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KIUC Remains Committed to Smart Meter Implementation Complaint Filed to Halt Rollout Disappointing

Līhu'e, Kaua'i, HI - 3/19/12 – David Bissell, CEO of Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) said today that we are disappointed that a local smart meter opponent felt the need to resort to the filing of a complaint with the federal court in Honolulu on Friday requesting an injunction to prevent KIUC from moving forward with its rollout of smart meters.

“While KIUC is committed to the smart meter technology, the cooperative has said it will indefinitely defer installation of smart meters for the small number of members who are opposed to the technology and submit a formal request,” Bissell said. “We hoped this deferral program and our many conversations with the community about smart meters would relieve the concerns raised by the plaintiff and prevent this issue from ending up in the courts.”

The complaint filed against KIUC asks the court to stop KIUC's installation of smart meters, require KIUC to use an “opt-in” system for future installations of smart meters and have all KIUC members subsidize the expense associated with maintaining two separate metering systems.

“KIUC has worked diligently over the past three years to talk with members, answer questions and address concerns about smart meters,” Bissell added. “We have used our quarterly update meetings, board meetings, bill inserts, *Currents* magazine stories, news releases, and many other community presentations to share information and receive feedback. Some of that feedback led us to the idea of an indefinite deferral of installation as part of the initial smart meter rollout.”

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Under the deferred installation plan, each member will receive two weeks' notice prior to installation, and will be given clear instructions for notifying KIUC if they would like to defer. KIUC will take time to assess the situation with the few who defer and determine the most appropriate long-term solution without delaying the efficiency and cost control benefits of this technology to the majority of members.

The complaint, which closely mirrors a similar action filed against the city of Naperville, Ill., cites security and privacy concerns as the basis for its action.

“KIUC understands the importance of protecting our members’ privacy and security,” said Bissell. “It is important for our members to remember that KIUC has been responsible for protecting critical information and systems for years. Smart meters are new, but the duty to protect member privacy and ensure the integrity of our electrical grid is not. The storage, protection and sharing of members’ private information is strictly governed by co-op bylaws and policies.”

The smart meters to be deployed by KIUC will transmit data to the cooperative using encryption technology. KIUC will use the information to more efficiently manage its system, troubleshoot problems, and help members manage their electricity usage.

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