

FARM STRAY VOLTAGE CONSULTATIVE GROUP

MEETING NOTES



Main Board Room, Ontario Energy Board

August 17, 2007

Welcome & Opening Remarks

The purpose of this first meeting of the Consultative Group is to clarify a number of organizational and procedural matters (outlined below). The Minister's Directive was reviewed and discussed with a view to highlighting the focus of both the Board consultation process and the activities of the Consultative Group: the quality of electricity service provided to Ontario's nearly 60,000 farm customers. It was further noted that neither the phenomenon of 'stray voltage' – defined for preliminary purposes as earth current the voltage of which is high enough to be felt by animals – nor the potential impact of stray voltage on livestock is at issue. Rather, the objective of the consultation as per the Minister's Directive is to identify measures that will ensure stray voltage has no undue impact on the operations of Ontario farms.

Role and Terms of Reference

It was agreed that the Consultative Group is to play a communications and facilitation role, including communicating stakeholder perspectives to Board staff; assisting Board staff to collect and interpret information provided by stakeholders; commenting on reports prepared by Board staff or experts; and communicating with constituency/stakeholders to obtain views and information and to provide consultation progress updates.

Activities Schedule

It was agreed to schedule up to four Consultative Group meetings over the September to December 2007 period. The date of the next meeting was tentatively set for Sept. 25, 2007. Board staff agreed in principle to a suggestion by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) that three or four stakeholder meetings be organized in farm communities across Ontario. It was further suggested that the location of these stakeholder outreach meetings be selected so as to be accessible to as many interested farmers as possible, especially Ontario's nearly 5,000 dairy farmers. The OFA offered to consult with its member organizations and affiliates and advise Board staff on appropriate dates, times and locations for these meetings.

Issues to be addressed in the Board Staff Discussion Paper

It was agreed that the following topics should be addressed in the Farm Stray Voltage discussion paper prepared by Board staff:

- Role & Jurisdiction of the Board
- Definition & Explanation of Farm Stray Voltage
- Sources of Farm Stray Voltage
- Potential Impact of Stray Voltage on Farm Operations
- Evidence from Ontario Farms
- Mitigation Measures & Costs
- Experience Elsewhere – Approaches & Results
- Recommended Regulatory Measures for Ontario

Suggested issues that could be addressed under the appropriate heading:

- Clarifying the Board's jurisdiction relative to electricity service quality and electrical safety.
- Characterization and definition of appropriate parameters for measuring farm stray voltage.
- The potential for both the sources of and contributions to farm stray voltage levels to change over time.

Consultative Group information and data contributions

Consultative Group members each introduced, tabled and described information and data their organizations were contributing for consideration by Board staff for the preparation of the staff discussion paper. Some members also advised on ongoing efforts to garner additional information from their stakeholders that would be provided to Board staff in due course.

Requirements for Independent Experts

It was agreed that expertise was required to organize, analyze and present information in three areas: the identification and assessment of the impact of farm stray voltage on livestock and farm operations; experience in other jurisdictions; and the cost of implementing the mitigation measures identified.

In Attendance:

David Balsillie	Board Member
Stephen Cain	Advisor, Energy Infrastructure Policy / Consultation Lead
Steve Clarke	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Affairs – Engineer, Energy & Crop Systems
Gary Gilbert	Electrical Safety Authority – Code Engineer, Provincial Office
Jason Hrycyshyn	Electrical Safety Authority – Electrical Distribution Safety, Utility Regulations
Kevin Mackenzie	Electricity Distributors Association – Policy Analyst
Donald McCabe	Ontario Federation of Agriculture – Executive Committee Member
Takis Plagiannakos	Manager, Energy Infrastructure Policy
Kenneth Quesnelle	Board Member
David Richmond	Project Advisor, Facilities Applications
Gordon Ryckman	Senior Advisor, Issues Compliance
John Savage	Ontario Ministry of Energy – Senior Policy Advisor, Electricity Planning (T&D)
Yury Tsimberg	Hydro One Networks – Manager, Asset Strategies & Standards (for M. Bell)

Regrets:

Michael Bell	Hydro One Networks, Senior Standards Engineer
Erik Veneman	Waterloo North Hydro – Manager, Distribution Engineering Chair, ESA UAC Working Group on Stray Voltage