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BY E-MAIL AND WEB POSTING

July 19, 2011

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

Re: Emergency Financial Assistance for Low-Income Consumers

On November 18, 2010, the Board posted the LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance Program Manual that was developed by the Financial Assistance Working Group (FAWG), and encouraged all electricity and natural gas distributors to make program funds available starting in January 2011. The Board also 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”.

LEAP & Winter Warmth Progress

In May 2011, Board staff sent a questionnaire to all distributors seeking information on the progress of LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance and Winter Warmth programs. Responses were received from 79 electricity distributors and 5 natural gas utilities.

As of April 30, 2011, over \$1.5 million has been spent by electricity utilities to assist low-income consumers throughout Ontario. Between January 1, 2011 and April 30, 2011, nearly 4,000 electricity customers received a LEAP emergency financial assistance grant averaging about \$388 per customer. During the heating season, over 2,700 natural gas customers were assisted using over \$1 million in funding made available mainly through the Winter Warmth program. The average grant was about \$385 per

customer. Further details regarding the progress of LEAP and Winter Warmth programs are provided in Attachment A.

Reconvening of the FAWG

To monitor the implementation of the emergency financial assistance program, the FAWG will reconvene on **July 21, 2011**. The meeting will be held at the Board's office in the 27th Floor Boardroom starting at **9:30 a.m.** An agenda will be provided to the group members in advance.

Eligibility for Costs

Members of the FAWG identified in the Board's June 17, 2009 Decision on Cost Eligibility will be considered eligible for costs in relation to participation in the July 21 meeting.

Eligible Activities

Cost awards for eligible parties for participation in the FAWG July 21 meeting will be to a maximum of actual meeting time plus 50% of meeting time for preparation and reporting. This limit applies to each eligible party, and not to each individual participant acting on behalf the eligible party.

Questions relating to this letter should be directed to Lenore Dougan at (416) 440-8141 or by e-mail at Lenore.Dougan@ontarioenergyboard.ca. The Board's toll free number is 1-888-632-6237.

Yours truly,

Original Signed By

Kirsten Walli
Board Secretary

Attachments: LEAP/Winter Warmth Progress Report