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April 28, 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 Fourth Quarter (Q4 F2020)
 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q4 F2020 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

Customer Complaints

Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC

	Q4 F2019	Q1 F2020	Q2 F2020	Q3 F2020	Q4 F2020
Total Complaints*	136	150	185	152	146
BCUC	25	38	29	26	27
*Total Complaints include the BCUC					

Complaint volumes increased from 136 in Q4 F2019 compared to 146 in Q4 F2020. This increase can be attributed to the start of COVID-19 financial impacts and customers seeking bill relief in March 2020. Complaints from the BCUC were slightly higher, with 25 in Q4 F2019 as compared to 27 in Q4 F2020.

Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints

	Q4 F2019	Q1 F2020	Q2 F2020	Q3 F2020	Q4 F2020
Average Response Time Days	3	3	3	3	4

The majority of complaints were completed within internal and external targets. The average resolution time in Q4 F2020 was four days.

Table 3 Complaints by Source

	All Sources									
	Q4 F2019		Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020	
BC Hydro	62	46%	57	38%	74	40%	67	44%	64	44%
BCUC	25	18%	38	25%	29	16%	26	17%	27	18%
Better Business Bureau	3	2%	2	1%	1	1%	5	3%	4	3%
Government*	46	34%	52	35%	81	43%	54	36%	51	35%
Media and Other	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	136	100%	150	100%	185	100%	152	100%	146	100%

**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 Q4 F2020. This is followed by complaints received by Government with 35 per cent of the total and the BCUC with 18 per cent for the same period.

Complaints submitted from Government represent 51 of the 146 total complaints in Q4 F2020, with 25 of those complaints submitted from MLA offices.

Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources

	All Sources									
	Q4 F2019		Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020	
Credit	28	21%	45	30%	47	25%	39	26%	25	17%
Billing and Payments	27	20%	34	23%	25	14%	31	20%	44	30%
Customer Crisis Fund	12	9%	13	9%	18	10%	16	11%	21	14%
SMI	18	13%	10	7%	45	24%	21	14%	2	1%
Non-Customer Service	25	18%	38	24%	28	15%	37	24%	25	17%
Other	26	19%	10	7%	22	12%	8	5%	29	20%
Total	136	100%	150	100%	185	100%	152	100%	146	100%

Complaints related to billing are the leading category with 30 per cent of the total in Q4 F2020. This is followed by complaints in “Other” with 20 per cent of the total. Complaints regarding reliability from tenants of a complex in Surrey contribute to the increase in this category.

Table 5 Complaints by Category - BCUC

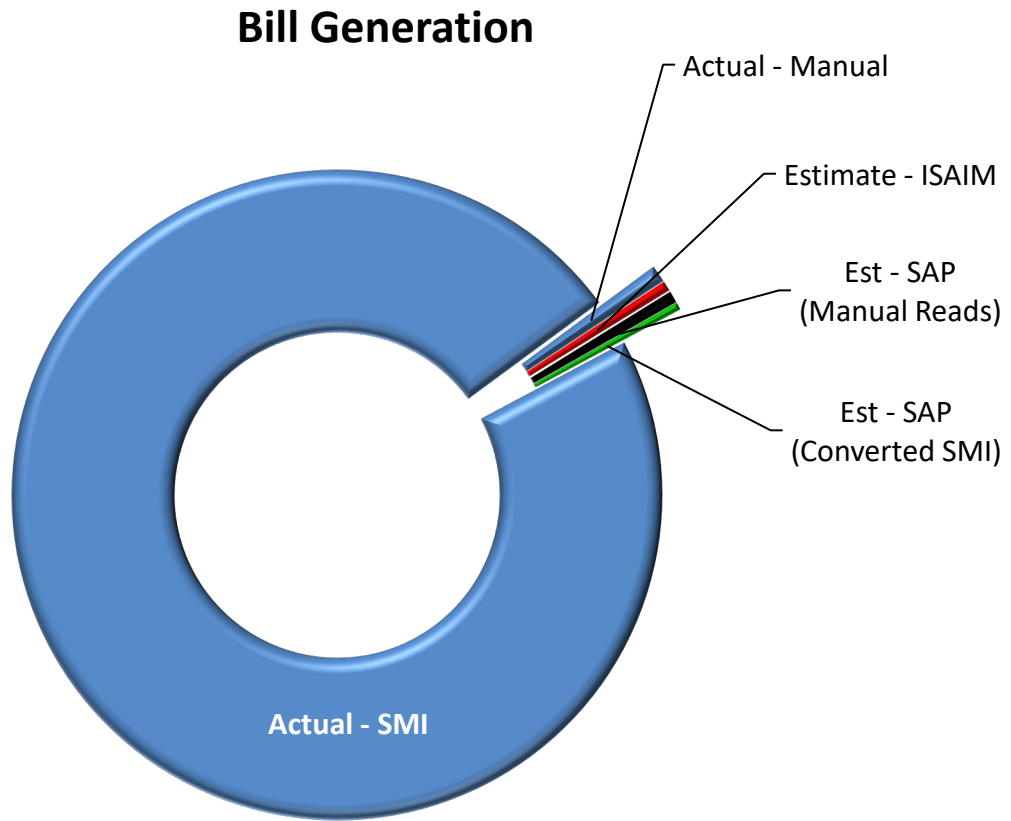
	BCUC									
	Q4 F2019		Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020	
Credit	9	36%	14	37%	10	34%	11	42%	4	15%
Billing and Payments	5	20%	14	37%	10	34%	7	26%	13	48%
Customer Crisis Fund	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%
SMI	5	20%	3	8%	1	3%	3	12%	1	4%
Non-Customer Service	4	16%	5	12%	4	14%	3	12%	3	11%
Other	2	8%	1	3%	4	14%	1	4%	5	19%
Total	25	100%	38	100%	29	100%	26	100%	27	100%

The leading complaint categories from the BCUC for Q4 F2020 are related to billing with 48 per cent and credit with 15 per cent. This is consistent with seasonal norms and higher winter bills.

Consecutive Estimates

For March 2020, 99 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 2020. The half per cent decrease compared with December 2019, is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, as explained in more detail below.

Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, March 2020



Bill Issued Using:	March 2020		
	Volume	%	%
Actual - SMI	1,425,592	97.7%	99.0%
Actual - Manual	12,337	0.8%	
Estimate - ISAIM	7,232	0.5%	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	8,581	0.6%	1.0%
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	5,450	0.4%	
Total	1,459,192	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 increased by 40 per cent since the previous quarter (Q3 F2020).

Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q4 F2020

	Dec 2019	Mar 2020
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	2,369	2,140
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	770	869
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	2,765	5,271
TOTAL	5,904	8,280

In March 2020, 8,280 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 40 per cent increase since the prior quarter (Q3 F2020) and a 1 per cent decrease since the same period the prior year (8,396 total consecutive estimates in Q4 F2019).

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 7,411 of these bills. The remaining 869 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 40 per cent increase in total consecutive estimates is due to significant increases in consecutive estimates for manual meter reading; which increased by 90 per cent since last quarter. While this is typically the month for which manual meter reading estimates are highest, largely due to access issues over the winter period, this year's results are particularly high. This increase can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic; BC Hydro suspended manual meter reading on March 18, 2020 to minimise the risk to Field Service Representatives. This move impacted our ability to obtain reads for meters that were just becoming accessible due to improved weather conditions. There were 2,141 manually read meters estimated for the second time in March 2020, an increase of approximately 1,000 meters over the same month last year. This is also the approximate number of meters estimated after March 18, 2020 when the first adjustments were made to our meter reading practices due to COVID-19.

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	500	10	243	22	1,183	52	1,926	23
Disconnected	65	1	42	4	189	8	296	3
Customer-side Power Outage	49	1	69	7	308	14	426	5
Subtotal	614	12	354	33	1,680	73	2,648	32
Meter Replacement	265	5	155	14	168	7	588	7
Estimated Automated Reads								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	749	15	91	9	5	0	845	10
Intermittent Comms – SAP	1,098	22	67	7	35	2	1,200	15
Estimated Manual Reads								
Customer Access	48	1	36	3	29	1	113	1
Other	2,025	41	342	33	349	16	2,716	33
Recently unconverted	156	3	12	1	2	0	170	2
Grand Total	4,955	100	1,057	100	2,268	100	8,280	100

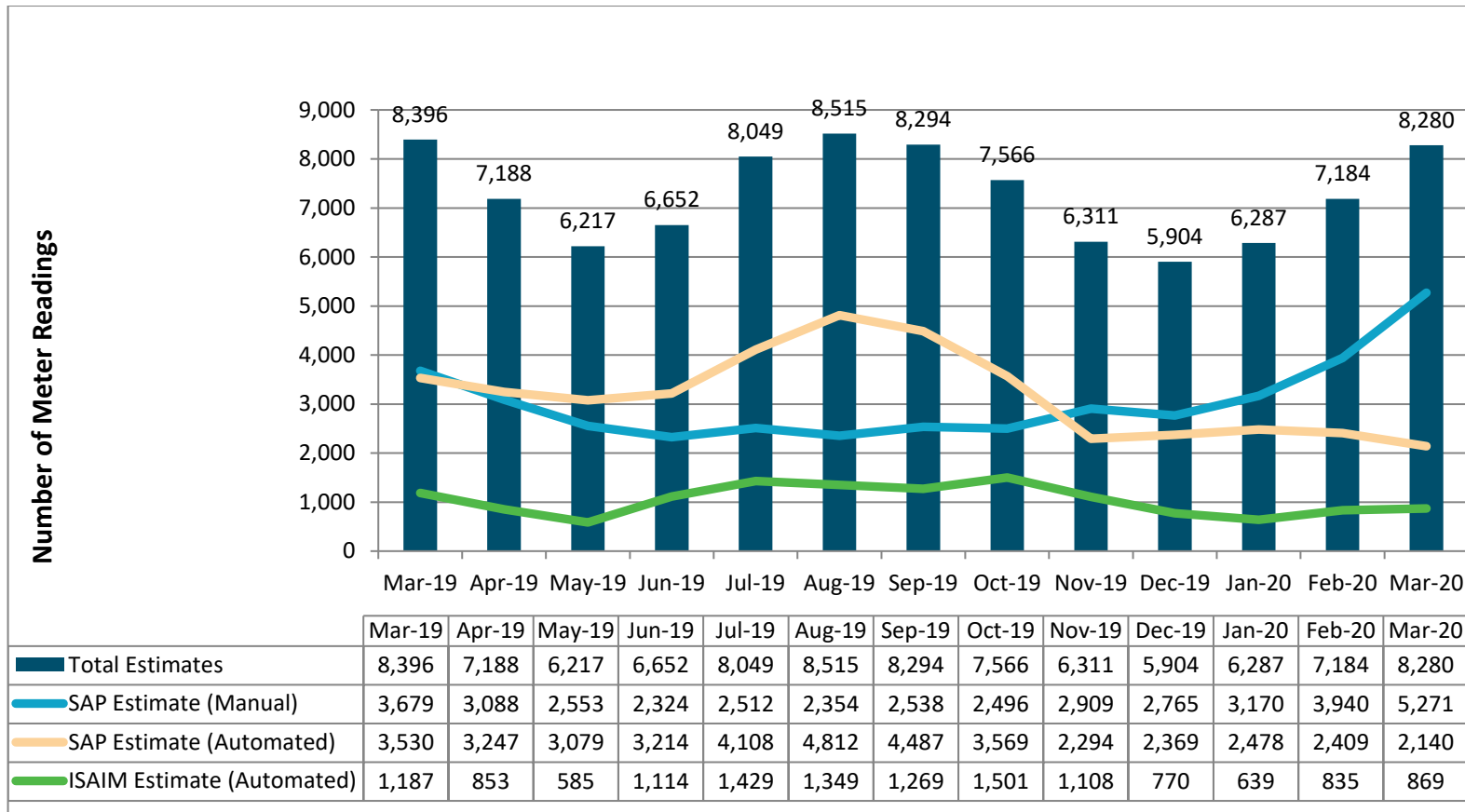
The above **Table 7** summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q4 F2020, including automated and manually read meters.

Due to COVID-19 Estimated Manual Reads category of “Other” is the highest overall reason for consecutive estimates this month at 33 per cent.

With the exception of that category, intermittent communications of automated meters continues to be the largest cause accounting for 25 per cent of estimated reads between ISAIM (10 per cent) and SAP (15 per cent) estimates. Vacant accounts with consecutive estimates remain high at 23 per cent of estimates. The remaining five categories have very low volumes, each 7 per cent or less, making up the remaining 18 per cent.

Meters with six or more consecutive estimates continues to be mainly comprised of causes that have no customer billing impact. Vacant accounts (52 per cent), customer-side power outages (14 per cent), and disconnected meters (8 per cent), comprise 73 per cent of the accounts with six or more consecutive estimates and do not impact customer billing. The ‘Other’ category of Estimated Manual Reads are also higher than usual, for nearly two thirds of these the last attempt to read the meter was not made due to COVID-19.

Figure 2 Meter Readings Requiring Two or More Consecutive Estimates, March 2019 to March 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.

Yours sincerely,



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