

Ontario Energy Board
2008 Survey of Stakeholders
REPORT

Prepared for:
The Ontario Energy Board

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pn6382



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In September 2008, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) retained Environics Research Group Ltd. to conduct a survey among members of its various stakeholder groups; the fifth such survey of stakeholders undertaken by the Board. The major goal of the stakeholder research is to measure the Board's performance, and to provide information to assist the Board in identifying areas for improvement in the way it operates and in the way it communicates with stakeholders and the public. This year's survey also included questions about future directions for the OEB.

The OEB interacts with diverse stakeholders. This survey includes interviews with consumer and advocacy groups, energy sector organizations (including sector associations, energy retailers and marketers), power generators, electricity and gas distributors, financial organizations (such as debt and equity analysts, rating agencies and institutional investors) and others (academics, consultants, the legal community, the media).

OEB provided Environics with a list of 90 stakeholder organizations for the 2008 survey. Interviews were successfully completed by telephone with senior officials representing 66 of these organizations, for a response rate of 73 percent. The survey was conducted between October 21 and December 12, 2008.

Stakeholder category	List	Interviewed
Consumer and advocacy groups	13	12
Energy sector organizations	16	13
Power generation companies	6	5
Electricity and gas distributors	23	20
Financial organizations	11	5
Other	21	11
Total	90	66

Because of the relatively small sample sizes within the various stakeholder category subgroups, caution is advised in interpreting differences among these categories.

Where appropriate, survey responses are compared to the responses from a survey of 46 stakeholders interviewed in a 2004 survey of stakeholders, those from a survey of 71 stakeholders conducted by

Environics in 2005, those from a survey of 71 stakeholders conducted by Environics in 2006 and those from a survey of 77 stakeholders conducted by Environics in 2007.

The topics addressed in the 2008 survey include:

- Priority of energy issues
- OEB strengths and weaknesses
- Importance of various OEB functions
- OEB overall performance and performance on a variety of attributes
- Evaluation of industry and consumer communications
- Evaluation of service quality
- Future directions

This report summarizes and describes the main findings of the survey. Throughout the survey, respondents are asked to provide evaluations using a 10-point scale. In interpreting these findings, scores above five can be considered positive and scores less than five are considered to be negative.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Issues

When asked to identify priority energy issues for the OEB, stakeholders are most likely to mention regulation/monitoring/policy stability, electricity prices and electricity supply/reliability, followed by conservation/environmental concerns.

Roles and functions

The most important OEB functions, in the view of stakeholders, continue to be setting utility rates and adjudicating utility requests for rate increases, setting and enforcing regulatory requirements, and protecting consumer interests.

Performance assessments

Overall satisfaction with the OEB's performance is unchanged from 2007, at 6.7; this is higher than the 6.4 score achieved in 2005 and well above the 2004 score of 5.4.

As in previous years, stakeholders identify communications and stakeholder consultation, and various aspects of the hearings and regulatory process, as the tasks that the OEB performs the best. Timeliness, speed and efficiency, and length of approval process are among the most frequently mentioned tasks that the OEB performs worst; communications and stakeholder consultation is also mentioned frequently.

When assessed on a variety of attributes, the OEB receives its best performance ratings for professionalism in conducting its hearings and proceedings, fairness of decisions, accountability in clearly defined regulatory processes and transparency in reporting. Performance scores have improved since 2007 on fairness of decisions and, to a lesser extent, cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

Stakeholders' overall rating of the OEB's openness to new ideas and innovations essentially unchanged from 2007, at 6.0.

Communications

Stakeholders give the OEB an approval rating of 7.0 on its industry communications activities; this is up slightly from the rating received in 2007.

Three-quarters of stakeholder use the OEB website regularly, one-quarter use it occasionally and only two percent do not use it.

Approximately nine in ten stakeholders express overall satisfaction with the OEB website with respect to the content and information provided on its website, and the ability to navigate the OEB website to find and retrieve information, but they are more likely to be very satisfied with the content than with the site's navigability. When asked about improvements, stakeholders are most likely to suggest that the website should be more user-friendly and that the search engine should be improved.

Stakeholders give the OEB an approval rating of 5.0 on its performance in the area of informing consumers about important issues and changes occurring in the electricity and gas sectors. This is essentially unchanged since 2007 but higher than the 3.2 score received in 2004.

Service quality

When assessed on several service quality dimensions, OEB staff receive their highest overall ratings in the area of being objective and fair in their dealings with stakeholder organizations, followed by being knowledgeable about areas of the energy sector, and being easy to deal with and responsive to questions and requests.

Future directions

Stakeholders are most likely to say that the OEB should take on more regulatory policy initiatives in the areas of time of use pricing and distributed generation. Stakeholders are most likely to suggest fewer initiatives in the areas of financing electricity investment and conservation.

Stakeholders are most likely to think that the OEB should work with other energy partners in the areas of educating consumers about electricity pricing and educating consumers about energy retail contracts, educating consumers about smart meters and time-of-use rates and promoting consumer education in general.

Closing comments

Closing comments and words of advice from stakeholders vary widely, with no predominant themes emerging. The OEB's "good progress" is noted by several stakeholders.

3.0 DETAILED FINDINGS

3.1 PRIORITY OF ENERGY ISSUES

Stakeholders were asked, top-of-mind, to indicate which of all issues in the energy area today should be priorities for the OEB. The most frequently mentioned issues are: regulation/monitoring/policy stability (38%), electricity prices (35%) and electricity supply/reliability (33%), followed by conservation/environmental concerns (24%). A number of other issues are also mentioned.

Priority of energy issues	
Of all the issues in the energy area today, which do you think should be priorities for the Ontario Energy Board? (more than one answer is possible)	
	2008
Regulation/monitoring/policy stability	38
Electricity prices	35
Electricity supply/reliability	33
Conservation/environmental concerns	24
Consumer interests/public education	18
Cost effectiveness	18
Infrastructure	15
New transmission	12
Investor confidence/fair competition	8
Mentions of IPSP	8
LDC consolidation	4
Return on equity	4
Removal/reducing electricity barriers	3
Other	2
dk/na	2

Some differences in preferred priorities can be seen among the different stakeholder groups, although many of these differences are relatively minor. Consumer and advocacy stakeholders are more likely than others to mention electricity prices, cost effectiveness and infrastructure, and less likely to mention regulation/monitoring/policy stability. Energy sector organizations are more likely to mention

conservation/environmental concerns and cost effectiveness, and less likely to mention infrastructure. Generator stakeholders are more likely to mention infrastructure and new transmission, and less likely to mention most other leading issues. Distributors are more likely to mention regulation/monitoring/policy stability, and less likely to mention consumer interests/public education and cost effectiveness. Financial organizations are more likely to mention return on equity and less likely to mention a number of other leading issues. Stakeholders categorized as “other” are more likely to mention electricity supply/reliability, and less likely to mention cost effectiveness and infrastructure.

3.2 ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

When asked to assess the importance of specific OEB functions (rated on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means of critical importance), the most important functions in the view of stakeholders are setting utility rates and adjudicating utility requests for rate increases, setting and enforcing regulatory requirements, and protecting consumer interests. The less important functions are seen to be providing information to consumers and facilitating conservation initiatives.

Since 2007, the levels of importance assigned to stakeholder communications and providing information to consumers have increased slightly.

Importance of OEB functions					
I'm going to name several functions that are part of the OEB's mandate. Please rate the importance of each function, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means it is of no importance and 10 means it is of critical importance.					
	2008 Mean	2007 Mean	2006 Mean	2005 Mean	2004 Mean
Setting utility rates and adjudicating utility requests for rate increases	8.6	8.5	8.8	8.6	8.6
Setting and enforcing regulatory requirements	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.5	8.7
Protecting the interests of consumers	8.0	8.1	8.1	8.5	8.2
Supporting economic efficiency in the energy sector	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.4	7.8
Stakeholder communications	7.8	7.5	6.8	7.2	7.3
Promoting a viable energy sector	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.9
Providing information to consumers	6.8	6.6	6.3	6.3	6.1
Facilitating conservation initiatives	6.1	6.1	5.8	5.3	4.2

Some differences emerge in the importance of these functions to the various stakeholder groups. Protecting the interests of consumers is of greater than average importance to consumer advocacy organizations, but promoting a viable energy sector is of less than average importance. Energy sector organizations place a higher than average importance on supporting economic efficiency in the energy

sector and a lower importance on promoting a viable energy sector. Generators assign greater importance to promoting a viable energy sector, and less importance to facilitating conservation initiatives and providing consumer information. Distributors place more importance on stakeholder communications, and less importance on supporting economic efficiency and providing education to consumers than do other stakeholder groups. Financial organizations place higher importance on supporting economic efficiency, promoting a viable energy sector, setting utility rates, stakeholder communications and facilitating conservation initiatives. Stakeholders categorized as “other” place higher importance on providing information to consumers, and lower than average importance on supporting economic efficiency in the energy sector and stakeholder communications.

3.3 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

General performance assessments

Overall satisfaction with the OEB's performance, on a 10-point scale, remains at 6.7, unchanged since 2007, but higher than the ratings the OEB received in 2006, 2005 and 2004.

The OEB's performance is rated at 6.0 or higher by all stakeholder groups, with generators, financial organizations and stakeholders categorized as "other" providing the highest ratings. Since 2007, the ratings provided by generators and stakeholders categorized as "other" have increased.

Overall satisfaction with OEB performance											
How satisfied are you with the OEB's overall performance, using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you are completely dissatisfied and 10 means you are completely satisfied?											
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	Consumer advocates	Energy sector orgs.	Generators	Distributors	Financial orgs.	Other
Mean satisfaction rating	6.7	6.7	6.2	6.4	5.4	7.2	6.2	7.4	6.0	7.4	7.4

What the OEB does best and worst

Stakeholders were asked to indicate, top-of-mind, what the OEB does best and worst. The largest proportion think that what the OEB does best is communications and stakeholder consultation (45%). Various aspects of the regulatory function are mentioned by many respondents, including the hearing process (21%), transparency of decision-making (15%), providing regulation (15%), fair treatment and decisions (15%), and fast and efficient processes (11%).

What does OEB do best?	
What would you say the OEB does best? (more than one answer is possible)	
	2008
	%
Good communication/consultation with stakeholders	45
The hearing process	21
Transparency of decision-making	15
Provide regulation	15
Fair treatment/decisions	15
Efficient/fast processes (various)	11
Representing public/consumer interests	8
Review/regulate rates	6
Long-term/effective policies	6
Consistency/predictable	6
Being independent/impartial/objective	6
Balance/fairness for market participants	3
Identifies issues/solutions	2
Regulate utilities	2
Sets or monitor prices/costs	2
None	—
Other	3
dk/na	5

Generators are more likely to mention efficiency, objectivity and consistency. Financial institutions are more likely to mention good communication and consultation, and transparency. Distributors are also more likely to mention good communication.

Timing and timeliness is most frequently identified as the task the OEB performs worst, followed by communication/consultation with stakeholders, length of approval process, speed/efficiency in delivering decisions, management/inefficiencies, consistency in regulation/policies/regulations, and dealing equally with all market participants/stakeholders. Other tasks mentioned by more than four respondents are consumer education/informing the public, regulating companies/utilities and future planning/creating new processes/policies.

What does OEB do worst?	
And what would you say the OEB does worst? (more than one answer is possible)	
	2008
	%
Timing/timeliness	23
Communication/consultation with stakeholders	15
Approval process is too long	15
Speed/efficiency in delivering decisions	14
Consistency in regulation/policies/rulings	12
Management/inefficiencies (various)	12
Deal equally with all market participants/stakeholders	11
Consumer education/informing the public	9
Regulating companies/utilities	9
Future planning/creating new processes/policies	8
Clarity or consistency of regulation/policies/code	6
Protecting consumers	6
Hearing process	6
Being independent/managing interference	5
Over-regulates	3
Mandate/agenda is not well-managed	3
Low return/no incentives for businesses or sector	2
Policy analysis/predicting market shifts	2
Lack understanding/support in certain areas	2
Lack of environmental concerns	2
Other	3
Nothing	2
dk/na	9

Energy sector stakeholders are more likely to mention the length of the approval process. Financial institutions are more likely to mention timing/timeliness. Consumer and advocacy stakeholders are more likely to mention consistency.

Performance in specific areas

The OEB receives its highest performance rating for professionalism in conducting its hearings and proceedings, followed by fairness of decisions, accountability in clearly defined regulatory processes and transparency in reporting. Its lowest ratings come in the areas of timeliness and flexibility, which were also the two lowest-rated attributes in 2007.

Since 2007, the OEB's perceived performance has improved in the areas of fairness of decisions and, to a lesser extent, cost-effectiveness and efficiency. Performance ratings have declined slightly in the areas of consistency and timeliness. Most attributes are assessed more highly in 2008 compared to the first assessments conducted in 2004.

Performance in areas linked to OEB's mandate					
Here are several attributes that are linked to the OEB's fulfilment of its mandate. Please rate the OEB's performance in each of these areas on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very poor and 10 means excellent.					
	2008 Mean	2007 Mean	2006 Mean	2005 Mean	2004 Mean
Extent to which hearings and proceedings are conducted in a professional manner	8.2	8.2	7.9	7.9	-
Fairness of decisions, rules and codes	7.1	6.8	6.7	7.0	6.9
Accountability in clearly defined regulatory processes and sound explanations for its decisions	6.8	6.7	6.0	6.3	5.8
Transparency in reporting on its own performance as a regulator	6.6	6.6	6.1	6.6	4.0
Extent to which decisions are clear and easy to understand	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.2	5.9
Consistency of decisions across market participants and over time	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.3
Cost-effectiveness and efficiency	6.2	6.0	5.5	6.0	4.7
Timeliness of processes including decisions, application processes and notification	5.4	5.7	5.2	4.9	4.1
Flexibility in responding quickly to changing market conditions	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1	4.1

There are some modest differences in the performance assessments made by the various stakeholder groups. Consumer advocacy organizations rate the OEB more highly than others on flexibility and lower on accountability. Generators give a higher rating on fairness, clarity, consistency and cost-effectiveness,

and a lower rating on timeliness. Distributors provide lower ratings on cost effectiveness, consistency, timeliness and flexibility. Financial organizations provide higher than average ratings on consistency, clarity of decisions, transparency, cost-effectiveness, timeliness, flexibility and accountability. Stakeholders categorized as “other” provide higher ratings on flexibility, timeliness, transparency and cost-effectiveness.

Performance in areas linked to OEB’s mandate							
Here are several attributes that are linked to the OEB’s fulfilment of its mandate. Please rate the OEB’s performance in each of these areas on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very poor and 10 means excellent.							
	2008 Mean	Consumer advocates	Energy sector	Generators	Distributors	Financial org.	Other
Extent to which hearings and proceedings are conducted in a professional manner	8.2	8.2	8.0	8.0	8.4	8.2	8.0
Fairness of decisions, rules and codes	7.1	7.3	6.6	8.2	6.7	7.2	7.5
Accountability in clearly defined regulatory processes and sound explanations for its decisions	6.8	6.3	6.8	7.2	6.4	8.0	7.2
Transparency in reporting on its own performance as a regulator	6.6	6.6	6.1	6.8	6.4	8.5	7.1
Extent to which decisions are clear and easy to understand	6.5	6.4	6.7	7.2	6.1	7.4	6.6
Consistency of decisions across market participants and over time	6.3	6.5	6.5	7.6	5.6	7.2	6.4
Cost-effectiveness and efficiency	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.8	5.4	7.7	7.1
Timeliness of processes including decisions, application processes and notification	5.4	5.8	5.3	4.8	4.6	7.0	6.1
Flexibility in responding quickly to changing market conditions	5.2	5.7	4.8	5.0	4.6	6.0	6.0

Openness to new ideas

When asked to rate the OEB as a whole, on its openness to new ideas and innovative approaches, stakeholders give the OEB a rating of 6.0; almost unchanged since 2007.

Financial organizations give the OEB its highest rating on this attribute, while distributors give it a lower than average rating.

Performance on new ideas/innovation									
How would you rate the OEB <u>as a whole</u> when it comes to its openness to new ideas and innovative approaches?									
	2008 Mean	2007 Mean	2006 Mean	Consumer advocates	Energy sector	Generators	Distributors	Financial org.	Other
Openness to new ideas/innovative approaches	6.0	5.9	5.9	6.3	5.7	6.0	5.2	7.8	6.5

3.4 COMMUNICATIONS

Industry communications

Stakeholders give the OEB an approval rating of 7.0 in terms of how it carries out industry communications activities, such as communicating its strategic objectives and decisions, engaging in stakeholder consultations and guiding regulated entities in their obligations.

This is a slight increase from the rating it received on this attribute in 2007; it is notably higher than the 5.3 score received in 2004.

OEB industry communications is rated at 6.1 or higher by all stakeholders groups, with the highest ratings coming from financial organizations and stakeholders categorized as “other.”

OEB performance on industry communications											
When it comes to <u>industry</u> communications, the OEB communicates its strategic objectives and decisions, it engages in stakeholder consultations and guides regulated entities in their obligations. How do you rate the OEB in carrying out these communications activities, again using the same scale?											
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	Consumer advocates	Energy sector	Generators	Distributors	Financial org.	Other
Mean approval rating	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.9	5.3	7.2	6.1	6.2	6.9	7.8	7.9

OEB website

When asked how often they or others in their organization use the OEB website, three-quarters (74%) use it regularly, one-quarter (24%) use it occasionally and only two percent do not use it.

Distributors and stakeholders categorized as “other” are most likely to use the OEB website regularly; generators are least likely to use it.

Use of OEB website							
Do you or others in your organization use the OEB website regularly, occasionally or not at all?							
	2008	Consumer advocates	Energy sector	Generators	Distributors	Financial org.	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Regularly	74	75	62	40	90	60	82
Occasionally	24	25	31	60	10	40	18
Not at all	2	—	8	—	—	—	—

Satisfaction with OEB website

Among regular and occasional users of the website, the OEB receives a higher satisfaction rating for the content and information provided on its website (42% very satisfied) than it does for the ability to navigate the OEB website to find and retrieve information (26% very satisfied). Approximately nine in ten website users express overall satisfaction in both areas.

Satisfaction with OEB website			
Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied or not satisfied with ...?			
	Very	Somewhat	Not
	%	%	%
The content and information provided on the OEB website	42	52	2
The ability to navigate the OEB website to find and retrieve information	26	62	8

Consumer and advocacy organizations are more likely to be very satisfied with the website's content, but less likely to be very satisfied with its navigability. Energy sector organizations are less likely to be very satisfied in both areas. Generators and financial organizations are more likely to be very satisfied with the website's navigability; stakeholders categorized as "other" are more likely to be very satisfied with the website's content.

Improvements to the OEB website

When asked what improvements or changes should be made to the OEB website, users are most likely to mention that it is hard to navigate and should be more user-friendly, and that the search engine should be improved.

Improvements or changes to OEB website	
And what improvements or changes, if any, do you think should be made to the OEB website? (more than one answer is possible)	
	2008
	%
Hard to navigate/more user-friendly	42
Improve the search engine	26
Access to complaint records/past profiles/documents	11
Increase the speed of regulatory information updates	9
Offer more comprehensive information	5
Offer a two-way dialogue	3
Other	3
dk/na	38

Consumer and advocacy organizations are more likely to mention navigation issues. Generators are more likely to suggest more comprehensive information. Financial organizations are more likely to mention improving the search engine. Stakeholders characterized as “other” are more likely to mention navigation issues, and access to complaint records, past profiles and documents.

Consumer information

The OEB receives an approval rating of 5.0 from stakeholders on its performance in the area of informing consumers (i.e., the average householder) about important issues and changes occurring in the electricity and gas sectors. This rating compares to 4.9 in 2007, and is notably higher than the 3.2 rating achieved in 2004.

Consumer and advocacy organizations, and financial institutions rate the OEB more highly than other stakeholders on this dimension, while energy sector organizations provide the lowest rating.

OEB performance in informing consumers

Again, using a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means very poor and 10 means excellent), how good a job is the OEB doing in informing consumers (the average householder) about important issues and changes occurring in the electricity and gas sectors?

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	Consumer advocates	Energy sector	Generators	Distributors	Financial org.	Other
Mean approval rating	5.0	4.9	5.0	4.6	3.2	5.8	3.9	5.0	5.0	6.8	4.9

3.5 SERVICE QUALITY

Stakeholders give the highest overall ratings to OEB staff in the area of being objective and fair. The OEB also receives positive ratings in being knowledgeable about areas of the energy sector, and being easy to deal with and responsive to questions and requests. The lowest rating is given in the area of openness to innovation.

The current ratings on these attributes are similar to those provided in 2007.

Service quality				
When it comes to service quality, using a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means very poor and 10 means excellent) how would you assess OEB staff in each of the following areas ...?				
	2008	2007	2006	2005
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Objective and fair in their dealings with your organization	7.2	7.1	7.1	7.3
Knowledgeable about the areas of the energy sector they are responsible for	7.1	7.2	6.9	7.4
Easy to deal with and responsive to questions and requests	6.9	7.0	6.7	6.8
Open to new ideas and able to provide innovative approaches	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4

Consumer and advocacy organizations, and financial organizations give higher than average ratings to staff service on all four areas. Energy sector organizations give lower than average ratings on being easy to deal with, and being objective and fair. Generators give OEB staff lower than average ratings on being knowledgeable and open to new ideas. Distributors give OEB staff a lower rating on all four areas. Stakeholders categorized as “other” are more likely to give higher than average ratings on being easy to deal with, open to new ideas, and objective and fair.

3.6 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Regulatory policy initiatives

When asked whether the OEB should take on more regulatory policy initiatives, should take on fewer or should maintain its current level of initiatives in specific areas, a majority support more initiatives in only one area – time of use pricing – and a plurality support more activity in the area of distributed generation. Stakeholders are most likely to suggest fewer initiatives in the area of financing electricity investment. Stakeholders are most likely to prefer that the OEB maintain the current level of initiatives in the areas of electricity rate design, transmission connection cost responsibility, utility cost comparison and service quality regulation. Stakeholders are divided as to whether the OEB should take on fewer, or maintain current initiatives, in conservation.

Regulatory policy initiatives			
Looking ahead, do you think the Ontario Energy Board should take on more regulatory policy initiatives, should take on fewer or should maintain its current level of initiatives in each of the following areas ...?			
	More	Maintain current level	Fewer
	%	%	%
Time of use pricing	52	27	15
Distributed generation	42	27	24
Transmission connection cost responsibility	36	47	11
Utility cost comparison	32	45	17
Service quality regulation	30	45	18
Conservation	29	33	33
Financing electricity investment	29	26	38
Electricity rate design	29	53	12

Energy sector organizations are more likely to think that the OEB should take on more initiatives in the areas of distributed generation, transmission connection cost responsibility and time of use pricing. Generators are also more likely to think the OEB should take on more initiatives in the area of transmission connection cost responsibility; they are more inclined to say that the OEB should take on fewer initiatives in most other areas (with the exception of service quality regulation). Distributors are more likely to say the OEB should take on fewer initiatives in the areas of service quality generation.

Financial organizations are more likely to say that the OEB should take on more initiatives in the area of financing electricity investment.

Consumer education

When asked whether the OEB should work with other energy partners in a number of areas related to consumer education, about three-quarters or more of stakeholders think that it should work with partners in the areas of educating consumers about electricity pricing, educating consumers about energy retail contracts, educating consumers about smart meters and time-of-use rates, and promoting consumer education in general. Slightly over half of stakeholders think it should partner with others to educate consumers about energy conservation.

Consumer education	
Looking ahead, do you think the Ontario Energy Board should or should not work with other energy sector partners in each of the following areas ...?	
	Yes, it should
	%
To educate consumers about electricity pricing	80
To educate consumers about energy retail contracts	79
To educate consumers about smart meters and time-of-use rates	74
To promote consumer education in general	73
To educate consumers about energy conservation	56

Consumer and advocacy organizations, and generators are more inclined to think the OEB should work with partners to educate consumers about energy conservation. Financial organizations are more likely to think that the OEB should partner with others to educate consumers about smart meters and time-of-use rates, but less likely to think it should do so to educate consumers about energy retail contracts.

3.7 CLOSING COMMENTS

More than half of stakeholders offer some closing words of advice to the OEB; the proportion who provide comments is higher than that found in 2007. Some stakeholders offer more than one comment or suggestion.

The comments vary widely, with no predominant themes emerging. The OEB's "good progress" is noted by several stakeholders.

Suggestions/final comment topics	
Finally, do you have any closing words of advice for the OEB? (more than one answer is possible)	
	2008
	%
Better policies/rulings	20
Consult more stakeholders/better balance their concerns	11
Good progress/keep up the good work	11
Maintain independence/fend off government interference	11
Improve understanding of market/social environment	9
Enhance training for new staff	6
Respond faster/expedite processes/reduce bureaucracy	6
Stay consistent	5
Provide solutions/protection for consumers	5
Focus/prioritize on economic regulatory issues	3
Attract investment/investors	3
Be more open to innovative ideas	3
Reduce regulation	2
Improve website/be more user-friendly	2
Inform or educate public/consumers	2
Other	2
None/nothing	23
dk/na	14

APPENDIX

SURVEY METHODS

Interviews for this survey were conducted between October 21 and December 12, 2008. Prior to the start of fieldwork, all potential respondents on the list supplied by the OEB, primarily senior personnel in the various stakeholder organizations, were sent a letter from the Chief Operating Officer of the OEB inviting them to participate in the survey. Respondents were assured that their responses to the survey would remain confidential in every respect.

All attempts were made to secure the full participation of as many stakeholders as possible. Alternate respondents were permitted to complete the interview if the named respondent was aware and approved of the alternate. Of the 66 interviews completed, the named respondent participated in 53 of the interviews.

Also, groups were allowed to participate in a speaker phone interview, rather than have just the one respondent interviewed. A total of 61 interviews were conducted with a single respondent and five with multiple respondents.

The interviewing was conducted from Environics' central facilities in Toronto. All surveys were conducted in English. Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. Ten percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association.

Response distribution table:

Total	90
Not available	6
Refused/mid-interview terminated	18
Completed	66

Response rate: 73%
(completed/total valid numbers)