



**Testimony at D.C. Zoning Commission Hearing on
Case No. 01-02**

*Text Amendment—Regulation of Antennas, Antenna Towers, and Monopoles
Presented by
Sheila Hogan,
Friends of the Earth
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Good morning Chairman Mitten and other members of the Commission. My name is Sheila Hogan and I reside at 3203 38th St., NW, Washington DC.

I am pleased to come before you as a resident of the District for over 10 years and as a representative of Friends of the Earth. Friends of the Earth is dedicated to the health and well being of the District's residents and the District's natural environment. Through our DC Environmental Network, we are working towards a city where the air and water are clean; schools, homes and workplaces are toxic-free; and the parks and waterways are attractive places for recreation and for wildlife.

Friends of the Earth commends the Zoning Commission for tackling the difficult task of revising the rules governing antennas, antenna towers and monopoles. We particularly applaud the general principal of certifying compliance with FCC regulations concerning the cumulative radiofrequency radiation of a site before permitting the installation of a new antenna.

We feel that these regulations can be improved, however. Our comments are as follows:

We oppose the proposed “alternative” language for Chapter 2606 related to stealth structures

We are greatly concerned by this proposal, which effectively exempts antennas in stealth structures from many of the regulations imposed on permits for other antennas. We would like to encourage the “hiding” of all antenna-holding structures, but not at the expense of sensible regulation designed to protect the character and health of our neighborhoods. Furthermore, we feel that the proposed alternative language is too vague to be adequately enforced by DC officials, e.g. who is to decide whether a stealth structure is “not out of scale with the subject property” or whether the proposed structure provides “adequate” screening of the antennas?

We encourage the broadening of restrictions on antenna and tower/monopole placement (2603.2. 2611.7)

There are restrictions on placing broadcast antennas and on towers and monopoles in or close to residential neighborhoods, but we feel that this should be extended to certain

public/institutional zoning categories, especially schools, nursing homes & hospitals. As you know, RF emissions vary and could in time exceed FCC guidelines despite the processes outlined in section 2601.2. These institutions should be particularly sheltered from excess exposure as our children and elderly are most at risk for developing leukemia and other rare cancers due to the genetic effects of RF emissions.

We feel that permits should have a finite life

As per NCPC guidelines on federal property, antenna permits should not be "in perpetuity," but should expire to encourage their removal/replacement as technologies evolve. NCPC requires a 5-year review of all permits for antennas on federal property. While we understand that the City has objected that a 5-year review would cause too much of a regulatory burden, how about a 7-10 year review? Without this kind of review, we could end up with numerous under-utilized towers or antennae cluttering up our city in 10-20 years time with no requirement for dismantling/maintaining/altering such structures.

We recommend setting "Maximum Installed Capacity" limits for Antenna Towers and Monopoles

We feel that it is prudent to require that antenna towers, monopoles, or other structures which hold antennas get up-front "*maximum installed capacity certifications*." These maximum limits should be broken out by antenna category (e.g. HDTV, regular TV, radio, cell phones), as determined by the design of the antenna tower or monopole.

Up-front limits will *help* (not guarantee that) both city agencies and our neighborhoods/ANCs ensure that structures built "on speculation" (e.g. without contracts in place for antennas to occupy their entire holding capacity) are not of a size which would lead to excessive RF exposures to nearby residences/schools/etc. once fully occupied. It will help to ensure that huge & unnecessary towers are not built due to poor information on the part of investors and will help to streamline the enforcement of these regulations.

It is conceivable that a tower could be built & only afterwards would the investing company find out that RF exposure under FCC standards is "maxed out" due to proximity to other broadcasting facilities. A detailed up-front certification per Section 2601.2 for the maximum installed capacity by type of antenna would help to prevent overly large antenna towers from being built.

Thank you for considering our points and for approving these important revisions to the regulations concerning antennas, antenna towers, and monopoles.