



PUBLIC INTEREST ADVOCACY CENTRE
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October 21, 2008

VIA MAIL and E-MAIL

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

Dear Ms. Walli:

Re: Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition (VECC)
EB-2008-0238 Northern Ontario Wires Inc. – 2009 Electricity
Distribution Rate Application

We are writing on behalf of our client, the Vulnerable Energy Consumers' Coalition (VECC), in reply to the letter dated October 10, 2008 and received by us on October 20, 2008 from Northern Ontario Wires Inc. ("NOWI") wherein the applicant appears to object to VECC's intervenor status in the above-captioned proceeding. The basis of NOWI's apparent objection appears to be its belief that VECC may not represent any specific person or organization in its service area. Accordingly NOWI seeks clarification with respect to the interest VECC represents in the NOWI franchise area.

While numbers and residence of organization members might conceivably be important in circumstances where the Board considers issues such as compensation to, or treatment of, land owners for certain LDC projects and operations and where a group seeks to represent the interests of that constituency, it is unlikely to be relevant in the routine determination of issues of revenue requirement including cost allocation and rate design. With respect, the NOWI approach confuses the pertinent question of whether the application concerns the interests of the rate-paying constituency that VECC seeks to represent with the identification of individual ratepayers in the organizations making up the VECC coalition. VECC does not believe that NOWI would claim

that its application will have no impact upon vulnerable consumers and/or that there are no such customers of NOWI within its franchise area; VECC believes that its constituency, as outlined in its letter of intervention, provides a sufficient basis for the Board to permit VECC, as it has repeatedly in the past, to represent that aspect of the public interest in this process.

In most Board proceedings, VECC advocates for the interests of vulnerable energy consumers across Ontario without making inquiry into whether its member organizations have individual member customers within the relevant jurisdiction. If there were no vulnerable customers whose interests are affected by the NOWI application, then VECC would not, and should not, intervene. We believe that VECC's representation meets that criterion of relevance in this proceeding.

It should be noted that in many of the EDR applications before the Board for 2009 rates VECC is one of only a few, and we believe in some instances is the only, intervenor of record seeking to represent residential customers. VECC respectfully submits that its comprehensive representation of vulnerable consumer interests across the various distributors in Ontario is helpful to the Board in terms of maintaining consistent regulatory oversight over all regulated distributors.

Unlike all of the applicants to the Board in the 2009 EDR applications, VECC has no funds of its own and no mechanism for recovering its costs directly from the ratepayer groups it represents. It therefore depends on cost awards to be able to provide critical, and meaningful, analysis to the evidence submitted by the applicants.

VECC submits that it has a well established history of responsible intervention that adds value to Board proceedings, as well as a history of efficiency with respect to the cost of its interventions.

Accordingly, VECC respectfully requests that VECC's intervenor status be confirmed along with its eligibility for a cost award in the proceeding.

Yours truly,



Michael Buonaguro
Counsel for VECC

cc: Ms. Monica Malherbe
Northern Ontario Wires Inc.