



Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario
Centre ontarien de défense des droits des locataires

July 25, 2008

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

Dear Ms Walli,

Re: **Consultation on Energy Issues Relating to Low Income Consumers**
(Board File No.: EB-2008-0150)

I am writing on behalf of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) to advise you that we intend to participate in the above-mentioned consultation process, and in particular wish to attend the stakeholder conference to be held the week of September 22nd.

ACTO is a specialty legal aid clinic with a province-wide mandate, funded by Legal Aid Ontario to engage in test case litigation and law reform advocacy to improve the housing situation of the province's low-income residents.

ACTO is also a founding member of the Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN), formed in 2004 to raise awareness of the impact of rising energy prices on low-income consumers and to work with policymakers and the utility sectors on solutions to energy poverty. We use the term energy poverty to describe the disproportionate burden of electricity, natural gas and other utility costs on low-income households which reduce the funds available for rent, food, clothing, transportation, medicine and other basic necessities.

ACTO is specifically concerned that rising costs for electricity and gas are eroding housing affordability for Ontario's low-income households, and that we need a comprehensive energy poverty strategy in place in the province, comprised of:

- An energy rate affordability program,

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The Tenant Duty Counsel Program is a project of ACTO

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- targeted low-income energy conservation/efficiency programs at no-cost to participants, and with as extensive measures as practicable to provide deep reductions in energy use,
 - extensive consumer education about energy conservation and available programs to support conservation activities, and
 - adequately funded emergency energy assistance to help low-income households in short-term financial crisis.

LIEN's advocacy also includes the promotion of terms and conditions for utility service that are in the best interests of low-income consumers. Such terms and conditions:

- will not add to the service costs, nor penalize low-income consumers who are experiencing payment difficulties, and
- will assist low-income consumers in accessing and maintaining essential utility service.

We wish to be considered for cost eligibility for our participation in the stakeholder conference. We will collaborate with LIEN and the other LIEN steering committee intervenors to minimize duplication.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by

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