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April 27, 2021

Mr. Patrick Wruck
Commission Secretary and Manager
Regulatory Support
British Columbia Utilities Commission
Suite 410, 900 Howe Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

Dear Mr. Wruck:

**RE: British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC or Commission)
British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro)
Fiscal 2021 Fourth Quarter (Q4 F2021)
Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q4 F2021 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

Customer Complaints

Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC

	Q4 F2020	Q1 F2021	Q2 F2021	Q3 F2021	Q4 F2021
Total Complaints*	146	192	123	134	189
BCUC	27	13	18	22	18

*Total Complaints include the BCUC

Complaint volumes increased from 146 in Q4 F2020 compared to 189 in Q4 F2021. This increase can be attributed to a letter writing campaign from residents in Morris Valley regarding reliability. BC Hydro has acknowledged the need for upgrades to the Morris Valley area and is working closely with residents to address their concerns and keep them updated on progress to improve reliability. Complaints from the BCUC had decreased with 18 in Q4 F2021 as compared to 27 in Q4 F2020.

Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints

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

The majority of complaints were completed within internal and external targets. The average resolution time in Q4 F2021 was three days.

Table 3 Complaints by Source

	All Sources									
	Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021		Q3 F2021		Q4 F2021	
BC Hydro	64	44%	107	56%	66	54%	68	51%	92	49%
BCUC	27	18%	13	7%	18	14%	22	17%	18	9%
Better Business Bureau	4	3%	6	3%	3	2%	4	3%	7	4%
Government*	51	35%	66	34%	36	30%	40	29%	72	38%
Media and Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	146	100%	192	100%	123	100%	134	100%	189	100%

*Government represents Office of the Minister, MLA and Ombudsperson

The majority of complaints were received by BC Hydro and represent 49 per cent of the total in Q4 F2021. This is followed with complaints received by Government with 38 per cent of the total and the BCUC with 9 per cent for the same period.

Complaints submitted from Government represent 72 of the 189 total complaints in Q4 F2021, with 27 of those complaints submitted from MLA offices.

Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources

	All Sources									
	Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021		Q3 F2021		Q4 F2021	
Credit	25	17%	9	5%	9	7%	32	24%	35	18%
Billing and Payments	44	30%	118	61%	39	32%	23	17%	34	18%
Customer Crisis Fund	21	14%	15	8%	20	16%	32	24%	18	10%
SMI	2	1%	1	1%	6	5%	3	2%	3	2%
Non-Customer Service	25	17%	23	12%	26	21%	19	14%	45	24%
Other	29	20%	26	14%	23	19%	25	19%	54	29%
Total	146	100%	192	100%	123	100%	134	100%	189	100%

Complaints related to Other is the leading category with 29 per cent of the total in Q4 F2021. This is due to a letter writing campaign from residents in Morris Valley regarding reliability issues. The second leading category for Q4 2021 was Non-Customer Service which includes complaints related to Design and Power Smart Programs.

Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC

	BCUC									
	Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021		Q3 F2021		Q4 F2021	
Credit	4	15%	0	0%	0	0%	6	27%	7	39%
Billing and Payments	13	48%	10	77%	10	55%	9	51%	8	44%
Customer Crisis Fund	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%
SMI	1	4%	0	0%	3	17%	1	5%	1	6%
Non-Customer Service	3	11%	2	15%	3	17%	3	13%	2	11%
Other	5	19%	1	8%	2	11%	2	9%	0	0%
Total	27	100%	13	100%	18	100%	22	100%	18	100%

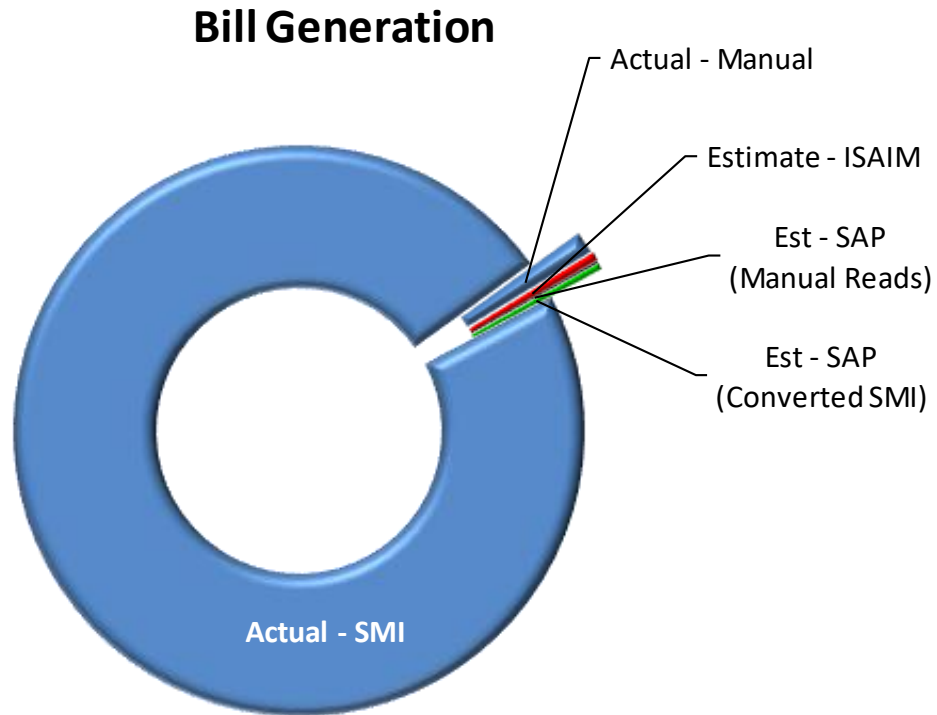
The leading complaint categories from the BCUC for Q4 F2021 are related to billing and payments with 44 per cent. This is followed by credit with 39 per cent.

Consecutive Estimates

Q4 F2021 sees Consecutive Estimates continue to decrease since the previous quarter. Consecutive Estimates are the lowest they have been in March for several years, even though we continue to be challenged by COVID restrictions.

For March 2021, 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 March 2021. This is consistent with other years prior to COVID.

Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, March 2021



Bill Issued Using:	March 2021		
	Volume	%	%
Actual - SMI	1,528,118	97.8%	99.5%
Actual - Manual	19,179	1.2%	
Estimate - ISAIM	7,559	0.5%	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	1,753	0.1%	0.5%
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	5,475	0.4%	
Total	1,562,084	100%	100%

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 3 per cent since the previous quarter (Q3 F2021).

Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q4 F2021

	Dec 2020	Mar 2021
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,347	2,932
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	1,080	697
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,138	3,738
TOTAL	7,565	7,367

In March 2021, 7,367 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 3 per cent decrease since the prior quarter (Q3 F2021) and an 11 per cent decrease since the same period the prior year (8,280 total consecutive estimates in Q4 F2020).

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 6,670 of these bills. The remaining 697 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.

The 3 per cent decrease in total consecutive estimates is due to a significant reduction in consecutive estimates on automated billing, while consecutive estimates for manually read meters increased. The increase in consecutive estimates for manually read meters is primarily due to poor weather conditions leading to inaccessibility, which are only just clearing in some parts of the province.

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	(%)
Customer impact nil/low								
Vacant	422	10	301	36	1,341	50	2,065	28
Disconnected	41	1	11	1	227	8	279	4
Customer-side Power Outage	72	2	83	10	511	20	666	9
Subtotal	535	13	395	47	2,079	78	3,009	41
Meter Replacement	264	7	151	18	195	7	611	8
Estimated Automated Reads								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	608	15	38	5	13	1	659	9
Intermittent Comms – SAP	1,459	39	73	10	96	4	1,629	23
Estimated Manual Reads								
Customer Access	82	2	19	2	53	2	154	2
Other	809	21	69	8	210	8	1,088	15
Recently unconverted	135	3	80	10	1	0	216	3
Grand Total	3,892	100	825	100	2,647	100	7,367	100

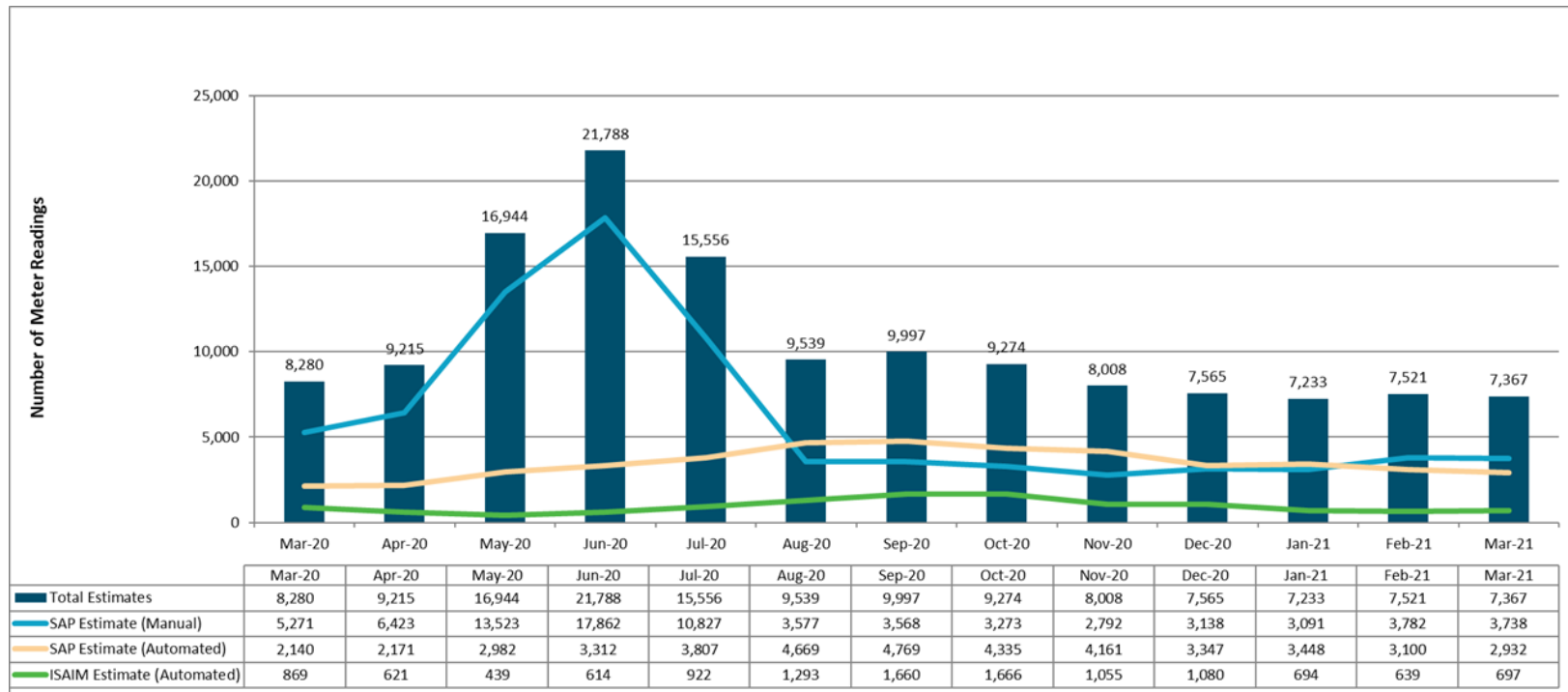
The above **Table 7** summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q4 F2021, including automated and manually read meters.

The largest category contributing to consecutive estimates overall, at 41 per cent has low or no customer impact. This category includes accounts that are vacant (28 per cent), services with the line side breakers turned off (9 per cent) and disconnected services (4 per cent).

The second largest category is intermittent communications of automated meters accounting for 32 per cent of estimated reads between ISAIM (9 per cent) and SAP (23 per cent) estimates. The remaining four categories have relatively low volumes, 15 per cent or less, making up the remaining 28 per cent. “Other” is currently dominated by poor weather conditions for manual meter reads, which continue in the snowier parts of the province (15 per cent).

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (50 per cent) and customer-side power outages (20 per cent). These two categories, along with disconnected meters (8 per cent), comprise 78 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, Mar 2020 to Mar 2021, 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.

Yours sincerely,



Fred James
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