**Dear Commissioners,**

**I wrote the piece below for a newspaper in Western Massachusetts before coming down for one of your open meetings. Attending that meeting in April, I was struck by your conclusion that there is a wish for greater and greater wireless connectivity on the part of U.S. citizens (ie, “demand”) and by your determination that your role is to make sure the supply is there. But when I speak to people, even strangers, and give them a brief description of what the deployment of millions of small cells will entail – both the costs and the benefits – even those who are not concerned about the health impacts typically do not want to lose local control of cell siting and do not want to be more monitored than they are now – which is more monitored than any society in the history of the earth. So I respectfully suggest that you try broadening your opinion poll. I think you will find that most people do not wish to trade their privacy and their health for “better signal” or for Frito Lay to know when each bag of Doritos has been finished. Their privacy and health are likely both compromised by 4G, wi-fi, Bluetooth and cordless phones, begging the question “how much more can they take?” Some things are better left a mystery.**

**Sincerely,**

**Jonathan Mirin**

**Shelburne, MA**

**Be Careful What You Wish For: 5G and the hilltowns**

**Published in the Shelburne Falls and West County Independent, Feb. 9, 2017**

If I told you that in just a few years you will be able to be anywhere in the hilltowns and download a feature film to your phone in just a few seconds, that would be pretty good, right? If we also had self-driving cars connected to each other and antennas along all the roads that were less prone to accidents than humans are, that would also be good. To top it off, what if everything you purchase — from a lightbulb to a screen or a vacuum — could talk to each other and the house — security system, lighting, heating, AC — and all work together to maximize energy efficiency and save you money while helping the planet avert climate catastrophe. You might just say, “bring it on!” and you are not alone. There are U.S. senators, most recently the Commerce Committee, who want to help make this happen and who have received plenty of information about the benefits of the new wave of technology called 5G or “the Internet of Things” (IoT) from some helpful telecom industry lobbyists.

These senators are also supported by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which decided last summer that the 5G rollout and wave of private innovation that will accompany it should not be impeded by annoying little hang-ups like testing or regulation. This is America, after all, and we are not going to sit around worrying about the effects of our progress on public health or civil liberties or privacy or town government or local decision-making or any other antiquated notion that those Communist/Socialists in those frozen, forgotten Scandinavian countries are hung up on. Of course, one of the primary reasons for the rush is that there seems to be something to worry about.

Embarrassingly, our own federal government had the crazy idea to invest $25 million and conduct the most sophisticated study to date on the effects of cell phone radiation, and then the head of the study held a press conference to announce partial findings last May because he thought it was important the public be informed as soon as possible — a statistically significant number of rats exposed to cell phone radiation developed cancer, and none of the rats who were not exposed developed cancer. As long as they were at it, they looked to see if the rats’ DNA was damaged by the exposure and yes, it was. This would be surprising if it was not just an exclamation point on the 15,000+ studies from the 1970s straight through showing negative biological effects but didn’t happen to be conducted by the National Toxicology Program.

The other crazy thing that’s been happening is millions of people all over the world are experiencing everything from headaches to tinnitus to fatigue to heart palpitations related to non-ionizing (non-heating) microwave radiation exposure. Some otherwise respectable countries like Sweden, France, and Spain are recognizing the disability, which can be to the point where people can no longer go almost anywhere without disabling symptoms. Luckily, those people, including my wife, have tremendous difficulty doing things like protesting and using a computer, so no one’s too worried about *them*.

What’s worrying are the independent scientists. The independent scientists, generally funded by crazy liberal institutions of higher learning or extreme left countries — like Turkey, Israel, Germany, or Switzerland or Italy — keep linking this perfectly invisible, odorless form of air pollution with Alzheimer’s, behavior and attention issues, neurological problems, cancer, autism, insomnia, anxiety and yes, depression.

Okay. Let’s get serious for a second. There are still people in the hilltowns with spotty or no cell phone signal. There are still people without DSL who have to pay some satellite company 80 bucks a month for an annoying service (I was one of them for about 7 years). 5G would fix all that, right? Some of it, yes, at a tremendous cost to health, privacy, and the environment. It’s a little like seeing someone is hungry and drowning him/her in a mountain of GMO prime rib.

5G is extremely infrastructure intensive. The signal does not penetrate well so you need a small cell tower antenna every few houses. The hilltowns will require thousands of them, and cell phone carriers don’t want to have to deal with annoying town zoning boards and PTOs that don’t want a mini-cell antenna outside Jimmy’s classroom, so the legislation being proposed right now in the U.S. Senate excludes any local input about how and where the antennas are deployed. They will be put on any utility pole that suits a carrier’s fancy. This takes the 1996 Telecom Act, which precludes objecting to cell towers based on health concerns, to a whole new level of unconstitutionality by not allowing an objection based on ANY concerns. The average decline in the value of a house after a new cell tower is put up nearby is 15 percent — but at least you will have incredible cell phone reception.

What about the energy savings? “Smart homes” are smarter than “dumb homes,” right? Unfortunately, the primary beneficiary of a smart home is the utility company and others providing the wireless connectivity, because your data has value to marketers who want to know what time you brew your coffee and how often you vacuum — even your facial expressions as you watch TV. They want to know everything because then they can develop your profile to the point where it is easier to sell you EXACTLY what you need. What about saving us from climate change by allowing us to turn off the A/C from the dinner party across town with our new 5G phone made with conflict-free coltan? Unfortunately, transmitting and storing everyone’s critically important daily household decisions in servers across the globe is an extremely energy-intensive proposition, and it takes energy to irradiate everything so, no, independent researchers are not seeing the smart grid as a boon for the climate.

**But I’m not sick yet**

It is sometimes hard for people who are not aware of being affected yet to see how they will benefit from demanding that safer forms of wireless be developed, but there are broad environmental implications to the safe technology riddle.

In case there are any remote areas where 5G can’t reach, there are eight companies who want to deploy wi-fi from space, which will require launching hundreds of kerosene-burning rockets annually, significantly accelerating climate change through black carbon emissions. Another point of environmental intersection is pollinators. If we think we can save pollinators by eliminating pesticides and not also develop standards for electromagnetic hygiene, well, that’s not what experience and research is suggesting.

If any of this rings a bell (or corded landline) with you, there is an exciting array of legislation to phone your elected representatives about on both state and federal levels

You may want to **contact your Board of Selectmen and/or Planning Board** and suggest that, if members have not already done so, they pass additional **bylaws regulating small cell placement** at annual town meetings this year. An example from Randolph, MA is available at ptco.org/emf. If the town receives a small cell application from a carrier before bylaws are in place, town options go from limited to straight-jacketed.

Please consider taking action now on the bills below. It may feel awkward at first but you will thank yourself later!

**Pending Massachusetts bills supportive of public health**

HD2454 - An Act relative to best management practices for wireless in schools.

SD.1881: Right to Know Cell Phone Labeling.

SD344: Smart Meter Opt out (right to choose non-radiating meter without paying a fee).

SD 1462: Resolve creating a special commission to examine the health impacts of electromagnetic fields.

SD.2053: An Act relative to the safe use of hand-held devices by children (right to know labeling)

### Representative Stephen Kulik, **District Office**: 413-977-3580.

Senator Adam Hinds, [adam.hinds@masenate.gov](mailto:adam.hinds@masenate.gov), 617-722-1625

**Federal bills unsupportive of public health**

Mobile Now Act S.19 and Digit Act S.88 will be voted on in the coming days. They lay the groundwork for 5G and the IoT. Find sample text for e-mails and phone calls to Senators Markey and Warren at ptco.org/emf.

Markey, Edward J. - (D - MA)  202-224 -2742 Contact: [www.markey.senate.gov/contact](http://www.markey.senate.gov/contact). Warren, Elizabeth - (D - MA)  202-224 -4543 Contact: [www.warren.senate.gov/?p=email\_senator](http://www.warren.senate.gov/?p=email_senator).

**This opinion piece was published in the Shelburne Falls and West County Independent, a newspaper serving the hilltowns of Western Massachusetts. Jonathan Mirin is a public health advocate and theatre artist living in Western MA and Les Ponts-de-Martel, Switzerland. His Piti Theatre Company is currently planning the “To Bee or Not to Bee” North American Tour for fall, 2017 which will bring the all ages theatre production on the subject “Innocenzo” he created with his wife, electrically sensitive theatre artist Godeliève Richard, across the U.S. www.ptco.org/tour**