



July 5, 2021

INFORMATION RELEASE – BCUC Approves BC Hydro’s Customer Crisis Fund Program

VANCOUVER – Today, per [Order G-203-21](#), the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) approved British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority’s (BC Hydro) Customer Crisis Fund (CCF) Program application, as directed by the British Columbia (BC) government in [Order in Council \(OIC\) No. 365](#). According to the application, the CCF Program began on June 1, 2021, and will run for approximately 18 months and provide grants to eligible BC Hydro customers.

BC Hydro can include up to a maximum of \$5 million in program costs in its CCF Regulatory Account. The funds collected from the previous CCF Rate Rider exceeded the operating costs of the former CCF Pilot Program by approximately \$5.9 million. As a result, BC Hydro does not expect to re-establish the CCF Rate Rider.

The BCUC approved this application as directed in [OIC No. 365](#). Our review was limited only to ensuring the wording of the order is consistent with the OIC.

More information about the proceeding can be found on the [BC Hydro CCF Program proceeding page](#).

Background

In January 2017, the BCUC approved the establishment of a crisis intervention fund as a pilot program, after an extensive public review of [BC Hydro’s 2015 Rate Design Application](#). The evidence in the proceeding indicated that a crisis fund may reduce BC Hydro’s bad debts due to the disconnection of their BC Hydro service and offset the cost of the fund to ratepayers. In November 2017, the BCUC approved the CCF Pilot Program per [Order G-166-17](#), for a period of three years ending May 31, 2021, to allow time to assess whether there is an economic or cost of service justification for the establishment of a permanent program.

Given concerns raised by ratepayers, the BCUC ordered BC Hydro to provide a Report of the CCF Pilot Program after the first year so the BCUC could gain an earlier understanding of the CCF Pilot Program’s actual results and to assess if the program could be reviewed earlier. It was determined that more data was required before a review of the program could effectively be conducted, and thus the BCUC completed its review of the CCF Pilot Program after receiving the Year Two Evaluation Report.

On May 7, 2021, the BCUC issued [Order G-144-21](#), determining that the continuation of BC Hydro’s CCF Pilot Program cannot be justified on an economic basis. This was consistent with BC Hydro’s conclusions in their [Year Two Evaluation Report](#), which was submitted to the BCUC on July 31, 2020. The BCUC also found that continuing the CCF Pilot cannot be justified based on any other factors the BCUC considered during its review. As a result, the CCF Pilot Program ended on May 31, 2021.

The BCUC’s initial decision ([G-144-21](#)) did not change the CCF Rate Rider of \$0.13 per month, charged to all BC Hydro residential customers, as the BC government ordered the BCUC by [OIC No. 159](#) to not change or cancel the rates charged to BC Hydro customers for the CCF Rate Rider, except on an application by BC Hydro.

BC Hydro filed an additional [application](#) with the BCUC on May 13, 2021, to cancel the CCF Rate Rider. Following its review, the BCUC has approved BC Hydro's application to discontinue the CCF Rate Rider, per Order [G-162-21](#), effective June 1, 2021.

About the BCUC

The BCUC is an independent regulatory body, responsible for regulating BC's energy utilities, as well as its compulsory automobile insurance rates, and intra-provincial pipeline rates. The BCUC is also responsible for administering BC's *Fuel Price Transparency Act*. It is the BCUC's role to balance the interests of customers with the interests of the businesses it regulates. The BCUC carries out fair and transparent reviews of matters within its jurisdiction and considers public input where public interest is impacted.

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