

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment & Communications
Parliament House
Via e-mail

11 March 12

Dear Secretary,

Telecommunications Amendment (Mobile Phone Towers) Bill 2011.

I am writing this submission to Senate Inquiry, because of my grave concerns regarding Public Health policy & planning in relation to extremely low frequency electromagnetic field (ELF) and Radio Frequency radiation (RF).

I have read the Bio Initiative Report compiled by 14 scientists in a collaboration, to present a holistic view of the issues that require attention.

The review of legislation and regulations which allow organisations to construct phone towers, provide all politicians, regardless of their political persuasion, with an opportunity to consider the health and wellbeing interests of all Australians.

The development of prudent public health policy about the construction of phone towers, requires all politicians to be well informed on this subject to enable them to make educated decisions that take into consideration all relevant evidence.

The Bio Initiative report makes recommendations for new public safety limits regarding the emission of extremely low frequency electromagnetic field (ELF) and Radio Frequency radiation.

However, the report sights there are varying recommendations from various research, depending on who is writing the report. It appears to me one of the reasons for the varying recommendations, is that the basic premise of the standards of evidence vary. The Bio Initiative Report states that studies where the findings contradict those in the Bio Initiative Report, adopt standards of evidence considered to be unreasonably high.

In making decisions regarding policy, I implore you either to determine the standards of evidence in a manner which reflects your responsibility to prudent public health policy. Alternatively, that you consider the standard of evidence of information submitted to you, and that you challenge the underlying assumptions made in the research which underpins recommendations provided to you.

It would be reckless not to act in a responsible way where there so many major unanswered questions about the impact on individuals of sustained exposure to extremely low frequency electromagnetic field and radio frequency radiation.

As with many policy decisions politicians are required to preside over, there are vested interests on all sides.

However, I am concerned that organisations whose vested interests focus primarily on financial gain and do not consider - in a genuine and meaningful way – the impact of their actions on the health & wellbeing of individuals – will override the rights of everyday Australians to good health & wellbeing.

The question for all politicians is:- What do you want your legacy to be?

Do you want to be seen as paying a dividend to the interests of a few companies over your responsibility towards the health and wellbeing of the people you represent?

I am sure that you, like me, would want future generations to look back at the decisions made from this inquiry, and be very thankful that the health & wellbeing of individuals was central to the decision-making process in this case.

As has been experienced with the James Hardy case, even in the face of evidence about the potential effects of the use of asbestos, they continued to disregard information that came to their attention – without further investigation. The reason? Financial gain which would be negatively impacted if James Hardy had to recall asbestos products.

With the benefit of hindsight, perhaps the politicians of the day could have played a regulating role by using their ability – and responsibility to influence public health policy.

It has been proven repeatedly, not only in Australia but globally that industry self-regulation does not work. It is unrealistic to expect private organisations to make honest efforts to find a solution that may negatively impact on their bottom line.

I recognise the demand for communications translates into a need for private organisations to respond with ever improving services, in order to keep their customers satisfied. However, there are measures available now, that have been implemented by Governments around the world that can protect their people against exposure to long term ELF & RF. This includes the Swedish Government who pays for homes & schools situated nearby to phone towers to be shielded. (Y-Shield)

The adaptation of the precautionary principle at this point in time, has the potential to mitigate risks to governments now & into the future.

I ask the Committee to increase the level of protection for individuals from the cumulative effects of sustained exposure to ELF & RF due to serious impacts on people's health.

Yours sincerely,

Concerned Citizen