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Arizona State Senate

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December 10, 2015
Supervisor Sharon Bronson
District 3
130 W. Congress, 11th Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Chairman Bronson:

I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the design of the cell tower Verizon proposes to erect next to the Northwest Fire Station on Camino de Oeste. On Tuesday, December 15, the Board of Supervisors is scheduled to hear a community appeal against a fake old-fashioned water tower design (P21-15-008). State business will prevent me from attending this meeting.

The tower site is located on a Major County Scenic Route with wide panoramic views of three mountain ranges and scattered single family residences on three acres or more. The site is adjacent to the fire station building - a former stucco home, that blends in with the surrounding neighborhood.

I attended all four community meetings and remain in favor of a more appropriate design for the cell tower. Those of us in opposition to the fake old-fashioned water tower design tried time and again to be flexible and offered alternatives that would blend in with the existing environment – a palm or pine tree, a saguaro, a clock tower, a bell tower.

In Pima County we're lucky that we have a zoning code that specifically calls for mitigation of their "adverse visual impact" and specifically that on a Major County Scenic Route the towers must be constructed in a "stealth design." There are many designs for cell towers that can meet this important criteria; a water tower would be more appropriate at Old Tucson Studios, rather than a neighborhood where there are no ranches or farms. The codes provide some conformity and consistency in our built environment for the benefit of the greatest number of citizens. A few neighbors should not be allowed to choose any design they like for a cell tower, no matter how close they live to the site.

Currently, further discussions are underway with Verizon and the near-by residents led by one of those neighbors, well-regarded Tucson architect, Paul Weiner. They have made progress but need additional time to reach consensus.

We ask the Board to rigorously apply the language and intent of existing Pima County building codes and reject this water tower cell tower design in this particular place. We urge you not to establish a precedent that Verizon can use to justify putting up fake old-fashioned water towers as cell towers in various locations in Pima County.

I join the appeal and the 75 residents who have signed petitions in opposition to the water tower design, requesting you recognize the inappropriateness of that design in that spot as well as the predominant public sentiment against it, and require that Verizon come up with some alternative designs in keeping with the existing landscape or buildings which everyone can agree on.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olivia".

Senator Olivia Cajero Bedford
Arizona State Senate
Legislative District 3