

Mrs. Sue Fusco
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ATTN: Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee

Bill Fisch, Regional Chair and CEO (ex officio)
Chair: Joyce Frustaglio, Regional Councillor, City of Vaughan
Vice Chair: Jack Heath, Regional Councillor, Town of Markham
Brenda Hogg, Regional Councillor, Town of Richmond Hill
Phyllis Morris, Mayor, Town of Aurora
John Taylor, Regional Councillor, Town of Newmarket
Tony Wong, Regional Councillor, Town of Markham

Dear Committee Members,

I have provided the Regional clerk the documents, which I refer to in my correspondence. I would like to share with you two documents of which I have provided excerpts from. One consists of a new report that was released recently in the UK regarding the issue of high voltage transmission lines and health impacts. I have referred to the SAGE group, formed in 2004 and the work they have been carrying out in my past delegations on behalf of the community group Stop Transmission lines Over People (S.T.O.P.) last year.

The report issued on April 27, 2007, prepared by the Stakeholder Advisory Group on EMF's (SAGE), provides a detailed assessment of risks and health impacts associated with electrical energy and is circulated on behalf of the facilitators RK Partnership Ltd. **The report finds a positive link between EMF exposure and childhood leukemia and recommends that high voltage power lines should not be constructed within 60 meters(200 feet) of residential properties.** To avoid power line health risks, SAGE recommends Britain legislate a ban on new housing and school construction within these distances. (page 48 of 65)

The recommendation comes after a three-year-investigation by the Stakeholder Advisor Group on Electricity (SAGE), **a joint effort by the electricity industry, residents, scientists and health professionals.**

In an extraordinary agreement, SAGE concluded there is clear evidence that living near power lines results in a raised increase of childhood leukemia, and possibly other major health ailments, including breast and brain cancer, miscarriage and Alzheimer's.

The group, overseen by Britain's Department of Health, was supposed to explore implications for a precautionary approach to electromagnetic fields. SAGE says the government should take precautionary measures on construction near power lines of up to 400,000 volts. Less powerful lines, up to 132,000 volts, should not be sited closer than 30 meters (100 feet).

While the report clearly supports public concerns and the need for more protective guidelines, it also provides clarifications as to the issues that have been omitted and/or downplayed which in turn "deems this report to be far too limited" by some of the participants in its conclusions on current scientific evidence. This is revealed throughout the Appendix: Stakeholders commentaries of the Report on page 57 of 65.

A copy of the report is attached and can be downloaded from the website at:

<http://www.rics.org/NR/rdonlyres/C904CC15-C1F2-427C-B767-10F0CEED1831/0/SAGEFirstInterimReport.pdf>

In addition, the other report I would like to refer the committee to is, The Canadian Human Rights Commission Report (CHRC) on *The Medical Perspectives on Environmental Sensitivities* written by Margaret Sears. The report states that approximately 3% of Canadians have been diagnosed with environmental sensitivities and up to one third of the population may experience discomfort due to factors in their environment.

It is also attached and now available online at the Internet links provided below. The author of the report collaborated with prominent physicians and architects in Canada for this project. This report confirms that **avoidance of toxins and other triggers is key to the management of environmental sensitivities and minimizing them.**

Please note the section on electromagnetic radiation and fields as it recognizes a vast variety of symptoms people are experiencing from electrical pollution in public and occupational settings. This is outlined on page 45 of 85, Section VII, C of the pdf. Document at this link.

http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/pdf/envsensitivity_en.pdf

As seen in Table 6 (pg 23), the more common agents that trigger reactions in susceptible people include pesticides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as solvents, perfumes, formaldehyde and other petrochemicals, vehicle exhaust, moulds, pollens, foods, animal dander and electromagnetic phenomena.

In her Conclusions IX, page 54 of 88 the author states, "Some people have debilitating responses to chemicals or electromagnetic radiation. They usually experience neurological difficulties and often have symptoms such as fatigue, burning eyes, headaches, trouble thinking and concentrating, nasal congestion, pain in various parts of the body, respiratory distress and gastrointestinal ailments."

Dr. Lynn Marshall, who represented the Ontario College of Family Physicians Environmental Health Committee among collaborators on the report, indicated that she was pleased that the Canadian Human Rights Commission had undertaken such a sorely needed literature review and summary of the complex clinical issues surrounding environmental sensitivities. "I was impressed with the thoroughness of the scientific review by Dr. Sears, which should be of major help in guiding physicians, other health professionals, employers, insurers, and governments to take accelerated action to serve the urgent needs of this largely overlooked population of patients."

A complete overview of the research project is currently posted with the Canadian Human rights Commission at : http://www.chrc-ccdhp.ca/research_program_recherche/esensitivities_hypersensibilitee/toc_tdm-en.asp?highlight=1

As stated by Margaret Sears for the CHRC, "Municipalities can go beyond provincial codes in regulating or implementing more stringent building, use requirements or institute specific provisions for their own buildings". It is my hope and trust that the awareness of this information will assist The Region of York officials and staff to promote further prevention and education about exposures related to electrical pollution within our communities.

Ultimately, it is the role of the Government of Canada to establish a provision of adequate care and standard for all across the country to implement legislation that will result in increased public health protection. It would be responsibly progressive for Provincial and local governments to apply the same weight in their planning agendas and utilize their influence to initiate this change.

However, there continues to be a great deal of concern from public members in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island advocating for more protective guidelines and considerations of environmental impacts in Energy related projects. The residents of Tsawwassen, B.C. are concerned about their power lines proposal and hope the province of B.C. is paying attention to the recent SAGE study recommending the British government to ban construction near high voltage lines.

I would like to thank York Region officials for their past support in preparing comprehensive Recommendations in the State of the Environment Report (2005) and encouraging the Federal government to pursue further research of the effects on human health from EMF exposure. I especially wish to recall the correspondence the past Medical Officer of Health Dr. Helena Jaczek exchanged with the Federal Minister of Health Carolyn Bennett with respect to EMF exposure and the Precautionary Principle and ask all committee members to review it as it provided a strong position for the need for guidelines that are more protective for the public.

In my opinion, it would be most reassuring if York Region representatives could also advocate the Provincial Ministry of Health and Environment to adopt the principles in the SAGE report as it is their mandate to address environmental impacts associated to Energy project proposals. This research and information should invoke a review and update to the current EMF standards and infrastructure development policies. This would restore the faith in public consultations and minimize the "social friction" that develops when environmental and socio-economic impacts are not given the same if not more consideration as technical and cost factors in power system planning. In addition, would you please consider referring this research to the Regional Planning Department.

On behalf of the STOP community group and its members I would respectfully request a response as to the position that York Region maintains with respect to the information submitted and if any future direction will be taken in respect to these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Sue Fusco