

## **KEEP LANDLINE TELEPHONES**

AT&T's 2020 policy will dismantle the copper landline phone system in use since 1877. "They are already preparing for it and whittling away at it," stated one AT&T representative I spoke to recently. The FCC is allowing carriers to launch experiments in designated communities to wean people off their landlines. Communities in New Jersey and New York are furious. They want the landline back.

The shutdown of the copper landline would have to be approved by the FCC, a move that is unfortunately widely expected. We are hoping Senator Feinstein can recognize the landline's importance and intervene.

A Huffington Post publication has demonstrated how AT&T, Verizon, and the FCC fail to count a copper phone line as a phone line once it is combined with another use, even though it still shares the same copper line. DSL cable, AT&T U-Verse, pace makers, home security systems and business fax machines all use the copper wire.

This is rigged accounting! With FCC complicity, the phone companies may account for only 30% of the total copper landlines in existence. Looking at higher profits and less regulation, they purposely want to paint a false picture that the copper landline is antiquated and most Americans are switching over to wireless.

Even based only on residential phone calling, the Center for Disease Control states that the majority. 3 out of 5 households or 140 million people have a copper landline telephone. Americans obviously want and deserve a choice.

This November 2015 Consumer Reports takes a strong look at the health hazards of cellphones. "I think the overall evidence that wireless radiation might cause adverse health effects is now strong enough that it is unjustifiable for government agencies not to alert the public," states Dr, David Carpenter, Director of the Institute for Health and the Environment.

Consumer Reports cites a recent German study that found electromagnetic radiation promoted the growth of brain tumors in mice exposed at supposed safe non-thermal levels of radiation.

In Environmental Health 2013, a study looked at the correlation between malignant brain tumors and mobile and cordless phone use. Confirmation was made with 95% confidence that electromagnetic radiation plays a significant role in the initiation and promotion of carcinogenesis, a process whereby normal cells are transformed into cancer cells.

According to the Wall Street Journal, one in two men and one in three women will get cancer and soon that rate will reflect life-threatening cancer.

Wireless radiation opens up the blood brain barrier, a protective membrane surrounding the brain. Children are especially sensitive since their malleable skulls are not fully developed.

A study from the Danish National Birth Cohort looked at prenatal and postnatal exposure to cellphone use. The highest incidence of behavioral problems was noted in children who had both prenatal and postnatal exposure to cellphones compared with children not exposed during either time period.

The City Council of Berkeley, California, approved a "Right to Know" law that requires electronic retailers to inform consumers about keeping cellphones at a safe distance away from their bodies.

If cellphones are dangerous, people living near cell towers, cell antennas and cell stations may be in more danger. The Indian government has recently set up a fund that will assist citizens who have been adversely affected by living in the proximity of cell towers. Unlike coal plants, they are in all neighborhoods, rich and poor.

Willie Taylor, Director of the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance in the US Department of the Interior has just written a letter to the United States Department of Commerce stating that the cell towers are biologically harmful to birds. The radiation is harming them. He has statutory authority over wildlife and thus birds. The US Department of Commerce is in charge of siting the cell towers. We can deduce that humans are as affected as birds are.

Additionally, in 1998 the California Department of Health stated that 3 - 5 % of the population has electromagnetic sensitivity. That translates to a minimum 1.2 million people here in California alone. This is a conservative estimate given that this survey was done over 17 years ago when wireless technology was a fraction of what it is today.

Given the inherent dangers of cellphones, the American public deserves a choice. Which is more important — the profits of the phone carriers or the safety of the people?

The copper landline has superior call quality — no static, dropped calls, or late voicemails. Remember those long, lingering phone calls before the cellphone?

In an emergency, copper is essential. 911 cellphone location information is often inaccurate, causing delayed emergency service that contributes to 10,000 deaths a year. In contrast, an emergency call placed on a traditional landline immediately shows a caller's address on an emergency dispatcher's map. Even with the power off, an emergency call may be placed.

After Superstorm Sandy in lower Manhattan, it took almost two weeks before electricity and cell phones worked again. In 9/11, the cellphones crashed because of the magnitude of the crisis and therefore the volume of calls.

AARP is strongly lobbying for the maintenance of the copper network. Seniors can be intimidated by the technology of a cellphone. They may have difficulty in hearing a cellphone as well. Emergency service is of utmost concern for seniors and they cannot rely on cellphones to help them in a crisis.

Losing the landline copper network would be a national security issue. According to The Wall Street Journal, former CIA Director James Woolsey, former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and General Petraeus state, "There is a 100% chance that there will be a cyber attack on the grid." More recently, former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano has stated that there is an 80-90% chance. It is not a matter of IF but WHEN.

Because the grid is dependent on computerized control systems and by nature is inter-connective, a terrorist organization such as Islamic State, already shown to be tech savvy with \$2 billion in assets, could easily launch a cyber attack. This would cause cascading outages and systemic imbalances that would fry the transformers in the tens and thousands of generating systems and substations throughout the United States. Transformers are not generic, require six to twelve months to be manufactured and are cumbersome and costly to transport.

To quote from *Lights Out*, Nightline anchor Ted Koppel's best selling new book, "George Cotter, the NSA former chief scientist, is convinced that China and Russia have already penetrated the US power grid in order to plant cyber weapons that could be activated in the future. He also believes that Syria's leader, Assad, has a cyber operation, which he routinely runs against Wall Street." Look at the sophistication of the recent hack into JP Morgan Bank.

On April 16, 2013, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Metcalf transmission substation near San Jose, servicing power to Silicon Valley, was physically attacked. Perpetrators cut AT&T's fiber-optic telecommunications cables and knocked out 17 giant transformers, all in only 19 minutes. Shell casings, free of fingerprints, pointed to AK-47 assault rifles used at the periphery of the stations.

Koppel commented on the Metcalf incident. "While Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Jon Wellinghoff told The Wall Street Journal that he is concerned that the Metcalf attack may have been a dry run for a far more devastating act of sabotage. Wellinghoff cited an analysis by FERC, concluding that if nine of our country's most critical substations were knocked out at the same time, it could cause a blackout encompassing most of the United States."

A blackout of that magnitude could last for 3-12 months. There would be catastrophic health concerns and enormous social unrest as people try to survive without food, water, heat, medical help, sewage, gasoline, and money, all of which are indirectly dependent on electricity. The landline telephone will be all we have left.

I strongly encourage Senator Feinstein to pressure the chairman of the FCC, Tom Wheeler, to maintain the tried and true copper landline. Given the health, emergency, and national security risks, Americans deserve to have a choice.

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Thank you.