



Kriss Worthington

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ACTION CALENDAR

September 9, 2014

(Continued from July 8, 2014)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington
 Councilmember Maxwell Anderson
 Subject: City Manager Referral: Cell Phone Safety Sticker Referral to City Manager and Community Health Commission

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer to City Manager and Community Health Commission for the creation of an ordinance to require cell phone retailers to place a sticker on cell phone boxes, either at the point of purchase or prior to having the products placed on the shelves, warning consumers of the risk of brain cancer when using cell phones within a 10 mm distance of their body.

BACKGROUND:

Essential to understanding the intent of this recommendation is the fact that what is proposed is not a new addition to consumer safety, but rather an attempt to further the effectiveness of current efforts. Per status quo, the warnings of the danger of cell phone use within the recommended 10 mm radius are already present; however, the ease of access does not accurately reflect the threat of damage. This warning is either hidden within cell phones themselves in folders within folders, or deep in the pages of manuals – both of which are areas few consumers inspect. Having a sticker would combat this flaw by bringing direct attention to the fact.

World renowned attorney, Harvard Law Professor, and Director of Edmund J. Safra Center for Ethics, Lawrence Lessig (<http://www.lessig.org/about/>), has offered to defend this proposed language. "The World Health Organization has classified wireless transmissions from cell phones as 'possibly carcinogenic,' based on an increased risk for brain cancer. Refer to the instructions in the phone or your user manual for the manufacturer's recommended distance to keep the phone from the body during use." With his professional advice, we can bring attention to this fact through the employment of stickers. Thus, the City of Berkeley would be taking a considerable step forward in the matter of consumer safety. Furthermore, Berkeley could be the first city in the nation to adopt this warning language as information for consumers.

<http://www.sfenvironment.org/article/safer-practices/using-cell-phones-safely>

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Increased consumer safety is beneficial to the City's environmental sustainability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Minimal

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