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# Sebastopol crowd decries PG&E's SmartMeters



CRISTA JEREMIASON/The Press Democrat

Sebastopol resident Deborah Tavares voices her concerns during a forum regarding PG&E's Smart Meters put on by Sonoma County Supervisor Efren Carrillo at Sebastopol Veterans Building on Wednesday. Tavares had Smart Meters installed on her properties in Southern California without being notified.

By LORI A. CARTER THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Published: Wednesday, April 21, 2010 at 3:00 a.m. Last Modified: Wednesday, April 21, 2010 at 9:06 p.m.

What was intended as a "balanced format" discussion about PG&E's SmartMeter installation in Sonoma County became a hatefest against the utility Wednesday night when it pulled out at the last minute.

#### Related Links:

- 'Smart' meters have security holes
- Cotati takes up Smart Meters
- <u>Sebastopol asks PG&E to put off SmartMeters</u>
- Sebastopol council weighs action on wireless PG&E n
- Sebastopol residents lash out against PG&E plan for 'smart meters'
- PG&E predicts more shutoffs with new meters
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#### More Photos:

• <u>SmartMeter Forum In</u> Sebastopol Sonoma County Supervisor Efren Carrillo said PG&E had promised to send a representative to participate in the Sebastopol forum, sparked by residents' concerns about the SmartMeters' safety and accuracy.

But Carrillo said he received a text message Wednesday afternoon from PG&E saying it would not attend. Because the format was changed to include include an open exchange with the audience, he said the company representatives "no longer feel they can have a meaningful dialog with their customers."

action on wireless PG&E meters "I do find it rather insulting that they would not participate in this format," he said, prompting jeers and Sebastopol residents lash out hisses aimed at PG&E from the crowd of about 300.

Carrillo organized Wednesday's meeting after he received hundreds of complaints from West County residents about PG&E's replacement of the old, analog meters with the new meters that beam digital information via radio waves to the company for tracking and billing purposes.

Without PG&E on the stage at the Sebastopol Veteran's Building, two representatives from the Public Utilities Commission, which has jurisdiction over the utility, took the brunt of residents' distrust and venom.

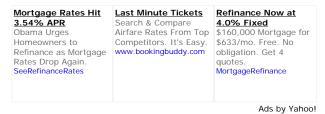
Critics contend the radio waves cause a range of debilitating health problems ranging from chronic fatigue, headaches, insomnia, anxiety and depression to heart problems, high blood pressure and cancer.

When one of the panelists asked members of the audience if they opposed the new meters, nearly everyone raised their hands.

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