SB 849 Smart Meter Utility Bill Amendment for January 30, 2023

VIRGINIANS FOR SAFE TECHNOLOGY (VA4ST)

- Requires notice for an existing, new and altered data capacity wireless meter installs

- Requires customer consent to install

- Requires customer choice to Opt-Out at anytime

- All costs waived for any Opt-Out choices selected

- Analog and Ethernet Opt-Out meter non-wireless choices added

- Prevents power companies to disconnect power if a customer Opts-out with a non-AMI smart meter

Summary:

My name is Mary Bauer and I am a retired radio frequency engineer with over 2.5 decades of experience working for the DoD. I am now the Technical Advisor for the consumer advocacy group, VA4ST. Our organization only supports this bill as amended by Senator Chase with the essential addition of other non-wireless choices for an Opt-out, including analog and Ethernet connection meters.

The radio frequency radiation (RFR) from smart meters is inescapable, unavoidable, pervasive and invasive. Smart meters violate our personal space with respect to physical safety, security, privacy, cybersecurity, and can adversely impact our health. Smart meters are incendiary devices with no ground and surge protection for fire safety, exposing customers to high impact, high risk liabilities that are subrogated to them due to these device design omissions. Yet, customers are coerced, penalized, and threatened with loss of power if they refuse to accept one of these electrically substandard AMI meters that are then recklessly installed under load and hot. These behaviors violate the Consumer Protection Act rights to safety, to be informed, to choice, and to seek remedy for unfair business practices. With all of these risks and more, wouldn't you want a safer choice? Please support this bill as amended by

Senator Chase. See our bill packet for additional information and if there are any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

There is nothing smart about an AMI smart meter. Quite frankly, they are an obsolete energy technology, using inefficient relay communications, too much power, and are too expensive for the customer due to their limited lifespans. They have to be refreshed every 5-7 years due to the computer circuit cards inside the meter. This is 5-7 times more changeovers than one analog meter's replacement lifespan. How is this in the public's best interest? The meter design can easily overheat, potentially resulting in smart meter fires, hot sockets, damaged internal wiring, and arcing and sparking when in use - without the customer's knowledge. Non-communicating meters have the same electric protection device omissions and are just as dangerous. Also, the remote disconnect switch malfunctions when high surges go through the meter after the power is restored, and overheats causing explosions. Fires are statistically underreported, but industry whistleblowers claim they happen very frequently and are told to not discuss it.

This happened so frequently at one point that large lots of these meters were recalled by power companies, like PSE&G in Pennsylvania and replaced allegedly with so-called non-defective meters. Why should customers be subjected to the type of severe and undue financial burdens and risks, if smart meters frequently explode, cause property damage like in Stockton, CA in 2015, health injuries or loss of life like Larry Nikkel in Vacaville, CA in 2010 and many others? The transition to AMI smart meters removed all of the electrical protection devices that electromechanical analog meters had. Analog meters never jeopardized financial assets or lives on this scale.

Power companies continue to tout that smart meters are safe with respect to 24/7 *cumulative* RFR exposures, ignoring recent case law that proves in the record they are anything but safe. The power industry relies upon FCC's outdated RFR safety guidelines, which have been deemed as arbitrary and capricious and not science based by the DC Court of Appeals in *CHD/EHT et al v. FCC* (decided August 2021). The power industry does not provide utility customers with the information they need to know to make an informed decision about what is best for their physical safety, security, privacy and health. They do not issue any kind of written disclosure regarding RFR on their meters for those who need to know, such as customers who have electronic medical implants, like pacemakers and insulin pumps. Legislation should be enacted that does this for the utility customer and provides a mechanism for choice to reduce RFR exposures and all the other risks they are exposed to, including how customer's data is unprotected in the air gaps of a wireless infrastructure that is so easily hacked. This was demonstrated on by 'Hash' the Texas Hacker during the Texas ice storm. To mitigate this huge problem, the utility industry should offer a wired Ethernet connection meter, with secure "end-to-end " capability to protect customers' homes, lives, data and physical

security. Utilities need to make electromechanical analog meters and Ethernet connection meters available as Opt-out choice immediately.