

TOWNSHIP OF UPPER DEERFIELD

RESOLUTION 14-80

OPPOSING THE PROPOSED STIPULATION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BPU BOARD STAFF AND VERIZON NEW JERSEY - DOCKET NUMBER T012020155

WHEREAS, There is a proposed stipulation of agreement between the BPU board staff and Verizon New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Upper Deerfield, County of Cumberland is opposed to the BPU accepted the proposed stipulation of Agreement with Verizon, New Jersey for the following reasons:

1. With well over 8% of the population of Cumberland County remaining without access to reliable broadband service, we oppose any agreement that would indicate that Verizon New Jersey has met its requirements under Opportunity New Jersey.

2. Verizon New Jersey customers have paid \$15 billion in surcharges to help ensure that all of New Jersey residents and businesses have access to broadband via fiber optic infrastructure. Verizon must be compelled to do more to fully meet its obligation, especially in a poorer, rural, agricultural-based county like Cumberland.

3. The coverage data that the BPU may be relying on appears flawed, making it appear that more areas in the County have wired or wireless coverage when they do not or the service that exists is not reliable. We strongly urge the BPU to obtain verifiable coverage data produced by an independent source with the expertise to produce this critically important data on which current decisions are being made.

4. In any settlement or action between BPU and Verizon, there must be a sensitivity to and recognition of the special nature of this important agricultural region where vast amounts of public funds have been invested to preserve farmland permanently and where the business of farming is so important to the local and the state economy. Lack of broadband service to these rural areas, puts this important part of the region’s and state’s economy at risk and all underserved farms and businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

5. By the very nature of the agricultural area and the preserved lands, these areas should not be expected to meet density requirements like other more populated and developable areas of New Jersey in order to have the opportunity for broadband services.

6. Residents and students who live in these rural areas in Cumberland and other counties should not be denied fair access to the educational opportunities provided through good broadband service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Upper Deerfield does hereby oppose the proposed stipulation of agreement between the BPU board staff and Verizon New Jersey for reasons stated above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this duly adopted resolution be forwarded to Senate President Stephen Sweeney, Assemblyman John Burzichelli, Assemblywoman Celeste Riley, Governor Chris Christie, County of Cumberland and the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

Moved By: John O’Neill

Seconded By: Scott Smith

VOTING

James P. Crilley
John L. Daddario
John T. O’Neill, Sr.
Bruce T. Peterson
Scott Smith

<u>In Favor</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
X			
X			
X			
X			
X			

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of Resolution adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Upper Deerfield, in the County of Cumberland, at a meeting thereof held March 20, 2014

Roy J. Spoltore, Township Clerk