**News Story for Print and Online**

**Prepared by Ministry of Energy, to be shared with Multicultural news outlets**

Translated news article in the following languages:

Korean, Hindi, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Farsi, Greek, Gujarati, Italian, Malayalam, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Chinese, Mandarin, Chinese, Cantonese, Tagalog, Tamil, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese.

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The Ontario Ministry of Energy and the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) are working together on a campaign to raise awareness of scams. We are aware that operators in Ontario are using aggressive tactics and targeting vulnerable populations, often to push them into signing contracts.

Our awareness campaign slogan is “don’t be afraid to say no.” To support your organization if interested in running a story to raise awareness of scams, we have provided a series of facts and talking points for your use.

* The OEB has identified that there has been a 70 per cent increase in the number of reported energy scams in recent months
* Frauds are being perpetrated through phone calls, texts, emails, social media ads, and home visits.
* Some involve messages from companies who claim to be affiliated with, or endorsed by, the OEB or government.
* Some companies falsely include the OEB’s name and logo in their messaging. Others claim to offer rebates or to help consumers apply for financial assistance under energy bill payment assistance programs like the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) or the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP).
* **Don’t be afraid to say no.** Energy utilities, the Ontario Energy Board and the government do not phone, email, or text to promote energy saving programs or to offer an in-home inspection.
* We encourage people to talk with friends or family members who might be more vulnerable to scammers.
* For any concerns, you can contact the Ontario Energy Board at 1-877-632-2727 (toll-free within Ontario).
* Visit oeb.ca/scams to learn more.