



Ontario
Energy
Board | Commission
de l'énergie
de l'Ontario

BY E-MAIL AND WEB POSTING

July 5, 2021

**TO: All Electricity Distributors
All Natural Gas Distributors
All Other Interested Stakeholders**

**RE: Green Button Implementation
OEB File No. EB-2021-0183**

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is today initiating a consultation to support the implementation of Green Button. This letter provides high-level details of the plan for the consultation.

In the fall of 2020, the Ontario government posted a regulatory proposal regarding Green Button on the Environmental Registry of Ontario and Regulatory Registry. Green Button is a data standard that utilities use in compiling a customer's usage data to share with households and businesses or with third-party applications where authorized by the customer. Ontario's commitment to implement Green Button was included in the Burden and Red Tape Reduction package, *Supporting Ontario's Recovery and Competitiveness*, which was released on April 15, 2021.

The Ministry of Energy (Ministry) has indicated that it intends to move forward with a regulation that will require electricity and natural gas distributors (collectively "distributors") to implement Green Button. During a meeting with distributors in June, Ministry staff indicated it was considering the fall for the start of a two-year, phased-in implementation of Green Button by distributors to allow alignment with other business priorities or other planned information technology investments. Ministry staff also indicated the desire to see Green Button implemented consistently by all electricity and natural gas distributors, in a manner that would meet the needs of Ontario energy service providers and customers, and that implementation prioritize cybersecurity, consumer protection and cost effectiveness.

The OEB's consultations will focus on the need for additional guidance or direction that would assist distributors in order to ensure the timely, efficient, and cost-effective implementation of Green Button. In keeping with its Strategic Goals as laid out in its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, the OEB will be focused on providing guidance and direction to distributors that will facilitate implementation of Green Button in a manner that

protects the public and supports innovation in the energy sector that can deliver value to consumers.

As part of its work on this initiative, the OEB is inviting select distributors and stakeholders, with every effort to make the membership representative of the diverse nature of the energy sector in Ontario, to participate in a task force. The OEB is taking this approach to ensure it can support distributors and the sector in keeping with the planned timelines for the implementation of Green Button. The objectives of the task force will be to assist OEB staff in identifying the key milestones on the critical path for implementation over the phase-in period and to identify any issues to be addressed to support the initial stages of implementation. By way of this letter, the OEB is inviting the following organizations to participate on the task force:

- Alectra Utilities Corporation
- Electricity Distributors Association
- Enbridge Gas Inc.
- EPCOR Electricity Distribution Ontario Inc. / EPCOR Natural Gas Limited Partnership
- Cornwall Street Railway Light & Power
- Cornerstone Hydro-Electric Concepts
- Hydro Ottawa Limited
- Kitchener Utilities
- London Hydro Inc.
- Building Owners and Managers Association
- School Energy Coalition

The organizations listed above are asked to provide the name and email address of the individual who will be participating in the task force meetings on the organization's behalf to Eamon.ORiordan@oeb.ca by Friday, July 9th, 2021. It is expected that the task force meetings will take place weekly during July and August. The first meeting is planned for Thursday, July 15th from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams, with the following weekly meetings to be scheduled after the first meeting has taken place.

As the task force progresses, there will be an opportunity for all interested stakeholders to comment on any code and rule amendments that may be proposed in order to implement Green Button in line with the government's goals as shared with distributors in June. Feedback will also be sought from stakeholders on areas of broad interest where additional guidance may be provided to distributors. Once the initial objective of identifying the critical path for the fall start to the phase-in period is completed, the OEB will provide further guidance on next steps in the consultation.

During the Ministry's meetings with distributors with respect to Green Button, distributors raised concerns with respect to recovery of costs incurred as part of the implementation of Green Button. Recognizing the concerns that have been raised, the OEB is considering whether a deferral account for costs associated with implementing

Green Button should be established and will be assisted by feedback from the task force on this matter as part of the initial discussions.

Cost Awards

Cost awards will be available under section 30 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* to eligible participants for their participation in this consultation. Costs awarded will be recovered from all rate-regulated electricity and natural gas distributors based on the number of customers they serve.

Attachment B to this letter contains information regarding cost eligibility requests and cost awards for this consultation. Although cost awards will be available to eligible participants in relation to their participation in the task force, given the timelines it will not be possible to complete the cost award eligibility process and issue a decision on eligibility before certain initial consultation activities take place.

Cost award eligibility requests and other filings related to cost awards must be made in accordance with the filing instructions set out in Attachment A. In order to facilitate a timely decision on cost eligibility, the deadlines for filing cost eligibility requests will be strictly enforced and the OEB is waiving the normal process of allowing objections to be filed in respect of cost eligibility requests.

Materials related to Green Button implementation will be available on the OEB's [webpage](#) for this initiative.

Any questions relating to this initiative should be directed to Eamon.ORiordan@oeb.ca.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BH', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian Hewson
Vice President, Consumer Protection & Industry Performance

Attachment A - Filing Instructions

How to File Materials

Stakeholders are responsible for ensuring that any documents they file with the OEB **do not include personal information** (as that phrase is defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*), unless filed in accordance with rule 9A of the OEB's [Rules of Practice and Procedure](#).

Please quote file number, **EB-2021-0183** for all materials filed and submit them in searchable/unrestricted PDF format with a digital signature through the [OEB's online filing portal](#).

- Filings should clearly state the sender's name, postal address, telephone number and e-mail address
- Please use the document naming conventions and document submission standards outlined in the [Regulatory Electronic Submission System \(RESS\) Document Guidelines](#) found at the [Filing Systems page](#) on the OEB's website
- Stakeholders are encouraged to use RESS. Those who have not yet [set up an account](#), or require assistance using the online filing portal can contact registrar@oeb.ca for assistance

All communications should be directed to the attention of the Registrar at the address below and be received by end of business, 4:45 p.m., on the required date.

With respect to distribution lists for all electronic correspondence and materials related to proceeding **EB-2021-0183** stakeholders should include the Case Manager, Eamon O'Riordan at Eamon.ORiordan@oeb.ca.

Email: registrar@oeb.ca

Tel: 1-877-632-2727 (Toll free)

Attachment B - Cost Awards

Any person intending to request an award of costs must file with the OEB a written submission to that effect by July 13th, 2021. The submission must identify the following:

- The nature of the person's interest in this consultation
- The grounds on which the person believes that they are eligible for an award of costs (addressing the OEB's cost eligibility criteria as set out in section 3 of the OEB's [*Practice Direction on Cost Awards*](#))
- An explanation of any other funding to which the person has access
- The name and credentials of any lawyer, analyst, or consultant that the person intends to retain, if known

All requests for cost eligibility will be posted on the OEB's website.

Eligible Activities

Cost awards will be available to eligible participants for participation in the Green Button task force, to a maximum of actual meeting time plus 50% of meeting time for preparation and reporting. Details on subsequent consultation activities eligible for cost awards will be provided at a later date.

Cost Awards

The OEB will apply the principles set out in section 5 of its *Practice Direction on Cost Awards* when awarding costs. The maximum hourly rates set out in the OEB's Cost Awards Tariff will be applied. The OEB expects that groups representing the same interests or class of persons will make every effort to communicate and co-ordinate their participation in this process.

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, please refer to the OEB's *Practice Direction on Cost Awards*.