



March 28, 2019

## **NEWS RELEASE – BCUC Establishes Process for Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry**

VANCOUVER – By [Order G-71-19](#), the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) has established a regulatory timetable for its inquiry into the regulation of Indigenous utilities in British Columbia.

The Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry (the “Inquiry”) will explore and seek feedback on a number of important questions, including:

- What are the characteristics of an “Indigenous Utility” with respect to:
  - The ownership and operation of the utility;
  - What services are provided;
  - Who the services are provided to; and/or
  - The location or area served by the utility?
- Should Indigenous utilities be regulated or not? And if so, how?
  - If they should be regulated, should they be regulated by the *Utilities Commission Act* (UCA) or another mechanism?
  - If unregulated, how will the interests of indigenous utility ratepayers be protected?

Indigenous peoples, all levels of government, utility owners and operators, the public and other organizations will have an opportunity to participate in the Inquiry. Ways to participate in the review process, are outlined below.

- **Request intervener status by Monday, July 15, 2019:** Persons who are directly or sufficiently affected by the BCUC’s decision or have relevant information or expertise, and who wish to actively participate in the proceeding, can request intervener status by submitting a completed [Request to Intervene Form](#) online.
- **Submit a letter of comment:** Members of the public can submit a [Letter of Comment](#) online. Letters of comment enable any member of the public to contribute views, opinions, and impact or potential impact, with respect to a matter before the BCUC, to the public record.
- **Register as an interested party:** Interested parties can [register](#) online to receive updates on the proceeding.
- **Attend an engagement session:** The BCUC will provide more information about dates, times and locations for Community Input Sessions over the coming weeks. There will be an opportunity for attendees to speak or present their thoughts to the Panel on the items within the scope of the Inquiry. Making a submission at a Community Input Session is equivalent to providing a written submission.

For more information on this application, please see the proceeding page for the inquiry [here](#).

### **Background**

On March 11, 2019, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, pursuant to section 5(1) of the *Utilities Commission Act* (UCA), requested the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) provide recommendations to Government

regarding the regulation of Indigenous utilities in British Columbia. The terms of the Inquiry have been outlined in [Order in Council \(OIC\) No. 108](#). The BCUC established the Inquiry on March 19, 2019 by Order [G-62-19](#).

Currently, under the *Utilities Commission Act* (UCA) most utilities with a connection to an Indigenous community are regulated by the BCUC as public utilities. Some utilities have requested exemptions from existing regulatory requirements. Findings from the BCUC's Inquiry will inform Government as it develops a clear regulatory framework for Indigenous utilities in BC. An interim report is due to the Government by December 31, 2019 and a final report is due by January 31, 2020.

### **About the BCUC**

The BCUC is a regulatory agency responsible for oversight of energy utilities and compulsory auto insurance in British Columbia. It is the BCUC's role to balance the interests of customers with the interests of the businesses it regulates. The BCUC carries out fair and transparent reviews of matters within its jurisdiction and considers public input where public interest is impacted.

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