

GIVING ONTARIO ENERGY CONSUMERS A STRONGER VOICE



Ontario Energy Board

The Ontario Energy Board's (OEB) goal is to empower Ontario's energy consumers by providing them with more opportunities to actively engage in the OEB's decision making processes. To make this possible, we are improving our processes to ensure that the very people who pay the bills have a stronger and more meaningful voice throughout our decision-making.

OBJECTIVES

1. Help Ontario electricity and natural gas consumers understand the OEB's regulatory process
2. Enable residential and small business consumers to access and meaningfully participate in OEB hearings
3. Provide effective mechanisms aligned with best practice to ensure the voice of the consumer is heard
4. Ensure OEB decisions consider the views of the customers impacted

CONSUMER VOICE IN OEB DECISIONS

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

[NEW]

- Expanded Notification
- Enhanced Consumer Website
- Process Counsel
- Community Meetings
- Regional Consumer Representatives
- Hearings in the Community



[EXISTING]

- Consultation by Utility Before Application
- Legal Notice
- Letters of Comment
- Intervention

NEW CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

A suite of tools to help residential and small business consumers get information and access to our adjudicative processes.

1. AWARENESS

- The OEB – who we are, what we do and how we do it
- How the OEB affects electricity and natural gas consumers
- How consumers can get involved and be heard

2. INFORMATION

- Consumers need more and better information in order to meaningfully engage
- Information needs to be clear, relevant and easily available in a format, language and medium that consumers can relate to

3. ACCESS

- Removing barriers to access
- Providing simple and meaningful ways to participate
- Going local – taking our process into the community

NEW TOOLS



EXPANDED NOTIFICATION

- Go beyond legal notice by using different channels: website, email, social media, utility bills and websites, consumer representatives
- Engage at different stages and in different ways



PROCESS COUNSEL

- Dedicated OEB contact person
- Helps consumers decide whether, how and when to get involved
- Guides consumers through the hearing process
- Points to additional resources



REGIONAL CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVES

- Local, community-based representatives to gather information from, and advocate for, local consumers
- Experienced in hearing advocacy, familiar with regional/local energy issues, knowledgeable about energy matters and have community-based engagement and consultation skills



ENHANCED CONSUMER WEBSITE

- Central "one stop" gateway for information, video tutorials and other tools about OEB adjudication
- Plain-language, easy-to-use guide book and supporting "quicktools" to understand how hearings work and how to get involved



COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- Gives local consumers a way to provide input and comments directly to the OEB
- Held in the utility's service area after an application is filed but before the formal hearing
- Informal, open-house format that is a more relaxed way for consumers to engage



HEARINGS IN THE COMMUNITY

- Allows consumers to participate close to home
- Makes OEB processes more accessible, open and transparent
- Enhances trust and confidence in the regulatory process

NOTES
