

From: Cherry, Brian K
Sent: 2/20/2013 9:15:46 PM
To: Carol A. Brown (carol.brown@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fwd: PD - Sebastopol Likely to Ban SmartMeters in Thursday Vote
Ugh

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Begin forwarded message:

From: News Flash <newsflash@pge.com>
Date: February 20, 2013, 9:14:11 PM PST
To: Real time PG&E coverage {PG&E Internal - #PRIVATE#} <Newsflash-Real-Time@pge.com>
Subject: PD - Sebastopol Likely to Ban SmartMeters in Thursday Vote
Reply-To: <newsflash@pge.com>

The *Press Democrat* published a story about a proposed ordinance banning the installation of SmartMeters in the city of Sebastopol.

Sebastopol Likely to Ban SmartMeters in Thursday Vote

By Bob Norberg

Press Democrat, February 20, 2013

<http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20130220/ARTICLES/130229967/1033/ne>

The Sebastopol City Council is poised to pass an emergency ordinance

on Thursday banning the installation of controversial SmartMeters, even though there is concern the city does not even have that authority.

The ordinance would classify the installation by PG&E or its contractors as a misdemeanor offense, with violations subject to citation, said City Manager Larry McLaughlin, who is also the city's attorney.

“Our council made it clear last night that they intend it to be used,” McLaughlin said Wednesday, referring to instructions given to staff by the City Council at its regular meeting Tuesday night. “If this ordinance passes and PG&E contractors do install meters, I expect our police department to cite them.”

Under the ordinance, Police Chief Jeff Weaver would set the fine for violations, which could be handled through traffic court or criminal court. Enforcement would be a low priority, but complaints would not be ignored, he said.

“If the council passes an ordinance that makes it illegal to install SmartMeters and someone calls and asks us to enforce the ordinance, we will,” Weaver said.

McLaughlin declined to discuss the legality of the proposed ordinance. However, he noted that a number of city attorneys believe that statewide rules adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission have pre-empted local authority to regulate SmartMeter installation.

Nonetheless, about 50 other California cities have adopted similar ordinances, McLaughlin said.

“If nothing else, they have good publicity value, a statement of how the community views the matter, a statement that the community does not

want SmartMeters, if the council is indeed speaking for the community,” McLaughlin said.

SmartMeters have been a controversial issue in Sebastopol for the past two years. Critics have packed meetings, complained about the health hazards from the radio emissions and demanded the city take a stand against them.

The city is also the home of the EMF (electromagnetic frequency) Network, one of the leaders of the protest, which has taken up dozens of hours of debate before the City Council.

The Sebastopol City Council has previously called for PG&E to allow whole municipalities to opt out, but has not gotten a response, said Councilman Patrick Slayter.

“The fact is that PG&E has not responded to our letter. It is as if it went into the ether. We were ignored,” Slayter said.

Slayter said that he is not in favor of using ordinances to make policy or a statement, but it seems appropriate in this case if the ordinance can get the installations stopped while state regulators examine the controversy.

“It is hitting the pause button,” Slayter said.

The proposed ordinance would place a moratorium on the installation of the meters until the Public Utilities Commission makes a decision on whether whole communities can opt out of having the meters installed.

Under a program adopted by the commission a year ago, customers are allowed to keep their traditional meters for a one-time fee of \$75 and a \$10 monthly fee to cover the cost of having meters read. Low-income customers who qualify for PG&E's CARE program pay a \$10 setup fee and monthly charges of \$5.

There are 21,000 gas and electrical meters at homes and businesses in the Sebastopol area. So far, PG&E has upgraded 7,100 of them to SmartMeters and 1,100 customers have opted out, **PG&E spokeswoman Brittany McKannay** said.

Statewide, less than 0.5 percent of PG&E customers have opted out, she said. To opt out or ask questions about SmartMeters, PG&E customers can call 1-866-743-0263, **McKannay** said.

PG&E officials met Wednesday afternoon to discuss the ordinance and the utility's response, if it was to pass.

The City Council meeting is at 9 a.m. Thursday in the City Hall conference room.

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