



## The Idaho Observer

# Smart Meters And The Current Battle Between Electric Utility Companies And Their Customers

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Last year I became acutely aware of our electric utility 'cooperative' switching out our analog meter for a digital meter. I had heard horror stories across the country regarding the new meters and had done a bit of investigation into the issue on my own. I decided to purchase 100 smart meter brochures from StopSmartMeters.org entitled, "Smart" Utility Meters: Are They Smart for You? I shared these brochures with family and friends to raise awareness of this issue.

On July 4, 2014 was the day I sent our electric cooperative the first lawful Notice that I will not be consenting to the placement of a smart meter on our house or property. Less than a week later I received a letter from the President of the Board of Directors assuring me that the meters they are installing are not radio frequency transmitters and are not very smart. He explained that they are power line carrier (PLC) devices and are not transmitting data through the air or WiFi.

Not knowing enough about the issue and having a fairly busy life of my own, I put the issue on the back burner until April 2015 when I was told about a meeting at a woman's home who had ES (Electro- Sensitivity.) At the meeting she revealed that our electric cooperative had installed a new digital meter at her home in August 2014 and she could feel the change immediately. She had to call the company and have them remove it due to her ES. I soon learned that in remote areas that do not have reliable cellphone coverage, they are using the powerlines for transmitting data on energy consumption at 5-17 minute intervals. These PLC meters are actually quite smart as one cooperative member revealed at the last board meeting. He brought a screen shot from his computer revealing that the chip in the new digital PLC meter had shown up as interfacing with his computer. I also learned that the company providing these meters to our electric cooperative is the 'pioneer' in smart meter technology so it was clear to me that I had been lied to and that the President of the Board of Directors was lying to the membership at their annual meeting when he stated publicly that the new meters weren't very smart and should actually be called dumb meters!

The following information is being shared with The Sovereign readership to raise awareness of the growing level of ElectroSmog we are being exposed to daily and why your home may no longer be a safe haven.

### Why Stop Smart Meters?

Electric utilities across the country are installing so-called 'smart' meters. As a result, bills are skyrocketing, health effects and safety violations are being reported, and privacy in our homes is being violated. Do we really need wireless or PLC smart meters?

**What is a Smart Meter?** According to the Bonneville Power Administration, a Smart Meter is an electronic device that records consumption of electric energy in intervals of an hour or less and communicates that information back to the utility for monitoring and billing purposes. Smart Meters enable two-way communication between the meter and the central system. Smart Meters are known to emit RF microwave radiation and dirty electricity linked with health and environmental problems. They also allow utilities, third parties and governments access to precise information about your private life.

**Do you want an accurate, reasonably priced utility bill?** Utility customers have noticed huge increases in their bill after a Smart Meter is installed – in some cases hundreds of dollars more than usual. Utilities claim the meters are accurate, but unexplained over-billing has been featured in many negative reports, all around the US.

**Do you value your health, and the health of your family and friends?** Just as we're learning that cell phones cause brain tumors, why are we installing the same technology on everyone's homes, often with no right to opt out? Thousands of people have complained of tinnitus, headaches, nausea, sleeplessness, heart arrhythmia, and other symptoms after a 'smart' meter was installed. Wireless technology is a public health hazard. Smart meters can violate already high FCC limits on human exposure to microwave radiation, and are being installed even as people are developing ES. There are also reports of 'smart' meter interference with pacemakers and other implants. A Power Line Carrier (PLC) digital meter is also a smart meter but uses existing power lines and household wiring for communication. An unintended consequence of these systems is that they turn the power lines into antennas that radiate into homes from the outside, and also from the wires within a home.

**Do you value your right to privacy?** When a Smart Meter is installed, your utility has access to a treasure trove of information about your electricity usage, compromising your privacy. Depending on the regulatory protections – and enforcement of those rules – in your state, they will be able to sell this information to a series of corporations and the government. The ACLU in Vermont and Hawaii have both condemned the lack of consumer privacy protection.

**Do you care about wildlife?** Smart meters do not result in energy savings, according to Reuters. They may even increase energy consumption. There is also emerging evidence that wireless, non-ionizing radiation (from cell phones, WiFi, and Smart Meters) harms wildlife and damages trees. There have been direct reports of Smart Meters affecting vital bee populations and disturbing bird habitat.

**Are you concerned about job losses in this anemic economy?** In California, PG&E claims that they are retaining 80% of their meter readers. What they don't tell you is that several years back, they transitioned their meter readers from full time to temporary so the job loss would not appear so drastic. Utilities look upon smart meters as an easy way to boost profits by cutting jobs. We cannot afford to lose thousands of jobs in this economy.

**Are you in favor of fire regulations that put the safety of people first?** At least hundreds of electrical fires, explosions, and other electrical hazards have been caused by Smart Meters. Most Smart Meters are not UL certified, as is required by the electrical code for all electric appliances within the home. Smart Meters are potential ignition sources and remove utility personnel from neighborhoods. If meter readers had been present in San Bruno, California, would the gas leak have been detected in time to prevent the destruction of the neighborhood? Several whistleblowers have reported unsafe installations of Smart Meters.

**Are you alarmed about the rise of the corporatocracy and our inability to make informed decisions affecting our lives?** The conversion to Smart Meters is one of the largest technology roll-outs in history, and yet virtually no public consultation with ratepayers or local governments was carried out in advance. Public Utilities Commissions, appointed (non-elected) bodies who are charged with regulating utility companies, have ignored popular local opposition for years. The Idaho Public Utilities Commission actually went so far as to declare Idaho a no opt-out state. The California Public Utilities Commission finally and belatedly produced an opt-out in early 2012 that costs PG&E customers hundreds of dollars just to avoid a recognized possible carcinogen. Around the world utility companies continue to install smart meters, often without public awareness or consent.

We want to encourage readers to get involved by going to StopSmartMeters.org and locating a group in your state. If a group doesn't exist, consider forming one. To access more documentation of the previous statements, access the below references.

References: [StopSmartMeters.org/why-stop-smart-meters/](http://StopSmartMeters.org/why-stop-smart-meters/)  
[www.eiwellspring.org/plc/PLC\\_antenna\\_effect.htm](http://www.eiwellspring.org/plc/PLC_antenna_effect.htm)  
[www.wi-cancer.info](http://www.wi-cancer.info)  
[www.proliberty.com/observer/20070910.htm](http://www.proliberty.com/observer/20070910.htm)