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BY E-MAIL AND WEB POSTING

September 9, 2013

**To: All Licensed Electricity Distributors
All Natural Gas Distributors
All Participants in Consultation Process EB-2008-0150
All Interested Parties**

Re: 2012 LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance & Winter Warmth Results

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the results of the Board's Low-Income Energy Assistance Program ("LEAP") Emergency Financial Assistance ("EFA") and Winter Warmth programs reported by electricity and natural gas distributors for 2012. For the complete results see Attachment A to this letter.

In addition, stakeholders are advised that the LEAP Manual, setting out the process for delivering LEAP EFA, has been updated to include Statistics Canada's 2012 Low Income Cut-Off ("LICO") table. The updated Manual is now available on the Board's Low Income [website](#) and comes into effect on **September 23, 2013**.

Background

LEAP consists of three components: Emergency Financial Assistance; special customer service rules; and conservation programs targeted at low income customers. LEAP has been delivered by natural gas and electric distributors in partnership with social service and government agencies since 2011.

The LEAP EFA program for electricity and natural gas distributors was implemented starting in January 2011. However, Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. ("Enbridge") and Union Gas Ltd. ("Union") are currently subject to separate court settlements that require

contributions to the Winter Warmth program¹. Therefore, in 2012 Union delivered Winter Warmth all year, whereas Enbridge delivered Winter Warmth for the heating season and delivered LEAP EFA for the remainder of the year.

The Board also established low income customer service rules. On the electricity side the rules came into effect in stages over the course of 2011; whereas on the gas side the low income customer service rules came into effect in January 2013.

Electricity distributors have been delivering the Ontario Power Authority's ("OPA") low income conservation program, the *Home Assistance Program*, since 2011. Union and Enbridge developed their own conservation programs for low income customers, which they have also been delivering since 2011.

LEAP Monitoring and Reporting

In its February 4, 2011 letter, the Board described information to be filed by electricity and natural gas distributors in relation to the LEAP EFA and Winter Warmth programs. In the same letter, the Board indicated the importance of evaluating and measuring program performance so as to understand how funds have been disbursed and how effective LEAP has been in "managing low-income energy consumer issues in relation to their use of natural gas and electricity such as disconnections, bad debt expenses, etc."

Currently, natural gas and electric distributors report annually to the Board on the results of the LEAP EFA and Winter Warmth programs. In 2014 electricity and natural gas distributors will also begin reporting on the results of the customer service rules.

2012 LEAP Results – Electricity Distributors

On April 30, 2013, electricity distributors filed their annual LEAP EFA results for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012, as part of the Board's Reporting and Record Keeping Requirements ("RRR"). In addition, they filed monthly monitoring data which captures demographic information about the applicants. A snap shot of the 2012 results with a comparison against 2011 is shown in the table below:

¹ Winter Warmth is a financial assistance program that predates LEAP and was used in the development of LEAP EFA.

Electricity Distributors	2012	2011	Change	%Change
LEAP Funds Available	\$ 4,733,771	\$ 4,308,440	+\$ 425,331	+9.9%
LEAP Funds Disbursed	\$ 3,946,644	\$ 3,737,235	+\$ 209,409	+5.6%
Applicants Assisted	8,053	7,756	+297	+3.8%
Average Grant	\$ 432	\$ 405	+\$ 27	+6.7%
# of Distributors that Exhausted Funds	44 (of 75)	53 (of 75)	-9	-17%

Some additional highlights are below:

- There was \$787,124 in remaining funds to be carried forward for use in 2013, in addition to the distributors' 2013 LEAP EFA funds;
- \$224,546 in charitable donations was provided;
- Social agency partners for 17 utilities did not retain administration costs; and
- According to the monthly monitoring data, the typical LEAP applicant is a renter, living in either a house or community/social housing with an average monthly income of \$1,760 and average arrears of \$570.

2012 LEAP Results – Natural Gas Distributors

On April 30, 2013, the natural gas distributors filed their annual LEAP EFA and Winter Warmth results (as applicable) for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012². As noted above, in 2012, Union had adequate funding from its court settlement to provide emergency financial assistance through the Winter Warmth program all year long. However, Enbridge delivered Winter Warmth for the heating season and LEAP EFA for the remainder of the year.

The highlights of the combined results of LEAP EFA and Winter Warmth are shown in the table below. For a full breakdown of the LEAP EFA and Winter Warmth results, see Attachment A to this letter.

² Union Gas had a reporting period of 13 months for 2011 (Dec. 2010 – Dec. 2011) and 12 months for 2012 (Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2012); Enbridge had a reporting period of 12 months for 2011 (Dec. 2010 – Nov. 2011) and 13 months for 2012 (Dec. 2011 – Dec. 2012)

Natural Gas Distributors ³	2012	2011	Change	%Change
LEAP and WW Funds Available	\$ 2,269,016	\$ 2,299,690	-\$ 30,674	-1.3%
LEAP and WW Funds Disbursed	\$ 2,134,411	\$ 2,149,079	-\$ 14,668	-0.7%
Applicants Assisted	4,889	4,824	+65	+1.3%
Average Grant	\$ 370	\$ 380	-\$ 10	-2.5%

In addition:

- Union and Enbridge had \$82,832 in remaining LEAP EFA and Winter Warmth funds to be carried forward for use in 2013; and
- Natural Gas Resources Limited and Kitchener Utilities had \$54,510 in remaining funds to be carried forward for use in 2013, in addition to the distributors' 2013 LEAP EFA funds.

Reconvening the Financial Assistance Working Group (“FAWG”)

The FAWG is the stakeholder working group that assisted the Board in developing the LEAP EFA framework. On July 10, 2013, Board staff reconvened the FAWG in order to present and discuss the 2012 program results. At the meeting the OPA, Union and Enbridge also shared the results of their respective low income conservation programs. The materials related to this meeting are available on the Board's Low Income [website](#).

Information about Cost Awards for FAWG Members

Members of the FAWG identified in the Board's June 17, 2009 Decision on Cost Eligibility in EB- 2008-0150 are considered eligible for costs in relation to participation in the July 10th meeting.

³ Utilities Kingston did not provide LEAP EFA data for 2012

Cost awards for eligible parties for participation in the July 10, 2013 FAWG meeting will be to a maximum of actual meeting time, plus up to an additional 2 hours for preparation and reporting. This limit applies to each eligible party, and not to each individual participant acting on behalf the eligible party. A separate Notice of Hearing will be issued to address cost awards in relation to this meeting.

Questions relating to this letter should be directed to Rachel Anderson at (416) 544-5150 or by e-mail at rachel.anderson@ontarioenergyboard.ca. The Board's toll free number is 1-888-632-6237.

Yours truly,

Original Signed By

Peter Fraser
Managing Director, Regulatory Policy