing. So I appreciate your time.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Could we please have Thomas Ham?

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HAM

Hello. My name's Thomas Ham, T-h-o-m-a-s H-a-m.

I'm a third generation telecom worker with
almost 20 years in the industry, and additionally, I serve as an executive vice president of CWA Local 9588 here in the Inland Empire, which covers most of the Inland Empire, which is mostly a Frontier area, not AT&T. So I'm here representing those AT&T customers that can't be here, because this is not their area they are serviced, by design, it seems.

I'm also a dedicated community organizer and an advocate for the under representative -- underrepresented in our country and state. My work has taken me across California, often in rural areas, and all over, from the north to the south. In many of these areas, the residents rely solely on copper phone services for communications. Shockingly, numerous communities lack access to broadband, often resorting to costly slow satellite options for Internet connectivity. They rely on satellite, because these -- many of these areas do not have cellular or wireless options. So asking us to move copper phone service to the cellular service is not an option for these people. They can't even get Internet.

I found myself in these areas not because they're my work locations, but because major corporations, such as AT&T, have long abandoned these communities. The aging copper infrastructure is barely
hold together -- holding together, and they're
understaffed and have limited resources struggling to
maintain services for these forgotten customers.

In 2015, I was in Northern California to help
repair the deteriorating Verizon plant before its sale
to Frontier. I was in the Round Valley Indian
Reservation in Covelo, and I encountered cable that was
melted from a house fire. This cable provided services
to the school district and the school for that
community, the only school district and school that was
there. With only two employees in that area, we -- they
had -- that covered all of Mendocino and Humboldt
County, they ended up having to do Band-Aids to fix the
service, to get them back in service. The makeshift
solution requires frequent visits, disrupting the school
district and school's op -- op -- operations, and it --
it's important to note that this is a sole high school
suburban -- serving the area and a community that over
30 percent of their residents are below the state
poverty line, and there was no other option for
communication services; cells did not work.

I implore the CPUC not to allow AT&T or any
other company to abandon their customers in pursuit of
profit. In 2023 alone, AT&T reported profits exceeding
$70 billion. It's un- -- yet, they neglect the
communities they serve -- they serve. It is unconscionable to prioritize profits over the well-being of entire communities and the livelihoods of their residents year after year. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Barbara Lea.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LEA

Thank you for having me. I'm Barbara Lea, B-a-r-b-a-r-a L-e-a.

Thank you for having me this afternoon. I spoke with you in Ukiah, and we talked about the phone service that you -- landlines allow during a crisis situation in the Bay area.

After 30 years of service, I was allowed to have a landline. Now, in my retirement, I started to pay $25 a month for that landline. Now I'm up to 125, and nothing has changed, except the cost. I find that this is -- and they want to now -- they want to take my landline away. I think that this is unlawful taking of my -- all -- and all the rest -- all the rest of the retirees' concessions.

The fact that AT&T made an arbitrary and capacious decision not to support POTS lines is what happens to landlines when fire departments can't work, when police departments no longer and schools no longer,
because they use landlines. They use them for Centrex, for PBX, and post offices.

I ask you not to go along with this decision, and protect the welfare and safety of the citizens of California. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Craig Akin.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER AKIN

Good afternoon, your Honors. My name is Craig Akin, C-r-a-i-g A-k-i-n, and I'm here to support the initiative to remove AT&T as the Carrier of Last Resort. My mom, also an AT&T and PacBell employee, since retired.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wow.

SPEAKER AKIN: And she -- she asked me almost every weekend to try to fix her internet. She has the AT&T technician on speed dial with all the rains. We live in Orange County, and this is not a rural area. This is a suburban area, and her service cannot be maintained. She's had -- been out over a dozen times. The service that she is on is copper is not reliable.

And if we can smartly manage where we're divesting, we could invest. I, fortunately, have fiber-optic overbuild. I have fast internet speed, and it is reliable. And my mom is asking, "When is my
neighborhood gonna be" -- "have the fiber overbuild?" I said, "I don't know. It's probably not going to be. You have direct buried. It's susceptible to water, and it's gonna be expensive."

And my mom, she does have an alternative with another carrier. There is cable TV. I know a lot of -- a lot of neighborhoods there is an alternative. She will not go to that. She is going to stick around with AT&T even though she -- her alarm is out. Her -- she has to call me on the cell phone. So if -- as long as we can invest in broadband expansion, I think it makes sense. Thank you for your time.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Mike Miller.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MILLER

Good afternoon. Mike Miller, M-i-k-e M-i-l-l-e-r, and I'm with -- from Santa Ana mainly just representing myself and other senior friends of mine.

And one of the things that was brought up by the other is besides phone service, the landline provides DSL internet. And if you take away the landline, you take away the internet because there is no fiber optics in my area.

And another provider coming in, well, all my AT& -- ATT email addresses are to AT&T. They'll charge
me for -- as an extra fee. I don't want that either.

Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Marybeth Grannell.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GRANNELL

Just put M.B. Grannell, G-r-a-n-n-e-l-l.

Hello. All these people have come from so many places in California to Indio for this meeting. To begin with, that seemed like it was just hiding out when so many people care about this.

All my friends in Pasadena that don't have good connection -- connections with their cell phones, all the repairs that take place over the fiber optics that take weeks and days to fix, it's just the quality.

My landline works perfectly, and I have no complaints with it. And our ZIP Code is threatened to have the landlines removed. I don't know when this takes place. You mentioned April. Is it April or September the vote comes up?

ALJ GLEGOLA: No. At this point, there's not going to be a vote on the COLR application. We still have to go through evidentiary hearings and stuff like that.

SPEAKER GRANNELL: Will there be notification?

ALJ GLEGOLA: Yes.
SPEAKER GRANNELL: Okay. And it's mainly the quality and also just the idea of relying on satellites. Satellites that are affected by solar flares and war and space forces out there and all this military, it's just -- you know, it's just junking up our atmosphere anyway.

I hate to complain. I'm not a complainer, but I had to come from Pasadena in 60-mile-an-hour winds to complain. So sorry, but please reject both applications. I keep writing in for landline, and that takes a lot of effort.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you for coming from Pasadena.

And I'll just tell -- since this is the second time that commenters have came up to Indio, if you want to know why Indio, you can blame me. I picked it. The Commission picked three places that were in more rural areas because we're also having remote hearings as well. That's -- that's the only reason. So, I mean, it was -- that -- that was the reason. So --

SPEAKER GRANNELL: Well, thank you for the -- any more remote landline help?

COMMISSIONER JOHN REYNOLDS: Yes. And I just wanted to add that if you have friends or neighbors or colleagues who couldn't attend one of our in-person
public participation hearings, we will have our virtual hearings on March 19th. Folks can dial in to those to make comments as well.

And information about those hearings is on our website at cpuc.ca.gov. And here -- since you are here with us in person today, you can ask the Public Advisor's Office who has a table out front about information for that March 19th hearing.

SPEAKER GRANNELL: Okay. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: And you can all -- always file a comment on our -- on the docket card for this proceeding.

As I mentioned, we've had about 5,000 people take the time to write, and we read them. I will -- I can guarantee you we read them.

SPEAKER GRANNELL: I called 8-6-6 and that worked.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Our next speaker is Rachel Lewis.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LEWIS

My name is Rachel Lewis, R-a-c-h-e-l L-e-w-i-s. Thank you, your Honor and Commissioner. I just wanted to speak in -- for the fiber build to California. I moved from an area up north that was all copper. Came -- and when rains hit, and getting it repaired was -- you know, it was the norm. I was -- we
were used to it. But moving -- I moved down to Southern California, Riverside area, and into a fiber area, so my telephone is v-o-i-p, and it works perfectly.

My son -- I have a 14-year-old son. He was at home during COVID. And if we did not have the fiber while he was at home -- he had to stay home for a year. He was able to see his teachers in classes on TV with the Smart TV. With that fiber, we could download and stream the applications that they needed for the schools. He would have been behind and probably been like other students that were in the areas that did not have the resources we have. So that's the -- one of the main reasons why I am for the -- both folks, yes. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Mario Gonzalez.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GONZALEZ

Hello. My name is Mario Gonzalez, M-a-r-i-o, last name G-o-n-z-a-l-e-z.

Good evening or good day, your Honor. I'm a lineman out of LA. I've had the privilege of working up north with other linemans (sic) where it's more rural.

A guy I worked with named Shawn Heape, you may know him. He's very passionate about this stuff. We've been through a lot up there, seen a lot: fires, rain,
lightning strikes. And we worked -- we -- we risk our
lives sometimes just to get these people back in
service, and we know the importance of having these
services for people that can't get internet. You know,
their -- their cell phone -- the cell phone service is
spotty, so I reject this proposal from AT&T.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Jimmy Brubaker.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BRUBAKER

Hello. I'm Jimmy Brubaker, J-i-m-i, Brubaker,
B-r-u-b-a-k-e-r. I'm a local President of CWA 588. I'm
also an employee of -- for one of the telecom companies
out here, actually, in this area. I have worked -- I
have worked as a contractor and -- and an hourly
employee in the industry for over 24 years.

And I have had the opportunity to work in many
different locations, both upper class and in low --
low-income areas. There's a clear difference in the
condition of the plant in those areas. It was then and
is still today a troubling reality. It has the
appearance of a company focusing on the services of the
more desirable areas with little to no desire to upgrade
or any upkeep in low-income areas.

The -- if AT&T's requests are approved, it will
do many things. The impact will hit those on fixed
incomes or in rural areas, which I deal with on a daily basis, and they just quit providing basic service. They will impact those families, those families in those situations. If their -- if their grandmother lives in one of those areas, now the family is going to be impacted if they can't get ahold of them.

It will also impact the employees who work and maintain the dilapidated cables in the rural and low-income areas.

Do you believe the company is going to continue to employ these guys? If your answer is "yes" to that question, then you're either naive or just plain lying to yourself.

If this is allowed, the competing telco company will do the exact same thing. The ripple effect will be very widespread.

You need to deny this request. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Anthony Munana. Apologies if I mispronounced your name.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MUNANA

It's all right. Good afternoon. My name is Anthony Munana, A-n-t-h-o-n-y M-u-n-a-n-a.

Same thing like everybody has been saying, I oppose what AT&T is trying to do to people and not be
Carrier of Last Resort.

Working in a lot of these rural communities, remote communities, half the time I'm pretty sure AT&T, Frontier, they are already falling behind on PUC commits (sic).

Now, if they are not the Carrier of Last Resort, what's going to happen then?

We're gonna have customers out for weeks, months at a time. And like -- like I said before, I work in these areas. So we have to go out, like the other gentleman said earlier. We're the ones that have to go face-to-face with the customers, hear them cry and complain that they can't get ahold of anybody. And just opposed to what AT&T is trying to do. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Mark Galdo (sic).

SPEAKER GALLARDO: Gallardo.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Gallardo.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GALLARDO

All right. Thank you. My name is Mark Gallardo, M-a-r-k G-a-l-l-a-r-d-o. I'm a POTS technician of about 25 years' experience.

From what I'm hearing, there are some of the people that are in favor of this. It seems like their argument is being presented in the ways of maintaining
the POTS lines are taking away from their advancement of
the digital technology.

I don't -- I don't see that. It seems to me --
I mean, some of these presentations are -- statements
that are made are -- I agree with it even though I'm not
in favor of this.

I -- I have -- yes. The people that are
speaking is they want broadband at their house. They
should have it.

But as a POTS technician, I -- I have found
there is basically two types of people that continue to
have POTS service.

The first type had no other alternative whether
they are out in a rural area or whether they are in the
middle of town in a -- in a apartment complex with an
infrastructure that is 50 or 60 years old and POTS is
the only thing there. There -- they're not all out in
the middle of nowhere. Some of them are right in the
middle of your neighborhood as well. There is plenty of
strip malls around that have no other alternatives but
3-meg DSL.

Now I ask you with all these alternatives
around: fiber optics, satellite, cable, who is
frequently taking 3-meg DSL if they don't have to, okay?
These are the people that we're talking about not
maintaining anymore.

The second type of people, these are people that have grown to trust their POTS service. These are people's parents. These are people's moms and dads who live in rural areas or even in the city. They are used to picking up their phone and it working. These are the people that are legacy customers. These people have been around paying their bill for 30 or 40 years.

Basically, these are the people who built the Verizon Wireless Network, the AT&T Network. These are SBC customers. These were PacBell customers. These are GTE customers. These are Verizon customers.

As a POTS technician, I'm proud to maintain that -- that client. I did a service call. Once I found out about this hearing, you know, I thought, "Okay. I" -- "I'll come up and say a few words." I didn't know what I was going to say. I wanted to feel it out first.

I started paying attention to customers connection dates. I -- I looked at one, 1968. Next, a couple days later, 1972; couple days later, 1979. I finished a POTS ticket in Idyllwild. I'm 60 years old. Connection date on this customer was 1968. I drove away from that customer's house, and I thought to myself, "I was five years old when this customer was put in
service."

This service has been working for 55 years.
And you know why? It is PUC regulated.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.
ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Danielle Nelson.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER NELSON

Good afternoon. My name is Danielle Nelson, D-a-n-i-e-l-l-e N-e-l-s-o-n.

I serve as the Executive Director of the Janet Goskey Senior and Disabled Center located in Riverside.
Our center is dedicated to enhancing the lives of the 100,000 seniors that we welcome every year.

I'm here today to express support for AT&T's COLR application. Our senior community has embraced the transition to modern technology readily adopting cell phones and accessing the internet.

AT&T has played a crucial role in this transition by offering digital literacy classes and educating our patrons about the affordable connectivity program. While some of our members still rely on landlines, I'm pleased to know that AT&T is committed to inclusivity ensuring that no one is left behind. If any of our seniors lack alternatives, AT&T pledges to
continue serving them.

Based on our valuable partnership with AT&T, I'm confident in their dedication to supporting our seniors throughout this trip -- transition. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Kevin Hernandez.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HERNANDEZ

Hi there, your Honor, Commish (sic). My name is Kevin Hernandez, K-e-v-i-n H-e-r-n-a-n-d-e-z, and I oppose AT&T's removal of Carrier of Last Resort simply because I have been a technician.

I have worked in the rural areas. And the number one thing a lot of people tell me, the elderly community, is that this is their lifeline. This is how they get ahold of their doctor, their prescriptions, they make calls to their family. This is the only way they have the ability to communicate to the outside world. Being removed from that is just -- you're just abandoning these people.

And to everyone thinking that AT&T being able to remove themselves from here and somehow come up with broadband for all these other areas, it's -- you're barking up the wrong tree. You're saying the wrong thing to the wrong people. You need to be talking to the commissioner telling him he needs to mandate
broadband for every Californian here. That's what they need to do not remove and sacrifice people whose lifeline this is. And that's it.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Andrea Johnson.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER JOHNSON

Hi. I'm Andrea Johnson. I hate public speaking, but I feel it was -- this is important.

A-n-d-r-e-a J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

I'm a certified professional organizer in Northern California. In the 8 years of my career in this work, I have served many homes and businesses in Alameda, Contra Costa, Sonoma, and Napa counties. Part of what I do is help people prepare themselves and their families for self-reliance in an emergency. I have been trained for and the volunteer of the Community Emergency Response Team, aka CERT, of Alameda and Contra Costa communities.

In this training and what I have passed down to my clients is to know where your nearest landline location -- connection is located. It's actually the third line to fill out on the very first form I have them complete.

To state the obvious, the people of California are vulnerable to dangerous earthquakes, wildfires,
fires resulting from earthquakes, and the loss of power resulting from these disasters. I have been taught and teach the families that I work with that a copper-wired landline connection is a critical component of the Emergency Response Network policy. See, I'm really bad at this.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're okay.

SPEAKER NELSON: And it provides power and connectivity when the electricity is down. We still need this system. I also work a lot with senior citizens. I can assure you that the landline is not solely nostalgic, but it is what they know how to -- and more often than not, what they are willing to use.

AT&T is a massive communication company and brand. Many companies align their branding with a cause and donate proceeds to non-profits of which they would -- they are aligned. This, of course, builds a reputation and strengthens their business.

Wouldn't it be wise for AT&T to align themself with community safety?

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Jason Paguio. And I apologize if I mispronounced your last name.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PAGUIO

Close enough. Good afternoon. Good afternoon,
your Honor and Honorable Commissioner. My name is Jason Paguio, J-a-s-o-n P-a-g-u-i-o. I'm the president and CEO of the Asian Business Association of San Diego and a California Commissioner on the Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs.

My organization provides specialist outreach to hard-to-reach communities and technical assistance at no coast to minority-owned small businesses -- to any small business -- seeking support. We were a lifeline for many of our disadvantaged business enterprises throughout the global pandemic who experienced language and cultural barriers, particularly with regard to digital equity access and the things that would provide them the resources during the very difficult time.

We strongly support the modernization of our infrastructure, particularly for companies like AT&T who can help our communities not just for today, but to allow for the investments for the future. We owe it to our kids and to our grandkids for this.

We're looking down the hole of a budget -- the extreme budget in the state of California, and we have invested in infrastructure for over 50 to a hundred years, and this is no different. We need to ensure that no community, especially our most diverse, are not left behind with technology that continually looks forward.
Thank you for your time.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Samuel Turley.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER TURLEY

Hello, everyone. My name is Samuel Turley spelled S-a-m-u-e-l, last name T-u-r-l-e-y.

Thank you all for hosting this meeting and for having us here today. Thank you for picking Indio because it's ten minutes from where I live in La Quinta, so I appreciate that.

So as I said, my name is Samuel Turley. I'm a civic engagement associate with Equality California, which is the nation's largest statewide LGBTQ civil rights organization, and I'm here today to support AT&T's application because we need a path forward in modernizing networks in California because it's an important part of bridging the digital divide.

The concerns you're hearing from folks today are valid, but the important thing is we figure out how to move forward. That's how we make sure people are connected.

I myself was born and raised in a rural community in northern Idaho. We have a population of about 1,200 people. When I was in elementary school, middle school we actually had to wait an additional six
months to have an internet tower installed so that we
could be connected to the internet and gain Wi-Fi. We
had landlines growing up, but that went out the door the
minute we got access to that Wi-Fi and were able to
connect to the wider world.

That new connection gave my family the tools to
fuel and fully participate in not only the economy, but
also be connected to our friends and family across the
country. And as an LGBTQ youth, that access gave me the
ability to learn more about my identity and to realize
that I wasn't alone. Connectivity is the key to
community, and today people make friends, create
community, and find support near and far thanks to the
access and convenience of cell phones and broadband.

Looking at this thru an LGBTQ+ lens, technology
unites our communities and individual voices by helping
people connect across vast geographic distances, find
support, ignite community, share information, and reduce
isolation.

Building out this modern network helps to
ensure that LGBTQ+ youth in crisis can immediately
connect with trained expert support professionals. For
all these reasons and more, I enthusiastically support
AT&T's application. Thank you. Have a good rest of
your day.
ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Susan Neely.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER NEELY

Good afternoon, your Honor and Commissioner.

My name is Susan Neely, Susan, S-u-s-a-n N-e-e-l-y. I'm from San Clemente, California, Orange County. I'm here to really tell you about me because I am so against no landlines. You have no idea. I did work for General Telephone. I did work for General Telephone when the decision was made to deregulate. It was a horrible decision then in my opinion. We were told it was going to reduce costs because there would be so much competition. How'd that work out?

I was paying $4.65 for a private line and now I'm paying a hundred. So another thing is cell phones do not accommodate a home. They cannot have an extension telephone on them. They are an incredible safety factor. And as an example, I have a good friend whose kids took their parents' landline out, and five months later mom fell, broke her hip in two places because she didn't know where her cell phone was but it was ringing. And she had five phones before. She couldn't have that. She's been through two surgeries. She's in her late 80s. I mean, I don't care. She's just one person, but every person counts.
As far as I'm concerned, I think you should be mandating AT&T to bucket up and to start giving the service that at General Telephone we were required on a two-hour out-of-service to have our customers back in service. I'll bet most of these people in this room do not even -- are not even aware of that. So that's really all I have to say. I am so against it.

And, yes, I've been writing -- and another thing -- I'm going to say one more thing. Sorry. When I got this notice, I called AT&T, and I called AT&T about five times. I finally called their corporate office. I couldn't get anywhere, so I called the PUC. The PUC had somebody from AT&T's executive office call me just to learn a little bit about what this was all about. It's incredible. The service from AT&T is terrible. I wish somebody with some, you know, work ethics would buy them. But that's it. Thanks.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Peter O'Brien.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER O'BRIEN

Good afternoon, your Honor and Honorable Commissioner. My name is Peter O'Brien, that's P-e-t-e-r O apostrophe B-r-i-e-n. My name is Peter O'Brien, as I say, and, unlike some, I'm happy to say I'm a 25-year AT&T employee, and I'm president of CWA
Local 9510.

When I started with AT&T, or Pac Bell as it was then known, the phone -- as it was then known, we worked for the phone company, and we were proud of the public service aspect of our jobs.

Since then, we've been rebranded as an internet provider, a tech company, an entertainment company, and who knows what next. I see this relinquishment by AT&T -- I see this as a relinquishment by AT&T of its public responsibilities. This is being done in the name of profit over people, often people who are most economically deprived in the state.

This is also a matter of job security for my members who take pride in supporting the communities from which AT&T is attempting to extract itself. Thank you for listening, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this important issue.

ALJ GLEGOLA: So that concludes everyone who is signed up to speak. Does anybody else want to speak? If you do, please come to the podium, please state your name and spell it and offer your comments.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ZEIDER

Stephen, S-t-e-p-h-e-n, Zeider, Z-e-i-d-e-r.

I've done that a lot. I really haven't followed this issue. I came with a friend. But I don't understand
how it is that you cannot advance your broadband stuff
and why that requires you to give up the landlines.

Many people have said, you know -- you know,
they're broadband. I don't do this stuff. I go in my
garage and I read books and that's all I do, but I don't
see why you can't do both. Costs, yes, but that's why
it's a public utility. It's not a -- it's a public
utility, not private.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Is there anyone else that wants
to speak? Please come up. Please state your name and
spell it.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BARONOWSKI

My name is Gary Baronowski. That's
B-a-r-o-n-o-w-s-k-i.

Now, you guys are just the Utilities
Commission. You're not AT&T. Okay. AT&T was split up
because of being anti-trust violation, and they managed
to re-control companies and buy it all back by Pac Bell.

I would say it's in your hands not to let AT&T
going away with this for control. That's what they want.
They want control again, and to pick their prices up. I
know they will. Don't let them off the hook like you do
with the power companies. Don't let AT&T go. Do not
let them split up -- or hold them to the landline. They
want to buy it all up. Keep on it because they're still
in violation of anti-trust laws by buying everything back up. That's all I got to say.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Does anyone else want to speak? Please approach the podium, state your name and spell it, please.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER NEIGHBORS

Daniel Neighbors, Neighbors, N-e-i-g-h-b-o-r-s. I'm a technician and I've had the pleasure of installing POTS service, as well as broadband service, across-the-board for many different sectors of our society from the underserved population to those that I would consider to be, well, well-endowed.

But I've seen over the years of my service a decline in POTS service, but I've always felt that it is not because there wasn't a need for it. It's mainly because of the way the cell structure is of the company. So many customers will call in and say they want a landline, and what they will end up with is a VoIP line. And they don't know the difference between a POTS line and a VoIP line until the power goes out, and their old phone used to work during the power outage, and now their corded phone doesn't work anymore. And back-up batteries are no longer being provided to those customers as well.

Currently if you go into a store and you try to
purchase a phone service through a brick-and-mortar place, they are not selling you phone service. They're referring you out either to another provider or asking you to call into the 1-800 number. But they will quickly sign you up for a cell phone, if one is available for you, or any other form of fiber optic service or any other broadband service. But the phone section for a long time has been dwindling.

So I find it very interesting that for a long time we have not been maintaining that plant. We have made it slightly more difficult for customers to get that phone service, and then they petition to have this COLR relief. So the numbers could show that, oh, less people are using the service or want the service, although it is more difficult for them to get the service or have to jump through more hoops in order to get that service or pay more for it.

And I'm sure prior to even filing for this, that they pushed heavily for education on the legislative front to try to teach and instruct mayors, counsel members, and whoever else, that this is coming down the pipeline, and this is what we want to do, and so that when it goes this way, and now let's go ahead and file for COLR relief as well.

So I feel like it is a long-time strategy of
theirs and they have always wanted to get out of this. It just really puts those people that currently are on the service for POTS service at a real disadvantage because I've been out to those places. I've been to -- trying to get other people -- they couldn't get the VoIP right because they couldn't port the number over, but they still want the POTS or they're elderly and they just -- they have no other options. And so because of that, I'm totally not in support of this COLR relief.

Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. If we have other speakers, please come forward, state your name and spell it.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LUJAN

Hi. My name is Anthony Lujan, A-n-t-h-o-n-y L-u-j-a-n. Today marks my anniversary working for AT&T for 16 years. I remember -- listening to everybody speak, it dawns on me that I remember a customer -- an elderly customer -- we had some wind storms which, we're currently experiencing now, knocking down the power lines, and they had the VoIP services. And because AT&T does not provide the back-up batteries for them, they had no service.

Unfortunately one of my customers had a heart attack and the customer was infuriated with AT&T running...
out -- it was also raining -- yelling and screaming because her cell phone had died because they didn't have a charge. They couldn't make any phone calls. And she was -- she didn't even know what to do. She was screaming outside for help for someone to call 911.

When I showed up the next day to fix the line, I told her with the -- because of the heart monitor that was monitoring her husband, they could not get the -- use the service that they had, the VoIP line that they had. So what ended up happening is we ended up putting them back on POTS so if the power went out, at least they could make a phone call to call 911. They could still use their service to monitor their heart.

I felt like that story needs to be told because there are many others that are probably out there that are going through the same thing. So with that being said, I oppose what AT&T is trying to do. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you. Is there anyone else who wants to speak?

(No response.)

Commissioner Reynolds, do you have any concluding remarks?

COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: I want to offer my thanks and appreciation to everyone for taking valuable time out of their days to come and share their views
with us. It's very valuable to the PUC to understand
the views of -- views and concerns of customers. We
appreciate you attending this and other public
participation hearings. We will take into account all
your comments as we're proceeding through these matters.

Once again, thank you so much. I appreciate
having a chance to be with you today.

ALJ GLEGOLA: We could not have done this
without the help of our court reporters, the City of
Indio, the staff at Public Advisors. I just want to
thank everyone who came.

This concludes our 2:00 p.m. public
participation hearing. We're adjourned and off the
record.

(At the hour of 3:24 p.m., a recess was taken
until 6:02 p.m.)

* * * * *
ALJ GLEGOLA: We will be on the record. The Commission will please come to order.

Today is March 14th, 2024, and this is the time and place for the second of two public participation hearings on two proceedings being reviewed by the California Public Utilities Commission.

The first proceeding is Application 23-03-002. This is the application of AT&T California to withdraw its eligible telecommunications carrier designation.

The second application is Application 23-03-003. This is the application of AT&T California to withdraw as a carrier of last resort from much of its service territory.

Today's public participation hearings, or PPHs as we call them, are being held in Indio City Council chambers. I very much want to thank the City of Indio for allowing us to use this room today.

Previously, we had two PPHs in Clovis and Ukiah, and on Tuesday, we will have two remote PPHs where folks will be able to call in.

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. I also want to make sure that everyone in attendance understands that the purpose of today's meeting is to hear from the public on these applications.

No action has been taken or will be taken today. Commissioner Reynolds will discuss the procedural schedule a bit later.

My name is Thomas J. Glegola. I am the assigned administrative law judge, or ALJ, for this proceeding. Honorable John Reynolds is the assigned commissioner.

Commissioner Reynolds, do you wish to make any opening remarks?

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

Good evening, everyone. I am John Reynolds, one of the five commissioners of the California Public Utilities Commission. I'm going to talk a little bit about the PUC and these proceedings before we get started in hearing from you. For those of you who were with us this afternoon, I apologize for any repetition.

I would like to echo the judge's thanks, first off, to the City of Indio for hosting us. It's wonderful to be here with you all. Thank you for joining us this evening and taking valuable time from
your days. And thank you to our staff for all the
effort you've put in to making these hearings possible.

I'm going to start by talking a little bit
about the Public Utilities Commission. The CPUC, or the
Commission, is the regulatory agency for all of
California's investor-owned public utilities spanning
the energy, water, and telecommunications industries.
The Commission is headed by five commissioners, with
each commissioner serving a six-year standard term. As
a commissioner, I'm assigned to a wide variety of cases,
including these two requests by AT&T. So now I'm going
to talk a little bit about these two requests.

AT&T has come before the CPUC for two separate
requests.

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

Second, we have AT&T's request for relief from
its carrier of last resort obligation, also known as the
COLR; and we'll use those two terms interchangeably. A
COLR is a telecommunications service provider that stands ready to provide basic telephone service, commonly landline telephone service, to any customer requesting such service within a specified area. AT&T is the designated COLR in many parts of the state, and is the largest COLR in California. Where AT&T is the default basic telephone service provider, it must provide basic telephone service to any potential customer in that service territory.

When we talk about basic telephone service, I do want to emphasize that this does not necessarily mean that your particular phone service is basic service or that it is provided by the landline copper or by a fiber-optic wireline. Your phone service, for example, may be provided by Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP.

We're here today for a public participation hearing. The purpose of a public participation hearing is for the Commission to hear from you, from customers, and concerned Californians about proceedings before the PUC. Today's public comments, in addition to the comments made in all of our public participation hearings over recent weeks, will help the Commission evaluate AT&T's requests in both cases. It is crucial to our decision-making process that we hear from
customers on the issues before us today, and I want to
thank all of you for coming to our hearing this evening.

I'm going to talk briefly about the procedural
posture of these cases, where are we at today. After
the public participation hearings conclude on March 19th
in the eligible telecommunications carrier case, Judge
Glegola will hold evidentiary hearings at the
Commission's San Francisco hearing rooms. After
hearings, AT&T and other active parties to the cases
will file briefs. After that process, Judge Glegola
will issue a proposed decision for the Commission to
consider at one of its official voting meetings, and our
current schedule provides for that to happen later this
year. In the COLR proceeding, we still have dates to
set for everything that will occur subsequent to these
hearings in that case. No decision has yet been made
about AT&T's requests. AT&T has made these requests,
but no changes can occur without a vote on a proposed
decision supported by a majority of the five
commissioners.

With that, I'm looking forward to hearing from
you all this evening, and I will turn it back to Judge
Glegola.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Commissioner.

Commissioner Reynolds provided a very high
level overview. If you would like more details about
the applications, a facts sheet should be available on
the table outside, and you can also go to the following
website: www.cpuc.ca.gov/pph. Additionally, AT&T
should have mailed notice of its COLR application to all
landline customers. This is both customers of plain old
telephone service as well as those that use Voice over
the Internet Protocol service.

Now we will turn to the public comment portion
of our meeting. Your comments will help the Commission
gather information to determine whether to grant,
reject, or modify these applications. In addition to
considering the comments received here today, we will
also consider all comments that have been submitted
electronically or by other means in this proceeding.
The last time I looked, we had received over 5,000
comments on these two applications.

If you would like to provide public comments
today, you can do so by signing up with our Public
Advisor's Office. The table is located just outside.
And I note that the last time I looked at the list,
there was about six people. So if you want to sign up,
by all means.

I also -- if I could just ask our Public
Advisor's folks to -- oh, no. I have it now. I was
having some technical issues with -- with the list.

   Before we hear from you, I'll just quickly go
over some ground rules. Court reporters will be
transcribing everything that is said here today. Please
remember to speak slowly and clearly; otherwise, our
court reporters will have a difficult time of taking
down everything that is said here today. Only one
person at a time can speak, as the court reporters are
unable to transcribe an accurate record when more than
one person is speaking. We will hear you best if you
speak directly into the microphone, and before beginning
your comment, please state and spell your name. To
ensure we have an accurate record, it may be necessary
for the court reporter or myself to interrupt the
speaker. We really don't like doing that, and apologize
if we do; but, that's how we get a -- a -- a clean
transcript.

   After this public participation hearing is
over, the court reporters will prepare a written
transcript of this hearing. The transcript will be
provided to myself and the five commissioners, and also
will be publicly available and posted on the docket card
for these proceedings.

   And as a final reminder to those who wish to
speak, but may not have already signed up, please sign
up on the list just outside the door.

With that, we are ready to start hearing from members of the public.

And our first speaker is Scott Armstrong.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ARMSTRONG

Good evening again, Judge Glegola and Commissioner Reynolds. I'm Scott Armstrong, S-c-o-t-t A-r-m-s-t-r-o-n-g. And I am the regional broadband coordinator. I'm with Inyo County, but I serve both Inyo and Mono counties.

I'd like to read a couple of sections from AT&T's application for relief from carrier of last resort obligations and highlight why a county and the residents impacted feel that this application is problematic, and why this -- why we strongly oppose this application in its current form.

AT&T California's COLR duties to existing customers will continue where there is no voice alternative to POTS, such as fixed broadband, VoIP, or mobile -- fixed broadband, VoIP, or mobile wireless.

For those few customers who are generally located in remote -- remote areas, AT&T California would continue to provide POTS, subject to existing tariff, until such time as an alternative becomes available, whether provided by AT&T or another service provider.
The other text I want to read is,
significantly, AT&T California is not seeking total COLR relief at this time. For the few customers who are currently -- who currently lack an alternative to AT&T California's basic voice service, AT&T California would continue offering voice service on the same terms as before, until an alternative becomes available.

AT and -- AT&T has not acknowledged in our application areas, areas in Inyo County or other regions that don't have an alternative to AT&T service. They have, however, published a map that indicates the areas that AT&T's seeking to withdraw from as COLR, either in response to an application or through a streamlined advice letter process.

Communities in AT -- I'll get the names of your communities. Communities in Inyo County that AT&T California seeks to withdraw from as COLR include Death Valley Junction, Shoshone, and Tecopa. Communities in Inyo and A -- Inyo County that AT&T California is seeking to withdraw from as a COLR in the future through a streamlined advice letter process include Stovepipe Wells, Park Village at Kettle Creek, Furnace Creek, and the Timbisha Shoshone Village at Furnace Creek. None of these areas have reliable voice alternatives to the current AT&T landline. None of these areas have a voice
alternative that will function during outage, a power outage. Our residents in Death Valley need to be able to pick up a phone and reach emergency services when the power goes out when it's 120 degrees outside.

While Inyo County strongly opposes AT&T's request for relief from COLR obligations, we understand we're not the decision-makers. If the application is considered for approval, we strongly suggest that the conditions in the application be modified to include these two points:

First, AT&T must identify those areas who do not currently have an alternative in place to assure that community -- assure that communities have -- need not worry about being able to place a phone call.

Secondly, any claim that a voice alternative exists should include something along the lines of a challenge process that includes community involvement.

And with that, I -- I'll end my -- my comments.

(Applause.)

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is -- and I am going to apologize ahead of time, because I'm certain I'm going to not pronounce your name correctly; but, it is -- I believe it's Mychaela Falconia.

///
STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FALCONIA

Yes. Thank you, your Honor, for allowing me to speak today. And indeed, my name is Mychaela Falconia, M-y-c-h-a-e-l-a, Falcon, like the bird, i-a at the end. And (indecipherable).

So I am speaking also in opposition to AT&T's application to withdraw from COLR status. I live in the town of Ramona, California. I am currently a AT&T POTS copper line customer. I've been with them since the Pacific Bell. I am very happy right now to have a copper line that is served from a 5ESS switch in wire center RMNCA 11. And yes, I know all of these things, because I am a professional telecommunications engineer, and as a professional telecommunications engineer with a strong love for retro technology, I oppose the -- the removal of POTS. Right now, I am paying an insanely high monthly amount just to keep my POTS line, even though my PO -- you know, the $60 or so I pay every month for my POTS line; that's like, what, three times the cost of another service from any other technology. And yet, I continue paying this price just to keep the copper -- copper POTS coming out of a real 5ESS switch. And I want this preserved. I want the POTS preserved. I want the 5ESS switch preserved. I want the DTM network behind this 5ESS switch, if there is one. I
want that preserved, as well.

And for -- people ask me why. Just because, you know, I fall from Mars or something? No. The reason why is because the other technologies are so horrible and unacceptable. For example, typically, they say, "Why don't you go to wireless?" The problem with wireless is AT&T and Verizon -- the only type of wireless they provide is a technology called VoLTE, which I find reprehensible and intolerable. I will never be able to use a VoLTE phone. I drove two and a half hours one way just to come here and make this public comment. If, on the way back, driving two and a half hours back, if I go to get into a horrible accident, I would rather bleed out to death on the side of the road than use a VoLTE phone to call for help, because the problem with VoLTE, it is impossible to use a VoLTE phone without using a chip that was made by Qualcomm or some other company that's just as evil as Qualcomm. I cannot use those technologies. The only type of cell phone I can use is the one I'm holding and waving in my hand, and that is a GSM 2G phone. Well, the problem with GSM 2G, AT&T killed -- shut down theirs back in 2017. Right now, T-Mobile is the only 2G service provider left; but, they are also threatening to shut it down. And so, if T-Mobile delivers on their
threat to shut down 2G, then I will no longer have a
working cell phone of any kind, at least other than when
I go to Mexico, because they actually have a -- surprise
surprise, a real GSM 2G network.

So -- so, now also, being a professional
telecommunications engineer, I know how to run my own
systems. At my house, I have my own personal cell that
I just operate for my own enjoyment, you know, in
unlicensed spectrum. I -- I know how to do all of those
things. But, you know, I have Internet connection
through Cox, which is, you know, pretty high speed, 100
megabits. I have all of those things. But, in order to
operate my own VoIP systems -- which, yes, I have -- in
order to operate my own -- my own cell phone systems --
which, yes, I have -- in order to do all of those
things, there are so many moving parts. So many pieces
can break, not to mention power outages and everything
else. So I use my POTS landline as fallback.

You know, a few weeks ago, me and my partner
came back from a week-long cruise. I came back home
from -- from vacation; everything is down. You know,
some -- something was not work -- working in my Cox
Internet. I had to call Cox technical support to fix
it. How else am I going to call them, unless I have
that -- that -- that copper POTS landline? There is no
other way. That POTS landline is the only way I can
call outside people for help when, you know, my own
technology is, you know, in need of some wanted help.
So this is just, you know, a number reasons.

Then, of course, there are more mainstream
reasons that people other than me would also hopefully
agree with, like, for example, the fact that most cell
sites don't have generators. I -- I think some do, but
most do not, simply just -- a typical cell -- cell site,
there's usually no place to put a generator, a fuel
tank; so typically, they are on a lonely battery backup.
And so the battery backup of a cell site lasts, what,
two hours, four hours, maybe, at max.

The same thing goes with fiber. All those
cabinets that people out on the streets that serve
U-verse, all those cabinets that convert from fiber to
copper or somewhere on the street outside the city hall,
yeah, they also have batteries; but, what, those
batteries are going to last two hours, four hours max,
whereas the giant bank of lead acid batteries in the
basement underneath the city hall is like what? I've
been told it's two weeks of battery backup. I don't
know how. Maybe -- maybe it's not three days, maybe
it's less; but still, probably it's measured in days,
and not hours. So when the power goes out, would you
rather have two hours of battery backup, would you
rather have at least several days of battery backup, if
not two weeks? Let's see, everybody who is potentially
affected by disasters or power outage, which is -- yeah.
So it's probably beyond dispute.

So the -- these are all of my oppositions.
But, just like the gentleman who spoke before me here
acknowledged that he doesn't have the power to make
decisions, ultimately, it's somebody else's decision.

So additional request I would like to make,
which is -- would be very unconventional, but if you
grant AT&T's application to withdraw from COLR, and
therefore, give them the green light to kill POTS and to
dismantle of IBSS, please impose the requirement that
they first -- as opposed to scrapping it that they offer
it for sale. Because in my town, in the town of Ramona,
California, 92065, wire center RMNCA 11, we -- we have a
nonprofit organization in the process of being formed,
with me as one of the founders, and so we -- we would
love to -- to take over the burden from AT&T. So if
AT&T thinks that maintaining copper infrastructure's too
much work, nobody wants it, it's legacy, obsolete,
whatever, whatever, whatever, fine. Let us have it.
Let us take over the ownership of physical control of
the 5ESS switch and all of the copper wires in the town
of Ramona, California, and let us maintain them on public property on the same poles where they are right now. So this would be, you know -- this would be the second choice. First choice would be to just simply deny the application, and force AT&T to remain COLR. But, if that's not acceptable, a fallback would be let our community nonprofit take over the 2G instead. So thank you for your time.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Maggie McCoricak (sic).

SPEAKER McCORMACK: McCormack.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Okay. Maggie McCormack.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER McCORMACK

As you stated, it is Maggie McCormack, M-a-g-g-i-e M-c-C-o-r-m-a-c-k. Everyone puts an "I."

So I'm a 23-year telephone company employee. I'm from the Communication Workers of Americas, District 9. I came to the 2 o'clock hearing where I heard a lot of individuals misunderstand what we are doing here.

And we're not saying we don't want the advancement of broadband and the advancement of technology. What we are saying is they can coincide together. And the misunderstanding here is they cannot. They can coincide together, and we can protect the
public safety. This is the most misunderstanding, I feel, the public has.

So whether they've been hoaxed into understanding it one way, I'm telling you as a phone company employee, we're told when you call in and we offer you bundles, we don't have bundles for you under copper. We can offer you copper at a higher rate because it pushes you out of copper. We can offer you copper as a standalone at $200 when you paid $59 or $35 or even $4 at one time. We're enticing you to leave because you can't afford it.

So when we talk about areas of low income or high income, they want to get out of the Universal Carrier Service. This is reckless. We have individuals who cannot afford to get out of universal lifeline, and we're gonna ask them to get out of that application?

They can very well -- they have 70 billion -- not million, billion dollars in profit last year. While they can pay their CEOs and their officers bonuses, they can care for this community. This community, these employees, these technicians, we got them those profits. They can -- they can keep their profits and still make sure that they improve the infrastructure of broadband but keep the POTS lines for peoples who need it. This is life.
When there is -- we're in California; there's earthquakes, there's fires, there's rolling outages. The POTS lines are the only things that keep us connected. If you have heart monitors -- unfortunately, we don't like to talk about this. If you're on house arrest, this shows you -- when you're on universal VoIP or whatever, you're out of location. When you're on heart monitors, it can't monitor you the way it's supposed to. It can't send that ping to your pacemaker. That's life, so this is reckless.

I'm extremely opposed. CWA is opposed to these applications, and we're saying, "Let's work together and give the community both." We want you to have broadband, but we want to preserve POTS.

And earlier I heard that AT&T is pledging to keep those individuals on POTS in areas they can improve. They're -- they're pledging to keep those preserved. Well, it's been years, and they've let that copper -- they have got a lot of funds from federal, state funds to keep those copper plants good. They are destroyed.

What about holding them to those. And if they are pledging, then what's the problem with being regulated? They would have no problem with it; right? Because they're going to keep their pledge anyway.
So CWA, Maggie McCormack is extremely opposed to these applications. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Michelle Cates.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CATES

Good evening, and thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Michelle Cates. It's M-i-c-h-e-l-l-e C-a-t-e-s.

I am speaking tonight as the Executive Director of Partners Against Violence, a local non-profit serving San Bernardino and East Riverside County.

Landline service is essential for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence who are reaching out for essential and life-saving services. Cell phone coverage is not reliable in many parts of our communities. And when survivors are seeking support, they should be able to rely on the phone system to connect their call for 24/7 crisis support.

Relief -- removing this reliability would have devastating consequences for the safety and well-being of survivors. It would also create tremendous challenges for the victim's service provider, such as Partners Against Violence, reach shelter from the storm and many other local non-profits providing 24/7 crisis supports.
As advocates supporting survivors and as sexual assault domestic violence advocates, I urge you to reject AT&T's request and ensure that our communities are able to continue accessing reliable landline services. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Elizabeth Romero.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROMERO

Hi. Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Elizabeth Romero, E-l-i-z-a-b-e-t-h R-o-m-e-r-o. This is Aaron, who would like to say hello.

SPEAKER AARON ROMERO: Hello.

SPEAKER ROMERO: Thank you for making these meetings accessible for public participation. I'm here to speak as a Riverside County resident and as an individual, and I'm here to support AT&T's application.

I'm here to give my comments primarily from an education standpoint. During the pandemic, many of our students relied on IP-based and wireless networks that allowed students to participate and take classes from their homes when there were no other options available for in-person instruction. And while I know that some individuals prefer -- and to, as some speakers have
said, require traditional copper landlines for home phone, I'm pleased to hear that AT&T is committed to maintaining those lines in the case if no alternative choices are available.

Having more fiber and improved cell service, especially in rural areas, put our students and families in a much better position today and prepares them for a better tomorrow ensuring that they have accessibility and technology needed to function in today's world.

Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Kristine Linnems.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LINNEMS

Thank you. Good evening. My name is Kristine Linnems, and I serve as the Executive Director for BOMA Inland Empire.

BOMA is an acronym for Building Owners Managers Association, and it is an association that is international. It brings together property managers, building owners, and the service providers for anything that has to do with commercial properties.

On the side of the commercial buildings, one of the most impactful aspects of the traditional copper lines is with regards to the elevator systems. They're very expensive to maintain, and a lot of the
modernization of the elevators has already transitioned to the VoIP system.

So we are here in support of AT&T's COLR application because our members rely upon fiber and 5G to run their buildings.

They are already integrating and preferring the VoIP as their voice services, and we continue to need more fiber and more cell sites in our areas. And I know that we are migrating the elevators to the VoIP with minimal issues. It's been a long time that these services have been provided in the commercial industry, and they're not impactful in the way that the copper lines would oversee the VoIP system. So thank you so much.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much. Those are all the speakers that have signed up.

Does anyone else want to speak that did not sign up?

If you do, please -- please come to the podium and remember to state your name and spell it.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CASTELLANO

Good evening. My name is Richard Castellano, C-a-s-t-e-l-l-a-n-o.

I'm a technician for AT&T for 26 years; right?

And it is clearly -- I was here the first session. I
didn't say anything. I was just listening.

Clearly not everybody understands what's going on here. I understand you guys want stuff for your elevators; correct? Right? Copper lines does the same thing. We are not saying not build.

I'm an AT&T employee. I want them to grow. I want them to have fiber everywhere. It keeps my job. But I also work on copper. I'm a maintenance licenser. That's all I do is work on copper.

So I live in LA and notice, not to be disrespectful, but we're here in Indio in Frontier area. We're here talking about AT&T.

Do you guys know that the nearest AT&T plant is 78 miles away from here? Why is that? Good question; right? Politics plays a big game here. We can't cut wire line.

I live in LA; right? I don't have cell phone service in my house, and I live in LA under AT&T plan. I have -- I have fiber too; right? All right. It works, but I still have my landline, you know? We still need it because in case of an emergency -- like everyone said in the first ones and even here, if there is an emergency, I have dial tone, and my neighbors know I have dial tone. So if there's an issue, guess who comes to my house and picks up the phone to call their loved
ones. Why? Because they know I work for AT&T, and they
know I have a landline, so they come to me because it's
there.

Not everybody else has that issue or has
that -- you know, whatever you want to call it. But
it's a big deal. This is a big deal for me. Like, this
is my job. This is my livelihood. You cut out copper,
and AT&T is going to cut all their work staff in half.
We know this. I work for the local. I work for the
union. Our union attorneys already say if this goes
through, half the locals are going to lose all their
members.

I'm the Secretary Treasurer for 9505; right?
And I only have 600 members. But if this does go
through and you guys approve it, the lawyers for CWA
National already said that half of my locals are going
to be gone, which includes me and my job. So that's a
big deal.

So I like it for, you know, everybody's health
and issues and -- the elderly, yeah. They need that
stuff, you know? I have an older mom too. She is in
her -- like 75 years old. If something happens, what am
I going to say, you know? And the other lady said -- or
I don't know if it was this one or the last one. She
said, "Yeah. She has a cell phone to call; correct?"
But if we have a landline, we have phones everywhere in our house. We have five different lines. We don't have five different cell phones everywhere. We only have one. So what happens if I fall? I know where my phones are at, but I don't know where my cell phone's at. Life or death; right?

I strongly disagree with this. I seriously hope that you vote no. Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much.

Is there anyone else that wishes to speak?

Please state your name and spell it.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER NEELY

Susan Neely, S-u-s-a-n N-e-e-l-y.

I was at the 2 o'clock meeting as well. I totally applaud the last speaker.

A dial-tone line, I -- I don't think most of the world anymore understands that a dial-tone line comes directly from AT&T's central office to my home. There is no electricity. There is no nothing.

And I can remember even when, for instance, Cox Cable came in and everybody said, "Why are you still paying AT&T? It is so much cheaper through Cox."

"That's because you have crappy service. As soon as the power goes out, you are not going to have a telephone."

They didn't believe it.
So education here is paramount. And landlines, there is nothing on this earth that is as perfect as dial tone coming from a cable care (sic) and a line switch in a central office. It just -- it just doesn't happen. And you are right that even in my area where, you know, you would think we would have decent cells, we don't. The beach areas are horrible with -- for cell phones.

And -- and the extension telephones that come off of one phone number -- you know, we're going backwards, guys. We're going backwards.

Remember when we only could get milk and cream out of glass?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

SPEAKER NEELY: We're going backwards. Don't screw up the one thing that's perfect because that service is pretty damn perfect. That's all I have.

Thank you.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Does anyone else wish to speak?

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FIELDS

I was also here earlier, but I can't not say this. Janet Fields, J-a-n, as in Nancy, -e-t; F, as in Frank, -i-e-l-d-s, as in Sam.

I work for the telecom companies. I am on the other end of the hotline. When you call up and your
service doesn't work, you can't process your credit
cards, your business is going down and you're a very
small business, you call me.

I cannot tell you how many times a day I get a
phone call from a small mom and pop business struggling
to make ends meet in this economy who have to pay
hundreds of dollars because somebody talked them into
going to VoIP for their phone lines and everything in
their office. Guess what? It doesn't work. It doesn't
work all the time for faxes. It does not work for 80
percent of the elevators in these buildings. It does
not work for alarm systems.

They charge you copper pricing out an
exorbitant amount of money so that you are tempted to
switch to VoIP. One day, yeah, maybe they will get the
technology right. And yes, there are alarm systems that
do support VoIP. There are elevator systems that
support VoIP. You are talking about carrying out an
entire infrastructure, in a condominium, a hospital,
wherever they happen to have the elevators or they may
need an alarm system. That's not cheap.

You're asking mom and pop businesses to switch
to a 19.99 line because it's awful cheap, but it's gonna
cost you $18,000 for a new POS, a new alarm system.
That doesn't work. It's not ready yet. The system is
not prepared to support all the necessary needs that
VoIP doesn't work for. Copper is vital. Medical
pacemakers, etc. It's not just elevator lines. It's
not just fax lines it doesn't work for. It doesn't work
for a lot of things.

And not everybody has these thousands of
dollars to pull out of their pocket to change their date
of entry or their elevators or their entire fire alarm
system so they can have cheaper lines. It just doesn't
work.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you very much.

Does anyone else wish to speak?

(No response.)

ALJ GLEGOLA: Seeing none, Commissioner
Reynolds, do you have any comments?

COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: I want to thank
everyone again for coming out this evening to share your
thoughts and concerns with us. We mentioned this at the
earlier meeting, but we are hosting virtual public
participation hearings on March 19th. If you have
friends, family, neighbors, or colleagues who have been
unavailable to attend one of our in-person hearings,
please encourage them to join our virtual hearing on the
19th.

More information about that hearing is
available on the CPUC's website at cpuc.ca.gov. The Public Advisor's Office who is here today can also provide information about that hearing.

Thanks again. Thank you to everyone who came out, thank you to our staff for putting on this event, and I will turn it back to Judge Glegola.

ALJ GLEGOLA: Thank you, Commissioner.

This concludes the 6:00 p.m. PPH for Application 23-03-002 and Application 23-03-003. We are adjourned and off the record.

(At the hour of 6:42 p.m., this matter having been continued to Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., the Commission then adjourned.)

* * * * *
BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING

I, ANDREA L. ROSS, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER NO. 7896, IN AND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY ME COMPRISE A FULL, TRUE, AND CORRECT TRANSCRIPT OF THE TESTIMONY AND PROCEEDINGS HELD IN THIS MATTER ON MARCH 14, 2024.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE EVENTS OF THE MATTER OR THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDING.

EXECUTED THIS MARCH 20, 2024.

ANDREA L. ROSS
CSR NO. 7896

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING

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EOANNA KOSTAPAPAS
CSR NO. 13242

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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EXECUTED THIS MARCH 20, 2024.

REBEKAH L. DE ROSA

CSR NO. 8708
March 14, 2024

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