



# SanAnselmo-FairfaxPatch

GOVERNMENT

## Assemblymember calls for Smart Meter health study

Health concerns over the wireless meters grow

August 7, 2010

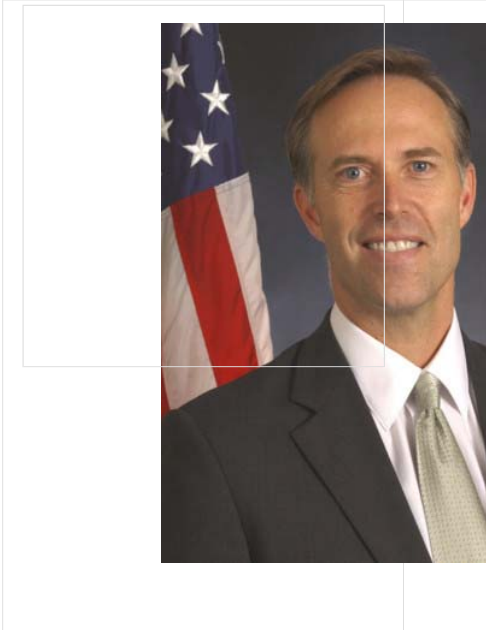
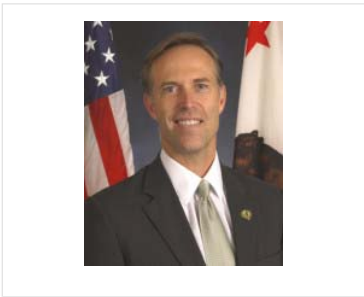
San Anselmo and Fairfax Assemblyman Jared Huffman ([/local\\_facts/assemblyman-jared-huffman-2](/local_facts/assemblyman-jared-huffman-2)) wants an independent agency to study the health effects of Smart Meters, the electronic monitoring devices that Pacific Gas and Electric Co. is installing statewide to measure the electricity output from each household and business.

[Read here about how Smart Meters work.](/articles/how-smart-meters-work) (</articles/how-smart-meters-work>)

The Democrat has asked the California Council on Science and Technology to determine whether Federal Communications Commission standards for the Smart Meters are sufficiently protective when taking into account current exposure levels to radio-frequency and electromagnetic fields. In addition, he has asked the agency to assess whether additional technology-specific standards are needed for Smart Meters and other devices that are commonly found in and around homes, to ensure adequate protection from adverse health effects.

Read the letter Huffman sent to the council at right.

Huffman said he decided to ask for the review based on concerns raised by residents in his district, which includes all of Marin and southern Sonoma County, as well as concerns raised by the Marin County Board of Supervisors, city of Fairfax and the Marin Association of Realtors.



Earlier this week, [PG&E announced they would voluntarily be suspending the Smart Meter program installation in Fairfax](#) (</articles/pge-announces-moratorium-on-smart-meter-program-in-fairfax>) because of mounting concerns in town over security, privacy, accuracy and, especially, health concerns. Fairfax also, at that time, drafted an emergency ordinance to ban the meters in town for one year until studies such as the one Huffman is requesting can be completed.

In the letter to Karl Pistel, chairman of the council, Huffman requested an independent, science-based study that would help policy makers and the general public resolve the debate over whether SmartMeters present a significant risk to public safety.

SmartMeters are being installed under the authority of the California Public Utilities Commission, following a series of decisions spanning from 2006 through 2009.

[Learn about the background and basic facts over the Smart Meter debate here.](#) (</articles/the-ins-and-outs-of-pges-smart-meter-program>)

PG&E and the public utilities commission maintain that electromagnetic fields emitted from these SmartMeters and the radio-frequency power associated with the wireless radios fall within FCC regulations, saying that SmartMeters emit fewer radio frequencies than the amount allowable for cellular telephones, microwave ovens and wireless Internet services.

Critics, however, contend that FCC standards are inadequate and do not take cumulative exposures and other factors into account.

Huffman said it is time to put the issue to independent scientists.

"If the FCC standards are deemed adequate, then the SmartMeter program can move forward with greater public confidence in the safety of the devices," Huffman said. "If the standards are inadequate, we need to know that so that we can get to work on better standards."

He said he supports the goal of using SmartMeter technology to help consumers become more energy efficient and achieve substantial statewide energy savings, but said it has to be done right.

**Do you think an independent study is necessary? Are you worried about your health from electromagnetic frequencies? Tell us in the comments.**

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