



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

SB 1188/HB 1767

Oppose

Senate Finance Committee

March 2018

SB 1188/HB 1767– Wireless Facilities – Permitting and Siting

Contact: Jason Damweber, Deputy City Manager

jasond@takomaparkmd.gov, 301-891-7202

The City of Takoma Park stands with the Maryland Municipal League and municipalities across the state in opposition to SB 1188/HB 1767 as it is currently drafted. While we recognize that cell wireless antennas and equipment are used by telecommunications companies to increase network coverage and capacity, and that such enhancements are advantageous and necessary as we become more reliant on electronic devices, we strongly believe that local residents and local government officials should play an integral role in decision-making about the location and design of these small cell facilities. After all, it is the people who live nearby who will have to live with and look at these facilities once they are installed, not the telecommunications companies who will be profiting from them.

We believe it is vital to protect our residents' voices regarding installation decisions to ensure that they work for the community, protect our neighborhoods and allow local government oversight. If passed, this bill would permit installation of poles up to 50 feet in height and equipment boxes measuring up to 28 cubic feet throughout the City, including residential neighborhoods. That could mean any number of poles being installed that are more than twice as tall as the surrounding homes, and equipment boxes larger than refrigerators taking the place of natural areas and land and streetscapes. And all without an opportunity for neighbors or local government officials in charge of the right of way to have any say at all in design and placement.

In short, we believe there is an opportunity to strike a balance that results in a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved, whether residents, the local government, or the companies installing the facilities. But this bill does not strike that balance.

For these reasons, the City of Takoma Park opposes SB 1188/HB 1767 and urges unfavorable consideration of the bill.