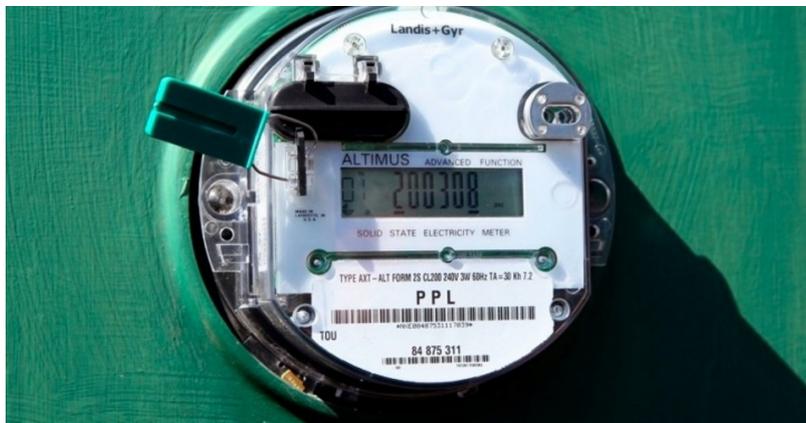




Written by [Alex Newman](#) on July 30, 2012

Texas Activist Who Pulled Gun on “Smart Meter” Man Speaks Out

When Houston-area activist Thelma Taormina was allegedly shoved multiple times by a man trying to install a controversial so-called “smart meter” on her home, she had already told the public-utility subcontractor that he was trespassing and to get off her property. When he continued to refuse, Taormina told *The New American* in an interview, she went inside and got her gun. That worked.



The incident has since become [national news](#). But amid headlines about Taormina’s efforts to stop what she described as an “assault,” little attention was given to one of the key elements in the controversy: the government’s attempt to foist “smart meters” on the American people no matter what citizens think about the devices.

It turns out that there are more than a few reasons why Taormina and other activists oppose the new electricity meters — and why they are willing to go to such lengths to stop them. “My main concern originally was the privacy — as far as I’m concerned this is a surveillance device,” Taormina told *TNA*, noting that the devices have unprecedented capabilities in terms of monitoring what is going on in the house.



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aormina with husband Nick

The devices, she said, also have the potential to violate the Fourth Amendment’s protection “against unreasonable searches and seizures” by giving officials huge amounts of detailed data about private homes. Such concerns have been [expressed repeatedly](#) across the political spectrum in recent years as the “[stimulus](#)”-funded meter installers fanned out across America. But officials have largely refused to address the criticism.

“Then I found out that these meters are actually going to relay information through the open air where hackers are able to get all of your information,” Taormina added, pointing to the vast array of data transmitted by the devices. While it may be illegal to intercept the signal, the government is not even capable of preventing identity fraud, let alone smart-meter hacking, she observed.

There are also serious health concerns about the meters, Taormina opined, pointing to a recent petition by activists focusing on those problems and seeking a public hearing. Numerous public health experts have [expressed similar concerns](#), but again, pro-smart meter authorities have mostly failed to respond



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to critics' fears.

The "smart meter" scheme is also linked by activists to the [deeply controversial United Nations Agenda 21](#) plan, which calls for a global effort to reduce energy consumption and even more severe restrictions on human activities — all under the guise of "saving" the planet from humanity. "It is 100 percent Agenda 21," Taormina said of the smart meter scheme. "It really is a way to control people."

Considering the myriad problems with smart meters, Taormina — the founder of a Houston-area 912 activist group dubbed "We The People" — was alarmed when her doorbell rang and she found a note "congratulating" her on a new meter. She was aware of the devices being installed in the area, but had already decided with her husband that they would not be taking one.

When Taormina finally saw the installation man — apparently a subcontractor, it was revealed later — she told him not to install the meter. The man insisted that he was going to do it anyway. After going back and forth for a while and being asked to get off the property several times, the man said he was going to call his supervisor. Taormina called her husband to let him know what was going on.

She told the meter man again and again that he was not going to install the meter. He disagreed. "Well, he shoved me out of the way — he literally took his hands and shoved me out of the way," Taormina said. She tried to stop him by putting her hand on the meter, and again he shoved and even "body slammed" her. "This went on like seven times."

According to Taormina, the installation man then began to call the police, which was fine with her — she wanted the police there, too. The man suggested she should call them instead, saying that by the time they arrived, he would be finished installing the smart meter.

"So I thought, well, I'm getting nowhere, I'll go in and call the police," Taormina explained. Once inside, however, she paused. "I thought, 'this is crazy,' ... so I went back into the yard and said 'how about I get my gun?' And he went, 'yeah right.' He didn't believe me. So I went back in my house, retrieved my pistol, walked out into my yard with it, and when he saw it, he turned around and he left."

Despite the impression given by "sensationalized" [local news reports](#), Taormina did not get the pistol because he was installing the meter, she quickly added. "I got the pistol because the man was way bigger than me, he was shoving me on my property, he was trespassing when he was told not to," she said, adding that the man was well built and over six feet tall, and that she is relatively petite at less than 140 pounds. "The only way I could get him off my property was to get that gun."

After the incident, the police showed up at her door. Taormina put her hands up as the police searched her, and she invited them inside to take her statement. Apparently the installation worker had called the police seeking to file assault charges.

Prosecutors later decided not to pursue the matter because the man "was trespassing" and "failed to leave when told to," according to a police report obtained by *The New American*. "But going through all of that was very concerning," Taormina said, pointing out that felony charges could have resulted in the loss of her gun rights.

Now, supporters of Taormina are urging her to press charges against the man, which she is considering. Mostly, she said, it is out of concern that the worker may treat other residents in a similar manner. "He shouldn't be out there working with the general public.... I was physically afraid of this man."

The Taormina household still does not have a smart meter installed, though some two million have



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already been set up in the Houston area. But for the power company, at least, the battle might not be over yet — the firm is now making threats about pursuing legal action.

“We are deeply troubled by anyone who would pull a gun on another person performing their job,” a CenterPoint Energy spokesperson was [quoted](#) as saying in media reports. “CenterPoint will be taking additional steps — including court actions — because what happened is dangerous, illegal and unwarranted.”

Taormina does not believe the company will act on its threats, partly because the employee was in the wrong. “They’re not only out there brutalizing people when they’re installing these things, but they actually have no right to even insist on the installation,” she explained.

But regardless of what happens, Taormina’s dedication to fight smart meters and raise awareness about the dangers has only grown stronger. Plus, state law, she said, does not mandate the meters — public utility authorities just decided to foist them on everyone without any lawful powers to do so.

“There was supposed to be consumer option,” Taormina explained, citing the law. “The [public utility authorities] virtually have broken the law because they’ve gone over and above our legislature and created a rule that mandates these meters, and they were never supposed to do that. Nobody is above the law. No one.”

Now, Taormina and her fellow activists are trying to reform the system so that consumers must opt in to receive a smart meter rather than opt out. “These people have broken the law and I am not backing down — I am not,” she said. “I don’t think that the citizens of Texas would be real happy to know that their bureaucrats are creating laws when the Texas legislature is supposed to.”

As the controversy continues and lawmakers start to get involved, reports indicate that public-utility authorities may allow homeowners to have the controversial devices removed if they choose. In the meantime, however, Taormina hopes citizens will educate their representatives about smart meters and the U.S. Constitution.

Photo of smart meter: AP Images

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