

From: Cherry, Brian K
Sent: 1/5/2011 9:32:23 AM
To: jf2@cpuc.ca.gov (jf2@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: FW: MIJ, SFC, KGO, KTVU, NBC, KGET- PG&E Says It Will Continue SmartMeter Installations Despite Marin Moratorium

FYI. Here's why we need to do something sooner rather than later....

From: News Flash
Sent: Wednesday, January 05, 2011 6:36 AM
Subject: MIJ, SFC, KGO, KTVU, NBC, KGET- PG&E Says It Will Continue SmartMeter Installations Despite Marin Moratorium

Several articles report on PG&E's SmartMeter program. Kim Griffin

PG&E says it will continue SmartMeter installations despite Marin moratorium

By Nels Johnson

The Marin Independent Journal, January 4, 2011

A moratorium on the installation of SmartMeters was imposed on Marin's unincorporated areas by county supervisors Tuesday, but Pacific Gas and Electric Co. says it will continue to install them anyway.

The move came on a 4-0 vote as supervisors bowed to a persistent crowd of meter foes even though officials conceded that the state Public Utilities Commission, not the county, has authority over the devices.

"This action is a political action," said Supervisor Judy Arnold, and as such should send a strong message to utility officials.

But Jeff Smith, a PG&E spokesman, said the state Public Utilities Commission, not the county board, has jurisdiction over the meters, and indicated that the company would continue installing them in Marin until it hears differently from the state commission.

Continuing with installation of meters across the Bay Area will ensure jobs for 600 union workers, Smith added.

The SmartMeter moratorium measure was prompted by a crowd of advocates who have packed board meetings on several occasions, urging supervisors to do what they could to regulate or outlaw the devices.

Deputy County Counsel David Zaltsman provided the board with an urgency ordinance imposing a one-year moratorium on meters "and related equipment." Critics contend the

wireless utility meters are inaccurate, jam emergency radio frequencies and pose a potential health hazard due to radiation.

Zaltsman noted several jurisdictions including Fairfax have halted installation of the devices, and added that county letters to the state PUC asking for study of meter accuracy and health impacts have gone unanswered.

The ordinance says: "Because the potential risks to the health, safety and welfare of county residents are so great, the Board of Supervisors wishes to adopt a moratorium on the installation of SmartMeters and related equipment within the unincorporated area of the county." The moratorium period will allow the California Council of Science and Technology to study the matter "and for additional information to be collected and analyzed" as urged by Assemblyman Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael.

The matter is urgent, the ordinance declares, because "there is a current and immediate threat to public health, safety and welfare."

A parade of four dozen speakers rose to address the board, citing health, safety and privacy concerns, questioning the accuracy of the devices, and saying the utility was robbing them of the right to choose how to live.

"PG&E is violating our right of choice as it continues to ram SmartMeters down our throats," said San Anselmo Mayor Ford Greene.

"This is America," noted David Wilner of Novato. "People should have a choice, but with SmartMeters, it's a different story. If you don't accept it, the utility will turn off the power."

Supervisor Susan Adams, named president of the board on Tuesday, earlier paused for several on-camera interviews with television crews. She noted the outpouring of commentary turned the chambers into "a forum where we've heard a lot" and said she helped Zaltsman refine the proposal over the holiday weekend. Adams, who later said she's considering making a run for Congress, called the session an example of democracy in action.

"I vigorously support this action today," added Supervisor Charles McGlashan, announcing he will seek appointment to the state PUC when he submits a letter of interest in the regulatory post to Gov. Jerry Brown.

Supervisor Steve Kinsey also hopped the moratorium bandwagon, calling the move "a strong statement of what we think is not working." He joined colleagues in directing staff to send letters to Gov. Brown, the PUC, Federal Communication Commission and others outlining county concerns.

The noisy crowd let out cheers, whistles and whoops of triumph as the board acted, then gave supervisors an extended standing ovation.

Marin County supes OK moratorium on SmartMeters

By David R. Baker

The San Francisco Chronicle, January 4, 2011

The Marin County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a one-year moratorium on the installation of Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s SmartMeters, siding with residents who consider the wireless devices a threat to their health, privacy and pocketbooks.

"It's a way for us to tell PG&E that we want you to stop implementing this until the risks are better known, and it's a way to tell our citizens that we hear them," said county Supervisor Charles McGlashan before the vote.

The moratorium, which covers the unincorporated portions of the county and was approved 4-0, is largely symbolic.

Although other local governments have tried to ban SmartMeters, authority to stop their installation rests with the California Public Utilities Commission. And the commission has so far rejected all calls to halt PG&E's program, saying that any pause would add to its \$2.2 billion cost.

Marin County officials, however, hope that their vote will persuade San Francisco's PG&E to delay installation in their county, where opposition to the new gas and electric meters is growing. Two women were arrested last week for blocking a caravan of meter installation trucks driving into Inverness.

Health risk feared

Opponents consider the meters' wireless radiation a health risk. They also question the meters' accuracy and say the devices collect too much personal information.

Marin County officials are betting that PG&E, its public image battered by September's fatal pipeline explosion in San Bruno, won't want the negative publicity that would come from continuing installations in spite of the moratorium. The company paused installation in other communities that passed temporary SmartMeter bans.

"They honored Fairfax's request, they honored Santa Cruz (County's) request, and we hope they'll honor ours as well," McGlashan said.

He announced during Tuesday's board meeting that he will submit his name to Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) to fill one of the openings on the utilities commission, a position that would give him regulatory power over PG&E.

Despite the vote, a PG&E spokesman on Tuesday suggested that the utility may continue installations in Marin County.

7.3 million installed

After Santa Cruz County supervisors approved a temporary SmartMeter moratorium in September, PG&E delayed installations there to give the company more time to meet with community members, said spokesman Jeff Smith.

The company, which has installed more than 7.3 million SmartMeters to date, says the devices will let customers track their energy use with precision and help them save power.

In Marin County, PG&E has already held about 35 community meetings and open houses, Smith said. The company, therefore, doesn't need to pause the program, he said.

"Continuing the program will allow all our customers to enjoy these benefits," he said.

A bill introduced by Assemblyman Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, in December would force PG&E to offer its customers a choice between receiving a wireless SmartMeter or an advanced

meter that would transmit the same data through a wired connection. In addition, PG&E reported last month that it is considering some kind of opt-out alternative for customers who don't want the meters, although the company has not yet specified what the alternative might be.

For now, Marin County residents opposed to the meters expressed satisfaction with the supervisors' vote, and warned PG&E not to ignore it.

Opposition growing

"If I were their public relations (person), I would not go back to west Marin," said Katharina Sandizell, a mother of two arrested Dec. 29 for blocking an installation truck. "Once two of us got arrested, seven people were ready to get arrested the next day. It's a groundswell, and they know it."

1-year Marin Co. SmartMeter moratorium approved

By Lyanne Melendez

KGO News, January 4, 2011

There's now a yearlong moratorium on SmartMeters in parts of Marin County. It affects unincorporated areas and follows heated protests by neighbors over health concerns. PG&E says more than seven million SmartMeters have been installed in California and the plan is to rollout 10 million by 2012.

Many residents cheered after supervisors passed the one-year moratorium. The confrontation with PG&E's contractor escalated nearly a week ago when two women from Inverness and Point Reyes station were arrested. They were trying to stop the installations.

"In a sleepy town like Inverness, a tiny town, to bring in 10 trucks feels very intimidating, so we felt we had to get in the street and say 'no,'" she Katharina Sandizell from the Point Reyes station said.

Dozens of Marin residents opposed to the SmartMeters voiced their concerns.

"To come onto my property and arbitrarily install a dangerous device without my permission, I really resent it," one resident said.

PG&E maintains the devices are safe. A similar moratorium was adopted in nearby Fairfax and former mayor Frank Egger says Tuesday's ordinance means residents can call local law enforcement to help discourage an installation.

"And the police department can ask the installer to leave the property. I don't think they are going to tell police 'no, we're not leaving, we are going to install a SmartMeter,'" he said.

But PG&E says it has a legal right to go into a property per the California Public Utilities Commission, but will likely not force their way in.

"Legally, I believe we do have the right to go in but it's not our intention to disregard our customers wishes," PG&E Spokesperson Katie Romans said.

In the meantime, lawmakers in Sacramento are considering a bill that would allow people to choose between the current wireless SmartMeter and a wired one.

"We need to ensure that the public has a full range of choices," Marin County Supervisor Susan Adams said.

The moratorium goes into effect immediately and expires on Dec. 31, 2011. During this period, the board would like to review some upcoming studies regarding the safety of these devices.

Marin County Supes Approve One-Year SmartMeter Moratorium

KTVU News, January 4, 2011

The Marin County Board of Supervisors Tuesday approved a one-year moratorium on the installation of PG&E's SmartMeters in unincorporated areas of the county.

The emergency ordinance takes effect immediately and expires Dec. 31, 2011. It will allow the California Council on Science and Technology and members of the state Legislature to complete reports regarding potential problems with the controversial SmartMeters.

The ordinance cites well-publicized concerns in California about the overcharges of customers using the SmartMeters and the health effects of the electromagnetic frequency radiation emitted by the wireless technology in SmartMeters.

The ordinance also cites legislation by Assemblyman Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, that would allow PG&E customers to opt out of wireless SmartMeter installation, including removal of any existing SmartMeters.

PG&E spokesman Jeff Smith said the utility company would continue with its program to allow all customers in its service area to enjoy the benefits of the SmartMeter technology.

Smith said PG&E held more than 35 open houses and answering center availabilities in Marin County last year. The company has installed 7 million of the 10 million SmartMeters it plans to put in its service area between Bakersfield and the Oregon border, Smith said.

The adoption of the ordinance comes six days after two women were arrested in Inverness Park in Marin County during a SmartMeter installation protest. They were cited for disobeying a police officer by failing to get out of the road so traffic could get through.

The women were trying to block 10 Wellington Energy trucks on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The Pittsburgh company has contracted with PG&E to install the SmartMeters.

One of the women, Katharina Sandizell is co-director of the West Marin Community Coalition for Public Health.

"(PG&E) is rolling over civil liberties and getting these things installed as quickly as possible so that people don't have time to consider the implications or ask questions," she said.

Sandizell also said that if PG&E continues to install the meters despite the moratorium, there will be more civil disobedience and arrests.

She said PG&E has to keep its promise of providing an opt-out alternative and remove SmartMeters that were forcibly installed.

The supervisors voted 4-0 in favor of the moratorium, with Supervisor Hal Brown absent, Sandizell said.

Moratoriums against SmartMeters have already been implemented in Fairfax, Watsonville and Santa Cruz County.

Following last week's protect in Inverness, PG&E spokesman Paul Moreno said PG&E believes the SmartMeters are safe.

They operate "well within the Federal Communication Commission's guidelines for radio frequency," he said.

Moreno said the meters use one watt of power - equivalent to a cell phone or baby monitor - to transmit data for 45 seconds each day.

It would take 1,000 years for someone with a SmartMeter to be exposed to as much radio frequency as a typical cell phone user is exposed to in a month, Moreno said.

Moreno also said the World Health Organization determined low-powered radio frequency devices do not pose risks to human health.

Top of Form 1

No More Smart Meters: Marin County Supes

By Mike Anderson

NBC Bay Area News, January 4, 2011

The Marin Board of Supervisors declared a one-year moratorium on Smart Meters by a 4-0 vote Tuesday.

PG&E's new wireless meters have been a hot issue in the area. Just a few days ago, two women were arrested for blocking a Smart Meter truck in Inverness. Opponents say the new meters are inaccurate and send out unhealthy radiation.

But the county actually has no authority over the meters. It's the state Public Utilities Commission that can make the decision, and it hasn't said anything.

PG&E spokesman Jeff Smith told the Marin Independent Journal that the utility will keep installing the meters unless it hears from the commission.

About 100 residents showed up to the meeting on Tuesday. Some of them complained about headaches, sleeping disorders and heart problems, according to a release.

The moratorium was put in place "because the potential risks to the health, safety and welfare of county residents are so great," the emergency ordinance says. It applies only to unincorporated areas of the county, including all of West Marin.

After thousands of customer complaints, a September audit found the meters were "functioning properly," but it didn't say anything about possible health risks. PG&E did admit that thousands of its meters had glitches.

Until more information is known about the meters, opponents in Marin want the option to opt-out of having the meters installed in their home.

There are currently about 5.5 million smart meters installed, most of them are in the Central Valley and the Bay Area.

PG&E installs new generation SmartMeters, customers are wary

KGET News, January 4, 2011

Pacific Gas & Electric will install more than 133,000 new SmartMeters in Kern County over the next several months. The company said the meters run on a wireless network and are more accurate than the old meters.

"It's the same technology that is in your cell phone so the meter sends in short bursts, a total of 45 seconds to us," PG&E spokesperson, Denny Boyles, said. "Somewhere in the neighborhood on a pole, there will be a neighborhood collection site that will transmit it back to us."

PG&E has come under fire over the years by people who blamed their high bills on the old SmartMeters, but an independent investigation found the SmartMeters were accurate.

PG&E said it's installing new meters because it has better technology and not because customers complained.

The new meter is digital and flashes a series of information that reads kilowatt usage and voltage.

PG&E customer Kenneth Cottrill took some time to read his new SmartMeter on Tuesday. He said it looks normal. "I hope I'm still getting away without a big bill," Cottrill said.

But other customers are wary of the new meters.

"Well if they're replacing them all, there must be something going on so maybe it's for the good," Pat Weir, PG&E customer, said.

PG&E customers said only time will tell how accurate the new meters are. The company will send customers a notice two weeks before it installs a new meter. Customers cannot opt out of the change.