

March 3, 2013

FortisBC AMI CPCN Application Opening Statement:

Good morning Mr. Chair and Commissioners:

1. My name is Keith Miles. I am a customer of FortisBC in Trail, B.C. and I am an intervenor to the FortisBC AMI CPCN application.
2. Initially in August, 2012, I became aware of the FortisBC Inc. initiative to move towards the AMI program with smart meter installations at our home and in our neighbourhood. To this point, I was relatively unfamiliar with the issues around continual RF exposure, other than various documented reports regarding cancer causation related to cell phone usage. I had generally taken personal precautions over the years at home to minimize our exposure by turning any RF emitting devices off at night or when not needed.
3. I have observed through the CPCN process that there is a consistent stream of objection to this application from the public in the entire service area, including Municipalities. I am aware of a smart meter moratorium motion passed by the Union of BC Municipalities. I am aware of motions for moratoriums passed by the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, the Regional District of Central Kootenay, and the Village of Montrose. I am aware of objections from Provincial political leaders. I do not believe I have seen in the more than 800 pieces of information coming to me through the BCUC application process even one public communication supportive of the application, other than within the industry.

4. It is inconceivable to me that where there is substantial controversy and unresolved issues related to RF systems, that the company delivering our power infrastructure (FortisBC) could be, as appears to be the case in this application, insensitive and resistant to those concerns, would not opt for a less controversial AMI solution (as was done by Idaho Power), and would potentially choose not to respect those many consumers who would have concerns.
5. On security issues, I am not skilled in the details of how RF security might be compromised, except to say to my general knowledge (and I have some years of training through the Computer Based Information Systems program from UVIC), it happens and it would probably be inevitable for the AMI RF infrastructure, considering the widely distributed and accessible nature of an RF signal. I would suggest that data in a wired or contained network infrastructure has, in my view, a better chance of being effectively controlled. Therefore, I believe our family would be exposed in some fashion under an RF system to compromised personal information.
6. My subsequent research has revealed that RF and EMR exposure is a real and valid concern shared by many professional individuals and organizations. The matter of health effects seems far from adequately researched or resolved. It is frightening that, in the absence of definitive long term studies on the effects of AMI RF smart meter exposure, there is a potential for FortisBC Inc. (and the BCUC, in addressing the application) to make medical evaluations regarding electrical utility users exposure to RF frequencies, including evaluations for those with health risks.

I don't believe such medical statements and are appropriate, particularly when there are wired options available that would not present a similar risk, such as the PLC solution, available fibre optic networks, or other available communication networks. AMI can be accomplished in other ways.

7. How is it possible that a corporation, with primarily corporate and financial interests at heart, able to say there is no medical risk to our family, their customers, who will be unable to change the device, turn it off, or select another service provider? In considering the AMI project size, the huge investment by FortisBC Inc., and the 20 year term, it is fair to say that FortisBC Inc. would be dismissive of obstacles to their plan and less than responsive to individual customer concerns.
8. Consequently, I would hope via this hearing that the wide and clearly negative public view as it has existed throughout this application is respected and that the FortisBC Inc. CPCN AMI application is quashed in its present form, noting the likely diminished potential health effects in the wired solutions.

Thank you for your attention.