



PITTSFIELD BOARD OF HEALTH

Alan G. Kulberg, MD, Chairperson
Steve Smith, MA ~ Brad Gordon, JD ~ Kimberly Loring, PMHNP-BC

August 31, 2021

Members of the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection
& Professional Licensure
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 506
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Senate Bill S. 186 to form a special commission to research the impact or electromagnetic and radiofrequency radiation on consumer protection, public health, and technology in the Commonwealth.

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure:

The City of Pittsfield Health Department and Board of Health have been investigating reports of illness from residents living near a new cellular tower that was activated in August 2020. Residents in seven households (three children, seven adults) believe that their symptoms of headaches, insomnia, ringing in the ears, nausea and dizziness are associated with the ongoing exposure to electromagnetic radiation (EMR) emissions from the 110 ft cell tower holding Verizon and other telecommunication carriers. The Board of Health's investigation has included consultation with the MA Department of Public Health's Environmental Toxicology Program as well as several national and inter-national professionals with experience and research in the potential adverse health effects of EMR exposure. In addition, the City contracted for a radiofrequency emission study to confirm power density as percentage of the FCC exposure standards. Based on our growing knowledge of findings in the medical and scientific community that demonstrate a biological response among people with sensitivity to EMR, the Board strongly believes that the research on environmental and health impacts needs to catch up with radio frequency technology. State Senator Julian Cyr's petition of Bill S. 186 calls for the Commonwealth to research the impact of EM and RD radiation on consumer protection and public health. We ask for your support of this Bill to address the safety concerns associated with EMR emissions.

The New Hampshire Commission to Study the Environmental and Health Effects of Evolving 5G Technology released its report in November 2020. The Commission heard from many experts on both sides of the argument concerning the health and environmental effects of 5G and RF radiation in general and reviewed countless study reports. The majority of members yield to a set of precautionary recommendations on 5G technology. In March 2020, New York State lawmakers have also introduced legislation to establish a commission charged with examining the health and environmental impacts of wireless radiation emitted by 5G technology and other wireless antennas.

According to Dr. Cindy Russell, who has studied the health impacts of environmental toxins through the California Medical Association and has over 10 years of research into the literature on electro sensitivity, wireless radiation is a pollutant just like lead or pesticides or mercury. The mechanisms are similar – oxidation, the effects of which are broad on all living organisms and people are often unaware they are exposed to the toxin – unless they are sensitive. Wireless radiation causes oxidative stress at low levels of radiation. These low levels cause a slow decline in physiologic processes, and for those who have become sensitive – an immediate reaction. People vary in their vulnerability due to age, genetics and other toxic exposures. Not all people react similarly and some people have a longer duration of exposure than others do.

Dr. David Carpenter is one of several other consultants to the Board of Health on this matter. Dr. Carpenter is a Public Health Physician and the Director of the Institute for Health & the Environment at SUNY Albany. He has a career of research and ongoing collaborative studies on air pollution in several countries and studies health effects of electromagnetic field exposure. He advised on electromagnetic hypersensitivity, stating that people have different reactions as with any other type of exposure to something. Sensitivity may depend on the types and duration of exposure. Dr. Carpenter suggested that a small-scale epidemiological study of the health concerns in Pittsfield would not provide adequate results. In our opinion, communities lack the resources needed to address the public's concern of health impact of nearby cellular towers and antennas. We urgently need our state and federal legislators to invest in the risk assessment and regulatory review that is necessary to protect public health.

Regarding our testing of EM emissions from the cellular tower located at 877 South Street, the cellular tower is operating within FCC limits. However, as noted above, those limits were developed twenty four years ago and based only on the short term thermal exposure to tissue, not the 24/7 low level, non-thermal biologic harm that is silent – similar to chemicals. We believe that the FCC limits, that are 100 times higher than in Italy and Russia, should be reviewed by a special commission for the Commonwealth. In fact, on August 13, 2021, the Environmental Health Trust and the Children's Health Defense won a lawsuit that was filed in July 2020 to force the FCC to reevaluate their standards based on modern science and changes in environmental exposure. In the decision by the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, the FCC is ordered to reexamine its standards for wireless radiation exposure and provide a review of wireless harms that is compliant with the law for non-cancer harms.

Massachusetts cannot wait for the FCC to act. We are asking to your strong support of this bill and for a favorable report out of the Committee on Consumer Protection.

Respectfully submitted,



Alan G. Kulberg, MD
Chair, Pittsfield Board of Health

cc: Mayor Linda Tyer, City of Pittsfield
Members of the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure
Margret R. Cooke, Interim Commissioner, MA Department of Public Health
Jan Sullivan, Director Bureau of Environmental Health, MA Dept. of Public Health
Governor Charlie D. Baker
Marylou Sudders, Secretary, MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Gina Armstrong, Director, Pittsfield Health Department
Peter Marchetti, President, Pittsfield City Council
Pittsfield Board of Health members
Senator Adam Hinds
Representative Smitty Pignatelli
Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier
Representative John Barrett, III

References:

New Hampshire Commission Studies 5G Technology Health and Environment Effects. Nov 17, 2020. <https://mdsafetech.org/2020/11/17/new-hampshirecommission-studies-5g-technology-health-and-environment-effects/>

Final Report on Commission to Study the Environmental and Health Effects of Evolving 5G Technology. State of New Hampshire, General Court. Nov 1, 2020. <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/statstudcomm/committees/1474/reports/5G%20final%20report.pdf>

Additional references are available upon request.