



William and Gwendolyn Cates
4372 Casey Avenue
Santa Ynez, CA 93460

May 30, 2015

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:

We appreciate the fact that the Planning and Development Department of Santa Barbara County has worked hard to preserve the beauty and agricultural openness of the Santa Ynez Valley. We and our neighbors in the valley live or moved here because we believe that our property values and agricultural zoning will continue to be protected. The proposed Verizon Cell Tower, a Tier Four project, does not belong in our neighborhood of small, mostly 4 to 5 acre, properties which are zoned agriculturally. Furthermore, approval of this facility would provide for the proposed tower complex to be expanded to accommodate the equipment of other telecommunication providers.

Grounds for the Appeal:

Deceptive presentation by Verizon maps of the Cell Tower Station proposed site, Santa Barbara Co Staff Report, March 11.

The area affected by the Verizon Cell Tower is zoned agriculturally with small properties. Verizon presented the area as 10 to 20 acre farms, when the site proposed is less than 5 acres, as are many of the surrounding farms. This fact makes all the residents closer together than the map suggested. In the Staff Report, Attachment G: the obsolete 2006 pictometry map does not show adjacent watering holes and wetlands.

During the hearing, coverage maps were shown so quickly that it was difficult to make an informed decision. Presentations did not include a photo during the winter months which would clearly reveal the tower for public view from Mora Avenue. (Pg 5 of the Staff Report) The tower would be clearly visible through the deciduous trees of adjacent neighbors, and an artificial tree does not blend in with the natural trees. This alone should be cause for dismissal of the proposed site if we are to preserve the extraordinary beauty of the area.

Staff did not point out the natural drainage/sensitive wet-land area on the proposed site, which is home to many animals: coyotes, birds of prey, migrant birds, and frogs.

Surrounding trees are nesting and roosting sites for raptors and owls and migrating birds – all of which may be damaged by EMEs (electromagnetic emissions) and noise from diesel and air conditioning motors necessary to support the system.

The migrating birds in our area include the Bullock's Oriole which weaves a basket nest hanging from tree branches. What

happens over the long term if these beautiful birds hang their nests from the branches of the fake tree, and endures constant exposure to EMEs? A qualified, independent biologist should be consulted to provide findings based on a long-term study of birds including orioles, barn owls, red tailed, red shoulder hawks and many others.

Alternative Sites Appropriate for the Verizon Tower:

Page 4 of the Staff Report states that the tower is to serve the West side of 154, so it would be better to place it there.

Verizon maps did not show the area across Baseline Ave, referred to as Camp 4, where there are NO dwellings for humans, and large open areas suitable to locate the tower far from the public viewing area of Baseline Avenue.

Verizon agent, Michelle Ellis, along with the lawyer of Dennis Merchant, expressed to neighbors on Mora Avenue that “Verizon would not have access” if the site was on Camp 4, as the land is to be included in the Chumash sovereign nation. However, it was not noted that Verizon contacted the Chumash Tribe, so how could this be verified?

Verizon maps do not show the large farm areas at the end of Casey Avenue with vast open fields where there are some more industrial areas far away from public view.

Similar Sites Which Rejected Verizon Towers

During the March 11 Hearing, it was stated that the parcel at Rancho Estates was rejected due to the fact that “no commercial usage” was allowed. The same criteria should be applied as a valid reason for the neighbors of Dennis Merchant

for opposing the cell tower station. Instead, the wording was changed to “infrastructure” which is allowed on agricultural land. It should be noted that for the Merchants, who will be receiving money for rental space, the Verizon tower is very much a business. If so, Rancho Estates should not have been able to dismiss the project on the same grounds.

Verizon did not mention, until prompted by the panel, why the tower was not placed at the Santa Ynez Valley Airport (a commercial site). It was because the neighbors did not want the unsightly tower and protested to airport management.

Verizon did not mention, until prompted by the panel, why the tower was not placed at the Chumash Casino building (a commercial site). The Chumash did not want the unsightly tower.

All of the above reasons for rejection of the Verizon tower should apply to the Verizon tower station at 1867 Mora Avenue.

Deceptive presentation by Verizon of the height of the tower:

In the CBAR meeting #14BAR-00000-00223 and in the staff report, there was conflicting data concerning the tower height.

“The proposed faux broadleaf tree exceeds the 35 foot residential structure height limit for the AG-I-10 zone district ...” (Page 2-3, Staff Report for March 11 Hearing) It is a Tier 4 project which requires a Major Conditional Use Permit. Verizon is more concerned about leaving room for other carriers (“further growth”) under their antenna than in lowering their tower. (Page 4, Staff Report for March 11 Hearing)

Rush to judgment by the Planning Commission:

Due to time constraints and lunch time, the Commission gave our group significantly less discussion time than they did the groups before us.

Although we stated that we had a similar situation to the group before us, and wanted to “piggyback” on their statements, this was ignored by the Commission. We asked for a continuance due to the lack of knowledge on the part of Verizon, of where the EME rays that did not get collected by the dish actually go. They did not request a professional and independent physicist to explain this to the concerned neighbors. They did not ask for a professional and independent biologist to find out the effects on birds, frogs, coyotes, horses and other animals that that live on the site.

The Commission did not comment on or consider the fact that owners of adjacent or nearby properties to the proposed site would have to disclose the proposed tower if they put their property up for sale or rent EVEN BEFORE the tower is built, because no one wants to live near an unsightly cell tower, or fake tree, that does not fit in with the character of the rural farmland area. Nor does any well-informed person wish to be a guinea pig on the long-term effects of this kind of electromagnetic radiation. There is, at this time, no scientific consensus on the dangers of cell tower radiation although studies done in Europe indicate caution is the proper approach.

The Commission did not consider the fact that concerned neighbors would not have purchased their agricultural property if they had known that “commercial” industry and/or the supposed “infrastructure” of any size, much less this significant size, would be situated in the neighborhood. Furthermore, Verizon has plans for expansion by other telecommunications providers. Neighbors should be concerned that this commercial Tier 4 industry will have the potential to become a much larger industrial venture than the tower that has been presented – a site which could not be opposed at a later date.

The Commission did not comment on or consider that coverage was mainly for proposed development on Camp 4, where there is abundant available space for the cell tower site.

Presentation time given to Verizon professionals was unlimited, but citizens wanting to protect their own safety and property were limited to three minutes. Verizon was also given rebuttal time.

No rebuttal time given to those who have enjoyed the use of their property for many years and who would like to continue living without being subject to radiation for which science offers conflicting reports as to potential harm to humans and other living things.

Further Information Relevant to This Application

Nearly all of the citizens who dwell within the area which would be affected by the Verizon tower are senior citizens on a fixed income, some quite elderly. Can this proposed project be characterized as Elder Abuse?

After the hearing, nearby neighbors, Dorothy and Rose Mari, of Mari Ranch on Baseline Avenue, told Gwen Cates that they are very alarmed by the proximity of a telecommunications tower. They had assumed that the tower was a “done deal” and that they could not oppose it. They are joining in the appeal.

There is no baseline decibel study of our area, which is presently very quiet. We request that an independent noise expert be hired by the county to do such a study so we will not know the noise impact on surrounding properties by the diesel generator. We do not know what equipment they used to measure the proposed noise level and if it is calibrated with the Sheriff department, which is who we would have to call for a noise complaint. The Commission did not discuss the long-term effect of running the generators. During the blackout of the 1998/1999 el niño, electricity was off for about a week, 24 hours a day. Also, it is unclear what time of day and night the air conditioning cooling units will run and the noise level.

Studies done abroad where it is legal to measure radiation levels and effects upon humans and animals raise serious Issues concerning radiation from Telecommunication Towers. Large companies such as Verizon have been successful in passing legislation which blocks disclosure of challenges to safety. (See the stealth clause in Section 704 of The Telecommunications Act of 1996) If their studies prove that the emissions are safe, they should be open to transparency concerning further scientific studies.

We appeal to the Santa Barbara County Board to consider the concerns of its citizens. This project potentially puts at risk the health and well being of landowners and taxpayers who believe that government acts in their best interest.

We are not scientists or experts, but to the best of our knowledge, the information in this letter is correct and truthful.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Cates owner at 4372 Casey Avenue

William Cates owner at 4372 Casey Avenue

Rose Mari owner of Mari Ranch on Baseline

Dorothy Mari owner of Mari Ranch on Baseline

Douglas Clay co owner at 1971 Mora Ave

Shannon Clay co owner at 1971 Mora Ave

Please Note: Gwendolyn and William Cates can be reached at 805-693-8303 or 805-245-4003.

