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*Save Lives, Save Nature, Reduce EMFs*

[www.emfsafetynetwork.org](http://www.emfsafetynetwork.org)

2/14/2022

**Save our water meters! OPT-IN! Agenda #15 on Feb 15**

*Sebastopol Mayor Patrick Slayter, Sebastopol City Council and Staff,*

EMF Safety Network appreciates the opportunity to revisit the smart water meter decision. Thank you for bringing it back to council.

An OPT-IN to a non-transmitting digital meter might resolve this problem. An OPT-OUT does not. The proposed opt-out policy is punitive, discriminatory, and ignores Sebastopol's General Plan Community Health and Wellness Goals that calls for community wide opt out of smart meters: "Action CHW 4h: Support efforts to approach and encourage the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to allow the City to opt out of public utility wireless data transmission systems (such as smart meters)."

**The smart water meters were corporate greenwashed as climate action friendly conservation tools.** Greenwashing is the use of deceptive marketing spin to persuade the public that a product is environmental friendly.

- Despite the claim we need smart water meters to reduce climate change, Sysco showed there are no reductions in greenhouse gases expected from water meters. (Attachment A) Sysco's energy savings from water meters is questionable considering PG&E admitted, "Evaluations from the past five program years have indicated that changes in energy use resulting from the programs are small and difficult to detect..."<sup>1</sup>
- Sysco, a partner of PG&E, markets smart meters as energy efficient. (Attachment B-1)
- Sysco wrote the language that the smart water meters are accurate and the current water meters are inaccurate. (Attachment B-2)
- Smart water meters are two way radios that emit EMF radiation, sound waves and use batteries. When a battery fails, the whole unit has to be replaced.

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<sup>1</sup> Pacific Gas & Electric Company's SmartMeter™ Enabled Programs: Program Year 2016 Evaluation of Customer Web Presentment and Bill Forecast Alert by Applied Energy Group April 28, 2017 [http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PGE\\_PY2016\\_Smart-Meter\\_Evaluation\\_FinalReport\\_27apr2017\\_CPUC.pdf](http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PGE_PY2016_Smart-Meter_Evaluation_FinalReport_27apr2017_CPUC.pdf)

- Smart water meters fail to meet the standards of the Zero Waste Sonoma purchasing policy<sup>2</sup> which calls for purchasing products that minimize environmental impacts, toxins, pollution and hazards to worker and community safety, as well as to purchase durable and long lasting products.
- Twice the staff report mentions the Climate Action Committee supported the project with none opposed. What they don't say is written by the committee co-chair in a note to the council stating, "some members of the SCAC felt they had not enough time to fully digest the many details of the proposed project." Members still had questions and concerns. (Attachment C)

**The decision making process on smart water meters was seriously flawed.**

- The city failed to comply with the 2019 Telecommunications Ordinance 1123<sup>3</sup> which requires public notice and a meeting where the technical specifications and the costs would have been vetted, prior to a planning commission review.
- The decision ignored Sebastopol's General Plan Community Health and Wellness Goals to minimize unsafe EMF's<sup>4</sup>.
- The decision ignored the 2013 Ordinance 1057<sup>5</sup> that banned smart meters for "matters of public health, safety and consumer protection...". This ordinance was referenced in 2019 in a letter to PG&E asking to retain the analog meters at the Fircrest senior mobile home park which was signed by Mayor Neysa Hinton<sup>6</sup>.

Staff created a one question survey that promoted "cellular" water meters as a conservation tool and for leak detection. Nearly half the respondents were opposed or undecided. When this came back to council, they hid the smart water meters in an energy efficiency project. The council unanimously approved the meters. This vote did not represent the community's values or historic actions.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gi5PyTLZdcDZae05HDMG5MFDnRI4xDA-/view>

<sup>3</sup> Sebastopol's 2019 Telecommunications Ordinance 1123 <https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/getattachment/4371a3fe-b28f-4e19-a4b2-bedd0073ab92/ordinance-number-11-23-telecommunications-facilities-and-minor-antennas-appvd-5-7-2019.pdf.aspx?lang=en-us&ext=.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Sebastopol's General Plan Community Health and Wellness Goals page 10-6 and 10-7 [https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/getattachment/10408047-71e8-473e-b804-e51ed2e9b187/adopted\\_generalplan\\_11-15-16.pdf.aspx?lang=en-us&ext=.pdf](https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/getattachment/10408047-71e8-473e-b804-e51ed2e9b187/adopted_generalplan_11-15-16.pdf.aspx?lang=en-us&ext=.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/DRAFT-Smart-Meter-Moratorium-Ordinance-For-2-21-2013-.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> City of Sebastopol letter to PG&E re Fircrest Mobile Home Park <http://emfsafetynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Revised-Letter-to-Fircrest-Mobile-Home-Park-and-PGE.pdf>

The city has railroaded this project for the benefit of some residents at the expense of other residents. Staff purchased the software before the meters were approved, and they purchased the meters before the financing was approved.

EMF radiation threatens nature<sup>7</sup>, public health<sup>8</sup>, and the EMF aware<sup>9</sup> and sensitive<sup>10</sup> community. Peer reviewed published studies find EMF radiation causes a wide range of health impacts: “Effects include increased cancer risk, cellular stress, increase in harmful free radicals, genetic damages, structural and functional changes of the reproductive system, learning and memory deficits, neurological disorders, and negative impacts on general well-being in humans.”<sup>11</sup>

*“It is time to recognize ambient EMF as a novel form of pollution and develop rules at regulatory agencies that designate air as 'habitat' so EMF can be regulated like other pollutants.”<sup>12</sup>*

Santa Fe, New Mexico is using Badger meters and they say their system will use 4G and 5G frequencies. Scientists are warning against the deployment of 5G technology.<sup>13</sup>

The EMF radiation transmitters would be in the sidewalks, in our neighborhoods and where people walk throughout town. Prudent avoidance is the way EMF sensitive people manage their symptoms (headaches, heart palpitations, nausea, tinnitus etc). We would not be able to avoid these transmitters. They would harm our quality of life and create a nuisance hazard throughout Sebastopol. This could force residents to move or create ADA access issues which could trigger a lawsuit: “The [US Access] Board recognizes that multiple chemical sensitivities and electromagnetic sensitivities may be considered disabilities under the ADA if they so severely impair the

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<sup>7</sup> Find links to science and news reports on how EMF radiation affects nature in this flyer [http://emfsafety-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Honey\\_Bee\\_Says\\_STOP\\_5G.pdf](http://emfsafety-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Honey_Bee_Says_STOP_5G.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive review of the science go to <https://bioinitiative.org>

<sup>9</sup> For an excellent intro and overview, watch the following video with Joel Moskowitz PhD “Health Effects of Cellphone & Cell Tower Radiation: Implications for 5G” held on Nov. 3, 2021. He speaks for about 45 minutes, followed by a Q and A. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-\\_8PvG753A&t=317s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-_8PvG753A&t=317s)

<sup>10</sup> Reliable disease biomarkers characterizing and identifying electrohypersensitivity and multiple chemical sensitivity as two etiopathogenic aspects of a unique pathological disorder <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26613326/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.emfscientist.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields on flora and fauna, part 1. Rising ambient EMF levels in the environment <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34047144/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.5gappeal.eu>

neurological, respiratory or other functions of an individual that it substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities.”<sup>14</sup>

If the city was planning to routinely spray the all sidewalks throughout town with pesticides because some residents wanted help controlling weeds you can understand how an “opt out” would not protect the environment or residents with chemical sensitivity.

A pay to opt-out is faulty PG&E logic. *The true “cost-causers” are the customers who want smart water meters, not the customers who don’t want them.*

In years past, the Sebastopol city council has been stellar, in fact heroic, in standing up to PG&E on smart meters, getting the lower kelvin, warmer LED streetlights, and defending the Fircrest senior community. You have been thoughtful, deliberate, and shown great care for the environment in reducing EMF’s.

Help us make this right. Keep our current water meters, with an OPT-IN to a non-transmitting digital meter for people who want more detailed water usage data.

Respectfully submitted,

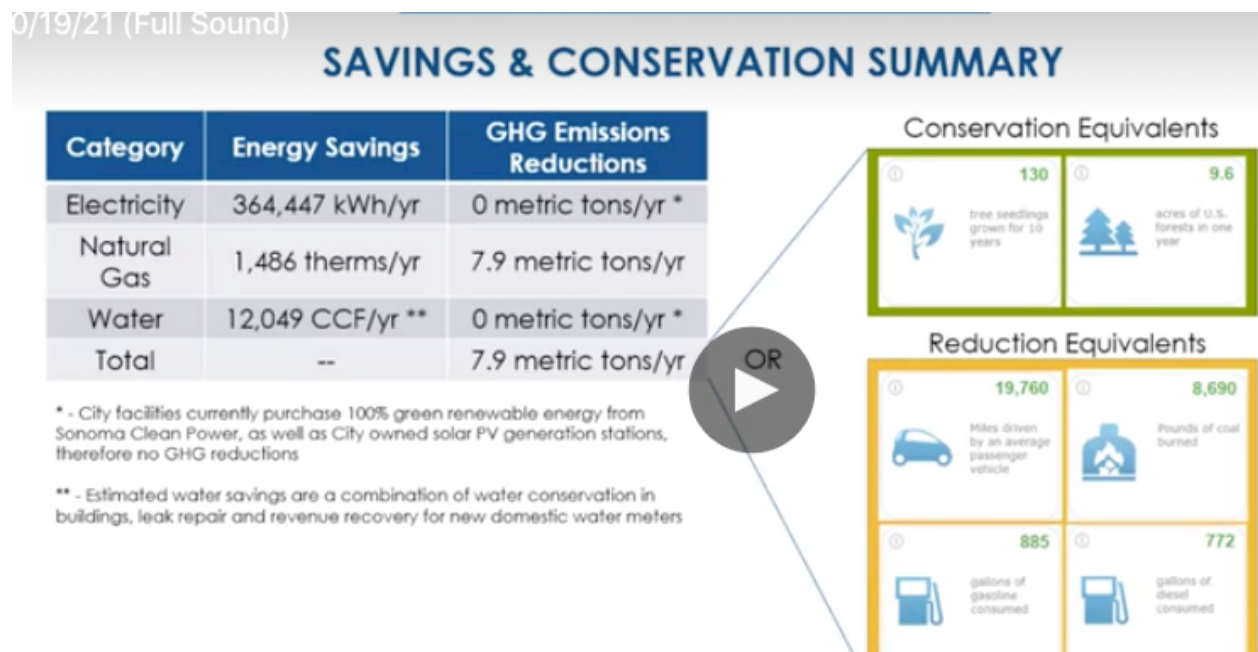
Sandi Maurer

Director, EMF Safety Network

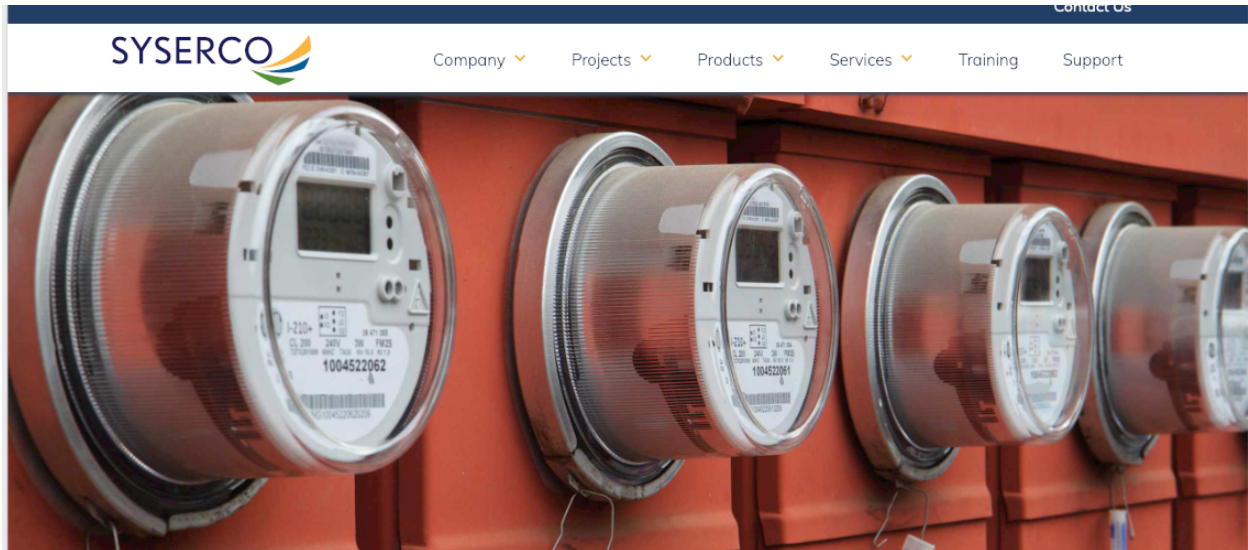
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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.access-board.gov/research/building/indoor-environmental-quality/>

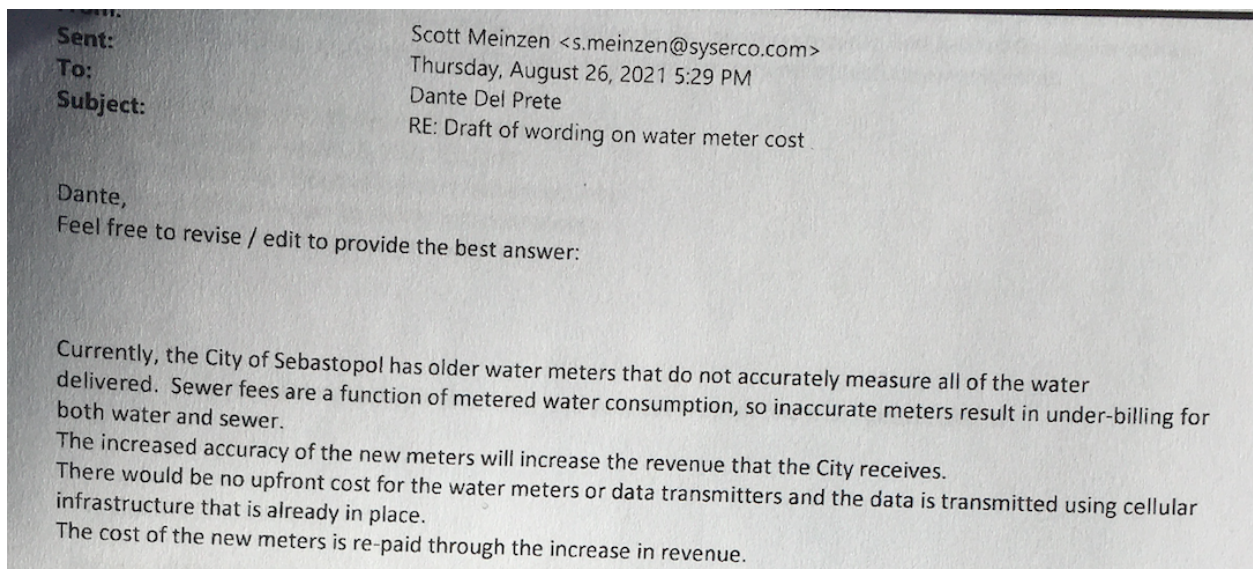
**Attachment A, Slide from Syserco showing zero GHG emission reductions from water meters.**



**Attachment B-1: Syserco website, photo of electric smart meters on their energy services page <https://www.syserco.com/energy-services>**



**Attachment B-2: Email from Syserco to Public Works showing Syserco wrote the language that the current meters are inaccurate and new meters are more accurate.**





**Attachment C: Sebastopol Climate Action report to council stating some members still had questions and concerns.**

**Sebastopol Climate Action Committee**

Meeting Report on Public Works Proposal

**Date:** 10/18/21

**To:** Sebastopol City Council

**From:** Sebastopol Climate Action Committee  
Josho Somine, Co-Chair

In our most recent meeting on 10/13/21, the Sebastopol Climate Action Committee (SCAC) voted to support and recommend the proposed 'Comprehensive Energy Efficiency, Water Conservation, and Solar PV Project', as presented by Dante Del Prete, Sebastopol Public Works Superintendent, along with consultants from Syserco Energy Solutions (SES). The vote was by a decisive majority, with none opposed.

With respect to the specific proposed project scope relating to the public library, members of the SCAC suggested that power storage capacity (e.g., battery backup) would be a beneficial addition to the installation of solar photovoltaic panels, and recommended investigating whether the intended power purchase agreement (PPA) could be extended to include such a feature.

Some members of the SCAC felt they had not had enough time to fully digest the many details of the proposed project. Dante Del Prete has made a point of offering continued communications with these members, to clarify questions, resolve concerns, and incorporate further suggestions. The SCAC expresses confidence and trust in the diligence and good intentions demonstrated by Sebastopol Public Works and its consultants at SES.