



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 868

Resolution calling upon the State of New York to set forth specific provisions for the timely construction of cellular phone towers along Interstate Highway 87 in order to eliminate any areas where cell phone service is not available.

By Council Members Nelson, Gentile, James and Koppell

Whereas, Interstate Highway 87, which connects New York City to Montreal, Canada, is a 346 mile interstate highway located entirely within the state of New York and is the longest interstate highway that does not cross any state lines; and

Whereas, I-87, also known as the Northway, serves approximately 80 million people each year and represents one of the largest and most heavily traveled international trade and transportation routes in North America yet, nearly 47 miles of this interstate is without cell phone service; and

Whereas, The section of the Northway that runs through the Adirondack Park is a designated federal scenic highway with state laws limiting development and construction and restricting the height of cell-phone towers within the six million acre Park; and

Whereas, In 2002, the Adirondack Park Agency approved a project to repair existing call boxes and build 38-foot tall towers at 32 locations along the Adirondack portion of the I-87, that would blend into the hillsides and carry four cell phone antennas on each tower; and

Whereas, While the emergency call boxes were repaired in Fall 2006, no companies were willing to rent space on the cell towers and instead, cell phone providers have been pushing for three 200-foot towers that could also provide service to towns nearby but would have an adverse visual impact on the Adirondack Park; and

Whereas, In 2006, the New York State Department of Transportation released the I-87 Multimodal Corridor Study which criticized the lack of communication and absence of cell towers along the Northway and recommended improving wireless communication along the Adirondack portion; and

Whereas, In January 2007, a couple from Brooklyn, New York was trapped for 32 hours with no cell phone signal after their car went off the southbound I-87 highway, eventually leading to the death of the husband; and

Whereas, In February 2007, a couple from Manitoba, Canada waited over 90 minutes for help after their car slid off the Northway in a section with no cell service, also leading to the death of the husband; and

Whereas, \$1 million was allocated in the New York State 2007-08 budget for cell phone tower improvements along the Northway, yet many feel this is not enough to fund the system of towers; and

Whereas, In April 2007, Governor Eliot Spitzer announced an agreement on a “Statement of Principles” between Verizon Wireless and five environmental groups, the Residents’ Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, the Adirondack Council, The Sierra Club, the Adirondack Mountain Club, and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondack; and

Whereas, The agreed upon principles provide for a wireless communications system along the Adirondack Northway in compliance with the Adirondack Park Agency’s regulations and restricts the construction of towers, roads or power lines on the New York State Forest Preserve Land; and

Whereas, While this new agreement is an important first step in the development of a wireless system, it does not offer a timetable or discrete plan of action for the construction of the cell towers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the State of New York to set forth specific provisions for the timely construction of cellular phone towers along Interstate Highway 87 in order to eliminate any areas where cell phone service is not available.

CFP
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