



Ontario
Energy
Board | Commission
de l'énergie
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BY EMAIL

March 11, 2021

To: All Licensed Electricity Distributors
All Licensed Unit Sub-Meter Providers
Gas Distributors

Re: Covid-19 Energy Assistance Program and Covid-19 Energy Assistance Program – Small Business – Direction to Continue Accepting Application Forms

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has made provision for the implementation of two government-funded programs by licensed electricity distributors, licensed unit sub-meter providers, and natural gas utilities (collectively, Utilities). These programs, the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) for residential customers, and the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program – Small Business (CEAP-SB) for small business and registered charity customers, provide financial assistance to energy consumers who have unpaid arrears.

On March 10, 2021, the OEB received a letter from the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines (Minister's Letter). The Minister's Letter indicated that the Ministry is currently pursuing options to provide more assistance to customers through these programs. The Minister's Letter also requested that the OEB work with Utilities to ensure that they continue to accept application forms even if their program funding has been depleted, with the understanding that these applications will be processed on a first come, first served basis once additional funding amounts are confirmed. Given that Utilities were recently enabled to "pool" their CEAP and CEAP-SB allocations to provide credits to eligible customers under either program, the OEB understands that the additional funding will similarly be for the benefit of eligible customers under both programs.

In order to ensure that customers can have ready access to any additional funding, the OEB expects that Utilities will continue to make available and accept CEAP and CEAP-SB application forms, or resume doing so, regardless of whether they have funding available. To facilitate the continued acceptance of applications, Utilities are relieved of

the obligation to process application forms within 10 days of receipt when they no longer have any remaining funding allocation for the programs. Once additional funding is confirmed by government, the OEB expects to allocate the funding amongst the Utilities and will be taking into consideration the number of applications that Utilities have received. Any applications that have been held pending additional funding, or that were rejected or not processed due to insufficient funding, will then be expected to be processed in the order in which they were received.

To assist the OEB in determining the appropriate allocation of any new government funding for the programs, Utilities are required to report to the OEB the current amount of CEAP and CEAP-SB funding they have remaining, as well as the number of CEAP and CEAP-SB application forms they have received but not processed on account of lack of funds. The report is due no later than March 19, 2021 and should be emailed to performance_reporting@oeb.ca with the subject line "March CEAP Report".

The OEB appreciates the ongoing efforts of Utilities in assisting their customers during the COVID pandemic. Any questions relating to this letter should be directed to the OEB's Industry Relations Enquiry e-mail at IndustryRelations@oeb.ca. Please include "CEAP/CEAP-SB Implementation" in the subject line.

Yours truly,

Original Signed By

Brian Hewson
Vice-President, Consumer Protection & Industry Performance