



OCTOBER 28, 2014 • FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# SaskPower's CEO resigns over dangerous Smart Meter program; should BC's Bennett be next?

After eight smart meter failures (minor fires with little damage and no injuries), an immediate independent investigation of the Saskatchewan smart meter program was demanded. Installations ceased, and smart meters were ordered removed from homes. In a highly critical report released on Oct. 27, Sask Power was found to have implemented the program without considering public safety a priority. **Upon release of the report, the CEO of Sask Power, Mr. Robert Watson, resigned immediately, without severance.**

**After more than 28 fires and failures** that are documented in official agencies' documents, what has BC Energy Minister Bill Bennett done? Nothing. In fact worse than nothing. *He continues to deny these "events" have occurred.* Has he asked for an investigation into the program, the safety of the smart meters, or to confirm that the public's welfare is BC Hydro's priority? No.

The BC government and BC Hydro rushed the implementation program, allowing no independent oversight into its procurement or safety. In 2008, the BC Utility Commission refused Fortis's application for the same program for 2 basic reasons: the benefits did not justify the costs and the technology was too new, unproven, and was likely to need expensive upgrading. Could this have been why the government, in the Clean Energy Act, banned BCUC from any oversight whatsoever?

BC Hydro has been allowed to ignore regulations such as those in the BC Safety Standards Act, installing meters on our homes that have not been safety tested according to BC and Canadian Standards, and denying any responsibility for the multiple smart meter failures. **BC Hydro has consistently put the blame on the homeowner.**

The BC Safety Authority, an agency that has responsibility for the tracking and reporting of electrical malfunctions and the enforcement of the Safety Standards Act, was **banned from reporting** on any smart meter fault they found or from forcing BC Hydro to comply with the laws.

pg 1 of 2... continued ►

**For Media Contact only:**

Sharon Noble • Director, Coalition to Stop Smart Meters • [director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca](mailto:director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca) • 250-478-7892 after 9:00 am

[www.stopsmartmetersbc.ca](http://www.stopsmartmetersbc.ca)

## **It’s time for a full independent investigation into BC Hydro’s smart meter program.**

**There have been far more failures and fires associated with the ITRON smart meter in BC than there have been in Saskatchewan**, as found in official documents obtained through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Yet BC Energy Minister Bill Bennett and the head of BC Hydro’s smart meter program, Greg Reimer, continue to deny any have occurred. Mr. Bennett has tried to mislead the public by saying that the brand of smart meters used in BC are not the same as used in Saskatchewan. While this is true, the fact remains that fires and meter failures have occurred in BC.

Sharon Noble, Director, Coalition to Stop Smart Meters believes this is not just a coincidence. “It appears as if the government did not want any oversight at all from any agency that has the duty and responsibility to protect the public’s welfare. This lack of concern for the safety of the public is alarming.”

A Fire Report was sent to the government in August by the Coalition, with examples taken from FOI documents of “failures” as well as fires that were not tracked officially. Noble believes it is ludicrous for the government to deny that fires and failures have occurred when Hydro itself has reports to the contrary.

**The Coalition believes that the lives and property of British Columbians are just as important as those of people living in Saskatchewan.** It is time for the government to do the right thing and end this dangerous program until and unless it can be proven to be safe.

----- 30 -----

### **For Media Contact only:**

**Sharon Noble** • Director, Coalition to Stop Smart Meters • [director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca](mailto:director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca) • 250-478-7892 after 9:00 am