

Don't Allow Cellular Telephone Antennas to Contribute To Our Toxic Environment – by Dr. Joseph DiGennaro

The proliferation of cell phone towers on Long Island is astounding. Most people (including even those who oppose them) are not fully aware and educated regarding just how potentially dangerous these telecommunication monsters can be to populations living close to them. They do indeed represent another source of unnecessary environmental toxicity. At best, all cell phone antennas should be placed exclusively in unpopulated, open regions as far away as possible from where people reside and congregate. To place them adjacent to schools, parks, playgrounds and other areas where children gather is utter madness.

Many reputable scientists contend that cellular phone towers are much more dangerous to the environment and human health than is currently perceived. Aside from the outspoken opposition within such places as Bayville, Sea Cliff and Jericho, the vast majority of Long Island residents, like their counterparts nationwide, know very little about the threat of antenna emissions; or are simply oblivious to their existence. This is perfectly understandable, because these emissions totally elude the human senses. We can't see, hear, smell, taste, or feel them. It is also common to encounter the person of the mind-set that "heaven forbid" someone or something might threaten the daily employment of that indispensable cell phone.

Basically speaking, cellular phone antennas emit a type of non-ionizing radiation termed RFR (radio frequency radiation). The levels of RFR emissions from cell phone antennas are deemed by government agencies and telecommunications representatives to be far below any that might pose a serious danger to human well being. In line with this erroneous assumption, the U.S. Congress has adopted the Telecommunications Act of 1996. It provides that although local municipalities have the right to determine their placement, design, and construction; they ultimately cannot by any means prohibit the erection of cell phone towers, and their residents cannot seek legal opposition to them based on health and safety argumentation. This irrational law (perhaps unconstitutional as well), warrants judicious amendment, or better yet, repeal. Given light of this unjust, prejudiced piece of legislation, it becomes quite evident

that many politicians may have strong ties of allegiance and provide uncompromising support to telecommunications corporate heads. They, in turn, invariably let little stand in the way of offsetting the continued success of their annual \$500 billion plus industry. Little wonder then as to why the safety assurances regarding cell phone antenna emissions set by government and telecommunications sources are fallaciously based on biased studies that are both sponsored and funded by the industry's leading corporations. Non-partisan studies in this area by independent researchers worldwide, on the other hand, have produced startling findings; which telecommunication's representatives, question, disregard, refute, camouflage, distort or simply cloak from the public eye. As an aside, it is interesting to note that allowable antenna RFR emission standards in Italy and Russia are 58 times more stringent than those set in the United States.

The most convincing and alarming evidence regarding the potential hazardous effects of RFR comes from a prominent, respected California based Environmental Policy Consultant, Cindy Sage. She has reported that RFR emissions well below standard levels considered dangerous by our government have led to: infertility, memory loss, slowing of reaction time, compromised immune system functioning, sleeplessness and most disconcerting of all, childhood and adult leukemia. As is the case of most toxic substances, the elderly and the young are the most vulnerable.

Many concerned Bayville parents are deeply disturbed by the fact that the Village's water tower, which houses 52 cell phone antennas, is directly across the street from our elementary school. There is good reason for concern, as the absorption of RFR is 3 times greater in a child's smaller, immature brain, than in that of the fully developed adult brain. Due to this fact, some counties around the country (Los Angeles for one) have banned the placement of cell towers near schools. We urge the Village of Bayville to consider an alternate location for the cell tower, well away from our precious growing children, and for all N.Y.S. legislators to follow the wise example of Los Angeles County.