

Guide for Smart Meter Legislative Campaign 2015

Introduction

This guide is designed for members of Maryland Smart Meter Awareness to be used in contacting their respective state representatives in Annapolis for the 2015 session. We have three main goals with our proposed legislation:

- 1) force the utilities to prove that there are extra costs associated with those ratepayers who reject a smart meter;
- 2) prevent the utilities from charging us for the smart meter program once the PSC approves those costs for all the ratepayers; and
- 3) halt the imposition of any fees on non-smart meter customers until the smart meter costs are built into the rate base. We have bills in both the Senate and House. The bill numbers are in the model letters to Senators and Delegates, respectively.

This guide works regardless of whether you have internet access, although using the internet may be more efficient. This guide will first explain how to determine the legislative district in which you live if you do not know this already. Then the guide will explain how to figure out who your respective state senators and delegates are. Once you have done that, you will have their contact information if you are using the internet. If you are not using the internet, you will need to get the contact information from the 800 number later in this guide.

Once you know who your elected representatives are, you need to decide whether you want to meet with your elected representatives or just write them letters or e-mails. By far the most effective action you can take is to actually meet with your elected representatives either near where you live (called an 'in-district' meeting) or in Annapolis.

If meeting face-to-face is not an option, then it is vital to at least write a letter to each of your elected representatives. We have drafted some model letters for you to use and put them on our web site. We did not include every reason why we are opposed to smart meters as that will overwhelm your elected representatives. Rather, we focused on the key issues that we think will present our opposition to smart meters in the most favorable light. You are encouraged to add your own personal touch to the letters. We make some suggestions in the Writing Letters section, below.

Some people like sending e-mail to their elected representatives. The jury is still out as to how effective that is. For the younger generation of lawmakers, it probably works, although it is less effective than written letters. For the older generation of lawmakers, they clearly give much greater attention to written letters.

Determining Who Your Elected Representatives Are

If you do not have access to the internet, you can call 1-800-492-7122 and ask them to help you figure out who your representatives are and how to contact them. If you have access to the internet, then just go to the website below:

<http://www.mdelect.net/>

At the top center of the page, type in your street address and press the find button. All your elected representatives in Maryland will appear on the left including your state senators and delegates. It will also tell you which district you live in. Each name is highlighted in blue. You can click on each name and get all the contact information you need for each of your senators and delegates. (If you have more than one delegate from your district, you will need to contact each one.) You will need this information if you wish to set up a face-to-face meeting, send them a letter or send them an e-mail. The elected representatives who we need to reach out to the most are the members of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee. If any of the members of these two Committees are your elected representatives, it absolutely essential that they be contacted as soon as possible. These two Committees will be deciding whether our bills go forward. The members of the Senate Finance Committee are:

Middleton, Thomas M. (Chair)
Astle, John C. (Vice Chair)
Benson, Joanne C.
Feldman, Brian J.
Hershey, Stephen S., Jr.
Jennings, J. B.
Kelley, Delores G.
Klausmeier, Katherine
Mathias, James N., Jr.
Pugh, Catherine E.

The members of the House Economics Matters Committee are:

Davis, Dereck E. (Chair)
Jameson, Sally (Vice Chair)
Adams, Christopher T.
Arentz, Steven J.
Aumann, Susan L. M.
Barkley, Charles
Branch, Talmadge
Brooks, Benjamin
Carey, Ned
Clippinger, Luke
Fisher, Mark N.

Frick, C. William
Glenn, Cheryl D.
Howard, Seth
Impallaria, Rick
Kramer, Benjamin F.
Lisanti, Mary Ann
Mautz, Johnny
Miller, Warren E.
Valderrama, Kriselda
Vaughn, Michael L.
Waldstreicher, Jeff
Wilson, C. T.

Requesting a Face to Face Meeting with Your Elected Representatives

As mentioned above, a face-to-face meeting is the most effective way to communicate your concerns to your elected representatives. Once you have determined who your elected representatives are and obtained their contact information, you need to call up their respective offices and start making appointments. You do not have to be a master of all the facts to meet with them. All you need to do is express sincere concern about smart meters. Personalize your reasons for opposing smart meters if possible. (See letter writing section for ideas.) It also is a good idea if you mention you belong to Maryland Smart Meter Awareness as it will give both you and our organization more credibility. If there is some question you cannot answer, note it carefully and tell the elected representative that you will contact MSMA and try to get the information. If it is easier, we will contact the delegate or senator directly. Once you have finished meeting with a particular delegate or senator, please e-mail me with the results at jlibber@gmail.com. We will need to know the elected representative's name, his or her district and what attitude that person had. If your representative seems really supportive of our efforts, ask him or her to co-sponsor the bill.

Of course, if you want one of our members to accompany you, you will need to coordinate with us so we can have someone there. As a practical matter, we have members willing to travel to areas within easy striking distance of Baltimore, Annapolis and the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC. It will be much harder for now to reach areas beyond that. To get someone from MSMA to accompany you, call Jonathan Libber at 410 358-4616 or e-mail him at jlibber@gmail.com.

Writing Letters

By far the most effective letter is one that is in your own words. We of course realize that many of you are very busy and need something simple and easy. And it is certainly preferable to have a mass produced letter sent than no letter at all. We have included some model letters on the MSMA web site

(marylandsmartmeterawareness.org) where you can just add the senator's or delegate's name and address, your own name and address, run it off and then send it to that elected representative. One compromise might be to take our model letter and change it around a bit so they look somewhat different. Here are a few very helpful ways to personalize your letter. First, try to include your own personal reasons why you do not want a smart meter. For example, you have someone who lives in your home with a pacemaker, and the FDA has warned that the rf radiation may interfere with its function. You might mention that you live in an apartment, and that there is a bank of meters on the other side of a wall of your bedroom. Even if you opt out, it will not help because of all the other meters. If there is a cost-free opt out, it will be easier to convince the other apartment dwellers to opt out. The American Academy of Environmental Medicine put together a list of medical conditions that could be adversely impacted by smart meter radiation. The list appears below. If you have any one of these conditions, I would mention that in your letter. Those conditions are:

- Neurological conditions such as paresthesias, somnolence, cephalgia, dizziness, unconsciousness, depression
- Musculoskeletal effects including pain, muscle tightness, spasm, fibrillation
- Heart disease and vascular effects including arrhythmia, tachycardia, flushing, edema
- Pulmonary conditions including chest tightness, dyspnea, decreased pulmonary function
- Gastrointestinal conditions including nausea, belching
- Ocular (burning)
- Oral (pressure in ears, tooth pain)
- Dermal (itching, burning, pain)
- Autonomic nervous system dysfunction (dysautonomia).
- Neurodegenerative diseases (Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis).
- Neurological conditions (Headaches, depression, sleep disruption, fatigue, dizziness, tremors, autonomic nervous system dysfunction, decreased memory, attention deficit disorder, anxiety, visual disruption).
- Fetal abnormalities and pregnancy
- Genetic defects and cancer
- Liver disease and genitourinary disease

In any case, your letter should be clear and concise and not more than two pages. Keep in mind that our state representatives have only one full time staff person, a part timer and an intern. With that staff they have to deal with the thousands of e-mails, letters and calls that come in. So a long complex letter is not going to be appreciated. Finally, you should ask them to respond with their position on the issue or the legislation if it has already been introduced.

When you get a response from your elected representative, we need to keep track of how they responded. It may be just a noncommittal polite response (e.g., "thank you for letting us know about this important issue"). But it might contain more information that gives away where the elected representative is coming from. Please e-mail me with the results at jlibber@gmail.com.

Writing E-Mails

While not as effective as personal letters, a quick e-mail containing the same substance as the model letter is certainly helpful. It does seem that the younger representatives have a higher regard for e-mail than the older ones. The same guidance for letters applies here, particularly in regard to personalizing the message. In addition, use the subject line to state why you are writing this e-mail. In the body of the e-mail you should state up front that you are a constituent (unless you are not!) and include your name and street address. Finally, you should ask them to respond with their position on the issue or the legislation if it has already been introduced. Again please e-mail me with the results at jlibber@gmail.com. If it is easier, just forward the response to me.

GOOD LUCK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!