

**City of Piedmont**  
**COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

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DATE: June 21, 2010

FROM: Mark Delventhal, Director of Recreation

SUBJECT: **PGE *SmartMeters***

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**BACKGROUND:**

In early May, the City of Piedmont (as a customer) received notice from PGE (see May 6 letter from Mr. William F. Devereaux) informing us that *SmartMeters* were soon to be installed on city properties.

Staff was concerned about such installations due to the considerable controversy and reported problems with *SmartMeters* that have appeared in the press and have been the subject of Senate hearings in Sacramento. “Watchdog” groups including TURN (The Utility Reform Network) have urged PGE to stop installing *SmartMeters* until the California Public Utilities Commission has completed their investigation into consumer complaints.

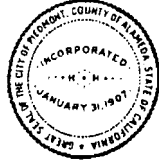
Therefore, on behalf of the City of Piedmont and its PGE customers, staff drafted a letter to Mr. Devereaux on May 11 asking that PGE refrain from any *SmartMeter* installations in Piedmont until further notice. We also asked that PGE appear before the City Council in order to provide information and the most current situation with the installation of *SmartMeters* in the Bay Area and Northern California.

Attached to this report please find several news articles and other pertinent written materials. PGE chose not to provide any written information prior to the meeting.

**ORAL REPORT:**

PGE informed staff that they are pleased to appear before the City Council to provide a report on *SmartMeters* and to answer any questions.

CITY OF PIEDMONT  
CALIFORNIA



May 11, 2010

Mr. William F. Devereaux  
Senior Director  
SmartMeter Program  
Pacific Gas and Electric  
One Market Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

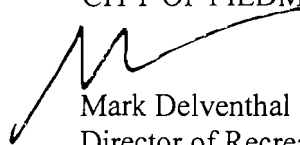
Dear Mr. Devereaux:

I am in receipt of your letter of May 6, 2010 regarding the installation of SmartMeters on various properties owned by the City of Piedmont. Please refrain from any such installations on any city properties until further notice.

This letter is to request that you or a representative from PGE appear before the Piedmont City Council in order to provide a full report and explanation regarding any installations on City of Piedmont properties, public or privately owned. As you might imagine, with the myriad of problems being reported with SmartMeters and the information provided at your press conference of May 10, 2010, we are concerned with any such installations.

The Piedmont City Council meets the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at Piedmont City Hall, 120 Vista Avenue, Piedmont at 7:30pm. I look forward to hearing from you in order to schedule this matter for our City Council agenda as soon as possible.

CITY OF PIEDMONT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Delventhal", is written over the printed name.

Mark Delventhal  
Director of Recreation/Buildings

cc City Administrator  
Department Heads  
Kevin Jackson

May 06, 2010

CITY OF PIEDMONT  
358 HILLSIDE AVE  
PIEDMONT, CA 94611

Re: Account ID 3201377020

Dear CITY OF PIEDMONT:

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is excited to inform you that we'll soon be installing SmartMeter™ technology on gas and electric meters in your area. PG&E's SmartMeter™ program will empower you to take greater control of your energy consumption, use less energy, and save money.

In the next several weeks, PG&E or our authorized representative (Wellington Energy) will upgrade meter(s) listed on page two for the account shown above. Here's what you can expect when we stop by:

- Your meter upgrade will only take place during regular business hours (Monday - Saturday).
- We'll attempt to make contact with someone on site before starting the work.
- It is not necessary that someone be present as long as we have access to the meter(s).
- If no one is present, we'll leave a note following our visit.
- Installation is simple and quick. We will replace the existing electric meter with a digital electric meter, and add a small module to the gas meter.

With SmartMeter™ automated meter-reading technology, you will no longer have to wait for a monthly bill to know how much energy you use. Once your meter can be read remotely by the SmartMeter™ system, you will be able to log on to [www.pge.com/myaccount](http://www.pge.com/myaccount) to see and track your hourly electric and daily gas energy use up to the previous day. Until then a PG&E meter reader will continue to read your meter on a monthly basis just as they do now. In the coming months, PG&E will be sending you more information about these, and other benefits, as they become available to you.

Utilities throughout the nation and around the world are using SmartMeter™ technology with great success. At the end of 2009, over 76 million advanced metering devices will be deployed world-wide, and that number is expected to double by 2013. In the long run, the SmartMeter™ program is expected to benefit our environment by decreasing demand on the power grid, better utilizing renewable energy sources and reducing the need for additional fossil-fuel power plants.

We've enclosed more information about how you can use SmartMeter™ technology to better manage your energy use and costs, and how the program can benefit you in the future. If you have questions about the SmartMeter™ program, or would like to learn more, visit [www.pge.com/smartmeter](http://www.pge.com/smartmeter), or call us at 1-866-743-0263.

Sincerely,



William F. Devereaux  
SmartMeter™ Program, Senior Director  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

MIACOMGE

Para más información o para solicitar estas materias en español, por favor llamar a 1-800-660-6789, o ir a [pge.com/espanol](http://pge.com/espanol).

欲知詳情或索取中文相關資料，請撥1-800-893-9555或上網[pge.com/chinese](http://pge.com/chinese)。

SmartMeter™ is a trademark of SmartSynch, Inc. and is used by permission. "PG&E" refers to Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of PG&E Corporation. ©2010 Pacific Gas and Electric Company. All rights reserved. 30% Post-Consumer Waste

62-1571 (12/09)

State Capitol, Room 313  
 Sacramento, CA 95814-4900  
 TEL (916) 651-4016  
 FAX (916) 327-5989

District Offices  
 1800 30th Street, # 350  
 Bakersfield, CA 93301  
 TEL (661) 395-2620  
 FAX (661) 395-2622

2550 Mariposa Mall, #2016  
 Fresno, CA 93721  
 TEL (559) 264-3070  
 FAX (559) 445-6506

SENATOR.FLOREZ@SEN.CA.GOV

WWW.SEN.CA.GOV/FLOREZ

# California State Senate

## SENATOR DEAN FLOREZ MAJORITY LEADER

REPRESENTING KERN, KINGS, FRESNO, AND TULARE COUNTIES



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May 18, 2010

Mr. Michael Peevey  
 President  
 California Public Utilities Commission  
 505 Van Ness Avenue  
 San Francisco, CA 94102  
 FAX 415-703-5091

Dear Commissioner Peevey:

The Senate Select Committee on the Smart Grid conducted its inaugural hearing late last month focusing on billing deficiencies associated with Advance Meter Infrastructure (AMI) systems. During the hearing, several items came to light that I would like to bring to your attention.

In particular, serious concerns over the level of California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) oversight of the AMI project implementation were raised during the hearing. This includes the observation that the CPUC's oversight is overly dependent on a customer-complaint driven process as opposed to implementing a proactive approach that relies on auditing and data gathering to identify problem areas. The fact that the CPUC is wholly unaware of smart meter customer complaints lodged directly with utility companies – since this information is not required to be provided to the Commission – further limits the Commission's ability to perform a meaningful oversight function.

Furthermore, the reporting requirements for each of the investor owned utilities (IOUs) appear to be substantially inconsistent. Whereas Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) is required to submit semi-annual and monthly written reports to the CPUC, Southern California Edison (SCE) for example reported that they are simply required to have regular meetings with CPUC staff.

There also seems to be little, if any, action taken by the CPUC in response to the data provided in existing AMI progress reports. For example, while PG&E has explicitly stated that they are experiencing an increase in "electric meter failures" in their last semi-annual report to the Commission, there is no indication that any substantive action to address this situation has been required or acted upon by the CPUC.

And, subsequent to the hearing, we also learned, through the media, how PG&E's bill estimation practices, commonly known as "true-ups," may have resulted in exceptionally high electricity bills



for Bakersfield customers due to smart meter communication problems and errors. This practice also raises a number of public policy issues which I would appreciate addressed by the CPUC.

As a result of the testimony taken at the hearing, as well as the subsequent media report mentioned above, I respectfully request that the CPUC consider and immediately act upon the policies and proposals outlined below:

#### Reporting

1. Require the CPUC to develop a uniform set of data that must be filed by each IOU implementing smart meters. The data should minimally include, but not be limited to, information that reveals the true extent of failures and errors in the smart meter system, such as meter failures, network failures, installer errors, failures in communication and billing failures and errors. This data will help to identify problem areas and provide a basis to compare systems implementation among the IOUs. This information should be made publicly available on a monthly basis.
2. Require each IOU to separately report monthly the number and percentage of bills where insufficient data was collected that resulted in an estimated bill. The information should also include the number and percentage of utility bill overestimations and underestimations as well as the reason for the estimation.
3. Require each IOU to separately report the number and percentage of customers whose power was terminated/shut off using the smart meter remote shut-off function.

#### Customer Complaints

1. Require each utility to provide notice to the Commission of every customer complaint associated with smart meters it has received to date and on an ongoing basis. This information should include the name and address of the complainant as well as the number, type and resolution of complaints filed with the utility. This information should be filed on a monthly basis and cumulative information should be made publicly available.
2. Require each utility to create an effective customer feedback loop. This could include requiring each IOU to send a quarterly smart meter satisfaction survey to all customers to collect and gauge complaints, customer concerns and technological problems that they may be experiencing with their smart meter.
3. Require the CPUC to create a standard for resolving smart meter customer complaints. This could include requiring that complaints be resolved within three working days and that meters in question be tested within 48-hours of receiving a request.
4. Require the CPUC to conduct an audit of smart meter related customer complaints to ensure that customer concerns have been satisfactorily addressed by the utilities according to CPUC established standards. Such an audit should review no-less than fifteen percent of the complaints received by a given utility.

#### Estimation Practices

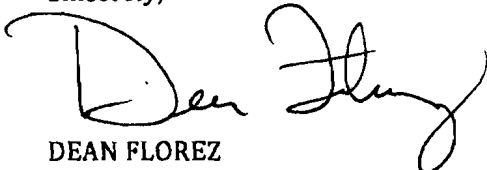
1. Require the CPUC to conduct a quarterly audit of all estimated bills to ensure that utilities are not violating their respective tariff. This is especially important in the case of PG&E which has a pattern and practice of violating its tariff. In fact, during the hearing PG&E Senior Vice President Helen Burt testified that it is possible that PG&E has regularly estimated bills for three months in a row.

2. Re-write existing tariffs to limit a utility's ability to collect undercharges on estimated bills, from the current three month to only one month. A basic tenet of installing smart meters was to provide consumers with a higher level of meter reading accuracy and thus provide consumers with a regular and reliable stream of data so that they can modify their energy use. A meter that consistently fails to provide data to the customer defeats the purpose of the smart meter. Given the regularity of data produced by smart meters, utilities should have the ability to identify data collection problems immediately and can - and should - take action immediately, such as employing a manual meter reader in order to create an accurate bill. It seems unreasonable to allow utilities to continue to estimate bills for up to three months in most cases.
3. Require utilities which produce estimated bills because of communication and other failures to provide customers with a digital in home device that will allow consumers to independently verify their electricity usage.
4. Require that estimated bills be clearly marked and allow consumers the option of not paying an estimated bill until a true reading is verified.

It is important that the CPUC, as the regulating agency, work to restore consumer confidence in light of the systematic deficiencies discovered in PG&E's smart meter program. Immediate action on the reforms proposed above will help to address a number of the oversight challenges that were identified during the hearing.

I would be interested in hearing your thoughts and response to this information. Again, given the testimony that was taken at the hearing, I think that these reforms are so necessary that inaction in their implementation could prompt a larger discussion about changes in our laws to ensure that smart meter implementation is done so in a manner that benefits and protects consumers. I would appreciate your response to this letter by Tuesday, May 25, 2010.

Sincerely,



DEAN FLOREZ  
Senate Majority Leader, 16<sup>th</sup> District

CC: PG&E, SCE, SDGE  
General Public

ENERGY SF Chron 05-31-10

# SmartMeters' problems, and how to fix them

By David R. Baker

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

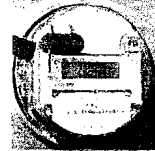
Faulty calibration. A component that shakes loose. Software that accidentally reboots.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. has found a number of reasons why almost 45,000 of its SmartMeters haven't worked as planned.

Since last summer, California's largest utility has faced a customer uprising over the meters, which were designed to measure power use with precision and wirelessly transmit their data to PG&E.

Angry homeowners have accused the meters of gross inaccuracy, blaming them for monthly bills that in some cases doubled without warning. California energy regulators have launched an independent investigation, expected to last four to six

*PG&E continues on A9*



## Where to call

If you want to register a complaint about your SmartMeter, contact:

**PG&E:** Customer service at (800) 743-5000

**State:** California Public Utilities Commission at (800) 649-7570

**Online:** [links.sfgate.com/ZJTJ](http://links.sfgate.com/ZJTJ)

## FROM THE COVER

# SmartMeters' problems,

PG&E from page A1

months, that will subject the devices to a battery of tests in the field and in the lab. About 5.7 million have been installed so far.

PG&E insists that most of the soaring bills blamed on SmartMeters were actually caused by high electricity rates and heat waves. However, the company's internal investigation has found several recurring problems with the meters and their installation. PG&E's findings so far don't explain every customer complaint about SmartMeters, and there remain a handful of meters spotted by PG&E that failed for reasons the utility doesn't yet understand. All of the problems identified to date can be easily fixed, says PG&E.

The Chronicle spoke at length with Helen Burt, PG&E's chief customer officer, and Bill Devereaux, senior director of the SmartMeter program, about those problems and their solutions. Two of the companies that make SmartMeters or their components — Landis+Gyr and Silver Spring Networks — also supplied information for this story.

## Problem: installation errors

(Number of meters affected: 23,200)

The most common SmartMeter problem boils down to human error. Or rather, several different errors, most involving meters that measure natural gas usage.

PG&E SmartMeters that record electricity use are entirely new devices that replace old, analog predecessors. Gas SmartMeters, in contrast, are small modules that installers attach to existing gas meters to record and relay data.

PG&E found about 14,000 modules that weren't attached tightly enough to their meters. While that sounds like a minor issue, it caused a magnet inside each module to be jarred loose. Those modules registered no gas usage at all, Burt said.

"What happened is the customer would be billed zero," she said.

PG&E replaced the modules and worked with the company that made them, Aclara RF Systems, to change its manufacturing processes, Burt said.



Rich Pedroncelli / Associated Press

## PG&E senior vice president Helen Burt answers state senators' questions about the SmartMeter program in April in Sacramento.

Gary Moore, president of Aclara RF Systems, disputed that account, saying, "We have not made any changes to those modules. We haven't had any incidents reported to us saying a magnet was falling out." PG&E, however, stands by Burt's comments.

Other gas modules — about 6,300 — weren't properly calibrated to work with their meters. As a result, they either doubled the apparent usage or cut it in half. Fixing the problem requires sending a technician to the customer's home or business to recalibrate the module.

One type of installation error affects SmartMeters that measure electricity.

SmartMeters for homes record electricity use once an hour, while those for businesses record once every 15 minutes. But in roughly 2,900 cases, workers installed the wrong kind, giving homeowners meters meant for businesses or vice versa. Putting the wrong meter on an account can confuse PG&E's computer system. Burt said that problem could affect customer bills, although she wasn't aware of any specific cases in which that happened.

The solution: Have the correct meter installed.

## Problem: data storage

(Number of meters affected: 12,736)

In some meters, a software glitch causes the component that stores energy-use data to reboot itself occasionally, losing some but not all of the data in the process. Not every customer who experiences this problem will notice it.

"It's not damaging to customers, because it would actually cause them to be billed for slightly less than they used," Burt said.

To fix it, PG&E installs a software patch, much like the ones your computer regularly downloads from the Internet. The company has installed the patch in all meters that are awaiting installation, Devereaux said.

## Problem: communication failures

(Number of meters affected: 9,000)

SmartMeters operate as a network, not as isolated machines.

They send their data to PG&E through "access points," receivers typically placed on telephone poles. While some meters contact the access points directly, most transmit their data to other meters nearby, the information taking several "hops" before it finally reaches a meter communicating with an

# solutions

access point.

That system works for the vast majority of meters. But in some cases, meters have had trouble reaching the network, or reaching it on a regular basis. Customers may receive estimated bills as a result.

The meters may be located in an area where PG&E has just started installing SmartMeters and there aren't yet enough meters and access points nearby for the network to work.

"Then we install more," said Eric Dresselhuys, chief marketing officer for Silver Spring Networks, the Redwood City company that designed the network and makes communications components for the meters. "The problem self-cures as we build out the system."

Or, individual meters may be located in rooms with poor wireless reception. Moving the meter can solve the problem. So can connecting it to an antenna that leads outside the room.

"To my knowledge, we've never drilled through someone's home or dismantled a house," Dresselhuys said.

## **Problem: measurement errors**

(Number of meters affected: 9)

For all the complaints PG&E has received about inaccurate SmartMeters, Burt and Devereaux say the company has only found nine that don't measure energy use correctly.

All are electric meters. Three of them undercounted energy usage, six of them overcounted. PG&E still doesn't know why they failed.

"There doesn't seem to be a common thread at all," Burt said.

The company will ask the Structure Group, a consulting firm hired by the California Public Utilities Commission to investigate SmartMeters, to perform an "autopsy" on the defective devices. Landis+Gyr, one of the companies that makes SmartMeters, is already trying to figure out why one of its meters failed.

"We take this matter seriously given that, to date, we have delivered more than 2.5 million leading-edge smart meters to a wide variety of North American utilities without client complaint," said Stan March, the company's senior vice president of corporate communications.

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*E-mail David R. Baker at  
dbaker@sfgchronicle.com.*

Newslanion 05/14/10

# SmartMeter program takes new hit

PG&E admits it has done a poor job responding to complaints, vows to improve customer service

By Dana Hull

danhull@mercurypress.com

After earlier insisting that only "a few" customers with its new SmartMeters received inaccurate utility bills, PG&E acknowledged Monday that the number may be as high as 23,000.

PG&E couldn't say how many of those customers were overcharged.

faith in our SmartMeter program, and frankly in PG&E," said senior vice president Helen Burt, the chief customer officer. "Restoring this trust is absolutely critical to us."

But State Senate Majority Leader Dean Florez, D-Shafter, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on the Smart Grid, characterized the utility's latest disclosures as "more a slow crawl toward the truth than anything else."

Florez, in a news release, complained that it took a directive from the California Public Utilities Commission, which has launched an independent probe of the SmartMeter program, to force PG&E to release what he described as "very basic" information.

"And there is still the unanswered question as to why so many customers have seen a spike in recorded energy usage following the installation of a SmartMeter in their residence," he said.

PG&E has installed 5.5 million SmartMeters throughout Northern California and continues to install about 10,000 a day. But hundreds of customers who already have the digital meters at their homes have complained of skyrocketing gas and electric bills, leading to widespread suspicions that the meters either malfunction or are used to intentionally overcharge.

After months of insisting that there were no problems with the meters and that high bills could be

See METERS, Page 7

Montelarian

FRIDAY, MAY 14, 2010

## Meters

From Page 1

traced to rate hikes or increased air conditioning use during the hot summer months, PG&E last month acknowledged some technical glitches with the program under questioning from state legislators.

On Monday it went a step further, with executives holding a rare news conference at the utility's San Francisco headquarters to publicly release for the first time — under a directive from the PUC — status updates on the SmartMeter program that it files every month with state regulators.

The executives announced efforts to improve customer service and answered questions from reporters.

Last month, PG&E detailed 43,376 cases in which the SmartMeters were involved in some kind of problem.

The utility found 23,000 meters that were installed improperly, 11,376 that failed to retain consumer usage information and 9,000 that had trouble connecting with the wireless network.

But it said then that only "a few" customers received inaccurate bills. On Monday, however, Burt disclosed that the 23,000 meters that were installed incorrectly were gas meters, and that the "vast majority" of those customers got inaccurate bills.

In some cases the bills registered half as much gas usage as usual, in some cases twice as much. There were no details as to how many Bay Area customers were affected.

Burt said PG&E is adding 165 customer representatives

to its SmartMeter call center, is revamping a "welcome kit" for consumers and is holding additional community meetings.

Utilities across the country are replacing analog meters with the digital meters, which can be read remotely. As more features are added, the so-called smart meters will be able to give consumers detailed information about their power use, from how much energy their appliances draw to consumer electric usage by the hour and day. They are a key piece of national efforts to upgrade the nation's aging electric grid.

PG&E, which provides gas and electric service to customers from Eureka to Bakersfield, was the first major utility to aggressively adopt the technology and hopes to have 10 million digital meters in place by the end of 2012.

But the consumer backlash, which began in Bakersfield, has roiled the smart grid industry for months, with technology vendors privately complaining that PG&E has badly botched the rollout.

Mark Toney, executive director of the consumer advocacy group TURN, renewed his call for a moratorium on SmartMeters until all of these issues are resolved. PG&E says a moratorium is not necessary.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," Toney said of PG&E's disclosure that up to 23,000 customers have received inaccurate bills. "We never get to the iceberg, but the tip just keeps getting bigger."

Contact Dana Hull at 408-920-2706. Follow her on Twitter at [Twitter.com/danahull](http://Twitter.com/danahull)



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## PG&E ISSUES APOLOGY FOR SMARTMETER PROBLEMS

by Bay City News Service, *Danville Express*  
May 11th, 2010

PG&E on Monday issued an apology along with 45 reports dating back to August 2006 detailing reviews, monitoring, testing, and corrections identified in the company's SmartMeter program.

"While 99 percent of our SmartMeter devices are installed and working properly, we recognize that even having less than 1 percent of meters with issues is still 50,000 customers, and that's too many," said Helen Burt, senior vice president and chief customer officer of the San Francisco-based utility that serves much of Northern and Central California. "We pledge to address customer service issues better than we have been, more quickly, and more aggressively."

SmartMeters are advanced utility meters that wirelessly communicate usage information to customers and utility companies. The California Pacific Utilities Commission approved PG&E to install the newer, smarter meters because, they said, the meters would give customers detailed information about their own energy usage, encouraging them to cut down.

But since PG&E began sporadic installation of the SmartMeters throughout the state in November 2006, the CPUC, PG&E, and various consumer advocacy groups have received numerous complaints about overcharging and other concerns.

Specifically, the CPUC said they have received approximately 600 complaints in PG&E's service area since January 2009, compared to 10 in Edison's service area in Southern California and 15 in the San Diego Gas and Electric Company's service area.

As a result of the complaints - many of which came from consumers in the San Joaquin Valley during the summer of 2009 - and pressure from legislators like Senator Dean Florez, D-Shafter, the CPUC launched an investigation into the company in March of this year.

PG&E spokesman Paul Moreno said the company has received roughly 1,000 complaints, and he also confirmed that there have been some 23,000 cases since 2006 in which a piece of equipment called the "gas module" was incorrectly installed, many of which resulted in an incorrect gas bill.

But Moreno said that nearly all of those situations have been rectified with customers and others preempted. He said the company expects all of their customers to have SmartMeters installed by 2012.

"We're installing about 15,000 per day," he said.

After issuing their apology on Monday, PG&E outlined some of the steps they are taking to address consumer complaints, including expanding testing, increasing the number of customer service "answer centers" and adding more customer service representatives, among others.

But Mindy Spatt, spokeswoman for the consumer advocacy group The Utility Reform Network, said the company should stop installing the meters altogether until the CPUC has completed their investigation.

The CPUC stated that it nixed the moratorium idea because the number of complaints compared to the total number of installations doesn't validate it. "There are millions of SmartMeters operating around the globe with no complaints," it said.

In the meantime, customers like Larry Chang, who is a small business owner in Oakland, have decided to refuse the SmartMeters by posting signage on their meters.

## TURN IN THE NEWS

**Man Refuses SmartMeter Installation VIDEO:** A Sacramento area man refuses to let PG&E install a Smart Meter on his house. PG&E changes its tune and says if you absolutely refuse a SmartMeter, your power will not be shut off. Mark Toney tells KCRA news that PG&E needs to get its act together.

**PG&E Apologizes for Flawed Meters** KCBS reports after an initial denial of any problems. PG&E now admits as many as 23,000 customers have seen inflated bills stemming from the smart meter.

**PG&E reports discuss SmartMeter problems** TURN continues calls for a smart meter moratorium, asks "How much worse does it have to get before the CPUC will do something?"

[More TURN In the News >>](#)

## EDITORIALS

**Vote no on misleading Proposition 16** An editorial board member writes that she opposes Prop 16 because it is bad for democracy and bad for California.

**PD Editorial: No on Proposition 16** PG&E has so far spent \$35 million on this campaign — one large bet that California voters won't do their homework. We believe it's a losing gamble. The Press Democrat strongly recommends a no vote on Proposition 16.

**Right Call By Senate on Tainted Commissioner** Mark Toney's message about TURN's victory for consumers in persuading the California Senate to reject the nomination of AT&T-backed Commissioner Rachelle Chong.

[More Editorials >>](#)

Chang said the company has not provided enough information about the benefits to the customers to warrant the installations. Although the company has touted that the technology will allow customers to track their energy usage, Chang said he would have to buy all new "Smart" appliances if he really wants to use SmartMeters as a personal energy auditing system.

Chang was one of 50 community members in Oakland who agreed to refuse SmartMeter installations in a neighborhood meeting focused on the potential benefits and detriments of the technology held last Tuesday. He plans to keep a sign on his old utility meter that reads "Don't even think about installing a 'SmartMeter' here," until PG&E caves.

"If I could find a way to get off of PG&E Service, I might very well do that at some point," said Chang.

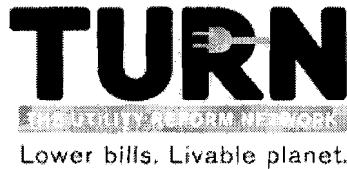
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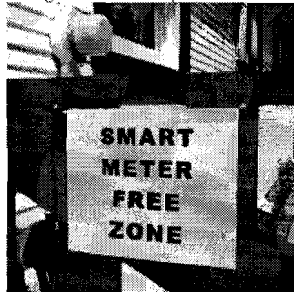
ACTION

Home » Issues » Smart Meters

## SMART METER BOYCOTT: DO'S AND DON'TS

How to Boycott Smart Meters Until the CPUC Investigation is Complete

- File a complaint with the CA Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the regulatory agency that oversees your utility issues.
- Put a sign on your meter telling PG&E you do not want a Smart Meter installed. If a worker comes to install a meter, tell them you do not want one installed until the CPUC investigation is complete. In most cases, installation workers have respected these actions. However, if they insist on installing a meter, there is nothing more you can do to stop them. Please notify us if they install a Smart Meter against your wishes.
- If other neighbors on your block do not have a smart meter yet, organize your neighbors to do the same and become a Smart Meter Free Zone!
- At least once a month, take a picture of your meter reading and mark the date and time. It is quite possible that PG&E may send you an estimated bill. If they overestimate your bill you will have proof of your actual usage. If PG&E threatens to shut off your power, file a complaint with the CPUC and contact TURN's consumer hotline immediately at 1-800-355-8876.



PG&E has publicly stated that they will **not** shut off power to customers boycotting the Smart Meter installations. It is more likely that they will begin to estimate your usage, which will be noted on your bill. If they underestimate your bill, be aware that PG&E could charge you for any 'past usage' for an indefinite period of time. You should save up to pay for any underestimates and contact PG&E.

We cannot assure you that PG&E will not try to shut off your power for boycotting a Smart Meter installation. However, based on our reading of their terms of service, we don't see a specific basis for PG&E cutting off your power.

**Sign Up to support the Smart Meter Boycott, to start a Smart Meter Boycott in your neighborhood and to stay informed about TURN's fight against PG&E's outrageous Smart Meters.**

First Name

Last Name

Email\*

Zip/Postal Code\*



Contact Kori Chen, Community Organizer, at 1-800-355-8876 or [kchen@turn.org](mailto:kchen@turn.org) for more info on forming a Smart Meter Free Zone!

Download a Smart Meter Free Zone Sign

## ISSUES

VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 15

SMART METERS

ENERGY

GREEN MATTERS

TELECOM

LEGISLATION

## TAKE ACTION

**Stop Outrageous Smart Meter Bills!**  
Instead of lower their energy bills, smart meter customers are seeing higher energy use and skyrocketing bills. Sign TURN's petition demanding accountability from PG&E and a moratorium on smart meters.

## CONSUMER TOOLS

**Smart Meter Boycott: Do's and Don'ts**  
Many of you have asked us what will happen if you ask PG&E to postpone installing a smart meter until the CPUC investigation is complete. Here is our advice, and please call our organizer Kori Chen to form a Smart Meter Free Zone in your neighborhood.

**Addressing the PG&E Smart Meter Crisis**  
Customer Complaints About Smart Meters Must Be Heard.

## TURN IN THE NEWS

**Man Refuses SmartMeter Installation**  
VIDEO: A Sacramento area man refuses to let PG&E install a Smart Meter on his house. PG&E changes its tune and says if you absolutely refuse a SmartMeter, your power will not be shut off. Mark Toney tells KCRA news that PG&E needs to get its act together.

**PG&E reports discuss SmartMeter problems**  
TURN continues calls for a smart meter moratorium, asks "How much worse does it have to get before the CPUC will do something?"

**PG&E issues apology for SmartMeter problems**  
PG&E apologizes for installing 50,000 broken smart meters, but hasn't identified the cause of most complaints and continues to install 15,000 per day.

More TURN In the News >>

## NEWS

Some 'Smart Meters' Failed to Transmit

**SMART METER**



**FREE ZONE**

[www.turn.org](http://www.turn.org)

Download a Do Not Install sign to hang on your traditional meter

Do Not install the smart meter!



For more information, please visit our website at [www.turn.org](http://www.turn.org).  
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**Information, PG&E Says**  
 PG&E said some of its 'smart' meters failed to transmit data, resulting in customers receiving estimated bills

**CPUC Selects Independent Evaluator For PG&E Smart Meters**  
 In response to TURN's demands and customer outrage, the CPUC has selected an independent evaluator for PG&E's suspect smart meters.

**Consumer Watchdog Senator Dean Florez Establishes Select Committee; Promises Answers On PG&E SMART METERS**  
 Senator Dean Florez promises oversight and accountability for smart grid.

**BLOG**

**Lois Henry observes that PG&E needs to get SmartMeter story straight**  
 Lois Henry has another great column in the Bakersfield Californian about the ongoing PG&E smart meter debacle.

**Sac Bee Editorial takes an early stand against PG&E power grab**  
 It is unusual for The Bee to come out against a ballot measure before the campaign has really started. The PG&E initiative deserves special attention. It's that bad.

**TURN BLOG**

**Smartmeters need further testing**  
 Letter from a Milpitas resident asking that the CPUC stop smart meter installations until complaints and issues are resolved.

**Rate Relief PG&E Style**  
 Apparently PG&E spells relief HIGHER BILLS. Real relief is lower rates.

**VIDEO: 'Smart Grid' may be vulnerable to hackers**  
 A cyber-security firm showed CNN how a hacker to cripple the grid with \$500 of equipment.

More TURN Blog >>

**BACKGROUNDERS**

**SMART METERS: A DUMB IDEA**  
 TURN explains "smart meters" with a brief fact sheet

**CONTACT US**

Press: [turn@turn.org](mailto:turn@turn.org) Membership: [membership@turn.org](mailto:membership@turn.org) Consumer Hotline: [consumerhotline@turn.org](mailto:consumerhotline@turn.org)





Home » Issues » Green Matters

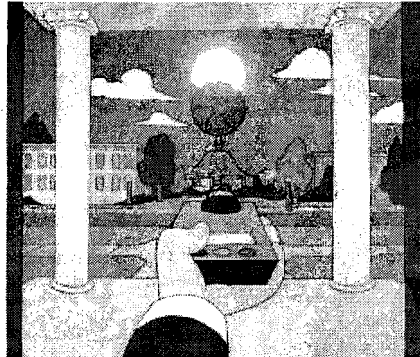
**SMART METERS: A DUMB IDEA**

**What are "smart meters" and how do they work?**

Smart meters are expensive devices that allow electric companies to track and control electricity usage in an individual household. Consumers are skeptical that they are worth the \$5.4 billion California utilities are charging for them.

**Are the meters supposed to save electricity?**

No. Smart meters merely track electric usage, just like their older, dumber predecessors. Consumers who purchase additional devices can receive detailed information on the energy costs of individual appliances. Utilities will encourage customers to sign up for high "time of use" rates in order to reduce peak demand.



**What additional expenditures will be required on the consumer end?**

Existing air conditioning cycling programs, energy efficiency measures and consumer education programs are the most direct way to reduce demand for electricity, especially during peak times. Consumers who take advantage of existing programs can already lower their bills and carbon footprint substantially.

**What additional expenditures will be required on the consumer end?**

In order to get the purported benefits of smart meters, consumers will purchase their own communications devices, computers, high speed internet, special thermostats, appliance chips and other automated equipment. The cost of retrofitting or replacing existing appliances alone will be astronomical.

Without the expenditures, consumers will not see any difference from the new meters except higher electric bills.

**Why are so many consumers complaining about smart meters?**

Many consumers believe the meters are inaccurate, or that their usage data is not being transmitted correctly. Due to the hundreds of complaints TURN and others have received about smart meters, the CPUC recently launched an investigation. TURN is demanding a moratorium on smart meter installations until the investigation is complete.

**What other problems are associated with smart meters?**

- Elimination of meter reader jobs.
- Allows utilities — or hackers — to shut customers off remotely.
- Risk of private data being lost, stolen or accessed.

**What consumer protections are needed?**

- Privacy protections to prevent loss, theft or misuse of customer data.
- Moratorium until CPUC investigation is completed.
- Allow customers to opt-out.
- Provide rebates and energy efficiency assistance to consumer whose bills have increased due to smart meters.

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**GREEN MATTERS**

SAVE MONEY AND THE PLANET

**TAKE ACTION**

Just say NO to PG&E's high rates. PG&E currently has proposals for \$6 billion in new rate hikes pending at the CPUC. Do you think PG&E's rates are too high already? Mark your calendar to speak out against PG&E's unfair rate hikes.

**CONSUMER TOOLS**

PG&E Cashing in on Climate Change. ClimateSmart isn't a smart investment. TURN urges the CPUC to ask PG&E to use the remaining funds to purchase carbon offsets and abandon its failed marketing campaign.

CFLs: Good Green or Utility Greenwash? Will the last person to leave California please turn off the energy efficient lights?

**TURN IN THE NEWS**

Capitol fight erupts over renewable energy. TURN's Matt Freeman tells Capitol Weekly how to make renewable energy and the green economy work.

California Cash For Appliance Program To Begin. VIDEO: TURN's Mindy Spatt tells CBS news that the California cash rebates for appliances aren't as customer-friendly as they seem.

California's New Bill Boosts Solar Net-Metering For Consumers. An explanation of the solar bill recently passed in California with quotes from TURN attorney Matt Freedman.

More TURN in the News >>

**BLOG**

California Voters to Choose: PG&E and Refineries or Clean Energy and the Climate. Mike Sandier, Co-founder of the Climate Protection Campaign, writes about PG&E's ballot initiative to lock PG&E's high rates into the California Constitution by locking out public power and community choice.

**BACKGROUNDERS**

SMART METERS: A DUMB IDEA. TURN explains "smart meters" with a brief fact

Correspondence - PG&E Presentation Regarding Smart Meters - 06/21/10

**RECEIVED**

MAY 21 2010

CITY CLERK  
CITY OF PIEDMONT

To: Mayors and City Council members of Alameda County  
From: Alameda County Residents Concerned About Smart Meters (ACRCASM)  
Re: a moratorium on PGE Smartmeter installation

This memo is to inform you that petitions addressed to California Public Utilities Commissioners, Alameda County Supervisors, Berkeley City Council members, Assembly member Nancy Skinner, State Senator Loni Hancock, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger are being distributed.

These petitions express the following concerns about PGE Smartmeters: inordinate billing increases, health problems due to radio frequency radiation, interference with medical appliances, diminished residence security owing to meter vulnerability to hackers, diminished national security from electric grid vulnerability, and inadequate privacy safeguards. We are particularly concerned that we don't have a choice to opt out of the new meters based on personal concerns.

We are petitioning for a moratorium on Smartmeter installation until the problems and resident concerns over these meters can be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties. We also want an opt out option.

Over <sup>500</sup>~~300~~ Alameda County residents have signed the petition thus far, either on paper or online. You may read online signatures and comments by going to this url: <http://www.petitiononline.com/Smart/>

Original signatures and comments on paper petitions are available to any recipient who informs us via telephone request or mail that you wish to see them: 510-595-5575.

ACRCASM and the petition signatories want to know what will be done about the Smartmeter problem and when. Please inform us how soon we may expect a reply.

We would also appreciate advice about how else we may accomplish our goals of achieving a PGE Smartmeter investigation, moratorium, and an opt-out option.

Sincerely, *Phoebe Sorgen* *Kathleen Bernier*  
*Stan Kottmeier* *Lynthea Johnson*  
ACRCASM *Jim Brown*  
Alameda County Residents Concerned About Smart Meters *Stephanie Thomas*  
PO Box 2, Berkeley, CA 94701

## Are Smart Meters Smart?

Smart meter technology is rolling out in California and throughout much of the world. Lampposts, buildings, and telephone poles will host the wireless repeater infrastructure to serve the new wireless Smart Meters, which will be installed on every home and business. These devices will add yet another layer of radio frequencies (RF) to our homes and environment and will emit RF signals throughout the day and night.

The FCC safety standards for wireless devices are based on short term heating and do not address the non thermal health effects which are documented in the [Bioinitiative Report](#), which has been recognized by the European Parliament. RF is under investigation as a carcinogen by the [National Toxicology Program](#).

There are a number of additional reasons to oppose smart meter technology aside from the public health issues and it's use by utilities to overcharge customers, discussed at the [TURN website](#). These include Big Brother-like questions regarding local utilities monitoring one's use of home appliances and making adjustments in this use without the consent of their consumers, and national security issues that arise because wireless networks are easier to hack into and compromise than their conventional wired counterparts.

In the interest of protecting public health and in light of the call for the precautionary principle from scientists and environmental agencies, the EMF Safety Network has started petitions asking for public hearings of the PG&E Smart Meters. We ask they require PGE to submit a characterization study, the "health and safety study (provided here: [\\*PGE Safety Report](#)) to allow customers to "opt out" and request a moratorium to allow time for public review.

Learn more about Smart Meters in this Southern California Edison briefing by expert Cindy Sage: [What You Need To Know About Smart Meters](#)

On April 6, on behalf of the EMF Safety Network, Sandi Maurer filed a petition for modification with the California Public Utilities Commission. See this document here: [Smart Meter CPUC petition 6-Apr-10](#)

**SEND OPT-OUT letters to CPUC (click on your utility group)**

Pacific Gas and Electric PG&E