

**Chris Sandve**  
Chief Regulatory Officer  
[bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com](mailto:bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com)

October 31, 2023

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

Dear Patrick Wruck:

**RE: British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC or Commission)  
British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro)  
Fiscal 2024 Second Quarter (Q2 F2024)  
Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q2 F2024 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

## Customer Complaints

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

	Q2 F2023	Q3 F2023	Q4 F2023	Q1 F2024	Q2 F2024
Total Complaints*	137	109	118	115	113
BCUC	24	28	11	21	16

\*Total Complaints include complaints received through the BCUC

The total number of customer complaints decreased slightly from 115 in Q1 F2024 to 113 in Q2 F2024.

Complaints received through the BCUC decreased from 21 in Q1 F2024 to 16 in Q2 F2024, which, while lower than the previous quarter, is in line with previous years' volumes.

**Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints**

	Q2 F2023	Q3 F2023	Q4 F2023	Q1 F2024	Q2 F2024
Average Response Time (Days)	3	3	3	3	3

The average response time to customer complaints in Q2 F2024 was three days. The majority of complaints were investigated and responded to within five business days. Complex investigations involving multiple departments were investigated and responded to within ten business days.

**Table 3 Complaints by Source**

	All Sources									
	Q2 F2023		Q3 F2023		Q4 F2023		Q1 F2024		Q2 F2024	
BC Hydro	72	53%	43	39%	45	38%	43	37%	50	45%
BCUC	24	18%	28	26%	11	9%	21	18%	16	14%
Better Business Bureau	5	3%	3	3%	7	6%	4	3%	5	4%
Government*	36	26%	34	31%	55	47%	47	42%	42	37%
Media and Other	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

The largest number of complaints were received by BC Hydro with 50 (45% of the total) in Q2 F2024. This is followed by complaints received through Government with 42 (37% of the total) and the BCUC with 16 (14% of the total).

Of the 42 complaints received through Government in Q2 F2024, 18 were received from MLA offices, 18 from the Office of the Minister, and six from the Ombudsperson's office.

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

	All Sources									
	Q2 F2023		Q3 F2023		Q4 F2023		Q1 F2024		Q2 F2024	
Credit	30	22%	15	14%	20	17%	26	23%	14	12%
Billing and Payments	10	8%	12	11%	27	23%	18	16%	16	14%
Customer Crisis Fund	2	1%	4	4%	3	2%	2	2%	2	2%
SMI	2	1%	4	4%	1	1%	4	3%	0	0%
Non-Customer Service	85	62%	57	51%	47	40%	56	48%	61	54%
Other	8	6%	17	16%	20	17%	9	8%	20	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC**

	BCUC									
	Q2 F2023		Q3 F2023		Q4 F2023		Q1 F2024		Q2 F2024	
Credit	14	58%	3	11%	7	64%	10	48%	2	13%
Billing and Payments	4	17%	4	14%	2	18%	6	29%	4	25%
Customer Crisis Fund	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SMI	1	4%	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Non-Customer Service	3	13%	17	61%	2	18%	5	24%	9	56%
Other	2	8%	2	7%	0	8%	0	0%	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Q2 F2024, 61 complaints (54% of the total) were in the Non-Customer Service category. Of these, 16 were related to Design, largely due to service connection delays or costs, and 15 were Field complaints, spanning topics such as impact of water levels on fish, vehicle operation, and pole and light replacements. There were 17 complaints related to Conservation and Energy Management, mainly pertaining to air conditioning, heat pump, and electric vehicle charging rebates.

Of the 20 complaints under the Other category, six were due to Reliability, six were about Vegetation, three were Property related, two resulted from the Call Centre phone system, one from customer service, one was a Claim dispute, and one due to a disconnection unrelated to BC Hydro.

Of the 16 complaints received by the BCUC in Q2 F2024, four were related to Billing and Payments and there were two related to Credit. Of the nine Non-Customer Service complaints, four were related to Rates, including two about the E-Plus rate in particular, two were related to Design, two were related to Conservation and Energy Management programs, and one was with regard to Planned Outage Notification. The one complaint in the Other category was about Vegetation.

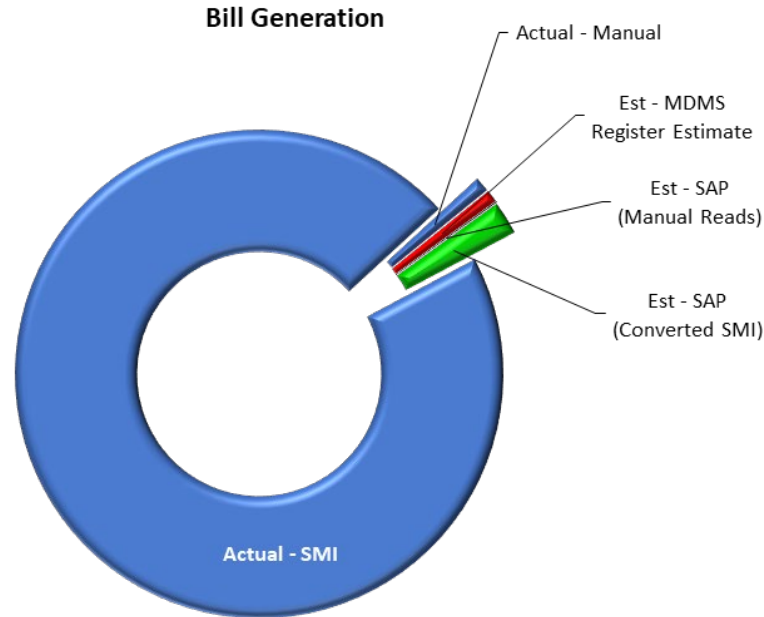
### Consecutive Estimates

In Q2 F2024, the number of Consecutive Estimates increased to 9,444 compared to 6,357 in the previous quarter. For September 2023, 96.9% of bills were issued based on actual reads.

This month's significant increase in estimated bills can be attributed to a technical issue, which prevented 29,000 Meter Data Management System (**MDMS**) reads (actuals or MDMS estimates) from being received by SAP, which resulted in SAP estimates being generated for the affected customers' September bills. Investigation into this incident identified the point of failure and has not uncovered any further incidents of this nature, however, the root cause has not yet been found. The investigation is ongoing.

Figure 1 below identifies the sources of meter reads (converted and manual reads) that received actual versus estimates for September 2023.

**Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, September 2023**



Bill Issued Using:	September, 2023		
	Volume	%	%
Actual – SMI	1,404,721	96.0	96.9
Actual – Manual	14,383	1.0	
Estimate – Register Estimate	11,685	0.8	3.1
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	1,066	0.1	
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	32,097	2.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,463,952</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</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 kVARh).

## Assessment of Meter Reading Performance

In September 2023, 9,444 scheduled meter readings were unable to be obtained for a second billing period in a row. Therefore, the associated accounts required consumption estimates to ensure timely delivery of bills to customers.

**Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q2 F2024**

	June 2023	September 2023
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	1,947	3,529
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read Register Estimate	1,362	2,904
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,048	3,011
Total	6,357	9,444

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 6,540 of these bills. The remaining 2,904 were Register Estimates.

The 49% increase in total Consecutive Estimates this quarter is due to a 118% increase in MDMS estimates and an 81% increase in SAP estimates for automated reads. While these fluctuations are consistent with seasonal trends, Consecutive Estimates were lower than typical in Spring 2023 (as discussed in our last quarterly report) and Summer Consecutive Estimates have been higher than usual. In addition to the densification of foliage that impacts automated reads each summer, this year's wildfires also likely contributed to this quarter's figures.

**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	658	12	196	29	1,284	45	2,138	23
Disconnected	107	2	46	7	234	8	387	4
Customer-Side Power Outage	41	1	105	16	863	31	1,009	11
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2,381</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>3,534</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Meter Replacement</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>8</b>

Category	2-3 Estimates		4-5 Estimates		6+ Estimates		Grand Total	
	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)
<b>Estimated Automated Reads</b>								
Intermittent Comms – MDMS	2,393	38	4	1	3	0	2,400	24
Intermittent Comms – SAP	1,738	31	60	10	93	3	1,891	21
<b>Estimated Manual Reads</b>								
Customer Access	116	2	73	11	123	4	312	3
Other	96	2	49	7	102	4	247	3
Recently Unconverted	253	4	4	1	1	0	258	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,967</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,815</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9,444</b>	<b>100</b>

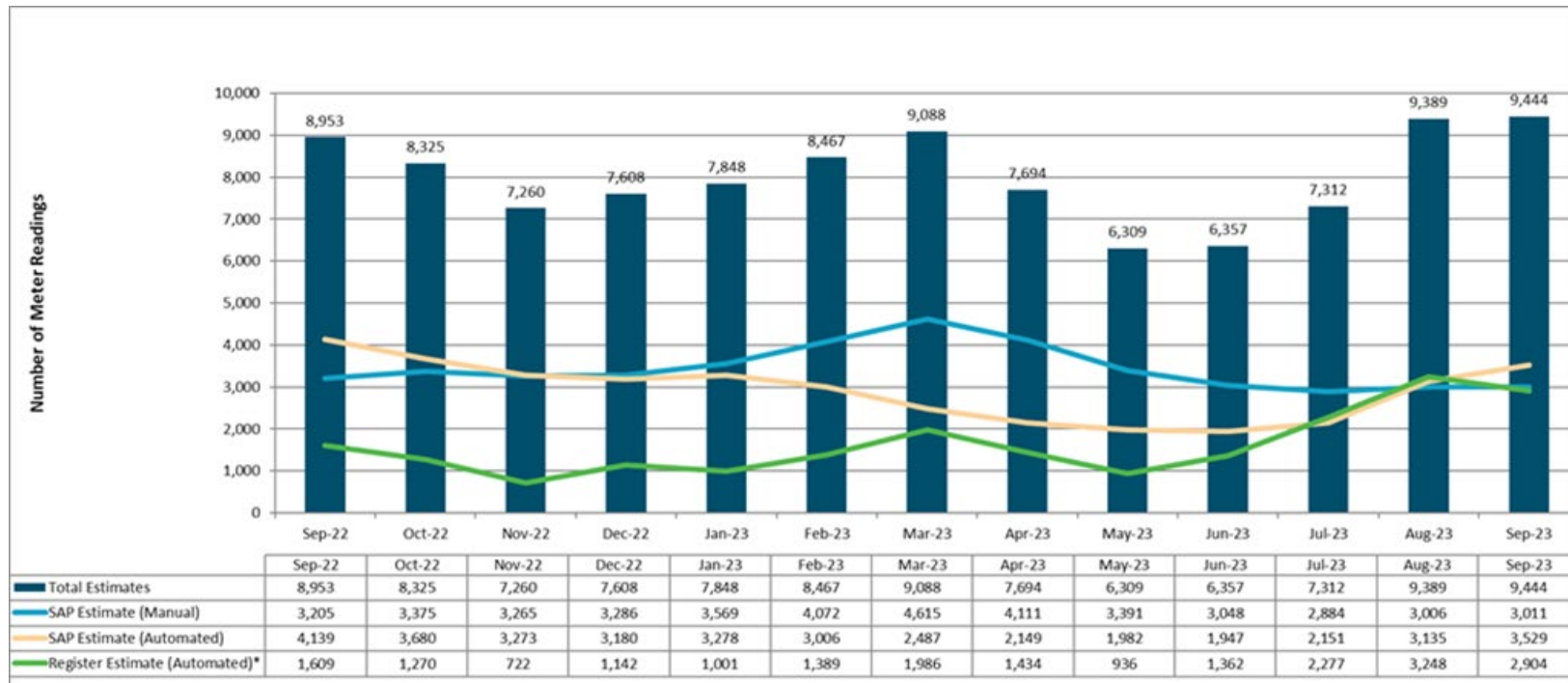
[Table 7](#) above summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q2 F2024, including automated and manually read meters.

BC Hydro assesses that 37% of the estimated meter reads had low or no customer impact. This category includes accounts that are vacant (23%), services with the line side breakers turned off (11%), and disconnected services (4%). The meter replacement category accounts for 8% of consecutive estimates. The majority of meters pending replacement have failed and require replacement for an actual read to be obtained. Intermittent communications of automated meters accounted for a further 45% of estimated reads, divided between MDMS estimates (24%) and SAP estimates (21%).

The 9% of consecutive estimates relating to manually read meters is evenly split between Customer Access issues (almost half of which relate to locked gates and key issues), Recently Unconverted meters (which are meters that have been changed from automated to manual reads as the meter stopped communicating over the air), and Other, of which half are due to restricted access to meters in wildfire areas.

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (45%) and customer-side power outages (31%). These two categories, along with disconnected meters (8%), comprise 85% of accounts with six or more consecutive estimates and do not impact customer billing.

**Figure 2 Meter Readings Requiring Two or More Consecutive Estimates, September 2022 to September 2023, Converted and Non-Converted Meters**



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For further information, please contact Alicia Henderson by email at [bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com](mailto:bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com).

Yours sincerely,



Chris Sandve  
Chief Regulatory Officer

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