



July 22, 2010

Planning Commission
County of Humboldt

Dear Commissioners

On behalf of the California Center for Rural Policy, I am providing input to Chapter 6 Telecommunications of the General Plan Update.

The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) at Humboldt State University conducts research to inform policy, build community, and promote the health and well-being of rural people and environments. We recognize how important broadband is to the future of rural communities which is why we are so pleased that the future Humboldt County General Plan will include a standalone Telecommunication Element.

However, I believe making the following amendments to the draft will help strengthen the plan:

T-G1 Availability:--Telecommunications, including high speed broadband, shall be available to every resident, business and institution in Humboldt County and a price comparable to urban communities.

T-G2 Broadband Access:--A broadband infrastructure that offers redundancy to all communities. All residents, business and institutions should have a minimum speed of broadband, even at times of peak usage, of 3 Megabytes per second for download, and 1 Megabyte per second for upload or they should be considered underserved.

T-G4 Telecommunication Facilities:--The County should undertake a study and environmental view to determine appropriate places to deploy wireless telecommunication facilities that would provide reliable coverage to every community within the county while protecting public health and safety; reducing visual blight; preserving rural character; and protecting scenic, natural and cultural resources. Areas approved in the report should receive expedited and streamlined permitting.

T-P3 Telecommunications Facility Siting—should recognize the county's responsibility to reduce the digital divide. While I support the need to reduce impacts this section should not be used to deny remote communities access to telecommunications including high speed broadband.

T-P4 e-government infrastructure—Continue to expand the County's website and



telecommunications to deliver online as many public services as possible to decrease trips and reduce impacts on the environment. The County shall work towards providing online all policies, plans, ordinances, and information about the jurisdiction.

T-P5 Telecommunications Facilities within the County Right-of-Way—Telecommunications installers shall size underground and overhead facilities to accommodate future expansion, changes in technology. The County should not give right-of-way access to providers that pass through underserved communities without providing them services. The County shall require providers using its right-of-ways to agree to adhere to the principal of net neutrality or unfiltered access to internet information.

T-P6 Telecommuting—not just businesses any upgrading of internet telecommunications should be considered principally permitted.

T-P7 Broadband Deployment—Work regionally to promote provisions of broadband infrastructure in all communities. Work the other jurisdictions to adopt countywide installation guidelines and a “one stop” permit.

T-P14 Wireless “Hot Spots”—should be principally permitted if providing free service to the community

T-IM5 Public Conduit—Work with other local and state jurisdictions to develop a standard for installing publicly owned telecommunications conduit as part of every capital construction project...

Thank you for considering making these changes. If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Connie Stewart
Executive Director