

VERIDIAN CONNECTIONS INTERROGATORY #2

INTERROGATORY

In paragraph 10, Wirebury declares that it can “offer customers lower cost services and improved access to market innovations like energy controls and time-of-use rates”:

- (a) Given that the Ontario Energy Board’s (“OEB”) Distribution Rate Handbook and Retail Settlement Code are prescriptive in the way in which licensed distributors levy distribution, transmission and commodity charges, how does Wirebury propose to offer time-of-use rates?
- (b) Does Wirebury agree that the provision of ‘energy controls’ and ‘time-of-use rates’ are competitive services? Given that the Affiliate Relationships Code and section 71 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* prohibit licensed distributors from using their monopoly service provider status to market competitive services, how does Wirebury propose to offer such “market innovations’ to its customers?

RESPONSE

- (a) Wirebury does not intend to offer time-of-use commodity rates. It will act as a market facilitator providing improved access for retailers to develop incentive rates for off-peak power and energy efficiency services by installing interval meters as part of its standard service offering to all customers.
- (b) As stated in (a), Wirebury does not intend to offer time-of-use rates. However, Wirebury does not agree that utilities should be prohibited from using energy controls or from facilitating the development of innovative energy services that benefit system customers. Section 71 of the Ontario Energy Board Act does not prohibit a distributor from offering demand-side and peak management programs that benefit their customers where there are clear benefits to their system and the services are not offered competitively. Certain information, like load profile and consumption data, may be offered competitively but it is more easily and cost effectively provided by the utility. The mere fact that something can be or is provided competitively is not sufficient to say that it cannot be provided by the utility. Customers who request specific information and advice from the utility about their consumption patterns should not be denied that service, particularly when there are ancillary benefits of providing that service, like customer retention, peak management and improved energy use.

