

REQUESTOR NAME: **BC Sustainable Energy Association and Sierra Club BC**

INFORMATION REQUEST ROUND NO: 2

TO: **BC Hydro**

DATE: **December 20, 2013**

PROJECT NO: **3698760**

APPLICATION NAME: **BC Hydro Smart Meter Choices Application**

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**17.0 Topic: AMI Radio-Off Decision**

**Reference: BCUC Decision and Order No. G-220-13**

On December 19, 2013 the Commission issued Decision and Order No. G-220-13 regarding the FortisBC Inc. Application for a Radio-Off Advanced Metering Infrastructure Meter Option (AMI Radio-Off Decision).

17.1 Please file a copy of Decision and Order No. G-220-13.

17.2 What changes, if any, does BC Hydro intend to make to the Meter Choice program or this Application as a result of the AMI Radio-Off Decision?

**18.0 Topic: Radio-Off vs. Legacy**

**Reference: Exhibit B-8, Enrolment Status**

BC Hydro's cost estimates were based on an assumed 50:50 split between Legacy and Radio-Off participation in the Meter Choice Program. However,

18.1 Please confirm that, as of the December 3, 2013 enrolment data, a total of 2704 customers made a valid choice for a Meter Choice option.

18.2 Please confirm that of the customers who made a valid choice for a Meter Choice option about 17% (450/2704) chose the Radio-Off Option.

18.3 Based on the information BC Hydro now has from customers who were considering participating in the Meter Choice Program, what are the reasons why enrolment in the Radio-Off Option is so much lower than in the Legacy Option?

18.4 In BC Hydro's view, to what extent was the Legacy Option chosen over the Radio-Off Option (by those who gave valid responses) for any of the following potential factors:

(a) lack of confidence that a Radio-Off smart meter would have no radio frequency emissions,

(b) avoidance of the one-time set-up fee for the Radio-Off Option,

(c) lack of awareness of the pay-back period of choosing Radio-Off over Legacy?

18.5 What plans if any does BC Hydro have to change its communications with customers interested in the Meter Choice program regarding the choice between Radio-Off and Legacy meters?

**19.0 Topic: Radio-Off choice**

**Reference: AMI Radio-Off Decision**

In the AMI Radio-Off Decision, the Commission said:

“The Panel believes that the election process for participating in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option should be no more onerous than the process for initially obtaining electrical service.” [p.8 of 25]

- 19.1 Please summarize the process for a customer to choose the Radio-Off option and discuss whether the process is “no more onerous than the process for initially obtaining electrical service.”
- 19.2 In light of the AMI Radio-Off Decision, does BC Hydro propose any changes to the process for an eligible customer to choose the Radio-Off option?

**20.0 Topic: Radio-Off Set-up Fee**  
**Reference: AMI Radio-Off Decision**

- 20.1 Please provide a table showing a breakdown of BC Hydro’s proposed Radio-Off Set-up Fee in the format shown on page 13 of 25 in the AMI Radio-Off Decision.

**21.0 Topic: Radio-Off vs. Legacy**  
**Reference: Exhibit B-6-1, BCSEA 1.12.1**

BCSEA-SCBC asked:

“1.12.1 Does BC Hydro agree that short of full implementation of radio-on smart meters the most cost-effective approach to retaining theft-detection benefits is to install radio-off smart meters where necessary due to customer objections and to manually read interval usage data from the radio-off smart meters? If not, why not?”

BC Hydro responded:

**“RESPONSE:**

**Agreed. Meter data downloaded bi-monthly includes all interval consumption data and other events including tamper and outage detection. This data is not available with legacy meters, necessitating the addition of field investigation resources to mitigate the impact associated with the ongoing presence of legacy meters on the system.”**

- 21.1 Does BC Hydro agree that from the perspective of all customers as a whole it would be preferable to those customers who do not want a functioning smart meter to choose the Radio-Off Option rather than the Legacy Meter Option? If not, why not?
- 21.2 Does BC Hydro agree that eliminating or reducing the Radio-Off Option set-up fee would encourage Meter Choice customers to elect the Radio-Off Option over the Legacy Option?
- 21.3 In BC Hydro’s view, in the context of Direction 4, does the Commission have authority in this proceeding to reduce the Radio-Off set-up fee for reasons other than immediate cost causality, that is, for reasons such as encouraging Meter Choice customers to choose Radio-Off over Legacy?

- 21.4 Confirm that eventually all Legacy Meters will be replaced by Radio-Off meters.
- 21.5 When it comes to pass that a Meter Choice customer's Legacy Meter is replaced by a Radio-Off Meter because the Legacy Meter requires replacement for technical reasons and there are no available Legacy Meters, will the customer be charged a Radio-Off Choice set-up fee?

**22.0 Topic: Meter reading**  
**Reference: Letters of comment**

- 22.1 Can BC Hydro explain why many of the authors of filed letters of comment say their Legacy meter has not been read manually for the past period of some months? Has BC Hydro been manually reading Legacy meters less frequently recently, compared to when all meters were manually read?
- 22.2 Please confirm that many of the authors of letters of comment say they would be willing to read their own Legacy Meter and provide the information to BC Hydro, with a true-up manual reading less frequently than bi-monthly in order to reduce BC Hydro's cost of reading Legacy Meters and hence to reduce the monthly fee for retaining a Legacy Meter.
- 22.3 Has BC Hydro examined the feasibility and cost of a self-read program that would meet BC Hydro's requirements at a lower cost to Legacy Meter customers? If so, what were the results? If not, why not?

**23.0 Topic: Non-integrated areas**  
**Reference: Exhibit E-156**

- 23.1 Has BC Hydro installed smart meters in non-integrated areas?
- 23.2 If so, is the Meter Choice Program available to customers in a non-integrated area?

**24.0 Topic: False Site Visit Charge**  
**Reference: AMI Radio-Off Decision, page 25 of 25**

- 24.1 In the context of both Direction 4 and the AMI Radio-Off Decision, what is BC Hydro's position regarding whether the Commission ought to approve the proposed False Site Visit Charge?