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September 14, 2021

Board of Supervisors  
Loudoun County  
1 Harrison St. SE  
Leesburg, VA 20175

re: SPEX-2020-0020 & SPMI-2020-0008, AT&T Morrisonville

To Board of Supervisors:

I am writing to you on behalf of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy in regards to Item 12 AT&T Morrisonville. It is true that there are gaps in cellular phone coverage and broadband internet in parts of Loudoun County. However, there are other alternatives to provide those services to Loudoun County residents that are not expressly prohibited by County policies, ordinances, and regulations. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy concurs with the Planning Commission's and County staff's recommendation that these special exception applications should not be approved.

The policies in the 2019 General Plan, the Strategic Land Use Plan for Telecommunications Facilities, and the Zoning Ordinance all expressly mention protection of our ridgelines to prevent further future degradation of the scenic resources (and thus enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world) such as the proposed monopole.

AT&T has made misleading claims that the only options to provide cell coverage and mobile broadband to the area include a singular monopole option or two monopoles on the parcel they currently own. Other alternatives do exist, they just happen to be on parcels that AT&T does not currently own. Furthermore, AT&T has made misleading characterizations on the public good and benefits this proposed monopole would provide.

- The mobile broadband proposed by this monopole should not be conflated with other high-speed broadband connectivity methods such as fiber, coaxial, fixed wireless, satellite, etc.
- This mobile broadband service would be a temporary fix delivered via smartphones, hot spots, or other mobile devices that may be costly to residents without unlimited data plans, and reduced speeds for congestion-based data management may apply, further diminishing the quality of services provided.

Loudoun County should pursue high-speed broadband internet options, and enhanced cellular coverage, but this proposal is not the best solution to achieve those goals, especially at the expense of environmental and scenic degradation. AT&T would not experience an exceptional hardship if this application would be denied, and they should present options that comply with County policies.

Better solutions should be sought, and the integrity of County policies, ordinances, and regulations should be upheld. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy urges the Board of Supervisors to follow the recommendations of the Planning Commission and County staff, and deny these applications as presented.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Myers  
Executive Director

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