



October 5, 2015

BY EMAIL/COURIER

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

Dear Ms. Walli,

**RE: EB-2015-0113/EB-2015-0251 Whitby Hydro Electric Corporation
Notice of Intervention of Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition (VECC)**

Whitby Hydro Electric Corporation (Whitby Hydro) is in receipt of VECC's Notice of Intervention dated October 2, 2015 and notes several areas that it wishes to provide comments for consideration by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB).

- 1) The OEB has decided to hold one consolidated hearing to consider the two applications submitted (2016 IRM and 1576 Disposition). Whitby Hydro had informally advised board staff that it did not object to this approach if the OEB felt this would be a more efficient and effective process as long as the consolidation would not impede or delay a decision on 2016 IRM application rates which would otherwise follow a simplified process. Whitby Hydro's 2016 IRM application is strictly mechanistic in nature as it does not involve elements that would typically include intervenor participation (ie. LRAMVA, Incremental or Advanced Capital Module, Z-factor etc.).

In light of this, Whitby Hydro requests that, should the OEB consider intervenors in this consolidated proceeding, it limit the scope of an intervenor's role to focus solely on issues related to the 1576 Disposition (ie. EB-2015-0251).

- 2) VECC's grounds for intervention as outlined in section 8 of their letter, does not apply. Contrary to the comment "The applicant is seeking to increase the rates to customers...", the 1576 Disposition will in fact be a credit to all Whitby Hydro customers and specifically will provide welcome assistance in reducing upward pressure on bills for residential and low volume customers who will lose the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit (OCEB) credit on January 1st. Neither the 1576 Disposition (nor the 2016 IRM) are contributing factors to energy costs which according to VECC "...continually exceed the rate of inflation."

To further clarify, Whitby Hydro's 1576 Disposition application is a request for a 1576 rate adder which is a refund to customers. The rate adder is intended to advance the

provision of credits on customer bills prior to Whitby Hydro's next cost of service application. As such, the application was intended to be a simplified and streamlined approach to begin returning funds to customers. Intervenors would still be able to participate in a prudency review at a later date during a cost of service process.

- 3) In section 11 of their letter, VECC has outlined their role in ensuring that consumer interests and in particular the interests of the low-income and vulnerable users of electricity are fully represented in the determination of just and reasonable rates.

Whitby Hydro's 1576 Disposition proposes to give back \$2.1M to customers which will benefit all customer classes. Board staff has been involved in other cost of service proceedings involving 1576 dispositions and it is expected that allocation methodologies to ensure fairness between customer classes has been part of board staff's review. Whitby Hydro would ask that the OEB evaluate the benefits of including an intervenor in this proceeding specifically as it applies to the 1576 Disposition. If the OEB were to allow the intervention to proceed, then a limited number of hours or dollar cap should be stipulated with respect to cost awards.

While Whitby Hydro does not formally object to VECC's intervenor request, it does ask the OEB to consider the points outlined above and appropriately direct any intervenor participation including role, scope as well as cost awards in this proceeding commensurate with any benefits provided that would not otherwise be attended to by board staff.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,

Original signed by

Ramona Abi-Rashed
Treasurer

cc: Mr. Michael Janigan (email)
Ms. Shelley Grice (email)