



JANUARY 28, 2015 • FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# BC's Itron Smart Meters put lives and homes at risk — who is looking out for us?

Smart meters have **design flaws that have caused fires** across North America, including in British Columbia. In Saskatchewan, Oregon, Florida, and now Ontario, measures are being taken to protect residents. Meanwhile in BC, Energy Minister Bill Bennett and BC Hydro **refuse to acknowledge this fire hazard exists**, allowing these meters to remain on homes and businesses, putting our lives and property at risk.

In Saskatchewan, after eight meter failures and one fire, on July 30, 2014, **the government ordered all smart meters to be removed immediately**. Energy Minister Bill Boyd explained this action as being precautionary. "The concerns about safety are paramount here," he said. "We believe that any time families are at risk here in Saskatchewan, actions have to be taken and that's why we have directed SaskPower accordingly."

<http://smartgridawareness.org/2014/07/30/fires-prompt-saskatchewan-government-in-canada-to-order-removal-of-105000-smart-meters/>

In Ontario risks are being reduced. On January 22, 2015 Ontario's Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) ordered certain smart meters to be removed immediately, as a precautionary measure. The meters have remote disconnect switches and were found to allow water/moisture and other contaminants to get into the meter. This could result in arcing and fire. <http://www.esasafe.com/assets/files/esasafe/Newsroom/ESA-Meter-Release-FINAL-ROP-Jan.22.2015.pdf>

"Although there were no serious incidents reported in Ontario involving these meters, when we learned of the events in Saskatchewan we undertook a due diligence safety review to determine if there were any implications for Ontario," said David Collie, ESA's President and CEO.

In British Columbia there have been many meter failures and several fires according to official government and BC Hydro sources.

*pg 1 of 2 ... continued* ►

**For Media Contact only, not to be published:**

Sharon Noble • [director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca](mailto:director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca)

Bob McKechnie • [bobmck@shaw.ca](mailto:bobmck@shaw.ca) • Technical contact

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

ITRON smart meters have the remote disconnect switch, just like those in Ontario, and **they allow water/moisture to accumulate just as they did in Saskatchewan.**

In British Columbia there has been at least one fire that, according to the BC Safety Authority, was caused by water leaking into the meter, causing a short circuit.

Yet no one, not Bill Bennett, not BC Hydro, not the BC Safety Authority is even acknowledging the fire risk, let alone taking precautionary measures to protect us and our homes.

**Engineers** who, on a voluntary basis are studying the meters, **have found several serious flaws**, one of the significant ones being the remote disconnect switch. They are concerned that proper testing of the switch and of the meters themselves hasn't taken place and there is no certification of safety by either CSA or an independent professional electrical engineer – something required by both common sense and the law.

In the attached commentary, a retired engineer, Bob McKechnie warns, “The switch is critical from the safety point of view because if it fails to operate properly the disconnect function will not be accomplished and safety will not be assured.”

Our government and BC Hydro are playing Russian roulette with our lives and property. Who is watching out for British Columbians? Must people die before Bill Bennett takes action?



**For Media Contact only, not to be published:**

**Sharon Noble** • [director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca](mailto:director@stopsmartmetersbc.ca)

**Bob McKechnie** • [bobmck@shaw.ca](mailto:bobmck@shaw.ca) • Technical contact