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Monday, May 8, 2017

British Columbia Utilities Commission
Sixth Floor, 900 Howe Street, Box 250
Vancouver, B.C., V6Z 2N3

Attention: Patrick Wruck, Commission Secretary
By Electronic Filing

Dear Sir:

Re: Letter of FortisBC Inc. of May 3, 2017 re: 2016 Long Term Electric Resource Plan and Long Term Demand Side Management Plan Application and Andy Shadrack - Information Request No. 2

In its letter of May 3, 2017, FortisBC kindly informs the parties to this Proceeding that it deems certain topics “out of scope”, and, accordingly that it “declines to respond” to specific questions related to those topics which I raised in my Information Request No. 2.

It must be noted that FortisBC has not written to the Commission to object to my questions, and to ask the Commission for a ruling on whether or not those questions are irrelevant or “out of scope”. FortisBC has instead made that determination itself, on its own authority, apparently in the full expectation that all concerned, including the Commission, will accord its decision proper deference. To me this seems analogous to a witness in a court proceeding taking it upon himself to decide which questions to answer and which questions not to answer, behaviour I believe would be viewed as contumacious.

I respectfully object to FortisBC taking such a high-handed approach. It seems to me, as a layman, that it would not be inappropriate for the Commission to simply order FortisBC to answer the subject questions without examination of the merits, if any, of FortisBC’s rationale for its stated position.

In the event I am mistaken, and the Commission chooses to accept FortisBC’s letter, not as the decision of a superior authority, but as an objection to my questions, I make the following submission.

The questions FortisBC is refusing to answer are concerned, directly or indirectly, with net metering. At the time of its Net Metering Tariff Update Application, FortisBC was then engaged in developing the Plan which is the subject of this Proceeding. In my Submissions on Further Process in the

Update proceeding, I suggested that any consideration of the changes to the Net Metering Tariff was premature, and that the issues FortisBC was raising in its Update application were really inseparable from, and should be part and parcel of, the subject Plan.

In its Reasons for Decision of Dec. 29, 2016 (G-199-16) in the Update proceeding, the Commission expressed, at p. 5, anticipation that the subject Plan would provide broader guidance regarding FortisBC's self-generation strategy.

Unfortunately, any such broader guidance regarding self-generation strategy is completely absent from the Plan, FortisBC having chosen to treat it as a "potential load driver" (a term which it fails to define), instead of as a resource option. However, the fact that it is missing does not mean that it should not be there, and, I suggest, the fact that it is not there represents a significant failing.

Rather than treating such subjects as substantive planning issues, FortisBC appears to prefer to deal with them on a piecemeal basis without having to adhere to any coherent broader overview. For instance, we currently have a situation where FortisBC is proposing a "community" solar installation for which enrolled customers would be charged a rate of 23.1 cents per kWh (for what might be thought of as 100% net excess generation) while simultaneously working to suppress its Net Metering Program by fighting tooth and nail to purchase such power at 4.303 cents per kWh, as well as for the "right" to expel customers responsible for such generation.

I further suggest that the question of whether or not self-generation and net metering represent a resource option, as well as broader guidance as to how they fit into the resource matrix, are significant issues in this proceeding, and, for that reason, all questions regarding self-generation in general and net metering in particular, including integrally related tariff issues, are obviously relevant to this or any other long term plan, whether or not FortisBC has arbitrarily attempted to exclude them.

Regards,

Andy Shadrack