

**Ontario Energy
Board**
P.O. Box 2319
27th Floor
2300 Yonge Street
Toronto ON M4P 1E4
Telephone: 416- 481-1967
Facsimile: 416- 440-7656
Toll free: 1-888-632-6273

**Commission de l'énergie
de l'Ontario**
C.P. 2319
27e étage
2300, rue Yonge
Toronto ON M4P 1E4
Téléphone: 416- 481-1967
Télécopieur: 416- 440-7656
Numéro sans frais: 1-888-632-6273



February 16, 2011

Angus Toulouse
Ontario Regional Chief
Chiefs of Ontario
111 Peter Street, Suite 804
Toronto, ON M5V 2H1

Re: Low-Income Energy Assistance Program Initiatives for Ontario First Nations

Dear Mr. Toulouse,

I am writing in response to your letter, dated December 3, 2010, regarding the delivery of Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) initiatives to First Nations.

In July 2008, the Ontario Energy Board initiated a consultation to consider the need for, and nature of, policies or measures that could assist low-income energy consumers. Throughout the various stages of that consultation the Board received submissions from several First Nation groups, specifically Nipissing First Nation, the National Chief on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations, and from three First Nations owned distributors (Attawapiskat Power Corporation, Fort Albany Power Corporation, and Kashechewan Power Corporation).

I am aware that Board staff met with Mr. Micheal Nadeau of the Ontario Native Welfare Administrators' Association (ONWAA) on November 24, 2010 to discuss issues relating to the delivery of LEAP emergency financial assistance to First Nations. It is my understanding that Board staff offered to connect Mr. Nadeau with electricity distributors that serve First Nations in order to ensure these distributors were aware of the assistance that ONWAA could provide. To assist with this process, staff provided Mr. Nadeau with contact information for Hydro One Networks via email on November 24. Staff further provided information about the location of distributors and requested that Mr. Nadeau indicate which distributors, in addition to Hydro One Networks, serve First Nations. To date, staff has received no response from Mr. Nadeau in this regard.

The Board expects that each distributor will partner with a social service agency for the purposes of delivering LEAP emergency financial assistance. In some cases, this partner may also engage a network of “Intake” agencies to serve a diverse or geographically large service area. It is not the Board’s intention however, to approve distributors’ agency partner(s) or the allocation of funds within each distributor’s service area. However, to the extent that the Board can assist distributors by providing information about potential partners, the Board does see merit in ensuring that distributors that serve First Nations are aware of ONWAA and the role it could play in the delivery of LEAP emergency financial assistance. As part of the webcasts held on November 25 and 26, 2010 to provide training on the delivery of LEAP emergency financial assistance, Board staff did provide information about ONWAA and invited distributors that serve First Nations to consider a role for ONWAA.

To that end, I invite Mr. Nadeau to advise Board staff which distributors serve First Nations, so that Board staff can assist Mr. Nadeau with getting in contact with these distributors.

It is my understanding that Mr. Nadeau has been in contact with Hydro One, and that Hydro One has indicated that they are willing to discuss a role for ONWAA in the delivery of LEAP emergency financial assistance to First Nations in Hydro One’s service area.

Your organization may also be interested in a related consultation that the Board is undertaking – information about which was provided to Mr. Nadeau in the November 24 email. “Electricity Distributors: Customer Service, Rate Classification and Non-Payment Risk” (EB-2007-0722) addresses amendments to the Board’s customer service rules for electricity distributors relating to requirements for disconnection notices, bill payment, security deposits and arrears management. On February 8, 2011, the Board issued for stakeholder comment a Notice of Revised Updated Proposal to Amend Codes (the “February Notice”), which sets out proposed updated customer service requirements tailored to the needs of low-income residential electricity customers. Written comments on the revised proposed amendments are due by February 28, 2011. The Board welcomes your input on all areas identified for further comment in the February Notice. You can find information about this consultation on the Board’s website at www.oeb.gov.on.ca.

In order to ensure that First Nations are more engaged in the Board’s consultations in the future, I invite you to meet with Board staff to discuss LEAP and other issues affecting First Nations in relation to electricity service.

To discuss this meeting, and any other information in this letter, please contact Lenore Dougan at 416-440-8141 or by email at lenore.dougan@oeb.gov.on.ca.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Kirsten Walli
Board Secretary

cc: The Honourable Brad Duguid, Minister of Energy
The Honourable Chris Bentley, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Jody Waddilove, President, ONWAA
Michael Nadeau, Executive Director, ONWAA
Grand Chief Randall Phillips, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians,
COO Social Portfolio
Lillian Baibomcowai-Dell, Social Services Coordinator, COO