

Testimony of Matthew B. in the
DTE Advanced (Smart) Meter Opt-Out Case, U-17053

What follows are the relevant portions of the testimony Matthew B. offered in the DTE opt-out case, [U-17053](#). The judge refused to allow any of this health testimony, stating that it was impermissible because the only thing to be decided at the hearing was whether DTE's proposed radio-off smart meter opt-out fulfilled cost-of-service principles. An appeal has been filed an appeal with the Michigan Court of Appeals.

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF MATTHEW BEN-BASSAT

Q. How long have you lived at your current residence?

A. I have lived in my home 15 years. I rent.

Q. What do you do for a living?

A. I worked as a builder and carpenter. I've done that for about 35 years.

Q. When was a smart meter installed on your home?

A. I believe it was later in July.

Q. Did you know it had been installed on your home?

A. No. But a few days after I believe it was installed, I went out to check and there was a smart meter.

Q. Why did you go out to check?

A. Because I had intense ringing in my ears. I also felt extremely agitated and really wired.

Q. So did you know about smart meters?

A. Yes. A friend of mine had told me about them, to pay attention to them. I didn't go too far with it as far as researching what he said. I talked with a few electricians.

Q. So were you worried about the smart meters?

A. I was concerned, because I felt like it was a way for the electric companies to monitor my personal habits, even knowing if I was home or not.

Q. Were you worried about the health aspects of smart meters?

A. I was concerned about it because of what my friend said, but I didn't make it important enough to research or follow it.

Q. What happened to your health after the smart meter was installed?

A. I started experiencing almost complete sleeplessness, intense insomnia. I also felt electrical shooting pains through different parts of the body. You know, I have experienced those pains before that, but never at the frequency or intensity that I began to experience now. I am one of those people who pays attention to everything, birds, animals, air, water. So when something changes in my body, I feel it.

One thing I found that was happening a lot, I felt like I couldn't leave the house, like I couldn't move my body right. It was like someone was moving my robot-body with a stick. My brain didn't feel right. Sometimes I couldn't even move my body. Usually there was extreme nausea right before I couldn't move. But I've never thrown up.

Q. What did you do when you couldn't move or could barely move?

A. I would try to drink some water, and then I would try to get out of my house.

Q. How did you get out of the house if you couldn't move or you could barely move?

A. I'd pray. It would take a little bit, but I could get out of the house.

Q. How did you feel once you left the house?

A. I felt better by the second. Two to three hundred feet from the house, I felt much better. I am really sensitive. I can feel the energy off my neighbors' smart meters. But the ringing in my ears doesn't go away. It does go away on sunny days when the sky is clear if I'm outside. But I always hear it in my house.

Q. Do you experience any other health problems or symptoms from the smart meter?

A. There are days when I go into Lowe's, I am going to throw up, and I have to leave.

When I'm outside, I feel fine, but as soon as I get home

At home, I also experience a strong, dull pressure at my occiput, wrapping around to the temple on the left side of my head. Also, I feel almost angry, there's a mood fluctuation. I never used to be any angry person. I'm not saying I've never been angry, but the ongoing consistency of the anger, it's become epic.

Q. Do you experience any other health problems or symptoms from the smart meter?

A. I feel a sick to my stomach feeling when I walk by a bunch of smart meters all lined up on a wall. I get pain in my forearms, it is excruciating, a crush, like my arm is being squeezed by a clamp and then released. I can experience that other times near meters, too, not just near a bunch of them.

The artery going up the left side of my neck pulses and swells. It is painful, too, not a sharp nerve pain, it's pretty dull, but it concerns me. I often get the occiput one at the same time.

I get numbness in my fingers and toes. I have experienced this numbness before, but it is much more exaggerated now.

I get an intense pain in my heel and Achilles. I feel it when I get home. At night, it's almost crippling.

I am so fatigued because I cannot sleep. It's like being tortured. I don't fall asleep.

I can't focus.

My teeth are in a lock-down bite when I sleep.

Q. How do you know it is smart meters that are affecting your health?

A. I wasn't feeling like this before. I was out of my home one day, and I came home, and suddenly felt all these sensations. Like I said above, after a few days of feeling so bad, I went out and checked my meter.

Q. Did you have any health problems prior to the installation of smart meters? If so, what were they and when did they begin?

A. No. My body is really healthy. I haven't been to a doctor in 20 years. I have been to the dentist.

Q. So, prior, no fatigue, no depression?

A. No. I'm happy most of the time.

Q. How was your sleep before a smart meter was installed on your house?

A. It was reasonable. The last three months, I feel like I've been in prison. I love life, I love nature, I love people, I love the house. But the last three months. . . . I tell you, if someone wants to mess with somebody, not letting them sleep is the way to do it.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to work and earn a living? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. Yes, because my sleep pattern is completely off. I'm unrested. I do a lot of ladder work, and it messes with my balance and equilibrium. I feel dizzy, nauseated, loss of strength. I never used to feel

that way==I've always been so energetic. Productivity is decreased by 25 percent because I am just trying to feel better during my work day. The exhaustion makes me depressed and unmotivated.

I have to go to Lowe's all the time. I have felt so bad in there sometimes that I have aborted my cart and left what I was going to purchase. Sometimes, I walk in there and have to walk out and leave without getting what I came for.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to interact socially with others? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. Some, yes. It affects my cognitive skills, speech. My head hurts. It affects my ability to interact socially because I'm not as attentive to the other person, listening as well, as I would normally be, as focused.

It's had an effect on my intimate relationships. I snap, I holler. I never used to do that.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to access public services, such as the public library, government offices? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. No, I don't go to those places.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to access religious or spiritual services? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. No, because I don't attend religious services.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to freely access health services? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. No, but like I said, I haven't been to the doctor in 20 years. I'm concerned about going to my dentist again.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to perform one or more major life activities not already mentioned? If the answer is yes, describe what activities and how the effects have affected your performance of these activities.

A. Reading, because my vision is kind of blurred sometimes and because I can't focus. Now, I don't read at home anymore. I was a big reader. Now I read in a café or in my car at a parking lot.

Q. Has your ability to live in your home been affected by the installation of smart meters?

A. Yes, most definitely. I do not feel comfortable or at ease in my home. Very unrested.

Q. Is there anything else you wish to say about how smart meters have affected your health and/or your life?

A. Since the smart meter was installed, there have been power surges when I flip the lights on, it's blown three switches so that I've had to replace them and blown seven light bulbs. Everything I have now buzzes: lamps, DVD player, portable massage tool, infrasonic QGM (which is an ultrasound machine). My refrigerators are just screaming all the time because the compressors are very sensitive to the electrical surges.

Q. How old is the wiring in your home?

A. It's Romex.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say about how the smart meters have affected your life?

A. Overall, it feels like something has happened to my body's electrical field, and a lot of things don't function right.

Q. What do you feel is a fair opt-out program?

A. What is even close to being reasonable is to put my analog meter back on. I can read my own meter. Businesses, everybody, should be able to opt out.

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