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- [Gadgets](#)
- [Hardware](#)
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Gadgets [PG&E Facing Calif. Utility Investigation Set to Begin Soon](#)
[Michael Barkoviak](#) - April 3, 2010 1:34 PM



Investigator will determine why PG&E's SmartMeters have been inaccurate

The California Public Utilities Commission has finally picked an independent investigator that will be responsible for investigating SmartMeters installed by PG&E.

The [power](#) company has been under fire from customers who said their electric bills have significantly increased due to the SmartMeters. There is a concern PG&E either installed faulty SmartMeter units, or wanted to intentionally overcharge customers.

The switch to digital readers from aging analog devices that are relatively limited -- utility companies are seeking the ability to offer [better](#) tracked analysis of a household's power usage.

Structure Group has been given a \$1.4 million contract to speak with PG&E subscribers about their problems. PG&E must now allow the company to conduct its investigation while also continuing a [public relations](#) campaign defending and promoting SmartMeters.

The company said its SmartMeters work fine and hopes the investigation is able to reassure home owners. The commission will be refunded the fee by PG&E, with both sides expecting the investigation to take up to four months.

PG&E has a thorough Web site available for homeowners [to learn more about the SmartMeter program](#), even though it won't be available to all residences until mid-2012.

"PG&E [is committed to our customers](#) and to continuing our education efforts around the

benefits of SmartMeter [technology](#)," said Andrew Tang, PG&E customer care executive, in a statement. "Customers deserve to have confidence in their meters."

There have been other complaints from utility companies in other parts of the country, with digital readers under even more scrutiny.

"You can bet that Sony built a long-term business plan about being successful in Japan and that business plan is crumbling." -- Peter Moore, 24 hours before his Microsoft resignation



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