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October 24, 2014

Ms. Kirsten Walli
Board Secretary
Ontario Energy Board
P.O. Box 2319
27th Floor – 2300 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Dear Ms. Walli:

Re: Policy Review of Electricity and Natural Gas Distributors' Residential Customer Billing Practices and Performance (EB-2014-0198)

On September 18, 2014, the Ontario Energy Board (the "OEB" or the "Board") released a Draft Report on the Residential Billing Practices and Performance of Electricity and Natural Gas Distributors.

In its Draft Report, the Board considers policies intended to meet the objectives to transition to monthly billing and the development of an estimated billing policy for residential consumers. Thunder Bay Hydro is pleased to provide comments, respectfully submitted after the deadline of October 9, 2014.

A large proportion of Thunder Bay Hydro customers are billed on a bi-monthly basis. Thunder Bay Hydro supports the Board's view of increasing customer awareness and control of their energy use, however, with the introduction of smart meters several on-line tools are already available for customers, offering customers access to their energy information on a daily and hourly basis, which provides much more information and awareness that a monthly bill would be able to provide.

Introducing monthly billing will increase costs both during the transition phase and on a permanent basis. For instance, information systems, communications and finance resources will be required temporarily to transition current customers to a monthly billing cycle. In addition to mailing and printing costs, permanent resources will be required to support higher exception handling volumes and customer inquiries due to more frequent billing. While the Board has indicated that there will be offsetting benefits to the costs, these benefits remain difficult to quantify. In addition, Thunder Bay Hydro has not conducted a survey or any form of customer engagement to determine if customers would be willing to pay more to receive a monthly bill and deciding this in absence of their input, would not be in the best interest of the customer.

With respect to estimate bills, Thunder Bay Hydro generally agrees that an estimated bill is not ideal; however, there are occasions where it may be necessary. Currently, Thunder Bay Hydro issues customer bills on actual meter reads and may occasionally issue an estimated bill when a meter is damaged or fails. Thus, completely removing estimated billing would not be ideal for the customer.

Please direct any questions relating to this submission to Sandra Leonetti (807) 343-1016 or sleonetti@tbhydro.on.ca.

Regards,

Sandra Leonetti
Thunder Bay Hydro

Committed to Customer Satisfaction