

After the briefing Senators Leahy and Jeffords (VT) and Congressmen Sanders (VT) and Tancredo (CO) agreed to propose three bills that would strengthen local and state regulatory authority and provide funding for federally-directed independent research on the health impacts of RF/MW radiation exposure.

What You Can Do: Write to your Congress members asking them to co-sponsor the Leahy/Tancredo bills. Send your letters to the attention of the Telecommunications

staffer and the Environment/Health staffer. Be sure to include a paragraph telling them how wireless siting issues affect you personally. Send us a postcard telling us whom you have contacted. We will follow up.

For a sample letter, details about the proposed legislation, and Congressional staff contacts by state, contact the EMR Network, P.O. Box 221, Marshfield, VT 05658.

Update on Satellites

by Arthur Firstenberg

The Cellular Phone Taskforce continues to track low-orbit satellite activities in relation to human health. Episodes of nausea, flu-like symptoms, and feelings of oppression, occurring throughout the world, have occurred periodically since the first low-orbit satellite constellation went into operation on September 23, 1998. Typically, these episodes last for about three weeks and coincide with new or increased levels of service.

This year there have been two more such episodes, beginning March 30 and June 5.

On March 30, 2001 Iridium, which has 66 operating satellites, resumed full commercial cell phone service worldwide. After a year and a half in bankruptcy, Iridium was resurrected December 5, 2000 when it signed a contract to serve the United States military. At that time it reopened its Gateway in Hawaii. A "Gateway" is a receiving and sending station on the earth which routes satellite telephone calls to their destination, and vice versa. On March 30 all the other Gateways all over the world became operational as commercial service was resumed.

On June 5, Iridium added mobile satellite data services, including connections to the Internet. Hoarseness was a prominent complaint of many who contacted the Taskforce during the next few weeks.

The March 30 event was unusual in certain respects. First, it was the night of a rare red aurora which was visible in the northern hemisphere as far south as Mexico, as well as in the southern hemisphere. It was a time of intense solar activity, so I am tempted to attribute this to pure coincidence, except that I am reminded of the reddish sky that some reported the night of September 23, 1998, when Iridium was turned on the first time. All-red auroras, which have been seen only once every decade or two, are associated with events unusually high in altitude, not far below where these satellites are orbiting. I am sure we do not understand all the interactions of these satellite operations

with the earth's magnetic field and atmosphere.

The second event that approximately coincided with this period of time was a catastrophic loss of Kentucky race horse foals in late April and early May. Since mares, according to the Merck Veterinary Manual, abort several weeks to a month after, for example, a viral infection, this would put the triggering event at about the end of March. Except that no such virus has been found. Kentucky veterinarians are so focused on finding a local cause that they are treating similar reports from far-away places very skeptically. In the U.S., unusual foaling problems were reported this spring not only from nearby states such as Ohio, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and Illinois, but also Maryland, Texas, and northern Michigan. In addition to spontaneous abortions and dead foals, breeders were reporting both newborn and older horses with unusual eye problems, and adult horses with pericarditis, or fluid around the heart.

Nobody's buying, but full steam ahead

Not a single low-orbit satellite enterprise has avoided insolvency, but they are all still up and running, with billions of dollars being poured into new schemes.

Iridium, which went bankrupt and closed down in 1999, was rescued by the U.S. military. Orbcomm, which went bankrupt in September 2000, sold cheaply to new investors in April and has remained operating throughout. And Globalstar, which stopped paying its debts in January, has now laid off half its workforce while continuing to expand global access to its services.

Despite the dismal performance of all these other enterprises, Teledesic LLC is still plowing billions into its effort to launch broadband "Internet-in-the-Sky" in the year 2003. Investors include Bill Gates, Craig McGaw, Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, the Abu Dhabi Investment Company, the Boeing Company, and Motorola.

Stay tuned.