

VALHALLA COMMITTEE

For Environmental Health

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October 25, 2007

Tony Geheran
Vice President
Telus Customer Solutions Delivery, BC

Dear Mr. Geheran,

I am in receipt of your couriered letter for which I thank you. The text causes me to wonder if you ever received my letter of October 12 together with its enclosures. As it seemed to me that you ignored this previous letter, and because of events I will hereinafter describe, the situation in New Denver in connection with Telus did worsen and with it our tone. (In the event it did not reach you it is enclosed herewith). If you lack the full context I can imagine the puzzlement you experience at the kind of ferocity of resistance you (Telus) has encountered in the cell phone transmitter issue. We will certainly endeavor to factor the occasions in which Telus gave us some time for research into Health Canada reports.

What you seem unaware of is another side to the issue in which Telus has come across as both arrogant and untruthful. Before I cite some instances let me sketch the context in which these statements or representations were made.

Previous to what I will enumerate, the Village administration, the Chamber of Commerce, the Slocan Valley Economic Development Commission and a majority of Village residents came out variously against the installation of a cell phone transmitter. The Village requested it be installed 500 meters outside the Village boundaries, the others came out against any cell phone installation whatsoever.

This united front was bred of the health concerns about which you are aware and which our website presents in detail. Understand, that the public alarm is rising due to the nature of the adverse scientific reports and the authorities (world-wide) who make them, thus a quite visceral response has been generated which has to do with protection of one's life and that of one's children.

Contrast this foreground with the CBC radio broadcast in which the CBC's reporter's statement that Telus subscribers in New Denver were reportedly canceling Telus optional services, the Telus representative Shawn Hall replied that he didn't understand that, saying:

“We are having *significant* demand for this (cell phone) service (in New Denver). In fact there are already 125 Telus cell phone subscribers already, despite the fact that we don’t even have a tower. (my emphasis)

“The tower is going to be safe. You would absorb more radiation watching TV or using a microwave or sleeping beside some alarm clock than you would sleeping underneath our cell tower.”

Dr. Carlos, the author of the book on cell phone’s health hazards stated, in a recorded telephone conversation, that this last statement of Hall’s is false. But worse than that, it is an insult to our intelligence and a wanton disregard of our concerns. Mr. Hall’s misrepresentations – as to the demand for cell phone service in New Denver (in his complete omission of the opposition by the local administration, the economic associations and majority of village citizens), given the actual facts, is also grossly misrepresentative.

Take another instance. In the later part of September, a cell phone user went to the Telus Nelson office (she was beginning to become concerned about cell phone use). The Telus representative (Michael) stated to her, and she repeated to us and the local newspaper:

“The Telus tower is going in no matter what.”

This woman (Lisa-Ann) asked: “Aren’t their requirements that have to be met with the Village council?” Michael: “Council, shmouncil, it doesn’t matter what recommendations are made, we’re not taking recommendations. It’s going in by October 1st no matter what.”

These two instance (there are others by Hall on radio and in the newspaper) are examples of an arrogant and gross disregard of the issues which have generated some of the frustrated, antagonized reception you are experiencing. A number of telephone users are, in fact, canceling their optional services – some are writing the Telus CEO email about it.

The responses I cite from Shawn Hall and the Nelson man have been greatly counterproductive. Moreover, it surely is coming to the attention of Telus management that their reliance on Health Canada’s assurances is not on as firm ground as Messrs. Hall and Jenkins repeatedly announced.

To exemplify what I mean, I again enclose our flyer, distributed to 5000 residents in the Slocan Valley, our press release and my latest letter to Health Canada. I believe you will perceive that matters of considerable substance are involved, and that Telus has been given considerable notice that what they propose may involve health hazards the responsibility of which can’t be transferred by pointing upward to Health Canada, not when substantial notice of the dangers is irrefutably in your hands.

What likely occurs to you – it certainly occurs to me – is that Telus seems bent on a public relations disaster in this area; something they should soberly consider. An aroused citizenry is a formidable force, fired as it is by a deluge of supportive science.

You are the individual who is evidently talented in finding solutions. It seems to me – given the economic picture here – which encompasses proposed, quite pitiful profits to Telus, compared to the ever degenerating public relations you are experiencing – that a quiet withdrawal should be considered, put on it what form you will. In our view, the issue gets worse as the scientific reports adverse to cell phone usage gets stronger. Cell phones seem to have made a huge impact economically elsewhere; that should be enough for Telus to consider it improvident to insist on the installation so fiercely resisted in our town.

I will certainly welcome your thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard Caniell
Chairperson

Enclosures:
Letter of October 12, 2007 with its enclosures
Press Release
Flyer
Letter to Health Canada

c.

The Honourable Tony Clement, Federal Minister of Health
Mayor Gary Wright, Village of New Denver
Mr. Robert Rabinovitch, President and CEO of CBC
Mr. Darren Entwistle, President and CEO of Telus
Morris Bodnar, District Director, Industry Canada
Sharon Watts, President and CEO, Hazardous Materials Information Commission
Steve Jenkins, Area General Manger, Southern Interior –BC, Telus
Healthy Housing Association