

**Ministry of Energy,
Northern Development
and Mines**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère de l'Énergie,
du Développement du Nord
et des Mines**

Bureau du ministre

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MC-994-2021-190

March 10, 2021

Ms Susanna Zagar
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
PO Box 2319
Toronto ON M4P 1E4

Dear Ms Zagar:

In recent weeks ENDM has worked closely with the OEB to develop and implement enhancements to the COVID Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) with the aim of helping Ontarians who are struggling to pay their electricity and/or natural gas bills as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am grateful for the responsiveness of the OEB and the utility community in rapidly executing program changes that maximize the assistance that can be provided to households and businesses who need it.

The pandemic continues to impact people's finances, and to ensure that Ontario's electricity and natural gas customers do not face hardship owing to mounting arrears on their energy bills, I am writing to inform you that my ministry is currently pursuing options to provide more assistance to customers through CEAP. This would ultimately get more money to utilities to further enable them to accept applications and help customers.

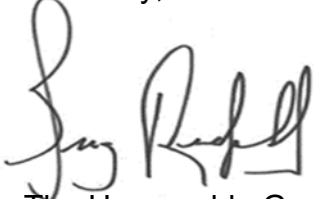
While additional financial support for customers is still subject to approval by the government, in order to provide continued assurance to energy consumers that our government is here to help, I am requesting that the OEB take steps to ensure that utilities continue to accept CEAP applications, and, where a utility has closed application portals because it has depleted its funds, that it resumes accepting applications with the understanding that these applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis once funding amounts are confirmed.

We know that we can count on the OEB and utilities to take steps in the interest of consumers by finding ways to get money where it is needed most. I thank the OEB for updating rules and requirements to allow utilities to be responsive to customer needs.

.../cont'd

We will share further details about additional funding in the coming weeks. My thanks again to the OEB for your continued assistance with this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Rickford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greg" and last name "Rickford" clearly distinguishable.

The Honourable Greg Rickford
Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines

c: Brian Hewson, Vice President, Consumer Protection & Industry Performance