

**Minutes of the Distribution System Code Development Task force  
First Meeting April 16, 1999 1:00pm - 3:30pm**

Location: Ontario Energy Board offices

1. Orientation by Kirsten Walli.
  - Kirsten Walli from the OEB provided a general orientation to the task force and its logistics:
  - The OEB feels that because the distribution system code will deal with technical issues, the industry, with its operational knowledge, should develop the distribution system code (DSC). The code developed by the task force will require Board approval prior to its implementation.
  - Board staff will be developing a Website to post relevant information and minutes of meetings. More details on that at a later date.
  - A list of task force members was circulated. Meeting participants were asked to verify contact information on the list. Corrections will be made and the list circulated to the members to help them communicate directly with each other. Attendance will be taken in all future meetings (for the Board's own internal costing purposes only). Substitutes may attend task force meetings.
  - Kirsten Walli is the Board staff contact person for the DSC task force. Shela Chan at the Board should be contacted for administrative issues, such as meeting confirmation times, report production for meetings etc. Her number is 416-440-7603, email [chansh@oeb.gov.on.ca](mailto:chansh@oeb.gov.on.ca) . Technical support is available from PHB/HB.
  - The Board's offices are available for meetings but participants should not feel restricted to meeting at the Board's offices only. When meetings are to be held at alternative sites, members were asked to provide Kirsten with the location and timing for posting on the Website. Participants were also asked to RSVP to all meetings to allow the Board to ensure it has adequate seating capacity and arrange for coffee and/or lunch.
  - Some of the issues that participants will be dealing with will be dependent on, or will affect, work that has been undertaken elsewhere (for example, the Market

Design Committee recommendations, work being undertaken by the PBR taskgroups, other codes such as the affiliate code of conduct or the standard service supply code). Board staff will be available to provide information regarding these and other Board directed efforts.

- Board staff will be responsible for coordination with other Board led activities such as the development of the rates handbook or the standard service supply code.
  - The task force should review the recommendations of the Retail Technical Panel of the Market Design Committee and/or of the Market Design Committee itself, distributed in the morning. These were recommendations are not approved yet, some will need to be considered by the task force.
  - Task force participants will be responsible in part for obtaining necessary background information; Board staff will provide support in this area.
  - Board staff will assist to the extent possible, in copying and circulating chapters, papers, reports and memos to the task force. However, the task force may wish to undertake these activities within the task force.
  - The task force is responsible for ensuring that minutes of each meeting are taken, circulated to other participants for approval and provided to Shela for distribution and posting on the web.
  - The task force may determine that sub groups must be formed. If this happens Board staff will provide support as appropriate.
  - The task force will be expected to identify a chairperson sooner rather than later to ensure progress in accordance with the work plan, attend and lead task force meetings, coordinate with Board staff and consultants, and organize minute taking. Task force members were asked to think about who should be the chair person prior to the next meeting.
  - The next meeting of the DSC task force will be April 28, 1999 from 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM at the Board offices. The group identified Thursdays as a good meeting day for most members.
- 2) Introductions. Each participant stated the organization he or she represents, what he or she does within the organization, and what he or she expects from the process.

- 3) There was initial discussion of the issues listed in the terms of reference.
- \* A presentation was distributed of other codes developed or under development, and of the PBR task forces underway. A number of areas of potential overlap and/or interface were noted, in particular:
    - connection and expansion: PBR task forces will likely address the charges and rate making related to these.
    - service standards: a PBR task force is addressing these.
    - connections, disconnection: prudential requirements (establishment of credit, deposits, etc.) will be addressed in the retail settlements task force.
    - meter reading: it will be necessary to make the meter reading schedule compatible with retail settlements, and to create an effective "hand-off" from the meter to the billing system.
  - \* Clarification was sought as to whether there will be a retail metering code. It was explained that one may be developed pending a Board decision on whether retail metering will be made competitive. In the meantime, LDC responsibilities for metering will be addressed in the distribution system code.
  - \* The group determined that the list of issues circulated in the terms of reference is adequate with the following changes:
    - PBR task forces are addressing service standards. The DSC task force will review these to make sure they are complete.
    - Environmental, load management and energy efficiency responsibilities may have to be addressed in the DSC, certainly to the extent these relate directly to the distribution system.
    - Consideration should be given to load transfers (settlement for such transfers would be addressed by the Retail Settlement Code taskforce).
  - \* The group discussed the potential need for criteria to be used by the group in evaluating whether an area needs to be addressed in the DSC and how. It was noted that a PBR context should leave the utility some room to make its own business decisions, and that the code should focus on areas that should not be left to shareholder and management discretion. Possible criteria include reliability, safety and material in providing non-discriminatory access. The group was asked to think about the appropriate criteria for the next meeting.
  - \* The group began a discussion of the issues listed in the terms of reference to determine: whether there are standards for the issue today, and where these are (any documents codifying the requirements), the extent to which such issues

are dealt with consistently, the need to achieve consistency and difficulty of doing so. The group was asked to give further thought to this task for all issues in the terms of reference prior to the next meeting. The following topics were addressed:

- connection and service standards: it was noted that these are dealt with in individual utility terms and conditions of service. Although there is no uniformity, it was noted that differences may not be as significant as may appear initially. It was noted that absolute consistency may not make sense; however, consistent guidelines would be useful. For example, a utility might not be required to offer a particular service level, but would be required to meet some requirements if it did offer service of a particular level.
- disconnection: it was noted that it will be necessary to address disconnection under different circumstances, for example, non-payment, termination of service, maintenance and emergencies. It was noted that currently utilities have different standards in terms and conditions of service. However, there are some common requirements arising from an agreement reached with the industry in lieu of legislation. Board staff will bring copies of the agreement for the group. One group member noted the use of prepayment programs and the importance of maintaining and expanding such programs.

\* In initiating discussion of system expansion, the group noted the importance of being fully appraised of the work of the PBR task forces (how system expansion should occur depends to some extent on how issues like contributed capital are dealt with). The group asked that a formal briefing be provided soon, if possible at the next meeting. The group acknowledged the presence of some PBR task force members but noted the need for a comprehensive understanding of the PBR framework.

\* The group was informed by PBR task force members that the quality of service standards do not address power quality, primarily because it was felt that standards exist at the MEA and CSA level. The PBR standards will require utilities to respond in the event of a complaint as to power service quality within a certain period of time. The group noted that the distribution code will have to give utilities the ability to deal effectively and fairly with customers that are causing power quality problems.