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Kirsten Walli
Board Secretary
Ontario Energy Board
P.O. Box 2319
2300 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4P 1E

May 19, 2009

RE: EB-2008-0150 Nomination

Dear Ms. Walli,

The Housing Help Association of Ontario (HHAO) nominates Mary Anne Rowlands, Chair of the HHAO and Managing Director of The Help Centre (Northumberland County) to participate on the LEAP Financial Assistance Working Group. The Housing Help Association of Ontario (HHAO) represents and supports Housing Help workers who assist people to find and keep suitable housing across the province of Ontario.

The development and delivery of energy assistance programs to lower income households are core services within the Housing Help sector throughout the province in urban, sub-urban and rural contexts. Housing Help services offer energy programs that assist those in core housing need (households paying more than 30% for shelter), to maintain their housing and avoid eviction while reducing administration costs to energy providers. At our 2008 conference, our workshop on energy providers where members of the OEB and LIEN were invited to make presentations was heavily attended. Housing Help workers have been advocating for province wide energy assistance initiatives for many years because of their unique frontline experience assisting lower income people with housing security and stability issues within a complex system.

Ms. Rowlands is highly knowledgeable on issues of energy assistance for low income earners as she directly manages The Help Centre's front line services to deliver the Winter Warmth and local utility partnership programs. She works daily with the lived reality of low income earners and their energy needs. Ms. Rowlands initiated and developed the Northumberland Community Utility Trust Fund in conjunction with Winter Warmth, Northumberland County, The United Way and local service clubs. She has developed strong working relationships with Hydro One, Union Gas, Veridian Connections, Lakefront Utility Services, Winter Warmth and local suppliers of fuel, oil & wood. In addition she brings the perspective of rural Ontario to the table.



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Ms. Rowlands has many years of experience building partnerships between communities and other sectors and is one of the original architects of the HHAO bringing it from a simple network to a formal association. She combines a broad provincial policy scope with extensive front line experience. As a result of her work, the Northumberland Poverty Reduction Action Committee and Northumberland Affordable Housing Steering Committee have also endorsed Ms. Rowlands' nomination to the working group. Dedicated to community development, Ms. Rowlands is the Area Commissioner for Scouts Canada and is recognized by the Northumberland Rotary Club as volunteer of the year.

Cost Eligibility

Our nominee will require cost eligibility as she comes from a non-profit community-based agency with limited resources and a mandate to direct resources into direct program delivery. Similarly the HHAO is a new and growing association with a provincial mandate and limited funding from Ontario taxpayers. Therefore we have limited resources to cover disbursements such as travel, accommodation, telephone, printing etc in order to participate on this working group. As a result, without OEB cost awards the preparation, attendance and reporting time to participate on the LEAP Financial Assistance Working Group would largely be borne by The Help Centre or the participant herself.

We are very pleased that energy poverty is being recognized and that a province wide initiative is being implemented, led by the OEB. We look forward to assisting the OEB to develop and deliver this highly anticipated province wide program.

Sincerely,

Mary-Jane McKitterick
Coordinator, Housing Help Association of Ontario (HHAO)

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