

BY E-MAIL

May 16, 2023

**TO: All Rate-Regulated Natural Gas Utilities
All Licensed Gas Marketers
All Parties in EB-2018-0336 and EB-2018-0264
All Parties in the Review of the 2022 Annual Update to EPCOR Natural Gas
Limited Partnership's Gas Supply Plan (EB-2022-0141)**

**RE: Consultation to Review Annual Update to Natural Gas Supply
Plan of EPCOR Natural Gas Limited Partnership
Ontario Energy Board File No.: EB-2023-0111**

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is initiating a consultation to review EPCOR Natural Gas Limited Partnership's (EPCOR) Annual Update to its natural gas supply plan (GSP). The OEB invites participation in this consultation process by all interested and affected parties.

The OEB's [Report of the Board: Framework for the Assessment of Distributor Gas Supply Plans](#) (Framework) sets out the process for the review of gas distributors' GSPs and the Annual Updates.¹ The Framework was designed to introduce greater transparency, accountability and performance measurement to the review of GSPs to ensure that customers are receiving value from the distributors' gas supply activities.

The five-year GSP for EPCOR Aylmer was first reviewed in the Aylmer franchise rates proceeding.² EPCOR Aylmer GSP's first Annual Update was filed in 2020³, the second filed in 2021⁴, and the third filed in 2022⁵.

EPCOR South Bruce's three-year GSP (2020-2023) was first reviewed in 2020 alongside EPCOR Aylmer GSP's first Annual update. EPCOR South Bruce's subsequent GSP Annual Updates were filed with EPCOR Aylmer's GSP Annual Updates.

¹ EB-2017-0129

² EB-2018-0336

³ EB-2020-0106

⁴ EB-2021-0146

⁵ EB-2022-0141

On May 1, 2023, EPCOR filed its fourth (2023) Annual Update to EPCOR Aylmer's GSP and a three-year GSP for EPCOR South Bruce for the 2023-2025 period with the OEB pursuant to the Framework. The consultation will include a review of the updates to the outlook section of the GSP, any significant changes from the previous updates and a historical comparison of actuals and outlook.

Consultation

OEB staff and stakeholders can submit written questions on EPCOR Aylmer's Annual Update and EPCOR South Bruce's three-year GSP. The written questions should be forwarded to EPCOR and filed with the OEB by **June 27, 2023**. EPCOR shall respond to the questions in writing by **July 11, 2023**.

Following the responses to the questions, stakeholders will have an opportunity to submit written comments on EPCOR's GSPs by **July 25, 2023**.

EPCOR will then have the opportunity to review the written comments and decide whether to: (i) provide written comments in response, and/or (ii) revise its plan and provide a revision statement that outlines any changes, together with the rationale for those changes. EPCOR shall file its written comments and/or revision statement by **August 8, 2023**.

Following the responses and any revisions to the GSP, OEB staff will prepare and file its recommendations. As set out in the Framework, following consideration of OEB staff's recommendations, the OEB may determine that a proceeding is required. Unless the OEB decides to hold a hearing to consider any component of the Annual Updates, the review process will conclude with OEB staff's recommendations.

Invitation to Participate

Those interested in participating should indicate their intent by filing a letter with the OEB by **May 29, 2023**, in accordance with the filing instructions set out below. The letter should include a statement as to whether the participant is requesting cost eligibility.

Cost Awards

Cost awards will be available to eligible persons under section 30 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* for their participation in cost eligible activities as set out in Appendix A. Appendix A also contains information regarding cost eligibility requests and objections. Costs awarded will be recovered from EPCOR as it is the only gas distribution utility participating in this review.

Filings to the OEB in relation to cost award eligibility must be made in accordance with the filing instructions set out below.

Filing Instructions

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-2023-0111**, 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 [File documents online 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.
- Cost claims are filed through the OEB's online filing portal. Please visit the [File documents online page](#) of the OEB's website for more information. All participants shall download a copy of their submitted cost claim and serve it on all required parties as per the [Practice Direction on Cost Awards](#).

All communications should be directed to the attention of the Registrar 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 this proceeding, parties must include the Case Manager, Arturo Lau at Arturo.Lau@oeb.ca. The Board's toll-free number is 1-888-632- 6273.

Email: registrar@oeb.ca

DATED at Toronto, **May 16, 2023**

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD

Nancy Marconi
Registrar

Appendix A: Cost Awards

Appendix A

To Letter Dated May 16, 2023

EB-2023-0111

COST AWARDS

Cost Award Eligibility

The OEB will determine eligibility for costs in accordance with its [*Practice Direction on Cost Awards*](#). Any person intending to request an award of costs must file with the OEB a written submission to that effect by **May 29, 2023**. The submission must identify the following:

- The nature of the person's interest in this initiative
- 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
- Whether specific costs for any separate expert submissions are requested, the scope of the retainer, and whether the person intends to combine with other stakeholders for this purpose

If the utility has any objections to any of the requests for cost eligibility, such objections must be filed with the OEB by **June 5, 2023**. Any objections will be posted on the OEB's website. The OEB will then make a final determination on the cost eligibility of the requesting participants.

Eligible Activities

Cost awards will be available for the following activities:

ACTIVITY	TOTAL ELIGIBLE HOURS PER PARTICIPANT
Review of GSP & submission of written questions, if any	Up to 8 hours
Review of responses and written comments on GSP, if any	Up to 5 hours

Cost Award Amounts

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 coordinate 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 on this process, please see the OEB's [Practice Direction on Cost Awards](#).