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Our File No. 65152

Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge Street, 27 Floor
PO Box 2319
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Attention: Ms. Kristen Walli, Board Secretary

Dear Ms. Walli,

Re: EB-2016-0004 - OEB Application under its own motion to consider potential alternative approaches to recover costs of expanding natural gas service to Ontario communities that are not currently services

The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chamber of Commerce, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association and Common Voice Northwest (collectively the “NOACC Coalition”) were pleased to review the Draft Issues List provided by the Board and thanks for Board for taking the initiative to commencing this proceeding on its own motion and for including those Issues identified in EB-2015-0179 in the Draft Issues List.

The NOACC Coalition agrees with those issues identified and included by the Board in the Draft Issues List. The NOACC Coalition suggests that those issues to be addressed in the Hearing should be broad and expansive and ensure that any and all proposed mechanisms and amendments to the currently regulatory framework with respect to expansion of natural gas in Ontario may be the subject of evidence and argument. In other words, the Issues List should not restrict, limit, or exclude the Board from considering, and the Intervenors from submitting evidence and argument with respect to, any proposed mechanisms and amendments to the currently regulatory framework with respect to expansion of natural gas in Ontario.

Weiler, Maloney, Nelson

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Accordingly, set out in Appendix "A" attached hereto are the NOACC Coalitions suggested additions to the Draft Issues List for consideration.

Yours very truly,

WEILER, MALONEY, NELSON

Per: 

NICK A. MELCHIORRE

NAM/mpm

APPENDIX “A”

OEB Application under its own motion to consider potential alternative approaches to recover costs of expanding natural gas service to Ontario communities that are not currently services

Proposed Additions and Modifications to Draft Issues List:

1. What is considered a “rural and remote” community?
2. Does the Board have legal authority to establish a framework where all ratepayers (including electricity ratepayers in certain instances) subsidize expansion of natural gas service to remote or rural communities, irrespective of which utility undertakes the proposed expansion?
3. Should there be exemptions to certain costs being included in the economic assessment for providing natural gas service to rural and remote communities? If so, what are those exemptions and how should they be considered by the Board in assessing to approve rural and remote expansion projects?
4. To what degree, if at all, should the Board consider existing plans (for example the IESO’s North of Dryden Plan dated January 27, 2015; and IESO’s plan regarding the Ring of Fire) and future plans that identify a potential need to expand natural gas services, in assessing and approving rural and remote expansion projects?
5. To what degree, if at all, should the Board consider the availability (or lack of availability) of other energy distribution or transmission sources in such rural and remote communities in assessing and approving expansion projects in such communities?
6. Should the economic, environmental and public interest components in not expanding natural gas service to a specific rural and remote community be considered? If so how?