



BY EMAIL AND WEB POSTING

February 8, 2024

TO: All Participants in Consultation Process EB-2023-0188

**RE: For Stakeholder Feedback: OEB Staff Discussion Paper
Evaluation of Policy on Utility Consolidations
Ontario Energy Board File No. EB-2023-0188**

Today, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) posted an OEB Staff Discussion Paper (the Paper) as the next step in the consultation to review and update the OEB's [Handbook to Electricity Distributor and Transmitter Consolidations](#) (MAADs Handbook), and associated Filing Requirements for Consolidation Applications. The Paper is available on the OEB's [Engage with Us](#) webpage associated with this consultation.¹

The Paper summarizes key comments heard on several consolidation-related topics considered in meetings held with electricity utilities and intervenors. OEB staff's proposals for potential changes to the MAADs Handbook and filing requirements resulting from consideration of the stakeholder comments are also outlined in the Paper.

Background

On July 27, 2023, the OEB issued a [letter](#) launching its Evaluation of Policy on Utility Consolidations consultation. The OEB advised that the review will leverage experience to date of the approximately 20 consolidation-related decisions issued since the original MAADs Handbook was published in 2016 and is expected to identify and address any continuing barriers to consolidation, while ensuring customers are protected. This consultation is also expected to address the recommendations related to consolidations as outlined in the Auditor General of Ontario's Value for Money audit report, *Ontario Energy Board: Electricity Oversight and Consumer Protection*.²

Invitation to Comment

¹ See Consultation Documents section of the Engage with Us webpage or associated [webdrawer](#) for this consultation.

² See [Office of the Auditor General - Value for Money Audit: Ontario Energy Board: Electricity Oversight and Consumer Protection](#), recommendation 11, pp. 43-44.

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Stakeholders registered to participate in this consultation are invited to provide written comments on all issues addressed in the Paper by **February 29, 2024** and should also identify any preferred alternatives for addressing the issues. The OEB requests that comments be separated under the headings as noted in the Paper for ease of reference.

The OEB will determine next steps for this consultation following its consideration of stakeholder comments.

Cost Awards Matters and Filing Instructions

Cost awards will be available under section 30 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* to eligible persons in relation to the provision of comments on the Paper. Costs awarded will be recovered from all licensed rate-regulated electricity distributors.

Further information regarding cost awards and instructions for filing materials with the OEB is included in Appendix A to this letter.

Any questions relating to this letter should be directed to Georgette Vlahos at georgette.vlahos@oeb.ca. The OEB's toll-free number is 1-888-632-6273.

Yours truly,

Nancy Marconi
Registrar

Appendix A

Cost Awards Matters and Filing Instructions

Eligible Activities

Cost awards will be available to participants already determined eligible to apply for an award of costs under the OEB's *Practice Direction on Cost Awards* as per the OEB's August 2023 [Decision on Cost Eligibility](#)³ as follows:

Activities Eligible for Cost Awards	Maximum Number of Hours
Review of OEB Staff Discussion Paper and preparation of written comments	20 hours

Details on any subsequent consultation activities eligible for cost awards will be provided later.

Cost Awards

When determining the amount of the cost awards, the OEB will apply the principles set out in section 5 of its *Practice Direction on Cost Awards*. The maximum hourly rates set out in the Cost Awards Tariff will also 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. In accordance with section 12 of its *Practice Direction on Cost Awards*, 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*.

How to File Materials

All written materials sent to the OEB in response to this letter will be placed on the public record and posted on the OEB's website. If the written materials are from a private citizen (i.e., not a lawyer representing a client, not a consultant representing a client or organization, not an individual in an organization that represents the interests of consumers or other groups, and not an individual from a regulated entity), the OEB will remove any personal (i.e., not business) contact information (e.g., address, phone number and e-mail address) before placing the materials on the public record and posting the materials on the OEB's website. However, your name and the entire content of your materials will be placed on the public record and posted on the OEB's website. If the written materials are from a person acting in a professional or business capacity, all information in the written materials will be publicly available.

³ EB-2023-0188, Decision on Cost Eligibility, August 18, 2023

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-2023-0188** 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.

Email: registrar@oeb.ca

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