**Transparency & Citizen Input Missing from Wireless Cell Phone Tower Legislation:**

As the “Twilight Zone” began, “Imagine if you will,” that you are going to work in the morning, and enjoying a clear view of the street as you come out of your driveway. Then upon return home in the evening, you see a 50-foot cell tower in the right-of-way in front of your home. You had absolutely no idea this was going to happen, no notice, and no ability to provide comments to your member on the city or town council or county board of supervisors.

Legislation being considered in the 2018 Virginia General Assembly, House Bill 1258 (patron-Kilgore) and SB 405 (patron-McDougle), would allow just this kind of thing to happen. Local governments – the level of government closest to the people – would have no input in siting decisions through the local zoning process. Because the local zoning process is circumvented, citizens would have no opportunity to comment on matters taking place in their backyards, front yards and neighborhoods.

Let’s be clear, everyone wants reliable and fast wireless cell phone service. No one objects to that. And, cell towers are the only way that goal can be achieved. Local governments get that. Your local government wants to be able to have the conversations that would place towers appropriately, taking into account local conditions such as viewsheds, historic districts and sites, and, of paramount concern, input from local residents.

Under these bills, it is impossible to have any conversations that might address appropriate siting decisions because the wireless cell phone industry can bypass the local government and the all-important citizen input process. This is not transparency. This is not right.

Just as one example, the City of Alexandria has beautiful streetlights that capture the essence of historic times; under this legislation, a wireless provider could place a 50-foot cell tower right next to those streetlights. Local residents and the City of Alexandria could do nothing to stop that.

If you agree that local citizen input is vital to the cell tower siting process and to our communities, please contact your state legislator as soon as possible and tell them that **Citizen Input Matters**, and that local governments should retain the authority to review the siting plans for new cell towers contemplated in House Bill 1258 and Senate Bill 405.