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Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 11:24 AM

To: Stephen Giesbrecht <sgiesbrecht@petersburgak.gov>; Assembly <assembly@petersburgak.gov>

Subject: Public Safety Considerations Regarding Tidal Network Communications Towers and Service Area Impacts

Petersburg Borough Assembly & Manager Giesbrecht,

I am writing in my capacity as Chief of Police for the Petersburg Police Department to provide a public-safety perspective regarding the proposed Tidal Network communications towers on Mitkof Island, and to clarify the importance of Service Area distinctions particularly as they relate to the Papkes location.

A small number of individuals have expressed opposition to the proposed towers, citing health concerns sourced from the internet or other locations, visual impacts, and claims regarding property values. While those individuals have been vocal, it is important to recognize that they do not represent the full Petersburg community of approximately 3,200 residents. The Assembly's responsibility is to evaluate what best serves the long-term safety and welfare of the entire Borough.

From a land use standpoint, Tidal Network has selected locations that are properly zoned and legally permissible for communications infrastructure. Petersburg already hosts existing communications and cell towers in areas with equal or greater population density than the proposed sites, without documented public health impacts or demonstrable effects on property values. The proposed tower locations are not within residential neighborhoods and are consistent with existing land use precedent.

It is also important to note that the Papkes site is located outside of Service Area 1, based on decisions made during Borough formation and subsequent service area votes. As a result, Borough provided police, fire, EMS, and related services in that area should not be provided per Borough charter/code but are provided on a limited basis (ethical duty to respond/provide), and residents and visitors there already experience reduced emergency response coverage. This distinction matters when evaluating both public-safety risk and infrastructure need.

From an operational perspective, public-safety communications are currently inadequate in several areas of the Borough, including areas outside Service Area 1 such as Papkes, and even in portions of Service Area 1 itself. In the Papkes area, responders often cannot communicate with dispatch using portable radios and must rely on vehicle mounted radios to maintain contact. This is a known and recurring issue that affects officer safety, responder coordination, and response effectiveness.

The addition of these towers and critically, the Borough's ability to place public-safety radio equipment on them has the potential to significantly improve radio coverage for Police, Fire, EMS, and Search and Rescue, including in areas where services are already stretched due to geography and service area boundaries. Reliable communications are a foundational requirement for effective emergency response and responder safety.

In addition, expanded tower infrastructure improves cellular and internet coverage for the public. This directly affects the ability of residents and visitors especially those outside Service Area 1 to contact 911, reach emergency services, or communicate with family and assistance during

emergencies. In practical terms, improved communications infrastructure reduces isolation and risk in outlying areas.

Finally, the Assembly should consider the long-term future of Petersburg. Expansion of Service Area 1, increased development pressure, and growing service demands are likely over time. Establishing communications infrastructure now ensures the Borough has the tools in place to responsibly expand services and improve coverage, rather than reacting after existing gaps become critical or after an emergency exposes deficiencies.

From my professional standpoint as Chief of Police, supporting these towers and ensuring the Borough secures enforceable rights to install and operate public-safety communications equipment on them is a prudent, forward-looking decision that strengthens emergency response capability, improves responder and public safety, and positions Petersburg to meet future needs.

Thank you for considering this public-safety perspective as you deliberate on this matter.

Respectfully,

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