

Marjorie Williams
Chair, Montgomery County Tower Committee

Re: T- Mobile's Proposed Cell Tower: Mr. Ephraim Road in the Ag Reserve

Dear Ms. Williams,

April, 27 2011

In reviewing the above referenced application we offer the following specific comments and ask that you share them with the committee and the hearing examiner:

1. This location is unique. Sugarloaf Mountain, designated in 1969 a National Natural Landmark and a documented historic landmark, is an important destination for many in the Washington metropolitan area. The views from it and toward it are expansive should be afforded meticulous preservation effort.
2. The proximity to a designated rustic road* dictates the need for additional sensitivity to the protected view shed in terms of placement and setbacks. This proposed location continues to present conflict with the County's preservation programs and every effort to shift the site, co-locate elsewhere or utilize state of the art technology to promote harmony with rural aesthetics and community character should be undertaken.
2. At a public meeting on February 17, 2011, questions were raised as to whether T-Mobile had explored the use of the Distributed Antennae System (DAS) to address their roadway coverage needs at this location. The response provided was vague and ranged from *cost is higher to telephone poles in that area may not be tall enough*. Did the applicant explore this possibility and evaluate the cost differential? The central question remains: is DAS, successfully utilized elsewhere in the County (notably along River Road in Potomac), the best way to provide coverage and necessary sensitivity to protect important public resources?
3. The applicant has, to their credit, made some preliminary efforts mitigate effect on the historic view shed with the use of a tall silo to disguise the cell infrastructure. (see attached photo from balloon test/silo added) Yet, the placement of the silo out of context of a working farm, especially given its height is troubling. (See attached photo from balloon test with silo image added.) We would ask that if the DAS technology is ruled out, that such a silo be associated with the Savage Dairy Farm located on the property opposite the proposed site. This location may better meet the applicant's coverage goals and address the need for the utmost in sensitivity for harmony with the surrounding landscape. The dairy farm has indicated that they would welcome the silo and that the income could help their working farm, one of the few remaining dairy operations in the County.

* Please refer to Rustic Roads Master Plan pages 134 for Mt. Ephraim Road reference.

Respectfully submitted,

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