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**Commission de l'énergie
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BY EMAIL AND WEB POSTING

April 5, 2013

**To: All Natural Gas Distributors
Low-Income Energy Network
Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition
Federation of Rental-Housing Providers of Ontario
Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater Toronto
London Property Management Association
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters**

**Re: Notice of Hearing for Cost Awards
Customer Service Standards for Natural Gas Distributors
Board File No.: EB-2010-0280**

Background

A. The Consultation

On September 21, 2010, the Ontario Energy Board commenced a consultation process on the development of customer service standards and rules for gas distributors pertaining to residential and low-income customers (the “consultation”). In its September 21, 2010 announcement letter, the Board indicated that cost awards would be available under section 30 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* (the “Act”) to eligible participants in the consultation. The Board also stated that any costs awarded would be recovered from all rate-regulated natural gas distributors based on their respective distribution revenues.

In its October 28, 2010 Decision on Cost Eligibility, the Board found the following parties (collectively, the “eligible participants”) to be eligible for an award of costs in respect of the consultation: Building Owners and Managers Association (“BOMA”); Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (“CME”); Federation of Rental-Housing Providers of Ontario (“FRPO”); London Property Management Association (“LPMA”); Low-Income Energy Network (“LIEN”); and the Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition (“VECC”).

Following the first phase of the consultation, the Board issued amendments to the Gas Distribution Access Rule (“GDAR”) requiring rate-regulated gas distributors to implement and publish updated *residential* customer service policies, effective April 1, 2012. Similar amendments to GDAR in relation to customer service policies for *low-income* customers came into effect on January 1, 2013. On February 4, 2013 the Board

issued a Decision and Order on Cost Awards that addressed cost claims pertaining to the first phase of the consultation.

The second phase of the consultation focused on the development of reporting requirements to enable the Board to monitor the effectiveness of the new residential and low income customer service policies. In accordance with the March 28, 2013 Notice of Amendments to the Natural Gas Reporting and Record Keeping Requirements Rule ("Gas RRR"), the new reporting requirements will come into force on July 31, 2013. During the second phase of the consultation the Board solicited comments from stakeholders on the proposed amendments to the Gas RRR. Of the eligible participants, only LIEN provided comments on the proposed Gas RRR amendments.

Notice of Hearing

The Board is initiating this hearing on its own motion in order to determine the cost awards that will be made in accordance with section 30 of the Act in relation to the written comments noted above. The file number for this hearing is EB-2010-0280.

The Board intends to proceed by way of written hearing unless a participant can satisfy the Board that there is a compelling reason for not holding a written hearing. If a participant wants to object to a written hearing, the objection must be received by the Board no later than **7 days** after the date of this Notice.

If the Board does not receive any objections to a written hearing, the hearing will follow the process set out below.

1. Eligible participants shall submit their cost claims by **April 26, 2013**. A copy of the cost claim must be filed with the Board and one copy is to be served on each rate-regulated distributor. The cost claims must be completed in accordance with section 10 of the Board's *Practice Direction on Cost Awards*.
2. Rate-regulated distributors will have until **May 3, 2013** to object to any aspect of the costs claimed. A copy of the objection must be filed with the Board and one copy must be served on the eligible participant against whose claim the objection is being made.
3. An eligible participant whose cost claim was objected to will have until **May 10, 2013** to make a reply submission as to why its cost claim should be allowed. A copy of the reply submission must be filed with the Board and one copy is to be served on the objecting distributor.
4. The Board will then issue its decision on cost awards. The Board's costs may also be addressed in the cost awards decision.

Service of cost claims, objections and reply submissions on other parties may be effected by courier, registered mail, facsimile or e-mail.

All submissions in this hearing (i.e., cost claims, objections and replies) will form part of the public record. Copies of the submissions will be available for inspection at the Board's office and the submissions may be published on the Board's website.

Parties must file a paper copy and one electronic copy of their submissions with the Board Secretary by **4:45 pm** on the dates set out above. The Board requests that interested parties make every effort to provide electronic copies of their filings in searchable/unrestricted Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format, and to submit their filings through the Board's web portal at <https://www.pes.ontarioenergyboard.ca/eservice/>. A user ID is required to submit documents through the Board's web portal. If you do not have a user ID, please visit the "e-filings services" webpage on the Board's website at www.ontarioenergyboard.ca and fill out a user ID password request. Additionally, interested parties are requested to follow the document naming conventions and document submission standards outlined in the document entitled "RESS Document Preparation – A Quick Guide" also found on the e-filing services webpage. If the Board's web portal is not available, electronic copies of filings may be filed by e-mail at boardsec@ontarioenergyboard.ca. Those that do not have internet access should provide a CD containing their filing in PDF format.

All submissions must quote file number EB-2010-0280 and include your name, address, telephone number and, where available, your email address and fax number.

If you do not file a letter objecting to a written hearing or do not participate in the hearing by filing written submissions in accordance with this Notice, the Board may proceed without your participation and you will not be entitled to further notice in this proceeding.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

Kirsten Walli
Board Secretary