



**Testimony of
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Opposition to HB 241
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Before the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee

On behalf of CTIA, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I am here today to testify in opposition to HB 241. The legislation would create new onerous and prescriptive requirements for deploying wireless telecommunications facilities. HB 241 could result in a host of unintended consequences, including inhibiting the ability to deploy telecommunications facilities needed for public safety and to provide broadband services in one of Maryland's most densely-populated counties.

The people of Maryland continue to demand – at increasing levels – access to wireless products and services. This is demonstrated by the fact that there are more wireless devices in Maryland than there are people.¹ In addition, over one third of Marylanders live in wireless-only households.² The migration of customers to wireless services and the steady growth in mobile data usage increases the need for adequate infrastructure.

To address these demands, wireless providers continue to invest in, build-out and upgrade networks to compete on network quality. Wireless capital expenditures totaled \$26.4 billion in 2016, and over \$200 billion in the past seven years alone.³

HB 241, however, could hinder wireless providers' ability to invest, construct and update infrastructure to accommodate this demand. HB 241 would impose stringent and arduous requirements when deploying any type of wireless infrastructure on school grounds in Prince George's County. Under HB 241, small wireless infrastructure, commonly known as small cells, would be treated the same as large macro towers subjecting them to mandatory public hearings and required notification to every parent of a student in the district and notification in a

¹ FCC, Voice Telephone Services Report: Status as of June 2015, August 2016, at <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/voice-telephone-services-report>, last accessed 2/3/2018.

² CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless_state_201712.pdf, last accessed 2/3/2018.

³ CTIA's Wireless Snapshot 2017, <https://www.ctia.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ctia-wireless-snapshot.pdf>, last accessed 2/3/18.



local newspaper for four weeks. Small cells are unobtrusive facilities, about the size of a pizza box, which can be attached to existing structures.

Not only is it unnecessary to treat small cells the same as large macro towers, this policy directive is also counter to the policies being adopted across the country. Over the past two years, 13 states have passed legislation specifically acknowledging that small cells should not be subject to the same zoning and land use requirements as large macro towers. Additionally, seventeen states are currently considering similar legislation this year.

Furthermore, it is important to note that wireless infrastructure deployment is also key to enhancing the classroom experience for both teachers and students. Mobility in the classroom aids in productivity, collaboration and can be tailored to meet every student's individual learning style. Mobile infrastructure is needed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to benefit from mobile broadband. Technology experts, parents and students all agree – mobile broadband and the infrastructure needed to successfully deploy it are crucial to the future of education.

Finally, wireless infrastructure plays a vital public safety role. Since wireless consumers make approximately 70 percent of all 911 calls, first responders heavily rely on wireless infrastructure to ensure they can respond to emergencies expeditiously. Cell sites are carefully-selected and constructed to ensure ubiquitous coverage to meet the needs of public safety and the increasing consumer demand for wireless services. Like all broadband-based technologies, 911 and its successor Next Generation 911 technologies require comprehensive infrastructure deployment.

For all the reasons outlined herein, we respectfully ask for rejection of HB 241.