



# UNITED FIREFIGHTERS of LOS ANGELES CITY

Local 112 IAFF AFL-CIO-CLC

September 24, 2014

Honorable Mitch Englander  
Chairman, Public Safety Committee  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chairman Englander:

Just two weeks ago, I was made aware of the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System (LA-RICS) plan to install Long Term Evolution (LTE) broadband communication equipment at more than 25 Los Angeles City Fire Stations and facilities. When I learned of this plan, I immediately informed Fire Chief Terrazas of our public safety concerns related to the health and safety of our Firefighters with the planned installation of these transmission towers and radio antennas being just a few yards away from our members' sleeping quarters (see attached). I received no response to this letter.

On Wednesday, October 1, the Los Angeles City Council's Public Safety Committee is scheduled to hear this item and give approval for the LA-RICS project to proceed. I am asking that this matter be continued until we are 100% certain that these communication towers will not have a negative health impact on our Firefighters, Paramedics, and the surrounding residents who live and work near facilities where tower installations are planned.

On September 18, a letter from Mayor Garcetti was transmitted to the City Council stating that the LA-RICS Authority was granted a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption for the 231 proposed broadband sites. Full environmental clearance to begin construction on LA City sites has not even been granted yet. By waiving traditional CEQA requirements, there is an immediate red flag concern regarding this project. The fact that LA-RICS has not yet received full environmental clearance in accordance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) gives us additional reason for concern.

It's my understanding that in 2009, the Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District voted to ban cell sites on school property and increased setbacks near cell sites located near schools due to safety concerns. It's hard to understand why we have concluded that cell towers pose a risk to our children and school employees, yet LA-RICS is trying to install these same towers right next to our fire stations where our members spend more than one-third of their lives.

While I can appreciate that there is a September 2015 deadline to access federal funds for the completion of the LA-RICS project, it is inexcusable that once again our Firefighters in the field



were the last ones to know about a massive \$150 million dollar project that could jeopardize their health and safety. In fact, we were notified of the planned installations after a Firefighter in the field called to inform us that a contractor was at his fire station taking measurements for the planned project - which will be less than 10 feet away from their fire station. Nobody talked to us and we have not heard from one single expert who has told us that this project will be safe.

On behalf of more than 3,000 Firefighters, Paramedics, Dispatchers, Inspectors, and Pilots of the Los Angeles Fire Department who I am honored to represent, UFLAC will strongly oppose the use of Fire Stations as base locations for cell towers and/or antennas for the conduction of communication transmissions until a study with the highest scientific merit on health effects of exposure to low-intensity radiation is conducted and it is proven that such sites are not hazardous to the health of our members.

**I am asking you to delay action on this item unless and until we can be given firm scientific evidence that proves the safety of the LA-RICS project.**

I will also be sending separate communication to Chief Terrazas reiterating the position in our September 11<sup>th</sup> letter that the City must immediately cease and desist from the installation and construction of these facilities and demand that this installation be discussed as part of a meet and confer process with the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely



Frank Lima  
President

FL/mr  
opeiu #537  
afl-cio-clc

CC: Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles  
Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council  
Chief Ralph Terrazas, Los Angeles Fire Department  
Board of Fire Commissioners  
Ana Guerrero, Chief of Staff to Mayor  
Dave Gillotte, President, Los Angeles County Firefighters, Local 1014  
Harold Schaitberger, President, International Association of Firefighters  
James Ferguson, International Association of Firefighters  
Lou Paulson, President, California Professional Firefighters  
Marvin Kropke, President IBEW Local 11  
Brian D'Arcy, President IBEW Local 18



# United Firefighters of Los Angeles City

Local 112, International Association of Fire Fighters

2014 SEP 12 AM  
FIRE C.

September 11, 2014

Chief Terrazas, Fire Chief  
Los Angeles Fire Department  
200 North Main Street, Suite 1800  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Chief Terrazas,

UFLAC has learned that the Department and City plan to install and/or allow the installation of cellular phone transmission towers or radio antennas at or near several of the work locations of our represented members.

This letter is intended to put you and the Department and City on written notice that towers and antennas such as these pose significant health and safety risks – including, but not limited to, serious injury, debilitating or fatal disease, and accidental death - to those living or working nearby.

The Department and City must immediately cease in the planning, installation preparation, installation and/or allowing the installation of any and all cellular phone transmission towers or radio antennas at or near the work locations of UFLAC's bargaining unit members and must immediately deactivate and remove them or cause them to be deactivated and removed where and if they have been installed.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent health and safety matter.

Sincerely,

Frank Lima  
President

FL/mr  
opeiu #537  
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