

## **Senator Coburn: there are numerous questions that must be answered about smart grid technology**

Following is Senator Coburn's response to a constituent's inquiry about Smart Meters. - December 8, 2011

Thank you for your email regarding the recent installment of smart meters in parts of Del City. It is good to hear from you and I apologize for my delayed response.

As you may already know, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (H.R. 1, also known as the "stimulus") funded the development of Smart Grid technology, and subsequent smart meters, at \$4.5 billion. It has been said that Smart Grid technology has the capability of monitoring electricity consumption, and bringing in a new era of energy efficiency. While I believe our nation's energy grid requires updating, there are numerous questions that must be answered about smart grid technology, most of which you raised in your email. Concerns relating privacy and property rights in monitoring and adjusting home energy usage (as well as other things) and vulnerability to criminal actions must be addressed. Any invasion of privacy or overreach of the federal government would be inappropriate, and I will strongly oppose it.

Furthermore, the feasibility of this technology has not been proven; yet politicians eager to demonstrate their support for energy efficiency (and spend your money) have jumped on the smart grid bandwagon. I firmly believe that politicians should not select winners and losers in the market-that responsibility should be left to American consumers who will purchase the most effective and efficient technologies through trial and error, and the free market. Our free market has time and again shown it is more efficient and effective than the government in allocating resources in our economy and that government mandates and subsidies prevent the full use of America's technological know-how.

In regard to smart meters in Oklahoma, a voluntary smart meter program was approved last year by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. As a member of the U.S. Senate, I was not involved with this decision. You might consider contacting the members of the Commission to share your concerns.

Thank you again for contacting me on this subject, and please know I will guard the privacy of Americans and the ability to operate households as they see fit. Please stay in touch.

Sincerely,

Tom A. Coburn, M.D.  
United States Senator