



EB-2015-0176

## NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND WRITTEN HEARING

### **Application by Hydro One Networks Inc. for an Exemption to Sections 2.10.1 and 7.11.1 to 7.11.7 of the Distribution System Code for Certain Regulated Price Plan Customers**

#### **The Application**

Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One) has applied for an exemption from certain sections of the Distribution System Code (DSC) which relate to estimated billing and billing accuracy. If approved, the exemption would apply to approximately 170,000 of the utility's "hard to reach" customers. Hydro One requests that the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) grant this exemption effective April 15, 2015 until December 31, 2019.

The OEB issued the above-mentioned DSC amendments on April 15, 2015 (in proceeding EB-2014-0198). The Notice of the OEB's proposal to amend the DSC had previously been issued on February 5, 2015.

Approximately 170,000 of Hydro One's customers are "hard to reach", located in remote and sparsely populated areas with no existing commercial cellular network or a low level of communication reliability. Hydro One submits that, with respect to this group of customers, 98% of the time it cannot economically provide monthly bills that are based on actual reads and, as well, it cannot economically issue regular Time-of-Use (TOU) bills based on actual meter readings. Hydro One submits the costs associated with doing so would be excessively high, resulting in upward pressure on rates, and that the option of providing this group of customers with monthly, manually-read bills would be expensive. Hydro One also states that the situation is not expected to be resolved until there is improved telecommunications infrastructure in the province or when future technological advancements in automated meter reading infrastructure become available.

With regard to non-seasonal hard to reach customers, Hydro One proposes that bills be issued on a monthly basis and that meters be manually read on a quarterly basis. To the extent that the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Network provides remote reads within the billing window, these reads will be used to issue bills based on an actual read instead of the planned estimate. With respect to seasonal hard to reach customers, the utility proposes that bills be issued on a quarterly basis and that meters be read on an annual basis.

Hydro One's requested exemption in this proceeding would apply to the same 170,000 hard to reach customers for which the utility received an exemption (relating to the mandated TOU pricing date) in OEB proceeding EB-2014-0360. The extension granted in that proceeding is in effect until December 31, 2019.

The application will be decided by an employee of the OEB who has been delegated this authority pursuant to section 6 of the Act. The OEB does not intend to provide for an award of costs when deciding the application.

### **How to see the Application**

To see a copy of the application, go to the Consumer page of the OEB's website and enter the case number EB-2015-0176 in the "Find an Application" box. A copy can also be seen at the OEB's office and at Hydro One's office at the address indicated below.

### **How to Participate**

Interested persons may participate in the OEB's hearing of the application by following the steps set out in this notice.

### ***Oral vs. Written Hearings***

There are two types of OEB hearings – oral and written. The OEB intends to proceed with this application by way of a written hearing. If you think an oral hearing is needed, you can write to the OEB to explain why. Your submission must be received by the OEB and copied to Hydro One by **June 15, 2015**.

### ***Interrogatories***

If you wish to obtain information from the applicant that is in addition to the application materials already filed with the OEB (i.e. the "pre-filed evidence") and that is relevant to the hearing, you must request it by written interrogatories filed with the OEB, and delivered to the applicant, on or before **June 19, 2015**. Please ensure that each

interrogatory request includes a reference to the relevant page or item in the pre-filed evidence.

The applicant shall file complete responses to each interrogatory with the OEB, and deliver them to all interested parties in the proceeding, no later than **July 3, 2015**.

### ***Written Submissions***

You may express your views on the application by filing a written submission with the OEB. Your submission must be received by the OEB and copied to Hydro One by **July 17, 2015**.

If Hydro One wishes to respond to any submissions, its reply shall be made in writing, and filed with the OEB and copied to any party who made a written submission by **July 31, 2015**.

All written submissions sent to the OEB will be placed on the public record, which means that the written submissions will be available for viewing at the OEB's offices and will be placed on the OEB's website. If the written submission is from a private citizen, the OEB will remove any personal (i.e., not business) contact information from the written submission (e.g., the address, phone number, and e-mail address of the individual), before placing the written submission on the public record. However, the name of the individual and the content of the written submission will become part of the public record.

As stated elsewhere in this notice, you must provide a complete copy of your written submission (including your name, contact information, and everything written in the submission) to the applicant.

### **How to File Documents with the Board**

All written submissions filed with the OEB must quote file number EB-2015-0176 and clearly state the sender's name, postal address, telephone number and email address. You must forward two paper copies and, if possible, an electronic copy in Word format and in searchable PDF format, of your written submission to the OEB and one copy to the applicant. All written submissions to the OEB should be directed to the attention of the Board Secretary at the address below, and be received no later than 4:45 p.m. on the required date.

**Need More Information?**

For more information on how to participate please click on “Get Involved” under the “OEB and You” menu on the Consumer page of the OEB’s website [www.ontarioenergyboard.ca](http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca). If you do not have internet access, please call 1-877-632-2727 (toll free) to receive information about this proceeding and how to participate.

**IMPORTANT**

**IF YOU DO NOT FILE A WRITTEN SUBMISSION OBJECTING TO A WRITTEN HEARING OR DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE HEARING BY FILING INTERROGATORIES OR WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS NOTICE, THE OEB MAY PROCEED WITHOUT YOUR PARTICIPATION AND YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO FURTHER NOTICE IN THIS PROCEEDING.**

**ADDRESSES**

**Ontario Energy Board:**

Ontario Energy Board  
P.O. Box 2319  
27<sup>th</sup> Floor  
2300 Yonge Street  
Toronto ON M4P 1E4  
Attention: Board Secretary  
Filings:  
[www.pes.ontarioenergyboard.ca/eservice/](http://www.pes.ontarioenergyboard.ca/eservice/)  
Email: [boardsec@ontarioenergyboard.ca](mailto:boardsec@ontarioenergyboard.ca)  
Tel: 1-888-632-6273 (Toll free)  
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**Applicant:**

Hydro One Networks Inc.  
483 Bay Street  
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Attention: Oded Hubert  
  
Email: [Regulatory@hydroone.com](mailto:Regulatory@hydroone.com)  
Tel: 416-345-5240  
Fax: 416-345-5866

**DATED** at Toronto, May 29, 2015

**ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD**

*Original signed by*

Kirsten Walli  
Board Secretary