



Montgomery County, Maryland

November 25, 2019

**Montgomery County Sierra Club Group Testimony on ZTA 19-07
Telecommunications Towers – Approval Standards**

President Navarro and Councilmembers, the Montgomery County Sierra Club respectfully submits the following testimony on ZTA 19-07.

Montgomery County Sierra Club writes to express its concern about the energy use implications of ZTA 19-07, which authorizes expanded use of certain cellular communication towers and antennas. The goal of the ZTA is to facilitate the next generation of mobile broadband services, called 5G. The new 5G technology poses a risk of dramatically increased energy consumption and, hence, of increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In our previous letter of May 15, 2018, and testimony of September 24, 2018, we urged careful assessment of the energy use effects of a ZTA that would facilitate use of 5G before enacting such a ZTA, given the County Council's recent declaration of a climate emergency.

As you know, the Montgomery County Council unanimously passed Resolution No. 18-974 in December 2017 "to use all available powers and resources to ... restore a safe climate and build a sustainable economy." The Resolution recognized that the County "needs to do much more, much faster."

In Sierra Club's view, the County's declared commitment to climate safety means that proposed legislation (and ZTAs) must also be evaluated for their climate impact. As we previously expressed, Sierra Club urges - (1) deferral of consideration of ZTA 19-07 "until the impact on energy use is assessed, and (2) enactment of the ordinance if, but only if, the Council has a reasonable basis to conclude that the 5G technology facilitated by the ordinance will not exacerbate the problem of GHG emissions."

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with the county as it moves to more aggressively and effectively address climate change.

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