

October 29, 2018

Baltimore County Council Members (via e-mail)  
Historic Courthouse  
400 Washington Ave  
Towson, MD 21204

Re: 5G cellular/Telecommunications Advisory Panel

Dear County Council member,

As you may be aware, the Telecom industry is on the verge of rolling out 5G, which promises to provide extremely high wireless data rates. maybe even exceeding what is available today via FIOS or Comcast (but only to a portion of Baltimore County residents).

According to recent newspaper articles (Washington Post Oct 25), the FCC has recently issued new rules that, among other things, would limit the amount that the local jurisdiction could charge for any 5G equipment fastened to public utility poles or other public infrastructure. While Baltimore County may not own any actual "utility" poles in question, it could have other facilities on which the Telecom companies might wish to attach equipment. The rules are also intended to make it easier and quicker for Telecom companies to get approvals, thus perhaps bypassing some county reviews or processes. Numerous other jurisdictions have already challenged the new FCC rules in court.

Further, the County's zoning regulations regarding placement of cell towers will be out of date, as the new 5G does not use towers. Instead, equipment and antennae are usually placed on utility poles to each serve a much smaller area. This means that new zoning regulations are needed.

With the smaller cell sites and coverage of each, there is likely to be even less incentive for the Telecom companies to install 5G in rural, less dense areas, while, at the same time, slowing their installation of cable and Internet service, which is already a problem in our rural areas.

I suggest that the County's Telecom Advisory Panel be tasked to consider the implication of the new 5G and to provide recommendations to the Council. This would include recommendations for new regulations as well as whether and how the County may need to respond to the FCC's new rules.

The Washington Post reports that "Montgomery County ... plans to join other local governments in the D.C. region in filing a separate appeal of the FCC order".

Also, please review your appointments to Boards and Commissions and, if you do not have a current member of the TAP, please appoint one as required by BCC 3-3-1802.

I stand ready to assist in any way.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Pierce".

Mike Pierce  
Member, Telecommunications Advisory Panel (and maybe the only current one)

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