

A Ratepayer's View of Maryland's Bill of Rights for the Maryland Electric Power Companies that Implement Wireless Metering Systems

This Bill of Rights is an informal attempt to identify, from a ratepayer's perspective, the rights that have been granted to the electric power companies for implementing wireless metering systems in Maryland. Some of these rights have been granted explicitly by specific actions. Other rights have been granted implicitly by inaction. The net effect is a *perfect storm* of trouble for all Maryland residents and businesses and, ironically, for the electric power companies themselves. The sources of these rights are the following:

- actions by the Maryland Public Service Commission
- inaction (so far) by other parts of the Maryland Government, both executive and legislative
- actions by the U.S. Government

Mandates

- The Maryland Government, through the Maryland Public Service Commission, grants the Maryland electric power companies the right to *mandate* the installation of *wireless* metering systems for electricity on, or inside, every home, business, community, and jurisdiction in their service areas, without the consent of those living or working there, and without the consent of their elected representatives at any level of government.
- Implicit in the above right is the right to irradiate every person in those service areas with radiofrequency radiation at microwave frequencies (RF/microwave radiation), throughout the day and the night, every day of the year, forever, from both the installed wireless meters and the community-based transmitters of the electric power companies that communicate with the wireless meters.
- Further, the Maryland Public Service Commission grants the electric power companies the right to enforce these mandates by charging individual ratepayers Opt Out fees if those

ratepayers do not want the predominant type of wireless metering system currently being installed: the Wireless Smart Meter System. The Opt Out fees consist of a one-time fee of \$75, plus a monthly fee, forever, of \$11, \$14, or \$17, depending on the electric power company.

- Even if a given ratepayer pays the individual Opt Out fees, the electric power companies still have the right to mandate the type of replacement meter that the ratepayer must accept, including another type of wireless meter, even if that replacement meter fails to address the ratepayer's concerns about the Wireless Smart Meter System.
- Implicit in the right to charge Opt Out fees is the right to disallow Opt Out requests from at least these customers:
 - anyone who is not a ratepayer, such as
 - a renter of home or office space
 - an employee of a business
 - any individual or business, even if a ratepayer, that cannot afford the fees to Opt Out.
- In sum, the electric power companies are granted the right to treat both individuals and businesses that have the wisdom to Opt Out, as if they, *the customers*, are the problem rather than the electric power companies that insisted on the wireless metering systems that caused the problem in the first place.

Health and Safety

- The electric power companies are excused from any requirement to present, for public review, written documentation showing how they established that the wireless metering systems that they are implementing are safe for the health of humans and animals.
- The electric power companies are excused from any requirement to respond to the growing body of international biomedical research literature that shows that RF/microwave radiation, which is the type issued by wireless metering systems, can harm humans and animals.
- The electric power companies are excused from providing, for public review, any comprehensive data on the amount of radiation released by their wireless metering systems, including the wireless meters themselves and the community-based transmitters/receivers that communicate with the wireless meters and relay the data they collect back to the electric power companies.
- The electric power companies may issue as many bursts per day, as they wish, of RF/microwave radiation into and throughout homes, businesses, and entire communities, extending even to hundreds of thousands of bursts per day from each wireless meter.

- The electric power companies are excused from any special consideration for individuals identified by the international biomedical research community as especially vulnerable to harm from RF/microwave radiation, including the following:
 - pregnant mothers
 - unborn children
 - young children and teenagers
 - men of reproductive age
 - seniors
 - individuals with chronic health problems
 - the disabled
 - individuals already evidencing the symptoms of electromagnetic hypersensitivity
 - individuals dependent on the proper and safe functioning of electronic/electrical medical equipment that might be subject to interference from radiation from wireless metering systems
 - businesses dependent on the proper and safe functioning of electronic/electrical equipment that might be subject to interference from radiation from wireless metering systems.

- The electric power companies are excused from considering the impact, on a given customer, of the RF/microwave radiation produced by the wireless meters *of his neighbors*.

Note:

All wireless meters in a community irradiate all people in that community, just to different degrees. Once wireless meters are installed in a community, there is no escape from their radiation anywhere in that community.

The radiation in parts of your home, from even a single neighbor's wireless meter, can exceed the radiation from your own meter, if the neighbor's meter is closer to that part of your home than your meter.

Radiation from the neighbors' wireless meters is higher the closer the homes in the neighborhood are spaced (that is, the higher the population density). Thus, radiation from the neighbors' wireless meters is progressively higher in neighborhoods with the following types of residences:

- *large homes on large lots*
- *medium-size homes on medium-size lots*
- *small homes on small lots*
- *town homes*
- *condominiums (which have banks of wireless meters)*
- *apartments (which have banks of wireless meters)*

Also, because income levels tend to be lower in neighborhoods with higher population densities, the ratepayers with the lowest incomes are likely to experience the highest radiation levels from their neighbors' wireless meters.

- The electric power companies are excused from considering the radiation levels already present in the communities in which they install wireless metering systems and thus may ignore the added effect that the radiation from their wireless metering systems may have. Some of those other sources whose radiation can be ignored include the following:
 - cell towers
 - radio and television stations
 - private and business communications services

- In sum, the electric power companies are granted the right to forcibly enroll their customers, of all ages and medical conditions, in a giant medical experiment, for which the outcome is already known to be tragic. And the electric power companies may do so --
 - without informing their customers, let alone gaining their informed consent, for the experiment
 - with no control of, and no accounting for, the other radiation sources already in the environment of the experiment
 - with no monitoring of the health consequences of the experiment
 - and with no explicitly identified liability for the health consequences of that experiment.

Privacy and Security

- The electric power companies are permitted to collect, through their wireless metering systems, as much detailed data as they wish about the electricity flowing into, or out of, their customers' homes or businesses, and without concern for the privacy and security implications, even if that data is sufficient to indicate the following:
 - when people go to bed in the evening
 - when people get up in the morning
 - when people leave their home or their business
 - when people return to their home or arrive at their business
 - when people are on vacation, or otherwise leave their home or their business empty
 - what electronic and electrical equipment is present in a home or a business and when that equipment is operating.

- The electric power companies are also permitted to transmit RF/microwave radiation into all homes and businesses to probe for electronic or electrical equipment capable of responding in order to gather whatever data they can, without any specified restrictions.

- The electric power companies are excused from disclosing to the affected ratepayers, or to the public more generally,
 - the specific types of data that they are collecting through the wireless metering systems
 - the types of information that they are deriving from analysis of that data.
- The electric power companies are permitted to reprogram the wireless metering systems to perform any new functions that the companies desire, without any requirement to notify either the public generally, or the individual homes and businesses affected, let alone to obtain their prior informed consent.
- The electric power companies are not explicitly prohibited from selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring any data collected, or any information derived by processing that data, to any organization, whether law enforcement, data miners, or others, for any purpose.
- The electric power companies are not required to reveal to whom they have made available the data, or the information derived from the data, of a given ratepayer, whether that ratepayer is an individual, a family, or a business, let alone to seek prior informed consent from the ratepayer.
- In sum, the electric power companies are permitted to install on, and inside, individual homes and businesses, and throughout communities and jurisdictions, wireless meters with significant surveillance capabilities. And those installations may be made without the explicit knowledge or informed consent of those ratepayers about the extent and uses of those surveillance capabilities.

Costs

- The electric power companies are excused from providing periodic data, for continuing public review, that document their claim that the ratepayers can reduce their monthly bills by reducing their use of electricity *based on data from their Wireless Smart Meters*.

Note: The ratepayers have been able to reduce their monthly bills by reducing their consumption of electricity all along, without any data from Wireless Smart Meters.

- The electric power companies are free to claim that the Wireless Smart Meter System will reduce the companies' costs considerably, but are not required to document, for public review, how those cost savings are achieved and how those savings will lower the ratepayers' costs, rather than just increase the companies' profits.

Note: The electric power companies are expected to come forward ultimately with a request for a rate increase to "recover the costs" of the Wireless Smart Meter System, but

only after the installation has been completed, making it more expensive and thus more difficult to reverse that installation.

- The electric power companies are not required to present, for public examination and comparison, the costs of rejected competing metering systems, despite their advantages, including the following two types of systems:

(1) traditional analog mechanical metering systems (with no wireless communications capability)

- which are the most common type of metering system being replaced by the Wireless Smart Meter System
- which employ a rugged electromechanical design that makes them the simplest, safest, most reliable, most cyber secure, and least expensive meters
- which have a history of proven accuracy
- which issue no RF/microwave radiation and thus pose no threat to health
- which generate one number per month for billing purposes only, and thus pose no threat to privacy
- which are not embroiled, both nationwide and internationally, in a host of unanswered questions about their fire safety, as are the Wireless Smart Meters
- which rely on manual meter reading that is subject to cost reduction through many approaches that the electric power companies have been permitted to ignore, such as
 - employing a single meter reader to read the meters of all three utilities (electricity, gas, and water) at a given location, rather than sending separate meter readers for each utility

Note: A similar cooperative approach, among the utilities, is already used to mark the location of all underground utility services (electricity, gas, water, and telephone) on a customer's property before he digs in the ground.

- reducing the frequency of readings to, perhaps, as few as two per year, with estimated bills issued in the intervening months

- allowing the ratepayers to read their own meters, subject to periodic checks for accuracy and integrity, and to transfer those readings to the electric power companies using existing communications services with –
 - a telephone call to an automated answering service at the electric power company
 - an entry on a web site maintained by the electric power company
 - a photograph of the meter face, showing its readout, submitted to a web site maintained by the electric power company
 - a postcard designed for this purpose, and mailed to the electric power company.

- a combination of the above

(2) wired metering systems

- which do not require an expensive new wireless communications system because they use existing wired communications systems, such as
 - telephone landlines
 - wired internet connections, including fiber-optic systems

 - which do not employ RF/microwave radiation for communications which makes them safer than wireless metering systems

 - but which can threaten privacy, because, they, like the wireless metering systems, can collect, and transfer to the electric power companies, an enormous amount of data, unless designed not to do so

 - and which can threaten cyber security, but generally less so than wireless metering systems (such as the Wireless Smart Meter Systems which can accept and act on incoming wireless signals to shut down all power to the customer or to reprogram their functions)

 - and which can leave unanswered questions about fire safety, reliability, and longevity because their electronic nature is similar to that of wireless metering systems, and very different from that of the rugged electromechanical nature of traditional analog mechanical meters.
- The electric power companies are excused from presenting any written documentation, for public review, of the many possible *consequential* costs of the implementation of wireless metering systems, whether those costs are already evident or can reasonably be expected to emerge in the near future, such as the following:

- increased personal, local, and State health care costs for individuals harmed by the RF/microwave radiation of the wireless metering systems
- increased burden on medical practitioners to care for individuals harmed by the RF/microwave radiation from wireless metering systems, complicated by the fact that medical schools are not yet training practitioners to diagnose and assist such individuals
- increased legal costs for the ratepayers for claims of damage to health, and any associated loss of employment
- relocation costs for ratepayers who are driven out of their homes by the RF/microwave radiation from wireless metering systems
- increased insurance costs because of the increased health risk and fire risk
- reduction of property values for, and associated loss of property-tax income from, homes, buildings, and entire communities with wireless metering systems.
- The electric power companies, as regulated monopolies, are apparently guaranteed a profit, no matter what the wisdom of their decisions, which means that the companies can pass on to Maryland ratepayers --
 - the costs of discarding perhaps hundreds of thousands of properly functioning *traditional analog mechanical meters with no wireless communications capability* that still had years of service left in them, in order to make way for more complicated, more expensive, less cyber secure, likely less reliable, and definitely less safe wireless meters with likely much shorter lifetimes
 - all of the costs of the Wireless Smart Meter System, to be paid for, not only by those ratepayers using the Wireless Smart Meter System, but also by those ratepayers who Opted Out of that system and who are simultaneously paying the individual Opt Out fees
 - the costs of ultimately undoing the wireless metering systems entirely and replacing them with safe metering systems – costs that are rapidly rising now as the implementation of wireless metering systems is permitted to continue in Maryland.
- In sum, the electric power companies are granted the right to claim significant cost reductions from the installation of wireless metering systems, without presenting, for public scrutiny, any detailed and continuing evidence for the validity of that claim. They are then permitted to come back to the ratepayers later for rate increases to cover the increased costs of the wireless metering systems, while at the same time disregarding a host of consequential costs to all Maryland residents and to both local and State governments.

Power, Influence, and Control

- The Maryland electric power companies deliver a service that is vital to all Maryland residents. But they are free to disregard public opinion of their actions, because they are monopolies within their individual service areas. Thus, the ratepayers cannot discipline those companies with the usual market-based method of choosing a competing provider of delivery services for electricity. All Maryland customers must therefore rely on the only force strong enough to represent their interests: local and State governments.
- The Maryland electric power companies have the same right as anyone else in Maryland, but much greater means, to contribute to the campaigns of the elected members of local and State governments. The companies are free to target those members who have the most power to perpetuate the implementation of the tragic choice of wireless metering systems.
- The electric power companies are permitted to include, in each Wireless Smart Meter, a remotely controlled shut-off switch. This switch enables a company to turn off all electric power to a given ratepayer, whether intentionally or accidentally, by sending a wireless signal, and without even appearing on the ratepayer's property.
- In sum, the electric power companies have significant means to discipline their customers, but their customers have no comparable means to discipline the electric power companies, even though the electric power companies, as State regulated monopolies, are supposed to be serving their customers.