

Submission Type: Rule Change

Reference: Accelerating smart meter deployment

Organisation: individual

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Comments: I am writing to express my views on the draft determination and rule for accelerating smart meter deployment.

I am opposed to the installation of smart electricity meters that emit radiofrequency (RF) radiation. We know that RF radiation is harmful because:

The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified radiofrequency radiation as a Class 2B carcinogen.

Since that time, more evidence of carcinogenicity has been found from both human and animal studies.

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), a global standard for diagnostic health information for health practitioners, lists exposure to radiofrequency radiation as a classifiable condition.

Many eminent scientists and doctors have expressed concerns about the effects of RF radiation on people and the environment. For example:

An 'International Appeal', signed by 248 scientists, states that 'Numerous recent scientific publications have shown that EMF affects living organisms at levels well below most international and national guidelines. 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. Damage goes well beyond the human race, as there is growing evidence of harmful effects to both plant and animal life.'

According to the 2020 Consensus Statement of UK and International Medical and Scientific Experts on Health Effects of Radiofrequency Radiation (RFR), 'The main risks associated with exposure to such (wireless) non-ionising radiation in the peer-reviewed scientific literature include: increased cancer risk, cellular stress, increase in harmful free radicals, genetic damage, structural and functional changes of the reproductive system, learning and memory deficits, neurological disorders, and negative impacts on general well-being in humans.'

Courts in different countries have made determinations recognising that RF radiation could be a health risk, even at exposure levels that complied with standards.

Insurance companies have recognized the risks of RF radiation.

Further, Australia's radiation standard is based on flawed science and does not protect the public. International Commission on the Biological Effects of Electromagnetic Fields (ICBE-EMF) has examined the relevant science and concluded that 'Exposure limits for RF radiation are based on numerous assumptions; however, research studies published over the past 25 years show that most of those assumptions are not supported by scientific evidence.'

I do not consent to the installation of smart electricity meters that emit radiofrequency (RF) radiation on my home. This is because RF radiation has been repeatedly demonstrated to have harmful effects on the body and on other living creatures.

The draft assumes that 'households will become smarter and more autonomous over time'. It is equally possible that the reverse will be the case as more people develop adverse reactions to radiofrequency (RF) radiation and take steps to remove it from their homes.

The first reason why I object to the roll-out of wireless smart meters is that they emit radiofrequency radiation. It has been scientifically shown that this radiation is harmful to people and the environment. For example, biological changes that scientists have shown to occur from exposure. These include:

DNA damage

changes to neurotransmitters and hormones, including a reduction in melatonin

changes to cell behaviour, including increased levels of heat shock proteins and calcium ion efflux

breaches of the blood-brain-barrier

cell proliferation

and oxidative stress.

I am also opposed to the roll-out of radiation-emitting smart meters because of the harm they do to people with electromagnetic hypersensitivity(EHS). For example, EHS is an allergic-type reaction to exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs), including RF radiation.

It results in symptoms of mild to extreme discomfort and impairment, including:

headaches

sleep problems

fatigue

tinnitus

concentration and memory problems

nausea and digestive problems

skin redness and burning

pain

behaviour problems

depression

anxiety

and irritability.

Radiation-emitting smart meters are particularly problematic for people with electromagnetic hypersensitivity. For example people unable to work in environments with wireless equipment;

people unable to travel on public transport with WiFi;

people unable to teach, work as teachers' aids or learn in schools with WiFi;

people unable to enter public buildings – libraries, government offices, businesses, retail outlets, medical facilities, entertainment venues and so on – with WiFi;

people wrapping themselves in shielding material, shielding their homes, wearing shielded clothing etc in an effort to prevent symptoms from exposure;

people moving homes to find less-exposed places for their families to live;

people travelling Australia in search of low-radiation environments in which to feel comfortable.

These are not isolated scenarios. Many people are affected by exposure internationally and estimates of prevalence range from 1.5% to 13.3% of the population.

I do not believe it is appropriate for electricity companies to be collecting data about people's electricity usage and sharing it with third parties.

This is because it cannot be assumed that all customers want to have their data shared with third parties, especially when it will contain sensitive information, including information about a family's equipment, activities and the timing of their movements in and out of the home;

this accumulated data is vulnerable to hacking and there is every reason to expect that sensitive personal details will end up on the dark web, as has been the case with other examples of data hacking in recent years;

people have the right to be consulted about how their personal data will be used.

I do not consent to any electricity company collecting data about my electricity usage and sharing it with third parties without my written consent.

The legislation must be changed to ensure that all wireless smart meters are labelled with information that they emit radiofrequency radiation that is a Class 2B carcinogen.

The legislation must require electricity companies to compensate customers for any harm caused by their RF-radiation-emitting smart meters.

The legislation must require electricity companies to have insurance that covers them for harm caused by wireless smart meters.

The legislation must be changed to require electricity companies to roll out non-radiation-emitting smart meters.

The legislation must be changed to require electricity companies to obtain written consent for sharing data obtained by their smart meters.

The number of notices that retailers send to customers before a new meter deployment should not be reduced from two to one. The minimum number of business days required for notices should also not be reduced from what is currently required.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments.