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For Immediate Release

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Ontario Energy Board proposes better customer service measures

Toronto – Today the Ontario Energy Board (the Board) issued revised proposed code amendments intended to standardize a number of customer service policies for all electricity consumers across the province.

The Board believes the proposed amendments will benefit all electricity consumers while also addressing the needs of low-income residential electricity customers.

Among other things, the major revised proposed code amendments will require electricity distributors to:

- Provide a 16-day period within which to pay a bill without the application of a late payment charge.
- Provide 14 calendar days notice prior to disconnecting a residential electricity customer and permit residential customers to request an additional 21-day extension to the disconnection period when a registered charity, government agency or social services agency is considering providing financial assistance to the customer.
- Allow residential customers to pay security deposits in equal instalments over six months.
- Allow all residential customers the option to pay electricity bills in equal monthly instalments.
- Provide a standard minimum arrears management program to be available to all residential customers.

The revised proposed amendments are to the *Distribution System Code*, the *Retail Settlement Code* and the *Standard Supply Service Code*.

These new customer service policies were developed as part of the Board's work to develop a Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP). The Minister of Energy and Infrastructure recently advised the Board of the government's plan to implement a comprehensive long term strategy for low income energy consumers. As such, the Board has deferred implementing its separate LEAP initiatives beyond the proposed code amendments which are the subject of today's announcement. The Board anticipates the work completed to date as part of its LEAP initiative will assist the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure in developing its strategy going forward.

The Ontario Energy Board regulates the province's electricity and natural gas sectors in the public interest. It envisions a viable and efficient energy sector with informed consumers and works toward this vision through regulation that is effective, fair and transparent. For

more information on the Board, please visit our web site at www.oeb.gov.on.ca or contact the Consumer Relations Centre at 416-314-2455 or toll-free at 1-877- 632-2727.

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