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Maine Voices: Your smart meter isn't necessarily safe or healthy

Maine lives are at risk from the noncancer effects of smart meter-induced radiofrequency radiation.

By Ed Friedman: Special to the Press Herald

BOWDOINHAM — The title of Marina Schaffler's recent column referring to the "wired world" ("[We live in a wired world, ignoring potential threats from our devices.](#)" March 20) is a bit misleading. The myriad of problems discussed in the piece stem from an increasingly "wireless" world. Typically, wired connections are safe – or at least far safer than radiofrequency-emitting wireless.

In this excellent column, the real electromagnetic radiation elephant in the room gets barely a mention. While the impact of cellphones, Wi-Fi and personal electronic devices results from voluntary choices (excluding secondhand effects), smart meters, by contrast, which emit radiation and gather detailed information, are mandatory.

Opting out of utility smart meters, for which one must pay a punitive or extortive fee, is not protective for those with acute sensitivities to radiofrequency and electromagnetic waves unless you live several hundred yards from your neighbor's meter. While phones and devices can be turned off, meters in Maine transmit 9,000 to 170,000 times per day, 24/7. One should not have to pay to avoid actual or threat of harm.

One reason that many people who aren't made ill by other wireless devices are becoming sick from smart meter exposure is that meters, essentially plugged into the back of your breaker box, radiate transmissions on home wiring, all of the time. This exposes the whole body, and everyone in the home, nonstop. Mainers' lives are being destroyed right now by noncancer effects of smart meter-induced radiofrequency radiation.

Below are well-documented problems associated with smart meters. Reliable independent and government-published findings on all topics are available via the Web.

- Warrantless collection of detailed data.
- Taking of property without compensation.
- Mandatory exposure to radiofrequency radiation from one's own and neighbors' meters.
- Increased risk of fire from devices.
- Discrimination against those with acute sensitivities to radiofrequency waves.

- Cybersecurity/hacking.

Everything electrical in your home has a distinct electronic fingerprint. Smart meters collect all specific electrical use data from the home: when you open the refrigerator, turn on the TV, take a shower, etc. Detailed information can be determined from these data, including when you are home, how many people are there and what you are doing at any given time.

Right now, whether or not these data are separated from the aggregate, shared or sold is in the hands of your utility while third-party marketing firms clamor for it and law enforcement can request it without your knowledge or permission.

Think of your smart meter as a video camera recording activity in each room, but in a different medium than film. This should alarm everyone concerned with intrusive government and upholding our Constitution.

Upward of 20,000 peer-reviewed publications demonstrate adverse biological effects from low-level radiofrequency exposure. Impacts are not limited to humans but affect plants and wildlife as well.

A well-written [report](#) by India's Ministry of the Environment and Forest on cell towers' impacts on wildlife, birds and bees reviewed over 900 scientific publications and notes that electromagnetic waves interfere with biological systems in multiple ways. Imagine your Thanksgiving dinner without pollinators. It would look pretty much like an empty plate.

Given the exposure of humans, plants and wildlife worldwide to radiofrequency waves – including the upcoming (and climate-changing) [radiofrequency barrage from space](#), courtesy of Google, Facebook, SpaceX and others – unchecked wireless proliferation becomes a human rights issue of epic proportions and a violation of all 10 points of the Nuremburg Code of research ethics principles.

Don't expect help from the government. Columnist Schauffler rightly points out the well-known bias found in Federal Communications Commission guidelines. In fact, the Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard recently released [a report](#): "Captured Agency: How the Federal Communications Commission Is Dominated by the Industries It Presumably Regulates." Unfortunately, the same can be said for the Maine Public Utilities Commission and pretty much all of its sister agencies around the country.

Lack of adequate regulation and enforcement is consistently driven by the influence of money in politics and, at the base level, by human and corporate greed. As Walt Kelly, creator of the "Pogo" comic strip, aptly noted many years ago: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

— Special to the Press Herald

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ed Friedman of Bowdoinham was lead plaintiff in the four-year smart meter health and safety investigation before the Maine Public Utilities Commission, twice appealed to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.