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Energy
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To: All Licensed Electricity Distributors
All Licensed Unit Sub-Meter Providers
All Gas Distributors

Re: Covid-19 Energy Assistance Program and Covid-19 Energy Assistance Program – Small Business – Direction regarding multiple applications

On March 10, 2021, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) received a [letter](#) from the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines (Minister) which indicated that the government was pursuing options to provide additional funding for the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program – Small Business (CEAP-SB). The letter also requested that the OEB take steps to ensure that licensed electricity distributors, unit sub-meter providers and natural gas utilities (collectively, Utilities) continue to accept CEAP and CEAP-SB applications with a view to ensuring that program funds are directed where they are needed most. In a subsequent [letter](#) dated March 26, 2021, the Minister confirmed government approval of additional CEAP and CEAP-SB funding, in the amount of \$6 million for the 2020/21 fiscal year (ending March 31) and \$17 million for the 2021/22 fiscal years and requested the OEB to allocate these funds to Utilities in a manner that maximizes customers' ability to access credits from their Utilities under the programs.

By [letter](#) dated March 26, 2021, the OEB allocated a large portion of the additional \$6 million to Utilities that had expended their program funding or that had limited remaining funding. At the same time, the OEB stated that any customers that applied for and were granted CEAP or CEAP-SB credits in an amount less than the permitted maximum (\$750 for CEAP and \$1500 for CEAP-SB) were eligible to apply again, though their total credits cannot exceed that maximum amount.

The OEB has received a number of enquiries from Utilities regarding customers' eligibility to obtain a CEAP or CEAP-SB credit more than once. The OEB acknowledges that the rules regarding implementation of these programs as currently written contemplate that Utilities may only provide a credit to an eligible account more than once in certain circumstances. In order to protect the interests of consumers and to ensure that CEAP and CEAP-SB funding gets to those who need it most, the OEB confirms that, in keeping with the intent of the March 26 letter, Utilities may provide CEAP or CEAP-SB credits to any eligible customer more than once, provided that the maximum amount per customer is not exceeded. Applications should continue to be processed in the order that they are received. The OEB expects that further changes to the rules for implementing CEAP and CEAP-SB will be required in the near term and will use that opportunity to update the rules to reflect the above.

The Utilities are further reminded that they are required to report to the OEB, as soon as practicable, the date on which their total allocated amount of CEAP and CEAP-SB funding has been expended. It would further assist the OEB if Utilities could advise the OEB when they are close to expending their total allocations, to the extent possible.

Given the \$17 million in funding for 2021/22 will be allocated shortly, we request that any Utilities that have expended their funds continue to accept, although not process, applications to the CEAP programs to ensure customers that are eligible will receive the forthcoming assistance.

The OEB appreciates the ongoing efforts of Utilities in implementing CEAP and CEAP-SB for the benefit of their customers. Any questions relating to this letter should be directed to the OEB's Industry Relations Enquiry e-mail at IndustryRelations@oeb.ca. Please include "CEAP/CEAP-SB Implementation" in the subject line.

Yours truly,

Original Signed by

Brian Hewson
Vice-President, Consumer Protection & Industry Performance