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Executive Summary

Introduction

This paper analyzes the accounting in the government's consolidated financial statements for the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act ("FHP Act"), including the legal structures created to operationalize the legislative requirements under the FHP Act, and the contractual agreements entered into by the Province and various entities that form part of the government reporting entity. Addressed is the accounting for the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), Ontario Power Generation Trust (OPG Trust) and the Province. The basis of this analysis is the standards for governments in Canada issued by the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB). The FHP Act does not create accounting rules or legislate accounting. The act of legislating the tracking and recovery of the FHP variance account does not, in and of itself, result in its recognition as an asset for accounting purposes.

Considerations

In evaluating the accounting for transactions under the FHP Act, focus has been placed on the reporting of the regulatory asset as described under Section 25 of the FHP Act (referred to as the GA refinancing). Other aspects of the Fair Hydro Plan (FHP) relating to the transfer of support for electricity consumers through the Ontario Energy Support Program and the provincial portion of the HST to the taxpayer are guided appropriately by the primary sources of GAAP. In assessing the appropriate accounting treatment for the GA refinancing component of the FHP on Ontario's consolidated financial statements, the Office of the Provincial Controller considered the authoritative guidance issued by PSAB and other frameworks where Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS) are silent, as well as the accounting assessments of the IESO and Ontario Power Generation (OPG) management and their external auditors and/or advisors. The exercise required the use of professional judgement to ensure that the substance of the transaction and the repayment obligations of the ratepayers are clear and transparent to readers.

Conclusions

IESO

1. The temporary shortfall resulting from the FHP (referred to as the "variance account") meets the requirements to be accounted for as an asset under PSAS. The variance account was reviewed to ensure its consistency with the concept of assets as described in ASSETS, Section PS 3210 and FINANCIAL STATEMENT CONCEPTS, Section PS 1000, paragraph .36. The FHP variance account meets the requirements to be accounted for as an asset under PSAS based on the following:

(a) Future economic benefit – Future recovery from ratepayers

As noted in Sec 25 of the FHP Act, the IESO holds the sole right to collect the variance account from ratepayers under statute. It is expected that IESO will realize future economic benefits through future cash inflows collected from ratepayers. In addition, the IESO has the right to sell the right to collect amounts from the ratepayer in exchange for current cash inflows.

(b) Controlling the Resource

The FHP Act provides for the IESO to realize its collection through the transfer and sale of the variance account:

26 (1) The IESO may from time to time, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, transfer a specified portion of the regulatory asset to a financing entity in accordance with this section.

(2) An agreement between the IESO and a financing entity in relation to the transfer of a specified portion of the regulatory asset shall provide for consideration of a payment by the financing entity to the IESO in an amount equal to the amount of the specified portion.

Control over future economic resources is by way of collection from ratepayers or sale and transfer to a financing entity with all associated risks extinguished or transferred at the time of sale.

(c) Occurrence of a Past Event

Upon the transfer of electricity into the grid by the generators, a recoverable amount is due from ratepayers related to their portion of consumption that must be settled by way of the IESO.

ASSETS, Section PS 3210 paragraph .26 supports that the point of exchange at which risk transfers gives rise to an asset. The incurrence of the cost that is to be settled with power generators is the event for which there is a right to recovery from ratepayers under statute, not the statute itself as supported by PS 3210 paragraph .32.

2. The application of the GAAP hierarchy under PS1150 permits use of rate-regulated accounting.

PSAS is silent on the use of rate-regulated accounting; the standards neither explicitly permit nor prohibit its recognition, measurement, presentation or disclosures. PSAS, Section PS 1150.19 provides examples (not an exhaustive list) of other sources of GAAP to be considered, while PS 1150.20 emphasizes that “it applies professional judgment and evaluates the source in the context of the relative manner in which the standard setter requires its pronouncements to be applied”.

In applying professional judgment, a review of the PSAB concepts described in paragraph PS 1150.05(b) has been completed to ensure proper application of the GAAP hierarchy. It was determined ASC 980 under US GAAP is consistent with the concepts of assets as described in ASSETS, Section PS 3210 and FINANCIAL STATEMENT CONCEPTS, Section PS 1000.36.

The application of rate-regulated accounting was assessed as being compliant with the following requirements under US GAAP:

a. The operations of the IESO are within the scope of ASC 980 based on the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2

IESO's operations are within the scope of ASC 980 as IESO is 1) regulated by the OEB as a governing board which provides for it to 2) recover its costs based on 3) rates pursuant to the on-going demand for electricity in the marketplace.

b. The FHP variance account meets the criteria in ASC 980-340-25-1 for capitalization as a regulatory asset

The FHP ACT and its regulations (the "Act") entitle the IESO to recover the amounts that have been deferred, including interest and carrying costs. The rate per unit of electricity that is collected from the specified ratepayers will be determined based on the amount of electricity consumed in the future, not whether electricity is consumed in the future – the 2017 Long-term Energy Plan predicts that the demand for energy will be fairly steady over the planning period (to 2035). The IESO is also able to sell the regulatory asset.

c. And, the OEB need not be considered to be independent from the Province in order to meet the scope requirements of ASC 980 and/or the characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.36

The OEB has been established by the Province to be Ontario's independent energy regulator; its mandate and authority come from the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, the Electricity Act, 1998, and a number of other provincial statutes. As noted previously, the rates charged by the IESO to electricity consumers are determined by the OEB, and therefore, it is considered the governing board of the IESO.

While both the IESO and the OEB are controlled by the Province, this does not negate the role the OEB plays with respect the electricity market nor the determination of the IESO as a rate-regulated entity. Under US GAAP, the requirement is not solely an independent, third-party regulator, but can also be its own governing board empowered by statute or contract.

OPG Trust

1. The Provincial guarantee is not a form of continuing involvement in the regulatory asset that would preclude sale treatment when transferred to OPG Trust.

Unless the occurrence of a Protection Event is considered likely, liability recognition on the books of the province is not required and the existence of the guarantee would not preclude sale treatment when the regulatory asset is transferred from IESO to OPG Trust. The likelihood of a Protection Event will need to be continually assessed to determine if the recognition criteria is subsequently met.

2. The OPG Trust is not controlled directly by IESO or the Province (as opposed to being controlled indirectly by the Province through OPG) requiring it to be consolidated on a line-by-line basis in the GRE.

PSAS 1300.18 identifies certain indicators that provide more persuasive evidence of control. The following supports the conclusion that the Province indirectly controls OPG Trust through OPG under PSAS based on these indicators:

- Power to unilaterally appoint or remove a majority of the members of the governing body of the organization
- Ongoing access to the assets of the organization, has the ability to direct the ongoing use of those assets, or has ongoing responsibility for losses
- Holds the majority of the voting shares or a "golden share" that confers the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the organization; "Golden share" refers to a class of share that entitles the holder to specified powers or rights generally exceeding those normally associated with the holder's ownership interest or representation on the governing body

- Has the unilateral power to dissolve the organization and thereby access its assets and become responsible for its obligations

Commented [CV1]: Needs work

3. The IESO is permitted to sell the regulatory asset to OPG Trust.

The sale of the regulatory asset to OPG Trust is permitted under Section 26 of the FHP Act. Subsequent to the transfer to OPG Trust, the regulatory asset no longer possesses the three essential characteristics of an asset in PS 1000.36 to IESO as IESO no longer retains further rights, title or interest in the regulatory asset transferred to OPG trust. There are, therefore, no remaining future economic benefits to the IESO.

Accounting by the Province

1. The accounting of IESO and OPG Trust reflected in the financial statements of the Province is in accordance with PSAS.

IESO is classified under PSAS as an OGO and therefore included in the financial statements of the Province by line-by-line consolidation. Therefore, assets (for example, the variance account), liabilities, revenues and expenses of IESO are included in the financial statements of the Province.

OPG Trust is controlled by OPG. OPG is classified under PSAS as a GBE and therefore included in the financial statements of the Province using the modified equity basis. While, OPG consolidates OPG Trust on a line-by-line basis, the Province accounts for OPG as an investment in a GBE. The Province's net investment in OPG and earnings of OPG are included in the Province's financial statements on a one line basis.

Description

Ontario's consolidated financial reports are prepared in accordance with the accounting principles for governments recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA Canada). In order to meet the needs of users, including the legislature and the public, for accountability in government reporting and for decision making, it is essential that public sector financial statements reflect the economic substance of the government's activities.

In March 2017, the Government of Ontario (the Province) announced its Fair Hydro Plan (FHP). The FHP reduces electricity bills for Regulated Price Plan (RPP) customers (as well as those non-RPP consumers who receive the 8% rebate as specified in the Ontario Rebate for Electricity Act, 2016) by approximately 25%¹ for a period of one year, starting in the summer of 2017, and limits the increase in electricity bills to the rate of inflation over the next four years.

The measures that make up the 25% average reduction include:

1. Spreading the cost of Ontario's clean energy investments over the expected lifecycle of the generation infrastructure assets, referred to as the Global Adjustment refinancing (GA Refinancing). This is expected to account for approximately 16% of the overall reduction.
2. Shifting the cost of the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) and most of the Rural or Remote Rate Protection (RRRP) program costs from ratepayers to taxpayer-funded programs.
3. An 8% rebate equal to the provincial portion of the HST, which took effect on January 1, 2017.

While the first measure (the GA refinancing) represents a temporary reduction in the amount paid by the ratepayer by shifting payments to a later point in time, the second and third measures represent permanent reductions in the cost to the ratepayer, but at the cost of the taxpayer. These amounts are reflected in the Province's consolidated financial statements as expenses as incurred. The accounting for these items is not complex and not the subject of further analysis in this memo..

Commented [CV2]: True

Under the FHP, ratepayers continue to be obligated under legislation to pay for the cost of Ontario's clean energy investments. However, the FHP permits the ratepayers settle their obligation over a period of time which more aligns with the productive life of generating assets, as opposed to the term of the generator contracts which are shorter in duration.

Commented [CV3]: Consistent with Navigant report

As a result of this timing difference, there is a need to temporarily fund a portion of current clean energy investment costs., . The timing difference, or the deferred amounts, including interest and other costs,

¹ Because distribution rates vary across the province and customers use different amounts of electricity, the goal in calculating the new RPP electricity prices was to achieve a 25% reduction for a "proxy" customer, which is established under the Fair Hydro Act, 2017 and related regulations (FHP Act) as a residential customer of Toronto Hydro who uses 750 kWh of electricity a month, pays time-of-use RPP electricity prices and has the time-of-use consumption profile of a typical residential customer. From this analysis, an adjustment for non-RPP consumers to achieve similar savings was also established.

are legislated under the FHP to be recovered from ratepayers through future rates over a future period, ending in 30 years (2047).

Objective

The primary objective of this memo is to assess the appropriate accounting for the GA refinancing component of the FHP (i.e. deferred recovery of clean energy costs) on the consolidated financial statements of the Province in accordance with PSAS. The memo considers the objectives with respect to the IESO, OPG Trust and subsequently the Province on consolidation. The memo will address the following questions:

IESO

1. Does the temporary shortfall resulting from the FHP (referred to as the “variance account”) meet the requirements to be accounted for as an asset under PSAS?
2. Does the application of the GAAP hierarchy under PS1150 permit use of rate-regulated accounting?
If so,
 - a) Are the operations of the IESO (or the relevant portion thereof) within the scope of ASC 980 based on the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2?
 - b) Does the FHP variance account meets the criteria in ASC 980-340-25-1 for capitalization as a regulatory asset?
 - c) Does the OEB need to be considered independent from the Province in order to meet the scope requirements of ASC 980 and/or the characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.36?

OPG Trust

1. Does the Provincial guarantee represent a form of continuing involvement in the regulatory asset that would preclude sale treatment when transferred to OPG Trust?
2. Is OPG Trust controlled directly by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) or the Province (requiring it to be consolidated on a line-by-line basis in the consolidated financial statements)?
3. Is IESO permitted to sell the regulatory asset to OPG Trust?

Province

1. How is the accounting of IESO and OPG Trust reflected in the financial statements of the Province?

The Auditor General of Ontario raised certain matters in relation to the Province’s planned accounting for the Fair Hydro Plan. The matters raised by the OAG in *The Fair Hydro Plan: Concerns About Fiscal Accountability and Value for Money Special Report* dated October 2017 have been included in Appendix C showing where and how the matters have been addressed in this memo.

Commented [DM(4)]: Requires further cross-referencing

Background

Pre-Fair Hydro Plan

Prior to consideration of the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act (FHP Act), in accordance with Section 78(3.1) of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 (the OEB Act), the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has historically been responsible for determining the rate for RPP consumers. The OEB was established by the Province to be Ontario's energy regulator. The OEB's mandate and authority come from the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, the Electricity Act, 1998, and a number of other provincial statutes. The OEB is considered the governing board of the IESO, as the IESO's rates are established in accordance with these statutes. As part of the rate setting process, Section 78(3.3) of the OEB Act requires the OEB to forecast the cost of electricity (commodity charge) used by RPP consumers. Since the rate setting process is highly complex and involves numerous forecasts and estimates, the OEB regulatory framework allows for variances between the actual commodity charge of supplying electricity and the amount collected from RPP consumers.

In setting the rates for RPP consumers, Section 78(3.3) of the OEB Act requires the OEB to settle any such variances through rates over a 12-month period. This is achieved through a price adjustment charged or credited when setting the next RPP rate to be paid by RPP consumers.

The IESO is the administrator of Ontario's wholesale electricity market. The IESO settles the market with all participants as an agent, whereas it recognizes the market accounts of electricity contracts on its balance sheet but reports revenue on a net basis (see Appendix D). As part of its role as market administrator, the IESO oversees the market price for electricity (the Market Clearing Price, or MCP) by running the bids and offers of the market participants through an algorithm.

From a government policy perspective, decisions as to what is in the best interest of the public regarding electricity generation in Ontario are not based solely on economics, they are also influenced by environmental, social and political factors. In some circumstances, generators may receive compensation for investing in clean energy infrastructure. As a result, the total commodity cost of electricity will include these additional amounts payable to certain generators relating to the cost of clean energy initiatives they have undertaken. In these instances, the IESO (and previously the Ontario Power Authority) entered into contracts to pay the generators their costs (plus a reasonable rate of return thereon) over an extended period of time, typically 20 years. The amounts paid to the generators under the terms of these contracts that are in excess of the MCP are currently included in the RPP rates set by the OEB (as part of the commodity charges) with the intention they will be recovered from RPP consumers within twelve months.

Under existing legislation, the IESO is permitted to fund any cash shortfall relating to differences arising between the actual commodity cost and the amount collected from RPP consumers. In accordance with Section 25.33(5) of the Electricity Act, 1998 (the Electricity Act), the IESO has established and maintains a variance account to track these temporary differences (the original variance account) for subsequent

Commented [CV5]: ? – what do the financial statements of the IESO say?

RPP rate setting by the OEB. Cash shortfalls in the IESO arising from the original variance account are funded through financing provided by the OFA.

Changes under the Fair Hydro Plan

Under the FHP, while generators would continue to be paid over a twenty year period as contracted, the total commodity cost of electricity to RPP consumers, as well as non-RPP consumers (together referred to as “specified consumers”) who receive the 8% rebate as specified in the Ontario Rebate for Electricity Act, 2016, will no longer be fully collected over a 12-month period. Rather, these amounts paid by the IESO to the generators will continue to be recovered from specified consumers but over a longer period that more aligns with the **expected generating lifecycle of the assets**. Deferring the recovery of these costs from the consumers on a longer-term basis will create a significant interim cash shortfall for the IESO.

Section 24(1) of the FHP Act requires that IESO establish and maintain a variance account (separate from the original variance account described above) to track the cash shortfall specifically resulting from the implementation of the GA refinancing component of the FHP (the “FHP variance account”). This account is defined in Section 1(1) of the FHP Act as a “regulatory asset”².

The IESO is entitled under Section 25 of the FHP Act to recover the regulatory asset from specified consumers in the future, which will be achieved through the OEB setting rates to allow for such recovery. This role of the OEB is not dissimilar to its past role with respect to the setting of RPP rates to recover the commodity charge of supplying electricity, albeit the recovery was previously over a period of 12 months.

Section 26 of the FHP Act also permits the IESO to transfer the regulatory asset from time to time to a financing entity to fund its cash shortfall, thus commoditizing the future cash flow stream. The portion of the regulatory asset transferred to a financing entity is referred to as the “investment asset”.

The Province has appointed OPG to administer the investment asset. To fulfill this role as outlined in the FHP Act, OPG must establish a financing entity (OPG Trust) to purchase the IESO’s regulatory asset and eliminate any cash shortfall in the IESO. The Province (through the Ontario Financing Authority) is not the primary source of financing for electricity sector infrastructure investments. OPG Trust will be financing these purchases through a combination of provincial borrowing (flowed through OPG as an equity investment), amounts advanced from OPG and direct borrowing from capital markets. It is expected OPG Trust will purchase the regulatory assets from IESO on an on-going basis, but it is not required to do so.

² To avoid confusion in the remainder of this document, the term regulatory asset will refer to the defined term in the FHP Act and the term regulated asset or rate-regulated asset (RRA) will refer to an asset recognized for accounting purposes. For greater clarity and as discussed later in this memo, “regulatory asset” is simply a defined term in the FHP Act and does not on its own necessarily represent an asset for financial reporting purposes.

Accounting for the FHP variance account

It is important to clarify that the FHP Act does not create accounting rules or legislate accounting. The act of legislating the tracking and recovery of the FHP variance account does not, in and of itself, result in its recognition as an asset for accounting purposes. Accordingly, the primary issue at hand is whether the legislated regulatory asset is eligible for recognition as an asset in both the standalone financial statements of the IESO and the consolidated financial statements of the GRE.

Basis of Accounting

In accordance with PSAS 1300.07, the government reporting entity (GRE) for the Province comprises government components and those organizations that are controlled by the government.

As defined in the Introduction to PSAS, the following types of organizations are controlled by the government: (a) government business enterprises (GBE), (b) government non-for profit organizations (GNPO), and (c) other government organizations (OGO).

GNPOs and OGOs are considered governmental units and, in accordance with PSAS 1300.27, are consolidated in the GRE on a line-by-line basis. For consolidation purposes, the financial information of governmental units is required to be prepared in accordance with PSAS.

GBEs, on the other hand, are accounted for in the GRE using the modified equity method as prescribed by PSAS 1300.35. Under the modified equity method, which is described in detail in PSAS 3070, INVESTMENTS IN GOVERNMENT BUSINESS ENTERPRISES, the equity method of accounting is modified only to the extent that the GBE's accounting principles (which are required to be IFRS in accordance with paragraph 17 of the Introduction to PSAS) are not adjusted to conform to those of the government.

As documented in Schedule 8 to the consolidated financial statements of the Province, the IESO and OEB are OGOs and OPG is a GBE. The current accounting for these entities is as follows:

		ENTITY STATEMENTS	GRE STATEMENTS	
ENTITY	CLASSIFICATION	GAAP	ACCOUNTING METHOD	GAAP
IESO	OGO	PSAS ¹	Consolidation	PSAS
OEB	OGO	PSAS	Consolidation	PSAS
OPG (including OPG Trust ²)	GBE	US GAAP ³	Modified equity method	IFRS ⁴

1. For purposes of preparing general purpose financial statements, an OGO applies PSAS unless those standards do not meet the needs of its financial statement users. In that situation, **other accounting frameworks** should be considered and the most appropriate set of standards applied.
2. OPG has completed its assessment of OPG Trust under IFRS. As such, OPG Trust will be consolidated by OPG and, therefore, reflected in the GRE through the modified equity accounting of OPG under IFRS. See memo section on OPG Trust.
3. Although a GBE is required to apply IFRS for purposes of preparing general purpose financial statements, the Ontario Securities Commission has approved an exemption that allows OPG to apply US GAAP up to January 1, 2019 for purposes of filing its financial statements with the OSC. US GAAP to IFRS adjustments are made for the purposes of preparing the Province's consolidated financial statements.
4. OPG applies IFRS 14, which permits it to continue to account for rate-regulated activities using US GAAP guidance for purposes of determining the differences between US GAAP and IFRS.

This memo does not reconsider the classification of these existing entities (i.e., such classifications are based on past published Public Accounts).

Accounting by the IESO

The IESO is classified as an OGO and prepares its standalone, general purpose financial statements in accordance with PSAS based on an assessment of its user needs, which is consistent with the basis of presentation required for purposes of consolidating the IESO into the GRE.

The IESO is required by legislation³ to carry out its operations without the purpose of gain or profit. Other than the amounts the IESO is permitted to keep in accordance with its own rate order from the OEB to cover its internal operating costs, which makes it a self-sustaining entity, all amounts the IESO receives from market participants must be paid out to other market participants who have regulatory or contractual rights to receive payments from those collected amounts.

Effective January 1, 2016, the IESO adopted, on a retrospective basis, a new accounting policy that requires its market-settlement activities⁴ to be reflected in the financial statements. As documented by the IESO, this change to include the assets and liabilities of market participants brings consistency and comparability with other ISO entities across North America. It's also important to note that the market assets and liabilities included in the IESO's financing statements include assets and liabilities regulated by the OEB related to the RRRP, RPP, and OESP programs have been included in previous year's financial statements of the IESO. In addition, the pre-merger activities of the Ontario Power Authority also reported balances related to market settlements with power generators in its financial statements. Support for the change in policy is documented by the IESO in a report dated XX. This memo does not reconsider the conclusions reached by the IESO with respect to its change in accounting policy regarding market accounts.

Commented [LAP6]: To discuss proposed changes by the IESO relating to activities versus accounts.

Commented [DM(7)]: Report citation needed

Use of Rate-regulated Accounting

The IESO is legislated by the FHP Act to establish and maintain the FHP variance account to track the resulting cash flow deficit. In the FHP Act, the FHP variance account is defined to be a 'regulatory asset' but does not specify the accounting for the variance account. This variance account is similar in nature to the original variance account established under Section 25.33(5) of the Electricity Act, 1998, which is recognized as an asset in the IESO's financial statements. Reporting of market accounts is discussed further in Appendix D.

The IESO has adopted a policy to apply the U.S. GAAP guidance in ASC 980 in connection with accounting for rate regulated assets. Although the IESO's financial statements include the following accounting policy on regulated assets and liabilities, the asset relating to the original variance account has not been specifically labeled as a regulated asset:

As a rate-regulated entity, the IESO, in appropriate circumstances establishes regulated assets or liabilities and thereby defers the impact on the statement of operations of certain expenses or

³ Part II, 6(2) of the Electricity Act states no gain or profit

⁴ The IESO administers the wholesale electricity market by authorizing market participants, publishing system forecasts and market information, producing statements and invoices, and performing financial settlement transactions for the markets.

revenues because they are probable to be collected or refunded to market participants through future billings. The IESO has applied guidance from United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP) Topic 980, Regulated Operations, in this policy.

The only two balances specifically labeled as being recognized in the IESO's financial statements under the above policy are (i) unrecovered smart metering expenses, and (ii) unrecovered PSAB transition items. IESO management has, however, indicated in discussions that the cash flow deficit/surplus associated with the original variance account is also considered to be a regulated asset/liability under ASC 980 even though it has been presented as part of the Market Accounts balances in the statement of financial position.

IESO management has applied the guidance in ASC 980 and concluded the regulatory asset created by the FHP can be recognized as a regulated asset for accounting purposes in the financial statements of the IESO prepared following PSAS. The IESO's auditors, KPMG, concur with this position, as evidenced from the following excerpt from a draft letter issued by KPMG on May 16, 2017 (the KPMG Letter):

We have considered the foregoing analysis and management's conclusion. We concur that the variance account created by Bill 132 will meet the criteria for the recognition of a regulatory asset stated in ASC 980-340-25-1. Furthermore, we have also considered the criteria stated in ASC 980-10-15-2 and believe that IESO should be allowed to continue to use the guidance for regulated operations of Topic 980.

Consolidation of Other Government Organizations

When an entity reporting on a standalone basis under PSAS is consolidated into the financial statements of the GRE, the Province generally relies on the opinion of the external independent auditors and only adjusts the audited financial results of the entity in circumstances where an accounting policy applied by the entity has a material variance with the accounting policy of the Province. In the case of the IESO, KPMG has provided a clean opinion under PSAS for the IESO financial statements issued at December 31, 2016. However, since the government does not have an established accounting policy with regard to the application of rate-regulated accounting under PSAS, the Province has specifically assessed the application used by the IESO for its consistency with the primary source of GAAP and its adherence to the principles of presenting its financial statements in a transparent and accountable way to meet user needs.

Analysis - IESO

The following analysis addresses the questions below in arriving at the recommended accounting by IESO for the FHP variance account.

1. Does the temporary shortfall resulting from the FHP (referred to as the “variance account”) meet the requirements to be accounted for as an asset under PSAS?
2. Does the application of the GAAP hierarchy under PS1150 permit use of rate-regulated accounting? If so:
 - a. Are the operations of the IESO (or the relevant portion thereof) within the scope of ASC 980 based on the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2?
 - b. Does the FHP variance account meets the criteria in ASC 980-340-25-1 for capitalization as a regulatory asset?
 - c. Does the OEB need to be considered independent from the Province in order to meet the scope requirements of ASC 980 and/or the characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.36?

1. Does the temporary shortfall resulting from the FHP (referred to as the “variance account”) meet the requirements to be accounted for as an asset under PSAS?

The relevant guidance in PSAS 1000 relating to the recognition of an asset is as follows:

PSAS 1000.35

Assets are economic resources controlled by a government as a result of past transactions or events and from which future economic benefits are expected to be obtained.

PSAS 1000.36

Assets have three essential characteristics:

- a) *they embody future economic benefits that involve a capacity, singly or in combination with other assets, to provide goods and services, to provide future cash inflows, or to reduce cash outflows;*
- b) *the public sector entity can control the economic resource and access to the future economic benefits; and*
- c) *the transaction or event giving rise to the public sector entity’s control has already occurred.*

PSAS 1000.37

An item is not an asset of a government if it lacks one or more of the essential characteristics listed in the preceding paragraph. Thus, for example, an item does not qualify as an asset of a government if the item involves:

- a) *no future economic benefit;*
- b) *future economic benefit, but the government cannot obtain it; or*
- c) *future economic benefit that the government may obtain, but the events or circumstances that give the government control of the benefit have not yet occurred*

The following supports the IESO's position that the regulatory asset possesses the three essential characteristics of an asset:

- a) *Embody future economic benefits that involve a capacity, singly or in combination with other assets, to provide goods and services, to provide future cash inflows, or to reduce cash outflows***

The following excerpts from the FHP Act make it clear that the IESO is entitled to recover the regulatory asset through rates in the future:

Variance account to be established, maintained

24 (1) *The IESO shall establish and maintain a variance account in which it records the following:*

1. *The IESO deferral for each month.*
2. *All payments received by the IESO resulting from the exercise of the right of recovery under section 25 and any transfer under section 26.*
3. *Such other adjustments as may be prescribed, including adjustments in respect of the period that commences on or after May 1, 2017 and before the day this section comes into force.*

Recording determinative

(2) *Subject to the correction of any obvious error by the IESO, its recording of the balance in the variance account is determinative of the balance as of the time of the recording.*

Regulatory asset established

25 (1) *Effective May 1, 2017, the IESO has the right, exercisable in accordance with this Act and the regulations, to recover the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers.*

Board to set rates

(2) *Subject to subsection (3), the Board shall, from time to time and in accordance with the regulations, determine and set rates payable by specified consumers to allow for the IESO to recover the balance recorded in the variance account.*

Limitation

(3) *The IESO shall not be entitled to collect all or part of the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers before May 1, 2021.*

Accordingly, the regulatory asset, by statute, has the capacity to provide future cash inflows.

While perhaps obvious, paragraph 13 of PSAS 3210, ASSETS, confirms the generation of future cash flows represents a future economic benefit:

The future economic benefits embodied in an asset may also be in the form of generating future cash inflows. Cash inflows benefit the public sector entity because cash can be used to purchase or to provide goods and services, redistribute wealth or settle liabilities. Benefits in the form of cash inflows relate to resources, such as loans receivable, inventory for resale and portfolio investments. Also, some public sector resources generate cash inflows because they have user fees associated with them.

The ability of the regulatory asset to generate future cash flows is dependent on the future consumption of electricity by ratepayers. The timing of the recovery period of 30 years of the regulatory asset has been established by statute. Given the nature and extent of customer demand for the power generated and distributed in Ontario, both at this time and projected in the future, sufficient demand is expected to exist in the future to recover the regulatory asset. This conclusion, which is supported by Figure 8:

Commented [DM(8): To be confirmed (cite the regulation)

Delivering Fairness and Choice – Ontario’s Long-Term Energy Plan 2017, (see Appendix B) will need to be continually evaluated throughout the recovery period.

The willingness of unrelated third parties to fund the purchase of the regulatory asset from the IESO by OPG Trust provides tangible, externally supported evidence that future cash flows will be realized as sufficient demand will exist to permit its future recovery. Although the sale of the regulatory asset will be accompanied by a guarantee by the Province, the scope of the guarantee will be limited to regulatory changes (e.g., a statute or regulation being enacted, changed or repealed) and changes in the organization or structure of the IESO or Ontario’s electricity market initiated by the Province that materially and adversely affect the ability of OPG Trust to satisfy its payment obligations and will not provide protection relating to lack of sufficient demand.

The guidance on forgivable loans in PSAS 3050, Loans receivable, provides an example where an asset can be recognized under PSAS based on the existence of sufficient evidence of a reasonable expectation of its recovery.

b) The public sector entity can control the economic resource and access to the future economic benefits

Paragraph 16 of PSAS 3210, ASSETS, states the following:

A public sector entity controls the economic resource and access to the future economic benefits when it:

- a) can benefit from the economic resource through its capacity to provide goods and services, to provide future cash inflows or to reduce cash outflows;*
- b) can deny or regulate access to those benefits by others; and*
- c) is exposed to the risks associated with the economic resource.*

The IESO can benefit from the regulatory asset through its capacity to provide future cash inflows in one of two ways:

1. Collection through future rates

Section 25 of the FHP gives the IESO the right to recover the regulatory asset through future rates:

Regulatory asset established

25 (1) Effective May 1, 2017, the IESO has the right, exercisable in accordance with this Act and the regulations, to recover the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers.

Board to set rates

(2) Subject to subsection (3), the Board shall, from time to time and in accordance with the regulations, determine and set rates payable by specified consumers to allow for the IESO to recover the balance recorded in the variance account.

2. Sale to a financing entity

Section 26 of the FHP Act permits the IESO to sell the regulatory asset:

26 (1) The IESO may from time to time, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, transfer a specified portion of the regulatory asset to a financing entity in accordance with this section.

Agreement

(2) An agreement between the IESO and a financing entity in relation to the transfer of a specified portion of the regulatory asset shall provide for consideration of a payment by the financing entity to the IESO in an amount equal to the amount of the specified portion.

Effect of payment

(3) Upon receipt by the IESO of the payment by the financing entity,

- (a) the balance in the variance account shall be reduced by the amount of the payment;*
- (b) the regulatory asset shall be adjusted accordingly;*
- (c) the financing entity shall acquire a corresponding investment interest; and*
- (d) the IESO shall retain no further right, title or interest in the corresponding investment interest.*

Since (a) the statutory right to recover the regulatory asset belongs solely to the IESO, and (b) the IESO is permitted, but not required, to sell the regulatory asset, the IESO can deny or regulate access to the future economic benefits of the regulatory asset by others.

The IESO is exposed to the risks associated with the regulatory asset, with the primary risk being that collection through the mechanism set out in Section 25 of the FHP Act is dependent on the future consumption of electricity by rate-payers. If demand for electricity declines, the rate per unit must increase in order to recover the regulatory asset. Theoretically, the regulatory asset will be recovered as long as some level of demand exists. However, from a practical perspective, if demand drops too low the rate per unit may become prohibitively high to allow for full recovery, notwithstanding the 2017 *Ontario Long-term Energy Plan: Delivering Fairness and Choice* projects that demand will remain relatively constant until 2035 (see Appendix B). Even so, although the sale of the regulatory asset will be accompanied by a guarantee from the Province, the scope of the guarantee will be limited to regulatory changes (e.g., a statute or regulation being enacted, changed or repealed) and changes in the organization or structure of the IESO or Ontario's electricity market initiated by the Province that materially and adversely affect the ability of OPG Trust to satisfy its payment obligations and will not provide protection relating to lack of sufficient demand.

In reaching this conclusion, consideration was given to the following excerpt included on Page 37 of the 2008 Annual Report of the OAGO:

With regard to the second characteristic, we simply point again to the legacy of the former Ontario Hydro and its stranded debt. This in our view provides concrete evidence that even in monopoly situations governments do not have sufficient assurance that an enterprise will generate enough profits in future years to recover all of its past costs.

Although there needs to be sufficient assurance regarding the recovery of past costs, all relevant facts and circumstances need to be taken into consideration. Accordingly, the stranded debt of Ontario Hydro may be relevant to the analysis, but not determinative on its own. As noted in the previous section, the recoverability of past costs will be continually assessed.

c) The transaction or event giving rise to the public sector entity's control has already occurred

When evaluating whether a transaction or event gives rise to control, the following guidance from PSAS 3210, ASSETS, provides helpful guidance:

.26 The past transaction or event that gives rise to control of an economic resource resulting from exchange agreements or contracts usually occurs at the point of exchange. This arises when substantially all the benefits and risks of ownership have been transferred to the public sector entity and normally coincides with the disbursement of funds, exchange of other assets or assumption of liabilities.

.28 The existence of a law, by-law or policy in relation to a particular program is not a past transaction or event that gives rise to control of an economic resource. Control does not exist until the underlying event occurs.

.29 The past transaction or event giving rise to control of an economic resource must have occurred by the financial statement date. Legislation having retroactive application cannot create a past transaction or event. Any economic resources related to that legislation would be accounted for in the current and relevant future periods, not in the period of the effective date of the legislation.

In the case of the regulatory asset, the above guidance in PSAS 3210 makes it clear that it is not the statute itself that is the transaction or event giving rise to the asset, it is the incurrence of costs for which recovery is provided for under statute. Accordingly, control over the economic benefits of the regulatory asset occurs when the IESO incurs a cash flow deficit for costs to be recovered in the future that is recorded in the FHP variance account in accordance with Section 24(1) of the FHP Act:

24 (1) The IESO shall establish and maintain a variance account in which it records the following:

- 1. The IESO deferral for each month.*
- 2. All payments received by the IESO resulting from the exercise of the right of recovery under section 25 and any transfer under section 26.*
- 3. Such other adjustments as may be prescribed, including adjustments in respect of the period that commences on or after May 1, 2017 and before the day this section comes into force.*

At this point in time, the IESO has incurred a cash outflow for which it is entitled to recover under Section 25 of the FHP Act:

Regulatory asset established

25 (1) Effective May 1, 2017, the IESO has the right, exercisable in accordance with this Act and the regulations, to recover the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers.

Board to set rates

(2) Subject to subsection (3), the Board shall, from time to time and in accordance with the regulations, determine and set rates payable by specified consumers to allow for the IESO to recover the balance recorded in the variance account.

The following excerpt from the IFRS Staff Paper on Rate-Regulated Activities prepared for discussion at the June 2017 IASB meeting presents a consistent view and dismisses the potential dissenting view that the transaction or event giving rise to the IESO's control is the future consumption of electricity by rate-payers:

A right arises from the rate-adjustment mechanism if the entity has already partially or fully fulfilled a regulatory requirement (past event) but the current regulated rate does not yet reflect the compensation that the entity is entitled to in exchange. Even though the entity cannot compel its customers to buy the regulated goods or services, the entity's right to charge an increased future regulated rate has the potential to produce for the entity an inflow of economic benefits that are not available to other parties. That right will be consumed as the entity includes the rate increase in future regulated rates and will lead to an inflow of economic benefits if customers pay the increased future regulated rate for the future delivery of goods or services.

Another potential dissenting view is contained on page 37 of the 2008 Annual Report of the OAGO:

With regard to the third characteristic, we do not believe that a rate-regulation decision can be considered a transaction or event giving rise to an asset or obligation because, as stated above, from the level of the government's consolidated financial statements such a decision is an internal event between two government-controlled entities. An equivalent analysis for rate-regulated liabilities leads to the same conclusion. PSAB standards preclude the inclusion of both gains and losses from such inter-company transactions. Therefore, our contention is that, at the consolidated financial statement level, rate-regulated assets and liabilities have no place and should be removed upon consolidation of the government's controlled entities.

It should be noted, however, that the OAGO's belief that a rate-regulation decision cannot be considered a transaction or event giving rise to an asset or obligation is not contrary to the IESO position. As noted above, it is not action taken under the statute itself that is being considered the transaction or event giving rise to the asset, it is the incurrence of costs for which recovery is provided for under statute. The incurrence of such costs is not an internal event between two government-controlled entities.

Asset classification and net debt

Once it is determined that the regulatory asset meets the basic characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.36, consideration also needs to be made as to what type of asset it is. This is important because PSAS 1000.58 does not permit the recognition of intangible assets:

In the absence of appropriate public sector recognition and measurement criteria for intangibles, all intangibles, including those that have been purchased, developed, constructed or inherited in right of the Crown, are not recognized as assets in government financial statements. The intangible often called "human capital" that embodies the talent or intellectual capital of government employees is not recognized as an asset under existing accounting principles.

PSAS 1000 identifies two types of assets: financial assets and non-financial assets and provides the following commentary:

.39 Financial assets are assets that could be used to discharge existing liabilities or finance future operations and are not for consumption in the normal course of operations.

.40 A financial asset is any asset that is:

- a) Cash
- b) a realizable asset that is convertible to cash;
- c) a contractual right to receive cash or another financial asset from another party;
- d) a contractual right to exchange financial instruments with another party under conditions that are potentially favourable to the government;
- e) an equity instrument of another entity;
- f) an investment in a government business enterprise or government business partnership;
- g) a financial claim on an outside organization or individual; or
- h) an inventory or item for sale that meets the criteria in FINANCIAL STATEMENT PRESENTATION, paragraph PS 1201.055.

.41 Non-financial assets include tangible capital assets, and other assets such as prepaid expenses and inventories of supplies.

.42 Non-financial assets are acquired, constructed or developed assets that do not normally provide resources to discharge existing liabilities, but instead:

- a) are normally employed to deliver government services;
- b) may be consumed in the normal course of operations; and
- c) are not for sale in the normal course of operations.

PSAS 3210, ASSETS, also provides some relevant guidance:

.24 Non-financial resources include all items of a fixed or permanent nature (such as tangible capital property), claims to goods and services (such as prepaid items) and consumable goods (such as inventories of supplies). Non-financial resources also include intangibles, Crown lands and natural resources.

.25 Certain non-financial resources are, however, not given accounting recognition as assets in government financial statements. For example, all government intangibles, and all natural resources and Crown lands that have not been purchased by the government, are not given accounting recognition in government financial statements. A government's non-financial assets, as defined in FINANCIAL STATEMENT CONCEPTS, Section PS 1000, comprise the recognized non-financial resources of a government.

Although PSAS does not permit the recognition of intangibles, it also does not provide a definition of intangibles. In absence of specific guidance in PSAS as to what constitutes an intangible, U.S. GAAP is probably the most appropriate source to consult, in light of the fact that it deals specifically with regulated assets. Under U.S. GAAP, a regulated asset is not treated as an intangible. ASC 980 contains separate subsections for 'Intangibles – Goodwill and Other' and 'Other Assets and Deferred Costs' and regulated assets are included in the guidance on 'Other Assets and Deferred Costs'.

In accordance with PSAS 1201.040(a), financial assets are presented separately on the statement of financial position. The IESO classifies its regulated assets (i.e., the original variance account and the regulated assets relating to unrecovered smart metering expenses and unrecovered PSAB transition items) as financial assets.

Although the regulatory asset created under the FHP does not clearly meet the definition of either a financial asset or a non-financial asset under PSAS, it possesses characteristics more consistent with that of a financial asset since it will be available to discharge existing liabilities or finance future operations and is not for consumption in the normal course of operations.

The FHP is expected to be executed in a manner such that the regulatory asset will be available to discharge existing liabilities or finance future operations in the short term through its commoditization

(i.e., transfer to the OPG Trust). However, even if not commoditized, the regulatory asset will be available to discharge existing liabilities or finance future operations in the future similar to, for example, a long-term receivable.

By recognizing the regulatory asset in a manner consistent with that of a financial asset, the FHP will have a neutral impact on both the Province's net debt and accumulated deficit, which appears appropriate and aligned with the intent of guidance in PSAS 1100, Financial statement objectives:

Financial statements should present information to describe the government's financial position at the end of the accounting period. Such information should be useful in evaluating:

- a) the government's ability to finance its activities and to meet its liabilities and contractual obligations;*
and
- b) the government's ability to provide future services.*

A government's net debt is an important indicator of a government's financial position, highlighting the financial affordability of future government service provision. A net debt position represents a "lien" on the ability of the government to apply financial resources and future revenues to provide services. Non-financial assets are added to net debt to calculate the other indicator of a government's financial position — its accumulated surplus or deficit. Non-financial assets are "prepaid service potential". Reporting a government's recognized non-financial resources as part of its financial position provides information necessary for a more complete understanding of a government's debt position, financial position and future operating requirements.

Governments provide public services and redistribute wealth for a variety of social and economic purposes. To meet those objectives, governments need information about the cost of services and the affordability of services. An understanding of the extent of the financial "lien" the government has on its ability to provide future services as a result of past transactions and events is essential information. Governments also need to have an appreciation of the magnitude of the total economic resources they have on hand to deliver services. A government's net financial resources / net debt position, assessed in combination with the non-financial resources position of the government, provides a measure of the net recognized economic resources available to the government at the financial statement date to provide services in the future.

Net debt is a measure of future revenue required from taxpayers relating to past transactions and events. If the regulatory asset is not recognized in a manner consistent with that of a financial asset by the GRE, the Province's net debt will increase significantly, suggesting that the Province has a much higher future revenue requirement needed to be funded by taxpayers. This would be inaccurate, however, since the regulatory asset is going to be recovered under statute from electricity consumers, not taxpayers. Combining amounts to be funded by ratepayers and tax payers is not consistent with the objective of the net debt indicator in PS1100.

Additionally, while an increase in net debt and/or accumulated deficit in the financial statements of the GRE would be an indicator the Province's financial position has deteriorated in accordance with PSAS 1200.036, the FHP has not resulted in any change to the expected recovery from ratepayers for clean energy investments that would alter the net financial position of the IESO or the Province prior to the introduction of the FHP Act.

Conclusion

The FHP variance account meets the requirements to be accounted for as an asset under PSAS. As noted in Section 25 of the FHP Act, the IESO holds the sole right to collect the variance account from ratepayers under statute. It is expected that IESO will realize future economic benefits through future cash inflows collected from ratepayers.

The FHP Act also provides for the IESO to realize its collection through the transfer and sale of the variance account:

26 (1) The IESO may from time to time, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, transfer a specified portion of the regulatory asset to a financing entity in accordance with this section.

(2) An agreement between the IESO and a financing entity in relation to the transfer of a specified portion of the regulatory asset shall provide for consideration of a payment by the financing entity to the IESO in an amount equal to the amount of the specified portion.

Control over future economic resources is by way of collection from ratepayers or sale and transfer to a financing entity, and all associated risks are extinguished or transferred at that time.

Upon the transfer of electricity into the grid by the generators, a recoverable amount is due from ratepayers related to their portion of consumption that must be settled by way of the IESO.

ASSETS, Section PS 3210 paragraph .26 supports that the point of exchange at which risk transfers gives rise to an asset. The incurrence of the cost that is to be settled with power generators is the event for which there is a right to recovery from ratepayers under statute, not the statute itself as supported by PS 3210 paragraph .32.

Net debt under PSAS is a measure of future revenue requirements from the taxpayers to pay for past transactions and events. Absent the recognition of the variance account as an asset, the Province's net debt would increase significantly, suggesting that the Province has a much higher future revenue requirement, while the recovery of the variance account is from the ratepayers, not taxpayers.

Since the FHP Act regulatory asset is going to be recovered under statute from electricity consumers, not taxpayers, such an increase in net debt would be misleading and inaccurate to financial statement users based on the substance of the transaction.

2. Is the application of the GAAP hierarchy under PS1150 permit use of rate-regulated accounting? If so:

In assessing whether ASC 980-340-25-1 is an acceptable source of guidance under PSAS, Paragraph 5 of PSAS 1150, GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTED PRINCIPLES, states the following:

When the primary sources of GAAP do not deal with the accounting and reporting in financial statements of transactions or events encountered by the public sector reporting entity, or additional guidance is needed to apply a primary source to specific circumstances, the selection of an appropriate accounting policy requires

the exercise of professional judgment. In these circumstances, a public sector reporting entity should adopt accounting policies and disclosures that are consistent with:

- a) the primary sources of GAAP; and*
- b) the application of the concepts described in FINANCIAL STATEMENT CONCEPTS, Section PS 1000.*

Related guidance is also provided in PSAS 1150.18-.20:

Paragraphs PS 1150.19-.24 identify some of the other sources that a public sector reporting entity might consult to assist in selecting accounting policies and disclosures that comply with paragraph PS 1150.05.

Pronouncements issued by other bodies authorized to issue accounting standards may be useful sources to consult. For example, accounting pronouncements published with the authority of the Canadian Accounting Standards Board (AcSB), International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), US Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB), US Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), or International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB) are often important sources to consult on matters not covered by primary sources of GAAP or for assistance in applying a primary source of GAAP to specific circumstances.

When a public sector reporting entity chooses to consult a source described in paragraph PS 1150.19, it applies professional judgment and evaluates the source in the context of the relative manner in which the standard setter requires its pronouncements to be applied, as well as in the context of the related pronouncement. When an accounting standard setter does not have a conceptual framework that is similar to the concepts referred to in paragraph PS 1150.05(b), the public sector reporting entity needs to ensure that the selected source is consistent with those concepts.

Since PSAS does not specifically address the treatment of costs incurred that will be recovered through regulatory operations in future periods, the IESO would not be precluded from following the guidance in ASC 980-340-25-1 (i.e., silence under PSAS on this specific topic does not, on its own, mean that such guidance is to be ignored). However, PSAS 1000.05 makes it clear that in order to do so, it must first be demonstrated that such guidance is consistent with the application of the concepts described in PSAS 1000, FINANCIAL STATEMENT CONCEPTS.

In a letter from the OAGO to the Board of Directors of the IESO dated June 22, 2017 (the OAGO Letter), the OAGO makes the following statement:

The definitions of an asset in the PSAS and FASB Conceptual Framework are similar. Similar to PSAS, rate regulated deferral accounts do not generally meet the definition of an asset in the FASB's Conceptual Framework.

However, the following excerpts from the Basis for Conclusions for FAS 71 (paragraph 58 in particular), clearly support that ASC 980 is an application of, not an exception from, the basic definition of an asset in the Conceptual Framework:

Economic Effects of Regulation

56. The second threshold issue in the Discussion Memorandum was: "Does rate regulation introduce an economic dimension in some circumstances that should affect the application of generally accepted accounting principles to rate-regulated enterprises?"

57. Most respondents to the Discussion Memorandum indicated that rate regulation does introduce such an economic dimension in some circumstances. Respondents cited the cause-and-effect relationship of costs and revenues as the principal economic effect of regulation that affects accounting for regulated enterprises. They noted that cost might be one factor used by unregulated enterprises to establish prices, but it would often not be the most important factor. Usually, prices are limited by the market. An unregulated enterprise might desire to price its goods or services at a level that would recover all costs and a reasonable profit; however, the market might not permit that price. Alternatively, an unregulated enterprise might be able to increase its prices and its profit if competition does not limit its prices. In either case, cost often is not the principal determinant of prices. In contrast, for an enterprise with prices regulated on the basis of its costs, allowable costs are the principal factor that influences its prices.

58. The economic effect cited by most respondents is the ability of a regulatory action to create a future economic benefit—the essence of an asset. For example, consider a regulated enterprise that incurs costs to repair damage caused by a major storm. If the regulator approves recovery of the costs through rates over some future period or is expected to do so, the rate action of the regulator creates a new asset that offsets the reduction in the damaged asset. The enterprise has probable future economic benefits—the additional revenue that will result from including the cost in allowable costs for rate-making purposes. The future benefits are obtained or controlled by the enterprise as a result of a past event—incurring the cost that results in the rate order. Thus, the criteria of Concepts Statement 3 for an asset are met.

The fact that many Canadian rate-regulated entities recognized regulated assets under Part V of the CPA Canada Handbook – *Pre-changeover Accounting Standards* (Part V GAAP) further supports the position that regulated assets do meet the basic definition of an asset under PSAS. Although Part V GAAP refers to rate regulation in several standards, it does not include cost capitalization guidance equivalent to ASC 980-340-25-1. It does, however, specify in paragraph 32B of Section 1100, *Generally accepted accounting principles*, that Section 1100 applies to the recognition and measurement of assets and liabilities arising from rate regulation beginning January 1, 2009. Since Section 1100.04 only permits the use of an alternate source of GAAP if it is consistent with Part V GAAP, regulated assets need to meet the basic definition of an asset under Part V GAAP in order to be recognized. The Part V GAAP definition of an asset in Section 1000, *Financial Statement Concepts* is consistent with the PSAS definition.

The CICA Research Report also concluded regulated assets meet the basic definition of an asset under Part V GAAP:

In the Study Group's view, the economic benefits and obligations created by rate regulation and resulting from past transactions or events, and the changes in these amounts, meet the definition of a financial statement element set out in Handbook Section 1000.

The OAGO Letter suggests that IFRS should be consulted prior to referring to ASC 980 under PSAS's GAAP hierarchy in PSAS 1150 and points out the following:

- In 2005 the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) indicated the US GAAP recognition criteria for regulated assets were not fully consistent with IFRS and could not be applied by analogy.
- When the question of rate regulated accounting was posed to the IFRIC again in 2008, the IFRIC noted the topic had been previously addressed and there was a well-established practice of first

time IFRS adopters ceasing rate regulated accounting and removing regulatory deferral accounts from their financial statements.

- In the Basis for Conclusions on IFRS 14, IFRS 14.BC30 noted the differences in the recognition criteria between IFRS and ASC 980 resulted in almost all existing regulatory deferral accounts being derecognized upon transition to IFRS.

While PSAS does not prescribe an ordering of consideration for sources other than primary sources, the statements made with respect to IFRS by the OAG have been considered. It should be noted, however, that the IASB's project on rate-regulated activities is still in progress and the OAGO Letter does not reference more recent and relevant activity. In September 2014, the IASB issued Discussion Paper DP/2014/02, *Reporting the Financial Effects of Rate Regulation*. The Discussion Paper presents the opposing views as to whether regulatory deferral account balances meet the definitions of an asset or a liability and specifically states the following in paragraph 5.09:

Consequently, the IASB has not formed a preliminary view on whether regulatory deferral account balances meet either the current or proposed revised Conceptual Framework definitions of an asset and a liability. It will use the input received from the responses to this Discussion Paper and the Conceptual Framework project to help it assess whether to develop any specific accounting guidance or requirements for rate-regulated activities.

In addition, the most recent paper issued by the IASB staff in June 2017 includes the following:

17. During the May 2017 Board meeting we also considered the interaction between the definitions of assets and liabilities and the characteristics of defined rate regulation (see paragraphs 5 and 6). We concluded that a combination of those characteristics suggested that the rights and obligations created by the rate-adjustment mechanism are assets and liabilities, as those terms are expected to be defined in the forthcoming revised Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting.

The Exposure Draft ED/2015/3, *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting*, defines an asset as follows:

4.5 An asset is a present economic resource controlled by the entity as a result of past events.

4.6 An economic resource is a right that has the potential to produce economic benefits.

This recent activity suggests that it would be premature to assume that the IASB will conclude that regulatory deferral account balances will not meet the definitions of an asset or a liability.

Conclusion

The application of the GAAP hierarchy under PS1150 permits use of rate-regulated accounting. PSAS are silent on the use of rate-regulated accounting; the standards neither explicitly permit nor prohibit its recognition, measurement, presentation or disclosures. GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES, Section PS 1150.19 provides examples (not an exhaustive list) of other sources of GAAP, while PS 1150.20 emphasizes that "it applies professional judgment and evaluates the source in the context of the relative manner in which the standard setter requires its pronouncements to be applied".

In applying professional judgment, a review of the PSAB concepts described in paragraph PS 1150.05(b) has been completed to ensure proper application of the GAAP hierarchy. It was determined ASC 980 under US GAAP was consistency with the concept of assets as described in ASSETS, Section PS 3210 and FINANCIAL STATEMENT CONCEPTS, Section PS 1000.36.

However, recognizing the regulatory asset as a rate-regulated asset for accounting purposes in the financial statements of the IESO in accordance with ASC 980 is appropriate only if all of the conditions are met.

a. Are the operations of the IESO (or the relevant portion thereof) within the scope of ASC 980 based on the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2?

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (OAGO) has publicly stated that it does not believe the IESO meets the criteria to be within the scope of ASC 980. This is evidenced by the following statement included in *Legislated Accounting Included in Bill 132, Including the Proposed Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 – Submission to Standing Committee on Justice Policy* dated May 25, 2017 (OAGO Submission):

“Moreover, IESO is not engaging in rate-regulated activities, and the contracts under its administration were never subject to rate regulation.”

Assessing the eligibility criteria in ASC 980-10-5-2

ASC 980-10-15-2 states the following:

The guidance in the Regulated Operations Topic applies to general-purpose external financial statements of an entity that has regulated operations that meet all of the following criteria:

- a) *The entity's rates for regulated services or products provided to its customers are established by or are subject to approval by an independent, third-party regulator or by its own governing board empowered by statute or contract to establish rates that bind customers.*
- b) *The regulated rates are designed to recover the specific entity's costs of providing the regulated services or products. This criterion is intended to be applied to the substance of the regulation, rather than its form. If an entity's regulated rates are based on the costs of a group of entities and the entity is so large in relation to the group of entities that its costs are, in essence, the group's costs, the regulation would meet this criterion for that entity.*
- c) *In view of the demand for the regulated services or products and the level of competition, direct and indirect, it is reasonable to assume that rates set at levels that will recover the entity's costs can be charged to and collected from customers.*

Ontario's electricity industry is rate-regulated. Rates paid by electricity consumers are regulated by the OEB such that over time rates equal cost plus, where applicable, a reasonable rate of return. Providing electricity to consumers involves several different parties, including generators, transmitters, distributors and the IESO. Some of these parties engage in rate-regulated activities, some do not.

The IESO serves an important and active role in Ontario's electricity market, irrespective of the fact that it records market transactions on net basis in the financial statements. The IESO balances the supply of

and demand for electricity in Ontario and directs its flow across the province's transmission lines, oversees the wholesale electricity market, where the price of energy is determined, and administers the rules that govern the market. In determining whether the IESO has regulated operations, the focus is on whether the rates the IESO charges its customers are regulated and not whether the costs incurred by the IESO are regulated (although a number of them are).

The following supports the position of IESO management that the above criteria are met and the IESO's operations are within the scope of ASC 980:

- a) The entity's rates for regulated services or products provided to its customers are established by or are subject to approval by an independent, third-party regulator or by its own governing board empowered by statute or contract to establish rates that bind customers.***

As noted in a research paper issued in 2001 by a taskforce established by the CICA (the CICA Research Report), there is a view held by some that, with respect to rate regulation in the public sector, there is usually no *independent, third-party regulator* because the government controls both the enterprise and the regulatory agency. Accordingly, it is important to point out that independence is not required to meet the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2(a). The requirement is an *independent, third-party regulator or its own governing board empowered by statute or contract*. In fact, paragraph 64 of the Basis for Conclusions for FAS 71, ACCOUNTING FOR THE EFFECTS OF CERTAIN TYPES OF REGULATION (which is the pre-codified version of ASC 980), specifically states that the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2(a) was modified so as not to preclude application by government utilities with rates set by their own governing board.

The OEB has been established by the Province to be Ontario's independent energy regulator and, therefore, is considered the governing board of the IESO. The OEB's mandate and authority comes from the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998*, the *Electricity Act, 1998*, and a number of other provincial statutes. As described in more detail below, the IESO's rates are established in accordance with these statutes.

In the context of its market-settlement role, the IESO's 'customers' are the Market Participants buying electricity from the IESO-controlled grid. All Market Participants are required to execute a Participation Agreement with the IESO. In accordance with Article 3.1 of the standard Participation Agreement, each Market Participant has agreed to be bound by and to comply with all of the provisions of the Market Rules, which includes the following:

Chapter 9, Section 1.2.3

Notwithstanding any other provision within the market rules, market participants shall remit to the IESO such applicable settlement amounts and other payments as may be required under the relevant provisions of the Electricity Act, 1998, the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and any related regulations, as amended from time to time.

The IESO's operations meet the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2(a) because the rates charged by the IESO are based on statutes. As discussed in more detail below, the rates are designed to recover the IESO's expenditures for providing the regulated services plus the pass-through costs related to the energy

purchased from the generators and to government programs. Each cost detailed below is accompanied by the appropriate reference demonstrating the necessary regulatory approval under statute.

The main components of invoices issued by the IESO to Market Participants are as follows:

- **Commodity Charges**
 - Hourly Ontario Energy Price
 - Global Adjustment
- **Wholesale Market Service Charges**
 - IESO Administration Fee
 - Uplift Charges
 - Rural and Remote Electricity Rate Protection
- **Wholesale Transmission Charges**
- **Debt Retirement Charge**

Each component is determined as follows:

Commodity Charges

In accordance with Section 25.33(1) of the Electricity Act, the IESO is required to price electricity to recover costs:

Electricity pricing to reflect costs

IESO to make adjustments

25.33 (1) The IESO shall, through its billing and settlement systems, make adjustments in accordance with the regulations that ensure that, over time, payments by classes of market participants in Ontario that are prescribed by regulation reflect,

- a) amounts paid to generators, the Financial Corporation and distributors, whether the amounts are determined under the market rules or under section 78.1, 78.2 or 78.5 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998;*
- b) amounts paid to entities with whom the IESO has a procurement contract, as determined under the procurement contract; and*
- c) such amounts as may be prescribed that are paid or incurred by the IESO in relation to the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017. 2014, c. 7, Sched. 7, s. 8 (1); 2017, c. 16, Sched. 1, s. 43 (2).*

Market Participants are initially invoiced for consumed electricity at the Hourly Ontario Energy Price (HOEP), which is calculated as the average of the twelve market clearing prices set in each hour. In accordance with Section 25.33(5) of the Electricity Act, the IESO is required to track differences between the amounts invoiced to Market Participants at HOEP and actual costs incurred in a variance account:

Variance accounts

(5) The IESO shall establish and maintain such variance accounts as may be necessary to record all amounts payable or receivable by it under this section or under the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017. 2004, c. 23, Sched. A, s. 37; 2014, c. 7, Sched. 7, s. 8 (5); 2017, c. 16, Sched. 1, s. 43 (5).

Sections 3.1 and 3.3 of the OEB Act require the variance account to be settled over a twelve-month period, which is done through the Global Adjustment on a Market Participant's invoice:

Annual rate plan and separate rates for situations prescribed by regulation

(3.1) The Board shall, in accordance with rules prescribed by the regulations, approve or fix separate rates for the retailing of electricity,

- a) to such different classes of consumers as may be prescribed by the regulations; and*
- b) for such different situations as may be prescribed by the regulations. 2004, c. 23, Sched. B, s. 14 (1).*

Rates to reflect cost of electricity

(3.3) In approving or fixing rates under subsection (3.1),

- a) the Board shall forecast the cost of electricity to be consumed by the consumers to whom the rates apply, taking into consideration the adjustments required under section 25.33 of the Electricity Act, 1998 and shall ensure that the rates reflect these costs; and*
- b) the Board shall take into account balances in the IESO's variance accounts established under section 25.33 of the Electricity Act, 1998 and shall make adjustments with a view to eliminating those balances within 12 months or such shorter time periods as the Minister may direct. 2004, c. 23, Sched. B, s. 14 (1); 2014, c. 7, Sched. 23, s. 6 (2).*

Although the implementation of the FHP involves the deferral of costs over an extended period of time, it does not change the IESO's obligation under the OEB Act to price electricity to recover incurred costs in full.

The deferral relating to the FHP is tracked in a separate variance account in accordance with Section 24(1) of the Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 (the FHP Act):

Variance account to be established, maintained

24 (1) The IESO shall establish and maintain a variance account in which it records the following:

- 1. The IESO deferral for each month.*
- 2. All payments received by the IESO resulting from the exercise of the right of recovery under section 25 and any transfer under section 26.*
- 3. Such other adjustments as may be prescribed, including adjustments in respect of the period that commences on or after May 1, 2017 and before the day this section comes into force.*

The right for the IESO to recover the variance account is set out in Section 25 of the FHP Act:

Regulatory asset established

25 (1) Effective May 1, 2017, the IESO has the right, exercisable in accordance with this Act and the regulations, to recover the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers.

Board to set rates

(2) Subject to subsection (3), the Board shall, from time to time and in accordance with the regulations, determine and set rates payable by specified consumers to allow for the IESO to recover the balance recorded in the variance account.

Limitation

(3) The IESO shall not be entitled to collect all or part of the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers before May 1, 2021.

Wholesale Market Service Charges

IESO Administration Fee

The IESO charges Market Participants an administration fee to operate the wholesale electricity market and manage the electric power system in Ontario. This fee is required to be approved by the OEB under Section 25(1) of the Electricity Act on an annual basis.

Review of requirements and fees

25 (1) The IESO shall, at least 60 days before the beginning of each fiscal year, submit its proposed expenditure and revenue requirements for the fiscal year and the fees it proposes to charge during the fiscal year to the Board for review, but shall not do so until after the Minister approves the IESO's proposed business plan for the fiscal year under section 24. 2014, c. 7, Sched. 7, s. 3 (1).

Uplift charges

The IESO will make payments for “ancillary services” to ensure reliability of the power system, which must be paid to generators and other service providers as compensation for additional costs and recovered by charging purchasers a surcharge.

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Commented [DM(10): Email sent to Susan Nicholson

RRRP charges

The RRRP program provides a rate subsidy to rural and remote residential customers who face higher distribution costs. As required by Ontario Regulation 442/01, the RRRP program cost is recovered from all electricity customers in the province through a charge that is reviewed annually and approved by the OEB.

Wholesale Transmission Charge

This charge to LDCs and some large consumers covers the cost incurred by transmission companies to construct and maintain the high-voltage transmission lines needed to transport electricity from generating stations to LDCs or consumers. In accordance with Section 78(1) of the OEB Act, the rate for this service is approved by the OEB.

Debt Retirement Charge

When the Ontario electricity sector was restructured in April 1999, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation (OEFC) took on \$20.9 million of stranded debt from Ontario Hydro. The OEFC services and retires the stranded debt with cash flows from a number of sources in the electricity sector, one of those currently being debt retirement charges paid by certain ratepayers (ratepayers cease paying debt retirement charges April 1, 2018).

Under Regulation 494/01, DEBT RETIREMENT CHARGE – ADMINISTRATION, the IESO is appointed as a collector of debt retirement charges (Section 2) and is required to collect a debt retirement charge on behalf of the OEFA from every entity who withdraws electricity from the IESO-controlled grid (Section 6(2)). The prescribed rate for the debt retirement charge is set out in Regulation 493/01, DEBT RETIREMENT CHARGE – RATES AND EXEMPTIONS.

- b) The regulated rates are designed to recover the specific entity's costs of providing the regulated services or products.***

As discussed in detail above, the IESO is required by statute to set prices to recover costs.

- c) In view of the demand for the regulated services or products and the level of competition, direct and indirect, it is reasonable to assume that rates set at levels that will recover the entity's costs can be charged to and collected from customers.***

The majority of the monthly amount invoiced by the IESO to Market Participants represents a direct flow through of costs as they are incurred, but there are certain types of costs for which recovery may be deferred. For those deferred costs, the IESO is dependent on the future consumption of electricity by ratepayers to fully recover costs.

Based on relatively short recovery periods, it is reasonable to assume there will be sufficient demand to recover the deferred costs that currently exist. Specifically:

- RPP and RRRP variance accounts supported by the rate base are recovered over twelve months in accordance with Section 3.3(b) of the OEB Act.
- The Smart Metering Entity charge is recovered over the period from May 1, 2013 to October 31, 2018 in accordance with OEB Decision and Order EB-2015-0298.

Under the FHP, responsibility for the cost of the OESP program is being transferred to the government program expense and ratepayers will no longer be charged for the cost of this program. The OESP variance account, which is currently in a credit balance, will be used to fund the cost of the program until depleted.

The timing of the recovery of the FHP variance account has been established by the OEB to be, by law, recoverable over a period of 30 years. Given the nature and extent of customer demand for the power generated and distributed in Ontario, both at this time and projected in the future, it is reasonable to conclude that there will be sufficient demand to recover the regulatory asset. As discussed earlier, this conclusion, which is supported by Figure 8: *Delivering Fairness and Choice – Ontario’s Long-Term Energy Plan 2017*, (see Appendix B), will need to be continually evaluated throughout the recovery period. The willingness of unrelated third parties to fund the purchase of the regulatory asset from the IESO by OPG Trust also demonstrates the belief that sufficient demand will exist to permit its future recovery.

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Other Exceptions Considered

In addition to the general scope requirements of ASC 980 discussed above, specific consideration is made as to whether the following scope exception in ASC 980-10-15-7 applies to the FHP:

The guidance in the Regulated Operations Topic does not apply to any of the following transactions:

- a) Accounting for price controls that are imposed by governmental action in times of emergency, high inflation, or other unusual conditions, or accounting for contracts in general. However, if the terms of a contract between an entity and its customer are subject to regulation and the criteria of paragraph 980-10-15-2 are met with respect to that contract, the guidance in this Topic shall apply.*

Based on the discussion below, this scope exemption is not applicable to the FHP.

Electricity cost reductions resulting from the FHP do not represent price controls imposed by the Province in a time of emergency, high inflation, or other unusual conditions. As noted in the 2017 budget speech, the 2017 Ontario Budget – A Stronger, Healthier Ontario, the FHP is a fairer way to share the costs of building a cleaner, more modern and reliable electricity generation system. In particular, the budget speech states:

Recognizing that existing electricity infrastructure is expected to last for decades to come, the Province would refinance the cost of those capital investments to ensure that system costs are more equitably distributed over time.

The following paragraph from the Basis for Conclusion for FAS 71 also provides some insight as to the specific concerns relating to government imposed price controls that resulted in the scope exception in ASC 980-10-15-7(a):

70. The first scope limitation of paragraph 8—excluding accounting for price controls imposed by governmental action in times of emergency, high inflation, or other unusual conditions—was included in the Discussion Memorandum. Price controls imposed in periods of unusual conditions are not expected to be applied consistently over an extended period. Indeed, their duration usually is limited by statute. In that environment, assurance of future benefits cannot be provided by probable future actions of the price control regulator because that regulator may not exist at a given future date.

The implementation of the FHP does not create the type of environment described in FAS 71.BC70 as it is governed by the OEB and there is no concern the OEB will not continue to exist.

The second part of the scope exception in ASC 980-10-15-7(a) relating to the accounting for contracts is further explained in the following paragraph from the Basis for Conclusion for FAS 71:

71. Accounting for contracts in general was also excluded from the scope of the Discussion Memorandum. The economic effects of cost reimbursement contracts are in some respects similar to the economic effects of the type of regulation addressed by this Statement. However, most contracts tend to be relatively short-term, whereas regulation of enterprises covered by this Statement is expected to continue beyond the foreseeable future. The Board noted that other authoritative literature addresses contract accounting and concluded that it should exclude the general issue of contract accounting from the scope of this Statement.

Although the impetus for the FHP relates to term of contracts the IESO has entered into with certain generators, the FHP does not change the existing accounting for these contracts.

Conclusion

The operations of the IESO are within the scope of ASC 980 based on the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2 as the IESO is 1) regulated by the OEB as a governing board which provides for it to 2) recover its costs based on 3) rates pursuant to the on-going demand for electricity in the marketplace.

b. Does the FHP variance account meets the criteria in ASC 980-340-25-1 for capitalization as a regulatory asset?

ASC 980-340-25-1 states the following:

Rate actions of a regulator can provide reasonable assurance of the existence of an asset. An entity shall capitalize all or part of an incurred cost that would otherwise be charged to expense if both of the following criteria are met:

- a) It is probable (as defined in Topic 450) that future revenue in an amount at least equal to the capitalized cost will result from inclusion of that cost in allowable costs for rate-making purposes.*

b) Based on available evidence, the future revenue will be provided to permit recovery of the previously incurred cost rather than to provide for expected levels of similar future costs. If the revenue will be provided through an automatic rate-adjustment clause, this criterion requires that the regulator's intent clearly be to permit recovery of the previously incurred cost.

A cost that does not meet these asset recognition criteria at the date the cost is incurred shall be recognized as a regulatory asset when it does meet those criteria at a later date.

Assessing the capitalization criteria under ASC 980

The following supports the IESO's position that the FHP variance account meets the above criteria for capitalization:

It is probable (as defined in Topic 450) that future revenue in an amount at least equal to the capitalized cost will result from inclusion of that cost in allowable costs for rate-making purposes.

The following excerpts from the FHP Act make it clear that the IESO is entitled to recover the regulatory asset through rates in the future:

Variance account to be established, maintained

24 (1) The IESO shall establish and maintain a variance account in which it records the following:

- 1. The IESO deferral for each month.*
- 2. All payments received by the IESO resulting from the exercise of the right of recovery under section 25 and any transfer under section 26.*
- 3. Such other adjustments as may be prescribed, including adjustments in respect of the period that commences on or after May 1, 2017 and before the day this section comes into force.*

Recording determinative

(2) Subject to the correction of any obvious error by the IESO, its recording of the balance in the variance account is determinative of the balance as of the time of the recording.

Regulatory asset established

25 (1) Effective May 1, 2017, the IESO has the right, exercisable in accordance with this Act and the regulations, to recover the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers.

Board to set rates

(2) Subject to subsection (3), the Board shall, from time to time and in accordance with the regulations, determine and set rates payable by specified consumers to allow for the IESO to recover the balance recorded in the variance account.

Limitation

(3) The IESO shall not be entitled to collect all or part of the balance recorded in the variance account from specified consumers before May 1, 2021.

If demand for electricity declines, the rate per unit must increase in order to recover the regulatory asset. Theoretically, the regulatory asset will be recovered as long as some level of demand exists.

However, from a practical perspective, if demand drops too much the rate per unit may become prohibitively high to allow for full recovery. Accordingly, the recovery of the regulatory asset is effectively dependent on sufficient future consumption of electricity by ratepayers. The recovery period has been determined to be 30 years. Given the nature and extent of customer demand for the power generated and distributed in Ontario, both at this time and projected in the future, it is reasonable to conclude that it is probable there will be sufficient demand in the future to recover the regulatory asset. This conclusion, which is supported by Figure 8: *Delivering Fairness and Choice – Ontario’s Long-Term Energy Plan 2017* (Appendix B), will need to be continually evaluated throughout the recovery period.

The willingness of unrelated third parties (e.g., investors) to fund the purchase of the regulatory asset from the IESO by OPG Trust also demonstrates the belief that sufficient demand will exist to permit its future recovery. Although the sale of the regulatory asset will be accompanied by a guarantee by the Province, the scope of the guarantee will be limited to regulatory changes (e.g., a statute or regulation being enacted, changed or repealed) and changes in the organization or structure of the IESO or Ontario’s electricity market initiated by the Province that materially and adversely affect the ability of OPG Trust to satisfy its payment obligations and will not provide protection relating to lack of sufficient demand.

Based on available evidence, the future revenue will be provided to permit recovery of the previously incurred cost rather than to provide for expected levels of similar future costs. If the revenue will be provided through an automatic rate-adjustment clause, this criterion requires that the regulator’s intent clearly be to permit recovery of the previously incurred cost.

Based on the above excerpts from the FHP Act, it is clear the IESO will be recovering costs previously incurred rather than providing for expected levels of similar future costs.

As well, the IESO is considered an agent in the market-settlement process and, therefore, recognizes revenue on a net basis. Although this conclusion impacts whether the recovery of costs through rates are presented as revenue in the financial statements of the IESO, it is not considered to preclude these amounts from being considered ‘future revenue’ for purposes of assessing the criteria in ASC 980-340-25-1. In fact, the capitalization of the incurred costs in the FHP variance account preserves the treatment of the IESO as an agent (i.e., if these costs are not capitalized, it results the recognition of costs in the period incurred and the recognition of revenue in a subsequent period when electricity is consumed, which, in effect, is gross presentation). To put another way, not capitalizing the costs in FHP variance account treats the IESO as a principal in the transaction by showing costs and revenue.

Conclusion

The FHP variance account meets the criteria in ASC 980-340-25-1 for capitalization as a regulatory asset. The FHP variance accounts meets the criteria in ASC 980-340-25-1 for capitalization. The FHP Act and its regulations entitle the IESO to recover the amounts that have been deferred, including interest and carrying costs. The costs being recovered under the FHP Act relates to past costs incurred and are not for the purposes of providing for future expected service levels. The rate per unit of electricity that is collected from the specified ratepayers will be determined based on the amount of electricity consumed in the future, not whether electricity is consumed in the future – the 2017 Long-term Energy Plan

predicts that the demand for energy will be fairly steady over the planning period (to 2035). The IESO is able to sell the regulatory asset.

- c. Does the OEB need to be considered independent from the Province in order to meet the scope requirements of ASC 980 and/or the characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.36?

ASC 980

To be in the scope of ASC 980, ASC 980-10-15-2(a) requires the following:

The entity's rates for regulated services or products provided to its customers are established by or are subject to approval by an independent, third-party regulator or by its own governing board empowered by statute or contract to establish rates that bind customers.

As previously discussed, independence is **not** required to meet the criteria in ASC 980-10-15-2(a). The requirement is an *independent, third-party regulator* **or** *its own governing board empowered by statute or contract*.

The OEB has been established by the Province to be Ontario's independent energy regulator and, therefore, is considered the governing board of the IESO. The OEB's mandate and authority come from the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998*, the *Electricity Act, 1998*, and a number of other provincial statutes. As detailed in previous sections, the IESO's rates are established in accordance with these statutes. Accordingly, the requirement of ASC 980-10-15-2(a) is met irrespective of whether the OEB is considered independent.

As evidenced by the following excerpt from page 15 of the special report issued by the OAGO in October 2017, the OAGO appears to erroneously conclude that the OEB needs to be independent in order for ASC 980 to apply:

The regulator of the electricity sector in Ontario is the Ontario Energy Board (OEB). However, the Province has the power, through legislation, regulations and Ministerial directions, to dictate the activities of the OEB. In fact, the OEB has been legislated in the Fair Hydro Act to follow a course of action. This reinforces the OEB's lack of independence over this transaction. If there is no independent regulator establishing electricity rates for consumers, neither can there be a rate-regulated asset.

PSAS 1000.36

The third criteria in PSAS 1000.36 requires the transaction or event giving rise to the public sector entity's control to have already occurred. As previously discussed, the following view contained on page 37 of the 2008 Annual Report of the OAGO states a decision by the OEB cannot be considered to be a transaction or event giving rise to an asset:

With regard to the third characteristic, we do not believe that a rate-regulation decision can be considered a transaction or event giving rise to an asset or obligation because, as stated above, from the level of the

government's consolidated financial statements such a decision is an internal event between two government-controlled entities. An equivalent analysis for rate-regulated liabilities leads to the same conclusion. PSAB standards preclude the inclusion of both gains and losses from such inter-company transactions. Therefore, our contention is that, at the consolidated financial statement level, rate-regulated assets and liabilities have no place and should be removed upon consolidation of the government's controlled entities.

However, to reiterate, it is not the statute itself that is being considered the transaction or event giving rise to the asset, it is the incurrence of costs for which recovery is provided for under statute. The incurrence of such costs is not an internal event between two government-controlled entities.

Further, one could argue the creation of the relevant statutes is not an internal event from the point of view of the consolidated government. Statutes must be passed by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to become law. Since the Legislative Assembly is comprised of elected members, it can be viewed as the government's governing body.

Conclusion

The OEB does not need to be considered independent from the Province in order to meet the scope requirements of ASC 980 or the characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.36. The OEB has been established by the Province to be Ontario's independent energy regulator; its mandate and authority come from the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, the Electricity Act, 1998, and a number of other provincial statutes. As noted previously, the rates charged by the IESO to electricity consumers are determined by the OEB, and therefore, it is considered the governing board of the IESO.

While both the IESO and the OEB are controlled by the Province, this does not negate the role the OEB plays with respect the electricity market nor the determination of the IESO as a rate-regulated entity. Under US GAAP, the requirement is an independent, third-party regulator or its own governing board empowered by statute or contract.

Summary

Concluding the regulatory asset possesses the three essential characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.05 then begs the question as to whether the application of the guidance in ASC 980 is even necessary in this particular situation. Consistent with the statement in ASC 980 –340-25-1 that *rate actions of a regulator can provide reasonable assurance of the existence of an asset*, ASC 980 provides guidance as to how to apply the primary source of PSAS in the regulatory environment.

Analysis – OPG Trust

OPG Trust is controlled by OPG and therefore consolidated on a line-by-line basis in OPG's financial statements. The analysis addresses the below questions in arriving at the accounting by OPG Trust:

1. Does the Provincial Guarantee represent a form of continuing involvement in the regulatory asset that would preclude sale treatment when transferred to OPG Trust?
2. Is OPG Trust controlled directly by IESO or the Province (as opposed to being controlled indirectly by the Province through OPG) requiring it to be consolidated on a line-by-line basis in the GRE?
3. Is IESO permitted to sell the regulatory asset to OPG Trust?

The analysis for OPG Trust is as follows:

1. Does the Provincial Guarantee represent a form of continuing involvement in the regulatory asset that would preclude sale treatment when transferred to OPG Trust?

As previously noted, the sale of the regulatory asset will be accompanied by a guarantee by the Province. As documented in The Change of Law Protection Agreement dated December 21, 2017, the scope of the guarantee will be limited to regulatory changes (e.g., a statute or regulation being enacted, changed or repealed), changes in the organization or structure of the IESO or Ontario's electricity market initiated by the Province, or an *ultra vires* court ruling of the FHP Act or its regulations that both materially and adversely affect the ability of OPG Trust to satisfy its payment obligations (referred to as Protection Events).

Although the guarantee represents a form of continuing involvement in the regulatory asset by the Province, its existence would only preclude sale treatment if the guarantee requires recognition as a liability in the financial statements of the GRE.

Until a Protection Event occurs, the guarantee will meet the definition of a contingent liability in PSAS 3300, *Contingent Liabilities*:

Contingent liabilities are possible obligations that may result in the future sacrifice of economic benefits arising from existing conditions or situations involving uncertainty. That uncertainty will ultimately be resolved when one or more future events not wholly within the government's control occurs or fails to occur. Resolution of the uncertainty will confirm the incurrence or non-incurrence of a liability.

In accordance with PSAS 3300.15, a contingent liability is recognized in the financial statements when:

- (a) it is likely that a future event will confirm that a liability has been incurred at the date of the financial statements; and
- (b) the amount can be reasonably estimated.

Accordingly, unless the occurrence of a Protection Event is considered likely, liability recognition is not required and the existence of the guarantee would not preclude sale treatment when the regulatory asset is transferred from IESO to OPG Trust.

The likelihood of a Protection Event will need to be continually assessed to determine if the recognition criteria is subsequently met.

Conclusion

Unless the occurrence of a Protection Event is considered likely, liability recognition is not required and the existence of the guarantee would not preclude sale treatment when the regulatory asset is transferred from IESO to OPG Trust. The likelihood of a Protection Event will need to be continually assessed to determine if the recognition criteria is subsequently met.

2. Is OPG Trust controlled directly by IESO or the Province (as opposed to being controlled indirectly by the Province through OPG) requiring it to be consolidated on a line-by-line basis in the GRE?

Under IFRS, OPG Trust is controlled and consolidated by OPG. As a GBE, PSAS requires OPG to be accounted for in the financial statements of the GRE using the modified equity method. Under the modified equity method, the financial results of OPG (which includes the financial results of OPG Trust) are neither reconciled from IFRS to PSAS, nor consolidated on a line-by-line basis in the financial statements of the GRE.

However, since control is defined differently under IFRS and PSAS, consideration has been made as to which party controls OPG Trust under PSAS. If controlled directly by either the Province or IESO under PSAS, OPG Trust would likely need to be consolidated on a line-by-line basis in the financial statements of the GRE and excluded from the equity accounted financial results of OPG in the GRE accounts.

PSAS 1300.18 identifies certain indicators that provide more persuasive evidence of control. The following supports the conclusion that the Province indirectly controls OPG Trust through OPG under PSAS based on these indicators:

Power to unilaterally appoint or remove a majority of the members of the governing body of the organization

Ongoing access to the assets of the organization, has the ability to direct the ongoing use of those assets, or has ongoing responsibility for losses

Holds the majority of the voting shares or a "golden share" that confers the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the organization. "Golden share" refers to a class of share that

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entitles the holder to specified powers or rights generally exceeding those normally associated with the holder's ownership interest or representation on the governing body

Has the unilateral power to dissolve the organization and thereby access its assets and become responsible for its obligations

Conclusion

PSAS 1300.18 identifies certain indicators that provide more persuasive evidence of control. The following supports the conclusion that the Province indirectly controls OPG Trust through OPG under PSAS based on these indicators:

- Power to unilaterally appoint or remove a majority of the members of the governing body of the organization
- Ongoing access to the assets of the organization, has the ability to direct the ongoing use of those assets, or has ongoing responsibility for losses
- Holds the majority of the voting shares or a "golden share" that confers the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the organization; "Golden share" refers to a class of share that entitles the holder to specified powers or rights generally exceeding those normally associated with the holder's ownership interest or representation on the governing body
- Has the unilateral power to dissolve the organization and thereby access its assets and become responsible for its obligations

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3. Is IESO permitted to sell the regulatory asset to OPG Trust?

As discussed above, IESO management has concluded the regulatory asset created by the FHP can be recognized as a regulated asset for accounting purposes in the financial statements of the IESO in accordance with the guidance in ASC 980.

Since the IESO does not have the financial capability to finance the regulatory asset, OPG has established a financing entity (OPG Trust) to purchase the IESO's regulatory asset on a monthly basis to eliminate any cash shortfall in the IESO. The OPG Trust purchased its first portion of the regulatory asset from the IESO at the end of December 2017. Through this arrangement, OPG Trust will finance these purchases through a combination of provincial borrowing (flowed through OPG as an equity investment), amounts advanced from OPG and direct borrowing from capital markets. The OPG Trust issued its first capital market debt issuance in February 2018.

The sale of the regulatory asset to OPG Trust is permitted under Section 26 of the FHP Act:

26 (1) The IESO may from time to time, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, transfer a specified portion of the regulatory asset to a financing entity in accordance with this section.

Agreement

(2) An agreement between the IESO and a financing entity in relation to the transfer of a specified portion of the regulatory asset shall provide for consideration of a payment by the financing entity to the IESO in an amount equal to the amount of the specified portion.

Effect of payment

(3) Upon receipt by the IESO of the payment by the financing entity,

(a) the balance in the variance account shall be reduced by the amount of the payment;

(b) the regulatory asset shall be adjusted accordingly;

(c) the financing entity shall acquire a corresponding investment interest; and

(d) the IESO shall retain no further right, title or interest in the corresponding investment interest.

Consideration needs to be made as to whether the sale of the regulatory asset is accounted for as a sale transaction or a financing transaction. If treated as a sale transaction, the existing regulated asset is derecognized and offset by the cash received (DR Cash, CR Regulated Asset). Since the cash proceeds received are equal to the book value of the regulated asset, there is no net impact to income (i.e., no gain or loss on the sale). If treated as a financing transaction, the existing regulated asset continues to be recognized and the cash proceeds received are treated as a loan (DR Cash, CR Payable).

IESO management has concluded the sale of the regulatory asset to OPG Trust will result in the derecognition of the regulated asset (i.e., sale transaction). The IESO's auditors, KPMG, concur with this position, as evidenced from the following excerpt from the KPMG Letter:

We have considered the foregoing analysis and management's conclusion. We concur that the regulatory asset should be derecognized on transfer to the OPG Trust as IESO no longer has rights or future economic benefits associated with the asset.

PSAS provides little guidance relating to the derecognition of an asset. In particular, PSAS 1000, *Financial statement concepts*, PSAS 3210, *Assets*, and PSAS 3450, *Financial instruments*, are all silent on the topic. Although the transfer of the regulatory asset is not within the scope of PSAS 3430, *Restructuring Transactions*, the following derecognition guidance in this standard provides some relevant insight:

.21 Individual assets and liabilities transferred in a restructuring transaction should be derecognized by the transferor if they no longer meet the definitions of assets and liabilities and applicable recognition criteria at the restructuring date.

.24 When a transferor continues to be involved in the individual assets and/or liabilities it transferred to a recipient subsequent to the restructuring date, it would assess the nature and extent of its continued involvement against the definitions of assets and liabilities and applicable recognition criteria to evaluate whether:

(a) derecognition of the asset and liability transferred would be appropriate; and

(b) its continued involvement gives rise to a new asset or new liability that needs to be recognized.

.25 A new asset or new liability may arise from a restructuring due to a transferor's continued involvement in the individual assets and liabilities transferred (for example, if it agrees to guarantee repayment of all or a portion of a transferred liability or leases back a portion of a transferred asset). As the new asset or new liability is not transferred, together with related program or operating responsibilities, they are not part of the restructuring transaction. They would be accounted for in accordance with individual Sections of the PSA Handbook by both the transferors and recipients.

The IESO should derecognize the regulated asset when transferred to OPG Trust if it no longer meets the definition of an asset in PSAS 1000.35-.36. However, consideration should also be made as to whether the IESO has any continued involvement in the regulatory asset that would result in the recognition of a new asset and/or a new liability (i.e. financing transaction).

The following supports the IESO's position that subsequent to the transfer to OPG Trust, the regulatory asset no longer possesses the three essential characteristics of an asset in PSAS 1000.36 and, therefore, should be derecognized:

- a) Embody future economic benefits that involve a capacity, singly or in combination with other assets, to provide goods and services, to provide future cash inflows, or to reduce cash outflows***

The future economic benefits embodied in the regulated asset are realized by the IESO through the transfer of the regulatory asset to OPG Trust in exchange for cash. As noted above, under Section 26(2)(d) of the FHP, the IESO retains no further right, title or interest in the regulatory asset transferred to OPG Trust. Accordingly, there is no remaining future economic benefit to the IESO.

- b) The public sector entity can control the economic resource and access to the future economic benefits***

Although the IESO will collect funds on behalf of OPG Trust, the following sections of the FHP support that control of and access to the future economic benefits of the regulatory asset pass to OPG Trust:

Section 16 - IESO to receive amounts

- 2) The IESO shall, as agent of the investment interest owners, receive amounts in respect of the clean energy adjustment paid to it from electricity vendors in accordance with the market rules made under section 32 of the Electricity Act, 1998 or the regulations.*
- 4) All amounts received by the IESO in respect of the clean energy adjustment shall, until remitted to or for the benefit of the investment interest owner, be held in trust by the IESO for the investment interest owners.*
- 5) The IESO shall remit amounts received by it in respect of the clean energy adjustment, inclusive of interest earned on the amounts referred to in subsection (1), to or for the benefit of the investment interest owners in accordance with the regulations.*

Section 29 - Irrevocable rights and interests

- 1) The investment asset constitutes a current and irrevocable property right and interest consisting, collectively, of the following rights and interests of investment interest owners:*

1. *The right and interest to impose, invoice, collect, receive and recover the clean energy adjustment from specified consumers, including the right to determine the clean energy adjustment in accordance with this Act.*
2. *The right to receive, collect and recover the clean energy adjustment that is imposed, invoiced and recoverable under this Act, including any amounts in respect of the clean energy adjustment that are held by electricity vendors, IESO and other prescribed parties.*

c) *The transaction or event giving rise to the public sector entity's control has already occurred*

Not applicable as IESO does not control.

As previously noted, the IESO relinquishes its rights, title and interest in the regulatory asset upon transfer to OPG Trust. Subsequent to the transfer, the IESO's continuing involvement is as follows:

- The IESO acts as agent of OPG Trust, which involves receiving funds and holding them in trust on behalf of OPG Trust. This level of continuing involvement does not result in the recognition of a new asset and/or a new liability by the IESO.
- The IESO will provide OPG Trust a letter of credit equal to approximately one to two month's estimated Clean Energy Adjustment collections from all unrated or non-investment grade LDCs. It is estimated that LDCs not rated by any agency deliver power to approximately 25% of the Ontario electricity market. This level of continuing involvement also does not result in the recognition of a new asset and/or a new liability by the IESO. **[NEED TO INSERT/REFERENCE IESO/KPMG ANALYSIS OF LETTER OF CREDIT]**

Commented [DM(14)]: Confirming receipt of this

Accordingly, it is appropriate to account for the transfer of the regulatory asset as a sale and derecognize the regulated asset.

Derecognition of the regulated asset is also consistent with ASC 980. ASC 980-340-40-1 provides the following guidance on the derecognition of an asset that has been recognized in accordance with ASC 980-340-25-1:

If at any time an entity's incurred cost no longer meets the criteria for the capitalization of an incurred cost (see paragraph 980-340-25-1), that cost shall be charged to earnings.

In order for an incurred cost to be capitalized, ASC 980-340-25-1(a) requires the following:

It is probable (as defined in Topic 450) that future revenue in an amount at least equal to the capitalized cost will result from inclusion of that cost in allowable costs for rate-making purposes.

The capitalization criterion in ASC 980-340-25-1(a) is no longer met after the regulatory asset is transferred to OPG Trust because there are no future cash inflows that benefit the IESO. As mentioned above, the IESO realized the economic benefits associated with the regulatory asset upon the transfer. In accordance with Section 16 of the FHP, any future cash collected by the IESO is on behalf of OPG Trust.

Conclusion

The sale of the regulatory asset to OPG Trust is permitted under Section 26 of the FHP Act. Subsequent to the transfer to OPG Trust, the regulatory asset no longer possesses the three essential characteristics of an asset in PS 1000.36 to IESO as they no longer retain further rights, title or interest in the regulatory asset transferred to OPG trust. There are therefore no remaining future economic benefits to the IESO.

Analysis - Province

The following analysis addresses how the accounting of IESO and OPG Trust is reflected in the financial statements of the Province. A numerical example is provided regarding the impact of the FHP in the financial statements of the Province.

1. How is the accounting of IESO and OPG Trust reflected in the financial statements of the Province?

IESO is classified under PSAS as an OGO and therefore included in the financial statements of the Province by line-by-line consolidation. Therefore, assets (for example, the variance account), liabilities, revenues and expenses of IESO are included in the financial statements of the Province.

OPG Trust is controlled by OPG. OPG is classified under PSAS as a GBE and therefore included in the financial statements of the Province using the modified equity basis. While OPG consolidates OPG Trust on a line-by-line basis, the Province accounts for OPG as an investment in a GBE. Earnings of OPG are included in the Province's financial statements on a one line basis.

Numerical example

Independent Electricity System Operator	Ontario Power Generation			Ontario Financing Authority	Provincial Consolidated Financial Statements
	OPG Trust	OPG	Consolidated		
Received from consumers (through distributors)	75				
Paid to generators	(100)				
Proceeds from sale of rate-regulated asset to OPG Trust	25				
Rate-regulated Asset		25	25		
Investment in OPG				9	9
Investment in OPG Trust		9	9		
Debt - capital markets		(16)	(16)	(9)	
Debt - OPG		(9)	(9)		
Shareholder equity		(9)	(9)		(9)
	0	0	0	0	0

Commented [DM(15)]: Sample format for illustration (not final)

The impact on the Province's net debt and accumulated deficit is aligned with the intent of guidance in PSAS 1100, Financial statement objectives:

Financial statements should present information to describe the government's financial position at the end of the accounting period. Such information should be useful in evaluating:

- c) the government's ability to finance its activities and to meet its liabilities and contractual obligations; and*
- d) the government's ability to provide future services.*

A government's net debt is an important indicator of a government's financial position, highlighting the financial affordability of future government service provision. A net debt position represents a "lien" on the ability of the government to apply financial resources and future revenues to provide services. Non-financial assets are added to net debt to calculate the other indicator of a government's financial position — its accumulated surplus or deficit. Non-financial assets are "prepaid service potential". Reporting a government's recognized non-financial resources as part of its financial position provides information necessary for a more complete understanding of a government's debt position, financial position and future operating requirements.

Governments provide public services and redistribute wealth for a variety of social and economic purposes. To meet those objectives, governments need information about the cost of services and the affordability of services. An understanding of the extent of the financial "lien" the government has on its ability to provide future services as a result of past transactions and events is essential information. Governments also need to have an appreciation of the magnitude of the total economic resources they have on hand to deliver services. A government's net financial resources / net debt position, assessed in combination with the non-financial resources position of the government, provides a measure of the net recognized economic resources available to the government at the financial statement date to provide services in the future.

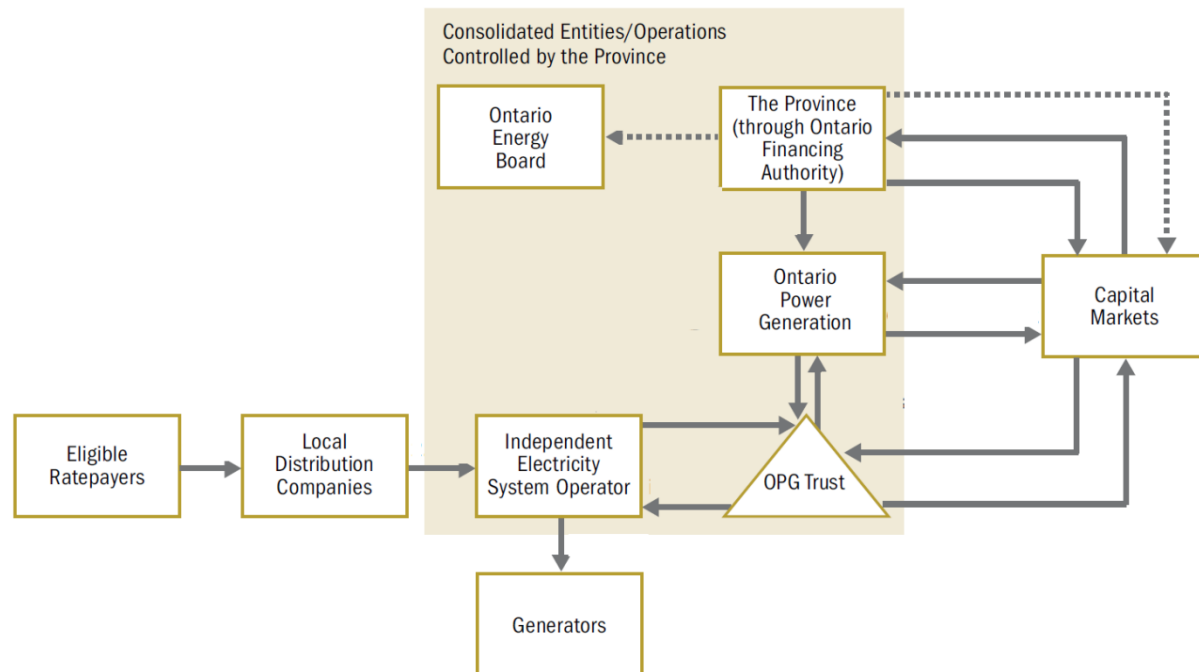
Net debt is a measure of future revenue required from taxpayers relating to past transactions and events. If the regulatory asset is not recognized in a manner consistent with that of a financial asset by the GRE, the Province's net debt will increase significantly, suggesting that the Province has a much higher future revenue requirement needed to be funded by taxpayers. This would be inaccurate, however, since the regulatory asset is going to be recovered under statute from electricity consumers, not taxpayers. Combining amounts to be funded by ratepayers and tax payers is not consistent with the objective of the net debt indicator in PS1100.

The FHP plan does not legislate the accounting for the regulatory asset. The reporting of the variance account meets the definition of an asset under PSAS. The accounting for this variance account in this matter reflects the substance of this transaction. Reporting the shortfall as an expense, as recommended by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario in the Special Report: Fair Hydro Plan, reflects a deterioration of the financial position of the Province. Such presentation would be misleading and inaccurate to financial statement users based on the substance of the transaction, as it does not appropriately account for the future recovery under statute from electricity consumers, not taxpayers, for past costs incurred.

APPENDIX A – Proposed Legislated Transaction Structure

Proposed Legislated Transaction Structure

Adapted from the Office of the Auditor General Special Report: Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan



Eligible ratepayers pay 25% less to Local Distribution Companies which remit to the Independent Electricity System Operator, while the full amount is payable to Generators. The resulting shortfall of payment is reported as a rate regulated asset in accordance with ASC 980 as applied under the GAAP hierarchy permitted under PS1150.

The IESO is made whole by selling the rate regulated asset and the right to the collection of the shortfall from future ratepayers to the OPG Trust. The OPG Trust finances the purchase from an investment from the Province through Ontario Power Generation, OPG itself and Capital Markets.

Interest costs and service fees are charged back by the OPG Trust to the IESO which is added to the rate regulated asset and charged back through to ratepayers that will be recovered from future ratepayers.

Reporting

The IESO is reported in the consolidated financial statements on a full consolidation basis as an Other Government Organization. All assets and liabilities held by the IESO at the report date are reported on a line-by-line basis in the government's consolidated financial statements.

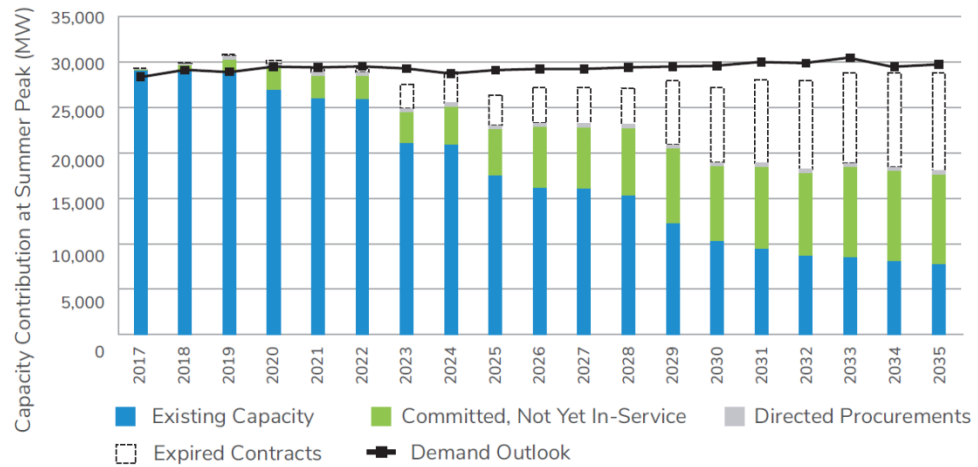
As a subsidiary of OPG, OPG Trust is consolidated into OPG and reported in the government's consolidated financial statements on a modified equity, one-line basis. The debt and rate regulated asset held by the consolidated OPG entity are reported as part of the investment of OPG as a GBE of the Province under PSAS.

The Province has issued a limited guarantee on the capital market debt issued by the OPG Trust. The guarantee is subject to note disclosure in the financial statements.

APPENDIX B – Ontario’s Forecast Electricity Production

FIGURE 8.

Supply and Demand Outlook (2017-2035)



Source: IESO

Source: 2017 Ontario Long-term Energy Plan, p.37

APPENDIX C – Matters raised by the OAG

<i>Matters raised by the OAG</i>	<i>Memo reference</i>	<i>Response to matters raised</i>
Through the Fair Hydro Act, the government created a needlessly complex accounting/ financing structure for the electricity rate reduction in order to avoid showing a deficit or an increase in net debt in its budgets and in the Province’s consolidated financial statements		<i>In the development of OFHP, the government considered a range of policy options. The decisions made to implement GA refinancing most effectively achieves the goals of the refinancing program and ensures that the deferred costs are borne by the rate-base, as the beneficiaries of the electricity system, and not the tax-base. The accounting for this transaction reflects the substance of this transaction.</i>
According to the government’s current plan, the only electricity rate reduction lasting beyond 2027 will be a 9% reduction mainly from the HST rebate and other taxpayer-funded programs. From 2028 on, ratepayers will be charged more than the actual cost of the electricity being produced in order to pay back the borrowings. The total borrowings to be repaid will be an estimated \$39.4 billion, made up of \$18.4 billion borrowed to cover the current rate reduction shortfall and \$21 billion in accumulated interest over the term of the borrowings	Not applicable	Not an accounting issue but a government policy decision.
Applying the government’s complex accounting/financing structure could result in Ontarians incurring extra interest costs over 30 years that could total up to \$4 billion, more than necessary	Not applicable	Not an accounting issue but a government policy decision.
The government applied a correct accounting treatment for the electricity sector’s stranded debt in 1999/2000, and there is no good reason for it not to apply the same accounting treatment to the debt that will accumulate as a result of the Fair Hydro Act’s electricity rate reduction		<i>The report makes a comparison between the OFHP and the OEFC stranded debt. There are however crucial differences, the latter was already incurred when the restructuring took place. Also, it is important to note that the 1999 restructuring led to an “unbundling” of the electricity rate. Prior to the 1999 restructuring and 2002 market opening, there was a “bundled rate” for electricity that included cost recovery of generation and transmission costs, operating and capital – including debt costs, as well as central market operations costs. The Debt Retirement Charge represented the unbundling of a portion of the debt service costs that represented the effective amortisation of cost recovery of the debt incurred to cover the cost to invest in long-lived assets. This was a normal practice and would have been very</i>

		<i>unusual to recover the investment capital outlay in the years invested from those ratepayers, as unfair as the benefit of those assets would be in place for decades. As such, it was fair to incur debt and recover those costs over time, including as continued on through the DRC post-1999.</i> <i>The OFHP GA deferral is also intended to have costs recovered from specified ratepayers over a time period to better reflect the expected lives of those assets (vs the contract lengths, that may be shorter than the expected useful life of the assets).</i>
The creation of a regulatory asset legislated in the Fair Hydro Act violates the government's own accounting policies, developed in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards		<i>The Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and its related regulations do not "create accounting rules" or "legislate the accounting". This is a fundamental disagreement with the report of the OAG. As previously noted, the Province will prepare its consolidated financial statements in accordance with PSAS.</i>
The government knew there was a high risk that it would receive a "qualified" audit opinion on the Province's consolidated financial statements as a result of using legislation to create a regulatory asset, but it accepted this risk in order to avoid showing a deficit and an increase in net debt in its budgets and consolidated financial statements. Accordingly, the 2017/18 budget does not, but should, include the impact for 16% of the costs of the Policy Decision to reduce electricity rates by 25%. The 16% reduction is estimated to cost an average of \$2.5 billion per year (over 10.5 years) through to 2027		<i>The accounting for the Fair Hydro Plan and application of ASC 980 under US GAAP for rate regulated operations is in accordance with Public Sector Accounting Standards. The application of the GAAP hierarchy under PS1150 allows the government's accounting staff to apply professional judgement in circumstances where PSAS is silent on specific issues.</i> <i>The issuance of a qualified opinion by the Auditor General of Ontario is an indication to the users of the financial statements of a professional difference of opinion in the application of the accounting framework. However, the government has determined through its research and evaluation that its presentation represents is the most appropriate to reflect the true substance of the transaction.</i>

APPENDIX D – Reporting of the Market Accounts

Effective January 1, 2016, the IESO adopted on a retrospective basis a new accounting policy that requires its market-settlement activities⁵ to be reflected in the financial statements.

Under the new policy, the assets and liabilities recognized on the IESO's statement of financial position relating to the IESO-administered markets include cash, amounts due from market participants, interest receivable, revolving line of credit, HST receivable, amounts due to market participants and other liabilities. The IESO statement of operations and accumulated surplus does not include the revenue and expenses of the financial transactions of market participants within the IESO-administered markets. This indicates IESO management has taken the position that the IESO is an agent, not a principal, in the IESO-administered markets and, accordingly, records revenue on a net basis.

PSAS does not provide any specific guidance as to how it should be determined whether an entity is acting as a principal or an agent in the context of revenue recognition, but both IFRS and US GAAP do. The relevant guidance in IFRS is as follows:

IAS 18.8

Revenue includes only the gross inflows of economic benefits received and receivable by the entity on its own account. Amounts collected on behalf of third parties such as sales taxes, goods and services taxes and value added taxes are not economic benefits which flow to the entity and do not result in increases in equity. Therefore, they are excluded from revenue. Similarly, in an agency relationship, the gross inflows of economic benefits include amounts collected on behalf of the principal and which do not result in increases in equity for the entity. The amounts collected on behalf of the principal are not revenue. Instead, revenue is the amount of commission.

IAS 18.IE21

Determining whether an entity is acting as a principal or as an agent (2009 amendment).

Paragraph 8 states that 'in an agency relationship, the gross inflows of economic benefits include amounts collected on behalf of the principal and which do not result in increases in equity for the entity. The amounts collected on behalf of the principal are not revenue. Instead, revenue is the amount of commission.' Determining whether an entity is acting as a principal or as an agent requires judgement and consideration of all relevant facts and circumstances.

An entity is acting as a principal when it has exposure to the significant risks and rewards associated with the sale of goods or the rendering of services. Features that indicate that an entity is acting as a principal include:

⁵ The IESO administers the wholesale electricity market by authorizing market participants, publishing system forecasts and market information, producing statements and invoices, and performing financial settlement transactions for the markets.

- a) *the entity has the primary responsibility for providing the goods or services to the customer or for fulfilling the order, for example by being responsible for the acceptability of the products or services ordered or purchased by the customer;*
- b) *the entity has inventory risk before or after the customer order, during shipping or on return;*
- c) *the entity has latitude in establishing prices, either directly or indirectly, for example by providing additional goods or services; and*
- d) *the entity bears the customer's credit risk for the amount receivable from the customer.*

An entity is acting as an agent when it does not have exposure to the significant risks and rewards associated with the sale of goods or the rendering of services. One feature indicating that an entity is acting as an agent is that the amount the entity earns is predetermined, being either a fixed fee per transaction or a stated percentage of the amount billed to the customer.

Application of the above IFRS guidance supports the conclusion that the IESO is an agent in the market-settlement process and, therefore, recognizing revenue on a net basis is appropriate. IESO has completed a more thorough analysis of their position that it is an agent in the settlement of the market and reconsideration of that decision is not the topic of this memo.

As noted earlier, the IESO is permitted to keep in accordance with its own rate order from the OEB to cover its internal operating costs are recorded as system fee revenue in the IESO financial statements. These amounts are not characterized as being part of the IESO-administered markets.

Cash impacts of the Market Accounts

While the net position of market accounts will ultimately settle to a nil balance in accordance with market rules, due to settlement timing differences, the net position of market accounts will not be in a nil position from a cash flow perspective at the end of any reporting period. This raises a question as to how a cash flow deficit related to the market-settlement process should be accounted for in the financial statements of the IESO.

Two approaches are as follows:

1. The cash flow deficit is recognized as an asset when it occurs and then derecognized in the period in which it is settled. Under this approach, the net position of market accounts will always be in a nil balance in the IESO's balance sheet and there is no impact on the IESO's income statement.
2. The cash flow deficit is recognized as a charge to income when it occurs and then reversed through income in the period in which it is settled.

IESO management has concluded it is appropriate to recognize existing cash flow deficits arising from the market-settlement process as an asset. This is evidenced by the fact the components of the market accounts net to a nil closing balance at year end in the IESO financial statements for the year ended

December 31, 2016. This treatment is consistent with the conclusion that the IESO is acting as an agent in the market-settlement process.