

Policy regarding Smart Meter implementation for Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities

Background

The Los Alamos County Department of Public Utilities (DPU) is implementing system-wide deployment of Advanced Metering Infrastructure, consisting of “smart” electric meters which can record and securely transmit consumption data in specified time increments of fifteen minutes or less, and electronic modules connected to gas and water meters which have similar capabilities. Because the Utilities are municipally owned, and data collected or retained is subject to public disclosure under the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA), some individuals have expressed concern over potential public disclosure of their incremental usage data. It is recognized that the most effective approach to addressing such concerns would be adoption, by the State of New Mexico legislature, of legislation exempting customer consumption data from municipally-owned utilities from disclosure. Until and unless such legislation, or other effective means of addressing the concern, is adopted, The DPU will establish rules by which customers may elect to “Opt Out” of participation in this program. If such election is made, the DPU customer’s monthly consumption data of electricity, gas and water will still be subject disclosure under an IPRA request, but 15-minute incremental data collection will not occur.

Specific parameters of the rule will be as follow:

- DPU will take all reasonable efforts to notify every DPU customer that data collected by the DPU is subject to disclosure under IPRA, and if customers have concerns their incremental usage data may be disclosed, they will be allowed to “Opt Out” of the Advanced Metering program. Reasonable efforts will include public service announcements in the local media, bill inserts, and posters or flyers prominently displayed at the DPU Customer Service counters and other locations throughout the County where public service announcements are routinely posted.
- The “Opt Out” election will be offered to the account holder, regardless of ownership or occupancy of the particular location.
- A customer may “Opt Out” by submitting a completed “Election to Opt Out” form to the DPU Customer Care Center.
- Should a customer elect to “Opt Out”, the functionality of the meters and modules to collect and transmit incremental usage data will be disabled, and no such data will be collected or retained by the DPU. Only monthly billing data will be collected and used for account management and billing purposes.
- Customers electing to “Opt Out” will not have access to their “real time” usage information, account management features enabled by the Advanced Metering, or alternative rate structures that may be implemented that utilize the detailed incremental consumption data that advanced metering can provide. Meters will be read monthly at the customer’s location by DPU staff for billing or account management purposes.

- All new customers will be provided the same full disclosure regarding the possibility of public release of their incremental metering data and will be afforded the opportunity to “Opt Out” when establishing service should they choose to do so.
- If a customer does not elect to “Opt Out” when first advised of the opportunity to do so, but later decides they wish to “Opt Out”, they may do so by contacting the DPU Customer Care Center staff at 505-662-8333 and submitting the appropriate written request or form. The functionality of the metering equipment to record and transmit incremental usage data will be disabled within ten business days of receiving such request from the customer.
- If a customer does elect to “Opt Out” but later decides they wish to cancel their “Opt out” election, they may do so by contacting the Customer Care Center and retracting their previously executed ‘Opt Out’ form.
- If a customer that chose to “Opt Out” at a specific location moves the “opt out” election of the customer moving out will not automatically be transferred to a new location in the Department’s service area. The customer moving should submit a new election for the new location if that customer wishes to continue to “Opt Out” of participation in the advanced metering program.
- There will be no additional charges specifically for the election to “Opt Out”.