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For Immediate Release

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OEB's Monthly Billing Initiative to Benefit 1.9M Electricity Customers

Toronto, ON - The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) today announced that by the end of 2016, all electricity distributors in Ontario will be required to bill their customers on a monthly basis. The OEB's announcement comes on the heels of extensive consultation with utilities and consumer advocacy groups as part of its policy review of customer billing practices for distributors.

Ontario's 4.6 million electricity customers are served by more than 70 distributors, many already providing monthly billing. However, 1.9 million residential customers and thousands of small businesses continue to receive their bills less frequently. These customers are served by 19 utilities; among them are Enersource Hydro Mississauga Inc., Horizon Utilities Corporation, PowerStream Inc., Burlington Hydro Inc., Veridian Connections, and Toronto Hydro-Electric System Limited.

"We want the bill to be more effective in helping customers manage their costs," says Rosemarie Leclair, OEB Chair and CEO. "Putting a bill into their hands 12 times a year instead of six will foster a better understanding of energy habits and prompt regular conservation behaviour."

This new OEB requirement will put more accurate information into the hands of consumers closer to when they use electricity. It makes the bill more effective in helping households and small businesses manage their electricity costs. For many customers, the bill is the only tool they use to understand their consumption habits. A monthly bill is a better tool because it provides more frequent information about electricity use and more current signals to support conservation behaviour.

In addition to monthly billing, the OEB has also announced that effective immediately, distributors are expected to issue bills based on actual meter reads, rather than estimates, at least 98% of the time. Customers have a right, and should expect, to receive an accurate bill based on actual meter reads.

With the rollout of smart meters in Ontario, meter reads are largely automated, meaning that there are few reasons for utilities to continue to issue estimated bills. The OEB expects that customers will receive bills reflecting their actual consumption, with limited exceptions.

The amendments regarding estimated billing and billing accuracy come into force today, April 15, 2015. The amendment regarding monthly billing will come into force on December 31, 2016.

About the OEB

The Ontario Energy Board is an independent and impartial public regulatory agency that makes decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a viable and efficient energy sector that provides reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

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*Small Business Customers refers to General Service class customers using no more than 50 KW of use monthly.