

**SB 849 Amendment Bill Summary:** There is an urgent need for public utilities to provide customers with other opt-out meter alternatives, giving them the ability to select a meter of their choice that has no wireless capability, such as an electromechanical analog and an Ethernet connection meter. This bill establishes customer notice and consent to accept a wireless meter, the ability to decline and revoke consent at any time, and implements additional meter opt-out replacement choices for existing and future wireless meter installations.

#### **Need for the bill:**

1. Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) wireless meters use approximately 10% more energy to operate due to dirty electricity and increases - not decreases - the customer's monthly bill.
2. Wireless meters create significant cyber security threats and violate customer's property rights.
3. Wireless meters cause serious adverse neural stimulation risks recognized by the FCC, and RFR injuries from wireless meters or similar types of RF sources are well documented in the [11,000 pages](#) of testimonial evidence entered in the FCC record in [CHD/EHT et al v. FCC decided August 2021](#).
4. AMI wireless meters are physical safety and fire risks due to internal overheating and lack of grounding and surge protection.
5. AMI wireless meters have a lifespan of approximately [5-7 years](#), creating a financial burden on the utility customer.
6. Wireless meters enable power companies to obtain detailed personal data regarding specific electrical usage within the premises, which introduces significant data privacy and personal security risks.

#### **How the SB 849 amendment bill solves the problem:**

1. Establishes utility customer written notice for consent 30 days prior to installation of wireless meters, equivalent technology, and altered wireless meters; consent can be declined or revoked at any time. (Installs after 7/1/2023)
2. Establishes utility customer written notice for consent within 30 days of the effective date of this bill for previously installed wireless meters, which can be requested for removal and replacement. (Installs before 7/1/23)
3. Establishes utility customer written notice and consent for previously installed equivalent technology (such as a repeater and a collector) in or on the customer's premises, which can be requested for removal and relocation off the customer's premises.
4. Provides analog and Ethernet meters, which do not have wireless components installed or disabled, radiate RFR to transmit or receive, or are altered to add wireless capabilities, as additional opt-out meter options.
5. Provides cost protections to the customer and prohibits customer disincentives for those who opt-out.

#### **Supporting Background Information:**

The State Corporation Commission issued a [Final Order](#) for Case [No. PUR-2021-00127](#) on January 7, 2022, which approved the deployment of AMI wireless electricity meters throughout Virginia as part of the Grid Improvement Project. All utility AMI meters create high voltage transients (known as "dirty electricity") that put extra voltage on the electrical wiring. This extra voltage is a by-product of the switch mode power supply (SMPS) and can interfere with the AMI meter's accuracy and increase a customer's monthly bill by [approximately 10%](#) or more because it gives the appearance the customer is using this additional electricity. The SMPS performs AC/DC power conversion and is inside every digital AMI meter currently offered to Virginia customers for advanced electric utility metering. The AMI meter frequency emissions range from [2-50 khz](#) (see pg. 19 of hyperlink), which are in the same part of the electromagnetic spectrum recently recognized in 2019 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to cause possible [adverse neural stimulation](#) (pg. 157-159, paragraph 39-45 of hyperlink).

Additionally, all wireless utility meters use low level radio frequency radiation (RFR) for wireless data communications, which introduces significant data privacy, health, security, and safety risks. Anyone with the right antenna can easily [siphon wireless meter data](#) while it is being relayed and use it for criminal purposes. These meters also introduce low level RFR exposures in close proximity to the customer 24/7 and create an RF mesh "bubble" in and around **the customer's private property home, farm structure, or business environment that is inescapable, involuntary, pervasive and intrusive**. AMI meters completely violate the safety, security, privacy, and property rights of Virginians within their own premises. RFR is considered a toxic injurious air pollutant by the industry itself, is uninsurable even by the largest insurance companies such as [Swiss Re](#) and [Lloyds of London](#), and is categorized as a [Group 2B](#) possible carcinogen by the World Health Organization. Chronic long term exposures can lead to adverse physiological 'whole body effects', posing significant health and safety risks, especially to young children and other vulnerable parts of the population such as pregnant women, those who are [electromagnetically sensitive](#), or individuals with electronic medical implants.

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