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SAFE TECH 4
SANTA ROSA SAFE CONNECTIONS FOR ALL

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June 1, 2023

Honorable Senator Mike McGuire
Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
State Capitol
1021 O Street, Suite 3350
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Please Oppose AB 965 and AB 1065

Dear Senator McGuire,

EMF Safety Network and Safe Tech for Santa Rosa represent hundreds of California voters in your district.

We thank you for your past service to our local governments as Mayor of Healdsburg and Sonoma County Supervisor. We also thank you for your continued service as our District 2 Senator since 2014. We know you understand the importance of local government control. **Therefore, we request a NO vote or an “abstain” for AB 965 and AB 1065.**

These two bills are a one-two punch. **AB 1065**, derails the public process of planning and implementing the expenditure of the federal dollars on broadband by **hijacking** dollars designated for WIRED broadband. **AB 965**, recklessly speeds up the permitting process for antenna approval so for-profit wireless can carpet areas using the federal dollars.

AB 965 “Local Government: Broadband Permit Applications” (Carrillo) allows wireless companies to intentionally “batch” antenna applications, dumping dozens of them on local governments at once and creating new and unreasonable permitting obligations.

AB 965:

- Increases staff costs for local governments to accommodate the heavier workload.
- Overwhelms local government’s efforts to protect the public health and safety.
- Exceeds FCC rules by creating a **“deemed approved”** remedy for small cell applications that the FCC considered, but declined to approve (and for good reason).

As you know, local governments that have part-time boards are already stretched thin and may not have the capacity to handle the volume of permits that batching will inevitably create. Severe weather, fires, pandemics, and other unavoidable events can delay local government action, with the result that public officials may not have time to properly vet the applications before time runs out.

In addition, wireless antennas catch fire, their supporting structures can fail in high winds, and local officials need time to evaluate the applications for safety specifications and conformity with local and state codes. In many cases, **there will be insufficient time for proper scrutiny of applications to ensure the protection of public health and safety.**

AB 1065, “Communications: California Advanced Services Fund” (Patterson) is a government hand-out to the unregulated and highly profitable wireless industry. It will provide funding for the increasingly massive rollout of wireless installations and take it away from the much safer, more reliable, and energy-efficient option of WIRED internet connections.

- **AB 1065** allows for WIRELESS companies to apply for FFA (Federal Funding Account) grants, money that is intended for last mile WIRED infrastructure.
- CPUC regulators have determined that WIRED connections are technologically superior to wireless and will provide much better access for the unserved and underserved communities.

“The Federal Funding Account (FFA), established by the CPUC according to Senate Bill 156, will fund last mile broadband infrastructure projects to connect unserved and underserved Californians with high-speed broadband service. The FFA has a \$2 billion budget made up of state and federal funds.” <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-implementation-for-california/last-mile-federal-funding-account>

These bills are being promoted as a solution to the digital divide, but this is a cruel hoax. Wireless broadband, especially the kinds of basic services offered to low-income families, is notoriously slow, unreliable, and unable to meet the demands of present and future digital communications. Also, wireless networks are easily hacked, causing security and privacy concerns.

Fiber to the Premises (to each home) offers greater capacity, predictable performance, lower maintenance costs, and a longer technological lifetime than wireless technologies. Fiber service is not degraded by line-of-sight issues and is not affected by capacity issues.

Finally, wireless will set the state back in terms of climate change management because wireless uses a huge amount of energy compared to WIRED broadband.

Thank you for your attention to these bills. **Please oppose AB 965 and AB 1065.**

Sincerely,

Sidnee Cox

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Director, EMF Safety Network

Steering Committee, SafeTech4SantaRosa