Parent Teacher Associations Opposed to Cell Towers

The Palo Alto PTA Council voted overwhelmingly in May 2019 to advocate for "risk reduction policies" regarding cell tower setbacks from schools and other electromagnetic field related issues consistent with the 1994 California PTA resolution on electromagnetic fields

-Palto Alto California School Board Resolution Opposing Cell Towers at Schools

New York State PTA

Adopted TWO Resolutions in 2014

"CELLULAR PHONE TOWERS – 2014 (R-'07, R-'00); Resolved that the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. support legislation that would encourage local communities, including parents and school officials, to regulate the placement of cell towers and cell tower antennas particularly in schools and areas where children congregate,

and be it further Resolved that the New York State PTA support continued research into the long-term effects of radio frequency and microwave frequencies on humans especially as they apply to children, and be it further Resolved that the New York State PTA seek to educate parents and school officials as to the current debate over the placement of cell towers and antennas."

California State PTA

First resolution adopted in 1994, reapproved in 2004

"Resolved: That the California State PTA educate aid inform its districts, councils, and units about the potential hazards of EMFs and encourage school districts and schools to develop risk reduction policies and continue to disseminate information on the subject as it becomes available."

"Lessons learned from studies on smoking, asbestos, second-hand smoke, and radon must not be ignored. We have an obligation to learn from the past and protect our children by reducing their exposure to what is clearly a serious and potential health hazard."

**Click on bolded text for hyperlink to source documents.*

Connecticut State PTA

Resolution passed in 2003 suporting legislation calling for a 1500 feet setback for cell towers away from a school or day care.

Conejo CA PTA

Op-ed in *Thousand Oaks Acorn Journal*

"The California PTA advocates on behalf of children and families. They advocate against electromagnetic field radiation in schools."

"Most people don't realize that the 1996 FCC state standards for safe levels of emission was actually based on a level set by the American national standards institute in 1982. Well this standard has not been changed in 30 years it has usurped all local authority."

"For this reason, Conejo Council PTA made up of 9000 parents and teachers has decided to take action. We're calling on our local leaders to put in place policies that would ensure parents are notified when cell towers are proposed near schools and then encourage a buffer zone around schools."

-Kim Huber, legislative chair of the Conejo Council PTA.

Letters by Local PTAs Nationwide

Click on the PTA to read the letters by PTAs opposing proposed cell towers.

- **Neelsville Middle School, CA PTA**
- **Hillsmere Elementary School, MD PTA**
- **Briarlake, GA, PTA**
- **Forest Grove Elementary, Pacific Grove Middle School, & Pacific Grove High School CA PTAs**

HILLSMERE ELEMENTARY PTA

December 18, 2018

Anne Arundel County Board of Education
2644 Riva Road
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear President Hummer and members of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education,

I am writing you on behalf of the Hillsmere Elementary School PTA (Hillsmere PTA) in regard to the Anne Arundel County Board of Education's (the Board) December 19, 2018 agenda item 6.02: Shady Side Elementary School - Telecommunications Transmission Facility (cell tower).[1] For the reasons described below, the Hillsmere PTA is requesting that the Board specifically reconsider the proposed placement of a cell tower at Shady Side Elementary school, as well as reexamine Anne Arundel County Public School's (AACPS) current contract with Milestone Communications related to the placement of cell towers at AACPS schools.

The installment of a cell tower on or immediately next to any school – including Shady Side Elementary - poses significant health dangers to both students and staff. While some argue that radiation emitted from any type of cell tower, is not a health danger, data from independently, nonpartisan sponsored studies, indicate the opposite. Scientists and health care professionals are increasingly expressing concerns regarding both the overall roll-out of the 5G network, and the presence of mini-cells and cell towers near schools specifically. On November 1, 2018, the National Toxicology Program (NTP), an inter-agency program within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, released the final results of its ten-year study, which is currently the world's largest and most expensive study to date on the link between radio-frequency radiation and cancer. Of significance, the study found evidence of cancerous heart tumors, as well as some evidence of cancerous brain tumors and pheochromocytomas tumors[2] in adrenal glands, in male rats[3] exposed to high levels of radio-frequency radiation like that used in 2G and 3G cell phones.[4]

Similar findings were revealed in a March 2018 study from the Ramazzini Institute in Italy, in which researchers found that a large-scale lifetime study of lab animals exposed to environmental levels of cell tower radiation developed cancer. According to David Carpenter MD, former Dean of the School of Public Health at the University at Albany, the study from Italy raises concerns that simply living close to a cell tower will pose threats to our health. Dr. Carpenter states "Cell towers should not be near schools, hospitals or people's homes. Public health agencies need to educate the public on how to reduce exposure from all sources of wireless radiofrequency radiation—be it from cell towers or cell phones or Wi-Fi in schools. This is particularly urgent

[1] As reference, the Hillsmere PTA submitted a letter on November 14, 2017, in opposition to the Board's November 1, 2017 vote on then-agenda item 5.13, approving an easement for Verizon Wireless to install and maintain a communications facility (mini-cell) on a BG&E power pole adjacent to Hillsmere Elementary School. While some information from the November 14, 2017 letter is included in this letter for new Board members' awareness, additional scientific information published in the last 13 months has been added.
[2] Pheochromocytomas tumors can cause secondary cancers and/or damage to heart cells.
[3] According to NTP, while the findings of animals cannot be directly applied to humans, the study does question the long-held assumption that radio frequency radiation is of no concern as long as the energy level is low and does not significantly heat the tissues.
[4] Although the study is limited in scope to radiofrequency radiation associated with 2G and 3G cell phones (given those were the current networks in 1999), it is important to note that 2G and 3G networks are still used for phone calls and texting.

because of current plans to place small 5G cell towers about every 300 meters in every street across the country. These 5G 'small cell' antennas will result in continuous exposure to everyone living nearby and everyone walking down the street. The increased exposures will increase risk of cancer and other diseases such as electro-hypersensitivity." And as expressed in our November 14, 2017 letter, according to findings by the Environmental Health Trust, radiation from mini-cells is not small. Wireless antennas emit microwaves — non-ionizing radiofrequency radiation — essentially functioning as cell towers –and that radiation is expected to typically travel from 10 meters up to several hundred meters.

In a letter[5] to the United Nations, 244 scientists[6] from 41 nations have appealed for protection from non-ionizing electromagnetic field exposure, citing numerous peer-reviewed studies showing that exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) generated by electric and wireless devices can cause increased "cancer risk, cellular stress, increase in harmful free radicals, genetic damages, structural and functional changes of the reproductive system, learning and memory deficits, neurological disorders, and negative impacts on general well-being in humans." [7,8] The letter also specifically requests that "children and pregnant women be protected", and that 5G should be investigated before it is deployed. In another appeal to the European Union on September 13, 2017, 180 scientists and doctors from 35 countries requested a moratorium on the roll-out of 5G, for telecommunication until potential hazards for human health and the environment have been fully investigated by scientists independent from industry. According to the scientists' appeal, the current guidelines for EMF are obsolete - based on the outdated hypothesis that the critical effect of RF-EMF exposure relevant to human health and safety is heating of exposed tissue. However, research has proven that many different kinds of illnesses and harms are caused without heating ("non-thermal effect") at radiation levels well below current international guidelines.[9]

In a September 18, 2017 letter to the Governor of California, Physicians for Safe Technology expressed that "[p]hysicians realize now that the incremental increases in daily radiofrequency (RF) exposure already exceed human health tolerance for many people" and "[w]e need to be reducing rather than increasing new sources of involuntary RF exposure in our communities." The March 9, 2018 edition of *Environment International* published results from a six-nation study of outdoor exposures to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, finding that cell towers are the largest contributor to environmental radiofrequency radiation exposure.

Another 2017 study[10] compared people living close and far from cell antennas and found a significant impact on people living closer to cellular antennas. Damage was found in their blood that predicts cancer development. In a German study[11], researchers discovered that the proportion of newly developed cancer cases was three times higher for those living within a quarter of a mile of a cell tower compared to those living further away. In addition, cancer risks jumped up more than threefold for those living a quarter of a mile or less from a cell tower during a duration of 6-10 years. This last statistic is important given that elementary students can attend

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[5] The letter originally submitted in 2015, has since been updated in 2018. See https://emfscientist.org/index.php/emf-scientist-appeal

[6] Since our November 14, 2017 letter, the number of scientists signing onto the appeal increased from 236 to 244. Collectively, the scientists have published over 2,000 research papers on electromagnetic fields on biology or health.

[7] The scientists were specifically studying the biological and health effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields.

[8] In reference to the letter, "U.S. regulatory standards and international guidelines only control for short-term heating of tissue. The standards do not protect us from the low-intensity, chronic exposures to [EMF] that are common today. The scientists who signed the Appeal request that the UN and member nations protect the global human population, and animal and plant life from EMF exposures. There has been strong support from the international scientific community for the Appeal, even among those who believe that scientists should not take public policy positions. Some have taken personal risks to sign the Appeal because this is a public health issue that affects everyone now, as well as future generations." Joel Moskowitz, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Family and Community Health, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley.

[9] https://ehtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Scientist-5G-appeal-2017.pdf

[10] "Impact of radiofrequency radiation on DNA damage and antioxidants in peripheral blood lymphocytes of humans residing in the vicinity of mobile phone base stations" (Zothansiama et al, 2017; published in Electromagnetic Biology and Medicine).

[11] "The Influence of Being Physically Near to a Cell Phone Transmission Mast on the Incidence of Cancer" (2004)

the same school for up to 6-7 years (depending on enrollment in Pre-K or Kindergarten). The study also revealed the average age of diagnosis was much younger, while the risk for breast, prostate, pancreas, bowel, melanoma, lung, and blood cancer all increased substantially. A study by researchers at Tel Aviv University in Israel found a similar pattern, with the relative risk of cancer over four times higher for those living about one-fifth of a mile or less from a cell tower. And it is not only cancer to be concerned about. Studies have shown that women with the highest magnetic field exposures during pregnancy had nearly three times more miscarriages, along with prenatal non-ionizing radiation exposures led to higher risk of obesity, and asthma. Other studies have found evidence of effects on autism, genes, memory loss, lack of sleep, stress proteins, the nervous system, and damage to sperm & reproduction.

The International Association of Fire Fighters, the leading advocate for fire fighter health and safety in North America, voted on a resolution *13 years ago* against having cell towers near fire stations in order to protect our first responders. Even professionals from the telecommunications industry have expressed reservations regarding the continuing placement of communications facilities before the full impact of such impact can be understood. The former president of Microsoft Canada, has stated that "our current use of wireless technology, specifically use of devices such as cell phones, could be much safer" and that while he supports the potential benefits with the next iteration of wireless technology, "neither my industry, nor any Federal agency in Canada or the United States can say unequivocally that this technology is safe. There are too many unknowns regarding this technology[.]" He also cited that "There is strong scientific evidence that the radiation we are now being exposed to from 2G, 3G and 4G has serious adverse effects on human health. The new spectrum proposed to be licensed has undergone very little research on human health effects. No Federal Agency, including …the FCC can point to any peer-reviewed evidence-based science that shows 5G technology is safe."[12]

Additionally, in a response to the impact of wireless radiation, Maryland became the first state in the United States to recommend eliminating Wi-Fi within schools. In its report, the Maryland State Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council cited the NTP's earlier findings of increased rates of rare malignant cancers in animals, as well as children's unique vulnerability to the radiation.[13]

We could go on and on citing studies and appeals from scientists and health care professionals to put a halt to placement of cell towers and mini-cells near schools – but the bottom line is this: 1) there is evidence that exposure to current wireless radiation causes harm; and 2) there are too many unknowns about the full impact of future wireless technology. Research also shows that children and pregnant women are the most vulnerable[14] – two demographics most likely to be on school grounds on a regular basis.

At the same time, has the Board addressed other critical questions *with community notification* with each cell tower or mini-cell placement? Are balloon tests conducted, with community notification, so that the public can see how high the cell tower will be above the school? If such tests were conducted in the past, was the public properly informed? Is the Board – and the community – fully educated about the "fall zone"? Cell towers can fall over – so the fall zone is critical in planning purposes – especially if a parking lot, playground, or athletic field is within that fall zone. Once any cell tower or mini-cell is installed, it also opens the door for Verizon and

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[12] https://ehtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/C4ST-submission-to-Governor-Jerry-Brown-re-SB-649-1.pdf

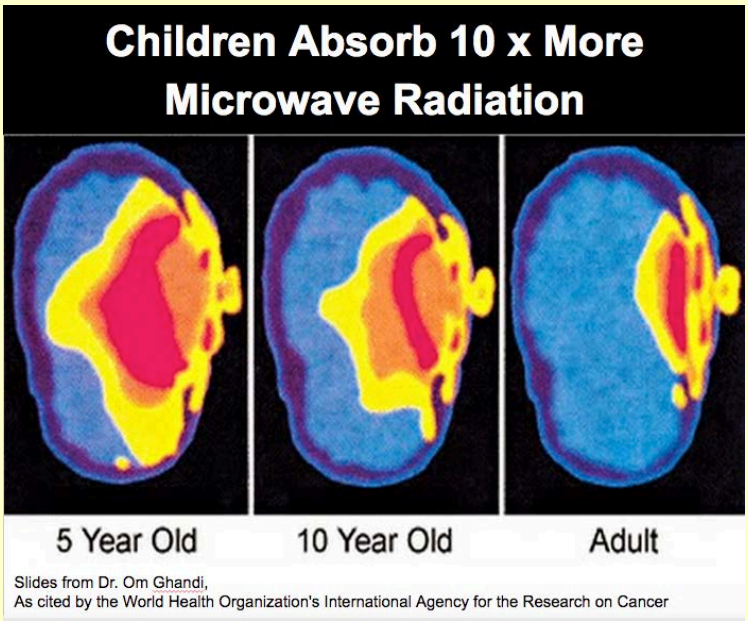
[13] Cell tower placement is also a human rights issue for children. In a law article published in *Environmental Science & Policy*, human rights experts argue that, given the fact that "the Convention on the Rights of the Child [(CRC)] obliges [countries] to provide a higher standard of protection for children than adults, any widespread or systematic form of environmental pollution that poses a long-term threat to a child's rights to life, development, or health may constitute an international human rights violation. [The] dearth of legislation to regulate the installation of [cell towers] in close proximity to children's … schools clearly constitutes a human rights concern according to the language of the [CRC]." Claudia Roda, Susan Perry. "Mobile phone infrastructure regulation in Europe: Scientific challenges and human rights protection." *Environmental Science & Policy*, Volume 37, March 2014, Pages 204-214.

[14] One of many quotes by scientists: "The harmful effects of electromagnetic fields, regardless of their frequencies, are now scientifically settled. Pregnant women (the fetus) and children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable." - Dominique Belpomme, MD, MPH, Paris V Descartes University, European Cancer & Environment Research Institute.

other telecommunications companies – and the FCC – to have open use of the tower/pole in question, which could potentially lead to multiple cell phone antennas or mini-cells being installed in different directions. Given the current evidence of the potential harm of exposure to wireless radiation – plus the very fact that the studies cited by those in support of cell towers/mini-cells near schools all say "more studies are needed" – the Board should not be supporting the placement of a cell tower or mini-cell on or adjacent to any school.[15] We should not be placing our students and teachers in environments with cell towers, mini-cells, or other wireless technology that have not yet been supported by peer-reviewed, evidenced-based, studies.

There are also potential racial and socio-economic impacts with cell tower/mini cell placements. Statistics show that cell towers are disproportionately placed in neighborhoods with higher numbers of minorities and students needing free and reduced meals. We do not want AACPS to mirror a location such as Montgomery County, which on its surface passed what seemed like strong regulations banning cell towers from all elementary schools and allowing placements of cell towers at middle or high schools only after parental approval. While banning cell towers from elementary schools was a critical step in protecting the youngest students, studies show most cell towers were placed at Montgomery County high schools with higher numbers of minorities, and high ESOL and FARMS rates, while schools in more affluent neighborhoods were able to stop such placements. We do NOT want AACPS students to face similar situations.

Finally, we believe this statement from Ronald Melnick, Ph.D., Senior Toxicologist (retired) and former head of the NTP's health effects studies of cell phone radio frequency radiation, captures the essence of why protecting children from cellphone radiation is so critical: "[I] find it appalling that mobile phone emission standards do not adjust for children when it is well established that the absorption of radiofrequency radiation by the brain is greater in children than in adults, the developing brain is highly susceptible to tissue damaging agents, and the use of wireless devices is being actively marketed to children."



Please reconsider the Board's previous vote(s) and rescind approval for the cell tower at Shady Side Elementary School, as well as stop any future placement of cell towers or mini-cells at all other AACPS schools.

[15] The presence of unidentified utility workers in the vicinity of the school is a secondary concern for student safety as well.

Best regards,

India L Ochs

India L. Ochs
Hillsmere Elementary School PTA, Advocacy Chair

Cc: Dr. George Arlotto, AACPS Superintendent
Erin Snell, Hillsmere Elementary School PTA President
Lisa D. B. Rodvien, Anne Arundel County Council, District 6
Jessica Haire, Anne Arundel County Council, District 7
Jenese Jones, Constituent Services, Anne Arundel County

HILLSMERE ELEMENTARY PTA

November 15, 2017

Anne Arundel County Board of Education
2644 Riva Road
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Dr. Arlotto, and members of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education,

I am writing you on behalf of the Hillsmere Elementary School PTA (Hillsmere PTA) in regard to the Anne Arundel County Board of Education's (the Board) vote on November 1, 2017 on agenda item 5.13, approving an easement for Verizon Wireless to install and maintain a communications facility (mini-cell) on a BG&E power pole adjacent to Hillsmere Elementary School (Hillsmere). For the reasons described below, the Hillsmere PTA is requesting that the Board reconsider its November 1, 2017 decision and rescind its approval of the proposed easement for placement and maintenance of a mini-cell at Hillsmere.

The installment of a mini-cell on a pole adjacent to Hillsmere poses significant health dangers to both students and staff at Hillsmere. While some argue that radiation emitted from a mini-cell, or any type of cell tower, is not a health danger, data from independently, nonpartisan sponsored studies, indicate the opposite. Scientists and health care professionals are increasingly expressing concerns regarding both the overall roll-out of the 5G network, and the presence of mini-cells and cell towers near schools specifically. According to findings by the Environmental Health Trust, radiation from mini-cells is not small. Wireless antennas emit microwaves — non-ionizing radiofrequency radiation — essentially functioning as cell towers –and that radiation is expected to typically travel from 10 meters up to several hundred meters.

In a letter[1] to the United Nations, 236 scientists from 41 nations[2] have appealed for protection from non-ionizing electromagnetic field exposure, citing numerous peer-reviewed studies showing that exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) generated by electric and wireless devices can cause increased "cancer risk, cellular stress, increase in harmful free radicals, genetic damages, structural and functional changes of the reproductive system, learning and memory deficits, neurological disorders, and negative impacts on general well-being in humans."[3] The letter also specifically requests that "children and pregnant women be

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[2] The scientists were specifically studying the biological and health effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields.
[3] https://emfscientist.org/index.php/emf-scientist-appeal

protected". In another appeal to the European Union on September 13, 2017, 180 scientists and doctors from 35 countries requested a moratorium on the roll-out of 5G, for telecommunication until potential hazards for human health and the environment have been fully investigated by scientists independent from industry. According to the scientists' appeal, the current guidelines for EMF are obsolete - based on the outdated hypothesis that the critical effect of RF-EMF exposure relevant to human health and safety is heating of exposed tissue. However, scientists have proven that many different kinds of illnesses and harms are caused without heating ("non-thermal effect") at radiation levels well below current international guidelines.[4]

In a September 18, 2017 letter to the Governor of California, Physicians for Safe Technology expressed that "[p]hysicians realize now that the incremental increases in daily radiofrequency (RF) exposure already exceed human health tolerance for many people" and "[w]e need to be reducing rather than increasing new sources of involuntary RF exposure in our communities."

Another 2017 study[5] compared people living close and far from cell antennas and found a significant impact on people living closer to cellular antennas. Damage was found in their blood that predicts cancer development.

Even professionals from the telecommunications industry have expressed reservations regarding the continuing placement of communications facilities before the full impact of such impact can be understood. The former president of Microsoft Canada, has stated that "our current use of wireless technology, specifically use of devices such as cell phones, could be much safer" and that while he supports the potential benefits with the next iteration of wireless technology, "neither my industry, nor any Federal agency in Canada or the United States can say unequivocally that this technology is safe. There are too many unknowns regarding this technology[.]" He also cited that "There is strong scientific evidence that the radiation we are now being exposed to from 2G, 3G and 4G has serious adverse effects on human health. The new spectrum proposed to be licensed has undergone very little research on human health effects. No Federal Agency, including Health Canada and the FCC can point to any peer-reviewed evidence-based science that shows 5G technology is safe."[6]

Additionally, in a response to the impact of wireless radiation, Maryland became the first state in the nation to recommend a reduction in WiFi within schools. In its report, the Maryland State Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council cited the US National Toxicology Program findings of increased rates of rare malignant cancers in animals, as well as children's unique vulnerability to the radiation.

We could go on and on citing studies and appeals from scientists and health care professionals to put a halt to placement of mini-cells near schools – but the bottom line is this: 1) there is

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[4] https://ehtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Scientist-5G-appeal-2017.pdf

[5] "Impact of radiofrequency radiation on DNA damage and antioxidants in peripheral blood lymphocytes of humans residing in the vicinity of mobile phone base stations" (Zothansiama et al, 2017; published in Electromagnetic Biology and Medicine).

[6] https://ehtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/C4ST-submission-to-Governor-Jerry-Brown-re-SB-649-1.pdf

evidence that exposure to current wireless radiation causes harm; and 2) there are too many unknowns about the full impact of future wireless technology. Research also shows that children and pregnant women are the most vulnerable – two demographics most likely to be on school grounds on a regular basis. The actual placement of the pole cited in the easement – at the front corner of Hillsmere's side parking lot – and across the street from another location frequented by children (PAL Park), only increases the concerns of the frequency in exposure.

Once the mini-cell is installed, it opens the door for Verizon – and the FCC – to have open use of the pole in question, which could potentially lead to multiple mini-cells being installed in different directions on the pole. Given the current evidence of the potential harm of exposure to wireless radiation – plus the very fact that the studies cited by those in support of mini-cells near schools all say "more studies are needed" – the Board should not be supporting the placement of a mini-cell on a pole adjacent to Hillsmere (or any school).[7] We should not be placing our students and teachers in environments with mini-cells or other wireless technology that have not yet been supported by peer-reviewed, evidenced-based, studies.

Please reconsider the Board's previous vote and rescind approval for the easement with Verizon Wireless at Hillsmere.

Best regards,

India L Ochs

India L. Ochs
Hillsmere Elementary School PTA, President

Cc: Kimberly Terry, Principal, Hillsmere Elementary School
Christopher Trumbauer, Anne Arundel County Council
Amalie Brandenburg, Education Officer, Anne Arundel County

[7] The presence of unidentified utility workers in the vicinity of the school is a secondary concern for student safety as well.

Exhibit A

August 6, 2018

Pacific Grove City Council
City Hall
300 Forest Ave.
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Dear members of Pacific Grove City Council,

I am writing you on behalf of Pacific Grove High School PTA in regard to the Pacific Grove Planning Commission's vote on July 26, 2018, which approved a request by Verizon Wireless to install and maintain a cell tower adjacent to Pacific Grove High School (PGHS). For the reasons described below, the Pacific Grove High School PTA **is strongly opposed** to the location of the Verizon cell tower and is requesting that the City Council consider and support the appeal that is being filed by a group of concerned parents who live in Pacific Grove and send their children to PG schools.

The installment of a cell tower adjacent to PGHS poses significant potential health dangers to both students and staff at PGHS. While some argue that radiation emitted from a cell tower is not a health danger, data from many studies indicate the opposite. Research shows that children and pregnant women are the most vulnerable – two demographics most likely to be on PGHS school grounds on a regular basis. The actual placement of the cell tower– near the back of PGHS and very close to Forest Grove Elementary School- only increases the concerns of the frequency in exposure.

Cell towers also pose a risk to students due to fire hazard. Many cell towers throughout the United States have caught fire and collapsed, posing a significant safety concern, especially in an area with young students walking to and from school every day.

The mission of all PTAs nationwide is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Our local PTA is very active in expressing our support for or opposition to issues dealing with the health, safety, education, or general well-being of children and youth in our community.

The members of the Pacific Grove High School PTA strongly urge you to please reconsider the Pacific Grove Planning Commission's previous vote and rescind approval for the Verizon cell tower at Pacific Grove High School.

Sincerely,

Julie Kavanaugh
President, Pacific Grove High School PTA

August 6, 2018

Re: Cell Tower Appeal

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Pacific Grove Middle School PTSA. Our board consisting of 16 members and 3 teachers has unanimously agreed that we oppose the construction of a Cell Tower next or near Pacific Grove High School. We support the appeal that is being filed and support the appellants as well.

Sincerely,

Ragni Coleman
President of Pacific Grove Middle School PTSA

Exhibit C

August 6, 2018

Re: Cell Phone Tower Appeal

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Forest Grove PTA. Our board consisting of 7 parents and 1 teacher has unanimously agreed that we are against the placement of a cell tower near the High School. We support the appeal that is being filed and support the appellants as well.

I have also been in contact with the President of the California State PTA Elena Shea. The California and National PTA are against cell phone towers near schools. I have attached the National PTA's resolution that they adopted in 2005.

Sincerely,

Katie Ryan

VP Forest Grove PTA

200

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELDS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 6, 1994
Reviewed by Board of Managers April 2005

WHEREAS, The third Object of the National PTA states: To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth; and

WHEREAS, There is great public concern based on recent studies that electro-magnetic fields (EMF) may cause or promote certain cancers; and

WHEREAS, In response to the 1992 Swedish national study indicating an increase in childhood leukemia with exposure to EMFs, the Swedish government announced that it would act on the assumption that there is a connection between exposure to power frequency fields and cancer, and, would propose legislation limiting EMF exposure to 1 milliGauss (mG) or less; and

WHEREAS, Children are exposed to sources of EMFs other than power lines, such as school computers, microwave ovens, televisions, and all electrical equipment; and

WHEREAS, Legitimate and proven methods of mitigating EMFs from power lines, computers, and other sources are available; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA seek participation in coalitions to study the effects of electro-magnetic fields; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA educate and inform its districts, councils and units about the potential hazards of EMFs and encourage school districts and schools to develop risk reduction policies and continue to disseminate information on the subject as it becomes available.

###

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There is growing concern about the effects of electro-magnetic fields (EMFs). A large body of evidence indicates a connection between exposure to EMFs and cancer. Some studies (for example, a study paid for by Southern California Edison) have not found a connection, but, more importantly, no study has concluded that EMFs do not cause or promote cancer.

Continued on next page

Electro-Magnetic Fields – continued

Many experts in the field including Carl Blackman, a biophysicist with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and David Carpenter, Dean of the State University of the New York School of Public Health advocate "prudent avoidance." In other words, avoid EMF exposure whenever possible.

The problem is that most people do not understand where EMFs come from, let alone how to avoid exposure to EMFs. Most people assume that EMFs are generated only from high voltage transmission lines. In fact, EMFs are generated from many sources, including all electrical appliances (e.g., computers, hair dryers, electric blankets) and high levels of EMFs can be found in any home or school simply due to the way the building is wired.

Most public utilities offer free measurement services. All homes and schools should be measured as a matter of course. Where levels are unacceptably high, public utilities should be encouraged to mitigate the problem. The public also should be educated about the fact that legitimate methods and devices for mitigation exist and that the California Department of Health has a list of mitigation experts.

Computers are a major source of EMF exposure in schools. However, even old computers can be cheaply and easily retrofitted to reduce exposure. Sweden, which has taken the lead in the study of EMFs, has issued guidelines on computers and EMF exposure which should be followed until we have all the facts. The New York City Schools instituted such guidelines early in 1992.

Lessons learned from studies on smoking, asbestos, second-hand smoke and radon must not be ignored. We have an obligation to learn from the past and protect our children by reducing their exposure to what is clearly a serious and potential health hazard.