

Smart Meter Information, New Jersey, 2/4/2021

Smart Meter Status

In 2017, NJ BPU called for a halt on Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) projects while Rockland Electric conducted a 3 year, smart meter pilot. In 2019, the BPU received an independent review of RECO's AMI Business Case and Recommendations for New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/boardorders/2019/20191113/11-13-19-2M.pdf>

Based on the cost benefit analysis of the business case study, the BPU lifted the moratorium in Feb 2020 and directed utilities to file plans to deploy the technology, including a detailed cost-benefit analysis, for the purposes of reducing customer outages and improving EDC's capabilities to effect timely system restoration following major weather events. JCP&L submitted a proposal that includes a \$28 monthly opt out fee and a rollout to begin in Jan 2021. <https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/customer/OpCoHome/files/JCPLRegulatory/2020-08-27-JCPL-AMI-Petition-Direct-Testimony-Trnsmtl-Ltr.pdf>

Rollout Despite Issues

NJ utility companies, board of public utilities and state legislators, are rushing to rollout smart meters as part of their plan to create smart cities and a smart grid where everything you do can be monitored and controlled.

<https://www.activistpost.com/2020/08/ieee-promotes-smart-devices-for-utility-data-collection-and-usage-regulation-despite-problems-with-smart-meters.html>

Smart meters are rolling out in NJ despite a number of issues. First, there are a variety of ways in which Smart Meters can cause **fires**.

<http://emfsafetynetwork.org/smart-meter-arcing/>

<https://smartgridawareness.org/2016/08/25/how-the-smart-meter-remote-disconnect-can-cause-fires/>

<https://www.smartmetereducationnetwork.com/smart-meter-fires.php#6>

Second, smart meters emit high levels of harmful RF radiation that have been shown to cause **health issues**. The utility industry claims that smart meters are safe. However, measurements show that smart meters cause an extraordinary RF/MW antenna effect on electrical distribution systems when they are used as intended, rather than in the isolation of a testing laboratory.

<http://www.stopsmartmetersny.org/debunkingutility.html>

<https://smartgridawareness.org/2016/10/02/health-risks-associated-with-smart-meter-wireless-emissions/>

<https://www.smartmetereducationnetwork.com/smart-meter-health-effects.php>

Even if you opt out, it's important to be able to keep the analog meter because the opt out meter may simply be a digital meter with the wireless turned off. Even with the wireless turned off, the power differential between the "switched mode power supply" of the digital meter and your home electrical system creates **dirty electricity** throughout your home wiring and metal pipes.

<https://www.smartmetereducationnetwork.com/dirty-electricity-and-smart-meters.php>

<https://eon3emfblog.net/new-critical-problem-with-smart-meters-a-switching-mode-power-supply/>

Third is the **invasion of privacy**. The data collected from all your smart devices 24x7, can reveal what you own, when you are home, and what you are doing. The utilities themselves have said that the data they gather on you is worth more than the electricity they sell you.

<https://www.smartmetereducationnetwork.com/dte-advanced-smart-meter-privacy.php>

Smart meters are also more **vulnerable to cyber attacks** that can affect the entire grid.

<https://smartgridawareness.org/2017/06/28/smart-meter-cyber-attacks-clear-and-present-danger/>

<https://smartgridawareness.org/2018/10/27/killing-the-grid/>

False Promises

According to the utility companies, the Smart Grid promises to enable utility companies and their customers to **reduce U.S. energy consumption** using a variety of technologies and methods. Researchers noted that customer behavior didn't change much, regardless of peak rates nor knowledge of energy consumption. In a pilot in Chicago, the overall amount of reduction was "**statistically insignificant**".

The main purpose of a system that allows a utility to remotely turn electricity on and off is to shift customers not only to tiered pricing but also to prepaid plans. The supposed energy savings of tiered pricing will be far overshadowed by the enormous energy needed to run the computers that manage the smart grid, and to cool the data centers that store and analyze the collected marketing data.

<https://nomasssmartmeters.wordpress.com/what-are-smart-meters/>

<https://www.smartmetereducationnetwork.com/do-smart-meters-really-save-energy.php>

Utility companies claim that Smart Meters will **save customers money**. Based on a pilot in Connecticut, the Attorney General warned that the pilot showed that smart meters had no beneficial impact on total energy usage or bill savings and that the advanced technology is very expensive. A pilot program of 10,000 such meters found no energy savings in 2009, but would cost ratepayers \$500 million, and would not save enough electricity for its 1.2 million customers to justify the expense.

In reality, these meters and their dedicated networks are primarily for the benefit of utilities, reducing their operating costs and increasing profits by firing meter readers, ironically with federal stimulus funds, while doing essentially nothing to advance what should be the real goal of the smart grid: balancing supply and demand and integrating more renewable sources.

Peak rates can be priced up to 10 times higher than regular rates in order to deter usage. **Bills generally increased** after smart meters are installed as consumers continue to use energy at peak hours.

<https://www.smartmetereducationnetwork.com/smart-meter-costs.php>

<https://smartgridawareness.org/2016/02/16/consumers-suffer-financial-loss-with-smart-meters/>

<https://smartgridawareness.org/2016/01/31/families-punished-by-smart-meters-and-tou-rates/>

Utility companies claim smart meters will **speed restoration from outages**. According to the results of a 2015 utility industry survey on outage and restoration management, despite the fact that 81% of surveyed utilities claim to have Smart Meters deployed, only 16% of these utilities

use their smart meters as the primary source of power failure alerts on blue sky days and 12% during storms.

<https://smartgridawareness.org/2015/04/30/customer-calls-not-smart-meters-still-primary-source-of-power-outage-notification-for-utilities>

A 2012 pilot report revealed that none of the claimed benefits held up in practice.

<https://gettingsmarteraboutthesmartgrid.org/pdf/Smart%20Grid%20Report%203-15-13.pdf>

Navigant Consulting conducted a study on the 2017-2019 Rockland **NJ pilot program** and found a "high likelihood" that Rockland Electric's **AMI program will be cost effective**. Another recent study by that same company said smart meters can detect outages, provide faster service restoration and improve billing accuracy.

<https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/nj-regulators-want-smart-meter-plans-from-3-utilities-57200564>

However, Rate Counsel Stefanie Brand said she thought the utilities were **overselling the benefits of how quickly service could be restored in storms** with AMI technology. "To me, this isn't going to solve our storm-response problems." Brand also **expressed concerns about costs**. "These are very big numbers," referring to the cost of replacing every meter in the state. "They are doing it in the most expensive way possible."

JCP&L minimized the impact of the new technology on customers, saying it will only increase monthly bills for typical customers by 65 cents, effective on Jan. 1, 2022, if approved by the BPU, according to Cliff Cole, a spokesman. Over the duration of the program, costs will rise \$4.01, or approximately 3.8 percent.

With all the other filings dealing with clean energy, such as solar, offshore wind and nuclear, Brand said somebody had to pay attention to this. "If we keep piling on, it is **going to be an unaffordable system**."

<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/08/smart-meters-ami-electric-utilities-nj-power-grid-advanced-metering-infrastructure/>