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January 22, 2020

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 2020 Third Quarter (Q3 F2020)  
 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

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BC Hydro writes to submit its Q3 F2020 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

### Customer Complaints

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

	Q3 F2019	Q4 F2019	Q1 F2020	Q2 F2020	Q3 F2020
Total Complaints*	175	136	150	185	152
BCUC	36	25	38	29	26
*Total Complaints include the BCUC					

Complaint volumes decreased from 175 in Q3 F2019 compared to 152 in Q3 F2020. This decrease can be attributed to minimal activities related to time expired meter exchanges. Complaints from the BCUC were also lower, with 36 in Q3 F2019 when compared to 26 in Q3 F2020.

**Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints**

	Q3 F2019	Q4 F2019	Q1 F2020	Q2 F2020	Q3 F2020
Average Response Time Days	2	3	3	3	3

The majority of complaints were completed within internal and external targets. The average resolution time in Q3 F2020 was three days and is consistent with the previous three quarters.

**Table 3 Complaints by Source**

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2019		Q4 F2019		Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020	
BC Hydro	94	54%	62	46%	57	38%	74	40%	67	44%
BCUC	36	21%	25	18%	38	25%	29	16%	26	17%
Better Business Bureau	0	0%	3	2%	2	1%	1	1%	5	3%
Government*	44	24%	46	34%	52	35%	81	43%	54	36%
Media and Other	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

The majority of complaints were received from within BC Hydro and represent 44 per cent of the total in Q3 F2020. This is followed by complaints received by Government with 36 per cent of the total and the BCUC with 17 per cent for the same period.

Complaints submitted from Government represent 54 of the 152 total complaints in Q3 F2020, with 22 of those complaints submitted from MLA offices.

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

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2019		Q4 F2019		Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020	
Credit	37	21%	28	21%	45	30%	47	25%	39	26%
Billing and Payments	35	20%	27	20%	34	23%	25	14%	31	20%
Customer Crisis Fund	20	11%	12	9%	13	9%	18	10%	16	11%
SMI	52	30%	18	13%	10	7%	45	24%	21	14%
Non-Customer Service	19	11%	25	18%	38	24%	28	15%	37	24%
Other	12	7%	26	19%	10	7%	22	12%	8	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>

Complaints related to credit are the leading category with 26 per cent of the total in Q3 F2020. This is followed by Non-Customer Service (NCS) complaints with 24 per cent of the total. Although the issues related to NCS complaints are diverse, 10 of the 37 are related to planned outages scheduled during colder temperatures and over the holiday season.

**Table 5 Complaints by Category - BCUC**

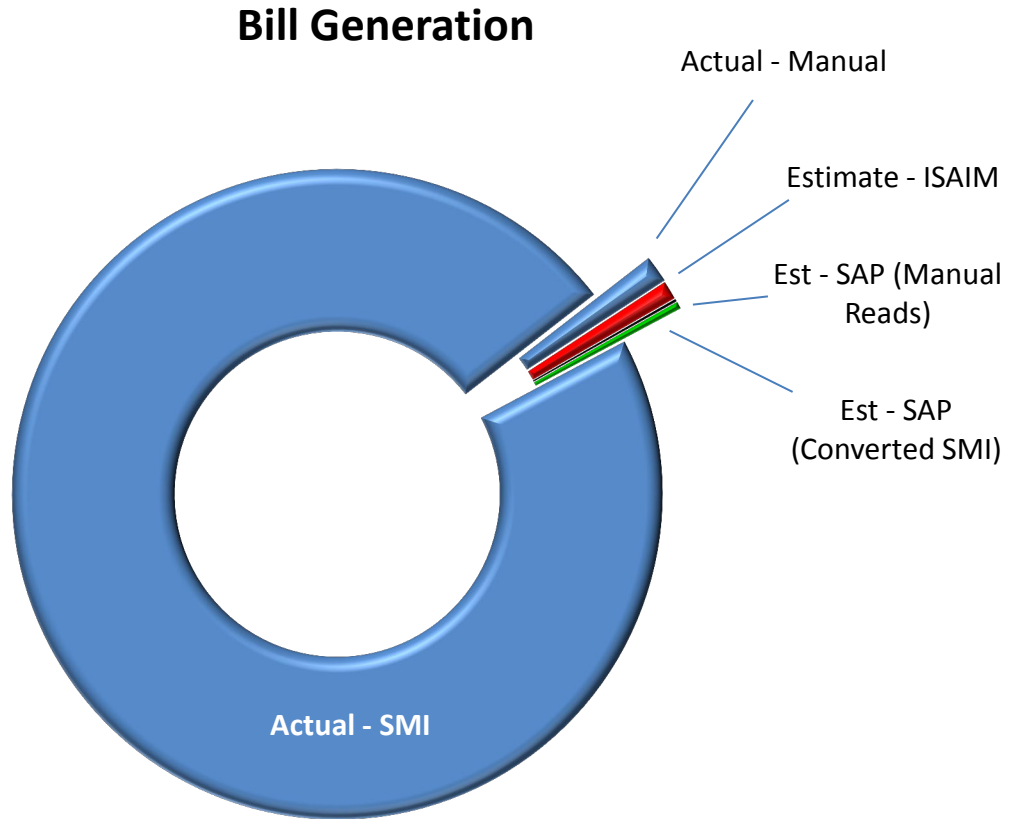
	BCUC									
	Q3 F2019		Q4 F2019		Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020	
Credit	15	42%	9	36%	14	37%	10	34%	11	42%
Billing and Payments	12	33%	5	20%	14	37%	10	34%	7	26%
Customer Crisis Fund	1	3%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	1	4%
SMI	5	14%	5	20%	3	8%	1	3%	3	12%
Non-Customer Service	3	8%	4	16%	5	12%	4	14%	3	12%
Other	0	0%	2	8%	1	3%	4	14%	1	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>

The leading complaint categories from the BCUC for Q3 F2020 are related to credit with 42 per cent and billing with 26 per cent. This remains consistent when compared to Q3 F2019.

### Consecutive Estimates

For December 2019, 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 2019.

**Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, December 2019**



Bill Issued Using:	December 2019		
	Volume	%	%
Actual - SMI	1,324,622	97.3%	99.5%
Actual - Manual	18,231	1.3%	
Estimate - ISAIM	12,567	0.9%	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	1,760	0.1%	0.5%
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	4,769	0.4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,361,949</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 29 per cent since the previous quarter (Q2 F2020).

**Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q3 F2020**

	Sep 2019	Dec 2019
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	4,487	2,369
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	1,269	770
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	2,538	2,765
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,294</b>	<b>5,904</b>

In December 2019, 5,904 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 29 per cent decrease since the prior quarter (Q2 F2020) and a 14 per cent decrease since the same period the prior year (6,882 total consecutive estimates in Q3 F2019).

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 5,134 of these bills. The remaining 770 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 29 per cent decrease in total consecutive estimates is due to significant decreases in consecutive estimates for automated meter reading; SAP estimates for automated reads fell by 47 per cent, while ISAIM estimates were reduced by 39 per cent. It is believed that the two most significant factors that contributed to this result are: the foliage that was affecting the communications of the network would have fallen thus improving read reliability; also, in November we changed the process to unconvert residential accounts sooner (from automated reads to manual reads), after 3 consecutive estimates rather than 4.

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

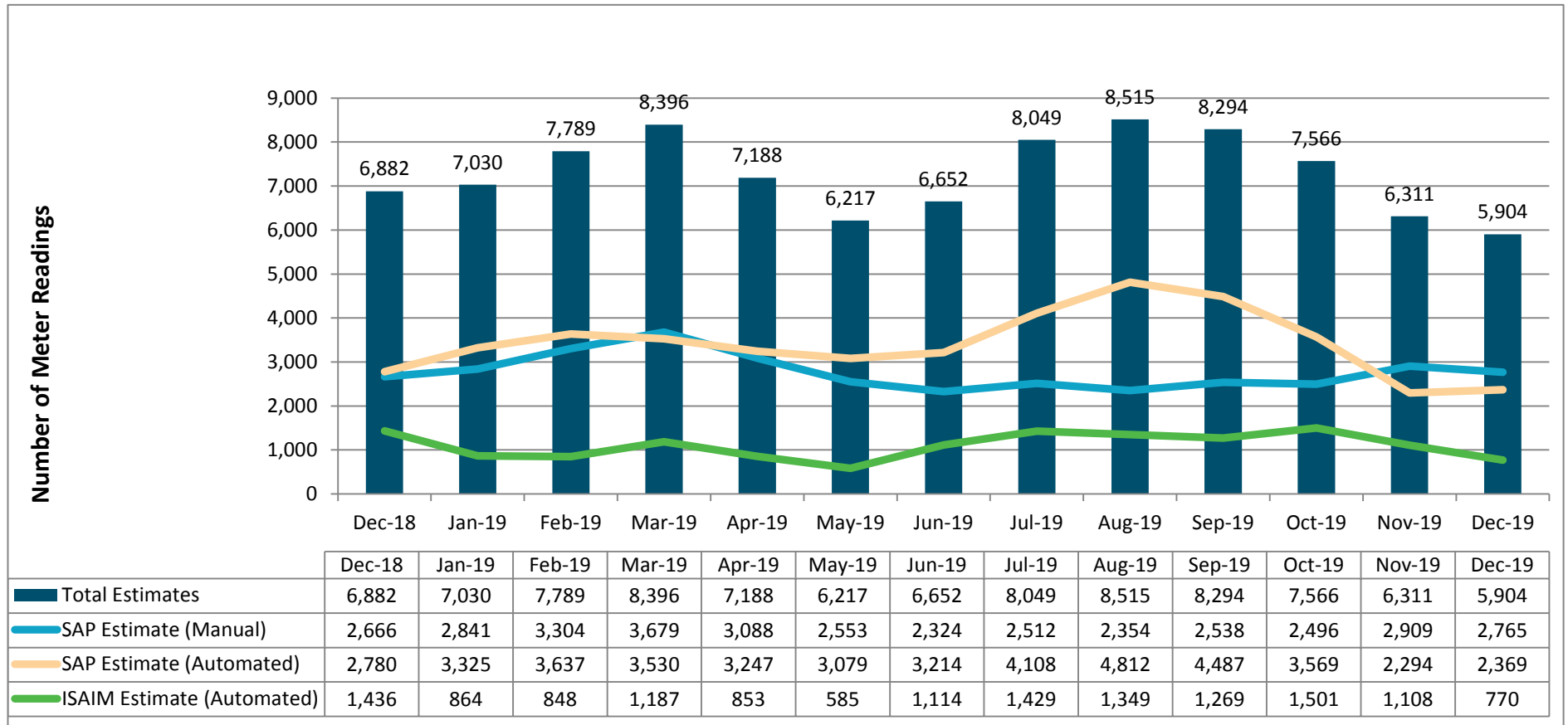
Category	2-3 estimates		4-5 estimates		6+ estimates		Grand Total	
	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)
<b>Customer impact nil/low</b>								
Vacant	371	12	245	26	953	52	1,569	26
Disconnected	41	1	32	3	173	9	246	4
Customer-side Power Outage	55	2	76	8	276	16	407	7
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1,402</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Meter Replacement</b>	330	10	187	19	224	12	741	12
<b>Estimated Automated Reads</b>								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	661	21	75	8	8	0	744	12
Intermittent Comms – SAP	1,165	38	70	8	47	3	1,282	22
<b>Estimated Manual Reads</b>								
Customer Access	72	2	39	4	45	3	156	3
Other	234	7	67	7	84	5	385	7
Recently unconverted	212	7	160	16	2	0	374	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,141</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5,904</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 F2020, 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 34 per cent of estimated reads between ISAIM (12 per cent) and SAP (22 per cent) estimates. Vacant accounts with consecutive estimates remain high at 26 per cent of estimates. The remaining six categories have relatively low volumes, each 12 per cent or less, making up the remaining 39 per cent.

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (52 per cent) and customer-side power outages (16 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, December 2018 to December 2019, 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,



Fred James  
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