



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-00870**

BY: **MR. RIOUX (SAINT-JEAN)**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 4, 2016**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **HONOURABLE JANE PHILPOTT**

Response by the Minister of Health

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Smart meters

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

Canada is recognized worldwide for the rigour with which it gathers, assesses and incorporates scientific information into its decision making and standards, including Safety Code 6.

Health Canada administers the Radiation Emitting Devices Act, which governs the sale, lease and importation of radiation emitting devices in Canada. In addition, the Department's mandate regarding human exposure to radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic energy from wireless devices includes carrying out research into possible health effects, monitoring the scientific literature related to such effects on an ongoing basis, and developing RF exposure guidelines, commonly referred to as Safety Code 6. Safety Code 6 sets recommended limits for safe human exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) in federally regulated industries and workplaces. While Health Canada recommends limits for safe human exposure, the Department does not regulate the general public's exposure to electromagnetic RF fields.

In 2015, Health Canada updated Safety Code 6 to take into account recent scientific data from studies carried out worldwide. In the establishment of acceptable limits, departmental scientists considered all peer-reviewed scientific studies, and employed a weight-of-evidence approach when evaluating possible health risks from exposure to RF energy. When establishing Safety Code 6, Health Canada incorporated several tiers of precaution into the human exposure limits. These included conservative thresholds for the occurrence of adverse effects, extreme worst-case situations for body size and orientation in relation to the RF fields, and additional safety margins. Since these

conservative approaches are cumulative, i.e., stacked upon each other, Safety Code 6 provides very large margins of safety against the occurrence of all established adverse health effects associated with RF field exposure. The Department's updated Safety Code 6 makes Canada's limits among the most stringent science-based limits in the world.

In 2011, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which is part of the World Health Organization (WHO), classified RF EMF as possibly carcinogenic to humans (Group 2B), based on an increased risk for glioma, a type of brain cancer, associated with long-term heavy cell phone use. The IARC classification of RF energy reflects the fact that some limited evidence exists that RF energy might be a risk factor for cancer. However, the vast majority of research to date does not support a link between RF energy exposure and cancers in humans. At present, the evidence of a possible link between RF energy exposure and cancer risk is far from conclusive and more research is needed to clarify this possible link.

It is Health Canada's position that the health of Canadians is protected from RF energy when the human exposure limits recommended by Safety Code 6 are respected. Safety Code 6 has always established and maintained a human exposure limit that is far below the threshold for potential adverse health impacts. In the case of EMF, there is sufficient evidence supported internationally to show that adherence to the recommended levels of exposure in Safety Code 6 will not cause harm to health. As such, a precautionary notice on the application of Safety Code 6 is unnecessary.

Health Canada has previously provided timely scientific information and messaging on EMF and health to federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) partners, including through the Pan Canadian Public Health Network. The Department will maintain this practice and its ongoing relationship with its FPT partners in an effort to support regional efforts and decision-making in this area.