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BY EMAIL

April 5, 2024

Ms. Nancy Marconi
Registrar
Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4
Registrar@oeb.ca

Dear Ms. Marconi:

**Re: Ontario Energy Board (OEB) Staff Submission
Enbridge Gas Inc. (Enbridge Gas)
Neustadt Community Expansion Project
OEB File Number: EB-2023-0261**

In accordance with OEB's Decision and Procedural Order No. 2, please find attached OEB staff's submission in the above proceeding. The attached document has been forwarded to Enbridge Gas Inc. and to all other registered parties to this proceeding.

Yours truly,

Michael Beare
Advisor, Strategic Policy

Encl.

cc: All parties in EB-2023-0261



ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD

OEB Staff Submission

Enbridge Gas Inc.

Neustadt Community Expansion Project

EB-2023-0261

April 5, 2024

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Application Summary

Enbridge Gas Inc. (Enbridge Gas) filed an application with the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) under section 90 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 15, (Schedule B)* (OEB Act), for an order granting leave to construct approximately 12 kilometres of natural gas pipeline in the Community of Neustadt within the Municipality of West Grey.

The proposed natural gas pipelines (Project) consist of approximately 4.8 kilometres of nominal pipe size (NPS) 2-inch polyethylene (PE) distribution pipeline and approximately 7.6 kilometres of NPS 6-inch PE distribution pipeline, consisting of approximately 6.7 km of supply lateral and 0.9 km of reinforcement pipeline.

The proposed pipeline would supply natural gas to approximately 230 forecasted customers in the community of Neustadt who currently do not have access to natural gas service. The Project was selected as eligible to receive funding from the Government of Ontario as part of Phase 2 of the Natural Gas Expansion Program (NGEP).

Enbridge Gas also applied to the OEB under section 97 of the OEB Act for approval of the form of land-use agreements it offers to landowners affected by the routing or location of the Project.

In terms of other OEB approvals required for the Project, in addition to the leave to construct requested in the current proceeding, OEB staff notes that Enbridge Gas has franchise agreements with the Municipality of West Grey¹ and Town of Hanover² and holds a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for any project work within the Municipality of West Grey³ and Town of Hanover⁴ which allows Enbridge Gas to construct, operate and add to the natural gas distribution system within all parts of the municipality and town.

Enbridge Gas advised that it plans to commence construction in June 2024⁵ and expects to connect customers starting in December 2024.⁶

A general location of the Project is shown on the map below:

¹ Municipality of West Grey Franchise Agreement - EB-2007-0818 (expires February 4, 2028)

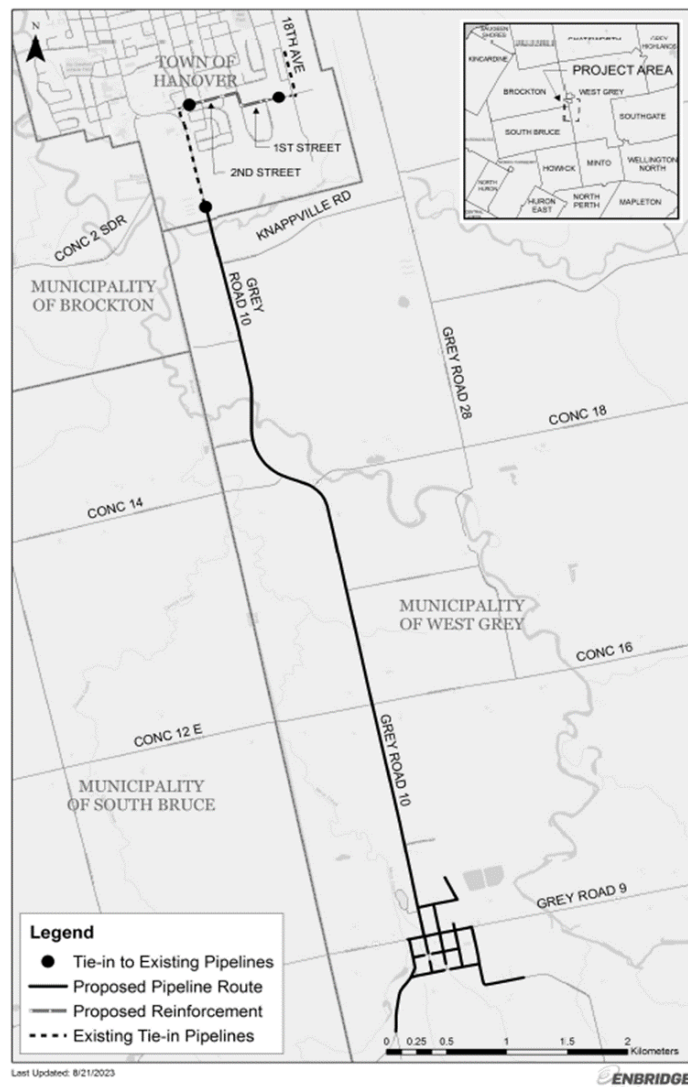
² Town of Hanover Franchise Agreement - EB-2007-0944 (expires March 17, 2028)

³ Municipality of West Grey CPCN – EB-2021-0269-H (dated February 17, 2022)

⁴ Town of Hanover CPCN – EBC 29 (dated May 1, 1963)

⁵ Argument-in-Chief, p.12

⁶ Exhibit A, Tab 2, Schedule 1, p. 2

Neustadt Community Expansion Project

The Proceeding

The OEB issued a Notice of Hearing on October 10, 2023, after Enbridge Gas filed its application on September 15, 2023.

Environmental Defence, and Pollution Probe applied for intervenor status and cost eligibility.

In its request for intervenor status, Environmental Defence stated that it wished to file evidence related to the cost effectiveness of heat pumps relative to natural gas (heat pump evidence). As part of its intervention request, Environmental Defence stated that it may request that the OEB provide for a technical conference following the receipt of interrogatory responses.

In Procedural Order No. 1, issued November 17, 2023, the OEB granted Environmental Defence and Pollution Probe intervenor status. Environmental Defence and Pollution Probe were also granted cost eligibility.

In Procedural Order No. 1, the OEB stated that it would decide on the request to file evidence at a later date and make its determination on the request for a technical conference after the responses to interrogatories were filed. The OEB provided for the filing of interrogatories and responses, and for the filing of comments on the need for a technical conference.

OEB staff and intervenors filed interrogatories by December 1, 2023. Enbridge Gas filed its interrogatory responses on December 15, 2023. OEB staff and intervenors filed comments on the need for a technical conference on January 10, 2024, and Enbridge Gas filed its response on January 17, 2024.

On September 27, 2023, Environmental Defence filed a Motion to Review⁷ the OEB's decisions (relating to the admissibility of intervenor evidence and to the merits of the applications) in the proceedings for the following Enbridge Gas community expansion projects: Selwyn; Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and Shannonville; and Hidden Valley.⁸

On December 4, 2023, Environmental Defence withdrew the part of its motion relating to the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and Shannonville project and the OEB confirmed withdrawal of this portion of the motion.

⁷ EB-2023-0313 Motion to Review and Vary OEB Decisions in EB-2022-0156/EB-2022-0248/EB-2022-0249

⁸ EB-2022-0156 – Selwyn Community Expansion Project; EB-2022-0248 – Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and Shannonville Community Expansion Project; EB-2022-0249 – Hidden Valley Community Expansion Project

The OEB issued a decision⁹ on December 13, 2023 denying the remainder of Environmental Defence's motion with respect to the other two community expansion projects noting that the OEB's orders approving the three projects remain in full force and effect.

On December 14, 2023, Environmental Defence filed a letter with respect to the Enbridge Gas community expansion applications being heard by the OEB at that time (Bobcaygeon, Sandford, Eganville, Neustadt) and the EPCOR Natural Gas Limited Partnership (EPCOR) Brockton application, which has now been withdrawn by EPCOR, proposing that:

- The OEB consolidate the hearing of these natural gas expansion projects given the overlap in the issues and evidence
- A joint technical conference for these projects be convened
- Environmental Defence be allowed to file evidence with respect to the Enbridge Gas natural gas expansion projects based on community surveys that it will conduct (survey evidence)

Enbridge Gas filed a response on December 21, 2023 stating that the OEB should reject Environmental Defence's proposals.

On December 28, 2023, the OEB issued a letter seeking clarification and further information from Environmental Defence, by January 11, 2024, on the evidence it is proposing.

Environmental Defence filed responses to the OEB's questions on January 11, 2024. Between January 11, 2024 and February 2, 2024, Environmental Defence and Enbridge Gas filed several letters regarding Environmental Defence's proposed evidence.

The OEB issued a Decision and Procedural Order No. 2 on February 29, 2024 denying the requests made by Environmental Defence and Pollution Probe for the filing of evidence and further discovery on the application. The OEB also set a schedule for final argument. On March 22, 2024, Enbridge Gas filed its Argument-in-Chief (AIC). Submissions by OEB staff and intervenors are due by April 5, 2024, and Enbridge Gas may file its reply submission by April 19, 2024.

On March 11, 2024, Environmental Defence filed a motion to review and vary the OEB's Decisions on Intervenor Evidence in the Enbridge Gas leave to construct community

⁹ EB-2023-0313 Decision on Motion to Review and Vary OEB Decisions in EB-2022-0156/EB-2022-0248/EB-2022-0249

expansion applications.¹⁰ Environmental Defence is contesting the OEB's decisions to deny intervenors an opportunity to file evidence and allow further discovery in the above noted proceedings. In the cover letter to the March 11, 2024, motion to review and vary, Environmental Defence also advised that it intends to appeal these decisions to the Divisional Court under section 33 of the OEB Act.

OEB Staff Submission

OEB staff supports the approval of Enbridge Gas's leave to construct application, subject to the conditions of approval contained in Schedule A of this submission. OEB staff also supports the approval of the forms of land-use agreements proposed by Enbridge Gas.

Consistent with the [OEB's Standard Issues List](#) for natural gas leave to construct applications, OEB staff's submission is structured to address the following issues:

1. Project Need
2. Project Alternatives
3. Project Cost and Economics
4. Environmental Impacts
5. Landowner Matters
6. Indigenous Consultation
7. Conditions of Approval

Project Need

The Project is one of 210 proposals for community expansion projects, including four economic development projects, submitted to the OEB, and included in the OEB's *Report to the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and to the Associate Minister of Energy: Potential Projects to Expand Access to Natural Gas Distribution*.¹¹

The Project is one of 28 projects across 43 communities selected as eligible to receive funding as part of the Ontario Government's Phase 2 NGEP as specified in the Expansion of Natural Gas Distribution System Regulation.¹²

¹⁰ EB-2022-0111 (Bobcaygeon) dated February 20, 2024; and EB-2023-0200 (Sandford), EB-2023-0201 (Eganville), and EB-2023-0261 (Neustadt) dated February 29, 2024

¹¹ EB-2019-0255, OEB's Report to the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and the Associate Minister of Energy: Potential Projects to Expand Access to Natural Gas Distribution, December 10, 2020

¹² Ontario Regulation 24/19 Expansion of Natural Gas Distribution Systems, Schedule 2

The NGEF provides funding to Ontario natural gas distributors to support the expansion of natural gas to communities that are not currently connected to the natural gas system. NGEF funding acts in a manner similar to a contribution in aid of construction and is designed to bring projects that would otherwise be uneconomic to a profitability index of 1.0 (i.e., make them economic under the OEB's test under E.B.O. 188). The Expansion of Natural Gas Distribution Systems Regulation sets out the funding mechanism and includes the projects selected to receive the government funding as well as the amount of funding allocated to each project.¹³ Enbridge Gas noted that the Project supports the Ontario government's efforts to help expand access to natural gas in Ontario that do not currently have access to the natural gas system.

Enbridge Gas provided its 10-year forecast of customer attachments in support of the Project as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Forecasted Customer Attachments for the Neustadt Community Expansion Project

Neustadt Customer Additions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Total Forecasted
Residential Units (Singles)	60	34	26	17	9	5	5	5	5	5	171
Residential Multi-Units (Semis, Towns, Apartments)	11	8	6	4	1						30
Commercial /Industrial Units	1	13	7	4	1	1	1	1			29
Total	72	55	39	25	11	6	6	6	5	5	230

Enbridge Gas retained Forum Research to conduct surveys of residential household and commercial businesses by telephone, online and in-person that took place in August and September 2022. Enbridge Gas stated that 128 surveys were completed. Enbridge Gas stated that the response rate for the Project was 48%.

¹³ The Expansion of Natural Gas Distribution Systems Regulation sets the mechanism for sourcing the funding of the eligible expansion projects by requiring that rate-regulated natural gas distributors charge each of their customers \$1 per month.

In its interrogatory responses, Enbridge Gas stated that the survey results yielded an 88% attachment rate for existing residential properties and small commercial properties. Enbridge Gas also indicated that at the end of the ten-year period, the overall assumed capture rate for the Project is approximately 86%.¹⁴

Enbridge Gas further stated that it will continue to engage residents in the Project area to answer questions regarding the Project and to provide Project information until the Project is placed into service.

Enbridge Gas noted that the need for the Project is strongly supported by the community's municipal government through its request for natural gas for its constituents. The Municipality of West Grey has emphasized its support for the Project via an expression of support dated March 3, 2020.¹⁵ In a letter dated September 7, 2023, the Municipality of West Grey again indicated its support for the Project.¹⁶

OEB Staff Submission

OEB staff submits that Enbridge Gas has established the need for the Project.

The Project is one of the community expansion projects selected by the Ontario Government as eligible to receive NGEP funding. OEB staff submits that availability of NGEP funding to enable the provision of natural gas service in unserved communities is an important consideration in the determination of the public interest. NGEP funding acts in a manner similar to a contribution in aid of construction and is designed to make projects economic, that would otherwise be uneconomic based on the OEB's test under its E.B.O. 188 guidelines.

OEB staff observes that in its decisions¹⁷ on previous community expansion projects, the OEB underscored the importance of the genesis of community expansion projects in its assessment of project need, specifically noting that these proposed projects obtain their potential viability because of the passage of *Access to Natural Gas Act 2018*.

The OEB's findings noted that while traditional utility regulatory principles provide that costs should be allocated proportionately to customers that have caused the costs to occur, the *Access to Natural Gas Act 2018* and O. Reg. 24/19 that was promulgated following its passage enabled an exception to the established regulatory principles. This exception advanced the goal of rate protection for customers in communities where the

¹⁴ IRR, Exhibit I, STAFF.3. pp. 2

¹⁵ Exhibit B, Tab 1, Schedule 1, Attachment 2

¹⁶ Exhibit B, Tab 1, Schedule 1, Attachment 2

¹⁷ EB-2022-0248 Decision, pp. 12,13; EB-2022-0156 Decision, pp. 12,13; EB-2022-0249 Decision, pp. 12,13

gas distributor has made a qualifying investment providing those customers with a rate reduction for natural gas service, which was designed to ensure that the revenues of the project would match the costs of the project (after the application of NGEP funding).

The OEB concluded that the Ontario government has identified a public need through its passage of the above noted legislation, and provided that a project is shown to be economic within the financial parameters set out in the legislation, it meets the requirements of the public interest criterion in section 96(1) of the OEB Act.

OEB staff also submits that Enbridge Gas has used multiple methods to establish the ten-year forecast of customer attachments and that Enbridge Gas has committed to continue engaging in outreach activities to ensure forecasted customer attachments are realized. OEB staff notes that the Project is strongly supported by the Municipality of West Grey.

While there has been some debate throughout the course of the proceeding as to whether conversion to heat pumps may be more cost effective than conversion to natural gas, Enbridge Gas's survey results suggest that there is sufficient interest in natural gas conversion, in the community, to allow Enbridge Gas to achieve its customer connection forecast. OEB staff submits that the need for the Project is supported by these survey results, in addition to passage of the legislation that created the NGEP. However, there is certainly a risk that over the ten-year customer attachment period, some of the customers that are forecast to attach may not actually do so.

In the section later in this submission on project costs and economics, OEB staff discusses its view that the 10-year Rate Stability Period (RSP) ensures that Enbridge Gas retains the risk of capital cost overruns and fewer customer attachments for the first ten years that the Project is in service. In addition, the requirement for Enbridge Gas to seek approval, in the rebasing application following the conclusion of the RSP, of the inclusion of the updated costs and revenues associated with the Project in rates allows the OEB the opportunity to undertake an additional review at that time. To the extent that the revenues or costs for the Project do not match the forecasts, the OEB can consider adjusting the costs and/or revenues associated with the Project for ratemaking purposes in a manner that continues to place those risks on Enbridge Gas.

Project Alternatives

Enbridge Gas submitted that it applied the Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) Binary Screening Criteria and determined that the Project meets the definition of a community

expansion project as defined in the IRP Framework.¹⁸ As a result, Enbridge Gas submitted that:

...The IRP Framework Decision explains that “Given the goal of the Ontario Government’s Access to Natural Gas legislation to extend gas service to designated communities, the OEB will not require Enbridge Gas to develop an IRP Plan or consider alternatives to the infrastructure facilities to meet this need.” Consequently, per the IRP Binary Screening Criteria (iv), the need underpinning the Project does not warrant further IRP consideration or assessment.¹⁹

Enbridge Gas submitted that “[c]onsidering that the proposed Project was previously reviewed and approved by the Government of Ontario and the OEB for the purposes of granting funding under Phase 2 of the NGEP, Enbridge Gas did not assess other facility alternatives.”²⁰

OEB Staff Submission

OEB staff submits that as the Project is an NGEP-related community expansion project, no IRP evaluation is required. Therefore, OEB staff notes that Enbridge Gas is not required to consider alternatives to infrastructure facilities to meet the need. OEB staff also submits that the proposed route is appropriate.

Project Cost and Economics

The total Project cost estimate is approximately \$7.8 million (\$5.1 million total pipeline costs and \$2.7 million total ancillary costs).²¹ The Project cost estimate includes a 10% contingency applied to all direct capital costs. Enbridge Gas stated that the contingency amount is consistent with the level of contingency set for other projects it proposed for the NGEP funding.

The NGEP funding provided for the Project is approximately \$5.1 million.²² The NGEP funding is treated similarly to a contribution in aid of construction. Therefore, the total

¹⁸ EB-2020-0091, Decision and Order, Enbridge Gas Inc. Integrated Resource Framework Proposal, July 22, 2021, Appendix A. and p. 48. The IRP Framework states that, “If a facility project has been driven by government legislation or policy with related funding explicitly aimed at delivering natural gas into communities, then an IRP evaluation is not required.”

¹⁹ Enbridge Gas Argument-in-Chief, p.9, at para. 19

²⁰ Enbridge Gas Argument-in-Chief, p.9, at para. 20

²¹ OEB staff notes that the updated Project cost estimate and the original cost estimate that underpinned the NGEP funding proposal are essentially the same (\$7,778,573 (updated) and \$7,769,155 (original)).

²² Ontario Regulation 24/19, Expansion of Natural Gas Distribution Systems, Schedule 2

capital cost of the Project, net of NGEP funding, is approximately \$2.7 million. In addition to NGEP funding, Enbridge Gas intends to charge a System Expansion Surcharge (SES) of \$0.23/m³ to the customers attaching to the Project for a term of 40 years to assist with the economic feasibility of the Project, which is consistent with Enbridge Gas's application for a harmonized SES (Harmonized SES Proceeding).²³

According to Enbridge Gas, the Project is economically feasible, having a Profitability Index (PI) of 1.0. Enbridge Gas indicated that without the NGEP funding and SES, the PI for the Project is 0.20, and with the inclusion of the SES the PI is 0.44.²⁴ The PI of 1.0 is based on the most up-to-date estimated capital costs and forecasted revenues and is inclusive of the NGEP funding and revenues associated with SES charges. The original PI of the Project as filed in the OEB's proceeding on Potential Projects for NGEP Funding was also 1.0 (inclusive of NGEP funding and SES revenues).²⁵

Enbridge Gas stated that, consistent with the OEB's findings in the Harmonized SES proceeding,²⁶ after the Project is placed into service, Enbridge Gas will apply a ten-year RSP during which Enbridge Gas will bear the risk of the Project customer attachment and capital expenditure forecast. In response to interrogatories, Enbridge Gas stated that it has included the original NGEP forecasted capital costs in its 2024 Rebasing application and that the final capital costs to be included in rate base will be determined at the rebasing application following the end of the 10-year RSP for the project.²⁷

OEB Staff Submission

OEB staff submits that the updated total estimated cost of the Project is reasonable. OEB staff also notes that the contingency budget is aligned with the contingency budgets for other similar community expansion projects.²⁸

OEB staff submits that the Project, with the inclusion of NGEP funding and revenues associated with SES charges, is forecast to be economically feasible with a projected PI of 1.0.

OEB staff notes that Enbridge Gas's proposal to charge the SES to newly attached customers over a term of 40 years is in accordance with the OEB's findings in the

²³ EB-2020-0094

²⁴ Exhibit E, Tab 1, Schedule 1, Attachment 1

²⁵ EB-2019-0255, Enbridge Gas Community Expansion Project Proposal, Schedule UU2, Table 7.1

²⁶ EB-2020-0094, Decision and Order, November 5, 2020, pp. 8,9

²⁷ IRR, Exhibit I.STAFF.5, p.2

²⁸ EB-2022-0156, Selwyn; EB-2022-0248, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and Shannonville; EB-2022-0249, Hidden Valley

Harmonized SES proceeding.²⁹ Additionally, the OEB's decision on Enbridge Gas's 2024 rebasing application recognized NGEP projects as distinct from other expansion projects, acknowledging that the applicability of the 40-year revenue horizon to NGEP projects was appropriate.³⁰

OEB staff also notes that specific approval of the SES charge is not required as was confirmed by the OEB in its findings with respect to the Haldimand Shores leave to construct application.³¹

OEB staff notes that in the Harmonized SES proceeding, the OEB stated the following:

The OEB finds that inclusion of the forecasted capital costs in rate base at the next rebasing before the end of the RSP is consistent with the Generic Decision's requirement for a Community Expansion Project and would achieve the desired goal that Enbridge Gas bear the risk of any capital cost overrun during the RSP. The OEB also finds that the treatment of actual capital costs at the time of rebasing following the rate stabilization period is appropriately the jurisdiction of the panel reviewing the rate rebasing case.³²

The OEB further noted:

The OEB confirms the requirement to continue to report on the capital costs, customer attachments and PI of SES projects that require a LTC at the first rebasing following the end of the ten-year RSP... This information will be vital to the panel deciding on the inclusion of actual costs in rate base after the RSP.³³

OEB staff submits that Enbridge Gas should bear the risk of any revenue shortfall during the ten-year RSP associated with the customer attachment and capital cost forecasts as this approach is in accordance with the OEB's findings in the Harmonized SES proceeding.³⁴ OEB staff notes that Enbridge Gas has appropriately included the original capital cost of the Project that underpinned the NGEP funding proposal in its rebasing application.³⁵ The RSP ensures that Enbridge Gas bears the risk of revenue shortfalls during the first ten years that the Project is in service. OEB staff notes that, after the RSP, the OEB will have the opportunity to review the actual project costs and revenues and determine what amount should be recognized in rates.

²⁹ EB-2020-0094, Decision and Order, November 5, 2020

³⁰ OEB-2022-0200, Decision and Order, December 21, 2023, pp.30,31

³¹ EB-2022-0088, Decision and Order, August 18, 2022, pp.9,10

³² EB-2020-0094, Decision and Order, November 5, 2020, p.9

³³ EB-2020-0094, Decision and Order, November 5, 2020, p.10

³⁴ EB-2020-0094, Decision and Order, November 5, 2020

³⁵ EB-2022-0200, Exhibit JT6.3, Updated July 6, 2023

OEB staff submits that the allocation of risk, between ratepayers and Enbridge Gas, beyond the term of the RSP for the Project has not been determined at this time. Enbridge Gas is relying on its forecast of capital costs and customer attachments to underpin the need for the Project. As noted previously, OEB staff agrees that the customer attachment forecast supports the need for the Project. However, the risk remains that the customer attachments will not materialize as forecasted.

OEB staff submits that all options will be available to the OEB in the rebasing following the conclusion of the RSP with respect to the appropriate rate treatment of potential capital cost overruns and/or lower than forecast customer attachments/volumes (and associated revenues). OEB staff submits that Enbridge Gas is not guaranteed total cost recovery if actual capital costs and revenues result in an actual PI below 1.0.

OEB staff notes that, as was stated in decisions on previous community expansion applications, the OEB cannot bind a future panel that will be responsible for determining the appropriate treatment of revenue shortfalls in Enbridge Gas's post-RSP rebasing application. However, the OEB has advised in previous NGEP-related decisions that there is a reasonable expectation that existing customers will not be called upon to provide a further subsidy to compensate for post-RSP revenue shortfalls.³⁶

Environmental Impacts

Enbridge Gas retained Stantec Consulting Ltd. to undertake a route evaluation and environmental and socio-economic impact study, which included a cumulative effects assessment, to select the preferred route for the Project. The results of the study are documented in the ER filed with the application. The ER also includes consultation input and mitigation measures to minimize impacts from the Project.

Enbridge Gas stated that the ER was circulated to the Ontario Pipeline Coordinating Committee, municipalities, conservation authorities, and Indigenous communities and Enbridge Gas filed the comments received on the ER as part of its evidence.³⁷

Enbridge Gas stated that it would prepare an Environmental Protection Plan (EPP) prior to construction of the Project. The EPP will incorporate the recommended mitigation measures identified in the ER and received in the consultation from agencies for the environmental issues associated with the Project.

³⁶ EB-2022-0156, Final Decision, pp. 20-21; EB-2022-0248, Final Decision, p. 21; EB-2022-0249, Final Decision, p. 20

³⁷ Application, Exhibit F, Tab 1, Schedule 1, p.2 and Attachment 2

Enbridge Gas stated that using the mitigation measures and monitoring and contingency plans found within the ER, EPP and additional mitigation measures provided by regulatory agencies through the permitting and approval process, construction of this Project will have negligible impacts on the environment.³⁸

Enbridge Gas stated that it has completed a Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment (AA) which was submitted to the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (MCM) on May 15, 2023.

In its interrogatory responses, Enbridge stated that MCM is still reviewing the Stage 1 AA Report and that a Stage 2 AA is currently being conducted in accordance with the recommendations of the Stage 1 AA. Enbridge Gas stated that it expects to have the Stage 1 and 2 AAs reviewed and accepted by the MCM prior to the commencement of construction.³⁹

The application identified potential environmental/land permits and approvals from federal, provincial and municipal agencies that Enbridge Gas requires to construct the Project.

OEB Staff Submission

OEB staff submits that Enbridge Gas has completed the ER in accordance with the OEB's *Environmental Guidelines for the Location, Construction and Operation of Hydrocarbon Pipelines and Facilities in Ontario* (Environmental Guidelines).

OEB staff has no concerns with the environmental aspects of the Project, based on Enbridge Gas's commitment to implement the mitigation measures set out in the ER and to complete the EPP prior to the start of construction.

OEB staff submits that Enbridge Gas's compliance with the conditions of approval outlined in Schedule A will ensure that impacts of pipeline construction are mitigated and monitored. OEB staff notes that the conditions of approval also require Enbridge Gas to obtain all necessary approvals, permits, licences, and certificates needed to construct, operate and maintain the Project.

Landowner Matters

In its application, Enbridge Gas stated that the Project is planned to largely be within the existing municipal Right-of-Way (RoW) with the potential for temporary working areas outside of the municipal RoW. Temporary working areas may be required along the

³⁸ Exhibit F, Tab 1, Schedule 1, p.4

³⁹ IRR, Exhibit I. STAFF.6

preferred route where the road allowance is too narrow or confined to facilitate construction.

Enbridge Gas filed the forms of temporary working area agreement and easement agreement that it intends to provide to affected landowners. Enbridge Gas stated that these agreements are the same as those approved for use in Enbridge Gas's Haldimand Shores Community Expansion Project.⁴⁰

OEB Staff Submission

OEB staff submits that the OEB should approve the proposed forms of easement agreement and temporary working area agreement as both were previously approved by the OEB.

Indigenous Consultation

In accordance with the Environmental Guidelines, on September 12, 2022, Enbridge Gas contacted the Ministry of Energy (MoE) in respect of the Crown's duty to consult related to the Project. The MoE issued a letter delegating the procedural aspects of the Crown's duty to consult for the Project to Enbridge Gas on December 30, 2022 (Delegation Letter). In the Delegation Letter, the MoE identified three Indigenous communities⁴¹ that Enbridge Gas should consult in relation to the Project:

- Saugeen First Nation
- Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation
- Georgian Bay Historic Métis Community (Represented by the MNO Region 7)

Direct notice of the application was provided by Enbridge Gas to all the above-noted Indigenous communities, and none of them sought to intervene or otherwise participate directly in the hearing.

As part of its application, Enbridge Gas filed an Indigenous Consultation Report. In response to interrogatories, Enbridge Gas provided an update on its Indigenous consultation activities as of December 19, 2023.⁴²

Enbridge Gas stated that it has provided its Indigenous Consultation Report to the MoE for review. The MoE will determine whether consultation undertaken by Enbridge Gas is

⁴⁰ EB-2022-0088, Decision and Order, August 18, 2022

⁴¹ Evidence, Exhibit H, Tab 1, Schedule 1, Attachment 2, p.2

⁴² IRR, Exhibit I. STAFF.8, p.1,2

satisfactory by providing a letter of opinion to Enbridge Gas.

Enbridge Gas also stated that it will continue to engage with Indigenous communities throughout the life of the Project to ensure potential impacts on Aboriginal or treaty rights are addressed, as appropriate.⁴³

OEB Staff Submission

OEB staff submits that Enbridge Gas appears to have made efforts to engage with the potentially affected Indigenous groups identified by the MoE.

If the OEB determines that it is appropriate to grant leave to construct the Project, OEB staff submits that the OEB should wait to receive the letter of opinion from the MoE before approving the application. If the letter of opinion is not filed by the close of the record, the OEB may consider placing the proceeding in abeyance until such time that the letter is filed.

OEB staff notes that, to the extent that the letter of opinion may identify outstanding issues, the OEB could provide for additional procedural steps to address these issues.

Conditions of Approval

The OEB has established standard conditions of approval that are typically imposed in leave to construct approvals.⁴⁴ Enbridge Gas stated that it has reviewed these standard conditions and has not identified any additional or revised conditions that it wishes to propose for the Project.

OEB Staff Submission

By letter date April 3, 2024, the OEB advised that it has made minor modifications to standard conditions of approval for leave to construct applications. More specifically, minor modifications (underlined> were made to Conditions 2(b)(ii) and (iv), 7(a), and 7(b) to better reflect the intent of those conditions. OEB staff requests Enbridge Gas to confirm in its reply submission if it agrees with these modifications.

⁴³ Evidence, Exhibit H, Tab 1, Schedule 1, p.4

⁴⁴ Natural Gas Facilities Handbook, Appendix D

OEB staff submits that the OEB should approve the Project subject to the conditions of approval attached as Schedule A to this submission.

~All of which is respectfully submitted~

Schedule A

Conditions of Approval

EB-2023-0261

April 5, 2024

**Leave to Construct Application under
Section 90 of the OEB Act**

**Enbridge Gas Inc.
EB-2023-0261**

Conditions of Approval

1. Enbridge Gas Inc. shall construct the facilities and restore the land in accordance with the OEB's Decision and Order in EB-2023-0261 and these Conditions of Approval.
2. (a) Authorization for leave to construct shall terminate 12 months after the decision is issued unless construction has commenced prior to that date.
(b) Enbridge Gas Inc. shall give the OEB notice in writing:
 - i. of the commencement of construction, at least 10 days prior to the date construction commences
 - ii. of the planned in-service start date, at least 10 days prior to the date the facilities begin to go into service
 - iii. of the date on which construction was completed, no later than 10 days following the completion of construction
 - iv. of the full project in-service date, no later than 10 days after all the facilities go into service
3. Enbridge Gas Inc. shall obtain all necessary approvals, permits, licences, certificates, agreements and rights required to construct, operate and maintain the Project.
4. Enbridge Gas Inc. shall implement all the recommendations of the Environmental Report filed in the proceeding, and all the recommendations and directives identified by the Ontario Pipeline Coordinating Committee review.
5. Enbridge Gas Inc. shall advise the OEB of any proposed change to OEB-approved construction or restoration procedures. Except in an emergency, Enbridge Gas Inc. shall not make any such change without prior notice to and written approval of the OEB. In the event of an emergency, the OEB shall be informed immediately after the fact.
6. Concurrent with the final monitoring report referred to in Condition 7(b), Enbridge Gas shall file a Post Construction Financial Report, which shall provide a variance analysis of project cost, schedule and scope compared to the estimates filed in this proceeding, including the extent to which the project contingency was utilized.

Enbridge Gas shall also file a copy of the Post Construction Financial Report in the proceeding where the actual capital costs of the project are proposed to be included in rate base or any proceeding where Enbridge Gas proposes to start collecting revenues associated with the Project, whichever is earlier.

7. Both during and after construction, Enbridge Gas Inc. shall monitor the impacts of construction, and shall file with the OEB one electronic (searchable PDF) version of each of the following reports:

(a) A post construction report, within three months of the full project in-service date, which shall:

- i. provide a certification, by a senior executive of the company, of Enbridge Gas Inc.'s adherence to Condition 1
- ii. describe any impacts and outstanding concerns identified during construction
- iii. describe the actions taken or planned to be taken to prevent or mitigate any identified impacts of construction
- iv. include a log of all complaints received by Enbridge Gas Inc., including the date/time the complaint was received, a description of the complaint, any actions taken to address the complaint, the rationale for taking such actions
- v. provide a certification, by a senior executive of the company, that the company has obtained all other approvals, permits, licenses, and certificates required to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed project

(b) A final monitoring report, no later than fifteen months after the full project in-service date, or, where the deadline falls between December 1 and May 31, the following June 1, which shall:

- i. provide a certification, by a senior executive of the company, of Enbridge Gas Inc.'s adherence to Condition 4
- ii. describe the condition of any rehabilitated land
- iii. describe the effectiveness of any actions taken to prevent or mitigate any identified impacts of construction
- iv. include the results of analyses and monitoring programs and any recommendations arising therefrom
- v. include a log of all complaints received by Enbridge Gas Inc., including the date/time the complaint was received; a description of the complaint; any actions taken to address the complaint; and the rationale for taking such actions

8. Enbridge Gas Inc. shall designate one of their employees as project manager who will be the point of contact for these conditions, and shall provide the employee's name and contact information to the OEB and to all affected landowners, and shall clearly post the project manager's contact information in a prominent place at the construction site.