



# **DECISION AND ORDER**

**EB-2022-0127**

## **ENBRIDGE GAS INC.**

**Application for the renewal of a Municipal Franchise Agreement  
with the Town of Fort Erie**

**By Delegation, before: Theodore Antonopoulos**  
Vice President  
Applications

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**June 30, 2022**

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This Decision and Order approves Enbridge Gas Inc.'s (Enbridge Gas) application for the renewal of its natural gas franchise agreement with the Town of Fort Erie for a twenty-year term. The proposed municipal gas franchise agreement is in the form of the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) approved Model Franchise Agreement, with no amendments, and is for a term of twenty years.

## THE PROCESS

Enbridge Gas filed an application with the OEB on March 23, 2022, under section 9 of the *Municipal Franchises Act*. The application was for an order of the OEB approving the renewal of Enbridge Gas's right to construct and operate works for the distribution, transmission and storage of natural gas, and the right to extend and add to the works, in the Town of Fort Erie.

The OEB held a written hearing. A notice of hearing was published in the local newspaper on April 21, 2022. There were no requests for interventions. A letter of comment was received from a customer of Enbridge Gas, residing in the Town of Fort Erie, on May 2, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

In this Decision and Order, a reference to the Town of Fort Erie is a reference to the municipal corporation or its geographical area, as the context requires.

## THE APPLICATION

Enbridge Gas is a corporation incorporated under the laws of the Province of Ontario, with its head office in the City of Toronto.

The Town of Fort Erie is a municipal corporation incorporated under the laws of the Province of Ontario and is a lower-tier municipality in the Regional Municipality of Niagara.

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<sup>1</sup> Christine Knighton Written Submission, EB-2022-0127, May 2, 2022

Enbridge Gas currently has a franchise agreement with the Town of Fort Erie that is scheduled to expire on September 9, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

Enbridge Gas also holds a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the Town of Fort Erie.<sup>3</sup>

Enbridge Gas applied to the Town of Fort Erie for approval of the renewal of the franchise, based on a proposed municipal franchise agreement in the form of the Model Franchise Agreement, with no amendments, for a term of twenty years. On February 28, 2022, the Town of Fort Erie gave its approval.

With the application, Enbridge Gas filed the Town of Fort Erie's draft by-law granting the proposed franchise renewal, and a copy of the proposed municipal franchise agreement. Enbridge Gas also filed a copy of the Town of Fort Erie's resolution passed on February 28, 2022, approving the form of the draft by-law and franchise agreement, and authorizing Enbridge Gas's request for an order declaring and directing that the assent of the municipal electors to the by-law and franchise agreement is not necessary.

A letter of comment was filed by an Enbridge Gas customer residing in the Town of Fort Erie. Through the letter, the customer asked that the term of the franchise agreement be shortened to ten years and include reporting requirements in respect of GHG emissions. In support of the request, the customer cited a paper issued by Enbridge Gas wherein it discussed the utility's commitments and progress in respect of its 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions reduction targets.

Enbridge Gas responded to the letter of comment, stating that it does not support a shorter term for the franchise agreement, or the inclusion therein of reporting requirements in respect of GHG emissions.<sup>4</sup> Enbridge Gas notes that the Model Franchise Agreement is a long-established template document that was developed in consultation with multiple sector stakeholders and other natural gas utilities. Enbridge Gas states that, as of May 2022, it has 356 twenty-year franchise agreements in place

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<sup>2</sup> RP-2000-0063 / EB-2000-0152

<sup>3</sup> EBC 58A

<sup>4</sup> Enbridge Gas Reply Submission, EB-2022-0127, May 17, 2022

with municipalities based on the Model Franchise Agreement. Enbridge Gas also notes that the Council of the Town of Fort Erie, which represents the residents of the municipality and thus the beneficiaries of the gas distribution services, approved the franchise agreement, based on the Model Franchise Agreement with no amendments.

Enbridge Gas further states that it conducts a feasibility analysis based on a forty-year service time horizon and has determined that the length of the franchise agreement is appropriate based on the long duration of natural gas services typically provided to residential customers. Enbridge Gas notes that it releases an annual sustainability report, shares natural gas consumption data with municipalities upon request, and is working with municipalities to advance their carbon reduction targets through various programs and initiatives by 2050.

## OEB FINDINGS

I find that it is in the public interest to approve the application. Enbridge Gas filed a complete application and provided notice of the hearing in the manner instructed by the OEB. I note that no party intervened to object to the application. The proposed municipal franchise agreement with the Town of Fort Erie is in the form of the Model Franchise Agreement, with no amendments, and is for a term of twenty years.

The Model Franchise Agreement outlines the terms that the OEB finds reasonable under the *Municipal Franchises Act*, which includes a twenty-year term.<sup>5</sup> The OEB has previously advised natural gas distributors that they are expected to follow the form of the Model Franchise Agreement when filing applications for the approval of franchise agreements unless there is a compelling reason for deviation.<sup>6</sup> I am satisfied with Enbridge Gas's response in terms of the work that it conducts with municipalities including the sharing of information, and find there are no compelling reasons for a deviation from the Model Franchise Agreement in respect of the application filed by Enbridge Gas in this proceeding.

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<sup>5</sup> Report of the Ontario Energy Board - "Natural Gas Facilities Handbook", EB-2022-0081, March 31, 2022

<sup>6</sup> EB-2021-0269, Decision and Order, February 17, 2021

**IT IS ORDERED THAT**

1. The terms and conditions upon which, and the period for which, the Town of Fort Erie is, by by-law, to grant to Enbridge Gas Inc. the right to construct and operate works for the distribution, transmission and storage of natural gas, and the right to extend and add to the works, in the municipality, as set out in the municipal franchise agreement attached as Schedule A, are approved. A current map of the Town of Fort Erie is attached as Schedule B.
2. The assent of the municipal electors is not necessary in relation to the by-law approving the franchise agreement.
3. Enbridge Gas Inc. shall pay the OEB's costs incidental to this proceeding upon receipt of the OEB's invoice.

**DATED** at, Toronto June 30, 2022

**ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD**

Theodore Antonopoulos  
Vice President, Applications

**SCHEDULE A**  
**MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE AGREEMENT**  
**ENBRIDGE GAS INC.**  
**EB-2022-0127**  
**JUNE 30, 2022**

# **2000 Model Franchise Agreement**

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THIS AGREEMENT effective this                      day of                      , 2022

BETWEEN:

**THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF FORT ERIE**

hereinafter called the "Corporation"

- and -

**ENBRIDGE GAS INC.**

hereinafter called the "Gas Company"

WHEREAS the Gas Company desires to distribute, store and transmit gas in the Municipality upon the terms and conditions of this Agreement;

AND WHEREAS by by-law passed by the Council of the Corporation (the "By-law"), the duly authorized officers have been authorized and directed to execute this Agreement on behalf of the Corporation;

THEREFORE the Corporation and the Gas Company agree as follows:

## **Part I - Definitions**

### **1. In this Agreement**

- (a) "decommissioned" and "decommissions" when used in connection with parts of the gas system, mean any parts of the gas system taken out of active use and purged in accordance with the applicable CSA standards and in no way affects the use of the term 'abandoned' pipeline for the purposes of the *Assessment Act*;
- (b) "Engineer/Road Superintendent" means the most senior individual employed by the Corporation with responsibilities for highways within the Municipality or the person designated by such senior employee or such other person as may from time to time be designated by the Council of the Corporation;

- (c) "gas" means natural gas, manufactured gas, synthetic natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas or propane-air gas, or a mixture of any of them, but does not include a liquefied petroleum gas that is distributed by means other than a pipeline;
- (d) "gas system" means such mains, plants, pipes, conduits, services, valves, regulators, curb boxes, stations, drips or such other equipment as the Gas Company may require or deem desirable for the distribution, storage and transmission of gas in or through the Municipality;
- (e) "highway" means all common and public highways and shall include any bridge, viaduct or structure forming part of a highway, and any public square, road allowance or walkway and shall include not only the travelled portion of such highway, but also ditches, driveways, sidewalks, and sodded areas forming part of the road allowance now or at any time during the term hereof under the jurisdiction of the Corporation;
- (f) "Model Franchise Agreement" means the form of agreement which the Ontario Energy Board uses as a standard when considering applications under the *Municipal Franchises Act*. The Model Franchise Agreement may be changed from time to time by the Ontario Energy Board;
- (g) "Municipality" means the territorial limits of the Corporation on the date when this Agreement takes effect, and any territory which may thereafter be brought within the jurisdiction of the Corporation;
- (h) "Plan" means the plan described in Paragraph 5 of this Agreement required to be filed by the Gas Company with the Engineer/Road Superintendent prior to commencement of work on the gas system; and
- (i) whenever the singular, masculine or feminine is used in this Agreement, it shall be considered as if the plural, feminine or masculine has been used where the context of the Agreement so requires.



## **Part II - Rights Granted**

### **2. To provide gas service**

The consent of the Corporation is hereby given and granted to the Gas Company to distribute, store and transmit gas in and through the Municipality to the Corporation and to the inhabitants of the Municipality.

### **3. To Use Highways**

Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement the consent of the Corporation is hereby given and granted to the Gas Company to enter upon all highways now or at any time hereafter under the jurisdiction of the Corporation and to lay, construct, maintain, replace, remove, operate and repair a gas system for the distribution, storage and transmission of gas in and through the Municipality.

### **4. Duration of Agreement and Renewal Procedures**

(a) If the Corporation has not previously received gas distribution services, the rights hereby given and granted shall be for a term of 20 years from the date of final passing of the By-law.

or

(b) If the Corporation has previously received gas distribution services, the rights hereby given and granted shall be for a term of 20 years from the date of final passing of the By-law provided that, if during the 20 year term of this Agreement, the Model Franchise Agreement is changed, then on the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary and on the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the date of the passing of the By-law, this Agreement shall be deemed to be amended to incorporate any changes in the Model Franchise Agreement in effect on such anniversary dates. Such deemed amendments shall not apply to alter the 20 year term.

(c) At any time within two years prior to the expiration of this Agreement, either party may give notice to the other that it desires to enter into negotiations for a renewed franchise upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon. Until such renewal has been settled, the terms and conditions of this Agreement shall continue, notwithstanding the expiration of this Agreement. This shall not preclude either party from applying to the Ontario Energy Board for a renewal of the Agreement pursuant to section 10 of the *Municipal Franchises Act*.

### **Part III – Conditions**

#### **5. Approval of Construction**

- (a) The Gas Company shall not undertake any excavation, opening or work which will disturb or interfere with the surface of the travelled portion of any highway unless a permit therefor has first been obtained from the Engineer/Road Superintendent and all work done by the Gas Company shall be to his satisfaction.
- (b) Prior to the commencement of work on the gas system, or any extensions or changes to it (except service laterals which do not interfere with municipal works in the highway), the Gas Company shall file with the Engineer/Road Superintendent a Plan, satisfactory to the Engineer/Road Superintendent, drawn to scale and of sufficient detail considering the complexity of the specific locations involved, showing the highways in which it proposes to lay its gas system and the particular parts thereof it proposes to occupy.
- (c) The Plan filed by the Gas Company shall include geodetic information for a particular location:
  - (i) where circumstances are complex, in order to facilitate known projects, including projects which are reasonably anticipated by the Engineer/Road Superintendent, or
  - (ii) when requested, where the Corporation has geodetic information for its own services and all others at the same location.
- (d) The Engineer/Road Superintendent may require sections of the gas system to be laid at greater depth than required by the latest CSA standard for gas pipeline systems to facilitate known projects or to correct known highway deficiencies.
- (e) Prior to the commencement of work on the gas system, the Engineer/Road Superintendent must approve the location of the work as shown on the Plan filed by the Gas Company, the timing of the work and any terms and conditions relating to the installation of the work.
- (f) In addition to the requirements of this Agreement, if the Gas Company proposes to affix any part of the gas system to a bridge, viaduct or other structure, if the Engineer/Road Superintendent approves this proposal, he may require the Gas Company to comply with special conditions or to enter into a separate agreement as a condition of the approval of this part of the construction of the gas system.

- (g) Where the gas system may affect a municipal drain, the Gas Company shall also file a copy of the Plan with the Corporation's Drainage Superintendent for purposes of the *Drainage Act*, or such other person designated by the Corporation as responsible for the drain.
- (h) The Gas Company shall not deviate from the approved location for any part of the gas system unless the prior approval of the Engineer/Road Superintendent to do so is received.
- (i) The Engineer/Road Superintendent's approval, where required throughout this Paragraph, shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- (j) The approval of the Engineer/Road Superintendent is not a representation or warranty as to the state of repair of the highway or the suitability of the highway for the gas system.

**6. As Built Drawings**

The Gas Company shall, within six months of completing the installation of any part of the gas system, provide two copies of "as built" drawings to the Engineer/Road Superintendent. These drawings must be sufficient to accurately establish the location, depth (measurement between the top of the gas system and the ground surface at the time of installation) and distance of the gas system. The "as built" drawings shall be of the same quality as the Plan and, if the approved pre-construction plan included elevations that were geodetically referenced, the "as built" drawings shall similarly include elevations that are geodetically referenced. Upon the request of the Engineer/Road Superintendent, the Gas Company shall provide one copy of the drawings in an electronic format and one copy as a hard copy drawing.

**7. Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency involving the gas system, the Gas Company shall proceed with the work required to deal with the emergency, and in any instance where prior approval of the Engineer/Road Superintendent is normally required for the work, the Gas Company shall use its best efforts to immediately notify the Engineer/Road Superintendent of the location and nature of the emergency and the work being done and, if it deems appropriate, notify the police force, fire or other emergency services having jurisdiction. The Gas Company shall provide the Engineer/Road Superintendent with at least one 24 hour emergency contact for the Gas Company and shall ensure the contacts are current.

## 8. **Restoration**

The Gas Company shall well and sufficiently restore, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Engineer/Road Superintendent, all highways, municipal works or improvements which it may excavate or interfere with in the course of laying, constructing, repairing or removing its gas system, and shall make good any settling or subsidence thereafter caused by such excavation or interference. If the Gas Company fails at any time to do any work required by this Paragraph within a reasonable period of time, the Corporation may do or cause such work to be done and the Gas Company shall, on demand, pay the Corporation's reasonably incurred costs, as certified by the Engineer/Road Superintendent.

## 9. **Indemnification**

The Gas Company shall, at all times, indemnify and save harmless the Corporation from and against all claims, including costs related thereto, for all damages or injuries including death to any person or persons and for damage to any property, arising out of the Gas Company operating, constructing, and maintaining its gas system in the Municipality, or utilizing its gas system for the carriage of gas owned by others. Provided that the Gas Company shall not be required to indemnify or save harmless the Corporation from and against claims, including costs related thereto, which it may incur by reason of damages or injuries including death to any person or persons and for damage to any property, resulting from the negligence or wrongful act of the Corporation, its servants, agents or employees.

## 10. **Insurance**

- (a) The Gas Company shall maintain Comprehensive General Liability Insurance in sufficient amount and description as shall protect the Gas Company and the Corporation from claims for which the Gas Company is obliged to indemnify the Corporation under Paragraph 9. The insurance policy shall identify the Corporation as an additional named insured, but only with respect to the operation of the named insured (the Gas Company). The insurance policy shall not lapse or be cancelled without sixty (60) days' prior written notice to the Corporation by the Gas Company.
- (b) The issuance of an insurance policy as provided in this Paragraph shall not be construed as relieving the Gas Company of liability not covered by such insurance or in excess of the policy limits of such insurance.
- (c) Upon request by the Corporation, the Gas Company shall confirm that premiums for such insurance have been paid and that such insurance is in full force and effect.

## 11. **Alternative Easement**

The Corporation agrees, in the event of the proposed sale or closing of any highway or any part of a highway where there is a gas line in existence, to give the Gas Company reasonable notice of such proposed sale or closing and, if it is feasible, to provide the Gas Company with easements over that part of the highway proposed to be sold or closed sufficient to allow the Gas Company to preserve any part of the gas system in its then existing location. In the event that such easements cannot be provided, the Corporation and the Gas Company shall share the cost of relocating or altering the gas system to facilitate continuity of gas service, as provided for in Paragraph 12 of this Agreement.

## 12. **Pipeline Relocation**

- (a) If in the course of constructing, reconstructing, changing, altering or improving any highway or any municipal works, the Corporation deems that it is necessary to take up, remove or change the location of any part of the gas system, the Gas Company shall, upon notice to do so, remove and/or relocate within a reasonable period of time such part of the gas system to a location approved by the Engineer/Road Superintendent.
- (b) Where any part of the gas system relocated in accordance with this Paragraph is located on a bridge, viaduct or structure, the Gas Company shall alter or relocate that part of the gas system at its sole expense.
- (c) Where any part of the gas system relocated in accordance with this Paragraph is located other than on a bridge, viaduct or structure, the costs of relocation shall be shared between the Corporation and the Gas Company on the basis of the total relocation costs, excluding the value of any upgrading of the gas system, and deducting any contribution paid to the Gas Company by others in respect to such relocation; and for these purposes, the total relocation costs shall be the aggregate of the following:
  - (i) the amount paid to Gas Company employees up to and including field supervisors for the hours worked on the project plus the current cost of fringe benefits for these employees,
  - (ii) the amount paid for rental equipment while in use on the project and an amount, charged at the unit rate, for Gas Company equipment while in use on the project,
  - (iii) the amount paid by the Gas Company to contractors for work related to the project,

- (iv) the cost to the Gas Company for materials used in connection with the project, and
  - (v) a reasonable amount for project engineering and project administrative costs which shall be 22.5% of the aggregate of the amounts determined in items (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) above.
- (d) The total relocation costs as calculated above shall be paid 35% by the Corporation and 65% by the Gas Company, except where the part of the gas system required to be moved is located in an unassumed road or in an unopened road allowance and the Corporation has not approved its location, in which case the Gas Company shall pay 100% of the relocation costs.

#### **Part IV - Procedural And Other Matters**

##### **13. Municipal By-laws of General Application**

The Agreement is subject to the provisions of all regulating statutes and all municipal by-laws of general application, except by-laws which have the effect of amending this Agreement.

##### **14. Giving Notice**

Notices may be delivered to, sent by facsimile or mailed by prepaid registered post to the Gas Company at its head office or to the authorized officers of the Corporation at its municipal offices, as the case may be.

##### **15. Disposition of Gas System**

- (a) If the Gas Company decommissions part of its gas system affixed to a bridge, viaduct or structure, the Gas Company shall, at its sole expense, remove the part of its gas system affixed to the bridge, viaduct or structure.
- (b) If the Gas Company decommissions any other part of its gas system, it shall have the right, but is not required, to remove that part of its gas system. It may exercise its right to remove the decommissioned parts of its gas system by giving notice of its intention to do so by filing a Plan as required by Paragraph 5 of this Agreement for approval by the Engineer/Road Superintendent. If the Gas Company does not remove the part of the gas system it has decommissioned and the Corporation requires the removal of all or any part of the decommissioned gas system for the purpose of altering or improving a highway or in order to facilitate the construction of utility or other works in any highway, the Corporation may remove and dispose of so much of the decommissioned gas system

as the Corporation may require for such purposes and neither party shall have recourse against the other for any loss, cost, expense or damage occasioned thereby. If the Gas Company has not removed the part of the gas system it has decommissioned and the Corporation requires the removal of all or any part of the decommissioned gas system for the purpose of altering or improving a highway or in order to facilitate the construction of utility or other works in a highway, the Gas Company may elect to relocate the decommissioned gas system and in that event Paragraph 12 applies to the cost of relocation.

#### **16. Use of Decommissioned Gas System**

- (a) The Gas Company shall provide promptly to the Corporation, to the extent such information is known:
  - (i) the names and addresses of all third parties who use decommissioned parts of the gas system for purposes other than the transmission or distribution of gas; and
  - (ii) the location of all proposed and existing decommissioned parts of the gas system used for purposes other than the transmission or distribution of gas.
- (b) The Gas Company may allow a third party to use a decommissioned part of the gas system for purposes other than the transmission or distribution of gas and may charge a fee for that third party use, provided
  - (i) the third party has entered into a municipal access agreement with the Corporation; and
  - (ii) the Gas Company does not charge a fee for the third party's right of access to the highways.
- (c) Decommissioned parts of the gas system used for purposes other than the transmission or distribution of gas are not subject to the provisions of this Agreement. For decommissioned parts of the gas system used for purposes other than the transmission and distribution of gas, issues such as relocation costs will be governed by the relevant municipal access agreement.

#### **17. Franchise Handbook**

The Parties acknowledge that operating decisions sometimes require a greater level of detail than that which is appropriately included in this Agreement. The Parties agree to look for guidance on such matters to the Franchise Handbook prepared by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the gas utility companies, as may be amended from time to time.

18. **Other Conditions**

None.

19. **Agreement Binding Parties**

This Agreement shall extend to, benefit and bind the parties thereto, their successors and assigns, respectively.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have executed this Agreement effective from the date written above.

**THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE  
TOWN OF FORT ERIE**

Per:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wayne Redekop, Mayor

Per:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Schofield, Clerk

**ENBRIDGE GAS INC.**

Per:

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Mark Kitchen, Director  
Regulatory Affairs

Per:

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Murray Costello, Director,  
Southeast Region Operations



**SCHEDULE B**  
**MAP OF THE TOWN OF FORT ERIE**  
**ENBRIDGE GAS INC.**  
**EB-2022-0127**  
**JUNE 30, 2022**

