

Financial Institutions and Technology Committee
Opposition Testimony
HB2
Becky Pratt
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Chairman Wilson, Vice-Chairman Hottinger, Ranking member Maharath and members of the Financial and Technology Committee.

I am Becky Pratt, President of Stop Smart Meters Ohio and a Board Member of Ohio 4 Safe Tech. I am here on behalf of these groups to vigorously oppose HB2, which will mean a vast expansion of small-cell transmitters and smart meters. This infrastructure is dangerous, will invite hacking and data mining, and represents an unreasonable **invasion of privacy**, as well as potentially constituting unreasonable searches in violation of the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Technology can be wonderful and we can all agree that the Internet is a remarkable invention. But technology has a down side, not often discussed or even acknowledged by policy makers. When technological access is not implemented properly and safely, it causes privacy and health risks, exposing participants to illegal hacking and high levels of microwave radiation.

This bill will further enlarge our rapidly growing surveillance society, one in which Big Brother sees your every move: what you read, how much you spend, where you go, with whom you interact, when you wake up in the morning, what you're watching on television and reading on the internet.

Data bit by data bit, we are building electronic citizen dossiers, and this bill hastens that construction, as rural residents are all swept up into a massive digital data dragnet that will threaten their privacy as a result of real-time, live-feed surveillance cameras, listening devices, geo-fencing and the spread of sensors for the Internet of Things (IoT). McKinsey & Company, perhaps the most prestigious consulting firm in the world, reports that trillions will be made by selling the most intimate details of our lives for what is termed "Surveillance Capitalism."

It will mean exponential growth in the technological tyranny that tracks citizens' every move, as their lives are monitored, mined for data, crunched, and

tabulated in order to form a picture of who they are, what makes them tick, and how best to control them.

City dwellers and suburbanites have been increasingly living under the watchful eye of Big Brother due to the growing increase in faster broadband speeds and capability. Small cells and wireless proliferation promote faster speeds but they also enable mass and pervasive surveillance. They are becoming “tools for tyranny.”

The abuses of technology used against American citizens are far too great to cover in detail here. But as John Whitehead with Rutherford Institute explains in his work “Digital Trails”:

“Chances are, as the Washington Post reports, you have already been assigned a color-coded threat score — green, yellow or red — so police are forewarned about your potential inclination to be a troublemaker, depending on whether you’ve had a career in the military, posted a comment perceived as threatening on Facebook, suffer from a particular medical condition, or know someone who knows someone who might have committed a crime.

In other words, you might already be flagged as potentially anti-government in a government database somewhere-- Main Core, for example—that identifies and tracks individuals who aren’t inclined to march in lockstep to the police state’s dictates.”

Why are faster speeds required? Per a Gartner Report, over 70% of the capacity from faster speeds is needed for live-feed, real-time surveillance cameras.

Have you consulted the Rural Community to see if they really want what comes with FASTER SPEED Broadband?

Do rural Ohioans really want to live under the constant watchful eye of Big Brother, always surveilling, always documenting? Do they want Technocracy? Do they want to live like those in Ohio’s cities where: sensors associated with the Internet of Things (IoT) track everything and everyone 24/7, light posts come complete with listening devices and facial recognition, and license plate readers record up to 1800 license plates *per minute*? Do they want the proliferation of cameras using facial recognition software to build a “vehicle surveillance database” of the nation’s cars, drivers and passengers, or sidewalk and “public space” cameras that give government officials access to all surveillance cameras-- on sidewalks, on buildings, on buses, even those installed on private property?

Will grant money be used to install Wireless AMI/AMR Smart Meters in Rural Ohio?

If rural Ohio residents are clamoring for new utility meters-- which I very much doubt-- they are entitled to have access to meters which are safe. This bill should therefore be amended to prohibit smart meters from being installed on the homes of rural citizens. These meters not only threaten health, they also have two-way transmitters that allow the data mining of detailed personal information about residents inside the home. This violation of the most basic right to privacy gives utilities the ability to sell this personal information-- which is wrong, unconstitutional, and must be corrected-- not exported to rural Ohio using our state tax money.

Dr. David Carpenter, University of Albany, is on public record warning PUCO of the continual threats to the health of Ohioans that have been forcibly-- and in many cases deceptively-- exposed to smart meters. Nevertheless, PUCO has turned a blind eye to the medical harm, privacy violations, lack of surge protection, and fire risks posed by these meters.

Will the utility companies who plan to install these meters notify rural residents about the dangers and privacy violations they involve, so that residents can decide whether to opt out of such meters? And, even though Ohioans have the right to opt out, how fair is that, since poverty-stricken rural Ohioans may not be able to afford the opt-out? It is already a financial hardship for poor and fixed-income Ohioans in non-rural Ohio-- many must tolerate harmful radiation because they cannot afford this fee. Coming up with an extra \$360 a year to buy back your health, privacy, and safety is quite a financial hit. Furthermore, Ohio fees are the highest in the country and currently have no expiration date.

Rural Ohio just won't feel so Rural Anymore

People escape to rural Ohio now because it is beautiful and tranquil, with no sensors, no cameras, no RFID readers, no facial recognition, and no GPS tracking. This bill has the potential to forever change the beauty and tranquility of what it means to reside in and visit rural Ohio. I reiterate our opposition to HB2.
