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April 5, 2011

Finance and Operations Committee
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

RE: PEG Access TV

Dear Honorable Finance and Operations Committee Members,

First, let me say that I realize how busy you are and that is why I especially appreciate you taking the time to read these thoughts regarding the provision of Public, Education, and Government Television for the unincorporated Coastside matter which is item number 5 on your April 6th agenda.

Three cable access channels responded to the County/Half Moon Bay RFP for the provision of PEG Access services: Mid-Coast Community TV, Pacifica TV and Peninsula Television. Following an evaluation of the submissions, the staff has recommended that the bid be awarded to Pacifica TV. Subsequently, a protest and a Public Records Request were filed by Mid-Coast Community TV.

PenTV respectfully asks that the staff recommendation be reconsidered. That reconsideration is warranted on the grounds that PenTV is the lowest bidder; that the evaluation committee was comprised of good people who primarily came from a traditional PEG background and their background and perspectives influenced their decision which was to award the bid to a traditional PEG provider; and that the evaluation of the proposals failed to take into account the county's past investment in PenTV and the need for a new PEG Access model going forward which would better serve Coastside residents as well as the county.

Listed below are five areas of discussion which are meant to briefly explain why PenTV believes a reconsideration of the staff recommendation is appropriate.

1. PenTV's Bid Costs Less

In a memo from Mr. Jim Porter, Public Works to your honorable committee there is a presentation of cost information for each of the three proposals. The cost of the various proposals are: Pacifica TV is $219,000; MCTV is $288,400; PenTV $150,000. The data clearly shows that Peninsula Television is the least expensive alternative and we believe that in the current financial environment, this factor should be heavily weighed.

2. The County has a Substantial investment in PenTV

Over the twelve year history of PenTV, the county has invested a significant amount of dollars in PenTV. The vision of the county has been to have a county-wide channel that broadcasts public interest and other

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programming of value to residents. Securing this bid is critical in many ways for the continuation of PenTV and the achievement of the county's original vision.

3. PenTV Currently Broadcasts to the Coast

Coastside residents already get PenTV. Why pay such a high price to get another PEG outlet for the coast? Data shows that only about 50 percent of Coastside residents have cable TV. That means that 50 percent of Coastside residents would not be able to watch the new channel on TV - therefore, a consideration of the proposals should place a heavy weight on web broadcasting. We believe PenTV's proposal was superior in this important area.

4. Services

The previously mentioned memo from Mr. Porter contains a chart of services. After a thorough review of that chart, it's clear that PenTV's offering is similar (and superior in some areas) to other bidders.

5. Other Thoughts

It is difficult to criticize other submitters' proposals and that is certainly not our purpose. But it's important to point out a couple of facts. PenTV has more future underwriters identified than the other two proposals (generates revenue); we believe fundraising is overstated in the other proposals and we wonder how one proposal can state that it will get approximately $16,000 per year in grants in the future since the source of those funds did not seem to be included in the materials.

In summary, PenTV offers comparable services at a lower price than the other two submitters. Therefore, we believe it's in the County's best interest to reconsider the recommendation of staff.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness on this issue and realize it is difficult to reverse a staff recommendation. In addition, Peninsula Television appreciates the county's support which has made thousands of programs available to county residents.

Sincerely,

Dan Lu
Director of Administration
Peninsula Television, Inc.