

History of the Anti-Wireless Movement

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by [Arthur Firstenberg](#), *ECHOEarth (End Cellphones Here on Earth)*

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In 1996, when almost no one owned a cell phone, and WiFi had not yet been invented, organizations formed to oppose wireless technology in order to protect our world from an unprecedented assault. The telecommunications industry planned to put a cell phone in the hands of every man, woman and child so they could communicate instantaneously from any point on Earth to any other point on Earth. In order to accomplish this, and for the first time in the history of the planet, every square inch of the Earth was going to be bathed in microwave radiation at all times. Also every human being – all seven billion of us – were going to become sources of such radiation. This was also unprecedented. Human beings, like all other creatures, were part of nature, not its enemy. But for the first time in the history of the Earth, every member of one of its species was going to be emitting radiation wherever they went.

Today, in 2021, when almost everyone owns a cell phone, WiFi, and an average of 23 other wireless devices, both the organizations and their goals have changed. Health and nature have already been destroyed, and the fight is no longer against wireless technology but, often, against each other. The purpose of this article is to review this history in order to remind people of the purpose of our movement and to unify and redirect global action once again to where it needs to be: against all of wireless technology in order to stop the

radiation and recover our health and environment before it is too late. I will focus this article on the opposition in the United States because I am most familiar with it, but similar dynamics have been operating in other countries.

On February 8, 1996, the Telecommunications Act was signed into law, mandating the rollout of wireless technology across America, and prohibiting local governments from protecting their citizens' health and environment from the radiation that it produces. Both existing and new organizations all over the United States united to oppose wireless technology and to try to restore democracy.

The EMR Alliance, which until that time had focused on radiation from power lines and computers, now directed its energies to fight cell towers. Citizens for the Appropriate Placement of Telecommunications Facilities was organized. I helped found the Cellular Phone Task Force to oppose not just cell towers but cell towers' reason for being, which is cell phones. Other organizations that formed included Noe Valley Families Against the Antennas; Healthy Home Alliance; Families for Appropriate Cellular Tower Siting; Ulysses Citizens for Responsible Technology; Hardwick Action Committee; Thistle Hill Neighborhood Alliance; Coalition of Concerned Citizens for Responsible Technologies; Citizens of Marin for Sensible Communications Planning; Northboro Residents for Responsible Tower Siting; Telecommunications Master Plan Coalition of San Francisco; and Rainier Valley Association for Safe Wireless Technology. These and other groups, individuals, public officials, and the Communications Workers of America, joined together to sue the Federal Communications Commission in order to protect health, nature and democracy.

In 2000, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against us, and the Supreme Court refused to hear our case.

In the aftermath of our failure, a national coalition called the EMR Network was formed to try to unify efforts to protect

us all against radiation. But in the five years since the passage of the Telecommunications Act, a majority of the population had acquired cell phones, and many had also acquired WiFi, which had recently been invented. Cracks formed in the coalition, which was beginning to split into factions. One faction still opposed all of wireless technology. Another opposed cell towers but not cell phones, as if one could exist without the other, and as if the radiation did not come from both. A third represented the interests of people who called themselves electrically sensitive. And not only were there differences of opinion among us, but outside interests had infiltrated our movement and helped to divide us.

The EMR Alliance, which had previously functioned as a national coalition, vanished. Its corporate counsel, Michael Withey, was the head of a national network of personal injury lawyers hunting for million dollar lawsuits, called the Electromagnetic Radiation Case Evaluation Team (EMRCET). When those lawyers concluded that ours was a losing cause and there was no money to be made from lawsuits about electromagnetic radiation, EMRCET disbanded, and the EMR Alliance also disappeared.

Another lawyer, James Hobson, who had represented most of the parties before the Second Circuit, and who became counsel for the EMR Network, was a telecommunications lawyer who, simultaneous to representing the parties against the FCC, represented a number of telecommunications companies, as well as the Telecommunications Industry Association, on other matters. He had also previously been in-house counsel for the FCC.

George Carlo, a lawyer as well as a scientist, who had headed up the telecommunications industry's effort to prove cell phones safe, made headlines when he switched sides and wrote a book condemning cell phones as dangerous. It was titled Cell Phones: Invisible Hazards in the Wireless Age. He attempted to join the national coalition against wireless technology, but

like Hobson, not everyone trusted him. He had spent most of his career as a scientist-for-hire working for major polluters. In addition to being hired by the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association to prove cell phones safe, he had been a consultant to the Tobacco Institute, Dow Chemical, Dow Corning, the Chlorine Institute and other polluters and published articles for two decades purporting to show that tobacco smoke, breast implants, dioxins, herbicides, and other chemicals were not dangerous.

Eventually the EMR Network, beset by internal quarreling, broke up and yet another coalition, called the EMR Policy Institute, formed. And gradually, over the years, as the wireless industry's adversaries came more and more to also be its customers, they abandoned, for the most part, the fight to protect human health, nature, and democracy. Many opponents of cell towers today are not only not opposed to cell phones, but they are heavily addicted to them and have damaged their health from years of exposing themselves to their radiation. The birds, insects and animals have already disappeared from their yards and they have grown used to living without them. I used to get more calls asking how to help fight wireless technology. Now, more often, people call me or email me from their cell phones asking me what is the safest kind of cell phone to use, how far away from their body to hold it, what kinds of devices will best neutralize the radiation, and how to distinguish a 5G tower from a 4G tower. When I tell them that radiation is radiation, that there is no way to "neutralize" it, that distance doesn't matter, and that it is destroying the Earth regardless of what you call it, they don't understand what I am saying. More and more, they ask, in frustration, "What is the alternative?" And when I answer that the alternative to not having a cell phone is the imminent, well-under-way destruction of all life on Earth, including their own, they don't seem to register what I am saying. They simply can't imagine living without a cell phone. [ECHOEarth \(End Cellphones Here On Earth\)](#), an organization that I helped

create in May 2020 in order to build a movement to abandon wireless technology, still has fewer than 2,000 members although 300,000 people and organizations have signed the [International Appeal to Stop 5G on Earth and in Space](#).

Meanwhile the EMR Policy Institute has also disappeared and a lot of new organizations have taken its place. The focus of many is not to stop wireless technology, or even cell towers, any more, but just to stop the newest version of them, which is called "5G". There is an international coalition called Stop 5G International. In the United States there are Stop 5G Chicago, Stop 5G San Diego, Stop 5G Hawaii, Stop 5G Georgia, 5G Free California, 5G Free Vermont, 5G Awareness Now, 5G Colorado Action, Citizens Against 5G Cell Towers, and dozens of other organizations with similar names. For many it is not because they no longer think radiation is harmful, but because they have given up trying to stop it, and because most of their members own cell phones.

And there are still outside interests assuming positions of leadership in our movement, and telecommunications lawyers representing us in court. Children's Health Defense, directed by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is doing wonderful advocacy work. However, it has been represented in its legal work against 5G by Scott McCollough, a telecommunications lawyer. Like George Carlo and James Hobson, he claims to have switched sides, but [his website](#) does not say anything of the sort, and he has told me that he does not believe RF radiation harms everyone, just people with electromagnetic hypersensitivity.

And there is a new national coalition that is now filling the void left by the EMR Policy Institute. It holds Zoom meetings every other Friday, and has invited a series of excellent speakers to present at these meetings. But they are only speaking to the choir, and the organizer of that coalition, Odette Wilkens, is a technology lawyer who makes her living representing IBM. IBM is the company that launched a "Smarter Planet" campaign in 2008 and a "Smarter Cities Challenge" in

2010. Everything IBM does today depends on cell phones and wireless technology. I have asked Odette whether she has a conflict of interest, but she has not responded. She is also an animal rights activist for which I admire her and I would like to be able to trust her, but she has give me no reason to do so.

Odette tried to sabotage the amicus brief that was filed in support of our current petition to the U.S. Supreme Court. She convinced the coordinator of the amicus brief not to file it, after a lot of organizations had already signed on and people had already donated money toward it, so that I had to find another organization on short notice to take over the effort and get it filed. She told a lot of people why not to sign on to the amicus brief and why not to donate money toward it. It was after she did this that I investigated her and discovered who she works for. Her new website, wiredbroadband.org, doesn't even have her name anywhere on it. [In an interview](#) (at 37:55) she said, falsely, that the preemption clause in the Telecommunications Act, which we are again asking the Supreme Court to strike down, does not apply to 5G and that people should not worry about it. She said that local governments are free to prohibit 5G towers to protect our health and environment because they provide "broadband" services and not "cell phone" services.

But that is false. Today "cellular" and "broadband" have merged and there is no difference. 5G provides both voice and internet services. And the preemption clause does not say "cell towers," it says "personal wireless service facilities," which encompasses everything. We are back before the Supreme Court after twenty years asking it, again, to strike down that clause, in order to restore to local governments the right to protect our health and environment, and impose liability on telecommunications companies that injure and kill people. In 2000, the Second Circuit addressed only the issue of States' Rights. Today we are asking for our Personal Rights to life,

liberty, and property. And in our petition to the Supreme Court we are represented not by telecommunications lawyers, but by lawyers with expertise in environmental law and civil rights.

The radiation emitted by cell phones is more, not less harmful than the radiation emitted by cell towers. There are 15 billion mobile devices in the world, and only seven million towers. And the phones are right next to everyone's body. The main difference is that people have become used to them. People have become used to the absence of butterflies and sparrows. People have become used to being fat and diabetic, and at risk for heart attacks and strokes. By this newsletter I am reaching out to all organizations and people who love this Earth. I ask them to remember what they are fighting for and to unite together in a campaign to abandon wireless technology and eliminate cell phones from this planet in order to save it. Cell phones are not the only threat to life on Earth, but they are the most urgent.

Cell phones are effectively radioactive devices. The idea that they are not radioactive comes from a mistaken distinction that the medical community made a century ago, which most people persist in believing despite a century of research showing that distinction to be little more than a fantasy. It is a fantasy that says that (a) only radiation above a certain frequency is energetic enough to remove electrons from molecules to form ions, (b) this causes genetic mutations which are the cause of cancer, and (c) radiation is harmless if it does not cause cancer.

The most obvious of those fictions is that radiation has no effects besides cancer. Whereas in fact radiation acts directly on the electrons in our mitochondria, slowing metabolism, making us hypoxic, and causing diabetes, heart disease and, yes, cancer. Radiation also acts directly on all the electric transmission lines in our bodies, including our nerves, our blood vessels, our heart's pacemaker, and yes –

even though western medicine doesn't recognize their existence – our acupuncture meridians. All this plays havoc with life and in just 26 years has wiped out most of the Earth's insects, a large percentage of the small birds, and is imminently threatening to put an end to what's left – including us – if we do not put an end to it.

Please work with me on a campaign to abolish cell phones. It is necessary, it is realistic, and the alternative is unthinkable. Thousands of people have written to me over the past few years asking how they can help. You can all help to begin this movement by throwing away your cell phones and joining [ECHOEarth](#). As soon as enough people have joined ECHOEarth so that it has strength in numbers, I will contact the people who want to work on this in earnest and we can discuss the next steps.

Connect with Arthur Firstenberg:

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