



Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District

March 20, 2024

California Public Utilities Commission
Ms. Alice Busching Reynolds, President
300 Capitol Mall, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA. 95814

Dear Ms. Busching Reynolds,

I am the writing on behalf of the constituents of Kensington who are served by the Kensington Police Protection & Community Services District (KPPCSD) regarding the application from AT&T to discontinue providing landline (copper wire / POTS) service in California. We are concerned that, in the event of a disaster, residents of Kensington could be cut off from communication with local emergency services. Kensington has been designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The risk of wildfire is, therefore, significant and communicating with residents during a wildfire event is critical to saving lives. Relying solely on mobile networks to communicate evacuation orders is problematic. As you know, on February 22, 2024, AT&T experienced a complete shutdown of their cellular service which emphasizes the need as to keep landline services for public safety.

Landlines are known for their reliability, especially during emergencies or natural disasters. Unlike mobile networks, landlines are less prone to disruptions caused by network congestion or power outages. Although the hard-wired service can experience an issue, the duration and frequency of such outages are usually lower compared to mobile networks.

Mobile networks do not provide good indoor coverage in certain parts of Kensington and many residents rely on their WiFi system to obtain reliable coverage. Landlines, on the other hand, have wider coverage and can often be relied upon in areas where mobile signals are weak or unreliable.

Landlines are directly connected to emergency services, making it easier for them to trace the resident's location in case of an emergency call. This can be crucial when you are unable to provide your exact location or if you are in a situation where every second counts. This is particularly important in the case of young children who are generally taught to call 911 for help using a landline rather than a cell phone that may be difficult for them to unlock.

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In closing, Landlines can still function during power outages as they are powered by the telephone line itself. On the other hand, mobile phones require battery power and may not be usable if the battery is drained and there is no way to recharge it.

I urge you to reject AT&T's application as submitted until a comprehensive state-wide assessment can be completed.

Sincerely,

David P. Spath, President
Kensington Police Protection & Community Services District

cc: Assembly Member Buffy Wicks
State Senator Nancy Skinner
Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia