



Plumas County

Negative Declaration Number 674

for

Telecommunications Ordinance

Plumas County, CA

Filed: September 17, 2018

Review Period:

From: September 17, 2018 through October 17, 2018

APPROVED/CERTIFIED:

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

It is found, based on this Initial Study, that this project would not have a significant impact on the environment.

An attached copy of the Initial Study documents reasons supporting the finding.

Determination by: Timothy E. Evans

Written by: Timothy E. Evans

Title: Assistant Planner

Title: Assistant Planner

Date: August 29, 2018

Date: August 29, 2018

Initial Study Telecommunications Ordinance

Project Title: Telecommunications Ordinance

Date of Initial Study Preparation: May 4, 2018

Lead Agency Name and Address: Plumas County Planning and Building Services
555 Main Street,
Quincy, CA 95971

Prepared By: Timothy Evans, Assistant Planner
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Project Location: Unincorporated area of Plumas County, CA

Project Sponsor: County of Plumas

General Plan Designation: Single-Family Residential, Multiple-Family Residential, Suburban Residential, Secondary Suburban Residential, Rural Residential, Limited Access Rural Residential, Commercial, Resort and Recreation, Industrial, Agricultural Preserve, Agriculture and Grazing, Timber Resource Lands, Open Space-Significant Wetland, Lake

Zoning: Single Family Residential (2-R, 3-R, 7-R), Multiple-Family Residential (M-R), Suburban (S-1), Secondary Suburban (S-3), Rural (R-10), Rural (R-20), Core Commercial (C-1), Periphery Commercial (C-2), Convenience Commercial (C-3), Recreation Commercial (R-C), Heavy Industrial (I-1), Light Industrial (I-2), Prime Recreation (Rec-P), Recreation (Rec-1, Rec-3, Rec-10, Rec-20), Recreation Open Space (Rec-OS), Agricultural Preserve (AP), General Agriculture (GA), Timberland Production (TPZ), Open Space (OS), and Lake (L)

Project Description: The project is the fulfillment of General Plan Goal 1.9 Communication Infrastructure and Policy 1.9.1 Communication Tower Location Criteria which states, “The County shall provide site development criteria in the County’s Zoning Code.” The project involves the development and adoption of a Telecommunications Ordinance that will implement a comprehensive set of standards for the design and placement of telecommunications facilities in the unincorporated area of Plumas County. The project will add Article 41, “Telecommunications,” to Chapter 2 of Title 9 of the Plumas County Code, as well as add Article 6.5, “Zoning Clearance Certificate,” to Chapter 2 of Title 9 of the Plumas County Code. Telecommunications facilities would be reviewed through discretionary review (special use permit), as well as through ministerial review via a new ministerial permit type (zoning clearance certificate). The proposed Ordinance, titled “Telecommunications,” defines telecommunications facilities or facility as those facilities meeting the definition of facility in Federal Standard 1037C, meaning a fixed, mobile, or transportable structure, including all installed electrical and electronic wiring, cabling, and equipment and all supporting structures, such as utility, ground

network, and electrical supporting structures; a network-provided service to users or the network operating administration; a transmission pathway and associated equipment; in a protocol applicable to a data unit, such as a block or frame, an additional item of information or a constraint encoded within the protocol to provide the required control; or a real property entity consisting of one or more of the following: a building, a structure, a utility system, pavement, and underlying land.

The facilities regulated by the proposed Ordinance are new tower or pole facilities, pole mounted facilities, building mounted facilities, co-located facilities, and pre-existing facilities. Under the proposed Ordinance, a new tower or pole telecommunications facility requires a special use permit. Facilities that are co-located, meaning the placement or installation of telecommunications facilities, including antennas and related equipment, on, or immediately adjacent to, an existing telecommunications co-location facility; building mounted, meaning that the facility is either façade mounted, meaning any telecommunications device and associated hardware that is affixed to the face of a building, or roof-mounted, meaning multiple or singular antenna directly attached to the roof of an existing building, tower, or other structure other than a telecommunications tower; and pole mounted, meaning a facility mounted on an existing pole, all require a zoning clearance certificate. Co-located facilities are permitted with a zoning clearance certificate if the telecommunications co-location facility is proposed on, or immediately adjacent to, was subject to a discretionary permit with an appropriate environmental document being certified or adopted, and the facility meets applicable state and local requirements. Co-located facilities that were not subject to a special use permit with an appropriate environment document being certified or adopted, must obtain a special use permit, have an appropriate environmental document certified or adopted, and comply with the applicable state and local requirements. Furthermore, the proposed Ordinance also regulates amateur radio systems, also known as ham radio systems. Due to their critical role in the County's Office of Emergency Services (OES), an amateur radio system is required to obtain a zoning clearance certificate for a new tower or pole. Lastly, excluding the repair, maintenance, and alteration of a pre-existing facility, the restoration, after one year of the damage occurring; enlargement, if not lawful nonconforming as to yard requirements, height, or lot coverage; relocation; and expansion of a pre-existing facility requires a special use permit.

The project will regulate telecommunications facilities in all zones, except those exempt by the Ordinance. The facilities exempt under the proposed Ordinance are: telecommunications facilities utilized as an accessory to residential or commercial uses, internal business, or household communications systems, such as two-way radio communication systems, citizen band radio systems, television antennas, radio antennas, and internet antennas, if they comply with Section 9-2.4108(a) and (b) of the proposed Ordinance regarding setbacks and height, excluding television antennas and internet antennas which are not subject to Section 9-2.4108(a) and (b); telecommunications facilities issued a permit by the California Public Utilities Commission or Federal Communications Commission demonstrating exemption or exemption due to any state or federal law; temporary facilities providing public information coverage of a news event for a time period no greater than 30 days; government-owned communications facilities utilized for a public purpose; facilities exempted under federal or state law; ordinary maintenance, repair, or replacement of a lawfully established (including lawful nonconforming) existing telecommunications facility or accessory building that does not result in a substantial

change as defined by the Ordinance; telecommunications facilities utilized for temporary use during an emergency or natural disaster; telecommunications facilities located in the Timberland Production Zone (TPZ); wireless access points mounted on new poles of any height and mounted at a height of thirty-five (35') feet or less; and a telecommunications facility meeting the definition set forth in the Ordinance as an "eligible facilities request."

The exemption for telecommunications systems utilized as an accessory to residential or commercial use, internal business, or household communications systems, such as two-way radio communications systems, citizen band radio systems, television antennas, radio antennas, and internet antennas, does not apply to facilities operated, leased to, or used by any FCC licensed commercial telecommunications provider, which includes, but is not limited to, telecommunications providers, specialized mobile radio (SMR) communications providers, personal communications systems (PCS) providers, and radio broadcast facilities.

Lastly, the proposed Ordinance prohibits locating telecommunications facilities in certain zones. The zones that prohibit telecommunications facilities are the OS (Open Space) and L (Lake) zones.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: The project applies throughout the unincorporated area of Plumas County. Land uses and settings vary throughout the county. Land uses throughout the county include: residential, commercial, industrial, public service, and open space. Open space land uses dominate approximately 94% of the county and include, but are not limited to timberland, recreation, mining, timber production, agriculture production, and cultural and historic resources. The remaining six (6) percent of the land is utilized as residential, commercial, industrial, and public service

Plumas County is bordered by six (6) counties, which include Lassen County to the north and east, Shasta County to the north, Tehama and Butte counties to the west, and Yuba and Sierra counties to the south.

Relationship to Other Projects: None

Other public agencies whose approval is required: Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)

Environmental Factor Potentially Affected: The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" and subject to mitigation as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources

Public Services

Hydrology/Water Quality Recreation

Utilities/Service Systems

Noise

Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that, based on the initial study and the county and state regulations that govern the project approval, there will not be a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.



Timothy Evans
Assistant Planner
August 29, 2018

INITIAL STUDY AND CHECKLIST

Purpose of Initial Study:

An initial study, after a project is determined not exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is to be prepared and completed according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063 to determine if the project will have a significant effect on the environment. All phases of project planning, implementation, and operation will be considered within this Initial Study. The information, analysis, and conclusions contained in this Initial Study will be utilized to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Mitigated Negative Declaration, or Negative Declaration. If the Initial Study reveals that an EIR should be prepared, the information contained in the Initial Study will be used to focus the EIR on the effects determined to be potentially significant.

1. Aesthetics.

Environmental Setting: Plumas County is located within the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. The County consists of a variety of aesthetic characteristics; rural, natural, and historic characteristics are predominant throughout the County. The rural, natural, and historic character is due to the County's many valleys, ridgelines, varying types of vegetation, watercourses, travel routes, and historic residential neighborhoods. Scenic resources within the County include mountains, hills, geologic features and formations, rivers, streams, and natural vegetation. Historic and cultural resources also contribute to the aesthetics of the County. Historical and cultural resources are sites, structures, features, objects, and properties being of nationwide, statewide, or local significance and having architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, cultural, or other values. Examples of historical and cultural resources are ranch home sites, barns, historic residential neighborhoods, ceremonial and/or sacred sites, quarries, mills, and cemeteries.

The aesthetic character of the county is most often viewed from the County's roads and highways. There aren't any officially designated state or county scenic highways within Plumas County. However, the Plumas County General Plan does designate scenic roads and applies design standards to those county designated scenic roads.

Scenic areas throughout the County play a major role in the rural, natural character of the County. The Plumas County General Plan specifically identifies scenic areas. The scenic areas identified by the General Plan are designed to maintain the natural, rural characteristics, preserve historic lifestyles, and attract tourists. In addition, the Plumas County General Plan also sets forth requirements to protect and preserve cultural and historic resources.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: No significant impacts are anticipated on scenic vistas due to this project. The proposed Ordinance will add Article 41, “Telecommunications,” to Chapter 2 of Title 9, which will implement standards and regulations that telecommunications facilities must comply with in regards to design and location. Contained within the proposed Ordinance are general requirements to protect the aesthetics throughout the County. In particular, residential zones and commercial zones have specific requirements for height, location, aesthetics, and landscaping. For example, Section 9-2.4108(g) of the proposed Ordinance requires all reasonable efforts be made to create a facility that is architecturally similar with existing structures and styles including colors, textures, and ornamentation, in residential zones. Per Section 9-2.4108(m) of the proposed Ordinance, if visual impacts become unavoidable, a screen of plant materials must be used to screen the facility from public view. Similar requirements, such as stealth techniques, are utilized for commercial zones to minimize their aesthetic impacts on the surrounding environment. The requirements that limit aesthetic impacts in residential and commercial zones are defined in the proposed Ordinance by specific sections regulating setbacks, height, location, lighting, signs, aesthetics, landscaping, and maintenance.

In addition, the construction of new facilities, in all zones, except Open Space (OS), Lake (L), and Timberland Production Zone (TPZ), requires a special use permit, where the impacts of any proposed facility on scenic resources would be addressed on an individual basis. Ministerial review for applications requiring only a zoning clearance certificate would also be required to comply with the standards and regulations contained in the Ordinance. Telecommunications facilities in Open Space and Lake Zones, which are utilized to maintain the natural environment, are not permitted under the proposed Ordinance. Telecommunications facilities located within TPZ have the potential to minimally impact the aesthetic resources of the County. However, due

to the nature of Timberland Production Zones being heavily wooded, it is anticipated that the forested areas throughout the TPZ zoning would screen a facility from the public view, reducing aesthetic impacts. It is also anticipated that, due to the topography of Plumas County, telecommunications facilities would be located far out of view on mountain tops and not within the meadows designated as scenic areas.

The Plumas County General Plan contains a Conservation and Open Space Element. One of the goals within the element is the protection of open space land for the continuation of the County's rural character; scenic beauty; recreation; the protection of natural and cultural resources; and as consideration of open spaces as an important factor in the County's quality of life. The design and placement of a facility would be carefully reviewed so as to not impact the open space areas within the County. While Plumas County does not contain any designated state scenic highways, it does, however, have scenic roads with design standards designated in the General Plan. It is anticipated that the telecommunications facilities would not be located within the scenic corridor as building regulations, such as fall zone, etc., would keep the facilities from being located close to the scenic roads.

The placement of facilities is speculative; therefore, the impacts on its surroundings are also speculative. The discretionary review process required in all zones, except TPZ, for new telecommunications towers or poles would address substantial impacts to the visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings.

During construction, lighting may be required during nighttime construction. However, due to construction occurring during the daytime, lighting or glare is not a common concern. If any lighting is required during the construction of a facility, it is only temporary and would cease upon facility completion.

Permanently affixed lighting would not cause a significant increase in light or glare. Section 9-2.4108(e) of the proposed Ordinance states, "All telecommunications facilities shall orient and shield lighting so as to not be intrusive to any residential surrounding areas." The provision is specifically designed to reduce light or glare to a less than significant impact or eliminate light or glare that may impact day or nighttime views.

In addition, per Section 9-2.4106(b)(i)-(ii), excluding co-located facilities complying with Section 9-2.4109(d) of the proposed Ordinance, new tower or pole telecommunications facilities and those facilities proposed within one thousand feet (1000') of a residential zone, airport, or airstrip require a special use permit. The special use permit would allow the discretionary review necessary to analyze potential impacts to Scenic Resources on an individual basis.

It is anticipated that telecommunications facilities would not have a significant impact on Scenic Resources; therefore, the project would result in a **less-than-significant** impact to **Aesthetic Resources**.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

2. AGRICULTURE/FOREST RESOURCES.

Environmental Setting: Agriculture and forest resource lands comprise a major portion of Plumas County. The total acreage dedicated to agriculture and forest lands are approximately 159,200 acres and 1.4 million acres, respectively. Agriculture has been and is a significant part

of the economy in Plumas County. Livestock-raising, hay production, and pasture uses comprise a majority of the agricultural land uses, with the remaining land being used for nurseries, apiary, seed, fruit, potatoes, and grains. Of the approximate 159,200 acres used for agriculture, approximately 109,658 acres are under Williamson Act contracts and Important Agriculture Areas. Agricultural areas throughout the state, and those in Plumas County, may be studied by the California Department of Conservation to determine the land classification under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Currently, Plumas County is not mapped under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring program, with the exception of the Sierra Valley.

Agricultural lands are the second largest land use in the county, with forest resources being the first. The 1.4 million acres of forest lands in the county are comprised of private, State, and federal lands. Of those 1.4 million acres of forest land, approximately 1.0 million acres are National Forest System lands. Timber production is the primary forest product generated on private and public lands. Public lands include the National Forests, such as Plumas, Lassen, Toiyabe, and Tahoe.

The location of telecommunications facilities is speculative and may entail a negligible amount of tree removal during construction.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:			

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for , or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: Sierra Valley is the only area located within Plumas County that is mapped under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Due to the Sierra Valley being the only area mapped under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, it is anticipated that the project would not cause a conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. The project would not involve changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. In addition, if located on agricultural lands the special use permit process would address site specific issues lessening the potential for conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

The project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract. The Williamson Act contracts do not preclude telecommunications facilities.

The project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of forestland, as defined by Public Resources Code 12220(g).

Under Public Resources Code Section 51104(h), telecommunications facilities are a compatible use in the Timberland Production Zone, therefore there would be no conflicts with the existing zoning, or cause rezoning of timberland. Additionally, tree removal to construct a facility would undergo the regulatory processes of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, including environmental review.

The project would not involve changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Agriculture and Forest Resources.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

3. AIR QUALITY.

Environmental Setting: Plumas County's topography greatly influences its climate, which results in disproportionate levels of precipitation throughout the County. More commonly known as the rain shadow effect, this condition is created by the Sierra Nevada Crest which acts as a barrier to storm systems between the western and eastern portions of the County. Consequently, while the western side of the Sierra Nevada Range receives over 90 inches of rain annually, areas east of the Sierra Crest receive only 11 inches, with the majority occurring from October to April. Throughout the year, average temperatures, as measured at Portola, can range over 80 degrees Fahrenheit ($^{\circ}\text{F}$) during the summer months to 18°F during the winter months.

Plumas County is located within the Mountain Counties Air Basin, which is a relatively large air basin located entirely within the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) regulates air quality conditions within the Mountain Counties Air Basin. Plumas County is in attainment or unclassified for all federal Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS); however, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering designating the Portola Valley as being in non-attainment for PM_{2.5}, which consists of dust/particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or smaller, based on federal standards. Plumas County is currently designated as non-attainment for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ based on state standards administered by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Recorded trends are likely to continue because the primary causes of PM₁₀, such as road dust and wildfires, are not expected to decrease. These designations are based on annually collected data from three air quality monitoring stations located in the County. The County's largest sources of Particulate Matter are unpaved road dust, prescribed burning and residential fuel. Primary activities contributing to these pollutant emissions include wildfires, use of woodstoves, forestry management burns, residential open burning, vehicle traffic, and windblown dust. The varying topography of the air basin also contributes to localized air quality issues within the valley areas.

The Plumas County General Plan includes eight policies regarding air quality. One of those policies, COS 7.9.3, requires developers to implement dust suppression measures during excavation, grading, and site preparation activities as required by the NSAQMD. The NSAQMD has adopted various rules to control air pollution. One of those rules is Rule 226: Dust Control, which is meant to reduce and control fugitive dust emissions to the atmosphere.

Sensitive receptors are locations where individuals are more sensitive to the adverse effects of pollutants. The sensitivity to air pollution can be caused by health problems, prolonged exposure to air pollutants, or an increased susceptibility due to factors such as age. Sensitive receptors are considered residences, day care providers, hospitals, schools, elderly housing, and convalescent facilities.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: The project would not obstruct or conflict the implementation of any known applicable air quality plan. There are two means by which a telecommunications facility could impact air quality, direct and indirect emissions. The first is directly through emissions from a

facility. Telecommunications facilities, in general, do not emit greenhouse gases; emissions directly from a facility would be from an emergency generator being used temporarily during power loss, creating a negligible amount of greenhouse gas emissions. The second is indirectly through a minimal, temporary increase in vehicle traffic during facility construction and maintenance. As discussed in the Greenhouse Gas Emissions section, the project would result in no impact to greenhouse gas emissions.

Construction would potentially contribute to the levels of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} for which Plumas County is non-attainment, based on state standards administered by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), potentially conflicting with an air quality plan. The dry, windy climate throughout the County during the summer months creates a potential generation of dust when soil is disturbed. The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) has not adopted any attainment plans for PM_{2.5} or PM₁₀. Although, the proposed Portola Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) Attainment Plan that the NSAQMD is considering for adoption considers fugitive dust insignificant and does not establish a budget for that pollutant. Emissions due to construction would be temporary and minimal, and long-term impacts caused by vehicles used during occasional facility maintenance would also be minimal. In addition, the NSAQMD requires compliance for all public and private construction with Rule 226: Dust Control to minimize and control fugitive dust. The NSAQMD also requires a dust control plan for any project disturbing more than one (1) acre of natural surface area.

The operation or construction of a facility would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to air quality violations.

Due to the construction of a telecommunications facility being temporary, it is not expected to result in a cumulatively considerable increase of any criteria pollutants. In addition, the rules adopted by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District would be in effect such as Rule 226: Dust Control.

Pollutant concentrations would minimally and temporarily increase during the construction and occasional maintenance of a facility. Telecommunications facilities would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

Due to the nature of telecommunications facilities, objectionable odors would not be emitted.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Air Quality**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

Environmental Setting: Plumas County encompasses a range of habitat types, many of which influence the water quality and quantity of the Feather River Watershed. These habitats, or vegetation communities, provide food, shelter, movement corridors, and breeding opportunities for a variety of wildlife species, many unique to the Feather River Watershed and the larger Sierra Mountain region. Conifer, including Mixed Conifer, habitat types comprise approximately 72% of land coverage in the County and are habitats commonly found at higher elevations. Plants characteristic of this habitat include a variety of pines and firs. The common pines and firs

begin to disappear as distance is increased from the higher elevation Sierra region. The greater distances from the higher elevation Sierra region gives rise to sagebrush, annual grasslands, and the freshwater emergent wetland habitat types more common at lower elevations.

Plumas County and the larger Feather River Watershed area contain aquatic habitats such as small alpine streams, natural ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and rivers. Two types of fisheries found within the County are cold water river/stream species and warm water lake/reservoir species. Special-status species are plants or animals that are legally protected under the State and/or federal Endangered Species Acts (ESAs) or other regulations, and species that are considered by the scientific community to be sufficiently rare to qualify for such listing. The California Department of Fish and Game has documented habitat for over 90 different species of special concern in the County. These include several amphibians, such as the red-legged frog, bald eagles, osprey, several mammals, and plant/wildlife species associated with the wetland habitats.

Impacts to wildlife are possible, more specifically birds are more commonly known to be impacted by the installation of communications towers. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (www.fws.com), an estimated 6.6 million birds collide with telecommunications towers in the United States annually. To combat the issue of bird collisions, in April, 2018, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revised and released “Recommended Best Practices for Communication Tower Design, Siting, Construction, Maintenance, and Decommissioning.” The document sets forth guidelines for how to reduce impacts and mortality of birds due to a telecommunications tower or pole facility. Three of the best practices suggested by the document are co-locating new facilities, limiting facilities to a height no greater than 199 feet above ground level, and minimizing light emitted.

According to the study titled, “An Estimate of Avian Mortality at Communication Towers in the United States and Canada” authored by Travis Longcore in conjunction with colleagues from various universities and Federal agencies, the Sierra Nevada Mountains had an estimated annual avian mortality of 343 birds for towers greater than 60 meters (approx.196.9 feet) above ground level while areas such as the Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau had an estimated annual avian mortality of 29,175 birds. The study, as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, found that the avian most commonly colliding with telecommunications towers was night-migrating songbirds.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California

Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Impact Discussion: The project would not have a substantial adverse impact, directly or indirectly, on any species, habitat, or community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Of the eight birds identified in Plumas County as special status species, none are identified as night-migrating songbirds, which are the most common birds colliding with telecommunications towers and poles. In addition, the proposed Ordinance would implement some of the best practices suggested by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Recommended Best Practices for Communication Tower Design, Siting, Construction, Maintenance, and Decommissioning." Two of those best practices that would be implemented by the proposed Ordinance are a heavy emphasis of co-location and setting the maximum tower height in all zones to 200 feet. The proposed Ordinance also contains Section 9-2.4108(e) which requires lighting to be oriented and shielded so as to not be intrusive to residential surrounding areas,

which would also aid in reducing birds colliding with telecommunications facilities. While the Recommended Best Practices recommends a tower height of 199 feet or less, it is not anticipated that the additional foot of tower height allowed by the proposed Ordinance would cause a significant impact.

The proposed Ordinance is not anticipated to have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

The General Plan contains a specific policy, COS 7.2.13, which requires the County to consult County maintained biological resource maps during the discretionary permit review process in order to identify habitat concerns and guide mitigations that would reduce biological resource impacts. To avoid significant impacts to wildlife and their habitats, the County would consult the Important Wildlife Habitat Areas and Important Wildlife Migration Routes identified by the Plumas County General Plan during the discretionary review process.

The proposed Ordinance or a telecommunications facility does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, or with any provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Tree removal to construct a facility would undergo the regulatory processes of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, including environmental review, prior to tree removal. One of the applications that may be required is the filing of a Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption, which is required when a timberland owner proposes to carry out a project that will result in timberland being converted to a non-timber growing use. The Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption specifically states, “No sites of rare, threatened, or endangered plants or animals or species shall be disturbed, threatened, or damaged.”

In addition, as mentioned throughout this Initial Study, the proposed locations and design of telecommunications facilities are speculative. It is anticipated that co-located and building mounted would result in no impact to Biological Resources. The proposed Ordinance would implement standards and regulations that have never before existed, giving the County the ability to conduct discretionary review in accordance with CEQA for all new tower or pole telecommunications facilities, with the exception of those located in TPZ. Each individual new tower or pole facility would undergo discretionary review, analyzing the project’s impacts to biological resources.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Biological Resources**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Environmental Setting: The cultural resources located throughout Plumas County can be attributed to the rich history of the county. The history of Plumas County begins from the time that the glaciers began to recede from the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountain ranges. Due to

the glacial recession, for thousands of years, humans have been utilizing the Sierra and Cascade ranges.

The primary inhabitants of the county prior to European settlement were the Mountain Maidu. The Mountain Maidu people have lived in Plumas County from hundreds to thousands of years ago, and still live here. Other tribes, such as the Washoe and the Paiute most likely utilized the area while not settling permanently. It is likely that the Mountain Maidu people existed in small, scattered, familial groups in the valleys of Plumas County. While maintaining permanent villages in the lower elevations of the glacial valleys, during spring and fall, smaller groups traveled to the higher elevations, such as the ridge tops and valleys of the Sierras, setting up open brush shelters. During the winter months, villages remained occupied and relied mostly on stored and preserved food.

In the spring of 1850, gold-seeking miners poured into the region in search of the fabled “Gold” Lake. Mining camps throughout the County were quickly established. Rivers were turned from their beds, ditches were dug to bring water from distant sources to the diggings, and the land was turned upside down.

The Mountain Maidu adapted to the changing environment by living on portions of ranch properties. In some cases the Mountain Maidu adopted the name of the ranching family associated with the ranch on which they resided. European settlers brought illnesses the Maidu had never been exposed to, causing a significant decline of the Maidu population.

One of the larger groups to settle in Plumas County during the Gold Rush years were the Chinese. After the decline of the mining industry in Plumas County around the 1900s, most of the Chinese population left the area.

The North, Middle, and South forks of the Feather River were named in 1821 by Captain Luis Arguello as the Rio de las Plumas (“River of Feathers”) after the Spanish explorer saw what looked like bird feathers floating in the water. “Plumas”, the Spanish word for “feathers”, later became the name for the county. The river and its forks were the primary sites of early mining activity, with many smaller camps located on their tributaries. Over the next five decades, gold mining remained the main industry of the county.

Ranching operations in the area also began during the Gold Rush years, with several large ranches established in the valleys of Plumas County. Dairies provided milk, butter, and cheese to the gold fields and later provided dairy products to the silver mining operations in northern Nevada. Many of the Swiss and Italian families who settled and worked the local meadows and valleys have third and fourth generations living and ranching their agricultural lands in the county today.

In 1850, the famous mountain man James P. Beckwourth, discovered the lowest pass across the Sierra Nevada and the following year navigated a wagon trail for California-bound emigrants from western Nevada, through Plumas County, to the Sacramento Valley.

In March of 1854, Plumas County was formed from the eastern portion of Butte County. After a heated election, the town of Quincy was selected as the county seat. In 1864, a large part of northern Plumas County was split off to form Lassen County. Shortly after, a portion of Sierra County was annexed to Plumas County, which included the mining town of La Porte.

After the construction of the Western Pacific Railroad in 1910, the timber industry emerged as the primary economic force in the county. Before the railroad, lumber was milled for local use. The completion of the railroad gave the ability for local mills to distribute their lumber nationwide. In March, 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt established the Plumas National Forest, with boundaries roughly encompassing the branches of the Feather River.

Along with the railroad's construction, up the Feather River Canyon came some of the earliest tourists to the county. Resorts and lodges popped up at intervals along the "Feather River Route" to accommodate fishermen, hikers, and sightseers. The last passenger train ran in 1970, and the line is now devoted to freight traffic only. In 1937, the Feather River Highway, touted as an "all weather route," was completed through the Feather River Canyon from Oroville to Quincy, linking Plumas County year-round to the Sacramento Valley. The railroads that were once utilized as a main source of transportation in the county have left a legacy of notable bridges and other railway features throughout the county.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in § 15064.5?
- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?
- c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?
- d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Impact Discussion: The Ordinance contains provisions to protect against the adverse changing or destruction of cultural resources. The Ordinance requires a special use permit for a new tower or pole telecommunications facility, where the cultural resources impact(s) specific to the site would be analyzed in compliance with CEQA. In addition, the Ordinance contains Section 9-2.4108(p) which states:

Should development activities reveal the presence of cultural resources (i.e., artifact concentrations, including, but not limited to, projectile points and other stone tools or chipping debris, cans, glass, etc.; structural remains; human skeletal remains), work within fifty (50) feet of the find shall cease immediately until a qualified professional archaeologist can be consulted to evaluate the remains and implement appropriate mitigation procedures. Should human skeletal remains be encountered, State law requires immediate notification of the County Coroner. Should the County Coroner determine that such remains are in an archaeological context, the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento shall be notified immediately, pursuant to State law, to arrange for Native American participation in determining the disposition of such remains.

The provision detailed in the Ordinance would protect from the adverse change, destruction, or disturbance of cultural resources.

Tree removal to construct a facility would undergo the regulatory processes of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, including environmental review, prior to tree removal. One of the applications that may be required is the filing of a Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption, which is required when a timberland owner proposes to carry out a project that will result in timberland being converted to a non-timber growing use. The Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption specifically states, "No timber operations are allowed on significant or archaeological sites."

The provision detailed in the Ordinance in conjunction with the regulatory processes of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection would protect from the adverse change, destruction, or disturbance of cultural resources. Therefore, there would be **no impact to Cultural Resources**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Environmental Setting: Geologic hazards pose a potential danger to property and human safety, and are present due to the risk of naturally occurring geologic events and processes affecting human development. The Lake Almanor Fault, Butt Creek Fault Zone, Indian Valley Fault, and the Mohawk Valley Fault are four of the several faults mapped by the California Geologic Survey in Plumas County. In addition, the County is surrounded by faults, two of the closer, more active faults are the Honey Lake and Fort Sage Faults. Although the County is surrounded by and contains faults, the County is not located within a delineated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Although the faults located within and around the county have the potential to result in seismic activity causing an impact on County residents and property, seismic hazard mapping indicates a low seismic hazard potential for Plumas County.

While Plumas County contains varying soils types, the majority of the County is consists of denser granular soils and bedrock at shallow depths; therefore, liquefaction potential is considered low.

The County is located in an area with varying topography and slopes. Areas with steep slopes in the County could be prone to landslides, mud slides, and avalanches. Landslides are dependent on slope, geology, rainfall, excavation, or seismic activity. Mud slides are often caused by heavy rainfall. Areas that have recently been subject to wildfire are susceptible to mudslides. Avalanches consist of a rapid flow of snow down a slope. They often reoccur in the same areas and can be triggered by varying weather patterns and human activity. The volcanic soils in the eastern portion of the Plumas National Forest and the areas along the North and Middle Forks of the Feather River are susceptible to landslides.

The rate of erosion is influenced by a myriad of variables, such as rainfall, runoff, slope gradient, vegetation, physical soil characteristics, and human activity. Human activities, such as timber harvesting, water diversion, irrigation practices, road and railroad construction, grazing, and mining have all contributed to in-stream water quality issues, such as sediment transport, that impact aquatic life and riparian vegetation. Approximately 70% of the County is considered as having a moderate potential for soil erosion, while less than 1% is considered a high potential for soil erosion. The remaining portion of the county is either considered low erosion potential or is not mapped. High erosion potential occurs at higher elevations in the County.

Expansive soils change due to the moisture content within the soil. Expansive soils shrink when dry and expand or swell when wet. The swelling and shrinking can cause damage to homes, foundations, roads, utilities, and other structures. The California Building Code and Uniform Building Code (1994) Table 18-1-B both set forth the classifications of expansive soils. The expansion index ranges from 0 to 130, with 0-20 being a very low potential expansion, 91-130 being a high expansion potential, and greater than 130 being a very high expansion potential. Highly expansive soils are undesirable for use as engineered fill or subgrade directly underneath foundations or pavement, and must be replaced with non-expansive engineered fill or require treatment to mitigate their expansion potential.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

- a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
 - i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other

substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: Although site locations are speculative, proposed telecommunications facilities would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects due to earthquakes or seismic shaking. All facilities would be designed, installed, and subject to the requirements of the California Building Code's seismic requirements. In addition to facilities adhering to California Building Code, the proposed Ordinance would place strict requirements on the construction of a telecommunications facility. For example, per Section 9-2.4108(b)(2) of the Ordinance, a facility must have one foot of setback for every foot in facility height plus an additional 25 feet, and in residential zones, facility height is limited to 35 feet.

Although Plumas County is considered to have a low seismic and liquefaction hazard potential, which renders geologic impacts a less than significant risk to people and structures, every new

tower or pole telecommunications facility, except those in TPZ, would undergo the discretionary review process in accordance with CEQA, analyzing all site specific geologic and soil characteristics and conditions.

Telecommunications facilities do not require the installation of septic systems or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

Therefore, there would be **no impact to Geology and Soils.**

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

7. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.

Environmental Setting: Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are comprised of a variety of gases. Greenhouse gases are: carbon dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), Nitrous Oxide (N₂O), and fluorinated gases. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the greenhouse gases emitted are approximately 81% carbon dioxide, 10% methane, 6% nitrous oxide, and 3% fluorinated gases. Greenhouse gases, along with other naturally occurring processes, have been shown to have a significant impact on the warming of the Earth. The rise in temperature is due to the greenhouse gases being similar to an adiabatic process or blanket around the Earth. Some of the solar radiation reflected from Earth's surface is absorbed by the gases causing the rate at which radiation is emitted from Earth to decrease.

Greenhouse gases are expelled from a variety of sources. The three largest sources are electricity generation, transportation, and industrial processes. The main process that electricity generation, transportation, and industrial processes emit greenhouse gases, such as CO₂, is through the combustion of fossil fuels. According to the EPA, CO₂ emissions, which are the largest portion of greenhouse gases, is emitted by transportation processes and contributes approximately 34% of the carbon dioxide emissions.

To combat greater increases in greenhouse gases, various forms of legislation have been implemented. Some of the major legislative changes were Executive Orders S-3-05 and B-30-15, AB 32, and SB 32. The first major piece of legislation that set emissions reduction targets was Executive Order (EO) S-3-05 signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. EO S-3-05 established the target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to below 2000 levels by 2010, 1990 levels by 2020, and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. On September 27, 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Assembly Bill (AB) 32, also known as the California Global Warming Solutions Act. AB 32 gave authority to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to implement and enforce the targets set forth in EO S-3-05. More recently, in 2015, Governor Brown signed EO B-30-15, which was an expansion of AB 32. The expansion set the goal to have a 40% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030. On September 8, 2016, to further empower CARB to institute regulations to meet the aggressive target set by EO B-30-15, SB 32, also known as the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: emissions limit, was signed into law. To ensure the goals of EO S-3-05 and EO B-30-15 are met, AB 32 established mandatory greenhouse gas emissions reporting, verification, and other requirements for operators of certain facilities that directly emit greenhouse gases.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

- a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?
- b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Impact Discussion: Construction and operation would potentially emit greenhouse gases. The greenhouse gases emitted during construction would be due to combustion processes from vehicles being used in the construction of a facility. In addition, the operation of a facility may require maintenance and/or monitoring, therefore requiring a small number of site visits per year. The temporary nature of construction and the negligible traffic increase due to site maintenance and/or monitoring would contribute a negligible increase in greenhouse gases.

Plumas County is under the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). As discussed in the Air Quality section above, the purpose of the district is to monitor air quality levels and set rules and regulations to limit air pollution. Implementation of the applicable rules and regulations set forth by NSAQMD would limit air pollution to below levels of significance. The Ordinance does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, nor does it conflict with any General Plan policy or goal designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, all new tower or pole telecommunications facilities, except facilities in the Timberland Production Zone, require discretionary review in compliance with CEQA under the proposed Ordinance, where greenhouse gas emissions impacts would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Greenhouse Gas Emissions.**

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

8. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

Environmental Setting: Throughout Plumas County, a variety of hazardous wastes may exist and can be transported in a variety of ways. Hazardous wastes can be liquids, solids, or gases. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines hazardous wastes as hazardous materials

that are discarded, abandoned, or recycled. The EPA groups hazardous wastes in three categories: Listed Wastes, Characteristic Wastes, and Mixed Radiological and Hazardous Wastes. Examples of the most common types of hazardous materials that are routinely transported and used throughout the County are diesel, gasoline, oils, cleaning materials, and propane.

Transportation-related public health and safety issues have the potential to occur along the major thoroughfares of the County. The highest potential for transportation-related incidents exists along the County's main east-west thoroughfare, State Route 70, and along State Routes 36 and 89. The majority of hazardous materials shipped through and within the County consists primarily of petroleum products, such as heating fuels, gasoline, diesel, and propane. The County's railroad corridors, both Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, are an additional public safety concern since freight trains also carry bulk containers of hazardous materials such as petroleum.

Locally, the Plumas County Environmental Health Division (EHD) manages the County's hazardous materials management program. The EHD maintains the Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Inventory Program. The program enforces the State "right-to-know" laws passed in 1984 and requires local businesses to provide public access to information about the types and amounts of chemicals being used on their property. Businesses must plan and prepare for a chemical emergency through the preparation of a Hazardous Materials Inventory that is certified annually and an inventory of hazardous updates annually. EHD also regulates the use, storage, and treatment of hazardous wastes and above-ground storage tanks.

In addition to the more commonly known hazards, one type of hazard that is of interest is electromagnetic radiation emissions from telecommunications facilities. To control excessive emissions outputs from telecommunications facilities, facility interference issues, etc., the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other federal regulatory bodies impose specific regulations. Plumas County must rely on these standards. In recent years, studies have been conducted to examine the impacts of electromagnetic radiation on humans and animals. A webpage published by the American Cancer Society detailed multiple studies conducted on humans and animals. One of the studies conducted on humans by British researchers compared more than 1,000 families with young children with cancer against a group of children without cancer. The study found no correlation between exposure to a mother during pregnancy and the risk of early childhood cancer. One of the studies conducted by the US National Toxicology Program exposed rats and mice from the time they were born until they were two years of age to RF radiation for nine hours a day. The study concluded that there was an increased risk of tumors called malignant schwannomas of the heart for male rats, while male and female mice had no increased risk.

Other studies have been conducted to determine the impacts of electromagnetic frequency emissions on humans. For example, a webpage published by the World Health Organization titled *Electromagnetic Fields and Public Health* states:

Over the past 15 years, studies examining a potential relationship between RF transmitters and cancer have been published. These studies have not provided evidence

that RF exposure from the transmitters increases the risk of cancer. Likewise, long-term animal studies have not established an increased risk of cancer from exposure to RF fields, even at levels that are much higher than produced by base stations and wireless networks.

The study titled *Survey Study of People Living in the Vicinity of Cellular Phone Base Station* by R. Satini and colleagues at the Institution of Applied Sciences, Biochemistry and Pharmacology in Villeurbanne, France, studied 530 people (270 men and 260 women) living both near and far from a telecommunications facility. The study subjects were located at distances from a telecommunications facility ranging from less than 10 meters (m), 10 to 50 m, 50 to 100 m, 100 to 200 m, 200 to 300 m, and 300 m or not exposed. The results of the study were that symptoms such as nausea, loss of appetite, visual disturbances, difficulty in moving, irritability, depressive tendencies, difficulties in concentration, loss of memory, dizziness, lower libido, headaches, sleep disruption, feelings of discomfort, skin problems, and fatigue were more common for people closer than 300 m than for people farther than 300 m or not exposed. Some symptoms were more common at different distances from the telecommunications facility. The study concluded that it is advisable to not site telecommunications base stations closer than 300 m (approx. 984.3 feet) to populations in order to reduce sickness due to radio frequency emissions.

The study titled *Increased Incidence of Cancer Near A Cellphone Transmitter Station* by Ronni Wolf, MD and Danny Wolf, MD of the Dermatology Unit, Kaplan Medical Center, Rechovot, and the Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel-Aviv University located in Tel-Aviv, Israel studied approximately 1,844 people. The study was conducted on people living in the vicinity of a telecommunications facility for at least three to seven years. The study suggested an increased occurrence of cancer in proximity to cellphone transmitter stations.

Plumas County must rely on the Federal Standards for electromagnetic emissions as a baseline as the County cannot regulate such standards.

Wildland fires are a major hazard in Plumas County. Wind, steepness of terrain, and naturally volatile or hot-burning vegetation contribute to wildland fire hazard potential. The principal ingredients of wildland fires - fuel, topography, and weather - combine to make highly hazardous fire conditions throughout much of the county. Fire protection is categorized in three ways, Local Responsibility Areas (LRA), State Responsibility Areas (SRA), or Wildland Urban Interface Fire Areas (WUIFA). Applicable building standards serve to address potential health and safety impacts within the LRA. Wildland Urban Interface Building Standards (WUIBS) serve to address potential health and safety impacts within a SRA, Local Agency Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, or WUIFA.

Located within Plumas County are three public-use airports: Nervino Airport in Beckwourth, Rogers Field Airport in Chester, and Gansner Airport in Quincy.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?
- b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?
- c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of existing or proposed school?
- d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?
- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two (2) miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Impact Discussion: Construction of a telecommunications facility would involve the use of potentially hazardous materials. Some potential materials are: automotive and heavy equipment fuels and oils, paints, and cleaning materials. The use of these materials are temporary due to the temporary nature of construction, and the materials being utilized would be stored according to the manufacturer's specifications, as well as local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Infrequent maintenance visits would involve the use of fuel powered vehicles and/or equipment and would be used in conformance with the manufacturer's instructions and local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Due to the nature of construction and operation of telecommunications facilities, the routine transport, disposal, or use of hazardous materials is not expected, nor is a telecommunications facility expected to cause a reasonable foreseeable upset or accident releasing hazardous materials.

As detailed in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, state and local governments are prohibited from regulating the location of telecommunications towers based on their radio frequency emissions. The Federal Communications Commission has standards and regulations set in place for maximum allowable exposure of RF radiation to humans from telecommunications facilities. The greatest extent that the proposed Ordinance may control, based on federal law, is contained in 47 U.S.C. 332 (c)(7)(b)(iv) which states:

No state or local government or instrumentality thereof may regulate the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Commission's [Federal Communications Commission] regulations concerning such emissions.

The proposed Ordinance contains Section 9-2.4108(l)(1) which requires a biennial RF/EMF emissions report, prepared in accordance with FCC reporting standards, that shall be submitted

to the Plumas County Planning Department by the facility owner or operator demonstrating facility compliance with FCC OET Bulletin 65. In addition, Section 9-2.4108(l)(2) of the proposed Ordinance also requires telecommunications facilities to not exceed exposure limits set by the FCC, if limits are exceeded, determine the transmitter(s) of concern and cease its or their operation until it's or they're brought into compliance with FCC standards. Therefore, the project would result in a **less-than-significant impact**.

Plumas County has a minimal amount of sites considered to be hazardous materials sites pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. It is not anticipated that a telecommunications facility would be located on one of the hazardous materials sites located in Plumas County. As mentioned previously, new tower or pole telecommunications facilities requiring discretionary review under the proposed Ordinance would be reviewed for potentially significant hazards during the discretionary review process. In addition, tree removal to construct a facility would undergo the regulatory processes of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, including environmental review, prior to tree removal. Therefore, the project would result in **no impact**.

There is a potential for a telecommunications facility to be located within two (2) miles of one of the three (3) public-use airports located in Plumas County. People would reside or work in the project area during construction and occasional maintenance of a telecommunications facility. Due to construction being temporary and maintenance visits being infrequent, it is anticipated that a telecommunications facility would not result in a safety hazard. In addition, Section 9-2.4016(b)(1)(ii) and (iii) of the proposed Ordinance sets forth that all facilities, excluding co-located facilities, within one thousand (1000) feet of an airport or airstrip, or a facility requiring Airport Land Use Commission review, requires a special use permit. The special use permit would allow for the discretionary review necessary to ensure no facility would result in a safety hazard to people residing or working in the project area. In addition, no matter the facility proposed, per Section 9-2.4107(a)(1)(v)(aa)-(ab) of the proposed Ordinance, facility plans detailing facility height, elevations, and any other pertinent dimensions are required. Per Section 9-2.4108(c)(1) of the proposed Ordinance, telecommunications facilities shall not be located so as to cause obstruction of currently existing or proposed air navigation operations. Facility plans would be reviewed and if a proposed telecommunications facility would cause obstruction of airport operations, the County would not approve the facility. Additionally, as required by the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCP), any project, including those exempt from the proposed Ordinance, would be subject to Airport Land Use Commission review for those facilities located within the Airport Influence Area, reviewing for compatibility with "Basic Safety Compatibility Qualities," an excerpt from the "California Airport Land Use Handbook," and other applicable standards and regulations. Lastly, construction would adhere to the applicable safety standards and regulations set forth by entities such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). It is not anticipated that the project would result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. Therefore, the project would result in a **less-than-significant impact**.

Plumas County does not contain any known private airstrips. Therefore, the project would result in **no impact**.

The proposed Ordinance would not impair the implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Section 9-2.4108(d) of the proposed Ordinance contains a section requiring compliance with all applicable building and electrical codes and applicable regulations adopted pursuant to Public Resources Code 4290. For telecommunications facilities located within a Local Responsibility Area, applicable building standards would ensure public health and safety needs are met, while areas located within State Responsibility Areas or Wildland Urban Interface Areas would be required to adhere to applicable building standards and the Wildland Urban Interface Building Standards. Therefore, applicable building and electrical standards would ensure the public health and safety needs are met. In addition, all facilities, including those exempt from the Ordinance, would be required to adhere to all applicable Building Code regulations, such as for fall zone, etc. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

9. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY.

Environmental Setting: Water quality may be impacted by a variety of factors; one factor is erosion of the earth's soil by natural, physical forces. Erosion is due to, and may be accelerated by, precipitation, running water, and wind. The rate of erosion is influenced by a myriad of variables, such as rainfall, runoff, slope gradient, vegetation, physical soil characteristics, and human activity. Human activities, such as timber harvesting, water diversion, irrigation practices, road and railroad construction, grazing, and mining have all contributed to in-stream water quality issues, such as sediment transport, that impact aquatic life and riparian vegetation. Approximately 70% of the County is considered as having a moderate potential for soil erosion, while less than 1% is considered a high potential for soil erosion. The remaining portion of the county is either considered low erosion potential or is not mapped. High erosion potential occurs at higher elevations in the County.

Flooding can occur in two fashions, the first being naturally due to excessive amounts of water in flood zones and the second is due to inundation by water due to dam or levee failure. Plumas County has been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to determine the locations of the Special Flood Hazard Areas, such as the 100-year flood hazard area. FEMA has identified the seven areas located in, or in the vicinity of, Chester, Greenville, Crescent Mills, Taylorsville, Quincy, Vinton, and the City of Portola as being in the 100-year flood hazard area.

The second means of flooding can occur due to a partial or complete failure of a levee or dam, causing an inundation of water to flood the adjoining regions. There are approximately 28 dams with the smallest being 50 acre-feet and the largest being 1,208,000 acre feet. The dams located within Plumas County that FEMA has identified as having inundations areas are along the North and Middle Forks of the Feather River, Indian Creek between Taylorsville and Antelope Lake, Sierra Valley, and Indian Valley. The inundation areas also closely coincide with the flood zones identified by FEMA.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect floodflows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: The installation of a telecommunications facility may entail a slight increase in on-site impermeable surfaces, resulting in a minimal increase in storm water runoff. It is anticipated that the minimal increase in storm water runoff would result in a **less-than-significant** impact in all zones. Although it is anticipated to be a less-than-significant impact, all facilities would adhere to the applicable building code standards such as those detailed in Appendix J of the California Building Code, Part 2, Volume 2, titled *Grading* for grading, erosions control, drainage, etc. In addition, new tower or pole telecommunications facilities, except those located in Timberland Production Zones, requiring discretionary review under the proposed Ordinance would be reviewed in accordance with CEQA for any hydrology and water quality issues. Per Section 9-2.4107(a)(2)(ii)(ab), facilities requiring discretionary review under the proposed Ordinance require the submittal of a drainage plan. A drainage plan serves to address potential impacts from storm water runoff.

Telecommunications facilities would not deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater due to not utilizing groundwater.

The construction of telecommunications facilities would require a minimal amount of ground disturbance. The minimal ground disturbance is negligible.

The adoption of the proposed Ordinance would not cause the construction of or place housing within the 100-year flood hazard area.

The very limited footprint of telecommunications facilities and accessory structures would not impede or redirect flows in the 100-year flood hazard area. Structures located within a floodplain and requiring a building permit would be subject to the applicable floodplain standards for construction as set forth in Plumas County Code.

The adoption of the proposed Ordinance would not place telecommunications facilities within the area of a levee or dam.

Due to the location of Plumas County, the project would not be inundated by a tsunami or mudflow. Seiche is a possibility for any body of water; a telecommunications facility would not increase the possibility of a seiche.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Hydrology and Water Quality**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

10. LAND USE AND PLANNING.

Environmental Setting: The predominate land use within Plumas County consists of open space use with a majority of land, approximately 94% of the total County area, dedicated to timberland or other managed resource uses. Consequently, many of these lands are managed for a combination of resource values, including, but not limited to recreation, mining, timber production, agriculture production, and cultural and historic resources. That leaves approximately 6% of the land area for uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, and public service.

Resources, history, and people have all had a significant role in defining Plumas County. Communities originally developed and evolved on the landscape based on proximity to the resources that provided a livelihood. The Mountain Maidu established villages in the valleys of the County where there was shelter from winter storms and access to good hunting and planting gathering sites. Upon arrival and settlement of Europeans in the mid-1800s, towns first grew up around mining activities, then log mills and later around transportation such as stagecoach and railroad.

The land use pattern across the County today reflects this historical approach to settlement in a time before the automobile. Today many counties and cities across California and the United States are trying to institute smart growth, transient-oriented design, form-based development, and to re-focus their communities into walkable places. Plumas County has, with a few exceptions, maintained its rural character with its compact and walkable communities.

The Land Use Element of the Plumas County General Plan defines the goals, policies, and implementation measures that will facilitate appropriate growth and development. Between the years of 1981 and 2012, Plumas County encountered an approximate 13% increase in population. In recent years, between 2000 and 2010, Plumas County experienced a 4% decline in

population. Although, the California Department of Finance predicts that Plumas County's population growth will be approximately 1% per decade between 2010 and 2050.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but no limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: It is not common or expected to have a telecommunications facility physically divide an established community. The purpose of the proposed Ordinance is to establish location criteria; therefore, avoiding impacts such as a facility physically dividing an established community. Furthermore, the proposed Ordinance specifically requires that a special use permit be obtained for all new tower or pole telecommunications facilities in all zones, except TPZ. The special use permit would allow discretionary review of an individual facility in accordance with CEQA.

The proposed Ordinance does not conflict with any land use plans, policies, goals, or regulations. The proposed Ordinance is the fulfillment of the following goal and policy in the General Plan:

Goal 1.9 Communication Infrastructure

To accommodate communication infrastructure facilities while requiring site provisions that protect the visual quality, health and character of the County.

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1.9.1 Communication Tower Location Criteria

The County shall provide site development criteria in the County's Zoning Code.

The implementation measure in the General Plan for the goal and policy is to “undertake necessary and appropriate zoning code and zoning map changes to promote and encourage the appropriate location for cellular tower facilities and other communication technology infrastructure within the county, utilizing such measures as co-location.” Currently, Plumas County Code Section 9-2.415 exempts facilities; the proposed Ordinance would implement regulations and standards upon facilities that previously had no oversight. The proposed Ordinance does not conflict with any County regulations as it is an update to Title 9 of the Plumas County Code.

The project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Land Use and Planning.**

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

11. MINERAL RESOURCES.

Environmental Setting: Since the 1800s, mineral resources have been a major part of the economy in Plumas County. Gold, copper, aggregate, and silver are some of the mineral resources that have been mined and exported. Although the significance of the mining industry has been declining over the past several decades, gold and copper mining speculation continues to contribute to the County’s economy.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: In general, telecommunications facilities are not known to occupy a large area of land causing a loss in mineral resources. Although sites are speculative, it is anticipated that a facility would not impact mineral resources. In addition, the installation of new tower or

pole facilities requires discretionary review in all zones, except Timberland Production Zones, under the proposed Ordinance. Therefore, telecommunications facilities would be reviewed on an individual basis in accordance with CEQA, analyzing impacts to mineral resources.

Additionally, tree removal to construct a facility would undergo the regulatory processes of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, including environmental review, prior to tree removal.

Therefore, there would be **no impact to Mineral Resources**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

12. NOISE.

Environmental Setting: The dominant sources of noise in Plumas County are mobile, related to vehicle (including truck traffic), aircraft and train transportation, to a lesser extent. Common stationary sources in the county include lumber mills and aggregate mining and processing facilities. To a lesser extent, construction sites are also considered a stationary source of short-term, or temporary, noise in the County. Common noise sources within Plumas County are the main roadways, railroads, some stationary activities, and airports.

Traffic contributes to the noise within the County. The primary factors that determine roadway noise levels are traffic volumes, a percentage of heavy trucks and buses on individual roadways, average vehicle speed, and presence of natural or human-made noise attenuation features such as sound wall and landscaping. Given the predominantly rural nature of the County, roadway noise impacts are those associated with the larger regional, or Statewide, network.

The traffic volumes on County roadways are fairly low, with most roadways experiencing fewer than 3,000 vehicles per year. The 24 hour average decibel (dB) level associated with a majority of the roadways is typically between 65 dB and 70 dB.

The second contributor to noise within the County is the railroad. Plumas County has two active rail lines used by the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railway (BNSF). While both lines are primarily used for freight and local shipping and receiving, a portion of the UPRR line through the Feather River Canyon is recognized as a scenic route, with occasional chartered passenger trains. Daily traffic on the UPRR and BNSF lines in the County consists of a limited number of trains per day. This volume creates minimal noise impacts in terms of frequency.

Stationary noise sources also contribute to the noise throughout the county. One of the temporary, stationary noise sources is construction. First, construction crew commutes and the transport of construction equipment and materials to construction sites would incrementally increase noise levels on access roads leading to the sites. Second, noise would be generated during excavation, grading, and erection of buildings. Construction typically occurs in discrete steps, each of which has a distinctive mix of equipment and, consequently, distinctive noise characteristics. These various sequential phases would change the character of the noise

generated on each site and, therefore, the noise levels surrounding these sites as construction progresses.

Three public use airports are located in the County: Nervino Airport in Beckwourth, Rogers Field Airport in Chester, and Gansner Field Airport in Quincy. Airport noise caused by aircraft depends primarily on the type of aircraft and the frequency and direction of flights, with specific noise events caused by aircraft flyovers, takeoffs, and landings. Noise from aircraft warming up early in the morning can also be a significant noise source from airports. In addition, helicopter related noise is common due to helipads being located at Rogers Field Airport, Gansner Field Airport, in Greenville, and at Plumas District Hospital.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project result in:

- a) Expose persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?
- b) Expose persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?
- c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?
- d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?
- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan area or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two (2) miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose

people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Impact Discussion: The proposed ordinance would implement requirements for the location and design of new telecommunications facilities. Although it is speculative as to the location and design of a proposed facility, noise and ground borne vibrations, if any, are expected to occur temporarily during construction and, on occasion, during maintenance of a facility or emergency generator operation. It is anticipated that the project would result in a less-than-significant impact to Noise.

Furthermore, the General Plan contains policy N 3.1.4 which is specifically designed to limit the noise due to construction on surrounding land uses. Under the proposed Ordinance, all new tower or pole telecommunications facilities, except those in TPZ, require discretionary review in accordance with CEQA, including those within 1000 feet of an airport or residential zone, or requiring Airport Land Use Commission review. During the discretionary review, noise impacts would be analyzed for conformance with the Plumas County General Plan and all other applicable requirements on an individual basis. It is not expected that facilities would require frequent maintenance, but to help control noise during facility maintenance in residential zones, the Ordinance contains Section 9-2.4108(o)(1) which limits maintenance hours to 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

The proposed Ordinance does not conflict with any of the provisions outlined in the General Plan or applicable standards of other agencies and there are no known private airstrips located within Plumas County.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Noise**.

Mitigation Required: No mitigation is required.

13. POPULATION AND HOUSING.

Environmental Setting: Plumas County is considered one of the most rural counties in California. The population, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, was 20,007, giving a population per square mile of 7.8. Plumas County's population is expected to grow annually by 0.7 percent through 2050, according to the California Department of Finance. The gradual increase in population would lead to a gradual expansion of home and business developments while maintaining the rural character of the County.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?
- b) Displace a substantial number of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?
- c) Displace a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Impact Discussion: The proposed Ordinance would regulate the installation of telecommunications facilities which would not include home or business development projects, or cause the extension of roadways or other infrastructure. Therefore, there would be **no impact to Population and Housing.**

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

14. PUBLIC SERVICES.

Environmental Setting: Public services are provided by a variety of service providers, including the County, special districts, and state and federal agencies. Special districts include the fire protection districts, school districts, County Service Agencies (CSAs), Community Service Districts (CSDs), and Public Utility Districts (PUDs). All project sites would be served by the Plumas County Sheriff.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse				

physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities, need for new or physically altered government facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: Telecommunications facilities would not cause a physical impact to or additional demand for public services such as fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities. Population growth is the driving force behind an increased demand on fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other facilities. The proposed Ordinance or construction of a telecommunications facility would not directly or indirectly induce population growth causing an increased demand on fire protection, police protection, schooling, parks, or other public facilities.

Therefore, there would be **no impact to Public Services.**

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

15. RECREATION.

Environmental Setting: People utilize the various areas around Plumas County for recreation. Recreation areas within the County are public parks, trails, forest lands, lakes, waterways, and other open space areas.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: As mentioned in the Public Services section, population growth is the driving force behind an increased demand on parks and other facilities. The proposed Ordinance or construction of a telecommunications facility would not directly or indirectly induce population growth causing an increased demand on parks or other public facilities. Therefore, there would be **no impact to Recreation.**

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

16. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC.

Environmental Setting: The state highway system provides the key inter-community roadway links within Plumas County. East-west access across Plumas County is provided by State Route (SR) 36 in the northern portion of the county and by SR 70 in the central/southern portions of the county, while SR 89 provides north-south access across the county. SR 147 serves the east side of Lake Almanor, while SR 49 and SR 284 provide access south towards Loyalton and north to Frenchman Reservoir in the far east portion of the county. County roads (and city roads in Portola) also provide important access, as do Forest Service roads. In total, there are 1,823 miles of public roadway in Plumas County, including 935 miles of US Forest Service roads, 674 miles of county roadways and 182 miles of state highways.

Due to the relatively dispersed nature of development in Plumas County, traffic congestion is not an issue, with the exception of “bell times” at some school areas and some locations around Lake Almanor during the summer months. SR 70 in Quincy is the busiest highway in Plumas County, with a peak-month, typically August, Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume of 12,200. Other relatively busy locations are on SR 36 in Chester (7,900 ADT) and SR 70 in Portola (7,800 ADT). Overall, peak month volumes on Plumas County state highways have declined by 12 percent over the last 10 years. The decline has been seen in all regions of the County. Caltrans counts of all trucks countywide have declined by 15 percent since 1992. However, the number of the largest trucks (5 axle and above) has climbed by 45 percent over this same period, particularly along SR 70.

Public transit is also provided in the county through several deviated fixed-routes. The service carries approximately 54,000 passenger-trips annually and is available to everyone.

Plumas County does not have passenger rail service, but there are two active freight rail operations. Union Pacific Railroad operates a line connecting Roseville, CA to the west with Salt Lake City, UT to the east. Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway operates track from Keddie and along Lake Almanor into Lassen County and Oregon.

While there are no commercial airports in Plumas County, there are three publicly owned airports: Gansner Field in Quincy, Rogers Field Airport in Chester, and Nervino Airport in Beckwourth. As a whole, these airports serve approximately 44,000 operations (takeoffs and landings) annually. In addition to the airports, the Plumas District Hospital in Quincy, the Indian Valley Health Care District in Greenville, and the Eastern Plumas Hospital in Portola have heliports.

While there are many hiking trails in Plumas County, bicycle and pedestrian facilities along main travel corridors and in communities are very limited.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

- a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and

relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level-of-service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

Impact Discussion: The project would not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy. Traffic due to a telecommunications facility would be related to the temporary construction of the facility and occasional maintenance visits. Once construction ceases, the only traffic directly caused by a telecommunications facility would be due to occasional maintenance.

Due to the rural nature of Plumas County, traffic congestion throughout the County is generally not an issue, nor is it expected to substantially increase due to the installations of telecommunications facilities.

There would be no impact to air traffic patterns as the proposed Ordinance contains Section 9-2.4108(c)(1) that states, “Telecommunications facilities shall not be located so as to cause obstruction of currently existing or proposed air navigation operations.” Furthermore, as required by the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCP), any project, including those exempt from the proposed Ordinance, would be subject to the Airport Land Use Commission review for those facilities located within the Airport Influence Area (AIA), and in special circumstances, those outside the AIA, reviewing for compatibility with “Basic Safety Compatibility Qualities,” an excerpt from the “California Airport Land Use Handbook,” and other applicable standards and regulations.

The project does not entail the development of sharp curves or dangerous intersections and would not increase hazards due to a design feature.

The project would not result in inadequate emergency access as the proposed Ordinance, per Section 9-2.4108(i), requires all facilities to have a road meeting the requirements set forth in Plumas County Code Sections 9-4.501(b)-(d).

Construction of telecommunications facilities could cause temporary closure of a walkway or traffic lane in a town. Construction would be temporary causing no significant impact to public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, and a telecommunications facility is not anticipated to decrease the performance or safety of such facilities.

In addition, as mentioned before throughout this Initial Study, the Ordinance requires discretionary review of new pole and tower telecommunications facilities. Therefore, impacts to transportation and traffic would be reviewed on an individual basis.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Transportation and Traffic**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

17. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Environmental Setting: The cultural resources located throughout Plumas County can be attributed to the rich history of the county. The history of Plumas County begins from the time that the glaciers began to recede from the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountain ranges. Due to the glacial recession, for thousands of years, humans have been utilizing the Sierra and Cascade ranges.

The primary inhabitants of the county prior to European settlement were the Mountain Maidu. The Mountain Maidu people have lived in Plumas County from hundreds to thousands of years ago, and still live here. Other tribes, such as the Washoe and the Paiute most likely utilized the area while not settling permanently. It is likely that the Mountain Maidu people existed in small, scattered, familial groups in the valleys of Plumas County. While maintaining permanent villages

in the lower elevations of the glacial valleys, during spring and fall, smaller groups traveled to the higher elevations, such as to the ridge tops and valleys of the Sierras, setting up open brush shelters. During the winter months, villages remained occupied and relied mostly on stored and preserved food.

In the spring of 1850, gold-seeking miners poured into the region in search of the fabled “Gold” Lake. Mining camps throughout the County were quickly established. Rivers were turned from their beds, ditches were dug to bring water from distant sources to the diggings, and the land was turned upside down.

The Mountain Maidu adapted to the changing environment by living on portions of ranch properties. In some cases the Mountain Maidu adopted the name of the ranching family associated with the ranch on which they resided. European settlers brought illnesses the Maidu had never been exposed to, causing a significant decline of the Maidu population.

To help preserve the rich Native American history, such as that in Plumas County, on September 25, 2014, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill No. 52 (AB 52). AB 52 went into effect on July 1, 2015, and added tribal cultural resources to the categories of cultural resources in the California Environmental Quality Act. According to AB 52, a project has an impact on the environment if it has a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource. A tribal cultural resource is considered significant if it is defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, in a local register of historical resources, or is a resource determined to be significant pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5024.1 subdivision (c).

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or

b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Impact Discussion: It is not anticipated that tribal cultural resources, as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21074 and listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or is determined to be significant pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5024.1 subdivision (c), would be significantly impacted.

Although it is not anticipated that tribal cultural resources would be significantly impacted, the Ordinance contains provisions to protect against the adverse changing or destruction of cultural resources. For example, the Ordinance contains a specific provision which states:

Should development activities reveal the presence of cultural resources (i.e., artifact concentrations, including, but not limited to, projectile points and other stone tools or chipping debris, cans, glass, etc.; structural remains; human skeletal remains), work within fifty (50) feet of the find shall cease immediately until a qualified professional archaeologist can be consulted to evaluate the remains and implement appropriate mitigation procedures. Should human skeletal remains be encountered, State law requires immediate notification of the County Coroner. Should the County Coroner determine that such remains are in an archaeological context, the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento shall be notified immediately, pursuant to State law, to arrange for Native American participation in determining the disposition of such remains.

The provision detailed in the Ordinance would protect from the adverse change, destruction, or disturbance of cultural resources.

As mentioned before throughout this Initial Study, the Ordinance requires discretionary review of new pole and tower telecommunications facilities, except those in TPZ. Therefore, impacts to

tribal cultural resources would be reviewed on an individual basis. Examples of two of the General Plan policies that would be adhered to are *COS 7.5.5 Assessment of Impacts to Cultural and Historical Resources* and *COS 7.5.8 Local Native American Coordination*. *COS 7.5.5 Assessment of Impacts to Cultural and Historical Resources* states:

The County shall encourage cultural resource preservation and ensure that new development does not adversely impact important resources. Discretionary projects involving ground disturbance shall have evaluations to determine cultural and historical significance. The County shall ensure that individuals conducting inventory and evaluation of cultural and historical resources consult with the Northeast Information Center in advance of any such assessments or studies and that those individuals undertaking such activities meet minimum standards. Any archaeological or paleontological resources discovered on a development project site shall either be preserved in their sites or adequately documented as a condition of removal. When a development project has sufficient flexibility, avoidance and preservation of the resource shall be the primary mitigation.

COS 7.5.8 Local Native American Coordination states:

The County shall respect Native American culture and planning concerns. The County shall collaborate with local Native American tribes, organizations and interests to preserve rehabilitate, restore and interpret cultural and natural resources important in tribal culture, as per statutes such as SB 18. The County shall consult with local tribes when actions undertaken by the County or as a result of the permitting process may affect traditional cultural values. The County shall meet in good faith with local tribes as warranted and appropriate to incorporate the tribal viewpoint into County activities and policies.

In addition, tree removal required to install a facility would fall under the regulatory processes of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, including environmental review, prior to tree removal. One of the applications that may be required is the filing of a Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption, which is required when a timberland owner proposes to carry out a project that will result in timberland being converted to a non-timber growing use. The Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption specifically states that “[n]o timber operations are allowed on significant or archaeological sites.”

The provision detailed in the Ordinance along with adhering to the requirements of the General Plan during the discretionary review process, in conjunction with the regulatory processes required by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for tree removal would protect from the adverse change, destruction, or disturbance of tribal cultural resources. Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Tribal Cultural Resources**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

18. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.

Environmental Setting: Utilities that are used within Plumas County are electricity, gas, water, and sewerage. Depending upon the location in Plumas County, electricity may be provided by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative, or Liberty Utilities. The two ways that water and sewer treatment is provided to people in Plumas County are individual on-site systems or through special districts, Community Service Districts (CSDs), and County Service Agencies (CSAs). Propane and heating oils are used as a significant source of heat and are provided by companies such as Suburban Propane, High Sierra Propane, and Hunt & Sons, Inc.

Curbside solid waste services are provided throughout the unincorporated areas of the County by Feather River Disposal, a subsidiary of Waste Management, with the City of Portola being served by Intermountain Disposal. Solid waste is transferred to a transfer station by two methods, one being through curbside solid waste service and the other is personally by individuals for their benefit. Solid waste from the five transfer stations located in Plumas County is transferred to Lockwood Regional Landfill in Sparks, Nevada.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or would new or expanded entitlements be needed?
- e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?
- f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?
- g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Impact Discussion: The proposed Ordinance does not conflict with wastewater treatment requirements of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, or require the use of water or wastewater treatment facilities. Construction of a facility would generate small amounts of solid waste. The project-generated solid waste would not exceed the tonnage beyond the capacity of Lockwood Regional Landfill in Sparks, NV. Solid waste generated from construction would be disposed of in the proper manner, complying with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations for solid waste. Although telecommunications facilities do not typically require water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage facilities, or cause impacts to service systems, all new tower or pole telecommunications facilities, except those in TPZ, require discretionary review in accordance with CEQA under the proposed Ordinance, where any potential impacts would be addressed on an individual basis.

Therefore, the project would result in **no impact to Utilities and Service Systems.**

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation is required.

19. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion: As discussed in the Biological Resources section above, there would be no impacts to Biological Resources due to the adoption of the proposed Ordinance. The proposed

Ordinance was designed to implement requirements that have never existed and reduce potential impacts to a level that is less-than-significant or no impact. The analysis from this Initial Study has found that the project would not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, or threaten to eliminate a plant or animal.

As discussed throughout this Initial Study, the proposed Ordinance was analyzed for cumulatively considerable impacts. The proposed Ordinance was designed to implement requirements that have never existed and reduce potential impacts to a level that is less-than-significant or no impact. This Initial Study has found that the project would not have a cumulatively considerable impact when viewed in connection with the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Lastly, the Initial Study has found that the project would not have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

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