



Max Anderson  
Councilmember District 3

CONSENT CALENDAR  
December 14, 2010

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmember Max Anderson  
Councilmember Laurie Capitelli  
Councilmember Susan Wengraf  
Councilmember Gordon Wozniak  
Subject: Disclosure of Cell Phone Radiation Output

RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct the City Manager to draft an ordinance (modeled after the San Francisco ordinance) requiring SAR disclosure for all cell phones available for sale or lease in the City of Berkeley and present to council for adoption within 60 days hereof.
2. Adopt a Resolution to refer to the Community Health Commission, the Community Environmental Advisory Commission, and the Youth Commission a request for information to provide recommendations for legislative actions providing potential buyers of cell phones (at the point-of-sale) information regarding disclosure of cell phone radiation output.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION  
NONE

BACKGROUND

Cell phone use is now pervasive in the City of Berkeley, and landline phones are being abandoned. Since it is well established that high levels of radiofrequency (RF) radiation have health effects, the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has established a maximum allowable Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) rating that manufacturers must disclose to the government when offering a portable wireless device (cell phone) for sale. Although there is no scientific consensus regarding potential health effects from long-term exposure to low levels, many studies have indicated potential harm. In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, many governments have issued warnings and advocated reduced exposures to RF radiations. Since the SAR values for different makes and models of cell phones differ widely, but consumers are not able to make informed purchasing decisions because there is no requirement that retailers provide the applicable SAR values at the point when the consumer is deciding between various makes and models. To allow consumers to make

informed decisions regarding potential risks from RF radiations emitted from cell phones, Berkeley should require that the SAR values be disclosed for all cell phones being sold.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Max Anderson, District 3

510 981-7130

Attachment: Resolution

December 14, 2010

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DISCLOSURE  
OF CELL PHONE RADIATION OUTPUT

WHEREAS, cell phone use is now pervasive in the City of Berkeley, and landline phones are being abandoned;

WHEREAS, since it is well established that high levels of radiofrequency (RF) radiation have health effects, the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has established a maximum allowable Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) rating that manufacturers must disclose to the government when offering a portable wireless device (cell phone) for sale.

WHEREAS, although there is no scientific consensus regarding potential health effects from long-term exposure to low levels is less clear, many studies have indicated potential harm.

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Precautionary Principle, many governments have issued warnings and advocated reduced exposures to RF radiations.

WHEREAS, since the SAR values for different makes and models of cell phones differ widely, but consumers are not able to make informed purchasing decisions because there is no requirement that retailers provide the applicable SAR values at the point when the consumer is deciding between various makes and models.

WHEREAS, to allow consumers to make informed decisions regarding potential risks from RF radiations emitted from cell phones, Berkeley should require that the SAR values be disclosed for all cell phones being sold.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council directs the City Manager to draft an ordinance (modeled after the San Francisco ordinance) requiring SAR disclosure for all cell phones available for sale or lease in the City of Berkeley and present to council for adoption within 60 days hereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council directs the Community Health Commission, The Community Environmental Advisory Commission, and the Youth Commission to review the potential health effects of cell phone use and to recommend additional actions to be taken to insure the public's right to know and enhance the public's ability to make informed decisions regarding cell phone use. Such actions should include but not be limited to joint outreach with City of Berkeley staff, UC Berkeley students and staff, Berkeley Unified School District students and staff, local health providers, the YMCA, service groups, faith based organizations and other appropriate venues.

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