

ORIGINAL



To: Arizona Corporation Commission
Commissioners Wing
1200 West Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2996

Attn: *ALL Commissioners & Chairman*

Re: **APS "Automated Meter Opt Out Program" (Docket # E - 01345A - Arizona Corporation Commission)**

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From: Eric A. Embertson
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Prescott Valley, AZ 86314
[Redacted]

AZ CORP COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL

DOCKETED BY [Signature] April 11, 2013

To the Chairman & All Commissioners of the ACC,

This letter is being sent to the Arizona Corporation Commission concerning the upcoming hearing on behalf of Arizona Public Service's "Automated Meter Opt Out Program" (Docket # E-01345A-13-0069).

First of all, let me say that I am in favor of the benefits that have come from advances in the area of technology.

However, when a utility company (in this case, APS) attempts to use that technology to FORCE its customers to surrender all informational data concerning their personal & private energy use habits by either complying with the new SmartMeter technology or face a huge monthly "meter reading fee", this becomes nothing more than a type of **extortion** by APS in an attempt to bring all of its customers into compliance with their data gathering scheme. A type of "penalty" being thrust upon the backs of the non-compliant who refuse to surrender such personal, detailed information.

My agreement with APS when I signed up as a customer was very simple: I was willing to *buy* their product, to *use* their product, and to pay the going rate per kilowatt hour of electricity that they provided to me during any given month. That agreement with APS has NOT CHANGED. I do NOT in any way agree to let them dictate to me HOW I use my electricity by authorizing them or otherwise complying with a system that allows them to change my rates based on WHEN I use the electricity I buy - which (amongst other things) is the essence of the SmartMeter technology. At a time where APS has [mistakenly & presumptuously] come to feel it is their right to know *how* or *when* I use their product, the analog meter that I have chosen to keep continues to give me that privacy which I choose to guard and protect, thereby maintaining a functional business relationship between APS and myself.

APS's claim that the proposed \$30 monthly fee is necessary because of the meter readers that must be "sent out" to read one's analog meter is patently absurd! APS has been reading meters for all these years prior to the recent introduction of the SmartMeter. The meter routes are already in place and have been functional for decades! The fact that the number of stops on any given meter reading route will now be greatly reduced through the SmartMeter technology shortening said route to only a *fraction* of the former completion time - **thereby saving APS money** - is not to be overlooked either. But the bottom line is that *contrary* to how APS is trying to "pitch" it, APS is not having to **add** meter readers to accommodate the analog meter customers. APS *knew* that the SmartMeter switch-over was not 100%. APS *knew* they could not yet eliminate the meter reading routes because of that very fact. Yet they are trying to tell us that that is exactly what they have done!! In light of such, if APS chose to prematurely & short-sightedly eliminate *all* meter reading routes, as they claim, that is a business problem that they must correct at their OWN expense, not the customer's!

Further proof that this issue truly has nothing to do with meter reading costs is borne out by the fact that all the SmartMeter customers are still being charged for meter reading. In other words, the income stream from "meter reading" charges has NOT changed a whit! It has not been reduced, and APS has not only incurred NO ADDITIONAL EXPENSE, but has REDUCED their manpower hours in the area of meter reading - a net **gain** for APS!!!

Given the unimaginable savings that the SmartMeter has saved APS by allowing them to REDUCE meter reading routes and times, APS should NOT be allowed to extort or to otherwise penalize non-SmartMeter customers in what is clearly - through their proposed monthly \$30 fine being masked as a "meter reading charge" -- an attempt to bring 100% compliance in the surrendering of personal energy use data from their customers through the SmartMeter program.

I am therefore strongly asking the AZ Corporation Commission to REJECT this proposal or anything which in similar fashion discriminates against or penalizes those APS customers who, for WHATEVER reason, may have chosen to "Opt Out" of the SmartMeter program.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Embertson (AZ resident, APS customer)