

May 19, 2020

**To: All Rate-Regulated Natural Gas Distributors  
All Participants in EB-2019-0255**

**Re: Notice of Hearing for Cost Awards  
Consultation on Potential Projects to Expand Access to Natural Gas  
Distribution  
OEB File No.: EB-2019-0255**

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## Background

On December 12, 2019, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) received a [letter](#) from the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and the Associate Minister of Energy under section 35 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* asking the OEB to examine and report back to the Ministry by August 31, 2020 with information on potential projects to expand access to natural gas distribution to communities that are not currently connected to a natural gas distribution system.

In its December 19, 2019 letter and [Draft Guidelines](#), the OEB indicated that cost awards would be recovered from rate-regulated natural gas distributors based on their respective customer numbers. Also, in that letter, the OEB determined that up to five (5) hours would be eligible for cost awards for providing written comments on the Draft Guidelines.

On December 30, 2019, the OEB issued its Decision on Cost Award Eligibility granting cost eligibility to thirteen parties. In its Decision, the OEB noted that there were stakeholders with overlapping interests. The OEB indicated its expectation that stakeholders with similar viewpoints would coordinate their activities in order to increase efficiency and minimize costs.

On January 3 and January 15, 2019, the OEB issued two Supplemental Decisions on Cost Award Eligibility granting cost eligibility to two additional parties.

## Notice of Hearing

The OEB 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 *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* in relation to eligible consultation activities that have occurred since December 19, 2019.

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

Assuming that the OEB does not receive any objections to a written hearing, the hearing will follow the process set out below.

1. Eligible persons shall submit their cost claims by **June 15, 2020**. The cost claim must be filed with the OEB and one copy is to be served on each rate-regulated natural gas distributor. The cost claims must be completed in accordance with section 10 of the OEB's *Practice Direction on Cost Awards*.

**Eligible persons must use the customized Cost Claim Form attached as Appendix A to this Notice.**

2. Natural gas distributors will have until **June 30, 2020** to object to any aspect of the costs claimed. The objection must be filed with the OEB and one copy must be served on the eligible person against whose claim the objection is being made.
3. An eligible person whose cost claim was objected to will have until **July 15, 2020** 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 OEB and one copy is to be served on the objecting natural gas distributor.
4. The OEB will then issue its decision on cost awards. The OEB'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.

The OEB will use the process set out in section 12 of its *Practice Direction on Cost*

*Awards* to implement the payment of the cost awards. Therefore, the OEB will act as a clearing house for all payments of cost awards in this process. For more information on this process parties may refer to the OEB's [Practice Direction on Cost Awards](#) and the [October 27, 2005 letter](#) regarding the rationale for the OEB acting as a clearing house for the cost award payments. These documents can be found on the OEB's [Rules, Codes, Guidelines and Forms](#) webpage.

All materials filed with the OEB must quote the file number, **EB-2019-0255**, be made in a searchable/unrestricted PDF format and sent electronically through the OEB's web portal at <https://pes.ontarioenergyboard.ca/eservice>. Filings must clearly state the sender's name, postal address and telephone number, fax number and email address. Parties must use the document naming conventions and document submission standards outlined in the RESS Document Guideline found at <https://www.oeb.ca/industry>. If the web portal is not available parties may email their documents to the address below.

NOTE: The OEB is temporarily waiving the paper copy filing requirement until further notice. All communications should be directed to the attention of the Board Secretary at [BoardSec@oeb.ca](mailto:BoardSec@oeb.ca), and be received no later than 4:45 p.m. on the required date.

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

**DATED** at Toronto, May 19, 2020

**ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD**

*Original Signed By*

Christine E. Long  
Registrar and Board Secretary

Attachment

**Appendix A**

**Notice of Hearing for Cost Awards**

**Consultation on Potential Projects to Expand Access to Natural Gas Distribution**

**EB-2019-0255**

**Appendix A: Ontario Energy Board Cost Claim for Consultations:  
Affidavit and Summary of Fees and Disbursements**

The form that eligible persons must complete are provided in a separate MS Excel Workbook named, "EB-2019-0255\_NOH Appendix A\_Cost\_Claim\_Form-FINAL".