

May 28, 2008

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Dear Mayor and Councillors of Thorold:

I am writing this letter to comment on the meeting of May 20th.

Stephanie Soccio-Marandola asked Anca Gaston and me to attend this meeting to speak to an issue she is very concerned about but doesn't know enough of the technicalities to speak about herself; public wireless internet access.

Stephanie had initially made contact with Mayor D'Angela and sent him a document titled "Analysis of Health and Environmental Effects of Proposed San Francisco Earthlink Wi-Fi Network". Heather Hulls-Marrone replied, "*You, or a representative, are welcome to attend a City Council meeting as a delegation to present the information directly to Council. Should you choose this option, I will require written confirmation (an email is acceptable) advising of who will be speaking and very briefly the subject matter. Also, please be advised that there is a 15 minutes time limit for all delegations and we do recommend that only one person be assigned to speak, although another person can certainly attend and be on hand to should Council have any questions.*"

So at your invitation, we attended with Stephanie to help her present her case.

Because this is a complicated topic, I asked Stephanie to forward some documents to you all before the meeting, so that you would have an idea of what we would be speaking about. The links to these are in the body of this letter. (It became obvious during the council session that you had not received any of them).

During the council debate, it was mentioned that we are not scientists in this field and that is true but two of the documents e-mailed ahead of time are written by well respected scientists in this field. One of these documents, "Analysis of Health and Environmental Effects of Proposed San Francisco Earthlink Wi-Fi Network" (http://weepinitiative.org/LINKEDDOCS/scientific/SNAFU_Havas_WiFi.pdf) was written by Magda Havas (B.Sc., Ph.D. Environmental & Resource Studies. Trent University). She is one of the world's leading authorities on this subject and she prepared this document for her presentation to the city council of San Francisco when they were debating the installation of WiFi.

Another document we sent but you didn't receive was the BioInitiative Report. This is a very important report released in 2007 by the BioInitiative Working Group. An international working group of scientists, researchers and public health policy professionals who released this report on electromagnetic fields (EMF) and health. They document serious scientific concerns about current limits regulating how much EMF is allowable from power lines, cell phones, and many other sources of EMF exposure in daily life. The report concludes the existing standards for public safety are inadequate to protect public health. This group of 14, studied over 2000 research papers to come to this conclusion. You can find this report and all reference material at: <http://www.bioinitiative.org/index.htm>

Councillors mentioned that studies can be found saying the technology isn't dangerous. True.... but what are the sources of those studies and who paid for them. The most reliable studies are those that are not paid for by the industry that is churning out this technology. So I do agree with Councillor Wilson, "let's compare apples to apples".

It was also mentioned that we were using scare tactics. Not so. ..We are not Chicken Littles who have mistaken an acorn, for the sky falling. We were merely reporting to you, the scientific proof that health harm exists from exposure to this technology. I would also like to mention that we have nothing to personally gain from asking you to remove these transmitters. We are merely concerned with the health of the residents of Thorold.

In 2007, the German government issued a warning to its citizens, "The Environment Ministry recommended that people should keep their exposure to radiation from Wi-Fi "as low as possible" by choosing "conventional wired connections". It added that it is "actively informing people about possibilities for reducing personal exposure". (<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/germany-warns-citizens-to-avoid-using-wifi-401845.html>)

The translated government document can be found at:
http://www.energyfields.org/pdfs/deutscher_bundestag.pdf

Are they using scare tactics? No. They are obviously more concerned about their citizens' health than the money this technology would generate. They are exercising the *Precautionary Principle* that states, "... Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." (*Article 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*.

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163>)

This is a United Nations Declaration that all UN members agreed to and signed.

The Radiation Protection Bureau of Health Canada has a series of safety codes that specify the requirements for the safe use of radiation emitting devices. *Limits of Human Exposure to Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields in the Frequency Range from 3 KHZ to 300 GHZ - Safety Code 6* (http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/alt_formats/hecs-sesc/pdf/pubs/radiation/99ehd-dhm237/99ehd-dhm237_e.pdf)

One problem with this safety code is that it only protects us from the thermal (cooking) effect of microwaves. It does not protect us from the biological effects of microwaves and as stated by the BioInitiative Working Group, "the existing standards for public safety are inadequate to protect public health".

Another problem with this safety code is that it was last revised in 1999. In the eight years since then, wireless technology has become much more powerful, its use is much more wide spread, and there is now scientific proof that the new technology is harmful to health. This code is years overdue for another revision.

Councillor Handley thought it unfair that we were singling out one company. We never once named any one company. We simply mentioned the technology. I actually commend this company for their business acumen. There is absolutely nothing wrong with their business plan. How else do you compete with the monopolies that already have a hold on this sector of the communications industry? The problem lies with the harmful technology they are selling.

The councillor said that if you are to look at this company then you should be looking at all of them. I agree. Especially before introducing new sources of EMF and RF into your environment. Smart meters and additional cell phone towers, for instance.

This technology is making people ill. I know several people who have become electro-hypersensitive to such a degree that they have had to abandon their own homes and live in remote areas where they have no direct exposure. They are known as EMF Refugees.

On June 15th 2007, The Canadian Human Rights Commission approved a Policy on Environmental Sensitivities. In this policy, Electro-hypersensitivity (EHS) is classified as an environmental sensitivity and therefore a disability. http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/research_program_recherche/esensitivities_hypersensibilitee/toc_tdm-en.asp?highlight=1

This is a government of Canada organization stating that there is a problem.

There are many other health issues associated with this technology. The young, elderly, and infirm are the most at risk. Children's bones are softer than an adult's and are at greatest risk since the signals from this technology can penetrate their skulls so much easier. Their brains are also still developing and in constant flux. It has been proven that EMF damages DNA. It has been linked to Autism, ADD/ADHD, mood disorders; the list goes on. A very recent study published in the last few weeks has linked behavioural problems in children whose mothers used cell phones while pregnant.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-wellbeing/health-news/warning-using-a-mobile-phone-while-pregnant-can-seriously-damage-your-baby-830352.html>

This is not only affecting humans it also affects the flora and fauna in our environment. As you have most likely seen in the news lately, bird, insect and amphibian populations are being reduced or mysteriously disappearing in unprecedented numbers. <http://weepinitiative.org/florafauna.html>

I would like to ask, is it really necessary to have wifi transmitters on poles, blanketing whole neighbourhoods with radiation? Residents already have cable and phone lines into their homes to connect to the internet. If they choose to have wireless technology in their homes, then that is their choice. (And they would be well advised to turn off the modem while it is not in use). But what about residents who do not want to be irradiated by this technology 24 hours a day? They don't have a choice. It is being imposed on them against their wishes. It is second-hand radiation from the few in the neighbourhood who subscribe to the service. These wifi units are transmitting into their homes and yards where their children play and they relax. They are being exposed in their sleep. The human body needs a healthy restful sleep to regenerate properly from the stresses and exposures during the day. This is impossible while being exposed to RF etc.

In the introduction to Safety Code 6, it states, "Recent developments in the electronics industry have led to the widespread use of radiofrequency (RF) devices in various areas, including telecommunication, radio and television broadcasting, radar, industrial processing, medical applications and consumer products. Electromagnetic fields extend over large areas when generated for communication, broadcasting and radar devices, but generally spread only over small areas when used in industrial, medical and consumer devices. Reflection and scattering of electromagnetic waves and simultaneous RF emissions by more than one source frequently result in a complex condition known as "multi-path" propagation and spatially non-uniform fields."

In layman's terms, if there are several sources of RF in any given area, the combined emissions may exceed the safety levels as set in this code. Remember, this was written 9 years ago, long before wireless internet and the proliferation of cell phones, towers and other wireless devices.

For an in depth explanation please see: <http://www.energyfields.org/pdfs/WiFi-appeal-SNAFU-Maifield-report-5-23-07.pdf>

In the preface to Safety Code 6 it states, "In a field where technology is advancing rapidly and where unexpected and unique problems may occur, this Code cannot cover all possible situations and blind adherence to rules cannot substitute for the exercise of sound judgment. Consequently, specifications and recommendations in this Code may require some modifications under certain circumstances. This, however, should be done in consultation with experts competent in the field of RF radiation protection. This Code will be reviewed and revised periodically and a particular requirement may be reconsidered at any time if it is found necessary."

I understand the underlined statement to be telling us to use our common sense when it comes to this issue. To look at each individual case and use a precautionary approach to avoid human casualties.

There is evidence that this technology is harming humans and the environment. There is an outcry from scientists around the world to listen now before it is too late. There are millions of people and many species of wildlife already suffering. Other governments are starting to listen and are taking action. We need to exercise sound judgment and adopt the precautionary principle. We need to put human health, the environment and the wellbeing of wildlife ahead of the almighty dollar.

I hope you will read and learn what you can about this issue so you can make informed and educated decisions about the lives of the constituents you are sworn to protect.

Best Regards

Sue Parsons

You may also find the following interesting from a business point of view:

<http://www.energyfields.org/pdfs/Cities-Wi-Fi-%20projects-find-costs-higher.pdf>
(Anick Jesdanun. the associated press)

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118722557149599153.html>
(Amol Sharma The Wall Street Journal online)