

To both:

December, 13, 2013

Erica Hamilton  
Commission Secretary  
BC Utilities Commission  
Sixth Floor, 900 Howe Street, Box 250  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

And:

Ms. Janet Fraser  
Chief Regulatory Officer  
British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority  
16th Floor, 333 Dunsmuir Street  
Vancouver, BC V6B SR3

From: John Mansell registered Intervener in BCH application for approval of charges in the Meter Choices Program.

My first set of questions is directed to both BCUC and BCH as they relate to this question and answer;

**Norman Ryder**

Information Request No. **1.3.1** Dated: **October 29, 2013**

British Columbia Hydro & Power Authority

Response issued **November 29, 2013**

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British Columbia Hydro & Power Authority

**Application for Approval of Charges Related to Meter**

**Choices Program**

**Exhibit:**

**B-6-1**

**3.0 Page 1-6 Lines 3 & 4 “b) costs incurred with respect to the installation and operation of, and services related to, smart meters from all customers”**

1.3.1 A number of years ago the the basic charge fee (currently \$0.1505 a day) was added to the general tariffs to pay for the cost of meter reading and billing. At the time there was considerable comment that a normal company includes the cost of billing in their general fee. Has the approximately \$10 per billing period been factored in as a cost the opt-out users are already paying? As meter readers are no longer being used

and much of the billing is on line will the basic charge be removed from the bills of customers with Smart Meters?

**RESPONSE:**

**The basic charge has not been factored into the proposed charges for the Meter Choices Program because it would not be appropriate to do so. The savings resulting from the implementation of the SMI Program (e.g., manual meter reading) are reflected in BC Hydro's revenue requirement. The proposed charges for the Meter Choices Program are based on incremental costs associated with the Meter Choices Program. BC Hydro will address any changes to the basic charge in a future rate design application.**

1) If the referred to basic charge fee (currently \$0.1505 a day) was **added** to the general tariffs to pay for the cost of meter reading and billing, would I be correct in assuming it was applied for and approved by BCUC at the time?

If so;

2) In the process of this application BCH has clearly defined the cost of meter reading. Since this basic charge was applied for, and justified, specifically for a service rendered, **to pay for the cost of meter reading and billing**, why is the meter reading portion of this charge not being refunded where this service is no longer being provided, i.e. smart meters on line?

3) Why is the meter reading portion of this basic charge not being credited to customers who meters BCH deems still need to be read? If it is figured as a credit into the proposed Meter Choices Charges then I repeat question two above.

4) BCH's response offers that they "will address this in a future rate design application." This infers an indeterminate time line during which BCH could accumulate a considerable amount of public monies with this basic charge for services no longer given. If this charge is not being credited to customers then what is happening to these monies?

My second set of questions is related to Exhibit A-10, Ms. Fraser's letter of December 3, 2013 and BCH's December 4, 2013 reply, plus the costs of the Meter Choices Program.

I note that BCUC directed BCH to provide the information on the customer response to BCH's "Meter Choice Program enrolment period" by December 4, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. I also note that BCH's reply offered to submit the requested information by December 16, 2013 as per the requests of Mr. Wong and the BCSEA.

As one of BCH's customers that chose to keep my analogue meter I recognized that the Meter Choices letter BCH sent asking me to choose and sign would represent a new contract with BCH. I therefore replied with my own letter restating in writing for the eighth time my choice.

On December 11, 2013 I received an express post reply dated December 11, 2013 from BCH, Greg Reimer, Executive Vice President, Transmission & Distribution acknowledging my choice and my refusal to sign letter. This recent letter gives rise to my next set of questions both in its cost and the number of categories that may exist in the information on the customer response to BCH's "Meter Choice Program enrolment period". It would appear that the information directed in BCUC's December 3, 2013 letter was ready by December 10, 2013 in order for BCH to respond personally to each of the customers enrolled in the Meter Choices Program, well before December 16, 2013.

My enquiries at Canada Post told me the following;

1a) The express post I received was sent December 10, 2013.

2a) The express post cost \$10.40 possibly minus a 5% bulk discount and a 5% business discount.

3a) The Express Post can only guarantee the information that the post was delivered to the address (not the customer).

4a) A registered letter, including postage, costs \$9.13 and guarantees a record of customer receiving and signing.

I am at a loss to understand why BCH would choose such an expensive way to send a single page letter to Meter Choices customers. If for a paper trail to legally demonstrate customers were informed there was a better and cheaper way available through registered letters and the customers, such as I, that replied in whatever form, provided the necessary paper trail in doing so.

I can see no pressing requirement for an expedited reply from BCH to use expensive Express Post so a reply would arrive perhaps three days ahead of regular post. It appears to only have added liberally to the cost of the Meter Choices Program.

This raises the concern that since the government has allowed BCH to recover the costs of the Meter Choices Program from those not complying with BCH's Smart Meter

Program, it empowers a lack of financial prudence in the Meter Choices Program by BCH to create a financial burden resulting in the constitutional right to live free and secure in our own home, and decide what is allowed in or on our home, to be the privilege of those few that can afford it.

My questions for BCH are;

1b) What was the cost for an individual Express Post reply?

2b) What is the total cost of the Meter Choices replies?

3b) Why did BCH choose not to use regular post, and why Express instead of Registered?

And in reference to the information on the customer response to BCH's "Meter Choice Program enrolment period"

4b) How many customers, like myself, refused to sign or fill in BCH's choices form?

5b) How many customers chose to keep their analogue meters?

6b) How many customers chose radio off meters?

7b) How many customers chose the standard smart meter? And of those how many indicated in some way that their choice was because they could not afford the proposed fees?

8b) How many BCH customers that received standard smart meters have since indicated that they would rather not have them?

Sincerely,

John Mansell, Intervener