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## **Cloud of Corruption Hangs over CPUC 'Smart Meter' Opt-Out Decision**

*Departing President Peevey Protects PG&E, Not the Public, Say Safety Advocates*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – Michael Peevey will preside Thursday over his last Public Utilities Commission meeting, leaving a legacy of corruption and a too-cozy relationship with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. reaching beyond the San Bruno pipeline explosion scandal. Under Peevey, the CPUC has also colluded with PG&E to repeatedly thwart grassroots and legal efforts to obtain safety on “smart meters” that have been linked to fires, and emit radiation the World Health Organization says is a possible carcinogen.

Smart meter opponents will again make their case at Thursday’s meeting. To date their campaign has been hindered by a close working relationship between the CPUC under Peevey and PGE protecting the utility’s interests, not the public interest:

- In 2010 Bill Devereaux, head of the PG&E smart meter program, used a fake email and name, “Ralph” to access private discussions of the EMF Safety Network, party to a proceeding at the CPUC. He forwarded some of the messages to the current head of the CPUC’s Planning and Policy Division, Marzia Zafar. Zafar was the public face of the CPUC at Smart Meter community events, just as Devereaux was the public face of PG&E of Smart Meters. PG&E was eventually fined \$390,000 for spying, but the PUC’s role was not investigated. When parties filed a records request for e-mails between Devereaux and Zafar, Zafar failed to report it.
- In the wake of “Ralph”, redacted emails showed PGE officials discussing the EMF Safety Network with the CPUC. Despite records requests, and ex parte violations the CPUC is withholding the unredacted emails.
- In 2012 a PG&E whistleblower stated to the CPUC judge that smart meters were causing fires. Media and customers have reported smart meter fires and electrical hazards in California, throughout the US, Canada and Australia. In 2014 the PUC reported to the Governor and Legislature they had investigated, but the CPUC ignored records act requests for the information.
- PG&E trained the CPUC Consumer Affairs Branch, the department charged with resolving customer complaints, on how to respond to smart meter complaints using corporate talking points and misinformation, so that the CPUC’s response matched the utility’s. PGE lied about how often smart meters transmit, and the CPUC parroted those lies.

“The CPUC is clearly a captured agency, working on behalf of and in collusion with the company it is supposed to be regulating,” said Sandi Maurer, director of the EMF Safety Network, which has documented widespread health and fire safety complaints. “Being coerced to pay to protect the safety, health and privacy of your family amounts to extortion. Today’s decision wrongly places the blame for smart meter hazards onto the customer, under the guise of “consumer choice”.

CPUC commissioners will vote Thursday on a proposal that that would force customers refusing installation of wireless smart meters on their property to pay an initial fee and ongoing monthly charge. The CPUC decision usurps the rights of local jurisdictions to act on behalf of their constituencies: community-wide, multi-housing, and commercial opt-outs are forbidden. The CPUC ignores more than a dozen local jurisdictions who’ve criminalized smart meter installation, and dozens more who called for a moratorium on the deployment and health and safety hearings.

Peevey, who in the wake of on-going scandals chose not to seek re-appointment, has been a promoter of the smart meter rollout by California utilities, claiming benefits including lowered costs. Peevey has presided over the majority of the smart meter proceedings at the CPUC.

The smart meter opposition that was started in California has grown worldwide. The public opposition is based on mounting evidence that a wireless energy grid does not live up to its claimed objectives and instead, causes higher costs as well as posing serious risks to human health, public safety, personal privacy and cyber-security.

“Thousands of people have reported adverse health effects after ‘smart’ meters were installed in their homes, but the Commission has refused to consider these serious issues in its decision-making process,” says Mary Beth Brangan of the Ecological Options Network, another official intervenor in the smart meter proceedings.

The World Health Organization’s [International Agency for Cancer Research](#) concluded that microwaves in the frequencies used by wireless devices, including smart meters, are a possible carcinogen, in the same class as DDT and lead. The [American Academy of Environmental Medicine](#) wrote to the CPUC calling for an immediate moratorium on installation of the meters, citing many peer-reviewed studies showing biological effects from pulsing microwave frequencies.

Visuals include coffin and black roses

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Links to compilations of health complaints: <http://emfsafetynetwork.org/smart-meters/smart-meter-health-complaints/> fire and electrical hazards complaints: <http://emfsafetynetwork.org/smart-meters/smart-meter-fires-and-explosions/>

Redacted emails between PGE and the CPUC on EMF Safety Network, during the time EMF Safety Network had an application before the Commission. PGE gave this to the CPSD, and to the media on the investigation of “Ralph”. [http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/096\\_SmartMeterInquiry\\_DR\\_CPSD\\_001-Q18Atch01-CONF-REDACTED-30.pdf](http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/096_SmartMeterInquiry_DR_CPSD_001-Q18Atch01-CONF-REDACTED-30.pdf)

PGE whistleblower tells the CPUC judge smart meter are causing fires.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnxIoItNUek>

May 2014 CPUC Annual Report to the Governor and the Legislature, p.5 mentions smart meter fire investigation. <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2F5149C6-885A-4211-8CBA-A4F88F02CEA7/0/SmartGridAnnualReport2013final.pdf>

Nevada: Fire Chiefs call for an investigation of smart meters fires, Nevada PUC launches an inquiry. <http://www.rgj.com/story/news/2014/09/22/rgj-investigates-nevada-regulators-launch-inquiry-smart-meters/16085113/>

PGE trained Consumers Affairs Branch [http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/078\\_PGE-trained-CPUC-SmartMeterInquiry\\_DR\\_CPSD\\_001-Q17Atch02-30-CONF-REDACTED.pdf](http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/078_PGE-trained-CPUC-SmartMeterInquiry_DR_CPSD_001-Q17Atch02-30-CONF-REDACTED.pdf)

In December 2014 , the province of Ontario’s auditor general [issued a report](#) that found that smart meters have few benefits that would justify the high costs.