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October 3, 2022

Mr. Chris Kehoe  
Director, Department of Planning and Community Development  
Town of Cortlandt  
1 Heady Street  
Cortlandt Manor, New York 10567

Dear Mr. Kehoe,

On behalf of many residents of the Town of Cortlandt, we hereby submit our letter of opposition regarding the 140-foot cell tower proposed for a residential area at the entry of Blue Mountain. Towers like these pose critical fire and safety issues that cannot be ignored.

The fall zone of this proposed cell tower encompasses residential structures, vehicles and a recreational area endangering everyone in the vicinity. As the severity of storms increases due to a changing climate, the siting of such large and potentially dangerous infrastructure in a residential area proximate to homes and an area that is well known for its active public use by adults and children for hiking and other recreational activities is clearly inappropriate.

The fire risk associated with telecommunications towers is a growing concern in many communities. Cell tower antennas are electrical devices that can and do overheat, fail and catch fire. However, the telecommunications industry is exempt from fundamental electrical codes at the federal, state and county levels. Electrical fires cannot be addressed by conventional methods since touching a cell tower with water can risk electrocution. Power to the cell tower must be shut off, and that could consume critical minutes or even hours as utilities are notified and the proper shut-off location is determined. You should be aware that telecommunications infrastructure was found to be involved in the ignition of several major fires, including the Malibu Canyon Fire in California which burned over 900,000 acres.

In 2018, the MTA removed a cell tower constructed at the Tarrytown Metro North station due to the immediate proximity of an apartment building and adjacent children's playground located in the fall zone. Local and state public officials as well as residents expressed serious safety concerns, which finally led to the cell tower's removal. And just a few weeks ago in Jakarta, Indonesia, a truck hit a cell tower causing its collapse and killing 10 people including 7 children and injuring 20 other individuals. The cell tower was sited adjacent to school property where children were playing outdoors.

Finally, the alarming rise in extreme weather events including those involving exceedingly high winds and gusts, call for public officials to make every effort to ensure that these cell towers are sited away from areas where residents live, play and learn.

We believe it is incumbent on the site developer to explore an alternate location in a non-residential area and provide documentation that there is a significant gap in cell service that must be filled. Please note the recent court decision (*ExteNet Systems v. Village of Flower Hill*) in which the court held that the 1996 Telecommunications Law applied only to personal wireless services such as talk and text, not the additional enhanced services that wireless companies would like to provide.

For these reasons we strongly urge the Town of Cortlandt to reject the cell tower application for this sensitive location and urge exploration of an alternate site.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.A. Wood', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Douglas A. Wood  
Founder and National Director

DW:nl