

EDA Weekly - Volume 17, Issue 20 - May 17, 2017

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Committee and
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OEB announces review of customer service rules and release of Consumer Charter

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has released a [Consumer Charter](#) as part of its mandate to protect energy consumers. The plain language document sets out the seven rights of residential consumers: safe, reliable service; accurate, timely bills; fair security deposit policies; fair disconnection and reconnection practices; access to conservation programs; personal privacy; and complaint resolution process.

The charter also identifies customer responsibilities, which include:

- * paying security deposits and bills;
- * respecting and providing access to utility equipment; and
- * notifying the utility in advance of moving out or if there is a need to disconnect service.

The OEB also announced that it will review its customer service rules for electricity distributors, rate-regulated natural gas distributors and unit sub-meter providers, which will be addressed at an EDA Regulatory Council meeting on May 30, 2017 (see story below).

In a [letter](#) to distributors and stakeholders, the OEB indicated that the review will “consider how existing customer service rules have been implemented, ensure that they continue to be relevant and serve the needs of consumers, and that they maintain an appropriate balance between customer protection and the ongoing operational needs of utilities.”

Phase one of the review will consider issues relating to disconnections, billing and payments, arrears management programs and security deposits. Phase two will review rules relating to customer accounts and billing errors as well as reporting requirements. Specifics about the OEB’s consultation activities will be announced soon.

For more information, please contact the EDA’s [Kathi Farmer](#), Senior Regulatory Affairs Advisor, at (905) 265-5333.

Ministry of Energy posts regulations to support Fair Hydro Plan legislation

The Ministry of Energy is seeking feedback on several regulatory proposals on social programs, bill presentment requirements and the refinancing of the Global Adjustment (GA) to support [Bill 132, the Fair Hydro Act, 2017](#). Given the impact these proposed regulations will have on the LDC sector, the EDA will review the proposals with its Regulatory Council to offer feedback. The regulations will take effect on July 1, 2017 if legislation is passed.

[Refinancing a portion of the GA](#)

The proposed regulation would implement the required calculations to refinance the GA, including:

- * required rate reductions under the *Fair Hydro Act* for regulated rate consumers;
- * adjustments for specified consumers, as defined in the legislation, who are not regulated rate consumers;
- * methodology for determining electricity rates and adjustments to GA costs after April 30, 2018; and
- * flow-through of rates and adjustments in circumstances involving unit sub-metering.

The regulation also supports the implementation of the role and responsibilities of the Independent Electricity System Operator’s (IESO) Financial Services Manager. Specifically, the proposed amendments to O. Reg. 280/14 (IESO Eligible Investments and Borrowing) under the *Electricity Act* would provide the IESO with the necessary authority over the funding, borrowing and financial arrangements contemplated in the proposed legislation.

[Proposed amendments under the Ontario Energy Board Act regarding bill](#)

[presentment](#)

This regulatory posting outlines requirements for LDCs to include messaging related to Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan on bills. The message is also available in French.

A bill insert to accompany paper invoices will also be required once every quarter within a specific 12-month period.

[Proposed amendments to the RRRP and the Ontario Electricity Support Program](#)

The government has also filed amendments to O. Reg 442/01 and O. Reg 315/14 that deal with Distribution Rate Protection, First Nations Delivery Credit, Rural or Remote Rate Protection and changes to the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

A complete summary of these amendments can be found in the [RapidSource](#) section of the EDA website.

For more information, please contact the EDA's [Joyce Mankarios](#), Policy Advisor at (905) 265-5334.

[Assisting LDCs and their customers with changes to the Industrial Conservation Initiative](#)

As part of an effort to communicate the various measures of its Fair Hydro Plan, the Ministry of Energy has developed a [fact sheet](#) for LDCs and their customers to better understand the changes to the Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI).

LDCs play an essential role in delivering the ICI program by:

- * identifying potential eligible customers;
- * providing potential eligible customers with the quantitative data to help them decide whether to participate in the program;
- * processing customers' decisions; and
- * appropriately billing all participating customers for GA as Class A customers.

Recognizing the significant role LDCs have in this program, the IESO has also posted the following resources regarding ICI changes:

- * a [backgrounder](#);
- * [Frequently Asked Questions](#); and
- * materials from the February 23, 2017 webinar ([slide presentation](#) and [webinar recording](#)).

Under the Fair Hydro Plan, more LDC customers will be able to participate in the ICI. These customers are referred to as Class A, and pay GA costs based on their contribution, as a percentage, to the top five peak Ontario demand hours over a 12-month period.

Proposed amendments to O. Reg 429/04 will allow customers in specific NAICS codes with average loads of less than one megawatt, but greater than 500 kilowatts, to qualify for the program. In addition, consumers classified as Class A since July 1, 2016 who participated in Ontario Climate Change Solutions Deployment Corporation programs or conservation-related initiatives, will be treated in the same manner as those who participated in IESO CDM programs.

More information on the program and the new rules and requirements can be found in the amended [O. Reg 429/04](#).

For more information, please contact the EDA's [Kathi Farmer](#), Senior Regulatory Affairs Advisor at (905) 265-5333.

EDA offers template letter to help LDCs educate customers on arrears management

To further support LDCs in their communications with customers in arrears, the EDA is offering a template letter that:

- * acknowledges the financial hardships that some customers may be facing and their impact on timely bill payments;
- * identifies some of the options available for managing arrears; and
- * encourages the customer to call the LDC to figure out a solution together.

The letter, which is voluntary, is intended to be the second step in the communications process, following the overdue bill notice. This gives customers another opportunity to respond so they can avoid receiving an official notice of disconnection.

The letter was developed after an LDC expressed interest in revising its communications process for overdue bills and disconnection. That LDC has consented to this letter being offered as a template for the sector.

LDC members can download the letter and other toolkit materials on the [EDA website](#).

What else is in the toolkit?

- * Template news release
- * Backgrounder on disconnections, customer service rules and low-income assistance
- * Tweet schedule
- * Additional campaign tactics for LDC consideration
- * Public service announcement templates
- * Op-ed story
- * Infographic (can be co-branded)

For more information, please contact the EDA's [Jana Manolakos](#), Director, Corporate Affairs and Communications at (905) 265-5337.

Green Ontario Fund and Conservation Mid-Term Review to be addressed by EDA's Conservation & Sustainability Issues Council and Conservation Steering Committee

Members will address the Green Ontario Fund (formerly referred to as the Green Bank) and the Conservation First Framework Mid-Term Review at a joint meeting of the EDA's Conservation & Sustainability Issues Council and Conservation Steering Committee on **Tuesday, May 23 at 9:30 a.m.**

Representatives from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will provide an update on the Ontario Climate Change Solutions Deployment Corporation and the Green Ontario Fund. The Ministry will also preview the first phase of a new website and solicit member feedback.

The agenda also includes a discussion on the IESO's Conservation Framework Mid-Term Review, upcoming report on governance and operations and the Advisory Group meeting.

All LDCs are welcome to participate. To register, please use the [EDA website](#). If possible, we encourage you to attend in person.

For more information, please contact the EDA's [Jesse Kulendran](#), Policy Analyst at (905) 265-5364.

REMINDER: Register for the HR Council meeting to discuss strategies for developing the next generation of skilled workers

Strategies and initiatives to develop the next generation of skilled workers will be the focus of a meeting of the EDA's Human Resources (HR) Council on **May 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

The agenda will also include the latest developments on the Changing Workplaces Review and EDA advocacy related to legalized recreational marijuana in the LDC workplace. Members will also discuss other HR and labour issues in the sector, as well as relevant policy and advocacy updates during the Chair's Roundtable.

As always, all council meetings are open to the entire LDC membership. To participate in-person, please register online through the [EDA website](#).

For call-in details or any other information, please contact the EDA's [Derek Nardone](#), Government and Stakeholder Affairs Analyst, at (905) 265-5348.

REMINDER: Register for the Communicators Council meeting to discuss Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan and customer engagement

The Communicators Council will now meet from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with lunch to follow .

LDC communicators from across the province will address the province's communications strategy for the Fair Hydro Plan as well as best practices in customer engagement at a meeting of the EDA's Communicators Council on **Tuesday, May 30 from 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** (with lunch to follow).

Representatives from the Ministry of Energy will speak to the Fair Hydro Plan, vehicles for disseminating information and the LDCs' role within the communications strategy.

BEworks, a consulting firm specializing in applying behavioural science to business strategy, will highlight some best practices in customer engagement within this discipline.

LDC members can also look forward to a presentation from Alectra Utilities on the complexities of merger communications, based on lessons learned from the recent merger among Enersource, Horizon Utilities and PowerStream.

LDC members can attend the meeting in person or via webinar. To register for in-person participation, please visit the [Communicators Council page](#) on the EDA website.

For webinar access, or for more information, please contact the EDA's [Andrea Coelho](#), Coordinator, Corporate Affairs and Communications at (905) 265-5323.

Regulatory Council to address customer service rules, Fair Hydro Plan, market renewal and regulatory streamlining

The EDA's Regulatory Council will meet to discuss four significant policy priorities on **Tuesday, May 30, 2017.**

1. *Customer Service Rules*

The OEB is scheduled to present on its Customer Service Rules review. LDCs will help identify opportunities to strengthen customer protection rules, share their experiences during the moratorium on disconnections and ask questions of OEB staff.

2. *2. Fair Hydro Plan*

Several proposed regulatory amendments have been posted to support the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan. These include the refinancing of the Global Adjustment and other program changes.

3. *3. Market Renewal*

Staff from the IESO are scheduled to present on the Market Renewal initiative and will highlight opportunities for LDC engagement.

4. *4. Regulatory Streamlining*

Council members will review specific recommendations for regulatory streamlining that build on the EDA's Long-Term Energy Plan submission.

All LDCs are welcome to participate in the meeting and are encouraged to attend in person.

To register for the meeting, or for more information, please contact the EDA's [Jesse Kulendran](#), Policy Analyst at (905) 265-5364.

EDA EVENTS

Cyber security and cyber governance to be addressed at EDA 2017 Directors Summit

The Directors Summit is quickly approaching. Register today to gain insights on "Evolving Trends in Governance".

Cybersecurity will continue to be a point of concern for any company in today's more web-dependent environment. This means that preparing for cyber-attacks and ensuring the adequacy of a company's cybersecurity measures need to become critical elements of a board's risk oversight responsibilities.

In addition to the threat of significant business disruptions, substantial response costs, negative publicity and lasting reputational harm, there is also the threat of litigation and

potential liability to deal with in the fall-out of an attack. The message is clear – cybersecurity should be on every corporate director's radar. So, how do you develop an effective strategy to combat cyber-threats?

Gary Bouchard of Gary Bouchard & Associates and Chris Lincoln from Online Business Systems will explore this topic thoroughly at the EDA Directors Summit on June 1, and will help put you on the right track to implementing the appropriate protection measures for your business.

As part of the EDA's continuous education program, this event provides board members and staff who are responsible for governance with the tools and resources they need to stay on top of changing trends and practices around governance and boost board performance. So, join your colleagues, board and corporate leaders on **Thursday, June 1** at the Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport for the EDA Directors Summit, "Evolving Trends in Governance."

Space is limited so [register now](#). This is one event that you do not want to miss.

Please [click here](#) to review the agenda for this year's Directors Summit.

Event Pricing

- * \$399 for members
- * \$499 for non-members

** Prices do not include HST*

Accommodations

For hotel accommodations, the EDA suggests:

- * *Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport*, located at 970 Dixon Rd, Etobicoke, ON. Please call 416-674-4343 or email reservations@yyzia.com.
- * *Sheraton Toronto Airport and Conference Centre*, located at 801 Dixon Road, Toronto, ON M9W 1J5. [Click here](#) to book your hotel now.
- * *Crowne Plaza Toronto Airport*, located at 33 Carlson Court, Toronto, ON M9W 6H5. [Click here](#) to book your hotel now.

For more information on the EDA CON:NECT event series, contact [Marica Macura](#), Director, Member Relations and Events at (905) 265-5346.

Save the date for *A Practical Review of EVs in Ontario* – a member-exclusive forum

Join us on June 15th at the Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel & Conference Centre.

A new member-exclusive EDA forum will offer LDCs and other members an opportunity to address the government's plans to build 500 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across Ontario and the role LDCs will play in advancing this initiative.

Attendees will receive the latest updates on electric vehicle deployment and gain insights on the following topics:

- * next steps being taken by the Ministry of Transportation;
- * impacts of EVs on the distribution system; and
- * challenges and opportunities for LDCs.

A detailed agenda, along with registration, will be available later this week.

For more information on EDA forums, contact [Marica Macura](#), Director, Member Relations and Events at (905) 265-5346.

Mark your calendars – the first EBIC conference is on October 25 and 26

Building on our commitment to advance innovation in the business and operations of the LDC sector, we launched the new Energy Business Innovation Conference (EBIC) under the umbrella of the EDA [CON:NECT Event Series](#). This will be your one-stop shop for updates on information sessions, speakers, planned activities, hotel information and much more.



The EBIC Conference will be held on October 25 and 26 at the Hilton Meadowvale Hotel in Mississauga. EBIC will pave the way for new technology and other advances in the sector, helping you to stay ahead of the curve and gain a competitive advantage. This event is relevant to everyone in your company as it will address the latest in management, communications, human resources, customer service, finance and regulation.

Make sure to check the website often to stay up-to-date as we gear up for this exciting new event.

You can also join our EBIC email list by [clicking here](#).

We look forward to seeing everyone there in October!

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Look up, look out and #RespectThePower

As the Victoria Day long weekend approaches, local hydro utilities Energy+ Inc., Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc., Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc., and Waterloo North Hydro Inc. are reminding residents and contractors working outdoors, to be aware of powerline dangers lurking silently, overhead and underground, around homes and businesses. These utilities are offering tips to #RespectThePower at home and at work. For more information, read the [news release](#).

Veridian and Electrical Safety Authority join together for Powerline Safety Week

Veridian Connections is proud to join the Electrical Safety Authority in promoting Powerline Safety Week, which runs from May 15 to 21, 2017. The initiative aims to raise awareness of the dangers that powerlines pose at home and on the job. It's also a reminder to all Ontarians to #RespectThePower. For more information, read the [news release](#).

INDUSTRY NEWS

Updates from the IESO include:

- * Final release plan for **changes to IESO IT systems**
- * Additional program details and speakers for the **2017 Stakeholder Summit**
- * A technical report on the **Ontario-Quebec Interconnection**
- * A reminder for the May 18 **Incremental Capacity Auction** meeting

More information is available at: [IESO website](#).

Updates from the OEB include:

- * Updated **RPP Variance Settlement Factor**
- * Appointment of two **new full-time Board members**

More information is available at: [OEB website](#).

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