

From: [Annette Davis](#)
To: [Doraida Arias](#)
Cc: [Dan Davis](#)
Subject: Letter of Opposition to Proposed Tower
Date: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 7:11:01 PM

April 1, 2026

Ms. Doraida Arias
Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning
Direct: (505) 867-7651
Office: (505) 867-7628
darias@sandovalcountynm.gov

To Ms. Arias and the Sandoval County Planning & Zoning Commission,

I am writing in formal opposition to the Conditional Use Permit application for the proposed 75-foot wireless monopole at 221 NM-165, Placitas (Project NM01-148 / ABQ Tierra Madre, APN 102-307-302-8180). The public hearing is scheduled for April 14, 2026. Please include this letter in the written record.

I oppose this application for the following reasons:

1. **INCONSISTENCY WITH THE PLACITAS AREA PLAN.** The adopted Placitas Area Plan explicitly requires protection of viewsheds and the semi-rural character of the community. A 75-foot commercial monopole on NM-165 directly violates these goals.
2. **INADEQUATE STEALTH DESIGN.** The applicant's own engineering drawings show that the concealment shroud begins at 55 feet above ground. The lower 55 feet — nearly three-quarters of the tower — is a bare, unscreened steel pole. This does not constitute meaningful concealment.
3. **THE COUNTY'S OWN REVIEWER RAISED CONCERNS.** Sandoval County's designated zoning reviewer, Robert Naumann, stated in the project record on May 31, 2024: "This site is considerably more visible, and I am not sure the stealth design proposed is a good concept." I agree, and urge the Commission to act on that assessment.
4. **ALTERNATIVES WERE NOT EXHAUSTED.** The applicant's original preferred site — the Sandoval County Fire Station at 463 NM-165 — was abandoned solely because lease negotiations failed, not because the site was technically infeasible. An existing structure on public land should have been fully pursued before a new freestanding tower was proposed.
5. **PROPERTY VALUE HARM.** Peer-reviewed research and professional appraisal studies consistently document that visible cell towers reduce residential property values by 7–10% within the visual impact zone. Placitas homes command significant premiums precisely because of the landscape. This tower would damage that value permanently.

I respectfully request that the Commission deny this application, or at minimum require the applicant to address the documented deficiencies — including the missing setback reduction approval, the boilerplate alternatives analysis referencing 'Madera County Code' (a California county, not Sandoval County), and the failure to provide photo simulations of the full three-carrier build-out this tower is designed to accommodate.

Thank you for including this comment in the public record.

Respectfully,

Annette Davis
29 Calle del Arroyo
Placitas NM 87043

Phone: 303 638-3884

Email: davisannette03@gmail.com

This message is originated from an external organization

From: [Katherine Bruch](#)
To: [Eric Masterson](#); [Wayne Johnson](#)
Cc: [Michael Eshleman](#); [Daniel Beaman](#)
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to CU-26-001 — Proposed 75-Foot Wireless Monopole at 221 NM-165, Placitas
Date: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 9:15:45 AM
Attachments: [Tower visual impact V4.pdf](#)

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "C. Edwin Garner" <ed@mammothpreclinical.com>
Date: April 1, 2026 at 7:12:40 AM MDT
To: Katherine Bruch <kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov>
Subject: Re: Opposition to CU-26-001 — Proposed 75-Foot Wireless Monopole at 221 NM-165, Placitas

April 1, 2026

Commissioner Katherine Bruch
Sandoval County Commission, District 1
1500 Idalia Road, Building D
Bernalillo, NM 87004
Via email: kbruch@sandovalcountynm.gov

Re: Opposition to CU-26-001 — Proposed 75-Foot Wireless Monopole at 221 NM-165, Placitas

Dear Commissioner Bruch,

We are writing to you as fellow Placitas property owners and 14 year residents of your district regarding a matter of significant consequence for our community. On April 21, 2026, the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on Conditional Use Permit application CU-26-001, a request by Scott Quinn / Pinnacle Consulting / Sun State Towers to construct a 75-foot commercial wireless monopole at 221 NM-165 (Placitas Homesteads Lot 5A-1AW, APN 102-307-302-8180).

As a Placitas resident of more than a decade, you understand better than most what defines this community. The Sandia foothills landscape, the open sky, and the unbroken high-desert viewsheds are not amenities — they are the foundation of Placitas' identity and property values. This proposed tower directly threatens those defining characteristics, and I respectfully ask for your engagement on behalf of your constituents.

Why This Application Should Concern You

This is not an ordinary conditional use request. The application contains multiple substantive deficiencies, and the County's own contracted reviewer has already raised concerns about this specific site and design. I will summarize the principal issues below; the full evidentiary record is being developed for the P&Z hearing.

1. Direct Conflict with the Adopted Placitas Area Plan. The Placitas Area Plan — adopted by the Board of County Commissioners — explicitly requires protection of viewsheds, preservation of semi-rural character, and adequate height standards to preserve views (pp. 38, 44, 54, 64). The Plan states that the community should “protect the existing semi-rural character of the Placitas region” and “establish protection of ridge-top development.” A 75-foot commercial monopole on NM-165 directly and materially conflicts with these adopted goals. The Commission has a legal duty to honor the Plan it created through a public community process.

2. Inadequate Stealth Design. The applicant describes this as a “concealed” installation. The engineering drawings tell a different story. Sheets Z-5 and Z-6 show the concealment shroud begins at 55 feet above ground level, meaning 55 feet of bare, unscreened steel monopole — nearly three-quarters of the structure — will be fully visible. In open high-desert terrain with 30-mile sightlines and no vegetative screening, the 18-foot diameter shroud does not conceal the tower; it enlarges its visual profile. A shroud that covers only the antenna cluster at the top does not constitute meaningful stealth design for a community defined by its natural landscape.

3. The County's Own Reviewer Questioned This Site. Robert Naumann, Sandoval County's designated zoning reviewer, stated the following in writing on May 31, 2024 — a statement already part of the application file: “This site is considerably more visible and I am not sure the stealth design proposed is a good concept.” This assessment came not from an opponent but from the County's own contracted expert. It deserves serious weight.

4. Co-Location and Alternatives Requirements Not Satisfied. The applicant's first candidate was the Sandoval County Fire Station at 463 NM-165, abandoned solely because “we were not able to finalize a lease agreement.” The site was never found technically infeasible. Additionally, the applicant's Alternatives Analysis references “Madera County Code” — a county in California's San Joaquin Valley — raising serious questions about whether a genuine, site-specific analysis was conducted for Sandoval County.

5. Unresolved Setback Deficiency. The applicant's own documents acknowledge that the northwest setback of 46 feet 9 inches requires a separate setback reduction approval. The standard fall-zone requirement for a 75-foot tower is 82.5 feet (110% of tower height). The proposed setback meets only 57% of that standard. This separate approval has not been granted.

6. Full Build-Out Visual Impact Not Disclosed. The tower is engineered to accommodate two additional future carriers at 50 and 60 feet AGL, each with pre-designed concealment shrouds. The photo simulations submitted show only the initial single-carrier installation. The public has never been shown the full three-carrier build-out that this commercial infrastructure is designed to become.

Documented Property Value Harm

The property value impact of this tower is not speculative. Published, peer-reviewed research establishes the following:

Affuso et al. (2018), *Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*:

Analysis of 23,309 property sales found a 9.78% decline in home values when a wireless tower is visible – approximately four times the impact of a non-visible tower at the same distance.

Rajapaksa et al. (2018), *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies*:

Documented up to a 15% decline in property values at close proximity (within 200 meters).

Using these peer-reviewed foundations, I have developed a 19-viewpoint angular geometry model covering 555 homes in the tower's visual impact area. The estimated aggregate property value loss ranges from \$22 million to \$24 million. With a median Placitas home value of approximately \$725,000, even a conservative 5% impact translates to over \$36,000 per home. For properties closest to the tower with direct sightlines, the peer-reviewed data indicates impacts of 10–15%.

We want to emphasize that these figures derive entirely from peer-reviewed academic sources published in respected journals. Non-peer-reviewed claims of 30–40% impacts are not supported by rigorous analysis, and I have deliberately excluded them. The property value evidence in this case is conservative, methodologically sound, and legally admissible under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which specifically preserves local authority to consider documented economic harm.

What We Are Asking

We recognize that CU-26-001 will first be heard by the Planning and Zoning Commission, not the Board of County Commissioners. However, we are writing to you now for three reasons:

First, as the District 1 Commissioner representing Placitas, your voice carries weight with County staff and with the P&Z Commission. A communication from your office expressing concern about the application's consistency with the adopted Placitas Area Plan would appropriately signal that the community's elected representative takes this matter seriously.

Second, if the P&Z Commission approves this CUP over community opposition, the Board of County Commissioners will serve as the appeal body. I want to ensure you are fully informed about the substance of this case well before any potential appeal reaches your desk.

Third, the Placitas Area Plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. Its viewshed protection goals represent a commitment the Board made to this community. Approving a 75-foot commercial monopole that directly contradicts those goals would undermine the credibility of the Plan and the process that created it.

A Note on Legal Framework

Under Section 704 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, local governments retain full authority to deny wireless facility permits on aesthetic, viewshed, land-use consistency, and documented property value grounds. What they cannot do is cite RF health concerns or impose a blanket prohibition on wireless facilities. Our opposition rests entirely on legally permissible grounds: conflict with the adopted area plan, inadequate stealth design, documented economic harm supported by peer-reviewed evidence, and substantive application deficiencies. These are precisely the grounds that have sustained tower denials in federal courts nationwide.

Closing

The community opposition to this tower is broad, factual, and growing. Multiple residents have already submitted written comments to the Planning and Zoning Department. We have personally submitted a detailed formal opposition letter for the official record. I am prepared to present the property value impact analysis at the April 21 hearing and to make the full evidentiary package available to your office.

We would welcome the opportunity to brief you or your staff on this matter at your convenience. We can be reached at the contact information below.

Thank you for your service to District 1 and for your attention to this issue.

Respectfully,

C. Edwin Garner, Ph.D.

Barbara Burzillo

46 Camino Barranca

Placitas, NM 87043

This message is originated from an external organization

From: Chavez, George Peter <gpchavez@lanl.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 4:32 PM
To: Daniel Beaman <dbeaman@sandovalcountynm.gov>
Cc: Chavez, George Peter <gpchavez@lanl.gov>
Subject: FORMAL LETTER OF PUBLIC CONCERN: CASE CU-26-001

FORMAL LETTER OF PUBLIC CONCERN: CASE CU-26-001

TO: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission

ATTN: Daniel J. Beaman, Director

RE: Proposed 75' Wireless Communication Facility – 221 Hwy 165, Placitas, NM 87043

APPLICANT: Scott Quinn (Pinnacle Consulting) for Verizon Wireless / Sun State Towers

DATE: April 1, 2026

Dear Director Beaman and Commissioners,

As the owner of **212 Hwy 165**, directly adjacent to the proposed project site, I am writing to formally list my concerns and request specific "Performance Conditions" be attached to any potential approval of Case CU-26-001.

While the application describes a standard 75-foot "stealth" tower, the technical specifications on the site plan—including a **200A Electrical Load Center**, a **dedicated Fiber Vault**, and the inclusion of **AT&T and T-Mobile as Collocators**—reveal that this is a high-compute **Regional AI-RAN Infrastructure Hub** rather than a localized cell pole. This industrial-scale utility is fundamentally incompatible with the residential-commercial transition zone of the Hwy 165 corridor.

- I. **Diminution of Value and Economic Injury** The placement of a triple-carrier industrial hub directly across from my residence represents a documented **Diminution of Value**. 2026 market data shows Placitas is currently a Buyer's Market where home values are sustained by "Rural Sanctuary" status, unobstructed views, and acoustic quiet.
 - **The "Stigma" Discount:** Market studies for luxury rural areas show that homes within 500 feet of such facilities face a **10% to 20% reduction** in realized equity and significantly higher "Days on Market."

- **Request:** I move that the Commission requires the applicant to provide a **Property Value Protection Agreement (PVPA)** and an independent **Appraisal Impact Study** specifically for the Placitas market before this permit is considered.
- II. **Hydrological Safeguards (CD-WP Zone)** Placitas relies entirely on private and shared wells. The proposed site's foundation drilling sits atop a fractured rock aquifer that serves as the sole water source for my home and 75+ others in this corridor.
- **Request:** I request the applicant provides a **Baseline Well Test** for all domestic and shared wells within 500 feet of the site prior to construction to ensure the local water table is not compromised. Furthermore, I request **110% Double-Containment** and a **Grout-Sealed Foundation** on all equipment cabinets to prevent surface contaminants (battery acid/coolants/fuel storage) from migrating down the tower pier into the fractured rock aquifer.
- III. **Acoustic Safeguards and "Amphitheater" Topography** Given the unique **"amphitheater" topography** of the Hwy 165 corridor, noise from the **200A-powered cooling systems** required for AI-RAN (V-RAN) hardware will echo and amplify toward residential structures. Standard flat-ground noise studies are scientifically insufficient for this specific location. Given the prevailing winds and the **"amphitheater" topography** of Placitas, this creates a persistent mechanical drone.
- **Request:** I request that the applicant install **Acoustic Dampening Insulation** inside the **"Coyote Fence"** enclosure to mitigate the persistent low-frequency drone of the triple-carrier cooling units. I further request a **Fixed Performance Standard** of 45 dB at the residential property line to account for the topographic amplification effect.
- IV. **Cumulative Impact and "Equipment Creep"** Under **Sandoval County Ordinance No. 03-10-16-11A**, the County must assure an "integrated, comprehensive review of environmental impacts," and review the cumulative impact of all collocators. The "Equipment Modification" clause in the lease allows carriers to "replace and augment" hardware (such as **NVIDIA GPU-accelerated server blades**) without further public notice. This creates a risk of "technological creep," where a quiet tower today becomes a high-heat, high-noise data hub tomorrow.
- **Triple-Tenant Load:** Each carrier will deploy its own ground equipment, resulting in **three sets of active cooling systems** and **three separate banks of high-density batteries** within the CD-WP (Water Protection) zone.
 - **Risk:** This grants the carriers a "blank check" to upgrade to high-heat, high-noise **AI-RAN (NVIDIA-accelerated)** server blades in the future without public notice.

- **Request:** I request a **Cumulative Impact Study** evaluating the total noise, heat, and chemical footprint of all three carriers (Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile) operating at peak capacity simultaneously. I ask the Commission to condition the permit on **Fixed Performance Standards** for noise (not to exceed 45 dB at the residential property line) that remain binding regardless of future hardware swaps.

We ask the Commission to protect the water security, acoustic quiet, and home equity of the Placitas community by **denying this permit** or, at minimum, staying the decision until these baseline protections are met.

Sincerely,

George, Leslie Chavez
212 Hwy 165, Placitas, NM 87043
505-217-8738

From: [John Branum](#)
To: [Daniel Beaman](#)
Subject: Proposed 75-foot Cell Tower in Placitas, NM
Date: Monday, March 30, 2026 2:18:04 PM

Dear Mr. Beaman,

As a Verizon customer, I object to Verizon's proposed cell tower near Homesteads Market in Placitas. While cell service may improve for me with this addition, it's not worth the visual offense it would create in a community that has deliberately curtailed erecting structures (exception to powerlines) higher than the residential structures that surround it.

Thank you,
John Branum

This message is originated from an external organization

From: [Misty Hillin](#)
To: [Daniel Beaman](#)
Subject: dbeaman@sandovalcountynm.gov
Date: Monday, March 30, 2026 12:33:50 PM

Hello Mr. Beaman

I am writing to express my opposition to the 75-foot tower going in by the Merc on Tierra Madre and 165 in Placitas. I know there are multiple reasons why this tower is unpopular - views, property values, and height restrictions. I also agree with those concerns.

My concern has more to do with the health of the residents around this area, including my own, as we live in Homesteads.

There is growing scientific evidence of health effects linked to cell tower and wireless infrastructure radiation, including immune function, cancer risks, and biochemical changes. As a healthcare provider, I do not believe this is good for the population in this area, including my own.

We moved here for the dark skies and the beautiful views. But we also moved here because we wanted to be more remote. We wished to be away from the frenetic energy of the city. If that tower had been there when we were looking at this community, we would not have purchased a home here.

And from what I understand, there are several legal reasons why this should not go in, including setback requirements and height restrictions.

I am extremely disappointed that this is being considered. I hope another solution can be reached; perhaps more provider antennas or something less intrusive. But I am definitely opposed to the cell tower option.

Thank you for allowing public comment and for having a hearing on April 21. I hope to attend, or at least log onto the meeting link.

Respectfully,
Misty Hillin, DPT, LMT

This message is originated from an external organization