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Opting out:

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Last week, in response to customer concerns, PG&E announced that residential electric and gas customers will have the option to continue using their traditional analog meter or have a SmartMeter installed at their home. The final decision to provide customers with an opt-out option was made by the California Public Utilities Commission.

According to Brandi Ehlers, PG&E spokesperson for the North Coast, the opt-out process is just beginning. "We have about 92,000 on the delay list," says Ehlers, meaning that those customers have self-identified as not wanting the new meters installed. The list of those customers has not been broken down by area. "In our CPUC filings in March of last year, we anticipated 145,000 customers will take advantage of the opt-out program," says Ehlers.

The CPUC's final decision requires customers who opt-out of the program to pay a \$75 initial setup charge and a \$10 monthly charge. This will cover the costs of manual meter-reading and associated operational and billing issues. Income-qualified customers will pay a \$10 initial setup charge and \$5 per month.

Approximately 70 percent of the new gas and electric meters have been installed in Mendocino County. "We have a total of about 52,000 meters in the county, with about 38,000 electric and 14,000 gas meters installed," says Ehlers. About 85 percent of gas meters have been switched over to the new SmartMeters.

In the city of Ukiah, customers are primarily gas meter users. They are

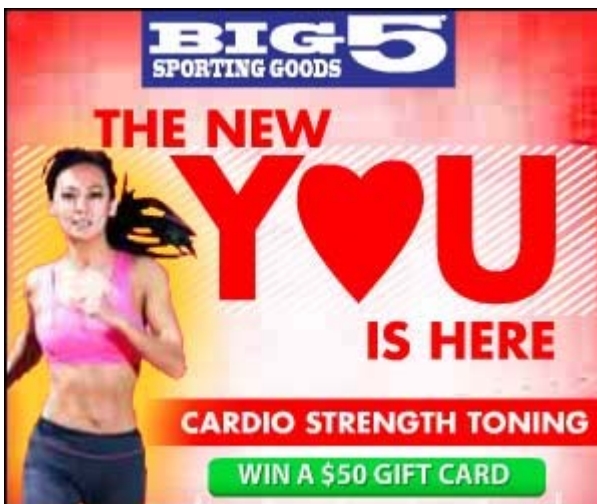
also eligible to opt out. Ehler emphasizes that customers will not receive multiple charges if they have both electric and gas meters at their residence. "If there are two meters there will be only one opt-out charge and the one single monthly fee - even if you have two meters," she explains.

For customers choosing to opt out, a meter reader will continue to come to their homes and read their meter on a monthly basis. The deadline for

customers to submit their request is May 1 of this year. Though the details are not clear, Ehler states there will be ways for customers to opt out beyond the May 1 deadline, but urges customers to contact PG&E before the date expires. "I'm sure customers will be able to opt out after May 1, and I'm sure we'll be able to offer analog meters to customers in the future. We're hoping that customers let us know so that we can continue deploying SmartMeters to those customers that want them," she explains.

There is still mounting concern regarding safety and privacy issues relating to the deployment of SmartMeters. Josh Hart, director of the grass roots Stop Smart Meters!, told the CPUC that the utility's customers should not pay the monthly fees, as the group feels the fees are already being borne by customers in their utility charges. The CPUC has stated it will be monitoring program costs and that customer fees could be adjusted in the future. The CPUC has also discussed the possibility of whether it would allow whole communities to opt out of the program. Currently, nearly 50 local and county governments have asked for a moratorium on SmartMeters because of looming questions regarding their safety. "Why should we have to pay to protect ourselves?," says local activist Greg Krouse, who has been a vocal opponent of SmartMeters since their initial rollout.

The Stop SmartMeters group is urging SmartMeter opponents to delay their opt-out contact with PG&E, because they believe that the service fee will not stand up to legal scrutiny. But for those who feel they have developed health issues related to SmartMeters - everything from interference with



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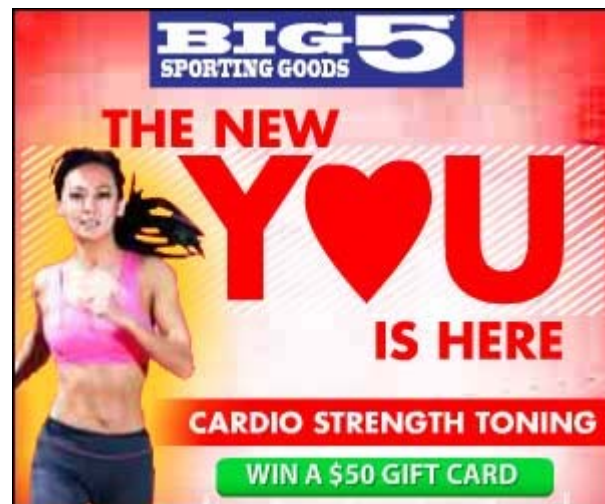
pacemakers to tinnitus, increase in seizures and debilitating headaches, the question remains whether a single individual's removal of a SmartMeter at their home will sufficiently reduce symptoms if nearby neighbors elect to use the new meters.

Privacy is another concern. Though PG&E clearly states that customers own their data, questions abound regarding how much information could be gleaned from a customer's daily usage patterns, and how safe a family's usage patterns are from hacking or other scrutiny. A 2010 Reuters interview with Martin Pollock of Siemens Energy states that the metering service giants "have the technology to record (energy consumption) every minute, second, microsecond." He goes on to say, "From that, we can infer how many people are in the house, what they do, whether they're upstairs, downstairs, do you have a dog, when do you habitually get up, when did you get up this morning, when do you have a shower - masses of private data. Granular Smart Grid data may allow numerous assumptions about the health of a dwelling's resident in which some insurance companies, employers, newspapers (when regarding public figures), civil litigants and others could be interested," he concludes.

PG&E defends its customers' right to privacy and the success of the rollout. "We've received customer feedback stating they are really enjoying the benefits of seeing their usage online, day by day, hour by hour. Protecting customer information is our top priority. For more than 20 years, PG&E has been subject to very strict CPUC regulations which prohibit disclosure or sales of customer information to third parties. We only use this information for operational purposes and to support our customers. Customer usage information is owned by our customers," Ehlers emphasized.

To date, about 9 million meters have been installed in California. PG&E anticipates the rollout to be completed by the end of this year.

To opt out of the SmartMeter program, visit www.pge.com/smartmeteroptout or phone 1-866-743-0263. For information on SmartMeter opponents visit <http://stopsmartmeters.org/>.



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