

Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee- February 4, 2026

S. 213- An act relating to the use of smart meters by public water systems

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Background

Vermont Electric Cooperative has used Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) on our system since 2005. The current Power Line Carrier (PLC) system involves two-way communication between VEC substations and member meters. Over 99% of our system utilizes PLC for energy usage metering and outage monitoring. We are now in the process of upgrading our system over the next several years to a more robust Radio Frequency (RF) infrastructure. RF technology communicates similarly to cellular communications. The RF system will allow for faster, more reliable, and near real time communication with member meters.

Opt-outs

Members have the ability to opt-out of AMI meters. To do so they must fill out a form and agree to submit monthly meter readings. VEC will manually read the meter at least once a year to true up the member bill as necessary.

Opting out means the member must call in any outages, will not have access to SmartHub usage information, and will not be able to participate in load management programs that require two-way meters.

VEC currently has 40,726 meters on the system of which 62 are opt-out meters.

Cost and Statute Recommendations

VEC would prefer all meters be part of the AMI system, but we support members having the option to opt out if they so choose. We also believe that if members opt out, the associated cost of that choice should not be incurred by other VEC members. Those costs include the time for field employees to do manual reads and for office employees to manage monthly read submissions in the billing system.

VEC would support a change in Title 30 that parallels the language proposed in S. 213 for Title 10.

S.213 as introduced- Title 10. Smart meters; customer rights

(2) allows a user to choose not to have a wireless smart meter installed, provided that the public water system may charge the user for the cost of the alternative meter and any additional service charge required for the public water system to operate the alternative meter; and

Proposed language for Title 30 VSA §2811. Smart meters; customer rights; report

(b)(2) allows a customer to choose not to have a wireless smart meter installed, ~~at no additional monthly or other charge; and~~ provided that the electric company may charge the customer for the cost of the alternative meter and any additional service charge required for the electric company to operate the alternative meter; and

Thank you.

