Mobilitie Shelter Valley Cell Tower appeal- Board of Supervisors January, 25 2012

We are here to represent 22 Shelter Valley people and 35 frequent visitors to the surrounding Anza Borrego State Park who signed a petition against this cell tower.

This proposed cell tower would be located less than 100’ from residences and the Shelter Valley Kids Club and be twice as tall as other structures, intercepting the views that people have moved here for. We've presented studies and a letter from a local Real Estate agent attesting that this tower could lower property values. The Desert State Park and historic Southern Immigrant Trail are less than ½ mile away, thus impacting the State Park view shed. We've demonstrated that the wildlife in this valley will be irrevocably impacted. We also demonstrate how the tower’s 6’ microwave dish Fresnel zone will no doubt intercept the State Park hillside as it travels up and over to a distant relay dish in the east. According to cell tower blueprints, this concentrated beam is aimed at the State Park where endangered Bighorn Sheep graze and the California Riding and Hiking Trail traverses the upper hillside. This is the area my husband rides his mountain bike every day. It has not yet been demonstrated that this transmission beam won’t exceed FCC limits for those in its path. Each of these appeal considerations are being disregarded because San Diego County is mandated to blanket our rural areas with cell phone reception, making it permissible to exempt zoning laws already in place to protect property owners’ rights.

I understand the appeal of cell phones. For eight years, I used a cell phone full-time for business. I was one of the long-term business users of cell phones such as those that were left out of the recent wireless industry-publicized Danish Cohort study. Three years ago I had to give up my cell phone when I began getting dizzy and nauseous whenever I held it to my head. These are typical signs of microwave radiation poisoning. I have not used a cell phone in the last 3 years and to this day cannot use even a portable WIFI phone without feeling ill. The area around my left ear is permanently numb and I often get ringing in this ear. After we discovered that our rental in the city was about 100’ from a disguised cell tower, we bought a foreclosed house in cell-tower free Shelter Valley to give us a home away from wireless radiation.

Because my job requires me to still be in the city part-time, for the last three years I have commuted between Shelter Valley and our rental in the city 100’ from a cell tower. When I’m in the city, I experience sleeplessness, very little dreaming, sudden agonizing headaches, and a constant feeling of heat and pressure in my forehead that interferes with my ability to concentrate. I have none of these symptoms in Shelter Valley. After we bought our home, we discovered that both a cell tower and a grid of microwave-emitting smart meters were to be installed in Shelter Valley. I began to study the evidence, using my research background.

Graduating with departmental honors from Vassar College, my first jobs were with the NYC Board of Education and an advertising agency on Madison Ave.

Here in San Diego, I was Communications Director for Project Concern International and the Walk for Mankind for many years. I’ve also worked for the San Dieguito River Valley Land Conservancy and have taught art in after-school programs and for the Encinitas Art Mobile project. I’ve won the Grand prize in the annual Del Mar Track Opening Day Hat contest and most importantly, researched medical studies for a living.

I have found that more and more scientific studies and top media sources are reporting the harmful effects of wireless communication. A study released in 2011, by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, demonstrates consistency of studies and confirms that there is a two-fold risk increase of childhood Leukemia from residential low-frequency magnetic fields. A study published in January 2012 Clinical Biochemistry concludes that mobile and base station radiation decreases critical hormone levels in subjects. The French government has banned advertising of mobile phones to children.

In 2010, CNN World ran an article called Study links bee decline to cell phones, stating that: “It’s not just the honey that will be lost if populations plummet further. Bees are estimated to pollinate 90 commercial crops around the world.” Another study from Landau University in Germany confirms that bees will not return to hives exposed to mobile phone radiation.

An LA Times article, Analysis of cellphone studies finds tumor risk, states: “When eight of the studies that were conducted with the most scientific rigor were analyzed, cell phone users were shown to have a 10% to 30% increased risk of brain tumors compared with people who rarely or never used them.”

In an article called Should you snuggle with your cellphone?, the New York Times states that Henry Lai, a research professor in the bioengineering department at the University of Washington, found that “”rats exposed to radiofrequency radiation had damaged brain DNA. He maintains a database that holds 400 scientific papers on possible biological effects of radiation from wireless communication.” 67% of these studies without cell industry funding show some sort of effect.

A 2010 Time magazine article called How Safe is your cellphone? states: “A number of scientists are worried that there has been a dangerous rush to declare cell phones safe, using studies they feel are inadequate and too often weighted toward the wireless industry’s interests.

A Psychology Today article called Cellphones and Brain Tumors, Reduce Your Exposure Today, reads: “The health hazards posed by cell phone usage are getting increasingly hard to ignore. . . Even the FCC is beginning to drop hints of a problem . . . . the debate is beginning to be dominated by evidence-based science.”

In 2011, the Huffington Post published an article called: Cell Phone Study ‘Misleading’: Children May Still be At Risk, Experts Say. This evidence is only the tip of the iceberg.

Scientists from around the world have documented obvious cancer clusters around cell phone towers. A 2009 study from Germany demonstrates a dose-response relationship for health symptoms based on cell phone radiation levels, including sleep problems and depression. Current U.S. statistics show that one in four women in America over age 40 now take anti-depressants and sleeping pill use is ubiquitous.

Shelter Valley is an important bird migration corridor. A 2007 US Fish & Wildlife report states that the bird population is declining by up to 50 million a year and it appears that this is related to the massive increase in numbers of cell phone towers. A number of biological studies also document how wildlife near cell towers is unable to reproduce. Sharon Henry, who lost her home in the Cedar fire and now lives about 100’ from this cell tower site in Shelter Valley, points out that Carlsbad Caverns requires visitors to turn off their cell phones so the resident bats aren’t harmed.

The writing is on the wall. Microwave radiation poisoning is cumulative and is a looming threat to crop pollination by bees and to the U.S. healthcare system. The average cost of treating a brain tumor exceeds $500,000. Cancer rates have risen 21% in the last 11 years. Mounting scientific evidence can no longer be ignored. Already the installation of microwave-emitting smart meters has been halted by 49 city governments in California. Both cell towers and smart meters are being paid for with governmental stipends. We object to having obviously questionable technology installed near our homes with billions of our own tax dollars. I, myself have already been harmed irreversibly. I feel compelled to protect my family and community from corporate entities that profit to this extent and yet are not required to pay taxes or carry insurance to cover probable property value loss and health impacts.

Due to the environmental sensitivity of the surrounding State Park and the closeness of this cell tower site to children and homes, I’ve recommended instead that a hard-wire fiber optic project be piloted by the wireless company and the Citizen’s Corporation. Fiber optic technology is included in the Stimulus Act and people in Shelter Valley want high quality, affordable internet. A cell tower here will be expensed at perhaps $500,000. Fiber optic cabling buried alongside county roads would surely be cheaper and safer.

Shelter Valley citizens have been led to believe that cell phones will serve them if the power is turned out due to wildfire. During the recent 7-hour San Diego blackout, smart phones quickly ran out of power. However, our landline continued to work the entire time. Wireless companies are actively lobbying the government to allow them to discontinue land line service once America is blanketed with cell towers. These land lines are lifelines when the power goes out.

To this day, a small paragraph in section 704 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act limits the ability of cities to consider environmental issues when siting cell towers. The wireless industry interprets this limitation to mean health and they enforce this assumption with assertive litigation. According to the Congressional record, in 1996 this 128-page Act was rushed through congress in an hour and a half and voted in before anyone in Congress had read it. Back then, there was little evidence regarding the long-term effects of cell phones and towers. Today the evidence is burgeoning as 4th generation wireless devices ramp up more and more bandwidth. In 2009, both the L.A. Board of Supervisors and the L.A. Unified School District Board voted to seek and support federal legislation that would repeal section 704 of the Telecom Act.

Even though my husband and I are nearing retirement and have put endless hours of physical labor into our Shelter Valley home that was badly damaged when we bought it, we would be again willing to move to another place without a cell tower. However, we know all too well that a place without cell coverage is the first place a new cell tower will be placed.

We  cannot begin to describe how heavy our hearts are to see our community and wildlife succumb to wireless technology that more and more scientists around the world agree is dangerous. I appeal to you to consider the long-term impacts on our community and protect our citizens from wireless proliferation.