

Fulmore, Janice

E-2 Sub 834/E-7 Sub 1115

**From:** pradeep gajjar <pgajjar@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 26, 2019 4:10 PM  
**To:** Lowell, Kathy  
**Subject:** Duke Energy has made it difficult to apply for a medical waiver for smart meter installation

Ms Kathy Lowell:

I would request you to pass this message onto Chairwoman, Ms Charlotte Mitchell and other commissioners.

I would like to opt out of smart meter installation at my residence in Cary, because I am sensitive to RF in general and due to the same I make minimal use of my cell phone (only for emergency).

First of all, I fail to understand why customers aren't allowed to simply opt out of this deployment of invasive technology.

Secondly, why has the commission allowed Duke to impose a one time fee of \$170 and a recurring fee of \$15 if they want to simply opt out of this deployment? Why is this penalty being imposed when up until now, most meters were analog and were being accessed/read for FREE all these years. Just because there is a new possibility of reading meters thousands of time everyday, which only the company wants to do and it is not the wish of the customers, we have to now pay a penalty if we want the company to read our meter once every month (the way it was being done, till now)?

Even though Duke Energy claims that they have a program to allow for medical waivers, they are asking customers to jump through hoops to get this waiver. Here are the hurdles they have put up to get this waiver:

1. The forms for the waiver are not made available on their website. A customer has to call a special phone number and talk to a person to actually just get forms to apply for a waiver. In this day and age, when everything else is easily made available online (in PDF format), somehow Duke Energy can't seem to make this available.
2. In order to get the waiver, you not only have to request your physician to sign on the form, but the physician has to go to a public notary to sign in his/her presence. Why is it that a physician's letter on his/her letter head is not acceptable, when the same is acceptable when a physician refers you to a specialist? Which physician do you think has the time to go to a notary in their busy schedule? I would like to understand what fraud Duke Energy is trying to prevent by making it mandatory for a physician to sign in the presence of a notary?

I can understand that Duke Energy is trying to "save money" by not having to send people out to read meters. So why can't Duke Energy accept options such as the following:

1. Self reporting: Where customers read the data and submit the data on an online form and pay their bills on a monthly basis. Duke can always penalize customers if the variance is more than say 10%.
2. Charge customers on their average monthly historical data and then do an annual adjustment based on meter reading once in a year.

I am sure there are several such options if this is only a matter about accurate billing and compensation to the company for power usage and not a matter to needlessly collect data from thousand/millions of customers and their usage patterns to be used for purposes other than getting compensation for power usage, where "data" itself becomes more valuable than the power usage.

In closing, I would really appreciate if your office can work towards helping customers opt out of this "invasive" program, without having to go through needless hurdles imposed by Duke Energy, just to make it harder for customers to opt out.

Sincerely,  
Pradeep Gajjar.  
Duke Energy customer, Cary, NC.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10