



COUNTY OF SISKIYOU

Board of Supervisors

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April 15, 2025

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5520
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 470 – OPPOSE - As Amended March 17, 2025

Dear Assembly Member McKinnor:

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors writes to express our opposition to Assembly Bill 470. This legislation threatens essential telecommunications services and will significantly impact rural and underserved communities by phasing out reliable and affordable access to basic telephone service.

Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) service providers ensure that all residents, especially those without dependable or affordable connectivity options, have access to fundamental telephone services. Regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), these providers are required to maintain key consumer protections, such as free 9-1-1 access and discounted rates through the Lifeline program. Most importantly, COLR providers must offer service to all requesting residents, including those in new housing developments and post-disaster recovery situations. In contrast, non-COLR providers, such as wireless companies, have no such obligations and can cease service without notice, leaving communities with unreliable options.

The majority of Siskiyou County lies within a Tier 2 or Tier 3 High Fire Threat zone, and many of these areas depend on landline or internet-based warning and alert platforms. To date, copper phone lines have been reliable and essential for our landline-dependent residents. If copper lines were removed without adequate replacement, communication with these areas would be severely compromised.

AB 470 would allow COLR providers to unilaterally abandon their responsibilities by simply notifying the CPUC that, in their assessment, an area has alternative voice services. This self-assessment process lacks critical oversight and creates a financial incentive for monopolies to disengage from service provision, potentially leaving entire communities without guaranteed telephone access. The CPUC plays a crucial role in maintaining safe, reliable utilities at fair rates, and this bill undermines that vital mission.

Moreover, COLR obligations are technology-neutral, permitting providers to use any available infrastructure, including fiber, to meet their commitments. However, alternative services often lack enforceable reliability, accessibility, and affordability standards. If AB

Jess Harris
District 1

Ed Valenzuela
District 2

Michael Kobseff
District 3

Nancy Ogren
District 4

Ray Haupt
District 5

470 is enacted, providers may exit the market and neglect system maintenance, raising the risk of service disruptions for entire communities.

While Siskiyou County supports transitioning to modern telecommunications infrastructure, AB 470 does not offer a responsible or adequate transition plan. Instead, it prioritizes industry convenience over public safety and consumer protections. California must ensure that any shift to advanced technology is managed responsibly, safeguarding essential communication services. The CPUC is already conducting a transparent review of COLR policies to modernize regulations without abandoning consumers, particularly those in areas where market forces do not ensure adequate service.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose AB 470. We remain committed to working on policies that guarantee all Californians, regardless of location, have access to reliable, affordable, and safe communication services. Unfortunately, as currently written, AB 470 does not meet that goal.

This letter was approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on April 15, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Sincerely,

Nancy Ogren
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Tasha Boerner, Chair, Assembly Communications & Conveyance Committee
Members of the Assembly Communications & Conveyance Committee
Emilio Perez, Chief Consultant, Assembly Communications & Conveyance Committee
Daniel Ballon, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Senator Megan Dahle
Assemblymember Heather Hadwick
Rural County Representatives of California
California State Association of Counties
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lang