



City of Alameda California

July 20, 2017

The Honorable Assembly Member Rob Bonta
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0018

VIA FAX: (916) 319-2118

Re: Opposition to SB 649 (Hueso), Wireless Telecommunications Facilities

Dear Assembly Member Bonta:

Thank you for your service to our community and our District.

As you know, the City of Alameda is strongly opposed to SB 649. While in favor of advanced technologies and innovations that improve our quality of life, this bill presents three major challenges for our community.

1. SB 649 removes local discretion as to where small cell wireless equipment is placed, which is concerning from environmental, public health, and aesthetic reasons.
2. SB 649 reduces the maximum a City can lease the property for from \$3,000 to \$250. While we understand the existing fee was intended for larger units, \$250 is far too low and eliminating the ability for cities to negotiate public benefits places all communities at a disadvantage.
3. The new technology being installed must be advanced 5G. Otherwise, we are giving away public space to special interests and getting nothing in return.

It is deeply concerning that these changes are being done without public input. As you may know, a few years ago, Alamedans expressed strong concern over potential negative health impacts associated with cell phone towers, resulting in Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) removing all cell phone towers from AUSD buildings. The unknown health risks from small cell equipment could raise similar concerns. The bill as amended would allow for antennas as large as six cubic feet, equipment boxes totaling 35 cubic feet (larger than previous bill version of 21 cubic feet), with no size or quantity limitations for the following equipment: electric meters, pedestals, concealment elements, demarcation boxes, grounding equipment, power transfer switches, and cutoff switches. Furthermore, cities would be unable to impose any meaningful maintenance requirements for the industry's small cells.

Office of the Mayor

2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 320
Alameda, California 94501
510.747.4701

When Alamedans oppose a particular small cell and its visual blight, our City Council will be unable to take them down, move them, or improve their appearance or any other community impacts. And as technology changes in the near-term, the State will not be in a position to refine and respond quickly.

While we remain strongly opposed to this bill, the City of Alameda also urges your support of the following proposed amendments:

- The City must maintain its ability to negotiate leases so they include public benefits, such as network access for police, fire, libraries, and parks.
- The cap on how much cities can negotiate leases for, currently at a mere \$250 (was \$850 under prior version of the bill), be increased to a fair amount.
- The aesthetics of our community will not be compromised by the urban clutter that could result from various carriers each installing their own bulky small cell equipment in the right of way.
- A map, easily available to the public online, document the precise locations where all small cell wireless equipment is installed so that the public may avoid such locations, especially for prolonged time periods.

In summary, the amended bill must be limited to access of 5G technology, as opposed to local deregulation of the entire telecommunications industry. It is in the best interests of all communities to protect and preserve local control from the demands of big spending special interests. We must strike the right balance and the current bill undermines our ability to ensure our residents have a voice and get a fair return for any use of public infrastructure.

While I appreciate that other elected officials have supported this bill, I hope that you, as Assembly Member for the City of Alameda, will join me in standing up to protect Alamedans' interests for a fair and balanced bill. We can have both access to 5G technology and reasonable local control. I'm confident that you have the ability to significantly amend this bill for the protection of Alamedans and Californians.

For the reasons stated above, the City of Alameda strongly opposes SB 649 in its current form.

Again, thank you for your representation of our community on this and other important matters.

Sincerely,



Trish Herrera Spencer
Mayor

THS:mk

cc: Senator Ben Hueso, FAX: (916) 651-4940
Senator Nancy Skinner, FAX: 916-327-1997
Sam Caygill, scaygill@cacities.org