



# County of Monterey

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April 14, 2025

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

**RE: AB 470 (McKinnor) Telephone corporations: carriers of last resort – OPPOSE**

Dear Assemblymember McKinnor:

On behalf of the County of Monterey, we regretfully oppose your Assembly Bill 470. This measure would abandon essential responsibilities and phase out reliable and affordable access to basic telephone service for all Californians.

Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) telephone services providers are located throughout the state, ensuring access to basic telephone service, often to residents who lack dependable or affordable options for connectivity. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) oversees these service providers to ensure that essential consumer protections, such as access to free 9-1-1 and discounted service rates through the Lifeline program, are implemented. Most importantly, COLR providers are required to provide service to anyone who requests it and must be able to do so in cases such as new housing developments or restoration of service after a significant storm or natural disaster. In contrast, non-COLR providers, such as wireless companies, may offer service in an area but are not obligated to continue, nor are they required to provide reliable and affordable options to eligible residents.

AB 470 would allow a COLR provider to automatically shed its obligations by simply notifying the CPUC that, in its determination, there are no customers or population in a given area and that alternative voice services exist. The mere notification by the COLR provider that it meets these requirements relieves it of the designation and rate requirements. This self-determined process lacks oversight and hands monopolies a financial incentive to make self-interested claims, potentially leaving entire communities without guaranteed telephone service. The CPUC's core function is to balance procedures and safeguards to protect consumers by ensuring safe, reliable utilities and infrastructure at fair rates, and this bill undermines that mission.

COLR obligations are technology-neutral, allowing providers to use any available technology, including fiber, to fulfill their commitments. Unlike basic telephone service, alternative services lack minimum reliability, accessibility, and affordability standards. AB 470 would allow providers to exit the market and neglect future system maintenance, creating a risk that entire communities could be left without viable phone service options.

We support the transition to modern, reliable telecommunications infrastructure, but AB 470 fails to provide a meaningful transition plan. Instead, it prioritizes industry convenience over maintaining public safety and consumer protections. California must ensure that the shift to advanced technologies is done responsibly, holding companies accountable so that no resident loses access to essential communication services. The CPUC is already engaged in a transparent, holistic review of COLR policies to modernize them without abandoning customers, especially in areas where market forces alone do not guarantee quality, competitive service. For these reasons, we must respectfully oppose AB 470.



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Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Monterey County's Public Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP, at 916-442-8888.

Sincerely,

**DRAFT**

**Chris M. Lopez, Chair**  
Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable John Laird, 17th Senate District  
The Honorable Robert Rivas, 29th Assembly District  
The Honorable Dawn Addis, 30th Assembly District  
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)  
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)  
Members and Consultants, Assembly Communications and Conveyance Committee  
Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee