

# AN AFTERWORD ABOUT THE TELUS INSTALLATION

Some days ago Telus installed the long-fought cell phone transmitter at the lowest level of transmission ever offered to us — below the accepted precautionary level recommended in the BioInitiative Report that Valhalla Committee and other citizens had been requesting for the past three years. Nevertheless, for some of us who worked against the installation for three years, Telus's entry has cast us into gloom and aggravation. For one thing, some scientists report adverse health effects to electro-sensitive people at levels below the BioInitiative standard, right down to effects that begin immediately, just above zero emissions. Thus the BioInitiative Report, the only sizeable compendium of scientific studies and a core document to be used in litigation, offers a rudimentary, precautionary level of protection.

Apart from this, we deplore the effect of cell phones on community, its addictive qualities, and the loss of our valuable cell-phone-free haven for ourselves and tourists in need of technological surcease. We also deplore the bulldozing of democratic process which the federal government, in league with Telecommunications, has dealt municipalities and citizens.

In the end, however, the lawsuit threatened by our citizens was connected solely with the involuntary radiation that those within 300-400 metres of the cell tower would endure. The lawsuit has been dropped unless Telus violates the statements we have accepted in good faith, that the levels would be lower than the BioInitiative recommendation, and maintained. The exception Telus made that levels may change for reasons such as population increase was met with our insistence that if the levels went up significantly, the Parent-Children's Association would initiate legal proceedings to bring them back down to the BioInitiative level.

Now Telus is claiming to media that it had always been offering the low-level emission of the BioInitiative Report, we just didn't understand their policies and technology. Essentially, our hard-fought three-year campaign was just a foolish, unnecessary waste of time! This is totally untrue. In August 2009, when Industry Canada approved the Telus installation, it delivered a coloured illustration showing the proposed transmitter and the various levels of radiation that would hit the nearest residences, the children's playground and the beach. *The radiation levels were between 5 and 15 times higher than the BioInitiative level.*

However in November 2009, Telus adopted the 3G technology which would allow them to reduce the radiation below the level shown on Industry Canada's illustration. Despite much correspondence between the resident's organizations and Telus, *not one reply told us of the change in technology and the reduced emission levels.* Although we based much of our resistance on the facts and summaries in the BioInitiative Report, we received no reply except standard assurance that Safety code 6 should be relied upon. (Safety Code 6 is 6000 times higher than the BioInitiative safety level.)

This year 61 parents allied themselves in an association and with a resident and Valhalla obtained the services of an attorney, David Aaron, to sue Telus in advance of their entry. Aaron wrote Telus of this prospect. The

attorney for Telus replied, providing the typical Telus tape-loop incanting about the safety of the federally-approved Code 6 but also stated that the levels would be below it. (Of course we already knew this from Industry Canada.) In return our attorney wrote a detailed letter about the hazards outlined in the BioInitiative Report, citing the distances of the beach (185 m.), playground (190 m.), and nearest residence (220 m.) from the tower.

Then, for the first time, on July 16, Telus's attorney wrote stating that the radiation would be below 0.1 microwatts per cm<sup>2</sup> (the BioInitiative precautionary level). He stated that the cited area of concern would be even below that level. Since this was what we would have sought in court, the Valhalla Committee and the New Denver Area Parent-Children's Association agreed to withdraw its proposed lawsuit, based on a good faith reliance on the Telus attorney's written statements.

Telus, ignoring this provable record, floats the story that we were mistaken in our opposition, but we only believed what their own executives and Industry Canada said in their letters. Were Telus's executives mistaken or did they withhold information they already knew? Is this an example of their corporate ego, not wanting any community elsewhere to believe that battling them fiercely will net anything from them in improved safety levels, which they always intended to transmit at this low level? Are we to believe that Telus fought a three-year battle with the residents while failing to tell us they intended to give us the levels we wanted? Or is it true what we've learned on the Internet today, that Telus only adopted the new 3G technology on November 5, 2009? Is Telus just trying to wipe away a three-year record of trying to force higher radiation levels on an unwilling community in order to powder their corporate face?

As a last example of contortion, Telus's attorney informed us that the fact that their present radiation level for New Denver matches the BioInitiative level is a "co-incident". And in the same letter, this attorney also states that Telus does not agree with the BioInitiative level, and does not agree that these lower levels of radiation are appropriate, which we are nevertheless going to receive. Consider the significance of all these collisions of fact and contradictions.

One last and important fact needs illumination. Irrespective of opposition, Telus was positively coming in this summer. If the Parents and Valhalla had not engaged a lawyer and written Telus about their pending suit, apparently we would never have learned that the radiation would be below the BioInitiative standard. Only the pending suit prompted Telus to reveal its intention. If people had blocked Telus without knowing about the lower radiation, they would have been vulnerable to being sued by Telus.

If Telus, intending to teach such objectors a lesson which they wanted known to other communities, sued the blockaders and we, protestors, parents, ended up in an injunction hearing, when Valhalla and its experts proposed to show the level of hazard, what would we or any observers think when Telus stated they're coming in with a level matching and under the BioInitiative levels,

the very level which would have been highlighted in our documentation as a precautionary measure? With this defense our case would have folded, as they had already adopted what we intended to prove was a minimum necessity. A huge cost judgment could have resulted against the blockaders and Telus would have come in, claiming victory over mindless protests. We only learned in the late afternoon of July 19 that they were coming in the next morning. The attorney's letter stated they would sue anyone obstructing them for huge damages. This is why we rushed to get this critical information to all potential protesters.

Telus should have told us long before if they were adopting the very standard we had been urging, but they weren't obligated to, hence a real or inadvertent trap existed for everyone opposed. Fortunately, the proposed lawsuit drew out the revelation that the levels of tower radiation were lower than the BioInitiative standard. And because of that it made no difference what we did, nor whether Telus had decided on their level in November 2009, the capacity for us to prove hazard had been disabled. In the face of this, there was nothing to do but recognize that the rudimentary level of safety we sought to have established was to be put in place.

What else is there left to say in the face of all this, but that those opposed to Telus in New Denver will be monitoring Telus's tower radiation from time to time via a certified firm, and if it significantly rises, the parents on behalf of their children will seek legal action to restore the BioInitiative level. Still, as research and experience goes on, it may well produce substantive studies showing that much lower levels are mandatory. The same could prove true with the relatively new 3G technology. When such evidence accumulates into a substantial peer-reviewed compendium, new action may have to be contemplated.

The Valhalla Committee would like to thank the hard-working, committed individuals and groups with whom we collaborated, especially Julia Greenlaw and Norbert Duerichen, Susan Yurychuk, Art Joyce, Anne Champagne, Bill Roberts with his superb cellphone free website, the Mayor and Village Council for their responsive concern, and the determined parents who put themselves on the line to potentially bring Telus into court.

It is exactly three years ago this month that we began a campaign demanding a higher protection level from radiation than Telus would ever concede, previous to last week. What matters in the end is that, as to the foundational science, the Centennial park users and nearby residents are afforded a level of protection from involuntary radiation that scientific research has proposed as the minimum level necessary. It may be that lower levels may yet be required; that there may yet be a battle to come. But for now, for myself, for my colleagues at Valhalla and especially for the indispensable help of Scott Cherry, my heartfelt thanks along with gratitude to all the unnamed others who have fought the Telus installation along with us during the past three years.

Richard Caniell  
Valhalla Committee for Environmental Health