

Agenda Item Number 15: Discussion of Opt Out Program for City-Wide Water Meter Project

I am writing to support citizen opt out for City of Sebastopol residents, who are above average in terms of their environmental awareness and knowledge.

The proposed Sysserco Energy Solutions energy efficiency proposition bundle includes 'water conservation' via digital EMF water meters at great expense to the city but is not fit for purpose for the City of Sebastopol for a number of reasons. This premature decision making continues a troubling trend of autocratic council behaviors that are not consistent with residents input, views, preferences and lived experiences.

'Real-time water use monitoring' is in reality just a marginally more accurate billing method and not a useful way of conserving water in increasingly difficult drought conditions.

We are lucky as a city in drawing ~465 million gallons per year of drinking water exclusively from our city wells, sourcing city water is not a big problem in comparison to the rest of the county. It is not clear how or why water conservation would be an attribute of the very expensive and unpopular digital metering devices as claimed, or whether this is even a priority.

The replacement of approximately 1,650 of Sebastopol's existing water meters

With the proposed EMF meters and cellular transmitters project will be an unnecessary burden on the city budget offset by taxing citizens for infrastructure that is not needed given the existing mechanical meters are fit for purpose. What IS needed is better monitoring and maintenance of the mains water backbone of the city, which would be a far more sensible use of money. The city water infrastructure would greatly benefit from

increased leakage monitoring devices within the main lines.

Historically Sebastopol has voted against smart meters in the past, and we have many highly qualified and knowledgeable residents who have very valid reasons for delaying or avoiding the adoption of new technologies that still have unknown side effects. We are accelerating very fast into ever greater exposures with 5G/wireless radiation and EMF/Electro Magnetic Fields as a society with unknown side effects.

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/we-have-no-reason-to-believe-5g-is-safe/>

There is no rush or need to go anywhere near these new technologies locally at present.

The existing mechanical meters are durable and functional, it should be perfectly acceptable for the choice to opt out and not participate or fund this experiment.

City of Sebastopol council currently has a worrying pattern of rushing outsourcing and signing agreements without due diligence and of embarking on personal projects disguised as city business in a cavalier fashion. This may be a side effect of lack of human interaction with citizens due to the pandemic, but there seems to be an increased disconnection with the population.

The EMF water meter and home brew homeless outreach projects are both poorly thought through and executed, and should give serious pause for thought about how the city is being run.

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