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January 28, 2021

Ms. Marija Tresoglavic  
 Acting Commission Secretary and Manager  
 Regulatory Support  
 British Columbia Utilities Commission  
 Suite 410, 900 Howe Street  
 Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

Dear Ms. Tresoglavic:

**RE: British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC or Commission)  
 British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro)  
 Fiscal 2021 Third Quarter (Q3 F2021)  
 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

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BC Hydro writes to submit its Q3 F2021 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

## Customer Complaints

**Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC**

	Q3 F2020	Q4 F2020	Q1 F2021	Q2 F2021	Q3 F2021
Total Complaints*	152	146	192	123	134
BCUC	26	27	13	18	22

\*Total Complaints include the BCUC

Complaint volumes decreased from 152 in Q3 F2020 compared to 134 in Q3 F2021. This decrease is due to the significant reduction in the time expired orders for meter exchanges and a slight reduction in billing and payments complaints. Complaints from the BCUC had decreased with 22 in Q3 F2021 as compared to 26 in Q3 F2020.

**Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints**

	Q3 F2020	Q4 F2020	Q1 F2021	Q2 F2021	Q3 F2021
Average Response Time Days	3	4	4	4	3

The majority of complaints were completed within internal and external targets. The average resolution time in Q3 F2021 was three days.

**Table 3 Complaints by Source**

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021		Q3 F2021	
BC Hydro	67	44%	64	44%	107	56%	66	54%	68	51%
BCUC	26	17%	27	18%	13	7%	18	14%	22	17%
Better Business Bureau	5	3%	4	3%	6	3%	3	2%	4	3%
Government*	54	36%	51	35%	66	34%	36	30%	40	29%
Media and Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*Government represents Office of the Minister, MLA and Ombudsperson*

The majority of complaints were received by BC Hydro and represent 51 per cent of the total in Q3 F2021. This is followed with complaints received by Government with 29 per cent of the total and the BCUC with 17 per cent for the same period.

Complaints submitted from Government represent 40 of the 134 total complaints in Q3 F2021, with 18 of those complaints submitted from MLA offices.

**Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources**

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021		Q3 F2021	
Credit	39	26%	25	17%	9	5%	9	7%	32	24%
Billing and Payments	31	20%	44	30%	118	61%	39	32%	23	17%
Customer Crisis Fund	16	11%	21	14%	15	8%	20	16%	32	24%
SMI	21	14%	2	1%	1	1%	6	5%	3	2%
Non-Customer Service	37	24%	25	17%	23	12%	26	21%	19	14%
Other	8	5%	29	20%	26	14%	23	19%	25	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100%</b>

Complaints related to credit and customer crisis fund (CCF) are the leading category with 24 per cent for each of the total in Q3 F2021. This is a decrease in credit and an increase in CCF compared to Q3 F2020 of 26 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. During Q3 F2021, due to the recommencement of credit related activities including disconnections, CCF reconsiderations had increased as a result.

**Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC**

	BCUC									
	Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021		Q3 F2021	
Credit	11	42%	4	15%	0	0%	0	10%	6	27%
Billing and Payments	7	26%	13	48%	10	77%	10	55%	9	41%
Customer Crisis Fund	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	5%
SMI	3	12%	1	4%	0	0%	3	17%	1	5%
Non-Customer Service	3	12%	3	11%	2	15%	3	17%	3	13%
Other	1	4%	5	19%	1	8%	2	11%	2	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

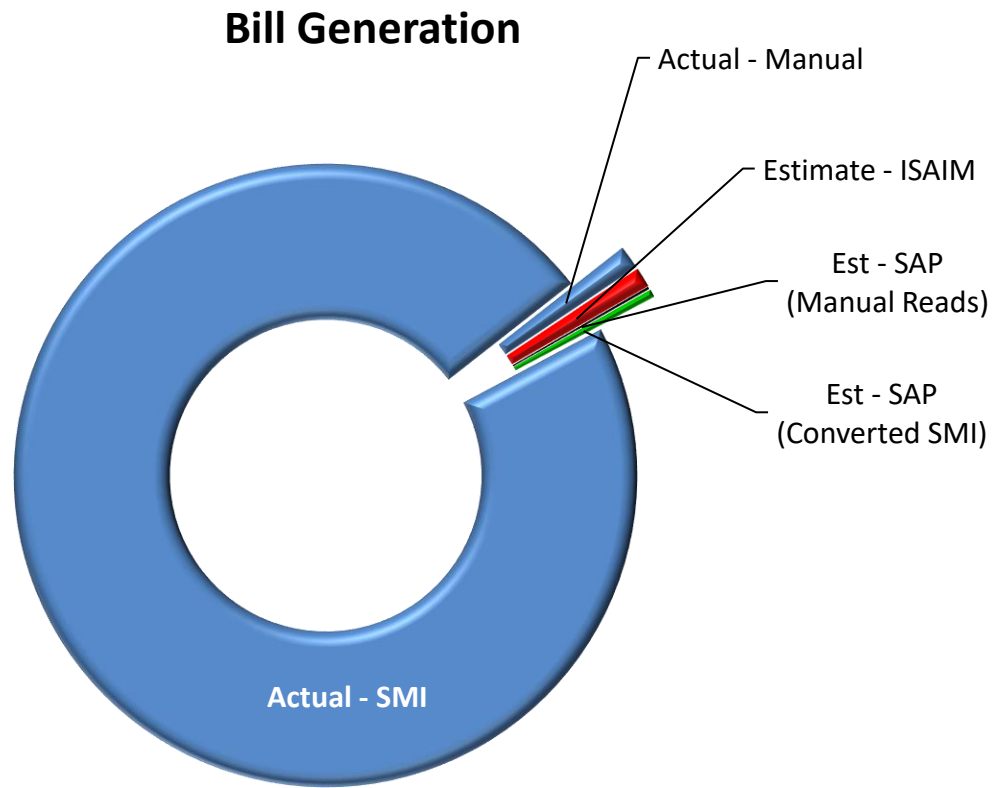
The leading complaint categories from the BCUC for Q3 F2021 are related to billing and payments with 41 per cent. This is followed by credit with 27 per cent.

### Consecutive Estimates

Q3 F2021 sees Consecutive Estimates continue to decrease since the previous quarter. Consecutive Estimates are still slightly higher than the same time last year, this is to be expected as some meters continue to be unread; customers with vulnerable residents (e.g., care homes) and in some remote communities (e.g., Indigenous communities requesting isolation). In addition, limited travel and minimizing staff at BC Hydro offices has caused some delays in replacement of failed meters and network equipment.

For December 2020, 99.5 per cent of bills were issued based on actual reads and ISAIM estimates. **Figure 1** identifies the sources of meter reads (converted and manual reads) that received actual vs. estimates for the month of December 2020. This month shows a full recovery of this metric, 99.5 per cent being the same percentage of bills based on actual reads as December 2019.

**Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, December 2020**



Bill Issued Using:	December 2020		
	Volume	%	%
Actual - SMI	1,338,997	97.2%	99.5%
Actual - Manual	16,634	1.2%	
Estimate - ISAIM	14,207	1.0%	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	1,832	0.1%	0.5%
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	5,623	0.4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,377,293</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Total does not reconcile to other tables and figures because:

- Results include all estimates, not just consecutive estimates (i.e., reflects accounts with only one estimate), and
- This view includes bills issued while the data for other charts is based on the reading of meter registers. In some cases, multiple meter registers are read but a single bill is issued (e.g., a poly-phase meter with scheduled reads for kWh, kW and kVAR).

## Assessment of Meter Reading Performance

The overall number of consecutive estimates has decreased by 24 per cent since the previous quarter (Q2 F2021).

**Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q3 F2021**

	Sep 2020	Dec 2020
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	4,769	3,347
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	1,660	1,080
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,568	3,138
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,997</b>	<b>7,565</b>

In December 2020, 7,565 scheduled meter readings were unable to be obtained for a second billing period in a row, and therefore the associated accounts required consumption estimates to ensure timely delivery of bills to customers. This is a 24 per cent decrease since the prior quarter (Q2 F2021) and a 28 per cent increase since the same period the prior year (5,904 total consecutive estimates in Q3 F2020).

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 6,485 of these bills. The remaining 1,080 were Itron SAP AMI Integration Module (ISAIM) estimates, which are highly accurate because they are based on daily consumption information for the days leading up to the closing of the customer's billing period.

While consecutive estimates decreased across all categories, contributing to the 24 per cent decrease in total consecutive estimates, the decrease in meters estimated through SAP on automated billing is responsible for over half. This is likely a result of improved foliage conditions as well as more established COVID 19 processes for replacement of failed equipment.

**Table 7 Causes of Missed Reads by Number of Estimates**

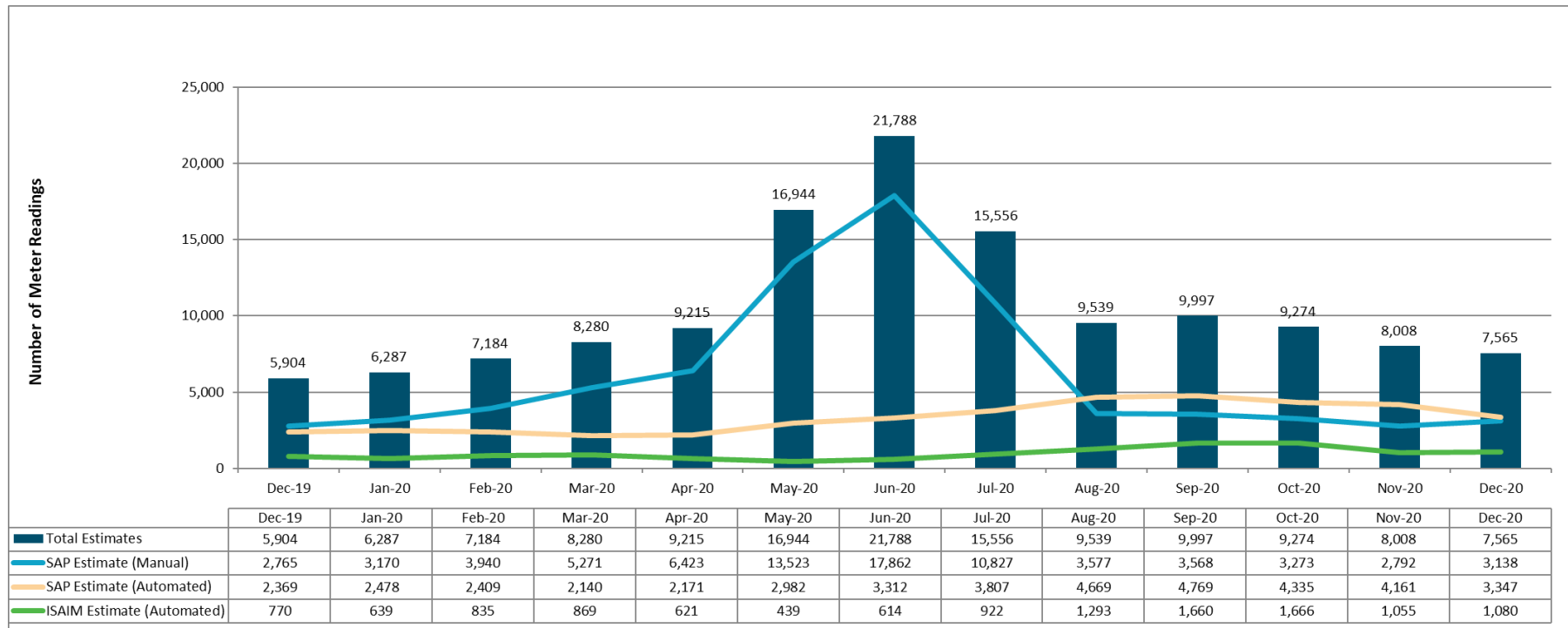
Category	2-3 estimates		4-5 estimates		6+ estimates		Grand Total	
	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)
<b>Customer impact nil/low</b>								
Vacant	319	8	161	15	1,291	48	1,771	23
Disconnected	29	1	22	2	247	9	298	4
Customer-side Power Outage	50	1	87	8	524	20	661	9
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2,062</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>2,730</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Meter Replacement</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Estimated Automated Reads</b>								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	929	23	112	10	6	0	1,047	13
Intermittent Comms – SAP	1,654	45	163	15	109	4	1,926	26
<b>Estimated Manual Reads</b>								
Customer Access	83	2	42	4	82	3	207	3
Other	229	6	140	14	182	7	551	7
Recently unconverted	163	4	127	11	1	0	291	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,814</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,665</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7,565</b>	<b>100</b>

The above **Table 7** summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q3 F2021, including automated and manually read meters.

For consecutive estimates of all counts, intermittent communications of automated meters continues to be the largest cause accounting for 39 per cent of estimated reads between ISAIM (13 per cent) and SAP (26 per cent) estimates. Accounts that are vacant, disconnected or have line side breakers turned off are a close second at 36 per cent, each being 23, 4 and 9 per cent respectively. The remaining six categories have relatively low volumes, each 11 per cent or less, making up the remaining 25 per cent.

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (48 per cent) and customer-side power outages (20 per cent). These two categories, along with disconnected meters (9 per cent), comprise 77 per cent of the accounts with six or more consecutive estimates and do not impact customer billing.

**Figure 2 Meter Readings Requiring Two or More Consecutive Estimates, Dec 2019 to Dec 2020, Converted and Non-converted Meters**



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For further information, please contact Anthea Jubb at 604-623-3545 or by email at [bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com](mailto:bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com).

Yours sincerely,



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