

**Ministry of Energy,
Northern Development
and Mines**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère de l'Énergie,
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et des Mines**

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MC-994-2021-235

March 26, 2021

Ms Susanna Zagar
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
PO Box 2319
Toronto ON M4P 1E4

Dear Ms Zagar:

I write to you in follow up to my letter of March 10, 2021, in which I advised you that the government was considering ways to continue to make CEAP available to electricity and natural gas customers struggling with their bills. In that letter I requested that the OEB take steps to ensure that utilities continue to accept CEAP applications, and I appreciate the quick action the OEB and Ontario's utilities have taken in this regard.

I am now pleased to inform you that the government has approved an immediate \$6 million in additional funding for utilities that have already, or will imminently have, exhausted their initial CEAP and/or CEAP-SB allocations ("CEAP 2020-21"). Furthermore, the government is providing a further \$17 million in new program funding that will be available for allocation starting on April 1, 2021, to allow utilities to continue to offer CEAP and CEAP-SB to customers in need ("CEAP 2021-22").

It is the government's desire that the OEB allocate these funds to utilities in a manner that maximizes customers' ability to access CEAP credits from their utilities. The OEB should use its discretion to allocate the funding to utilities incrementally according to demand. With this new funding, I hope that residential and small business customers, including those who have previously received CEAP credits and who have incurred additional arrears, can continue to be assisted on a first come, first served basis up to the total maximum credit amounts of \$750 for a residential customer and \$1500 for a small business customer.

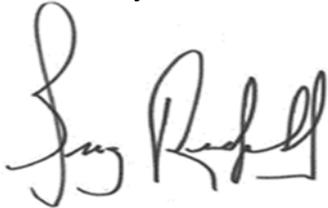
The \$6 million now available should be allocated to utilities as additional funding for the CEAP 2020-21 residential stream, recognizing that small business customers can access this funding once a utility's CEAP-SB allocation has been exhausted, as allowed by the OEB's Decision & Order to allow for pooling of funds across programs. For any CEAP or CEAP-SB application received on or before May 31, 2021, utilities should continue to draw on the funds that the OEB has allocated to them for CEAP 2020-21.

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Beginning on the earlier of a) a utility having depleted its CEAP 2020-21 allocation, or b) June 1, 2021, utilities should support applications through funds that the OEB will allocate to them from the CEAP 2021-22 funds that our government is providing. Any remaining CEAP 2020-21 funding will not be available to support applications received after May 31, 2021. Please note that in its allocation of CEAP 2021-22, the OEB need not create separate residential and small business allocations.

Thank you again for your responsiveness to these program changes, which will allow Ontario households and small businesses in need continued access to bill relief.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Rickford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "R".

The Honourable Greg Rickford
Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines