

**A.23-03-003: JOINT CONSUMER ADVOCATES’*
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARING HANDOUT**

WHAT IS THIS PROCEEDING ABOUT?

- At least one telephone company in your area is legally required to provide access to phone service to anyone in its service territory who requests it. This is known as the **Carrier of Last Resort (COLR)** obligation which ensures that everyone in California has access to reliable phone service. AT&T is the designated COLR in your area.
- AT&T is asking the CPUC to allow it to decide whether you can get AT&T telephone service, even if there is no other telephone provider in your area who is obligated to provide service.
- AT&T is asking the CPUC to change the rules and remove the safety net that guarantees access to affordable, quality phone service.

HOW COULD THIS AFFECT ME AND MY COMMUNITY?

If the CPUC grants AT&T’s request:

- No telephone provider would be obligated to provide you service in AT&T’s service area.
- AT&T could decide to not provide service to you as soon as six months after the application is granted.
- You could be required pay more for telephone service, receive lower quality service, buy phone service as part of an expensive “bundle,” or depend on cell service (which is not reliable or available in some areas).
- If you live in a Mountain Community you may not be able to maintain a landline as emergency backup for when there are outages due to cell phone network being damaged or destroyed by winter storms, wildfires, or other severe weather events.
- If you are a LifeLine customer or Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications (DDTP) customer, you may not be able to obtain those services. As a COLR, AT&T is legally required to provide low-cost telephone service to low-income households through the LifeLine program.
- If you have special medical equipment or other technology (such as a fire alarm or security system), it may no longer function.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

Join a Public Participation Hearing and share with CPUC leadership how you and your community rely on and benefit from your telephone service, especially if you subscribe to LifeLine or DDTP services.

* The Public Advocates Office at the California Public Utilities Commission (Cal Advocates), The Utility Reform Network (TURN), the Center for Accessible Technology (CforAT), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the Tahoe Energy Ratepayers Group (Tahoe ERG).