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May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

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

Attention: Patrick Wruck, Commission Secretary

**Re: FortisBC COVID-19 Customer Recovery Fund Deferral Account Application Request to Reconsider/Appeal Panel Decision of May 15, 2020.**

I write further to the Commission Panel's decision not to allow an additional on-line/teleconference or negotiated settlement process to review this Application. In their reasoning the Panel stated that it was:

*"...concerned with the additional regulatory costs and potential delay for this added process, particularly at a time where we should be extra sensitive to ratepayer costs while still maintaining regulatory efficiency... Furthermore, the Panel considers the regulatory process already established in Order G-97-20 is reasonable and sufficient to address the scope of this application".*

On Thursday May 21<sup>st</sup>, in an article titled *B.C.'s top doctor Bonnie Henry says 2nd wave of COVID-19 inevitable, but current lessons will guide response*, the CBC reported that BC Medical Health Officer Dr Bonnie Henry had determined that:

*"The optimist in me would like to think that maybe it will go away, and the virus will mutate and won't become worse,"* said Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry in an interview with Matt Galloway, host of CBC Radio's [The Current](#).

*"But you know what? We've never had a pandemic in recorded history that has not had a second wave"* (<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-may-21-2020-1.5577286/b-c-s-top-doctor-bonnie-henry-says-2nd-wave-of-covid-19-inevitable-but-current-lessons-will-guide-response-1.5577290>).

This statement by Dr Henry materially changes the very nature of this hearing, that was called to make permanent a 90 day bill deferral and bill credit program, which expires July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

Clearly Dr Henry, through her statement, even if she now believes that phase one of the Covid-19 pandemic is winding down, does not think that the pandemic is over, and therefore, contrary to the decision of this Panel, sticking to a discussion of a 90 day program, as envisioned in G-97-20, is neither reasonable nor sufficient to address the scope of this application.

I therefore wish to appeal the decision of the Panel and request that the need to extend the program beyond July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 be opened up for further discussion in light of Dr Henry's statement of May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

Further, a second discussion on which classes and customers are eligible to access an extended bill deferral and bill credit program should be opened up as well, given the potential extension of the pandemic.

In making this request I refer the Panel to, and defer to the well reasoned final argument of, the British Columbia Old Age Pensioners' Organization (BCOAPO) as an example of why the two matters that are of concern to me should re-opened for further discussion.

While I concur with the desire of the Commission Panel to be *"extra sensitive to ratepayer costs while still maintaining regulatory efficiency"*, I also believe that because there is already an interim order in place, there is an opportunity to take the time to get the framework for this Order right so that we do not have to expend more time and money coming back to fix the shortcomings of the current interim Order.

In making that statement, I am not trying to second guess what the decision of the Commission Panel would be. Rather, I am concurring with BCOAPO that FortisBC has not effectively answered certain questions around the issue of eligibility for the bill deferral and bill credit program, as well as adjudication of disputes by customers who want to access those programs, when FortisBC does not agree that they should even do so.

Of particular concern to me is what is going to happen to customers who deem it financially necessary to access the bill deferral and bill credit programs, if FortisBC determines they are not eligible to do so. Are they to be pushed into financial insolvency and left with the stigma of a bad credit rating?

All of which is Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Shadrack