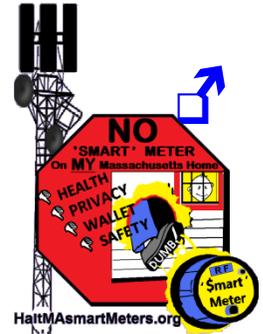


## MASS. BRACES FOR AFTERSHOCKS: WORCESTER, 'SMART' METER EPICENTER

The [Worcester City Council](#) may be [on track to challenge](#) the implementation of [National Grid and DPU, 'smart' meter pilot](#). According to Attorney General Coakley, who failed in her attempt to persuade the DPU not to approve the pilot, the cost to deploy in Massachusetts is approximately [\\$7.6 Billion](#). Ratepayers will foot the bill via tariffs and rate increases.



Due to growing [public outcry](#), the Worcester [Public Service and Transportation Committee](#) invited public comment at the 8/21/13 hearing; one event that precipitated the invitation was the questionable content of the National Grid "[Guide to Safety and Security](#)" ([PDF here](#)) submitted to the Council in July. HaltMAsmartMeters prepared, submitted and referred to [this rebuttal](#) during the hearing.

In an odd turn of events, [Councilor Kathleen Toomey who requested](#) the health and safety information in April recused herself shortly after the 8/21 hearing began.

[Phil Palmeiri](#), Chair of the committee called for a larger public hearing in thirty or so days. He wrapped up the evening by chastising National Grid, "**You've got the software and you can't cut a lawn. To gain people's confidence you've got a long way to go.**"

[Councilor Frederick Rushton](#) requested specific, reliable, sourced information on 'smart' meters and microwave antennae. He noted that as a lawyer he is aware that with the large sums of money involved, statistics are often be spun, speaking to the questionable validity of the Richard Tell, Inc. "[Guide to Safety and Security](#)" charts comparing radiation levels of in-home devices at various distances. He requested that National Grid provide FCC, FDA or WHO corroborating data.

[Bill Jones, National Grid Director of the Smart Energy Solutions](#) pilot did not pick up the softball lobbed at him by Palmeiri that state-wide deployment is a 'ways off.' (In fact, [in July, Jones specified](#) the imminent timeline and pilot/deployment overlap i.e. "As our Massachusetts pilot progresses towards rollout..." What this means is that 'smart' meters, soon to be deployed on every Massachusetts home will add to the 40M already deployed in the U.S. unless grassroots action puts the brakes on the steamrolling initiative.

As the hearing closed Palmeiri asked Jones to list the consumer benefits of 'smart' meters. What Palmeiri was expecting is anybody's guess, but to Jones' credit he cited the only supposed benefit of 'smart' meters, separate from smart grid i.e. graphs available on the internet that show when and how much electricity a household uses. Jones however neglected to mention, that Massachusetts "Customers seldom visit (the) web portal," which [NStar reported in May 2013](#). Mr. Jones seemed pleased that citizens acknowledged non-meter 'smart' grid improvements.

The chamber was packed with Worcester residents, local reporters, employees of National Grid and members of HaltMAsmartMeters.org (HMSM). Representative Steve DeNatale (D) Fitchburg, a vocal questioner of 'smart' meters deployment was able to wait only 2 of the 2 hours and 15 minutes of 'non-smart' agenda items. He departed without testifying.

A [video](#) of the 3.5 hour meeting [and agenda with attachments](#) are posted on Worcester.gov. A few of the 'smart' meters and their infrastructure issues addressed by the speakers:

- *Janet Johnson*: 2 1/2 hours in a fully 'smart' deployed Worcester neighborhood caused her to become very ill. (2.12 - e.g. *Johnson's testimony appears on the [video](#) at 2 hrs 12 mins*)
- *Patricia Burke*: National Grid's contention that 'smart' meters operate outside is false i.e. a major component is communication with, and control of home appliances and thermostats.

- Inadequate FCC 'guidelines' account only for thermal effects (when microwaves actually starts to cook tissue) but that evidence is mounting showing numerous, adverse effects well below the 'thermal threshold.' (2.21:45)
- *John Dick: solar producers (he is one) are being penalized* (in 'smart' deployed Arizona).
  - His wife or child may be affected by RF even if he isn't,
  - Rampant Worcester 'smart' meter pilot installation without permission
  - He called for another *hearing*. (2.29)
- *Tina Fallstrom, a Tatnuck Tower abutter*: recounted the experience of an acquaintance who tried to 'opt out' of 'smart' meter installation and was still unsuccessful after five attempts.
  - She submitted a photo of the disturbing "Radio frequency fields beyond this point may *exceed the FCC general public exposures limit*" sign recently mounted at the Tory Fort/Cooks Pond substation.
  - [Quoted](#) Norbert Hankin, EPA, Center for Science and Risk Assessment, Radiation Protection Division:
    - "The FCC's exposure guideline is considered protective of effects arising from a thermal mechanism but not from all possible mechanisms. Therefore, the generalization by many that the guidelines protect human beings from harm by any or all mechanisms is not justified."(2.37)
- *Clare Donegan*: a July HMSM survey showing 87% of those with confirmed 'smart' meters did not know they had a 'smart' meter and ZERO percent knew they are participants in the Worcester 'smart' pilot program (see below).
  - National Grid, at the hearing did not provide a copy of its [letter](#) informing ratepayers they have the ability to 'opt out' of a 'smart' meter
    - NOTE: of 'opting out' the 'opt out' letter states only "We have enclosed some important information for you to review." The unique (in Massachusetts) Worcester passive uninformed 'opt out' vs. informed 'opt in' was discussed at length separate from Donegan's comments. (2.44)
- *Leslie Saffer*: applauded CT's no 'smart' meter stance (per action taken by their AG)
  - Attorney General Martha Coakley's strongly opposes the Worcester 'smart' pilot program. (2.51:50)
- *Dr. Deborah Moore*, who spearheaded the "When in doubt, leave it out" campaign against fluoridating Worcester water:
  - There are no exposure studies of the long term effects
  - Asked "How much exposure is too much exposure?" (2.56)
- *Mo Bergman*: privacy & security,
  - People unknown to him will be able to detect the status of security systems
  - The danger/radiation sign (see Tina above) instantly negatively impacted surrounding property values (3.00)
- *Tim Sullivan*, whose family home is very close to the proposed five-antennae, 90 foot Tatnuck WiMax/microwave tower spoke briefly but poignantly of four plus years of National Grid's broken promises. The substation transformers have been moved 25' closer to his home and he is now plagued by a constant audible hum/buzz.
  - He closed with "I've learned over the years not to trust them at all."
  - Rushton followed up chastising National Grid "You have been a terrible neighbor to that neighborhood."
  - Palmeiri ordered that National Grid provide the committee with a weekly maintenance update "so that we know what you are doing." (3:06)
- *John Provost*: Webster Square towers may have pattern that the top two floors, nearest the cell phone antennae should be investigated.
  - "When in Doubt, Leave it OUT" (3:12)