



MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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CONSUMER PROTECTION**Proposed Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2009**

Ontario is proposing new rules that would provide additional protection for energy consumers and allow for greater energy conservation through suite metering.

The province introduced new legislation that would, if passed, lead to:

- Protecting consumers from hidden contract costs, excessive cancellation fees, "negative-option" contract renewals, and other unfair industry practices.
- Providing greater fairness and transparency for consumers through rate comparisons, plain language contract disclosure, enhanced rights to cancel contracts and a new licensing and training regime, including mandatory oral disclosure and ID badges.
- Enabling individual suite metering in apartment buildings, which gives tenants more control over energy costs.
- Granting the Ontario Energy Board more authority to set policies on security deposits and shutting off an individual's electricity.

The proposed Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2009, would ensure Ontarians have the information they need about electricity contracts and bills, as well as the comfort of knowing they can rely on fair business practices. If passed, the proposed legislation would help families make wise and informed energy choices. Many of the provisions resulting from the proposed legislation, should it pass, would involve consultation and be set at a later date by regulation.

Retailers	
Problem	Proposed Solution
Sales person practices	→ Immediate verbal disclosure and ID Badges Sales person training and other standards
Consumer's don't have	→ "Plain language" contract disclosure

Ontario Energy Board	
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the information they need to decide;	statement - available in various languages
language barriers	
Verbal contracts (usually on phone); Contracts not with account holder	<p>→ "Text-based" contract and signature required</p> <p>Only the utility account holder or others specified by regulation can sign energy retailer contracts for a household</p>
Consumers feel pressured into signing a contract	<p>→ Three possible cancellation alternatives: a 10-day cooling off period, upon third party verification (within 10-60 days of signing contract) and 30 days after receipt of first bill</p>
Unfair cancellation policies and fees; automatic renewals for gas contracts	<p>→ Prevent excessive cancellation fees or in some instances, any fees - such as when people move or accidentally sign a second contract</p> <p>Eliminate negative option renewals</p>
Electricity Retailer / Gas Marketer accountability	<p>→ Additional licensing conditions for retailers, including individual sales person training and background checks</p> <p>An assurance fund to assist in covering potential losses for consumers</p> <p>OEB randomly audits retailers</p> <p>Improved officer and director accountability</p>
"Fixed contracts" don't clearly disclose all costs or offer products promoting conservation	<p>→ Energy Retailers required to clearly show all charges Time-of-Use products can be required</p>

Suite Metering

Problem	Proposed Solution
No framework to install suite metering in rental apartment buildings	<p>→ Enable mandatory installation in new residential buildings Voluntary installation in existing buildings</p>
No rules for individual	<p>→ Consent required from sitting</p>

billing in rental apartment buildings	tenants Establish a framework for rent reduction if a tenant agrees to suite metering Prospective new tenants given prescribed information on suite energy use
Suite-metering companies not subject to the same rules as local distribution companies (LDCs)	→ Suite-metering providers subject to rules paralleling LDCs concerning fee regulation, licensing, security deposits and disconnections
Tenants can't control major energy efficiency factors in their suites, things like windows or appliances	→ Landlords required to meet certain energy efficiency standards for appliances and suites

Deposits and Disconnections

Problem	Proposed Solution
Gas and electricity companies work under different rules regarding invoices, disconnection and security charges	→ OEB can regulate disconnection and security deposits for both electricity and gas companies, such as mandating alternatives to deposits or requiring specific standards for disconnections for vulnerable consumers Government can regulate utility bill requirements, for example, requiring the inclusion of information that would help consumers manage their energy use

Quick Facts

- A suite meter lets tenants pay for their electricity based on their actual consumption. This means consumers could lower their electricity bills by conserving or shifting their usage.
- In the past three years, energy retailers have cracked the top 10 list of consumer complaints received by the Ministry of Consumer

Services.

- Currently, the Ontario Energy Board logs between 100 and 150 consumer complaints a week about the practices of energy retailers.

[News Release: Proposed Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2009](#)

[Backgrounder: Proposed Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2009](#)

[Minister's Speech](#)

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