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January 29, 2024

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 Third Quarter (Q3 F2024)
Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q3 F2024 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

Customer Complaints

Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC

	Q3 F2023	Q4 F2023	Q1 F2023	Q2 F2024	Q3 F2024
Total Complaints*	109	118	115	113	85
BCUC	28	11	21	16	7

*Total Complaints include complaints received through the BCUC

The total number of customer complaints decreased significantly from 113 in Q2 F2024 to 85 in Q3 F2024. Complaints about Conservation and Energy Management programs decreased from 17 in Q2 F2024 to 4 in Q3 F2024. A reduction in Credit and Billing complaints also contributed to the lower volume in Q3.

Complaints received through the BCUC decreased from 16 in Q2 F2024 to 7 in Q3 F2024, which is historically lower than the third quarter in previous years. The reduction can be attributed to a decrease in Billing and Payments, and Rates complaints.

Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints

	Q3 F2023	Q4 F2023	Q1 F2023	Q2 F2024	Q3 F2024
Average Response Time (Days)	3	3	3	3	4

The average response time to customer complaints in Q3 F2024 was four days. The majority of complaints were investigated and responded to within five business days. Most complex investigations involving multiple departments were investigated and responded to within ten business days.

Table 3 Complaints by Source

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2023		Q4 F2023		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2024		Q3 F2024	
BC Hydro	43	39%	45	38%	43	37%	50	45%	40	47%
BCUC	28	26%	11	9%	21	18%	16	14%	7	8%
Better Business Bureau	3	3%	7	6%	4	3%	5	4%	9	11%
Government*	34	31%	55	47%	47	42%	42	37%	29	34%
Media and Other	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	109	100%	118	100%	115	100%	113	100%	85	100%

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

The largest number of complaints were received by BC Hydro with 40 (47% of the total) in Q3 F2024. This is followed by complaints received through Government with 29 (38% of the total) and the Better Business Bureau with 9 (12% of the total).

Of the 29 complaints received through Government in Q3 F2024, 23 were from the Office of the Minister, five were from MLA offices, and one was from the Ombudsperson's office.

Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2023		Q4 F2023		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2024		Q3 F2024	
Credit	15	14%	20	17%	26	23%	14	12%	11	13%
Billing and Payments	12	11%	27	23%	18	16%	16	14%	11	13%
Customer Crisis Fund	4	4%	3	2%	2	2%	2	2%	1	1%
SMI	4	4%	1	1%	4	3%	0	0%	1	1%
Non-Customer Service	57	51%	47	40%	56	48%	61	54%	48	57%

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2023		Q4 F2023		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2024		Q3 F2024	
Other	17	16%	20	17%	9	8%	20	18%	13	15%
Total	109	100%	118	100%	115	100%	113	100%	85	100%

Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC

	BCUC									
	Q3 F2023		Q4 F2023		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2024		Q3 F2024	
Credit	3	11%	7	64%	10	48%	2	13%	2	29%
Billing and Payments	4	14%	2	18%	6	29%	4	25%	0	0%
Customer Crisis Fund	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SMI	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%
Non-Customer Service	17	61%	2	18%	5	23%	9	56%	3	43%
Other	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	1	14%
Total	28	100%	11	100%	21	100%	16	100%	16	100%

In Q3 F2024, 48 complaints (57% of the total) were in the Non-Customer Service category. Of these, 24 were related to Design, largely due to service connection delays or costs, and seven were Field complaints, specifically for street light and property access issues. There were six complaints related to Vegetation, three of which were related to tree removal in Saanich for a three-phase upgrade.

Of the 13 complaints under the Other category, eight were due to Rates, four were about Reliability, and one was due to a Forced Outage. Five of the 11 Credit complaints were related to disconnections.

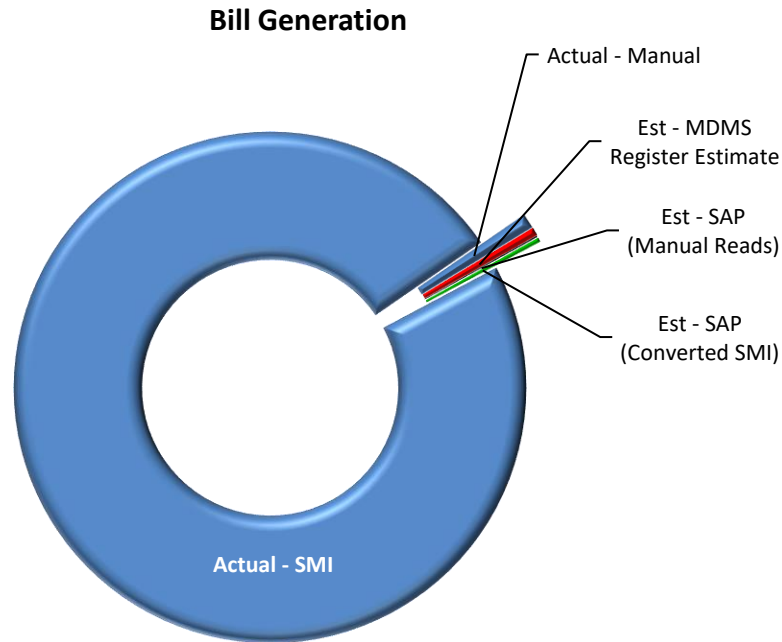
Of the 7 complaints received by the BCUC in Q3 F2024, two were related to Credit. Of the three Non-Customer Service complaints, two were related to Design, and one was about street lights. The one complaint in the Other category was about Reliability.

Consecutive Estimates

In Q3 F2024, the number of Consecutive Estimates decreased to 7,504 compared to 9,444 in the previous quarter. For December 2023, 99.1% of bills were issued based on actual reads.

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

Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, December 2023



Bill Issued Using:	December, 2023		
	Volume	%	%
Actual – SMI	1,325,857	98.2	99.1
Actual – Manual	12,592	0.9	
Estimate – Register Estimate	7,263	0.5	0.9
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	1,170	0.1	
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	3,718	0.3	
Total	1,350,600	100	100.0

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 December 2023, 7,504 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 – Q3 F2024

	September 2023	December 2023
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,529	2,356
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read Register Estimate	2,904	2,095
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,011	3,053
Total	9,444	7,504

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 5,409 of these bills. The remaining 2,095 were Register Estimates.

The 21% decrease in total Consecutive Estimates this quarter is due to a 33% decrease in SAP estimates and a 28% decrease in register estimates for automated reads, while consecutive estimates for manual reads increased slightly, by 1%. These results are consistent with seasonal trends.

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	285	7	180	27	1,335	46	1,800	23
Disconnected	41	1	24	3	239	8	304	4
Customer-Side Power Outage	51	1	116	17	872	31	1,039	14
Subtotal	377	9	320	48	2,446	85	3,143	41
Meter Replacement	387	9	86	12	74	3	547	7
Estimated Automated Reads								
Intermittent Comms – MDMS	1,823	46	18	3	2	0	1,843	25

Category	2-3 Estimates		4-5 Estimates		6+ Estimates		Grand Total	
	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)
Intermittent Comms – SAP	866	23	78	12	118	4	1,062	15
Estimated Manual Reads								
Customer Access	120	3	81	12	116	4	317	4
Other	249	6	85	13	109	4	443	6
Recently Unconverted	142	4	2	0	5	0	149	2
Grand Total	3,964	100	670	100	2,870	100	7,504	100

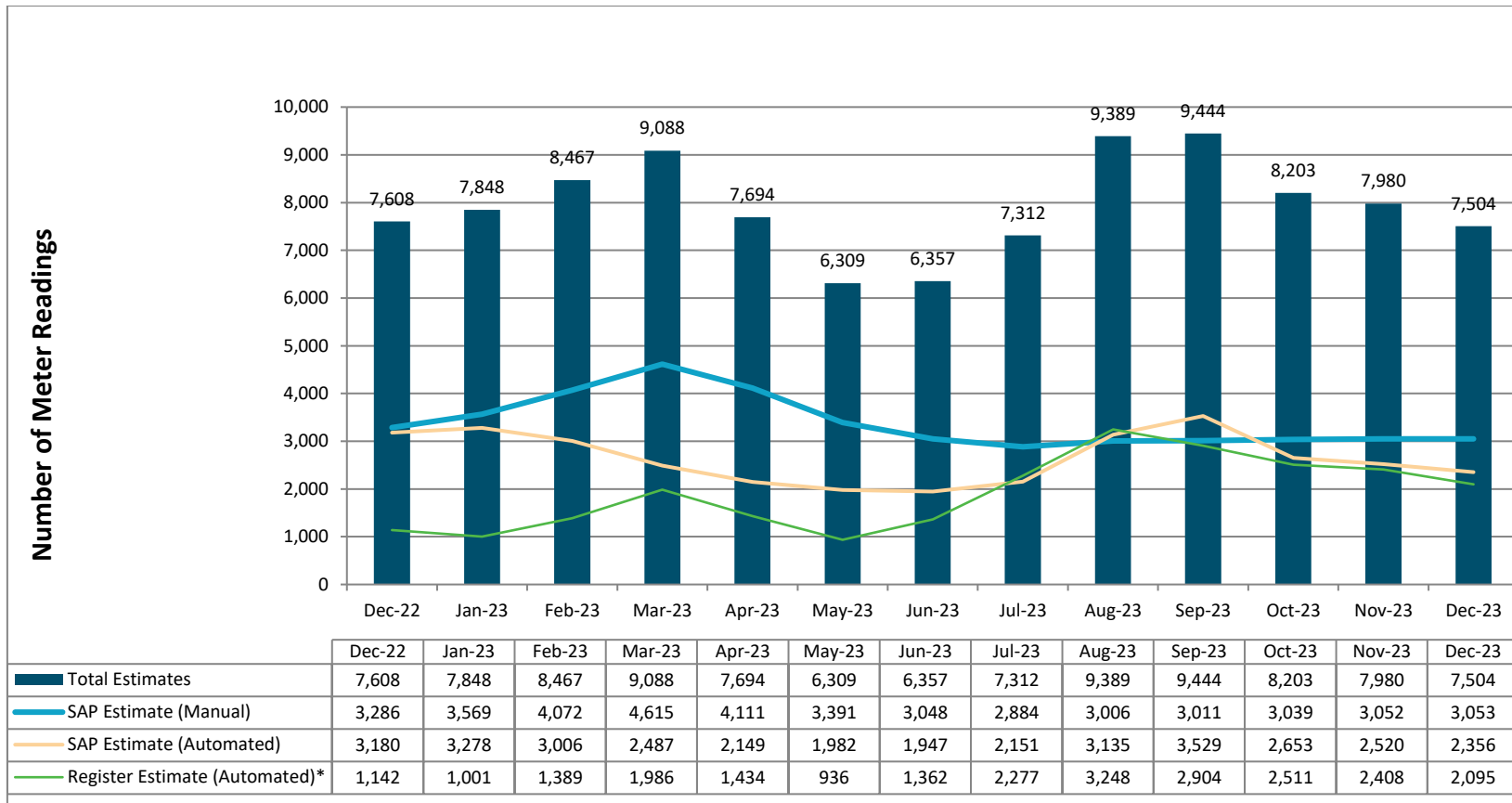
[Table 7](#) above summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q3 F2024, including automated and manually read meters.

BC Hydro assesses that 41% 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 (14%), and disconnected services (4%). The meter replacement category accounts for 7% 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 40% of estimated reads, divided between MDMS estimates (25%) and SAP estimates (15%).

Of the 12% of consecutive estimates relating to manually read meters, the majority are the result of the inability to access meters due to inclement weather conditions (included in the Other category, 6%). Customer Access issues such as locked gates and key issues account for 4% of consecutive estimates with the remaining 2% caused by Recently Unconverted meters (which are meters that have been changed from automated to manual reads as the meter stopped communicating over the air).

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (46%) 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, December 2022 to December 2023, Converted and Non-Converted Meters



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For further information, please contact Alicia Henderson by email at bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Sandve
Chief Regulatory Officer

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