

Angel's Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 7173

February 3, 2025

To the House Corporations Committee Chair and Members,

My name is Angel Lopez, and I am a resident of Providence. I write to you today in opposition to House Bill 7173. The changes proposed to existing legislation within this bill will allow any self-regulated small wireless facility under RI General Laws §39-32 to benefit under the rights and circumstances outlined in section 11-35-4 titled “Injuries to electric or communication lines”. Such wireless facilities are currently operating privately and are being allowed to withhold information from the public. I have submitted various APRA requests to the City of Providence of which have all been denied. My appeals to the Attorney General’s Office and to the Providence Director of Public Works have also been denied.

I do not have a problem with adding their components within the definition of Regulated Metals Property as appearing on page 2 line 34. However, subsection (2) within the Holding Period Section (page 3 line 24 to 29) creates a gap for a specific device to easily bypass the holding period requirements. Certain devices regardless of having a similar appearance do not identify the device owner or operator. In addition to being granted legal approval to regulate themselves according to RI General Laws §39-32 a shell entity may be set up to conceal the identity of the owner. The maintenance of these devices is conducted by contracted third parties thus leaving the utility pole or property without markings that will allow a bypass to comply with holding period requirements.

I have included five images of wireless installations of which based on their appearance and location are self-regulated by the property owner by way of RI General Laws §39-32.

APRA Request Denied (Image 1)



APRA Request Denied (Image 2)

This location is a school bus stop.



APRA Request Denied (Image 3)



Image of Wireless on Mt. Pleasant High



Image of Wireless on Charlesgate



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The inclusion of such devices within section 11-35-4 of this legislation is enabling the owners and operators of such devices to continue their operations as is. These devices have already impacted neighborhoods in many ways such as increasing property taxes, increasing the demand of energy resulting in energy rate hikes, they have become eyesores to residents, and may quite possibly be sharing information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Municipalities are paying for the services these devices are providing, but the community benefit and exact operations are concealed from the public. These devices are also emitting wireless radiation and there is no authority in this state with a line item to conduct regular testing for safety standards or ensure public tax dollars are being used to exclusively fund the operations that each municipality agrees to pay for. They should be regulated as much as any other business in this state before being given the privilege to be covered for damages outlined in section 11-35-4.

I urge you all to hold House Bill 7173 and request a thorough investigation into the adverse impacts to public health and municipal budgets caused by RI General Laws §39-32.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Angel Lopez
Providence, RI