

MAKING CELL TOWERS SAFE

What Members of Congress Can Do

The World Health Organization has recently declared that wireless cell signals are a possible cancer-producer for humans. The WHO declaration is based on numerous scientific studies performed around the world. Some of the most convincing studies come from Europe, where wireless phones have been in use for many years. The same cell signals emitted by hand-held cell phones are sent out by cell antennas at much higher power levels. Wireless communication is a two-way street and any cell phone conversation requires both receiving and sending phones and antennas to process signals back and forth.

Cell antennas transmit signals continuously throughout the day and night, 365 days a year. They are engineered to reach at least 7 miles. Many go much further. Families who live near cell towers and children who spend hours each day at schools located near cell towers are exposed to continuous wireless phone signals every day. Studies now show that persons living closer than 1500 feet (400 meters) to towers can contract a number of adverse health effects (in addition to cancer). For example, look at the Bavarian study by Drs. Horst Eger and Manfred Jahn, originally published in *umwelt-medizin-gesellschaft*, (Environmental Medicine Association) in Feb. 2010 at pages 130-139, and made available in English Translation. The doctor-supervised study shows a significantly increased health risk in the vicinity of cell phone antenna base stations and underscores the inadequacy of the currently accepted exposure limits. Discussion includes references to several past studies since the 1960s that support the findings.¹

In 1996, Congress directed the FCC to adopt safety regulations for cell transmission antennas. These FCC standards were based on earlier studies created almost twenty years ago using even older data. They are obsolete. The FCC standards are limited to preventing "thermal" effects of wireless signals in heating human flesh, and do not set any safety standards to protect against biological or other health effects (like cancer). The 1996 law prohibits state and local governments from considering environmental health effects independently when deciding on placement of cell tower antennas. (See 47 U.S.C. §332(c)(7)(B)(iv)):

(iv) No State or local government or instrumentality thereof may regulate the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Commission's regulations concerning such emissions.

What is Needed Now

Congress needs update its mandate of 1996 –15 years ago—to the FCC when Congress passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and direct the FCC to revise and update safety regulations to protect workers and the general public against cancer and other biological effects from wireless cell phone signals emitted by both phones and the transmission antennas, disclosed by later research since 1996. Such updating is long overdue to protect American families as well as telecom workers. Further delay is simply not acceptable.

¹ The original German text is available at:

http://www.avaate.org/IMG/pdf/Eger_Jahn_Selbitz_Studie_gesamt_umg_2_2010.pdf (Last visited 9/27/10.); The English text is available at:

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbxub2NlbGx0b3dlcmlob3VybmVpZ2hib3Job29kfGd4OjFiMDg5Yzk0ZWE3Y2U0Y2U> (Last visited 9/27/10.)