

January 8, 2015

Ms. Kirsten Walli
Board Secretary
Ontario Energy Board
P.O. Box 2319
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Re: Consultation on the Effectiveness of Part II of the *Energy Consumer Protection Act*, 2010, Board File No.: EB-2014-0158

Dear Ms. Walli:

I am writing on behalf of Bioenterprise Corporation in response to the Ontario Energy Board's request for stakeholder input into its review of the *Energy Consumer Protection Act*.

Bioenterprise Corporation is an Ontario business accelerator and commercialization agent, established to help promote the creation, growth and expansion of businesses engaged in agri-technologies. Bioenterprise works with companies at all stages, from start-ups to emerging and well-established businesses. Through our global network of industry contacts and professionals, we are able to assess the critical components needed to mitigate risks inherent in early stage business. Through the Agri-Technology Commercialization Centre, Bioenterprise works with researchers and entrepreneurs to solidify their results and move them toward commercialization.

Ontario's innovative agri-technological businesses need to ensure that all of their essential inputs are available from dependable suppliers at competitive market prices. Although Bioenterprise focuses on emerging technologies and leading edge research and development, we are very well aware that the success of the businesses with which we work always depends upon those businesses being able to source their basic energy needs at fair and predictable prices. While the fluctuating nature of commodity prices, particularly with respect to natural gas, can make it difficult for businesses trying to lock in their long-term costs, energy co-operatives such as Ag Energy Co-operative can provide emerging enterprises in the agri-technology sector with the education, information, and tools to help them manage their energy costs.

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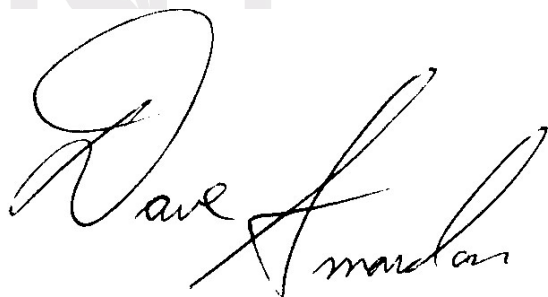
As a member-owned co-operative principally serving the broader agricultural and agri-processing sector, Ag Energy offers its members energy products which have been developed for the purpose of saving its members money and mitigating the risks of fluctuating energy prices rather than simply to maximize profits for investors. This is precisely the kind of support that innovative start-up enterprises in Ontario's agricultural sector need in order to succeed.

I understand that the *Energy Consumer Protection Act* has made it difficult for Ag Energy to offer its services to low volume consumers in rural Ontario. While it is certainly important for the OEB to ensure that consumers are protected from deceptive and unfair business practices by energy marketers, it is equally essential to enable all agricultural consumers to participate in the benefits made possible through membership in an energy co-operative. Rather than creating barriers, the regulatory environment should foster organizational models, which promote local ownership and provide direct benefits back to consumer members.

Bioenterprise would strongly urge the OEB to support any amendments to the ECPA Regulations and guidelines, which would make it economically and administratively feasible for energy co-operatives such as Ag Energy Co-operative to be able to extend its energy product offerings to a greater range of agricultural and rural consumers. These consumers deserve to have the option of becoming members of a co-operative which exists solely to promote their best interests and is ultimately accountable to the members who own it.

I appreciate the opportunity the OEB has provided us to participate in its review of the ECPA.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Smardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dave" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Smardon".

Dave Smardon
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