

Press Release – send out Wednesday July 27th 2022

Federal gov't & Rogers ignore cell tower regulations in BC

Salt Spring Island, BC

Today protesters asked Minister Francois Philippe Champagne & the Ministry for Innovation, Science & Industry for a cease construction order against Rogers Communications.

The protesting group alleges that Ken Pungente, Western Regional Director of Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada (ISED), ignored federal regulations to assist a former colleague & to enable a Rogers cell tower construction on Salt Spring Island, BC. Mr. Pungente's actions were contrary to the decision of the local land use authority.

Rogers proposed construction of a 40- 50 metre, 5G cell tower is in the middle of a densely populated community with the tower being 42 meters from the closest home. Rogers has refused to look at alternate locations for their tower even though there are acres of open space with equal elevation nearby.

Rogers originally obtained approval from the land use authority, the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee in July, 2021. In the last year, the protesting group demonstrated that Rogers made incorrect & misleading statements in their tower application, were breaking existing covenants registered on the site, and had ignored First Nations settlement activity dating back 2000 years. Following the community's wishes, & the ISED's direction, the Trust Committee overturned their tower approval in March, 2022.

Michael Krentz, representative of Rogers Communications, a former ISED employee & colleague of Mr. Pungente, sought clarification from Mr. Pungente & ISED Canada regarding the overturned approval. Ignoring Dispute Resolution actions required in Canadian federal regulations (CPC 2-0-03 Section 5), & not reviewing reasons for the overturn, Mr. Pungente wrote to the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee asserting they had no valid reason for the overturned decision. This response was in contravention of the ISED regulations, & a material conflict of interest given the relationship between Mr. Krentz and Mr. Pungente.

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee Chair recently contacted Rogers requesting a construction delay of the cell tower until the Trust had an opportunity to respond to Mr. Pungente's letter. Rogers has ignored that request & this week has begun construction of the proposed cell tower, attributing Mr. Pungente's letter as their authority.

Protesters have asked Minister Champagne to review the actions of Mr. Pungente, & for Rogers to be instructed by ISED to immediately cease any construction activity on Salt Spring Island.