

OEB introduces Consumer Charter to ensure consumers know their rights and responsibilities

TORONTO, ONT. (May 16, 2017) — A Consumer Charter that sets out the key rights and responsibilities of Ontario's residential energy consumers in a single, easily understood document for the first time, was released today by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB).

“Knowledge is power and the key to consumer protection. The Charter is one of the ways that we are providing consumers with the knowledge they need to protect their rights,” says Rosemarie Leclair, OEB Chair and CEO. “When a consumer feels that these rights are not being protected, they can and should call the OEB.”

The Charter, which can be found at www.oeb.ca/charter, is the first of its kind in Canada. It clearly explains the rights that residential consumers of energy utilities currently have, including the right to:

- Safe and reliable service;
- Accurate and timely bills;
- Fair security deposit policies;
- Fair disconnection and reconnection practices;
- Fair, reasonable and timely complaint resolution processes; and
- Personal privacy.

The Charter was developed with the advice and input of Ontario energy consumers, obtained through a Consumer Panel established by the OEB in 2015. Sessions were held in four key regions of the Province and included a relative demographic mix of everyday Ontarians – both residential and small business.

According to one panel member: “I am so grateful to have been able to supply input for the OEB Charter of Rights. And that my input has been incorporated into the Charter of Rights!”

Following the development of the Charter, the OEB is now moving forward with a review of existing customer service rules for electricity and natural gas utilities, which include rules on disconnections, security deposits and other rights.

“We’re not stopping with the Consumer Charter. We’re going to continue to improve and review the rules and help protect and empower consumers,” says Brian Hewson, Vice President, Consumer Protection and Industry Performance. “We want to look at these rules to ensure that they continue to be relevant and continue to serve the needs of consumers.”

The review will consider how customer service rules have been implemented by distributors and whether they maintain an appropriate balance between customer protection and the ongoing operational needs of utilities.

The OEB will consult with consumers, including representatives of low-income consumers, electricity and natural gas distributors and other interested stakeholders as part of its review.

“Protecting Ontario’s energy consumers – especially low-income consumers – is at the heart of all that the OEB does every day,” Leclair says. “We are engaging energy consumers on issues that matter to them such as rate increases proposed by their utilities, the development of the Consumer Charter and the review of customer service rules.”

Further details regarding the OEB’s process for the review will be released soon.

For more information about the OEB’s consumer protection mandate, visit www.oeb.ca/consumer-protection.

About the Ontario Energy Board

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is an independent and impartial public agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a sustainable and efficient energy sector that provides consumers with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

-30-

Additional Resources

- OEB’s letter (<https://www.oeb.ca/sites/default/files/ltr-csr-review-20170516.pdf>) to industry and stakeholders outlining the scope of the customer service review.

Contact Us

For more information, please visit the OEB website at oeb.ca or contact us directly.

Media Inquiries

Phone: 416-544-5171

Email: oebmedia@oeb.ca

Ce document est aussi disponible en français.

