

UPDATE: After CMP defends 'smart' meters, Scarborough asks PUC to halt installations

By Emily Parkhurst
Nov 30, 2010 10:30 am

SCARBOROUGH — The Town Council voted unanimously Wednesday to ask the Maine Public Utilities Commission to prohibit Central Maine Power Co. from installing "smart" electric meters in town until more information about their safety is available.

The action came after a five-hour meeting with CMP officials on Monday, where residents lined up to speak out against the installation of the meters on their homes.

"It is the duty of council to protect the health, safety and welfare of our citizens," council Vice Chairman Michael Wood said. "This is the follow-up (to Monday's meeting) and an appropriate step in my view."



Emily Parkhurst / The Forecaster

Scarborough resident Elisa Boxer-Cook, left, listens to a speaker during a Nov. 29 public hearing in Scarborough for people to voice concerns about Central Maine Power Co.'s "smart" meter project. Boxer-Cook is leading opposition to the meters, citing possible health effects from radiation emitted by the wireless meters. Representatives from CMP also attended the five-hour meeting and assured the public the meters are safe.

The council's letter will ask the PUC to provide an opt-out provision for customers who do not wish to have smart meters on their homes and also asks the regulatory agency to reopen the approval process that was ratified by the Legislature earlier this year.

"I wish more towns would do that," Averyl Hill, a Scarborough resident who filed one of the two PUC complaints against CMP, said Wednesday. "We need their support."

Emotions ran high at Monday's public forum, where more than 90 people discussed their health concerns with the meters, which have already been installed on 56,000 homes and businesses.

While security and fire concerns were also on the agenda for discussion, the topics had to be delayed when midnight arrived and the discussion of possible health effects had barely concluded.

"It's important to recognize how intimidating these large industries can be," Rep. Andrea Boland, D-Sanford, said during the meeting. Boland introduced legislation last year that

would have put warning labels on cellular telephones, which use the same type of frequencies as smart meters. Her cell phone legislation failed.

"There was only one Mainer who was not in the industry who testified against the warning labels," Boland said. "That was (Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director) Dr. Dora Anne Mills. I'm concerned money has crept into considerations in government."

The Maine CDC has released several documents defending the safety of smart meters, including a "frequently asked questions" pamphlet released Nov. 29 that acknowledges the lack of long-term studies proving the safety of the technology, but also says reviews of the research "pointed to no consistent or convincing evidence to support a concern for health effects related to the use of (radio frequency) in the range of frequencies and power used by smart meters."

Boland said legislators were uninformed about the potential risks when they voted to allow the smart meters.

In addition to Boland, speakers from more than 15 communities and two other states spoke out against the meters, many asking CMP for a formal opt-out provision that would offer a choice about having the meters installed.

"We're in a position (where) we're forced to buy product we don't want," said Scarborough resident Elisa Boxer-Cook, a critic of the wireless meters who has organized opposition and filed a formal complaint with the PUC. "We're asking CMP to respect our concerns, to compromise with an opt-out solution. We think this is reasonable."

Hudson, N.Y., resident Michele Hertz said smart meters reduced her ability to concentrate, made her agitated and caused headaches. "I'm not being paid to be here. I'm not a scientist. But I'm living proof — smart meters installed on my house made me sick," she said. "I really do not believe the electric companies are trying to hurt people, but they're making a terrible mistake."

Several local doctors also spoke out against the meters.

"There are very few of us who are informed in any way about any of this," Dr. Magili Quinn, a family practice doctor in Falmouth, said. Quinn said she contacted her stepson's cardiologist to ask if his pacemaker would be affected by the meters and was told to call the manufacturer. "The specialists I rely on don't even have any answers."

Monday's forum came after the Town Council passed a resolution on Oct. 20 asking CMP to wait 90 days before installing the wireless meters on customers' homes and businesses. The towns of Cape Elizabeth and Sanford subsequently passed similar moratoriums.

"You should have to prove it's safe first before you expose the public in massive experiment," Dr. Sean McCloy, a family practice physician from Portland, said Monday.

Once the smart grid is fully installed, which is scheduled for early 2012, the meters will allow customers to view their electricity usage in real time and make decisions about turning off appliances during peak hours to save money. CMP received \$96 million

stimulus funding to support the grid upgrade and has estimated it will save a matching amount by eliminating the need for meter readers.

"We are moving from the 19th to the 21st century," CMP spokesman John Carroll said. "This is a step forward for our company and something that's very good for Maine and our customers."

While CMP agreed to honor Scarborough's requested installation delay until after the public forum, residents in Cape Elizabeth reported the company has moved forward with the installation despite the town's request.

"Where's the choice to use or not use the technology? Cape Elizabeth voted no. You said 'we're doing it anyway,'" McCloy said.

Ann Kaplan, a Cape Elizabeth resident, filed a letter in support of Boxer-Cook's PUC complaint recently after she arrived home to find "a CMP employee with a box under his arm heading to my electric meter."

Kaplan said she asked the employee if he was aware of the Town Council's moratorium and he said that he was, but that he was going ahead with the installation anyway.

"We have certainly said to anyone who's ever asked us if we're stopping installation in Cape Elizabeth, we're not," Carroll said Monday. "If Cape Elizabeth councilors are asking for response, we've given it."

Carroll indicated after the meeting Monday that he was not sure if CMP would continue to honor Scarborough's moratorium now that the council-requested forum has happened.

The PUC has not decided whether to investigate or dismiss two complaints about the meters brought against CMP by customers in Scarborough. CMP has asked the regulatory agency to dismiss both complaints.

Boxer-Cook's complaint cites concerns by doctors that those with sensitivity to the radiation the meters emit should be allowed to opt out of having the meters installed. Currently, there is no formal opt-out provision.

"If the PUC said it was appropriate to require an opt-out, we would have to do that," Carroll said after the forum.

Elizabeth Kelley, founder of the Electromagnetic Safety Alliance, who spoke last week at a discussion of radio frequency radiation and smart meters in San Francisco, argued against the meters on Monday.

"At the conference in San Francisco, I had doctors come up after and ask for more information," she said. "They said, 'We can treat the symptoms, but we need to treat the cause.'"

Kelley called for more regulation of the radiation, citing strict regulations in Europe on exposing children to these kinds of radio frequencies.

"This grid represents the largest technology build-out in history," Kelley said. "No federal agency is really looking after this."

CMP-hired scientists also presented lengthy and technical explanations of the meters' safety, comparing the frequencies to that of cellular and cordless phones. Dr. Yakov

Shkolnikov, an engineer with California-based Exponent Consulting, said at peak radiation exposure, the meters are 1/1,000th of a cell phone and 50 percent of a common wireless Internet router.

The scientists also explained that the meters had lower average frequencies than many other common devices and that, even when a neighborhood is full of them, the devices would not be able to fire all at once.

"The meters share a frequency," Shkolnikov said. "Only one can talk at a time."

A second meeting to discuss cyber security and claims about smart meter fire risks is expected to be scheduled.

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This report was updated on Dec. 2.

Comments

Robert Williams says:

CMP DOESN'T ALWAYS LIE. SOMETIMES THEY HIDE THE TRUTH AND OTHER TIMES THEY JUST DELIVER MISINFORMATION.

The WIRELESS smart meters cause significant problems with private information violations, security risks and hacking, dramatically increased utility bills and health problems.

Focusing on HEALTH PROBLEMS:

On November 18, just last week, a dozen of the highest quality scientists with ultimate integrity from around the world met in conference at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco.

These scientists are the top-of-the-line worldwide regarding testing effects of Radio Signal Radiation (the type from CMP smart meters) and further evaluating other studies of Wireless radiation.

Their tests vary in type, but they each found DAMAGE TO CELLS. These CELL DAMAGE findings deny ALL claims of safety by CMP.

How long it takes to show various symptoms and how serious and widespread the illness will be is not yet known. Some suggested the possibility that death, cancer and disease could well exceed that from cigarette smoking, because of greater population exposure due to forced installation of WIRELESS smart meter type devices on homes.

Strong correlations have already been seen between wireless exposure and cancer. The greatest risks are to children, since their skulls absorb more of the radiation.

Damage to cells occur not only from substantial exposures to common wireless devices, but also from extremely low levels of exposure for short periods of time.

This evidence makes it quite difficult to ignore a Wireless Smart Meter attached to a home. The Smart meter not only transmits signals from the home where it is installed, but each smart meter also transmits to, receives from and repeats transmissions signals from

other meters in the community 24/7, without a shutoff switch. The Smart Meter also transmits PULSED signal radiation, which is shown to be considerably more damaging than a steady signal, even at low levels.

Smart Meter comparisons to other wireless devices are comparing apples and oranges because (1) smart meters run all night, (2) smart meters do not send utility information signals directly to the utility company. Instead, smart meters are deployed in a wireless mesh network transmitting, receiving and repeating the other meters signals in the community resulting in potentially millions of more signals than those originating from a single meter.

Simply stated, adults need a "Quiet electronic" time during sleeping hours so that they recover for the following day. Children, in addition to recovery, need that "Quiet electronic" sleep time for their own delicate electronic communications from brain to cells to direct the proper growth and development of their complete body, organs, systems and brain.

CMP pawns at so-called "Information meetings" compare smart meters to other wireless devices as if the smart meter is operating alone. It is similar to downplaying the danger of Army Ants in South America, by looking at the bite of a single ant instead of the devastation from Army Ants covering multiple square miles and destroying villages, farms and most all animal life in their path.

WIRELESS smart meters are great for CMP. CMP corporate management will make a \$\$\$ fortune eliminating meter reader jobs and not paying for shielded cables to carry the transmissions, which would protect people from the constant pulsed radiation.

So now, these scientist's observations and peer reviewed articles confirming cell damage from non-ionizing radiation denies the longstanding industry theories that incorrectly proclaimed safety.

WIRE THE METERS AND SEND THE SIGNALS THROUGH SHIELDED CABLES

*Check out this 3-minute video:

Insurance companies had their own scientists test common Smart Meter Type wireless device radiation and now they won't write insurance on damage from wireless devices:

<http://eon3emfblog.net/?p=382>

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