

Calif. County Criminalizes Smart-Meter Installations

By DEBRA KAHN of [Greenwire](#)

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Citing alleged health effects from electromagnetic waves, a county in the North San Francisco Bay Area has criminalized the installation of "smart" electric meters.

Marin County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed an ORDINANCE yesterday that deems the installation of smart meters a public nuisance in some areas.

The law applies to unincorporated Marin, home to about 70,000 of the county's 260,000 residents. In addition to electromagnetic health risks, the board cited concerns about meters being used to collect information about residents' activities, impacts on aesthetics and potential damage to amateur radio networks.

The board has asked the California Public Utilities Commission before to declare a moratorium on the meters, following the lead of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

A spokesman for Pacific Gas & Electric Co., which dismissed an executive last November after he admitted to monitoring smart-meter opponents online, said the company planned to continue smart-meter installation despite the ordinance ([Greenwire](#), Nov. 11, 2010).

PG&E's meter installation is being done by a contractor, Wellington Energy, and is supposed to be finished by the end of next year to comply with a state mandate. The towns of Fairfax and Watsonville, as well as Santa Cruz County, have also passed laws against the meters.

"We continue to be committed to engaging fully with our customers as well as in communities where smart meters are being installed or are about to be installed," utility spokesman Jeff Smith said. "Ultimately, continuing the program will allow all our customers to enjoy the benefits of them."

Among the benefits, Smith said, are faster power-outage detection, daily and hourly summaries of energy use for residents and alerts when a home is about to use enough energy to enter into a higher pricing tier.

Katharina Sandizell, a mother of two who was arrested last week for blocking Wellington trucks on a public road in Inverness Park, noted that San Francisco passed a law last year requiring cell phone retailers to post information on the radiation produced by each type of phone.

[ndlr: *Mobile Telephones (France): [Legislation concerning of the display of the SAR](#)*]

Smart meters emit more radiation than phones, she said.

"With cell phones, you can choose not to have them, or to turn it off when you're not using it or you can use a headset," she said.

"With the smart meter, it's just constantly on and you can't turn it off."

