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BY EMAIL ONLY

February 27, 2023

To: All Licensed Electricity Distributors
All Rate-Regulated Natural Gas Distributors
All LEAP EFA Lead Agencies

Re: Providing Flexibility to Consumers through the Low-income Energy Assistance Program – Emergency Financial Assistance

Through 2023, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) will provide ongoing flexibility in relation to eligibility criteria for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program - Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA) similar to last year.

More specifically, the OEB is extending the flexibility of two specific requirements outlined in its [letter](#) dated January 10, 2022. These include:

- To be eligible for LEAP EFA, the applicant still needs to be in arrears but does not need to be in threat of disconnection or have been disconnected, and
- The limitation on receiving LEAP EFA only once per year is waived; however, the total amount received by a household may not exceed the maximum grant amount for the year (see below).

OEB staff have heard from distributors that a significant number ran out of funds in 2022 and thus did not have funds to carry-over into 2023. This was not the situation in 2021 when distributors reported large amounts were being carried over. To ensure sufficient LEAP EFA funds remain available for consumers who may face disconnection at the end of the winter disconnection ban period, **maximum grant amounts for 2023 will return to \$500 (\$600 if electrically heated)** as set out in the LEAP Manual.

The OEB appreciates that distributors and their LEAP EFA agencies are in the best position to understand the particular circumstances within their communities and assess the needs of consumers. In applying the flexibility outlined in this letter, distributors, with advice from their partner agencies, should use their discretion to balance early intervention with ensuring sufficient availability of funds when consumers do face disconnection.

Any questions related to this letter should be directed to IndustryRelations@oeb.ca.

Sincerely,

Brian Hewson
Vice President, Consumer Protection & Industry Performance