

From: Cherry, Brian K  
Sent: 2/3/2012 2:21:22 PM  
To: 'zaf@cpuc.ca.gov' (zaf@cpuc.ca.gov)  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
Subject: Fw: SmartMeter Opt Out

Interesting article.

**From:** Bottorff, Thomas E  
**Sent:** Friday, February 03, 2012 02:19 PM  
**To:** Cherry, Brian K; Allen, Meredith  
**Subject:** FW: SmartMeter Opt Out

Fyi; good article.

Tom

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**From:** Burt, Helen  
**Sent:** Friday, February 03, 2012 1:32 PM  
**To:** Johns, Christopher; Stavropoulos, Nickolas; Williams, Geisha; Pruett, Greg S.; Austin, Karen; Bell, Des; Bottorff, Thomas E; Conway, John; Simon, John  
**Subject:** SmartMeter Opt Out

As many of you know, the media reporting of our SmartMeter opt out has been overall very balanced (thank you, Greg, Roger and team!) I found the article from Intelligent Utility to be a really great description of the meeting held this Wednesday and the people speaking in opposition. The reporter attended the meeting and has some first-hand observations.

Tom, thank you for your leadership in attending and helping us work with these customers and the Commission.

## **From health claims to Orwellian accusations, CPUC decision stings some**

<http://www.intelligentutility.com/article/12/02/health-claims-orwellian-accusations-cpuc-decision-stings-some>

Februray 3, 2012

## **PG&E opt-out option doesn't sooth anti-smart meter antagonists**

Kate Rowland

| Feb 02, 2012

As I have noted before, a critical piece of the intelligent utility is the intelligent consumer. In my opinion, the latter was sorely lacking in the public input portion of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Feb. 1 business meeting.

As I watched the video coverage yesterday, I was struck nearly dumb by some of the continued public outrage against the CPUC's proposed decision on agenda item 28, the modification of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E's) smart meter program.

Any good debater knows that it's imperative to keep emotion out of the argument. And yet, high emotions (and, in at least one case, downright delusion) ruled the day as nearly 60 people stood up to speak, and many ran over their one-minute time allotment.

As I listened, I realized that not one word of what PG&E and other utilities in California (not to mention the rest of the country) have been trying to do to educate customers has penetrated even the first layer of understanding for these particular folks. They know what they know, despite scientific evidence to the contrary.

Awhile back, some PG&E customers told the CPUC that they would pay to get their analog meters back. Fair, given that meter readers will need to be paid to read those meters, and PG&E will have to run two different billing systems, one for analog customers, and one for smart meter customers.

On Feb. 1, these same folks cried foul, declaring an initial charge to opt out (\$75 for most customers, \$10 for low-income customers) and a monthly fee (\$10 for most customers, \$5 for low-income customers) is "rather undemocratic," "discriminatory," "extortion," and, at the end of the proceeding, after the vote, "a crime against humanity." (The last screamed out, over and over, at the top of the protestor's lungs, until the room was cleared.)

PG&E and the CPUC have operated in good faith in this issue. Smart meter installations were put on hold while the opt-out option was considered, and in some places, smart meters have been replaced by analog meters as requested.

The hour-and-a-half public comment period was filled with accusations against PG&E and the CPUC, as well as lengthy descriptions of health ailments that purported resulted thanks to the smart meters. As my colleague Phil Carson so astutely noted

yesterday: "(I)n PG&E's case, there would seem to be a disproportionate number of electro-magnetic frequency sufferers in its service territory--in fact ... more than in all other areas of the country combined."

One speaker told the CPUC that there would be more health issue complaints, as well, because a lot of people don't yet know they're suffering from it.

It seems apropos to quote Roger Rabbit here: "Puhleeze!" Where is the documented evidence?

But that wasn't even the worst of it. Between health complaints writ large, the public comments got Orwellian. Here, word for word, is what one man testified, and while there is no credence whatsoever to any of his claims, I believe that it is important for utilities across the country to realize there are still people out there who believe what this man does. He said:

"In my opinion, and bolstered by a lot of evidence, PG&E is not all about money. The smart meter program also has a data component to it. For all of the data from these meters is being put into databases, permanent databases, which will never be surrendered, and which is a direct violation of everybody's right not to have unreasonable search.

"The smart meter program conforms to the engineering descriptions of the political philosophy of technocracy, which as created in the '30s. It's really eerie the way it does. These meters have been rolled out all over the world as a way of controlling the population.

"That was the specific requirement from technocracy, and it is being implemented now. It's unconstitutional, and it goes way beyond the health implications which are also hideous. So people should not be paying an extra fee not to be monitored by the technocratic system."

Where do I even start?

Utilities, if there are still people out there that believe this conspiracy theory, then you've got a lot more consumer education you need to be doing, post-haste. What is it they think is being collected besides energy usage? And what do they think is going to be done with the information, such as it is, that is being collected? And how is that information going to be used to "control the population"?

There were other equally confusing accusations levelled, as well. One speaker accused the utility of being "capitalistic". Ummm, yup, that's the definition of an investor-owned business. But that has nothing to do with the fact that it costs money to create and deliver energy and to deliver services, and those costs need to be recouped, whether the utility is an investor-owned utility, a municipally owned utility, or a cooperatively owned utility.

In a perfect world, electricity, natural gas and water would all be free. This isn't a perfect world. In this world, we're trying to keep the prices down, championing energy efficiency, and trying to do more with less. Utilities across the country are trying to encourage their customers to use less of their product. Capitalism has nothing to do with it. Keeping the lights on, and the water running, is of higher import, straight across the board.

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