

5G Resistance: Electromagnetic Radiation, Affecting People and the Planet

Concern Grows over European Rollout

By [Joyce Nelson](#)

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Resistance to 5G is rapidly increasing, especially in Europe where many are unwilling to roll over for a 5G rollout. Fifth generation wireless threatens to massively increase electromagnetic radiation, affecting people and the planet.

On March 31, Brussels (Belgium) became the first major city to stop a 5G pilot project because of health concerns. Refusing to increase allowable radiation limits, **Celine Fremault**, Environment Minister for the Brussels-Capital Region, told the press:

“I cannot welcome such technology if the radiation standards, which must protect the citizen[s], are not respected, 5G or not. The people of Brussels are not guinea pigs whose health I can sell at a profit.”

A scientific NGO called the Planetary Association for Clean Energy (PACE) – which has “special consultative status” at the United Nations Economic and Social Council – submitted a statement to the UN in February, revealing that allowable international “radiation limits will have to be increased by 30 to 40%” in order to make 5G deployment technologically feasible.

This move by Brussels was one of a number of steps taken in Europe to stop 5G during a recent three-week period.

Other actions include:

- Florence, Italy applies the precautionary principle, refusing permissions for 5G
- A district in Rome votes against 5G trials
- The Russian Ministry of Defence refuses to transfer spectrum frequencies for 5G use
- The Belgian Environment Minister announces that Brussels is halting its 5G rollout plans.
- Germans sign a petition en masse to force the Bundestag to debate 5G.
- Dutch Members of Parliament insist that radiation research must be carried out before approval of 5G
- Four Swiss cantons adopt resolutions calling for a pause on 5G, pending an environmental report

These events may have been influenced by major petitions that have received attention in

Europe since 2015.

But in an extraordinary move, telecom giant Swisscom defied local Swiss ordinances and on April 17 began activating 5G antennas in 102 locations. PACE's Main UN Representative in Geneva, Olivier Vuillemin, told me by email that Swisscom's action has caused "a huge backlash against 5G" across the country.

Guinea pigs?

In February 2019, US Senator Richard Blumenthal grilled wireless industry representatives during a Senate hearing. Industry spokesmen admitted that the industry "has done no health and safety studies on 5G." Senator Blumenthal memorably concluded: "We're kind of flying blind here, as far as health and safety is concerned."

In January the FCC removed the public notice requirement - 5G would be installed "without public notice, hearings or appeals"

PACE considers this "an experiment on humanity that constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" in violation of more than 15 international treaties and agreements.

In the US, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has taken extraordinary steps to ram through 5G over the past year. First, its unelected officials amended FCC rules in March 2018 so that deployment decisions regarding 5G infrastructure would no longer require public participation and environmental review.

Then in September 2018, the FCC voted to grant itself more power to

- 1) overrule all local and state governments in terms of siting 5G infrastructure,
- 2) enforce strict time limits on municipal approval, and
- 3) determine the (very low) fees that municipalities can collect from the telecom industry for the use of public infrastructure (streetlights, bus stops, sidewalks, buildings, utility poles).

These moves unleashed widespread resistance from the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the US Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and the Government Finance Officers Association.

Then in January 2019, the FCC removed the public notice requirement - meaning that 5G infrastructure would be installed "without public notice, hearings or appeals." But on April 5, the California Supreme Court unanimously upheld a 2011 San Francisco ordinance requiring the telecom companies to get municipal permits before placing antennas on city-owned infrastructure.

Popular resistance in the US has likely been fueled by the fact that President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate and his billionaire Palm Beach, Florida neighbours have obtained a key exemption from 5G rollout plans. *Palm Beach Daily News* (May 3, 2017) [reported](#) that Palm Beach obtained an exemption "from legislation that would limit local control on the installation of 5G transmission equipment ... welcome news in Palm Beach, where [Town Manager Tom] Bradford and Mayor Gail Coniglio have warned the new law would be an

aesthetic disaster.”

In Canada, such local decision-making has already been ruled out by the Supreme Court.

Rogers vs. Chateauguay

In 2007, Rogers Communications Inc. wanted to erect a cell phone tower within a residential area of the City of Chateauguay, Quebec. Because the tower was to be taller than 15 ft., by law Rogers had to hold a public meeting. Some 100 residents expressed health concerns about electromagnetic fields (EMF) and radiation, so Chateauguay City Council established a land reserve on the site, while offering to buy a different property for use by Rogers.

But Rogers insisted on its original site. Backed by a powerful legal team of Torys (Toronto) and Fasken Martineau DuMoulin (Montreal), Rogers took the issue all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, which ruled on June 16, 2016 that since the telecom industry comes under the jurisdiction of the federal government – specifically, the Canada Radio-television & Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) as regulator – municipalities have no say in the placement of cell phone towers or antennas.

A US expert on wireless radiation and health effects, has called 5G “the stupidest idea in the history of the world”

Charles O’Brien, a lawyer familiar with Rogers vs. Chateauguay court history, told me by email that federal jurisdiction over telecommunications “is certainly not unbounded. Its exercise should respect the ‘Public Trust Doctrine’ as well as the Canadian and Quebec Charters,” which “guarantee the right to life, security of person, privacy, and the rights of the handicapped. The Quebec Charter further protects flora and fauna. The telecommunications power may not justify radiation poisoning of humans and the environment. That would also breach the Radiation Emitting Devices Act, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.”

But for Canadians, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and constitutional right to privacy may be most pertinent in challenging 5G.

Spying on Canadians

5G will expand “smart cities” and the Internet of Things (IoT). But a recent expose by CBC’s *Marketplace* revealed how easily “smart” home devices can be hacked to spy on residents.

In Toronto, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association has recently filed a court application to stop (Alphabet/Google subsidiary) Sidewalk Labs’ “smart city” project as “unconstitutional” because it would allow “historically unprecedented, non-consensual, inappropriate mass-capture surveillance and commoditization of personal data.”

Sidewalk Labs’ proposed development of the eastern Toronto waterfront includes self-driving cars, robotic deliveries and garbage collection, snow-melting digital streets and sidewalks, and multiple sensors throughout the region to Hoover up personal data from residents and pedestrians. In December 2018, Ontario’s Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said the project “raises concerns in areas such as consumer protection, data collection, security, privacy, governance, anti-trust and ownership of intellectual privacy.”

Complicating the issues is the wireless industry's insistence on the use of satellites for 5G.

New Space Race

The 5G network will blanket the earth via 20,000 low and high-orbit satellites. Elon Musk's SpaceX project "Starlink" has received federal approval to launch 12,000 satellites. Other companies involved in the new space race for 5G include OneWeb (4,560 satellites), Boeing (2,956 satellites) Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Project Kuiper (3,000 satellites), and Telesat Canada (512 satellites).

The Economist (Dec. 8, 2018) has stated: "With a network of [5G] satellites encircling the planet, humans will soon never be off-line. High-quality Internet connections will become more widespread than basic sanitation and running water." As Wendell Berry observed in his 1996 book *The Unsettling of America* (i.e. before even 4G wireless was introduced), the human body is becoming "marginal." 5G takes us the next step.

Dr. Martin Pall, a US expert on wireless radiation and health effects, has called 5G "the stupidest idea in the history of the world."

The *Watershed Sentinel* (April/May 2019) [reports](#) that many communities in North America (800+) are eschewing wireless (and the big telecoms) and building and operating their own "fiber-to-the-premises" wired networks, or "municipal broadband."

This may be the best way to gain local control, unless you're a Palm Beach billionaire.

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