

1 [Urging the California Public Utilities Commission to Require Protections as a Condition of
2 Approval of AT&T’s Request to Relinquish its Carrier of Last Resort and Eligible
3 Telecommunications Carrier Designations]

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4 **Resolution urging the California Public Utilities Commission to require lasting**
5 **protection and to identify an alternative Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) to preserve**
6 **guaranteed access to basic phone service for those who are most vulnerable as a**
7 **condition of approval of AT&T’s request to relinquish its COLR and Eligible**
8 **Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) Designations.**

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10 WHEREAS, On March 3, 2023, AT&T submitted applications to the California Public
11 Utilities Commission (CPUC), requesting to be relinquished from its Carrier of Last Resort
12 (COLR) obligation and to surrender its designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier
13 (ETC) in California; and

14 WHEREAS, Given that AT&T is the COLR and ETC providing telephone service to the
15 City and County of San Francisco, the CPUC’s decision on AT&T’s requests will affect both
16 residential and business customers citywide; and

17 WHEREAS, The CPUC created the COLR obligation to ensure that everyone in
18 California has access to reliable phone service and defines COLR as a telecommunications
19 service provider that is legally required to provide access to basic telephone service, typically
20 “plain old telephone service” (POTS), to any customers requesting such service; and

21 WHEREAS, COLRs serve the public good by requiring that residents have access to
22 critical services regardless of location or the customer’s ability to receive service from another
23 carrier; and

24 WHEREAS, By granting AT&T’s request to relinquish its COLR obligation without
25 confirming whether existing POTS customers have access to alternative telephone lines or

1 the capability to seek comparable phone services, the CPUC will essentially remove the
2 current safety net that guarantees every resident access to affordable, quality phone service;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Although in its Application Summary, AT&T claims that “approval of the
5 application would harm no one” because 99.95 percent of consumers in AT&T California’s
6 service territory live in areas with at least one comparably or lower-priced broadband or
7 mobile wireless voice alternatives to POTS, approximately 62,779 (33,842 residential and
8 28,937 business) POTS lines remain in San Francisco, according to data extracted from
9 AT&T’s Amended Application, dated May 17, 2023; and

10 WHEREAS, Many San Franciscans continue to rely on POTS for emergency calls
11 26,476 emergency calls were made to 911 in 2023 using POTS lines, according to data
12 obtained from San Francisco Department of Emergency Management received on February
13 20, 2024; and

14 WHEREAS, The CPUC defines an ETC as a telephone company operating in a area
15 that receives financial assistance from the federal government-established Universal Service
16 Fund to provide quality and affordable telephone service to customers at all income levels;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, The CPUC’s approval of AT&T’s requests to surrender its ETC
19 designation would allow AT&T to stop participating in the federal Lifeline program, which is
20 designed to help subsidize telephone service for low-income customers; and

21 WHEREAS, According to its Frequently Asked Questions, the CPUC anticipates that a
22 household receiving federal Lifeline from AT&T may see an increase of \$5.25 per month for
23 voice-only service, or \$9.25 per month for bundled or internet service if AT&T’s requests are
24 approved without conditions; and

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1 WHEREAS, The CPUC is holding Public Participation Hearings, in person and virtually,
2 to offer the public a chance to understand and express their concerns regarding AT&T's
3 request and how CPUC's decision might affect customers throughout California; now,
4 therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, That the Board urges the community to participate in the CPUC's next
6 virtual Public Participation Hearings on March 19, 2024, and offer your feedback about
7 AT&T's requests; and, be it

8 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the California Public Utilities
9 Commission to require lasting protection, including a published written transition plan that
10 outline steps AT&T will take to ensure no customers are left without phone service, as a
11 condition of approval of AT&T's request and, be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the CPUC identifies an alternative COLR to maintain
13 guaranteed access to basic phone service for all of Californians if they grant AT&T's request;
14 and, be it

15 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board is hereby directed to transmit
16 copies of this Resolution to the California Public Utilities Commission as a demonstration of
17 the Board's commitment to ensure everyone continues to have access to basic, and
18 potentially lifesaving, phone service without disruption.

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