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**VIA COURIER**

July 5, 2011

Ms. Kirsten Walli  
Board Secretary  
Ontario Energy Board  
2300 Yonge Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4P 1E4

Dear Ms. Walli:

**Re: Consultation on Energy Issues Relating to Low Income Consumers  
Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. ("Enbridge")  
Ontario Energy Board File ("Board") No.: EB-2008-0150  
2010/2011 Winter Warmth Final Report**

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On February 4, 2011, the Board issued a letter to all participants in the above noted proceeding outlining the information to be filed by electricity and natural gas distributors in relation to the Low Income Energy Assistance Program ("LEAP") Emergency Financial Assistance.

As required by the Board, enclosed please find the 2010/2011 Winter Warmth Final Report.

Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bonnie Jean Adams".

Bonnie Jean Adams  
Regulatory Coordinator

Encl.



# Winter Warmth

2010/2011 Final Report

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Prepared by: Neighbourhood Information Post



In partnership with



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## Summary

The Winter Warmth 2010-2011 heating season operated between December 1, 2010 and May 31, 2011. The program was coordinated by a network of social service agencies through the United Way. Winter Warmth is designed for low-income households who are experiencing temporary setbacks and have exhausted all other means of financial support. The Winter Warmth program became an important part of the community and the participating social service agencies served as the place where families could go for assistance.

Winter Warmth was a blessing for many customers who had faced a crisis or a life-changing event that created a backload of debts including their heating bill. Households that received the grants became more financially stable and were better prepared to manage the upcoming utility bills. In addition to the monetary portion of assistance, the clients were provided with the necessary referrals and information about existing programs/services available in the community.

The Winter Warmth program helped families who have already exhausted all of their available resources and had nowhere to turn to. More specifically, Winter Warmth was able to help the families stay together under one roof and lessened the impact of financial strain and helped clients maintain the good credit rating without going into arrears.

Winter Warmth has a set cap of \$500 per utility as insurance to assist as many households as possible. The funds are not allocated for security deposits and connection fees. Even with the determined monetary limit of the household, most of the municipalities expressed concerns about the limited flexibility for the exceptional cases where help is needed and imperative in order to sustain utility and housing.

## Section A: Grant Disbursements

The following tables contain final information for grants disbursed in the Winter Warmth 2010/2011 heating season for each community.

⇒ Please refer to the end of Section A for the Table of definitions

Table 1: Enbridge Winter Warmth Disbursements

<b>Enbridge Gas Distribution</b>					
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Budget (\$)</b>	<b>Less 15% Admin (\$)</b>	<b>Total WW (\$)</b>	<b>Pay-out (\$)</b>	<b>Remaining (\$)</b>
Dufferin County	5,000.00	750.00	4,250.00	4,250.00	0.00
Barrie & Greater Simcoe County	68,120.10	10,218.02	57,902.09	57,902.09	0.00
City of Kawartha Lakes	6,000.00	900.00	5,100.00	5,100.00	0.00
Lanark County	3,810.05	0.00	3,810.05	3,810.05	0.00
Leeds & Grenville	12,000.00	1,800.00	10,200.00	10,200.00	0.00
Northumberland	5,000.00	750.00	4,250.00	2,421.61	1,828.39
Bruce Grey	5,010.01	751.50	4,258.51	1,269.30	2,989.21
Niagara Falls	37,250.00	5,587.50	31,662.50	31,580.47	82.03
Durham	32,000.00	4,800.00	27,200.00	27,032.91	167.09
Ottawa	62,999.91	9,449.99	53,549.92	52,139.87	1,410.05
Peel Region	90,000.00	13,500.00	76,500.00	76,398.50	101.50
Peterborough & District	26,111.55	3,556.64	22,554.91	22,554.91	0.00
Prescott-Russell	8,082.88	1,212.43	6,870.45	6,817.80	52.65
Renfrew County	12,000.00	1,800.00	10,200.00	8,956.79	1,243.21
St. Catharines & District	34,000.00	5,100.00	28,900.00	28,900.00	0.00
Toronto	85,000.00	12,750.00	72,250.00	72,250.00	0.00
Welland	34,000.00	5,100.00	28,900.00	28,900.00	0.00
Fort Erie	12,765.02	717.31	12,047.71	12,047.71	0.00
York Region	76,000.00	11,400.00	64,600.00	64,600.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>615,149.52</b>	<b>90,143.39</b>	<b>525,006.14</b>	<b>517,132.01</b>	<b>7,874.13</b>

## Section B: Household Composition

The following tables describe the total number of households assisted along with the number of individuals (adults and children) within the households.

⇒ Please refer to the end of Section C for the Table of definitions

Table 1: Household Composition from Enbridge Gas

<b>Enbridge Gas Distribution</b>			
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Total Number of Households Assisted</b>	<b>Total Number of Adults Assisted</b>	<b>Total Number of Children Assisted</b>
Dufferin County	10	15	22
Barrie & Greater Simcoe County	155	240	274
City of Kawartha Lakes	11	18	20
Lanark County	10	14	8
Leeds & Grenville	26	45	33
Northumberland	6	11	8
Bruce Grey	3	6	6
Niagara Falls	84	121	108
Durham	61	102	129
Ottawa	144	247	223
Peel Region	199	310	256
Peterborough & District	55	81	92
Prescott-Russell	15	19	23
Renfrew County	21	32	33
St. Catharines & District	69	106	106
Toronto	207	333	271
Welland	81	127	116
Fort Erie	32	52	25
York Region	160	283	219
<b>Total</b>	<b>1349</b>	<b>2,162</b>	<b>1,972</b>

## Section C: Funding Impact

The following tables show the household size and net income in relationship to the amount of utility's arrears.

For this report, we did not collect information on how long it took the applicants to accumulate their arrears.

⇒ Please refer to the end of Section D for the Table of definitions

*Table 1: Funding Impact from Enbridge Gas*

<b>Enbridge Gas Distribution</b>				
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Average # of Individuals per Household (Adults &amp; Children)</b>	<b>Average Monthly Household Income (\$)</b>	<b>Average Arrears Amount (\$)</b>	<b>Average Grant Amount (\$)</b>
Dufferin County	4	2,126.74	1,002.42	425.00
Barrie & Greater Simcoe County	3	2,932.50	410.67	373.56
City of Kawartha Lakes	3	2,343.52	1,001.07	463.64
Lanark County	2	1,384.33	824.43	381.01
Leeds & Grenville	3	2,679.36	818.27	392.31
Northumberland	3	1,646.58	558.53	403.60
Bruce Grey	4	3,231.33	715.58	423.10
Niagara Falls	3	1,245.58	877.05	375.96
Durham	4	1,845.30	645.01	443.16
Ottawa	3	1,910.05	492.22	362.08
Peel Region	3	2,606.55	951.87	383.91
Peterborough & District	3	1,574.75	596.37	410.09
Prescott-Russell	3	1,428.17	854.17	454.52
Renfrew County	3	1,480.53	568.12	426.51
St. Catharines & District	3	1,729.03	606.20	418.84
Toronto	3	2,024.09	486.89	349.03
Welland	3	1,581.04	745.75	356.79
Fort Erie	2	1,404.72	743.97	376.49
York Region	3	2,002.68	575.11	403.75
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,956.67</b>	<b>709.14</b>	<b>383.34</b>

## Section D: Staffing

The following tables provide information on human resources required to carry out the WW program. It also contains information on total number of inquiries as well as applications that were not granted and the number of hours spent on the program.

⇒ Please refer to the end of Section E for the Table of definitions

Table 1: Staffing from Enbridge Gas

<b>Enbridge Gas Distribution</b>				
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Total Number of Inquiries</b>	<b>Total Number of Staff</b>	<b>Total Number of Hours</b>	<b>Total Number of Rejected /Referred Applications</b>
Dufferin County	11	4	19	46
Barrie & Greater Simcoe County**	165	2	-	10
City of Kawartha Lakes	51	3	70	26
Lanark County	46	1	21	3
Leeds & Grenville	36	2	41	9
Northumberland	15	2	26	7
Bruce Grey	6	1	4	0
Niagara Falls	488	1	504	391
Durham	223	2	41	16
Ottawa	357	1	1,056	13
Peel Region	3,928	9	2,520	211
Peterborough & District	87	4	66	31
Prescott-Russell	19	1	16	4
Renfrew County	245	2	77	199
St. Catharines & District	115	3	205	46
Toronto	438	22	823	22
Welland	241	3	163	88
Fort Erie	115	1	76	3
York Region	2,606	2	1,227	156
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,192</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>6,955</b>	<b>1,281</b>

\*\* Municipality did not provide information.



## **Section E: Reasons for Rejected/Referred Applications**

### **Enbridge Gas Distribution**

- Applicant's household income exceeded income eligibility criteria
- Zero balance on the utility bill
- Documentation failed to verify information given by the applicant
- Unable to verify applicant's residency
- Unsustainable housing/utility
- Applicant was not an existing Enbridge customer
- Applicant was unable to make payment arrangements (for applicants whose utility's balance exceeded \$500)
- Applicant resided outside the catchment area
- Agency was out of Winter Warmth funding
- Applicant received assistance from OW or ODSP
- Referred client to OW for community start up benefit

## **Section F: Referral Source**

**The following information captures the data on applicants' referral sources:**

**Enbridge Gas Distribution:** Enbridge Call Centre, Winter Warmth flyers/brochures, United Way, social assistance offices (OW/ODSP), housing help centres, Salvation Army, newspaper, Internet, family and friends, community agencies, food banks, Employment Education Centre, media, schools, word of mouth, repeating clients

## **Section G: Challenges and Recommendations**

### **Grant amounts and repayments**

- Increased flexibility within call centre with payment arrangements for the remaining balance (over \$500).

### **Issues regarding the working relationship with utility**

- Enbridge service desk kept referring applicants who live outside Dufferin County.

### **Communication**

- Applicants should be directed to Winter Warmth before their balances exceeded the Winter Warmth allowance. Many applicants waited until their balances were very high and had to be referred to the utility company to make payment arrangements.
- Some applicants were under the impression that if they had been serviced and their grant amount was less than \$500, they could submit subsequent bills to get an additional grant amount up to \$500.

### **Funding**

- Funds were depleted prior to programs end. Increase in program funding is needed as demand is higher.
- Increase in funding for staffing.

### **Application Process**

- Advocating for OW/ODSP clients was time-consuming.

## **Accomplishments**

The Winter Warmth Program provided an extremely valuable form of assistance to the increasing number of low income households who faced the prospect of losing heat in the winter months. Social Service agencies, in collaboration with utility companies helped individuals and families maintain their housing, and enhance their support network when many families were confronted with challenges such as job loss, family breakdown, illness, injuries or death. Given the current economic downturn, this program is more important than ever in helping stabilize the life situations of low-income families who are confronted with short-term financial difficulties.