

Statement from Mayor Rudy Fernandez and Deputy Mayor Shawn R. Klein, Township of Livingston, in Essex County.

Thank you and good evening. I'm Rudy Fernandez Jr., mayor of Township of Livingston in Essex County, and I'm joined by deputy mayor Shawn Klein.

In Livingston, energy use has been a priority for our Council and our residents. In 2019, we became the eighth municipality in the United States to arrange 100% locally produced green energy for the majority of our 30,000 residents. We did this as part of an ambitious energy aggregation plan in which we went out to bid in the open market for qualified third party suppliers. In doing so, we saved our residents significant money and dramatically shrank their carbon footprints. Livingston has served as a model for many other towns.

Livingston is always looking for ways to use new technologies to improve the lives of our residents and make day-to-day living easier and better. PSE&G's Energy Cloud proposal would accomplish that by deploying smart meters to its 2.3 million electric customers across the state. By creating a real-time, two-way link between customer and utility, the Energy Cloud will improve outage restoration times, provide a better customer experience and support greater energy savings.

One significant benefit of the PSE&G's Energy Cloud will be improved storm restoration. We have all seen the increase in severe storms, and the experts warn us that powerful and destructive storms will occur with increasing frequency. We should make use of every available tool to improve our response to these storms. Any mayor or councilperson can tell you that good information is key during a major storm event and we are happy to say that during those events PSE&G makes it easy for us to stay in constant contact with them.

This proposal would put customers in constant contact with PSE&G, establishing a two-way communication link that would provide customers with the timely information they want and need during storms and other outages. That would include more precise estimates about when their lights will be back on. It would also put an end to the many false positive automated responses that many of our residents experienced during the most recent tropical storm indicating that their power had been restored, when in fact it had not.

And while the big storms get a lot of attention, smart meters would improve utility outage response in all kinds of weather. The meters would immediately notify PSE&G of an interruption whether you are home during a storm or away the house. The smart meter will automatically alert the utility of any problem, and if needed crews can be dispatched to make the necessary fixes, perhaps before you get home.

Another significant benefit of the proposal will be empowering customers to be more energy efficient. Smart meters will make information readily available to homeowners, allowing them to better monitor their energy consumption and make choices that can reduce their energy use. We all like to save money when we can and smart meters will make it easier to save on utility bills by being more efficient. PSE&G's energy cloud proposal pairs nicely with the company's recently approved Clean Energy Future – Energy Efficiency program.

Plus, energy efficiency is great for the environment. There is no cleaner energy than the energy you don't use.

Finally, it is shocking to know that New Jersey ranks 48th in the nation for use of smart meters. It is time that New Jersey residents have access to proven technologies that will improve their service and their lives.

Rudy Fernandez, Jr.
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