



New Jersey Pinelands Commission PRESS RELEASE

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Pinelands Commission Approves Changes to Cell and PCS Tower Plans

NEW LISBON, NJ - The Pinelands Commission has authorized amendments to its Comprehensive Plans for Local Communications Facilities to include AT&T Wireless of Philadelphia, LLC. The Comprehensive Cellular and Personal Communications Services (PCS) Plans previously enabled five service providers to apply to the Commission for approval to construct no more than 22 new towers in the million-acre Pinelands region. Under this amendment, AT&T may apply to the commission to construct up to six new towers. The amendments will also allow the installation of up to 74 additional antennae on existing towers or other structures.

The Cellular and PCS Plans were approved in 1998 and 2000, respectively, to provide adequate communications services in the Pinelands while protecting the scenic and natural resources of the region. Prior to the implementation of the plans, there were strict height limitations on structures throughout the Pinelands, except for Pinelands Regional Growth Areas and Pinelands Towns.

The Commission is revising the Cellular and PCS Plans to provide important communications services to the public and to ensure that Pinelands regulations are in compliance with the mandates of the Federal Telecommunications Act.

“These plans significantly reduce the visual pollution created by communications towers, especially compared to other parts of the State and nation,” explained John C. Stokes, Pinelands Commission Executive Director. “The Commission has taken every measure possible to minimize negative impacts from towers in the Pinelands.”

The new amendments are the result of more than two years of discussions among Commission staff, the Commission’s radiofrequency consultant and AT&T representatives. Also key to the success of the plans, the amendments incorporate the concerns of the other service providers to ensure full cooperation on the co-location of antennae on towers.

Under the plan, the applicants must demonstrate that facilities to be located in the Pinelands Preservation District and other ecologically important management areas are the least number necessary to provide adequate service. There are also strict standards for the protection of certain scenic resources from visual impacts. These apply to areas such as wild and scenic rivers, the Forked River Mountains, and the Pine Plains pygmy forests.

“This is an effective and workable plan which recognizes the latest technologies, maximizes the use of existing and previously planned facilities and minimizes the need for new ones,” added Stokes.

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