July 16, 2025

To: Mayor Gillingham and Councillors

Subject: City of Winnipeg Council Meeting, July 17, 2025; Item 5. Opt-Out Program for the Advanced Metering System

I am writing to ask that Council consider deferring the vote on Item 5. Opt-out Program for the Advanced Metering System; Recommendation 1. *"That the City not implement an Opt-Out Program for the Advanced Metering System in order to maximize the full benefits of the AMI technology."*

I do understand the goal is to replace aging water infrastructure, avoid water bill disputes, provide the public and City with real-time water consumption information, and be cost effective. Technology has created some excellent opportunities to accomplish these goals - BUT

The companies recommended in the Diameter Report[1] are U.S. companies.

- How will tariffs affect the hardware and software being proposed?
- Can the City absorb price uncertainty and significant cost overruns?
- Is this the time to seek out Canadian products and support systems?

The following article refers to the Aclara meter.

CBC news reports **Wireless water meter failure - Toronto is on the hook for millions to replace failing water meter transmitters City spending $5.6M for 'initial' supply of replacement units** *https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-water-metre-failing-units-1.7356671*

Quote: *"In July, civil servants said thousands of radio transmitters on water meters were failing years ahead of schedule, meaning they can't relay usage from homes or businesses to the city. In a new report to councillors on the infrastructure committee, Toronto Water says over 150,000 of those units have now failed and the city will need to spend $5.6 million on the first wave of replacements."*

Now is the time to incorporate the needs of vulnerable members of the community in the water meter replacement program. A meeting with representatives of the disabled community could provide another aspect to the procurement process that, in the long run, will be the most cost-effective option for the City.

- The City holds the purse strings for a very large capital expenditure. This is the perfect opportunity for staff to find the best fit for taxpayers, the City's budget, and data gathering. Vendors wishing to participate will be required to meet the City's requirements and goals.

Under my signature is the presentation I made, via zoom, to both the City of Winnipeg Executive Policy Committee on July 8, 2025 in support of Item 5. Opt-out Program for the Advanced Metering System and the City of Winnipeg Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment on June 27, 2025 Opt-Out Program for the Advanced Metering System. Thank you for your consideration.

Joyce Fox, Ontario

[1] Diamater Findings and Recommendations Report. Quote "The City of Winnipeg engaged Diameter Services to provide professional consulting services for an advanced water metering solution business case."

City of Winnipeg Executive Policy Committee on July 8, 2025 in support of Item 5. Opt-out Program for the Advanced Metering System and the City of Winnipeg Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment on June 27, 2025 Opt-Out Program for the Advanced Metering System.

I am speaking from my home in a large city in Ontario to share my experiences with the Neptune wireless water meter roll out. I would like to spare vulnerable people in Winnipeg the ordeal I went through.

In 2014 I received a clinic diagnosis of electromagnetic hypersensitivity (EHS) from the Medical Director of the Environmental Health Clinic at Women's College Hospital who is also Associate Professor University of Toronto in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, and former Chair of the Environmental Health Committee of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. I suffer severe disabling symptoms when exposed to radiofrequency electromagnetic microwave radiation (RF-EMR) emitted by wireless devices, at levels far below Safety Code 6 guidelines. Safety Code 6 is not protective of people with EHS and I know many people across Canada, including people in Winnipeg, who are adversely affected by RF-EMR. The Canadian Human Rights Medical Perspective on Environmental Sensitives recognizes electromagnetic hypersensitivity. There are currently twelve hospitals in Ontario that have accommodation policies for people with EHS.

My home has been professionally remediated to mitigate RF-EMR. No radiofrequency emitting devices or appliances are in my home - all connections including phone, tv and internet are hardwired and the smart hydro meter was changed out to a non-RF emitting meter that is read manually.

In 2015 I received notice that my residential water meter was being replaced by a wireless water meter provided and installed by Neptune. Acceptance was compulsory or service would be withdrawn.

Neptune installed the wireless water meter and within days I suffered adverse cardiac and respiratory symptoms when in my basement and on the first floor of my home. Chest pain and respiratory distress continued to occur when I went into my basement where the wireless water meter was installed and resulted in a trip to the hospital emergency department. I couldn't get food from the freezer or do laundry; I was also experiencing respiratory issues on the first floor of my home. This radiofrequency is actually going through concrete walls and infrastructure.

I informed the City my health was being seriously compromised by the wireless water meter radiofrequency emissions and the City returned my original mechanical water meter and I had no further adverse health incidents and could enjoy and work in my basement and first floor again. The water meter is read manually each payment cycle at no charge to me.

In 2021 the City notified me that Neptune would install a new water meter and run a wire to an antenna on my property outside my home. My property is very small and anywhere Neptune may place the antenna would cause RF to enter my home and impede my accessibility and enjoyment of my property. I again refused their demand to change to a wireless water meter and contacted the Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Division and referred to the email correspondence with the City.

The Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Division advised there is a violation of my human rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code and I require accommodation due to disability that is suitable to my

needs in terms of my disability and without accommodation is considered a failure to accommodate - further clarification could be found in the Ontario Human Rights Commission policy on Ableism and Discrimination based on Disability. The City's stated intention to charge me a monthly fee to have the meter manually read was also addressed and the charge would be deemed differential and unreasonable treatment by the Ontario Human Rights Commission – the City waived the charge.

I encourage the committee to ask the staff to consult with vulnerable residents to develop a fulsome opt-out program.

In closing, is risk of litigation assumed by Committee Members and City Council by denying people an opt-out option to this wireless water meter project?

Thank you. Joyce Fox