

1 [CELL PHONE RADIATION SAFETY AND DISCLOSURE]

2

3 **Resolution recommending measures for educating the public on and**
4 **reducing exposure to radiation from cell phones, including disclosure of**
5 **radiation information at point of sale.**

6 WHEREAS, The Policy Committee of the Commission on the Environment met
7 on December 14, 2009 and unanimously adopted the findings and recommendations
8 listed below; and

9 WHEREAS, More than 270 million people in the United States (US) use cell
10 phones with an increasing number of them children; and,

11 WHEREAS, Cell phones are an important tool of communication, especially
12 during times of emergency; and,

13 WHEREAS, A cell phone emits Radio Frequency (RF) radiation from the antenna
14 of the device, often in a 360-degree pattern, as the device seeks to make a connection
15 with the cell tower; and,

16 WHEREAS, Recently published long-term studies looking at cell phone use for
17 10 years have indicated evidence of increasing occurrence of brain and salivary cancers
18 especially on the side of the head where cell phones are held; and,

19 WHEREAS, Children are potentially more vulnerable to this radiation exposure
20 due to their smaller head size, thinner skulls, different composition of tissues, and still-
21 developing brains and bodies; and,

22 WHEREAS, Governments around the world including France, Israel, Germany,
23 Finland, and Switzerland, have issued warnings about prolonged cell phone use,
24 especially for children; and,

1 WHEREAS, The French Senate is considering legislation that would restrict the
2 promotion and sale of cell phones for use by children and would require companies to
3 offer headsets with each phone sold; and,

4 WHEREAS, The maximum level of radiation emitted from a cell phone and
5 absorbed by the human brain and body is called the Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) and
6 these values range in cell phones from 0.2 to 1.6 W/kg, the maximum legal value in the
7 US; and,

8 WHEREAS, The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not
9 review the safety of cell phones before they come to market but does have the authority
10 to take action against the unsafe exposure to radiation from these products; and,

11 WHEREAS, The United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has
12 accepted the safety standards for cell phone radiation set by the electronics professional
13 trade association, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE); and,

14 WHEREAS, Cell phone radiation safety levels accepted by the FCC do not take
15 into account potential increased vulnerabilities of children nor the cumulative effects of
16 long-term use and do not provide sufficient protection in determining a maximum
17 allowable SAR value of 1.6 W/Kg for the human head and brain; and,

18 WHEREAS, San Francisco has adopted a Precautionary Principle Ordinance
19 that compels government agencies to heed early warning signs from the scientific
20 literature and to take protective action to prevent harm; and,

21 WHEREAS, Cell phone manufacturers are required to report the SAR values of
22 their phones to the FCC but are not obligated to make this information available to the
23 public; and,

24 WHEREAS, Consumers in San Francisco, and beyond, have the right to know
25 the level of radiation being emitted by cell phones as they make their purchasing
26 decisions; and,

1 WHEREAS, Consumers in San Francisco should be informed of any steps that
2 can be taken to minimize harm, such as the importance of using head-sets and texting
3 as an alternative to speaking directly into the phone; now, therefore, be it,

4 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Commission on the Environment recommends,
5 as a matter of highest priority, that the:

- 6 a. City/County adopts legislation requiring that retailers of cell phones provide point-
7 of-sale information on SAR values and information on safer use. The SAR value
8 should be as visible to the consumer as the price.

9 FURTHER RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Commission on the Environment
10 recommends that the following options be considered for action in the future:

- 11 b. Federal Government conduct a public review of cell phone safety standards and
12 revise them based on peer-reviewed independent science, including the potential
13 effects on children and the effects of long-term use, and consider a ban on cell
14 phone advertising aimed at children.
- 15 c. State of California and the Federal Government adopt legislation that requires
16 warning labels be placed on all cell phone packaging regarding exposure to
17 radiation, especially for children.
- 18 d. City/County work closely with the School District to educate students, parents,
19 caregivers and teachers about cell phone radiation and the importance of
20 appropriate use of cell phones including: limiting their use to emergencies, use of
21 a headset, and keeping the phone away from the child's body to the maximum
22 extent possible.
- 23 e. City/County work closely with the School District to prohibit the distribution of cell
24 phone promotional materials and the use of cell phones as part of the curriculum
25 especially for elementary schools.

- 1 f. City/County explore ways to encourage cell phone companies to develop
- 2 technologies, products, and educational programs that facilitate the safest
- 3 possible use of cell phones.
- 4 g. Director of the Department of the Environment and the Department of
- 5 Technology, under the Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance, require that cell
- 6 phones purchased by City Departments minimize SAR values and come with a
- 7 headset when necessary and educational materials on minimizing exposure to
- 8 radiation.
- 9 h. Department of the Environment staff initiate an educational campaign that
- 10 includes a web page to help consumers identify low SAR value phones and
- 11 protective measures to reduce exposure to cell phone radiation.

12 I hereby certify that this Resolution was approved at the Commission on
13 the Environment's Meeting on January 26, 2010.

14

15  _____

16 *Monica Fish, Commission Secretary*

17 Vote: Approved (5-1) (1 Absent)

18 Ayes: Commissioners Gravanis, Martin, Mok, Tuchow and Wald

19 Noes: Commissioner Pelosi Jr.

20 Absent: Commissioner King

21

22

23

24

25