

July 26, 2017

The Honorable Ben Hueso
Member of the California State Senate
Room 4035, State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 649 (Hueso) – Small Cell Wireless Facilities - OPPOSE

Dear Senator Hueso:

Environmental Working Group (EWG) respectfully opposes your SB 649, which would make the installation of small cell wireless facilities, such as those used to facilitate 5G networks, ministerial rather than discretionary at the local government level.

The health impacts of cellular transmissions have been debated for over ten years because there are studies that raise real concerns about the effects of radio frequency radiation on humans. This is why EWG sponsored two bills by former Senator Leno, SB 1212 (2010) and SB 932 (2011) that would have required sellers of cell phones to inform consumers to minimize exposure to cell phone radiation by reading the manual that comes with the phone, as this is in fact recommended by cell phone manufacturers in their included manuals.

Studies on the health impacts of cell phones and their transmission infrastructure are continuing, but there is already adequate existing sound science for government to proceed with caution on the roll-out of the new technology. In particular, the results of the \$25 million National Toxicology Program study (2016) that showed tumors in rats caused by a typical amount of heavy cell phone use are to be reckoned with. And, most of the past science has analyzed older cellular technology like 2G and 4G, so we are moving into uncharted waters with 5G with its different wavelengths and energy levels.

Local governments must be able to evaluate science and respond to the wishes of their citizens and neighborhoods before permits are issued for this technology and SB 649 short-circuits that process. This includes important decisions about locating the technology near homes, schools, and hospitals. We simply cannot rely upon the word of the FCC (in terms of safety standards) to protect the health of Californians.

For these reasons, EWG will be urging a “no” vote for the Assembly floor. We will be writing a separate letter to the Assembly Appropriations Committee on fiscal concerns.

Sincerely,



Bill Allayaud
California Director of Government Affairs
Environmental Working Group