

Elisa Boxer
Scarborough
LD 383

Dear Sen. Baldacci, Rep. Matlack, and Respected Members of the Committee on State and Local Government,

My name is Elisa Boxer, I live in Scarborough, and I am a believer in the power of local government to give all sides, and all voices, a seat at the table.

This amendment, in my eyes, has less to do with 5G than it has to do with recognizing that municipal boards and councils are the people's first line of accessibility to democracy, and that they exist to allow meaningful discussions at the local level, so that all residents feel their voices are heard, considered, and weighed during the decision-making process.

Here in Scarborough, during the town's ordinance-drafting process for 5G, we were repeatedly told by the CTIA and various wireless industry lobbyists that our hands were tied and we couldn't have any say in locating 5G antennas (even on the basis of aesthetics, which federal law allows) because of the restrictive state law now in place.

Only later did we find out that not every state has such a restrictive law preventing meaningful discussion at the local level.

Many states have refused to take control away from municipalities, given the controversial nature of 5G. Because of that, cities and towns across the country have had meetings and robust discussions about 5G.

Some have resulted in allowing antennas in every right of way. Some, including municipalities in our neighboring New England states of CT and MA, have resulted in controlling the placement of 5G antennas.

For your reference, here is a list of cities and towns nationwide that have enacted permitting requirements and 5G ordinances based on resident input, rather than wireless industry strong-arming:

<https://ehtrust.org/usa-city-ordinances-to-limit-and-control-wireless-facilities-small-cells-in-rights-of-ways/>

5G is different from other utilities in that it operates wirelessly with high-frequencies, and therein lies the controversy. In fact, a New Hampshire legislative commission recently issued a report that was a year in the making, called Final Report on Commission to Study the Environmental and Health Effects of Evolving 5G Technology.

It was conducted by a legislative commission made up of lawmakers, doctors, economists, business leaders, etc.

Basically, it urges extreme caution, recommends avoiding residential areas, radiation labeling, signal-strength measurements, etc.

Among the recommendations:

- Require that any new wireless antenna located in a ROW be set back from residences, businesses and schools, unless the owners waive this setback requirement
- Require every pole in the ROW that holds a 5G antenna be labeled indicating RF radiation being emitted. Warning must be eye level and legible from 9 feet away.
- Require the collection of signal-strength measurements, including when changes are made to the system, such as changes in the software controlling the signals. In the event the measured power exceeds radiation thresholds, the municipality is empowered to immediately have the facility taken offline. Measurements are to be carried out by an independent contractor and costs borne by site installer.

Here's the full report:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/statstudcomm/committees/1474/reports/5G%20final%20report.pdf>

But honestly, even if every municipality in Maine voted to allow multiple 5G antennas in front of everyone's bedroom windows, those are discussions and decisions that I still believe should happen at the local level.

So I hope you will support LD 383 and, in doing so, support the fair and open airing of different viewpoints in the decision-making process that empowers local governments to work for the people, rather than keeping a state law that unwittingly takes away a town's ability to hear and consider the voices of its residents.

Thank you so much for considering mine.

Sincerely,
Elisa Boxer
Scarborough

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Elisa Boxer
journalist & author