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**BY EMAIL**

February 2, 2010

Ms. Kirsten Walli  
Board Secretary  
Ontario Energy Board  
P.O. Box 2319, 27th Floor  
2300 Yonge Street  
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Dear Ms. Walli:

**Re: Board Staff Submission on Peterborough Distribution Incorporated  
2010 Electricity Distribution Rates Application  
Board File Number EB-2009-0241**

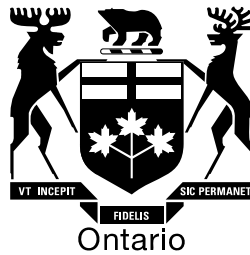
Please see attached Board staff's submission for the above proceeding. Please forward the attached to Peterborough Distribution Incorporated and any intervenors in this proceeding.

Peterborough Distribution Incorporated reply to submissions is due February 23, 2010.

Yours truly,

*Original Signed by*

Martin Benum  
Advisor, Applications and Regulatory Audit



# **ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD**

## **STAFF SUBMISSION**

2010 ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION RATES

Peterborough Distribution Incorporated

EB-2009-0241

**February 2, 2010**

**Board Staff Submission  
Peterborough Distribution Incorporated  
2010 IRM3 Rate Application  
EB-2009-0241**

**Introduction**

Peterborough Distribution Incorporated (“PDI”) filed an application with the Ontario Energy Board (the “Board”), received on October 20, 2009, under section 78 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, seeking approval for changes to the distribution rates that PDI charges for electricity distribution, to be effective May 1, 2010. The application is based on the 2010 3rd Generation Incentive Regulation Mechanism.

The purpose of this document is to provide the Board with the submissions of Board staff based on its review of the evidence submitted by PDI.

Board staff makes submissions on the following matters:

- Potential Tax Sharing Rate Rider;
- Disposition of Deferral and Variance Accounts as per the Electricity Distributors’ Deferral and Variance Account Review Report (the “EDDVAR Report”);
- Adjustments to the Revenue to Cost Ratios;
- Adjustments to the Retail Transmission Service Rates; and
- Accounting for the implementation of the Harmonized Sales Tax (“HST”).

**POTENTIAL TAX SHARING RATE RIDER**

**General Background**

The Supplemental Report of the Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> generation incentive regulation issued on September 17, 2008 determined that a 50/50 sharing of the impact of currently known legislated tax changes, as applied to the tax level reflected in the Board-approved base rates for a distributor, is appropriate. The calculated annual tax changes over the plan

term are to be allocated to customer rate classes on the basis of the Board-approved base-year distribution revenue. These amounts will be collected from or refunded to customers each year of the plan term, over a 12-month period, through an explicit volumetric rate rider derived using annualized consumption by customer class underlying the Board-approved base rates.

### **PDI Specific Background**

Using the Boards Supplemental Filing module PDI's Tax Sharing amount is a refund of \$58,966. This amount when unitized using PDI's volumetric billing determinants results in energy-based kWh rate riders less than four decimal places and demand-based kW rate riders less than two decimal places.

### **Submission**

Board staff notes that as a result of having kWh Tax Sharing rate adders of \$(0.0000) when rounded to the fourth decimal place and kW Tax Sharing rate adders of \$(0.00) when rounded to the second decimal place, the refund amount of \$58,966 will not be returned to ratepayers, which defeats the intent of tax sharing process. Board staff submits that the Board may wish to consider directing PDI to record the Tax Sharing refund amount of \$58,966 in the variance account 1595 for disposition in a future rate setting.

## **DISPOSITION OF DEFERRAL AND VARIANCE ACCOUNTS AS PER THE EDDVAR REPORT**

### **General Background**

For purposes of 2010 IRM applications, the EDDVAR Report requires a distributor to determine the value of its December 31, 2008 Group 1 Deferral and Variance account balance and determine whether the balance exceeded the preset disposition threshold of \$0.001 per kWh using the 2008 annual kWh consumption reported to the Board.

When the preset disposition threshold is exceeded, a distributor is required to file a proposal for the disposition of Group 1 account balances (including carrying charges) and include the associated rate riders in its 2010 IRM Rate Generator for the disposition of the balances in these accounts. The onus is on the distributor to justify why any account balance in excess of the threshold should not be cleared.

Any distributor exceeding the preset disposition threshold was required to file a Deferral and Variance Account Workform.

## **PDI Specific Background**

### **Annual Disposition**

In its Decision with respect to PDI's 2009 Cost of Service application (EB-2008-0241) the Board directed PDI to file an application by December 31, 2009 to provide the balances of all existing deferral and variance accounts and to explain the reasons for not seeking disposition for any of its other deferral and variance accounts. PDI filed a separate application under docket EB-2009-0420 to address this directive from the Board.

### **Submission**

This issue is therefore out of scope in this proceeding.

## **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE REVENUE TO COST RATIOS**

### **Background**

The Board's Decision (EB-2008-0241) for PDI's 2009 cost of service rate application prescribed a phase-in period to adjust revenue to cost ratios. The 2010 Supplemental Filing Module included schedules for PDI to complete to address this matter. The

process adjusts base distribution rates before the application of the price cap adjustment.

## **Submission**

Board staff submits that PDI has complied with the filing requirements of the 2010 Supplemental Filing Module. Board staff takes no issue with PDI's revenue to cost ratio adjustments.

## **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE RETAIL TRANSMISSION SERVICE RATES (RTSR)**

### **General Background**

Electricity transmitters in Ontario charge Uniform Transmission Rates (UTR) to their transmission connected customers. These UTRs are charged for network, line connection and transformation connection services. Based on the Decision and Rate Order of the Board in the EB-2008-0272 proceeding, the new UTRs effective July 1, 2009 were as follows:

- Network Service Rate was increased from \$2.57 to \$2.66 per kW per month, a 3.5% increase;
- Line Connection Service Rate remained unchanged at \$0.70 per kW per month; and
- Transformation Connection Service Rate was decreased from \$1.62 to \$1.57 per kW per month, for a combined Line and Transformation Connection Service Rates reduction of 2.2%.

On July 22, 2009 the Board issued an amended "Guideline for *Electricity Distribution Retail Transmission Service Rates*" ("RTSR Guideline"), which provided electricity distributors with instructions on the evidence needed, and the process to be used, to adjust Retail Transmission Service Rates ("RTSRs") to reflect the changes in the UTRs effective July 1, 2009. The Board set as a proxy at that time an increase of 3.5% for the

Network Service Rate and reduction of 2.2% for the combined Line and Transformation Connection Service Rates. The Board also noted that there would be further changes to the UTRs in January 2010.

Based on the Decision and Rate Order of the Board in the EB-2008-0272 proceeding, a Rate Order issued January 21, 2010 revised the UTRs effective January 1, 2010 as follows:

- Network Service Rate has increased from \$2.66 to \$2.97 per kW per month, an 11.7% increase over the July 1, 2009 level or 15.6% over the rate in effect prior to July 1, 2009;
- Line Connection Service Rate has increased from \$0.70 to \$0.73 per kW per month; and
- Transformation Connection Service Rate has increased from \$1.57 to \$1.71 per kW per month, for a combined Line and Transformation Connection Service Rates increase of 7.5% over the July 1, 2009 level or 5.2% over the rate in effect prior to July 1, 2009.

### **PDI Specific Background**

PDI has applied for an adjustment to its RTSR rates based on the July 22, 2009 RTSR Guideline proxy rate adjustments.

### **Submission**

Board staff notes that very few distributors, including PDI, included in their 2009 rates the July 1, 2009 level of UTRs since for most of them, distribution rates would have been implemented on May 1, 2009. Therefore, in accordance with the July 22, 2009 RTSR Guideline, Board staff submits that the revisions to the RTSRs ought to reflect the changes from the current level to the January 1, 2010 level, that is an increase of

about 15.6% to the RTSR Network Service rate, and an increase of about 5.2% to the RTSR Line and Transformation Connection Service Rate.

Board staff has reviewed the evidence provided by the applicant and submits that the proposal by PDI may no longer be reasonable, based on the January 1, 2010 level of the UTRs. Board staff submits that the applicant's proposed rates be revised to reflect the January 1, 2010 values.

## **ACCOUNTING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HARMONIZED SALES TAX**

### **General Background**

The Ontario provincial sales tax ("PST") (currently at 8%) and the Federal goods and services tax ("GST") (currently at 5%) will be harmonized effective July 1, 2010, at 13%, pursuant to Ontario Bill 218 which received Royal Assent on December 15, 2009.

The PST is currently an incremental cost applied to the price of goods purchased by an electricity distributor and is included in a distributor's OM&A expenses and capital expenditures. The PST is therefore included in the distributor's revenue requirement and is recovered from ratepayers through the application of distribution rates.

When the PST and GST are harmonized, distributors will pay the HST on purchased goods and service but will now claim an input tax credit for the PST portion. The mechanics of HST as a value added tax means that the distributor will no longer incur that portion of the tax that was formerly applied as PST (i.e. the 8%) on goods purchased. However, the current rates as applied will continue to effect cost recovery as if the PST was still in place. If no action is taken, the distributor will realize a savings in the cost of goods purchased while applying rates which do not reflect those savings.



## **PDI Specific Background**

In response to Board staff interrogatory # 8a which asked if PDI agrees that a deferral account should be established to capture the reductions in OM&A and capital expenditures, PDI stated that it “does not believe that it can effectively capture the OM&A and capital expenditure reductions in a variance account.” PDI further noted that “there is no certainty that vendors prices will be reduced by the corresponding 8% and that there is a multi-year transitional period in which an amount equivalent to PST will not be eligible for the Input Tax Credit for certain supplies and services. PDI has not yet determined the cost or cash flow impacts associated with the harmonization of taxes, however, the change will increase accounts receivable and reduce available working capital.”

## **Submission**

Board staff notes that many distributors’ comments on the administrative burden and costs of sales tax harmonization are at odds with the provincial and Federal governments’ pronouncements regarding the stimulative and competitive results of harmonization. Because the costs and savings are not clear at this point, Board staff submits that tracking of these is warranted at this point to quantify, per government pronouncements, that the potential savings for corporations like PDI could be significant. Accordingly, Board staff submits that the Board may wish to consider establishing a deferral account to record the amounts, after July 1, 2010 and until PDI’s next cost-of-service rebasing application, that were formerly incorporated as the 8% PST on capital expenditures and expenses incurred, but which will now be eligible for an HST Input Tax Credit (“ITC”). The intention of this account would be to track the incremental change due to the introduction of the HST that incorporates an ITC from the 5% to the 13% level. To qualify for this treatment, the cost of the subject items must be in the category of distribution revenue requirement. Tracking of these amounts would continue in the deferral account until PDI’s next cost of service application is determined by the Board or until the Board provides guidance on this matter, whichever occurs first.

PDI would apply to clear the balance in the account as a credit to customers at the next opportunity for a rate change after the account balance information becomes available and is supported by audited financial statements.

All of which is respectfully submitted