



**PUBLIC INTEREST ADVOCACY CENTRE**  
**LE CENTRE POUR LA DEFENSE DE L'INTERET PUBLIC**

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November 14, 2011

VIA MAIL AND EMAIL

Ms. Kirsten Walli  
Board Secretary  
Ontario Energy Board  
P.O. Box 2319  
26<sup>th</sup> Floor  
2300 Yonge Street  
Toronto, ON  
M4P 1E4

Dear Ms. Walli:

**Re: Establishment, Implementation and Promotion of a Smart Grid in Ontario**  
**Board File Number: EB-2011-0004**

**Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition - Intention to Participate and Request an Award of Costs**

As Counsel to the Vulnerable Energy Consumers Coalition (VECC), I am writing, per the Board's Letter of November 8<sup>th</sup> to indicate VECC's intention to participate in the above consultation and request an award of costs. VECC notes that it has already been granted status and eligibility for costs in the related proceeding associated with the Board's Renewed Regulatory Framework for Electricity initiative (EB-2011-0043, EB-2010-0377, EB-2010-0378 and EB-2010-0379).

**Interests Represented**

VECC is a coalition of groups that represents the interests of those energy consumers who, because of their household income, or other distinguishing characteristic such as age, literacy, etc, have a set of concerns that may differ in kind, and, in magnitude, from those of more affluent residential consumers as well as commercial and industrial consumers.

VECC consists of the following organizations:

- The Federation of Metro Tenants Association (FTMA)
- The Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations (OCSCO)

The Federation of the Metro Tenants Association (the "FTMA") is a non-profit corporation composed of hundreds of affiliated tenants associations, individual tenants, housing organizations, and members of non-profit housing co-ops. In addition to encouraging the organization of tenants and the promotion of decent and affordable housing, the Federation provides general information, education, and assistance to tenants. The address is:

500-27 Carlton Street  
Toronto, ON  
M5B 1L2

The Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations ("OCSCO") is a coalition of over 120 senior groups as well as individual members across Ontario. OCSCO represents the concerns of over 500,000 senior citizens through its group and individual members. OCSCO's mission is to improve the quality of life for Ontario's seniors. OCSCO's address is:

333 Wilson Avenue, Suite 406  
Toronto, ON  
M3H 1T2

The coalition of the FMTA and OCSCO under the name VECC has the specific mandate of intervening in proceedings to advocate on behalf of the interests of Ontario's vulnerable consumers with respect to energy issues, primarily through intervention in regulatory proceedings at the Ontario Energy Board.

Although the organization is not itself a member of VECC, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) in Ottawa assists in the representation of the interests of vulnerable consumers by ensuring the availability of competent representation and consultant support to the VECC participation.

### **VECC's Interest in the Issue and Participation**

VECC's constituents' general concerns are that electricity rates should be kept as low possible consistent with the need to maintain the reliability and quality of service. If undertaken properly, smart grid development offers the opportunity for reduced electricity delivery costs, improved reliability of supply and enhanced customer services. However, it also introduces challenges in terms of co-ordination between utilities, co-ordination with other development plans within a utility and the rate/bill impacts associated with the required investments. As

result, VECC is interested in the outcome of the consultation and how it will impact its constituents.

VECC would request that both its counsel and its consultant be placed on the distribution list for future developments. The contact information for both is provided below:

Mr. Michael Buonaguro  
Counsel  
c/o Public Interest Advocacy Centre  
34 King Street East, Suite 1102  
Toronto, Ontario  
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and

Mr. Bill Harper  
Econalysis Consulting Services  
34 King Street East, Suite 1102  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5C 2X8  
(416) 348-0193 (office)  
(416) 348-0641 (fax)  
bharper@econalysis.ca

Mr. Harper's CV can be found at [www.econalysis.ca](http://www.econalysis.ca).

### **VECC's Intention to Request an Award of Costs**

VECC will be requesting an award of costs for its participation in this proceeding and believes that it meets the eligibility criteria set out in the Ontario Energy Board's Rules of Practice and Procedure and its Practice Direction on Cost Awards.

As noted in PIAC's letter of July 14, 2004 on the matter of Stakeholder Participation in the Board's regulatory policy development processes, there are two types of customer and public interest organizations:

- Those that are member sponsored and can allocate a limited amount of staff resources paid out of membership fees to respond to the economic or political interests of their members and
- Public interest groups that are not generally member funded or do not have funds available for tribunal interventions,

VECC is in the latter category and uses the Public Interest Advocacy Centre to provide and co-ordinate the representation of its interests. VECC's constituent organizations, which consist of over one half million members, belong primarily to seniors and tenant groups. In order to provide meaningful and informed comment on the issues on which the Board is seeking input, VECC must rely on cost awards to fund the participation of its counsel, consultants and advisors.

Yours truly,



Michael Buonaguro  
Counsel for VECC