

For immediate release

**Citizens up in arms in Qualicum Beach
over 160-foot 5G cell tower being installed without due process:
Calling on Town Council to retract its consent
in light of serious breaches in public consultation process**

Qualicum Beach, Vancouver Island, BC, May 4, 2022.

A 49 metre (160-foot) cell tower has rolled into the small community of Qualicum Beach and is about to be erected in a residential area close to homes, a daycare and an elementary school. Citizens have recently discovered serious breaches in the public consultation process that the consultant representing Telus was supposed to respect. They are appealing to federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) François-Phillippe Champagne whose department oversees all matters pertaining to cell towers and antennas in Canada to invalidate the consultation as due process was not followed and therefore to stop the installation of the tower. They are also calling on the Town Council of Qualicum Beach to retract its consent in light of this information.

In 2020, the Town granted land use concurrence for the site at 2045 Island Highway based on the assumption that the consultant had done its due diligence. However, it has since come to light that the federal government's consultation process was not carried out correctly by SitePath Consulting, the consultant working for Telus, resulting in people who will be the most affected not being consulted, incorrect information being conveyed to the public, and a large number of residents' comments not being tabulated in the consultation.

According to the default consultation process, the company must mail a clearly marked notification package to the "local public", i.e., those located within a radius of 3 times the height of the tower (including residences, community gathering areas, public institutions, businesses, schools, etc.); and inform the wider community via a clear notice placed in a local community newspaper. However, SitePath based the entire process on the wrong tower height; sent out an incomplete notification package; neglected to notify 67% of the "local public", including a daycare centre; and placed a notice in the newspaper that indicated the wrong height. The notice also conspicuously avoided the word "antenna", simply referring to "ancillary radio equipment". Industry Canada's Procedures Circular CPC-2-0-03 refers to "antenna systems".

According to Carol Dowe, a local resident who launched a petition and letter-writing campaign: *"Not only was it unfair that they conducted their public consultation at the peak of the pandemic in a town with a high proportion of seniors, but they didn't even respect the process!"*

The regional office of ISED considers the case closed. In a recent meeting, Mrs. Dowe asked its director, Michael Fu, why he believed Telus's consultant who said that they mailed the notification package rather than written statements from citizens claiming they did not receive it. Referring to his reply, Mrs. Dowe said, "It was most disturbing to see a federal employee defending the consultant representing Telus. Mr. Fu said: *"How can you question the consultant for many cell towers across Canada? We are watching him."*

Across Canada, according to *Canadians for Safe Technology*, citizens are upset at the undemocratic way that cell towers are rolled out. The consultation is carried out by the company that wants to install the tower, the results are not made public, and the way the results impact final decisions regarding the installation of cell towers is unknown.

By far, the most frequent reason cited by people who oppose towers is their potential impact on health. However, ISED does not consider health concerns to be "relevant", deferring to Health Canada's exposure guidelines *Safety Code 6*. According to hundreds of scientists specialized in the health impacts of RF radiation, *Safety Code 6* is based on an outdated assumption that tissue must be heated to be harmed, and needs a major revision. Until that happens, the only recourse citizens have is to encourage the landowner not to lease or sell the land to the telecom company, and to point out non-health reasons for rejecting a tower during the consultation (e.g., companies are required to share towers when possible; Qualicum Beach already has 3 cell towers).

Residents have spent the past 20 months trying to make their voices heard.

Over 1400 citizens opposed the cell tower with letters and petitions, but the Mayor and Council voted 3/2 to accept it, refusing to give audience to a delegation of opposers which included doctors. A BC Ombudsperson investigation concluded that the Town had acted arbitrarily when it refused to allow the delegation to be heard.

Marcus Schlussen, an EMF consultant concerned about the health impacts of RF radiation, summarized the situation this way: *"It is shameful that in a country such as Canada, citizens who should be enjoying a well-deserved retirement have been forced to spend all their energies on advocating for a basic right to safeguard their health."*

Residents concerned about the health impacts point out that councillors have a responsibility for the community's well-being under the province's Community Charter. Also, since the proposed tower is on municipal land, the Council has the right to say no.

Meanwhile, a large Douglas Fir has been cut down to make way for the tower, and the installation crew has arrived.

Citizens who are opposed to this tower are appealing to the Town and to ISED to stop the installation, and are calling on all residents of Qualicum Beach to show up with family, children and friends to stand with them in protest:

5G Cell Tower Protest, Saturday, May 7, 2022, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm

at the cell tower site at 2045 Island Highway, across from the Christian Fellowship Church, 825 Village Way, Qualicum Beach.

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For more information, contact:

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Canada's Wireless Radiation Safety Guidelines

Safety Code 6 is Canada's exposure guidelines for radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation (such as microwave radiation from wireless devices and cell tower antennas). According to many scientists, these guidelines are based on a now discredited assumption that tissue must be heated to be harmed, do not take into account the biological effects at much lower levels than those that cause heating, and therefore do not protect Canadians. Hundreds of high-quality peer-reviewed studies show that radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation originating from human activity causes harm to humans and non-human organisms at levels far below Safety Code 6 exposure limits.

Canada has no guidelines to protect wildlife including birds and pollinators, and trees.

Scientists and NGOs such as *Prevent Cancer Now* and *Canadians for Safe Technology*, have submitted briefs to the Canadian Senate's Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources regarding **Bill S-5** Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act, to request that anthropogenic RF-EMR be included in amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.