

May 22, 2022

County of Lake
Community Development Department
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Attention: Mr. Eric Porter

Dear Mr. Porter and Community Development Dept.,

We understand there is an application pending before Lake County for approval of a new 150-foot lattice communications tower near the intersection of Highway 20 and Highway 53. The hearing is scheduled for May 26.

Our family owns property directly across Highway 20 from this proposed tower and it will lie directly between the most desirable building location on our property and the lake. Our family home burned down in the Wye Fire in 2012. Should we decide to re-construct a multi-generational family residence or other venture, this tower will clearly be at eye level and a mere .02 miles away from our site.

The Lake County Zoning Ordinance has several requirements regarding where these towers should be located. We believe that the County staff may have overlooked some aspects of those requirements.

Section 21-71(d) of the Zoning Code states:

Wireless communication facilities shall be sited in the least visually obtrusive location possible as determined by the Community Development Director. Facility towers, antennas, buildings and other structures and equipment visible from adjacent residences or public vantage points, shall be designed, located, constructed, painted, screened, fenced, landscaped or otherwise architecturally treated to minimize their appearance and visually blend with the surroundings.

This proposed tower is in full view of our family's homestead, and many public vantage points including Highway 20 and Highway 53, the gateways to Clear Lake. This will not blend with the surroundings. Rather it will be on an open ridgeline in plain view of two major highways.

Section 21.71.8(a)(2) of the Zoning Code states:

Co-location is required when feasible and when it minimizes adverse effects related to land use compatibility, visual resources, public safety and other environmental factors. Co-location is not required when it creates or increases such effects and/or technical evidence demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director that it is not feasible due to physical, spatial, or technological limitations.

Fiscal constraints or competitive conflicts are not considered justifiable reason for not co-locating a new facility where opportunity for co-location exists.

It appears that the applicant and staff are ignoring the fact that there already is an approved tower that will cover the same area, and co-location should be required to avoid a plethora of towers in the same area. The permitted tower that happens to be on our land will be located back from Highway 20 in a much less visually obtrusive spot. It will be placed behind a PG&E transmission tower to be less visible to the traveling public along Highway 53. The developers of this tower tell me they believe there are no physical, spatial or technical limitations to collocation and that they would definitely allow ATT to collocate on this tower at market rate.

Section 21.71.8(a)(3)-(5) of the Zoning Code states:

3. Wireless communication facilities shall not be sited in a way which will create visual clutter or negatively affect view from communities, highways and major collector roads, from Clear Lake or from highly used public areas, such as but not limited to parks and resorts.

Again, the tower will create visual clutter along Highway 20.

4. New communication facilities shall be discouraged on ridge top sites where they will be silhouetted against the sky from communities, highways and major collector roads or from highly used public areas, such as but not limited to parks and resorts.

It seems to us that the County should have informed the applicant that there was a prior permitted site nearby with ample ingress and egress from Highway 20, including ample parking around the facility. As discussed above there are no technical reasons that would require a separate site.

5. Wireless communications facilities shall be screened from any public viewing areas to the maximum extent feasible.

Again, the existing approved site on our property was designed to comply with this (scenic corridor) requirement by moving the site location to a location not visible from Highway 20. Clearly the applicant here has made no such accommodation.

Section 21.71.8(a)(11) of the Zoning Code states:

In instances where the wireless telecommunication facility is located near or in a residential area, or located within a Community Growth Boundary or within one (1) mile of said Boundary, photos shall be submitted of the proposed facility from the nearest residential neighbors. In instances where the wireless communication facility would be visible from a State Highway or County Collector or Arterial Road or from Clear Lake a detailed visual analysis of the facility shall be submitted.

Our land is zoned rural residential and we were never contacted for access to the property to take photos for a simulation of the view from our building site. We would assume that we are the closest residential area that will see the proposed tower from Highway 20, and yet we were never contacted.

Our family has a 59-year history and deep roots in Lake County. We have always tried to follow the rules and do right by our friends and neighbors. That's what we are asking today. Require the applicant to follow the rules adopted by the County, do right by the residents, encourage collocation and cooperation and limit the proliferation of unnecessary towers.

We ask that you deny this application.

Sincerely,

Patsy Thorburn

Cc
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