

# Researching, Resisting, Banning, Bulldozing: Some Actions Against Electromagnetic Pollution, 1997-2010

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June 1997. A cellular-phone saleswoman resigns from AT&T to protest the erection of cell towers on school grounds in Pepper Pike, Ohio -- and a dozen nearby communities join her to challenge wireless antennas at their schools.<sup>1</sup>

February 1998. When a cell tower is installed at Calusa Elementary School in Boca Raton, Florida, 250 students transfer out.<sup>2</sup>

October 1999. One thousand students stage a mass walkout from a Belfast, Ireland, grammar school to protest a telecommunications mast on the roof.<sup>3</sup>

June 2000. An international gathering of scientists proclaims that no low-end threshold for safe exposure exists for electromagnetic radiation.<sup>4</sup>

October 2000. San Francisco hosts the first U.S. mass demonstration against cellular-phone antennas. Sprint withdraws its applications for two proposed sites.<sup>5</sup>

July 2001. In Cyprus demonstrators stage a peaceful protest against Britain's planned military communications towers and demand the release of their prime minister who is in jail for doing civil disobedience atop a 160-foot mast. Police open fire, and a riot ensues.<sup>6</sup>

February 2003. After witnessing the biggest-ever protest meeting of a village in northern New Mexico, the local school board cancels an already-signed contract to erect cell towers on its schools.<sup>7</sup>

March 2003. The Catholic Church in Italy calls for cell phone antennas to be removed from bell towers, branding them dangerous to human health and spiritually “out of keeping.”<sup>8</sup>

November 2003. In England and Ireland outraged citizens bulldoze down cell towers -- as many as four in England and four in Northern Ireland each week.<sup>9</sup>

August 2004. The International Association of Firefighters calls for a moratorium on citing cell-phone antennas on fire stations.<sup>10</sup>

February 2006. Citing health concerns, Lakehead University in Canada bans Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) from campus.<sup>11</sup>

September 2006. The International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety releases the Benevento Resolution; signed by 31 scientists, it calls on governments to impose exposure limits.<sup>12</sup>

May 2007. A BBC Panorama investigation finds that WiFi ports can emit three times the signal radiation of a cell tower.<sup>13</sup>

June 2007. In Spain citizens hold International Day Against Electromagnetic Pollution to publicize the effects of exposure to high-voltage power lines, electric power substations, mobile telephony aeriels, radio lines, and telecommunications systems like WiFi and Wireless Inoperability Microwave Access (WiMAX).<sup>14</sup>

September 2007. Germany’s Environmental Ministry issues an unprecedented national warning to citizens: avoid exposure to radiation emanating from WiFi and WiMAX ports in cafés, schools, public “hot spots, and private homes.”<sup>15</sup>

August 2007. The European Environmental Agency demands immediate action to reduce exposure to radiation from WiFi, WiMAX, mobile phones, and antennas.<sup>16</sup>

October 2007. Masked protestors in a Druze village in Israel rip down a mobile phone mast. Police open fire on them.<sup>17</sup>

December 2007. The International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety recognizes a growing incidence of electro-hypersensitivity and urges limits on further dissemination of wireless technologies. Its Venice Resolution is signed by scientists from Italy, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, Brazil, Austria, Australia, Russia, and the U.S.<sup>18</sup>

December 2007. After only five months of the new WiFi system in Paris' libraries, the library union wins a moratorium on wireless ports due to the health effects already evident among clerks and workers.<sup>19</sup>

January 2008. For fear of exposure to electromagnetic radiation, thousands of Chinese demonstrators take to the streets to protest the extension of a magnetic levitation train through Shanghai.<sup>20</sup>

February 2008. Cell phone antennas in Tudela, Spain, are ordered removed when damage to citizens' health is revealed.<sup>21</sup>

March 2008. After learning of health impacts, the Sebastopol City Council in California breaks an already-signed contract to install citywide WiFi.<sup>22</sup>

April 2008. The National Library of France dismantles its entire WiFi system.<sup>23</sup>

September 2008. The West Linn-Wilsonville School Board of Portland, Oregon, unplugs already-operating cell towers and cancels all leases for WiMAX.<sup>24</sup>

January 2009. The U.S. National Safety Council calls for a nationwide ban on cell-phone use while driving, citing a Harvard study that links usage to 636,000 crashes and 2600 yearly deaths.<sup>25</sup>

February 2009. In France the Versailles Court of Appeals orders the dismantling of a relay antenna in Tassin la Demi-Lune, establishing legal recognition of health risks.<sup>26</sup>

April 2009. The European Parliament proposes publicly displayed maps warning of EMF-exposure areas and distance requirements between antennas and schools.<sup>27</sup>

April 2009. The U.K.'s Association of Teachers and Lecturers calls for suspension of WiFi in classrooms.<sup>28</sup>

May-September 2009. The Los Angeles Unified School District, then the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, then Pima County in Arizona and Glendale, California, challenge the U.S. Telecommunications Act's refusal to consider health effects in the placement of wireless routers and base stations.<sup>29</sup>

December 2009. In a major setback to telecom companies, the government of the state of Rajasthan bans the installation of new mobile towers.<sup>30</sup>

January 2010. Arlington, Texas, sues the U.S. Federal Communications Commission for requiring local governments to fast-track telecom applications.<sup>31</sup>

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