

I would like to just say a few words, to put a Human Face on Smart Meters.

My background is not in technical side of the issue. But by no means am stupid person. I have a Bachelors degree in Architectural Science, particularly in Building Sciences, so I am by no means a technical Luddite.

I was gainfully employed in the Building Industry until I was diagnosed 15 years ago with Multiple Sclerosis, or MS. MS is a neurological disease which essentially 'short circuits' the electrical impulses from the brain and causes loss of control to motor functions in my body. Specifically, it is a progressive form of the disease and will result in a steady decline in my health.

MS is something that I have learned to take in stride. There are many worse afflictions in life today and I have come to terms with my 'lot in life'. Over the past 15 years, I have experienced a slow and steady decline in my motor functions, and I have been fortunate compared to others with MS.

I am a single parent of a 13 year old daughter, and my primary concern in life is that I can house, clothe, feed, and usher her along into adulthood.

My primary concern with the introduction of Smart Meters is the potential effect they may have on my health. I do not have a contingency plan if my health were ever to take a 'nosedive'. Thus I strive to avoid anything that may speed up my decline.

Once I was aware of the introduction of Smart Meters by BC Hydro, I became alarmed. I pored over the BC Hydro information posted on their website, but I found it very shallow and it did not inspire much confidence in how safe this wireless technology was. I already suffered from daily internal electrical signal interruptions in my body, and did not want to volunteer for further external interference.

Now, I was a little ^{more} ~~most~~ concerned than most, not only because of my MS, but because of the fact that I live in a townhouse immediately adjacent to the electrical room for our cluster of 15 units. Basically, I am separated by a wood frame drywall partition from 15 Smart Meters. On one side of the partition is my dining room and coincidentally my computer where I spend far too much time, and on the other side of the wall, approximately 2 feet away, is a bank of 15 meters.

Once I realized this, I immediately contacted BC Hydro and refused to allow them to install a meter, and posted a sign on the electrical room door to that effect.

Well, as far as I know, 3 weeks ago, on October 24th, they then only installed 14 of my neighbors Meters, and left my analogue meter stand.

Within about 24 hours, I noticed when I sat at my computer, I now began to feel an increase in my heart rate, tingling in my legs and arms, loss of dexterity in my fingers, and difficulty concentrating on what I was working on.

At first I thought it was maybe just me over reacting, but it has now been 3 weeks and each time it sit down a my computer, I similarly start to vibrate. People suggest to me that I just move my computer. I would, but my total townhouse is only 750 sf, and there is really nowhere else to move it.

My house as modest as it may be is the total accumulation of everything that I had earned, throughout my working life, prior to my untimely 'early retirement' at the ripe old age of 36. I now am still hammering away at the mortgage on my disability income, to provide some sort of security and a home for myself and my child. I now feel our security and safety is threatened. On the day the Smart Meters were installed, which was coincidentally my daughter's 13th birthday, she cried uncontrollably and said that our home was the only place that she felt safe, and now THEY had wrecked it. Thank you BC Hydro for that wonderful birthday gift.

I spoke to Richmond Councilor Bill McNulty shortly before Remembrance Day, as he was collecting donations on behalf of the Veterans. We chatted about the sacrifices that the Vets had made for our freedoms in Canada. Somehow, it doesn't feel very FREE anymore.

I resent the fact that BC Hydro has more rights in MY HOUSE than I do. In my own home, I cannot protect my health, I cannot protect my privacy, I cannot provide security for my child, and I as a taxpayer will have to contribute to paying for this loosely tested technology to the tune of 1 billion dollars, at a time when fiscal restraint is being demanded around the world. I find BC Hydro's actions irresponsible, ~~abusive~~.

I realize that it is the BC Provincial Government's call on this issue, and copies of this 'diatribe' will be circulated forthwith to whomever's e-mails I can discover, but I entreat Richmond City Council, to speak for, and on behalf of all Richmond Residents, to put more pressure on 'the powers that be'. The only real action in this Province ~~has only ever~~ ^{often} come from the 'grass roots', and our Cities and Municipalities are a much stronger force than you give yourselves credit for.

To coin the mantra of the day, we are the 99%.

Thank you.

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