



Gordon Doyle  
Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Legal & Gas Supply

Pacific Northern Gas Ltd.  
750 – 888 Dunsmuir Street  
Vancouver, BC V6C 3K4  
Tel: (604) 691-5684  
Fax: (604) 697-6210  
Email: gdoyle@png.ca

Via E-File

November 12, 2020

British Columbia Utilities Commission  
Suite 410 - 900 Howe Street  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

File No.: 4.2.7 (2020)

Attention: Marija Tresoglavic  
Acting Commission Secretary

Dear Ms. Tresoglavic:

**Re: Pacific Northern Gas Ltd.  
British Columbia Utilities Commission – Inquiry into the Regulation of Safety  
Initial Submissions on the Regulation of Safety**

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Pacific Northern Gas Ltd. (PNG) writes in response to British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) Order G-241-20 which has established an inquiry to seek clarity on the BCUC's jurisdiction over safety (Inquiry). In particular, the BCUC has requested input from registered interveners on the following questions pertaining to key topics identified for the Inquiry:

1. What is the BCUC's jurisdiction with respect to the regulation of safety and what aspects of a public utilities' activities does it apply to?
  - (a) Does the BCUC have the authority under the UCA to set standards, rules or regulations with respect to safety?
2. Are there currently any legislative gaps in the oversight of public utilities with respect to safety?
3. Are there any areas of legislative overlap or duplication in the oversight of public utilities with respect to safety?
4. Would a workshop in support of the Inquiry be beneficial?
  - (a) If so, what would an appropriate scope for a workshop include?

## Safety at PNG

At PNG, no aspect of its business is more important than the health and safety of people and the protection of the environment and its assets. In recognition of the importance of safety, safety has been identified as one of PNG's core values which informs and guides company-wide processes and decision making. This reflects PNG's commitment to ensuring our employees and contractors prioritize the safety of themselves, others, the public and the PNG natural gas transportation and distribution systems.

PNG's approach to safety has a number of facets, including:

- Communicating with employees on the importance of environmental stewardship, incident prevention and minimizing impacts of PNG operations on the environment;
- Adherence to integrity management standards that includes regular inspection and maintenance of PNG assets;
- Complying with or exceeding applicable health, safety and environmental laws, acts, regulations, codes and industry standards;
- Designing, constructing, operating, and decommissioning PNG facilities in a safe and environmentally responsible manner;
- Providing appropriate training to enable employees to perform their duties in a safe and environmentally responsible manner;
- Systematically assessing and mitigating hazards in the workplace;
- Reporting and investigating all incidents to prevent future occurrences;
- Monitoring environmental, health and safety performance using leading and lagging indicators;
- Encouraging employees to bring environmental, health and safety concerns to their supervisor or an Environmental, Health & Safety (EH&S) Committee member;
- Preparing for and responding to emergencies in a timely and effective manner;
- Benchmarking health and safety metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) with industry peers; and
- Auditing PNG's safety and environmental management systems.

## PNG Response to BCUC Questions

On the matter of the questions posed by the BCUC in Appendix B to Order G-241-20, PNG notes that it was provided an opportunity to review a draft of the FortisBC submission filed on November 12, 2020.

PNG agrees with and adopts the FortisBC responses to Questions 1, 2 and 3. Of particular note, PNG is of the view that the BCUC has statutory jurisdiction with respect to safety under a number of provisions of the *Utilities Commission Act* and that these provisions are permissive and that the BCUC is not required to act. PNG also agrees that there are no legislative gaps in oversight of major public utilities with respect to safety and there is, in fact, overlapping jurisdiction with respect to some areas of safety.

With respect to Question 4, PNG provides the following comments:

**Q4. Would a workshop in support of the Inquiry be beneficial?**

PNG does not believe a workshop is required and that a written process would be an appropriate mechanism for the Inquiry. However, should the BCUC determine that a workshop would be beneficial, PNG would likely participate in such a workshop.

**(a) If so, what would an appropriate scope for a workshop include?**

If the BCUC determines a workshop would be beneficial, PNG suggests an appropriate scope could include presentations from public utilities outlining their approach to safety, their existing safety processes and procedures, as well as a discussion on the relevant regulations the utilities follow with respect to safety in their operations. PNG also suggests that the utilities and other parties should be provided an opportunity to comment and provide input on the scope of any planned workshop prior to finalization of the agenda for such an event.

Please direct any further questions on this matter to my attention.

Yours truly,

*Original on file signed by:*

Gordon Doyle