

**Ontario Energy Board**  
P.O. Box 2319  
2300 Yonge Street  
27th Floor, Suite 2701  
Toronto ON M4P 1E4  
Telephone: 416 481-1967  
Facsimile: 416 440-7656

**Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario**  
C.P. 2319  
2300, rue Yonge  
27<sup>e</sup> étage, bureau 2701  
Toronto ON M4P 1E4  
Téléphone : 416 481-1967  
Télécopieur : 416 440-7656



## **For Immediate Release**

February 17, 2006

### **OEB Proposes to Defer Date for Mandatory Time-of-Use Electricity Pricing**

**Toronto** – Today, the Ontario Energy Board (the “Board”) gave notice of a proposal to defer the date on which distributors are required to implement time-of-use (“TOU”) or “smart meter” pricing.

The Board is proposing amendments to the Standard Supply Service Code (the “Code”) for electricity distributors, extending the period of voluntary TOU pricing beyond May 1, 2006 to avoid potentially unnecessary costs. The Board will establish a new date for mandatory implementation of TOU pricing after the “smart meter” legislation (Bill 21) has been enacted and there is greater certainty regarding the role of distributors in relation to the billing of Regulated Price Plan (RPP) consumers with smart meters.

Initially under the Code, TOU pricing was voluntary for the first year of the RPP during a transitional period pending completion of the Government’s plan for the introduction of “eligible-time-of-use” or “smart” meters within the Province.

TOU pricing is currently scheduled to become mandatory on May 1, 2006 for all RPP consumers with meters capable of being used for TOU pricing. If the period of voluntary TOU pricing is not extended, electricity distributors would be required to make investments in their billing systems in order that they can perform all functions necessary for TOU billing. If a third party (referred to as the “Smart Meter Entity” in Bill 21) ultimately performs smart meter data collection and storage tasks on behalf of distributors, these billing system investments could become superfluous and would result in stranded costs being passed on to Ontario electricity consumers. The Board believes it would be prudent to avoid this potential scenario.

The Board is also using this opportunity to propose additional amendments to the Code relating to other aspects of TOU pricing and billing, as well as to the application of the “final RPP variance settlement amount”.

The Ontario Energy Board regulates the province’s electricity and natural gas sectors in the public interest. It envisions a healthy and efficient energy sector with informed consumers, and works towards this vision through regulatory processes that are effective, fair and transparent.

For more information on the Board or Code amendments related to the RPP, please visit our Web site at [www.oeb.gov.on.ca](http://www.oeb.gov.on.ca) or contact the Consumer Relations Centre at 416-314-2455 or toll-free at 1-877-632-2727.

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For more information, please contact:

Paul Crawford  
416-440-7607