



MAYOR

*Regina Romero*

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Rusty Bowers  
Speaker of the House  
Arizona House of Representatives  
1700 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Karen Fann  
President of the Senate  
Arizona State Senate  
1700 W. Washington St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Reginald Bolding  
House Minority Leader  
Arizona House of Representatives  
1700 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Rebecca Rios  
Senate Minority Leader  
Arizona State Senate  
1700 W. Washington St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Speaker Bowers and President Fann:

I write to you today on behalf of the Tucson City Council and the over 540,000 residents of the City of Tucson, Arizona's second most populous city.

Tucson, like other Arizona cities, supports the deployment of small cell infrastructure in our city and our state. We recognize the benefits that 5G technology and faster and more robust connections to the internet can bring to Tucson, especially during the pandemic when access to internet is a necessity.

Unfortunately, the rapid deployment of small cell infrastructure enabled by A.R.S. 9-591 through 9-599 is causing unnecessary problems in Tucson, and in other Arizona municipalities. The installation of poles in neighborhoods throughout our city is occurring without public notification and with no public input. In some cases, residents are waking up to loud machinery installing poles in front of their homes while in others, seniors with limited physical abilities are finding new poles in locations that impede their ability to move their garbage containers to and from the street for weekly pickup. In other cases, poles are being installed in locally permitted stormwater basins. Additionally, the installation of some of these poles are permanently damaging the root and branch systems of mature trees that the City has invested resources to maintain. These are a few reasons why it is imperative that residents and their local governments have an opportunity to have input early on in the process in the location of these poles.

Therefore, we respectfully request you to repeal and replace 2017's House Bill 2365 and restore authority for local governments in the decision-making and approval processes for collocation of small cell poles, especially in our public right of ways. At the bare minimum we request your

CITY OF TUCSON

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consideration for a statutory change to direct telecommunications companies to notify residents and local governments of the proposed locations of any poles and related infrastructure prior to the development of engineering plans and before installation.

This would allow residents and local governments to identify potential problems and work with the engineers/installers prior to the arrival of heavy machinery and the commencement of construction work. Currently, when neighbors request the movement of a pole a few feet in one direction or another, installers claim that the locations have already been engineered and “blue staked,” and it is not feasible to go back and resolve any location issues. In most cases, the accommodation sought by neighbors would move a pole a few feet in one direction or another. It would not deny or impede the pole construction.

Neighborhoods, residents, and local governments understand the technical requirements that guide decisions about pole locations. However, when those considerations and decisions are made in private with no community input at all, there are bound to be problems. Here too, we believe that some prior input from residents and local governments can assist the engineers and contribute to better outcomes for all.

We believe these changes are reasonable. They can give residents the ability to help avoid problematic pole placements without delaying infrastructure deployment.

Metro Tucson, with a \$40 billion Gross Municipal Product, and cities across Arizona, are the stewards of large, complex economies and diverse populations. It is our responsibility to balance the needs of businesses and consumers with the need to protect and enhance our residents’ quality of life. We respectfully request that communities and their local governments be included in good faith as partners and allies in building a stronger economy and quality of life for Arizonans. We believe the changes we are requesting present a good opportunity for more partnership with our State Legislature.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued efforts on behalf of Arizona's residents and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Regina Romero', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tucson Mayor Regina Romero

CC:

Tucson City Council

Diana Alarcon – Director, Department of Transportation & Mobility

Andrew Greenhill – Intergovernmental Relations Manager, City of Tucson