



October 16, 2017

Contact: Mike Roth, 916.444.7170
League of CA Cities: Eva Spiegel, 530.400.9068
CSAC: Gregg Fishman, 916.342.9508
RCRC: Justin Caporusso, 916.600.3433
UCC: Jolena Voorhis, 916.248.1428
AARP: Blanca E. Castro-Paszinski, 916.556.3021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cities, Counties, AARP and Labor Praise Gov. Brown's Veto of SB 649

*Governor's Action Protects Local Control, and Prioritizes Local Services
Over Telecom Profits.*

Sacramento, CA — Local leaders from throughout California praised Gov. Jerry Brown's veto of a measure that would have gutted local control and put the interests of the wireless industry over those of California residents.

A broad coalition of cities, counties, environmental, labor and consumer advocates opposed SB 649 by Sen. Ben Hueso (D-San Diego). The bill would have given wireless providers unfettered ability to install bulky cellular equipment on any street light or traffic signal as well as public libraries and other public buildings without permission from local governments, input from the public or fair compensation for city and county residents.

"There is something of real value in having a process that results in extending this innovative technology rapidly and efficiently. Nevertheless, I believe that the interest which localities have in managing rights of way requires a more balanced solution than the one achieved in this bill," said Governor Brown in his veto message.

SB 649 would have created a new unfunded mandate that would have cost the state millions and would have endangered cell phone coverage in low-income and rural neighborhoods across the state.

League President and South San Francisco Council Member Rich Garbarino: "The cities of California thank Governor Brown for vetoing SB 649. His action today recognizes that it's bad policy to put telecommunications industry profits ahead of the rights of Californian businesses and residents to have a say over how their public infrastructure is used. Cities support expanding connectivity but not through a policy that would have shifted power and resources from our communities to a billion dollar industry.

California State Association of Counties President and Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson:

“We want to offer our deepest thanks to Governor Brown for his veto of SB 649. This bill would have allowed telecom companies to usurp local authority and install unsightly equipment on public property with little or no local input. The veto of this bill puts the telecom companies on notice that they have to sit down with local governments and address this issue fairly, and in a way that recognizes local government authority.”

Rural County Representatives of California Chair and Tehama County Supervisor Bob Williams:

“RCRC applauds the Governor for standing up to the wireless industry, and protecting the voice of those in rural California. SB 649 would have silenced local voices, cost taxpayers around the state, and removed protections for unserved and underserved communities. The veto of SB 649 is a win for the residents of rural California.”

Urban Counties of California Chair and San Bernardino County Board Member James Ramos:

“The urban counties are deeply appreciative of the Governor’s action to veto SB 649. This veto recognizes the importance of local control and a balanced approach to the deployment of this new technology.”

AARP, State Director, Nancy McPherson: “On behalf of AARP’s more than 3.3 million California members, I would like to thank Governor Brown for his veto of SB 649. AARP believes that all consumers should have access to telecommunications, energy, and other utility services; but also that the process for the creation and maintenance of these services should be transparent and subject to reasonable public oversight. AARP strongly opposed SB 649 because it would have undermined local authority regarding the placement of telecommunications towers, effectively depriving Californians of any say over an important part of the character of their own communities.”

Barry Broad, Executive Director, California Teamsters Public Affairs Council: “Governor Brown did the right thing by rejecting this bad legislation. SB 649 was a nothing more than a bait and switch pushed by Big Telecom, and a brazen attempt to put corporate profits over the public interest and public safety.

###