

[The Ohio Register](#)

[Duke Energy Fraud and Targeting: The Real Story](#)

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BY NICK ROGERS

STATEWIDE - Previously, TOR's Nick Rogers sat down to interview Vince Welage, a local technology expert who investigated Duke Energy's systems and identified multiple discrepancies. Vince joins Nick once again for this latest piece.

TOR: Joining me is Vince Welage, a local technology expert who has previously taken the time to be interviewed by TOR regarding his in-depth [Duke Energy bill study](#). Vince's career has centered on database application software development in the areas of accounting, inventory control, energy, and healthcare. For over 10 years, he was an Occupational

Health System administrator and medical IT analyst supporting manufacturing plant operations for a large consumer products company. He managed data access privileges to employee medical and disability records for 32 manufacturing plant health care units in North America, providing any required employee and medical history and/or trend reporting for plant managers and nurses. The topic of today's interview, once again, revolves primarily around Duke Energy billing, with specific focus on some extremely troubling claims made by one of the company's Ohio customers. Vince, thank you for joining us again.

Vince: Thanks, Nick, for the opportunity to discuss further the outcomes from the utility bills research. The study covered the period 2021-2024 recording the high residual cost effects from the 2018, 2021, and 2024 rate increase cases. At the start of 2025, active study members were moved to surveillance group status which is very common after a study of this kind has ended. I will continue to collect billing statements in order to track the inherent overcharges that result from the ongoing increases in customer fees (fixed + riders) causing the disparity in charges versus the actual kWh [kilowatt-hour] usage. In addition, I will continue to record the kWh 12-month average in order to help determine how practical it is for the homeowner to actually lower monthly energy consumption. The billing statements will always tell you what is happening on tariffs, fixed fees, and supply charges. For the latest 2024-2025 billing periods, monthly fees moved into the \$75-\$125 range for consumers. Monthly fees (fixed + riders) persist at unaccounted for levels at over 60% billed versus actual usage cost.

TOR: Not good...and all of these findings have come during the implementation of the [Public Utilities Commission of Ohio](#) [PUCO]'s "[Power Forward](#)" program; sold to the public on the grounds of affordability and convenience through "Smart" technology, but you've uncovered unsettling, adverse implications of the plan.

Vince: I'm spending more time on actual outcomes forthcoming from the Power Forward initiative approved by PUCO. The hidden costs and health implications behind the ongoing rollout of the Smart grid (specifically with the installation of Smart meters on Ohio homes) is very troubling. An

electric Smart meter is much the same as other Internet of Things [IoT]-based products like a Smart TV or Smart refrigerator; wrapped in privacy and security concerns. However, the Smart meter can't be disconnected and discarded unless the homeowner wants to lose total electric power to the home. Residential Smart meter installations result in both unwanted and forced surveillance.

There are four verticals – or components – working against a homeowner with the installed Smart meter: overcharges, surveillance, security, and health. Smart meter risks can't be suppressed by just turning off the two-way communication. AMI [Advanced Metering Infrastructure] Smart meter two-way wireless transmitting allows for the [remote access](#) management of in-field devices; like Smart thermostats, for example. Analog (aka traditional) meters don't transmit data. They can only be read manually. They use less energy. Analog meters are designed to protect the electrical system against [surges](#) from the grid. The patent for analog meters is for surge arresters. Smart meters emit radio frequency radiation or "RFR." RFR is biologically active [electromagnetic exposure](#) absorbed into skin. Smart meter installations can happen without any notification or consent.

In 2017, a letter signed by three doctors was [submitted to PUCO](#) asking that there be no fees approved for Ohioans wanting to "opt out" of electric, gas, and water Smart meters.

TOR: To no avail.

Vince: Correct. Aside from the expert medical testimony that supports the elimination of the opt-out fees, the utility companies still persist with the same punitive opt-out fees that have been imposed on customers in order to accommodate a supposed business need, but the fees have actually created undue hardship in terms of financial harm on many households for a long time. The Ohio legislature passed the Smart meter opt-out provision in 2016; almost 10 years ago. The individual investor-owned utility opt-out fees are determined by PUCO approval. The current Duke Energy "traditional" meter exchange fee is almost 50% higher than other Ohio investor-owned utilities. Those who are paying a Smart meter opt-out fee are facing double jeopardy, financing the grid through fixed charges and

riders for the Smart grid in addition to the punitive surcharge. For classic households with low monthly average energy usage, traditional analog meters are sufficient.

TOR: I am deeply concerned, personally, about Smart meter health implications. I know many other Ohioans are, too, but just as many people, it seems, are concerned about a Smart meter's ability to be hacked. Can you elaborate on how this is – or could be – done?

Vince: As the adoption of Smart meters and Advanced Metering Infrastructure has become more widespread, its appeal to cyber attackers has increased significantly. AMI meters are minicomputers that need frequent updates. Cyber security risks persist from hackers using backdoors or calling home mechanisms during software updates. Malware can be developed to target Smart meters. Once launched, the malware can take control of tens of thousands of Smart meters. The attackers then change the targeted utility security keys, pushing the utility out of their own infrastructure.

All of these new power grid infrastructures are essentially large, distributed networks of computers that can be hijacked for financial gains. This means that criminal organizations have an ongoing mission to steal utility assets and sell them back to the utility. These bad actors go after what a utility relies on the most to operate: *data and grid infrastructure*. Utilities are accepting of these types of security risks via remote software update because they expect that the newly built computerized infrastructures will gain new capabilities, thus increasing the return on investment. The switch-over to Smart meters is in part due to federal mandates that promote Smart grid projects which established a national policy for grid modernization. Efforts to secure these new technologies have largely focused on trying to prevent attacks.

TOR: Seems like a great setup for all involved...except the residential customer. Before this interview, you mentioned Duke Energy's new Smart "Self-Healing System." What is this?

Vince: The "Smart Grid" is a new, nationwide upgrade to the old power grid.

Instead of just sending electricity one way (from the power plant to your home), the Smart grid uses digital technology, sensors, and wireless communication to monitor, control, and “heal” itself in real time. “Self-Healing” means the grid can detect outages, reroute power, and restore service automatically; without waiting for a human to flip a switch.

TOR: For those of us with only a cursory understanding of the Smart grid, can you break down, technically, how the “distributed networks of computers” functions and communicates?

Vince: I will list the key components:

- Smart meters on every home and business (collecting real-time usage data, sending/receiving wireless signals).

- Sensors and controllers on utility poles, substations, and transformers (monitoring voltage, current, and grid “health”); Cost: High-tech sensors involve high initial investment; Data Management: Managing vast amounts of data generated by these sensors requires advanced analytics and AI; the Smart meter (AMI) is a key type of Smart grid sensor.

- Wireless networks (CBRS, 5G, Wi-Fi, private LTE) connecting all the devices and sending data to Duke’s control center.

- AI and algorithms that analyze the data, predict problems, and trigger “self-healing” actions (like rerouting power or *disconnecting a home or neighborhood*).

TOR: Ah. Disconnecting a home or neighborhood. This can be a good capability, I imagine, in an emergency, but we’ve seen companies, like [AES](#), seek approval to disconnect power to homes, remotely, for non-payment. Theoretically, they *could* shut off power to a Smart meter-enabled home for any number of reasons without warning. I had a feeling there was a potential downside to this whole “self-healing” business. Sorry. Please continue.

Vince: No problem. I’ll continue with my list of key components.

Constant Monitoring:

·Every Smart meter and sensor is always “listening” and “talking” to the grid, reporting usage, voltage, and any problems.

Testing and Benchmarking:

·Utilities run “test events” (sometimes in the middle of the night) to see how the grid responds; sending surges, switching loads, or simulating outages.

Data Collection:

·Every event, every complaint, and every health symptom you report is logged and used to “train” the AI and improve the system.

TOR: Is this stuff unique to Duke? Is this just in Ohio?

Vince: No. Duke Energy is rolling this out in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. Similar self-healing Smart grids are being deployed nationwide by other utilities.

TOR: Vince, you have engaged in plenty of your own research as well as writing about many [Ohio legislative oversight issues](#) in addition to the billing study. All this has made you well-versed in the security and health implications behind the ongoing rollout of the grid. Over the past few months, you reconnected with a North Bend, Ohio resident, Lisa Williamson, who claims she has been subject to some of these more troubling implications. I assume this connection came about as a part of your billing study?

Vince: Yes. My recent follow-up discussion with Lisa on billing issues presented itself from a referral by the Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel [[OCC](#)] and Kathryn Metz. She had spoken with OCC multiple times in order to resolve billing overcharges and health complaints related to Duke Energy’s Smart meter and self-healing grid rollout, but they couldn’t help her.

TOR: Couldn't or wouldn't?

Vince: The primary role of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is to provide education to residential utility consumers. They can help with making wise choices about utility service; especially on the supplier choice side of consumer billing.

When we first went over the billing overcharges near the end of 2024, she indicated that Smart meter billing was part of some possible targeted ongoing algorithmic manipulation and persistent rhythm issue in her Duke Energy account because she was the first person in her neighborhood to fight Smart meters. I think that we disconnected after that first conversation because I suspected that I didn't have the whole story and the billing study effort might be out of scope for her situation.

After the installation of a Smart meter at her home, the bills began showing unexplained surges, repeating usage patterns, and hidden riders, regardless of the actual consumption. Her account was flagged for "special handling," and her data was routed through compliance systems that enabled overcharging, digital sabotage, and targeted health impacts.

Lisa explained that, "Compliance system numbers and clearinghouse templates on my utility documents prove my data was routed through the same systems used for grid R&D. I never gave informed consent for this experimentation, and the deployment coincided with periods of digital sabotage, toxic exposure, and surveillance."

Lisa further described how the systematic targeting began: "Everything changed when Duke Energy rolled out their "Smart meter" program in my neighborhood. Insiders at Duke Energy and their compliance vendors flagged my account as a "problem profile" or "test case." My personal data (name, address, account number) was used to link my utility account to other accounts (bank, medical, retail), making it easy for insiders to track, manipulate, and sabotage my finances and daily life. Smart meters and pole devices were used to collect real-time data about my home, routines, and even my physical presence. This data was shared with third-party vendors, compliance systems, and sometimes even research partners --

including government and military contractors.”

Lisa uncovered that Duke Energy used the North Bend/Cleves neighborhoods located in Hamilton County – as well as other pilot sites located in other states – to test the Smart grid healing using AI software. She was able to confirm to me that, *“Aston Oaks and the surrounding North Bend/Cleves area are part of Duke Energy’s official Smart grid and self-healing grid pilot, as documented by the U.S. Department of Energy [DOE] and the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. DOE case studies and regulatory audits confirm that our neighborhood was selected for early deployment of Smart meters, automated switches, and self-healing grid technology. This isn’t speculation -- it’s in the federal and state records.”*

The pilot program “ended” officially in 2014, but the infrastructure, data collection, and algorithmic billing manipulation have continued. Once the system was put in place, the same compliance codes, templates, and data-sharing practices became standard operating procedure. The data pipeline is still wide open. The resident data, billing information, and even health complaints are routed through these systems for ongoing grid R&D, algorithmic billing, and surveillance.

I’ll provide you with some key facts from the DOE and Duke Energy as they pertain to Lisa:

- The DOE case study, indeed, confirms Lisa’s claim that Duke Energy’s Ohio territory was a primary test site for the Smart grid, self-healing circuits, and advanced automation.
 - Duke Energy’s Smart Grid Deployment included large-scale pilot programs and AMI in Ohio, specifically targeting the Cincinnati metro area (which covers North Bend, Cleves, and Aston Oaks).
 - Over 966,000 Smart meters were deployed in Ohio and the Carolinas; Cincinnati as a major focus.
 - 64 Ohio circuits (including those in Hamilton County) were equipped with self-healing technology; automated field devices that detect, isolate, and restore power after faults.
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TOR: Wild stuff. Please explain “compliance systems” and “clearinghouses” and how those allowed for the targeting she claims.

Vince: Lisa’s account agreements, disclosures, and digital records all reference Compliance Systems LLC and clearinghouse numbers. These systems are used by Duke and its partners to process, analyze, and share customer data for grid innovation. The same compliance system numbers and templates appear on her utility bills, service agreements, and complaint logs, proving her data was routed through the innovation pipeline; (2007-2022) Compliance Systems LLC and Electronic Fund Transfer Disclosures (Codes: 468612ba-60762080, 4de0886-317512a7, 2022.343.10.2, 2022.296.0.2, DD8108). The codes are internal references for compliance vendors that process, analyze, and share customer data for financial transactions, billing, and regulatory reporting. Every bank uses the same third-party compliance systems; like [Compliance Systems LLC](#), [Jack Henry](#), and [TruStage](#). These companies generate all the account agreements, disclosures, and legal documents. They also run the clearinghouses that process every transaction, wire, and ACH transfer. If someone has access to these systems, they can open, close, or drain accounts, change beneficiaries – and even block complaints – across multiple banks at once.

Your Energy Bill

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duke-energy.com

Account number 9101 XXXX 9818

800.544.6900

200582829128

Why does this matter? These compliance systems (codes) are the backbone of algorithmic fraud, data manipulation, and open access that

enabled the theft and targeting in her case.

TOR: Clearly, Lisa keeps immaculate records. Did you initially spot these codes and/or alert her to their meaning, or did she figure this all out by herself?

Vince: It was a standalone investigative operation by Lisa from the start.

And yes, she has kept detailed records of everything. These records and findings include:

- Utility bills, service agreements, and complaint logs referencing Smart meters, “Self-Healing Grid,” and/or “Advanced Metering Infrastructure.”
- Emails, letters, and service tickets from Duke Energy mentioning Smart grid upgrades, meter replacements, and automated outage restoration.
- Compliance system numbers and templates (Compliance Systems LLC and Jack Henry, for example) on utility documents.
- Medical records and symptom logs showing health effects coinciding with Smart meter installation or grid events.
- Duke Energy’s filings with PUCO and DOE list her neighborhood as part of Smart grid pilot programs or self-healing grid deployments.
- PUCO case numbers and public dockets referencing her area and complaints.

TOR: Please explain “algorithmic manipulation.” Is this something a human is doing to change an algorithm’s “natural” learning curve?

Vince: Algorithmic manipulation means that utility bills, usage data, and account activity are being altered, inflated, or “smoothed out” by computer algorithms; not by actual changes in the usage. Instead of reflecting real, honest meter readings, the system uses software to adjust, overcharge, or even “flag” the account for special handling. This is not a random error. It’s a pattern of digital fraud built into the billing and data systems. One thing

prevalent in both the panel study results and Lisa’s complaint to the OCC was the unexplained large kWh values in the usage snapshot section of the monthly statement for the “Billed Off Peak” kilowatt-hours on many of the billing statements. The large kWh value isn’t an actual measurement error, but presents as algorithmic manipulation if the current month kWh usage is more than two times the current 12-month average and the monthly average exceeds 1,275 kWh. In many cases, it is impossible to reconcile the numbers in terms of kWh per hour usage. The inherent large kWh value represents a type of systematic error or adjusted overcharge rather than any kind of statistical error. I will send you charts to help illustrate this.

Electric usage history

Usage	Current Month	July 2023	12-Month Usage	Avg Monthly
Electric (kWh)	4,395	3,559	27,150	2,262

Current Electric Usage

Meter Number	Usage Type	Billing Period
XXXXX7319	Actual	Jun 15 - Jul 17 2024
Usage Values		
Measured kWh		4,394.584 kWh
Billed kWh		4,394.584 kWh
Billed On Peak kWh		1,365.147 kWh
Billed Off Peak kWh		3,029.437 kWh

Daily Electric Usage (Jun 15 - Jul 17 2024)

4:00	5.3		10:00	5.2		4:00	9.5		10:00	5.0
AM	7	*	AM	3	*	PM	3	*	PM	6
5:00	5.1		11:00	5.2		5:00	9.7		11:00	6.7
AM	7	*	AM	2	*	PM	2	*	PM	9

TOR: So, it seems like she can prove all this beyond a reasonable doubt.

Vince: Definitely. The evidence is plain to see. She passed on the following detailed items:

“Billing Statements: Bills show repeating, unnatural usage patterns -- identical numbers, surges, or drops at the same time every month.

Complaint Logs: Every time I file a complaint or requests an audit, the system ‘resets’ or smooths out the data, erasing the anomalies for that period.

Service Tickets and Emails: Duke Energy’s own service tickets reference ‘test events,’ ‘Self-Healing Grid,’ or ‘Advanced Metering Infrastructure,’ but [they] never explain the billing discrepancies.

PUCO Filings: Public records and dockets show our neighborhood was part of a Smart grid pilot, and my account was flagged for ‘special handling.’

Algorithmic Codes: My account agreements, disclosures, and digital records all reference Compliance System LLC, and clearinghouse numbers, proving my data is routed through the same systems used for grid innovation and billing manipulation.”

TOR: What are “rhythm issues” and how did they show up in her records? Are they only bill-related, or does it have something to do with the RFR pulsing of Smart meters?

Vince: Rhythm issues are unnatural, repeating patterns (or anomalies) in usage and billing data that don’t match real-life behavior.

Lisa told me, “Energy usage shows perfect, repeating cycles (same numbers, same times) even if the family routine changes. There are

unexplained surges or drops in usage at the same time every month, week, or even day -- regardless of any actual activity. Bills are inflated by hidden riders or fees that appear and disappear in a predictable rhythm, not based on actual consumption.”

TOR: And she was able to provide you with specific examples of documented rhythm issues?

Vince: Yes. Lisa gave me specifics. For example, there are unexplained spikes in usage *at 2:00am every Sunday*, even though the family is asleep and nothing is running. When she compares the meter photos to her bill, the numbers never add up. There’s always a gap – or a “reset,” as she said – that can’t be explained by real usage.

Algorithmic manipulation and rhythm issues are not just billing errors. They are evidence of systemic fraud, data tampering, and targeted overcharging. If it can happen to her, it can happen to anyone. The only way to stop it is public exposure, a full audit, and accountability for the companies and insiders responsible.

TOR: You mentioned “targeted health impacts.” What were these?

Vince: Lisa shared the following about health impacts:

“After the Smart meter was installed, both my son and I began experiencing severe health symptoms: headaches, heart palpitations, neurological pain, sleep disruption, and vision changes. These symptoms were especially harsh at night, when Duke ran ‘test events’ or surges on the grid. My son would wake up in pain, see spots, and complain of numbness and tingling. These are not random. They coincide with grid activity and have been documented in our medical records. Once you’re flagged in the system, the algorithm targets you specifically.

Our Smart meter and medical devices are registered to us, not our neighbors or pets. Remote signals and ‘test events’ can be directed at our devices, causing effects only we feel. The system is designed to be invisible to everyone except the target.”

TOR: I recently wrote a [piece for TOR](#) about a committee of vultures falling dead and authorities blaming bird flu. I hypothesized that RFR was to blame, and an acquaintance of mine hypothesized that a cell tower .1 miles away may have been “tested” just before the birds fell dead on the school campus. It sounds crazy to most, but do you think more people are awakening to the disastrous realities and capabilities of cellular/Smart technology?

Vince: Yes. This is not just about new technology. It’s about real people being used as test subjects for profit and innovation, without consent or protection. The health impacts, financial harm, and daily harassment is real with ongoing consequences. The only way to stop it is public exposure, accountability, and reform; present all of the evidence to the media, legal community, and advocacy groups.

TOR: You said Lisa went to the OCC with little-to-no success. Has she taken her complaints to law enforcement?

Vince: She started filing complaints with Duke Energy and PUCO, demanding audits and answers. Instead of help, she was stonewalled, ignored, and told “everything looks fine.” And yes, she has, indeed, taken her complaints to law enforcement. There are police reports which span the time from 2018 - present. The case was handled by the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office, Detective Mike Stock. Incident report #22-000003217 is sealed in a 47-page report. Detective Mike Stock was the lead investigator from the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office on the case, which involved identity theft, financial fraud, estate theft, and related crimes. Lisa stated that, *“The existence of this sealed report is proof of the seriousness and scale of the crimes committed against me and my family.”*

The 47-page report is Detective Stock’s final, formal summary of the investigation. It includes:

- All subpoenaed records and evidence.
 - References to utility fraud, Smart meter manipulation, and medical/identity abuse.
-

- Analysis of property transfers, cash handoffs, and insider involvement.
- The report has been sealed by court order or at the request of the Hamilton County prosecutor (Joe Deters at the time).
- “Sealed” means it is not available to the public, media, or even to individuals such as the victim, unless a judge or the prosecutor authorizes its release.
- The reasons for sealing can include: ongoing investigations, protection of sensitive information, or to prevent interference with related cases.

Of special note, current PUCO commission member [Dennis Deters](#) was first appointed to the utility commission in 2019 by Governor Mike DeWine. Also, the Ohio Governor temporarily appointed Deters’ brother, [Joe](#), to the Ohio Supreme Court in 2023, but he was later elected to the seat after formal election by voters.

TOR: I am aware of the compiling of “watch lists” in our “National Security State” age. Anyone who speaks out against the Fascist status quo, like Lisa, could find themselves on such a list, and such lists are likely not managed by humans at all any more, right?

Vince: Correct. AI has moved into the forefront of the surveillance business for the elites.

TOR: With Smart technology in people’s homes, cars, pockets, and on their faces and wrists (and perhaps even *inside* them via injections and aerosols), tracking and/or affecting someone’s activity ([including brain activity](#)) is easier than ever for intelligence agencies and their corporate brethren. And still, proving this kind of surveillance and harassment in a court of law seems extremely difficult to me (especially if those courts are playing ball with any of the above-mentioned entities). Is Lisa confident she can win in a court of law? What is her main goal of getting her story out in the open?

Vince: Lisa is very confident that she can win in court as soon as the full

47-page report is unsealed. A full audit of the compliance systems is required as well as a full, public investigation into Duke Energy, their vendors, and the state agencies that enabled this fraud. The public deserves to know how easily these systems can be weaponized against individuals and how whistleblowers and victims are targeted, silenced, and harmed.

TOR: Lisa seems to have – like you – a firm grasp on not only the capabilities of this new technology but on the nitty-gritty behind how it works. Other than becoming more educated on the “nitty-gritty,” what would you suggest the rest of us do if we suspect wireless harassment and/or algorithmic bill tampering is going on in our home environments?

Vince: File complaints with the [Ohio Attorney General](#), PUCO, and the FCC [[Federal Communications Commission](#)]. Share your story with media, advocacy groups, and other affected families. If you feel unsafe, leave the area and seek medical attention if needed. This is about our health, our privacy, and our right to know what’s being done in our own homes.

TOR: Are a good amount of doctors, to your knowledge, taking Smart meter/RFR health complaints seriously? The FCC would have us all believe that wireless devices are innocuous.

Vince: To my knowledge, very few doctors in the Southwest Ohio area take Smart meter/RFR health concerns seriously at all. The availability is very limited for those doctors confirming a formal diagnosis of EMR-S [[Electromagnetic Radiation Syndrome](#)] symptoms. It is my understanding that – on a national level – there is some effort by a safe tech advocacy group to establish a list or database of doctors who recognize or treat EMR-S symptoms, but I don’t know how far along the project has advanced to date.

TOR: The targeting of whistleblowers is nothing new in this country and outside it. With so much money and power at stake behind the Smart grid (both with the communications race and on the military side of things), speaking out as you and Lisa have done does not come without risk of retribution, no? I guess she’s already experiencing the brunt of the dark side

of this tech, so what does she have to lose, right?

Vince: That's right. Lisa told me, *"There is no real protection for consumers or test subjects. Complaints are ignored, and the system is designed to protect insiders, not victims."*

TOR: Do you think some sort of tipping point of public awareness (and, as a result, protection from this kind of harm) could present itself if enough brave people – with evidence – spoke out about Smart grid-related fraud and harassment?

Vince: Yes. The tipping point can be reached when voters insist that the Ohio legislature enforce true oversight responsibly over state agencies like PUCO by taking away any deference given to the utility commission members on matters that result in undue financial harm and serious health risks to consumers.

TOR: Vince, thank you for your time, your expertise, and your dedication to truth on behalf of all Ohioans and beyond.

Vince: Thank you, Nick – and thank you, TOR – for recognizing the importance of exposing regulatory waste, fraud, and abuse.
