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July 28, 2020

Ms. Marija Tresoglavic
Acting Commission Secretary and Manager
Regulatory Support
British Columbia Utilities Commission
Suite 410, 900 Howe Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

Dear Ms. Tresoglavic:

**RE: British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC or Commission)
British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro)
Fiscal 2021 First Quarter (Q1 F2021)
Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q1 F2021 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

Customer Complaints

Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC

	Q1 F2020	Q2 F2020	Q3 F2020	Q4 F2020	Q1 F2021
Total Complaints*	150	185	152	146	192
BCUC	38	29	26	27	13

*Total Complaints include the BCUC

Complaint volumes increased from 150 in Q1 F2020 compared to 192 in Q1 F2021. This increase can be attributed to COVID-19 impacts and customers seeking clarification of the COVID-19 Relief Fund programs in April and May 2020. Complaints from the BCUC decreased considerably, with 13 in Q1 F2021 as compared to 38 in Q1 F2020.

Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints

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

The majority of complaints were completed within internal and external targets. The average resolution time in Q1 F2021 was four days.

Table 3 Complaints by Source

	All Sources									
	Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021	
BC Hydro	57	38%	74	40%	67	44%	64	44%	107	56%
BCUC	38	25%	29	16%	26	17%	27	18%	13	7%
Better Business Bureau	2	1%	1	1%	5	3%	4	3%	6	3%
Government*	52	35%	81	43%	54	36%	51	35%	66	34%
Media and Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	150	100%	185	100%	152	100%	146	100%	192	100%

*Government represents Office of the Minister, MLA and Ombudsperson

The majority of complaints were received by BC Hydro and represent 56 per cent of the total in Q1 F2021. This is followed with complaints received by Government with 34 per cent of the total and the BCUC with 7 per cent for the same period.

Complaints submitted from Government represent 66 of the 192 total complaints in Q1 F2021, with 21 of those complaints submitted from MLA offices.

Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources

	All Sources									
	Q1 F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1F2021	
Credit	45	30%	47	25%	39	26%	25	17%	9	5%
Billing and Payments	34	23%	25	14%	31	20%	44	30%	118	61%
Customer Crisis Fund	13	9%	18	10%	16	11%	21	14%	15	8%
SMI	10	7%	45	24%	21	14%	2	1%	1	1%
Non-Customer Service	38	24%	28	15%	37	24%	25	17%	23	12%
Other	10	7%	22	12%	8	5%	29	20%	26	14%
Total	150	100%	185	100%	152	100%	146	100%	192	100%

Complaints related to billing are the leading category with 61 per cent of the total in Q1 F2021. This was predominantly due to customers seeking clarification of COVID-19 Relief Fund program requirements. This is followed by complaints in the “Other” category with 14 per cent of the total including complaints relating to reliability issues. During Q1 2021 disconnections and credit action were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in a significant decrease in Credit related complaints.

Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC

	BCUC									
	Q1F2020		Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021	
Credit	14	37%	10	34%	11	42%	4	15%	0	0%
Billing and Payments	14	37%	10	34%	7	26%	13	48%	10	77%
Customer Crisis Fund	1	3%	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
SMI	3	8%	1	3%	3	12%	1	4%	0	0%
Non-Customer Service	5	12%	4	14%	3	12%	3	11%	2	15%
Other	1	3%	4	14%	1	4%	5	19%	1	8%
Total	38	100%	29	100%	26	100%	27	100%	13	100%

The leading complaint categories from the BCUC for Q1 F2021 are related to billing with 77 per cent and credit with 15 per cent.

Consecutive Estimates

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the number of estimated meter readings in Q1 F2021. BC Hydro suspended manual meter reading on March 18, 2020 to minimize the exposure risk to Field Service Representatives, as well as the potential spread of the virus should an employee be infected. In addition, failed meters and other equipment used to obtain automatic reads couldn't be exchanged for an extended period as Power Line Technicians and other field staff were also unable to perform their regular work. No manual meter readings were obtained for nearly a month, with all customers subject to manual meter readings receiving bills based on estimated readings.

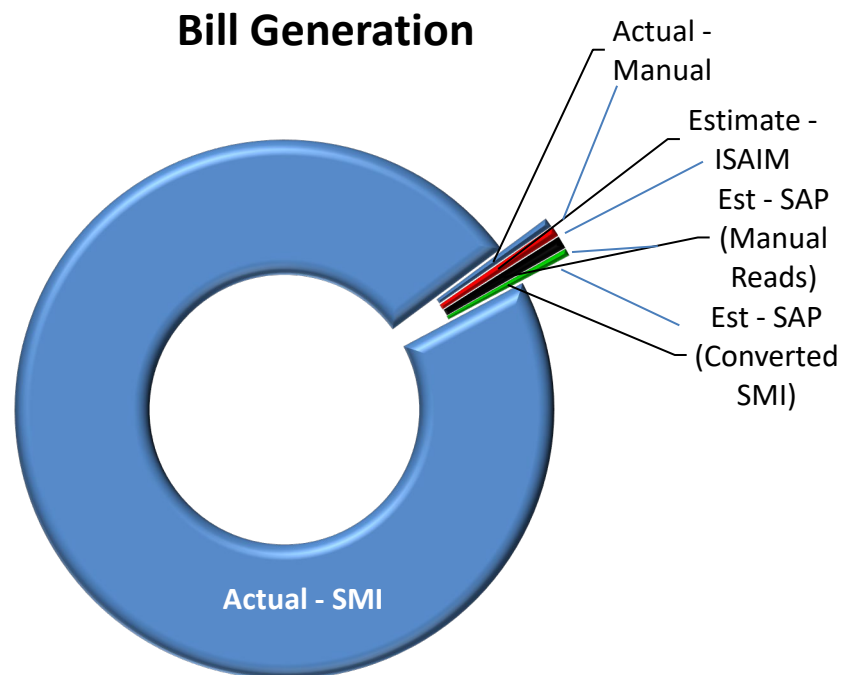
Manual meter reading has been gradually restarted with additional safety protocols in place. Manual meter reading for our large and medium sized commercial customers restarted on April 14th, small commercial customers followed on June 1st, and since June 22nd we have returned to manually reading residential customer meters as well. Meter exchanges and equipment repairs have also been restarted. Accordingly, we expect Consecutive Estimates to decrease in the coming months, assuming that the number of COVID-19 cases remains stable in British Columbia and we are able to maintain our current modified practices (e.g., additional safety protocols) for manual meter reading and other field work. Meters may continue to be unread at the premises of customers with vulnerable residents (e.g., care homes) or in some remote

communities (e.g., Indigenous communities requesting isolation). BC Hydro will work directly with affected customers to minimize billing impacts.

For June 2020, 98.9 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 June 2020. Bills based on actual reads continued to decrease this quarter, reaching a low of 98.4 per cent in April and May, but have recovered slightly in June. The low percentage of actual reads and subsequent improvement are attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, as explained above.

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



Bill Issued Using:	June 2020		
	Volume	%	%
Actual - SMI	1,335,140	97.6%	98.8%
Actual - Manual	7,727	0.6%	
Estimate - ISAIM	8,446	0.6%	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	10,359	0.8%	1.2%
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	6,191	0.5%	
Total	1,367,863	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 163 per cent since the previous quarter (Q4 F2020).

Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q1 F2021

	Mar 2020	Jun 2020
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	2,140	3,312
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	869	614
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	5,271	17,862
TOTAL	8,280	21,788

In June 2020, 21,788 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 163 per cent increase since the prior quarter (Q4 F2020) and a 228 per cent increase since the same period the prior year (6,652 total consecutive estimates in Q1 F2020).

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 21,174 of these bills. The remaining 614 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 163 per cent increase in total consecutive estimates is due to significant increases in consecutive estimates for manual meter reading, which increased by 239 per cent since last quarter. Typically June is a month for which manual meter reading estimates are low, as improved weather conditions over the first quarter generally enable the resolution of consecutive estimates caused by access issues over the winter period.

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	1,778	10	348	17	1,206	46	3,332	15
Disconnected	3,817	25	407	23	379	15	4,603	24
Customer-side Power Outage	26	.1	54	3	236	9	316	1
Subtotal	5,621	36	809	43	1,821	71	8,251	41
Meter Replacement	812	3	134	6	136	5	1,082	4
Estimated Automated Reads								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	479	3	18	1	3	.1	500	2
Intermittent Comms – SAP	1,177	7	103	5	194	7	1,474	6
Estimated Manual Reads								
Customer Access	47	.3	25	1	23	1	95	.4
Other	8,927	50	897	44	400	15	10,224	46
Recently unconverted	152	1	9	.4	1	0	162	1
Grand Total	17,215	100	1,995	100	2,578	100	21,788	100

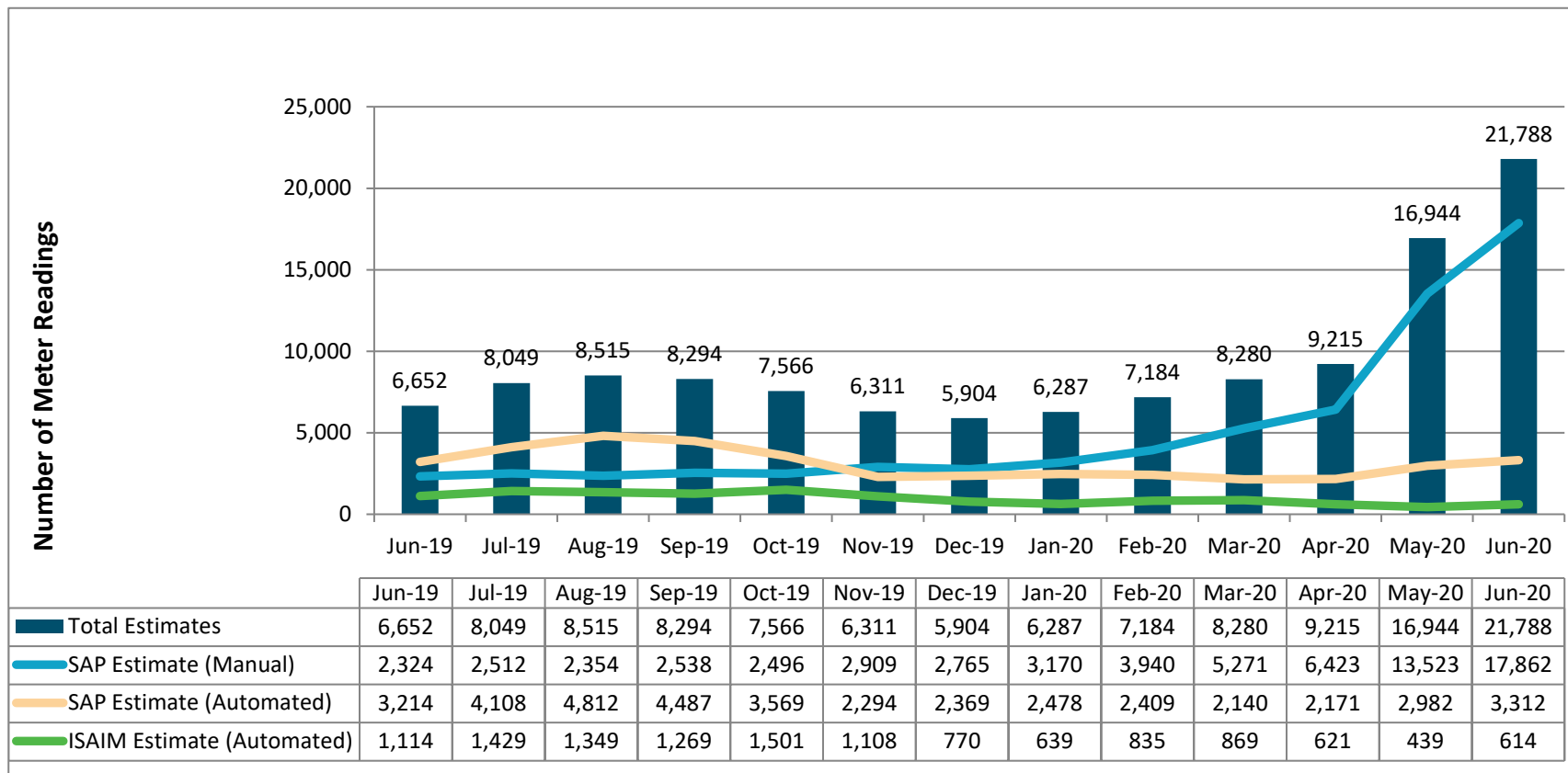
The above **Table 7** summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q1 F2021, including automated and manually read meters.

The Estimated Manual Reads category of “Other” is the highest overall reason for consecutive estimates this month at 46 per cent. These meters are almost exclusively those that were not read due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Excluding the “Other” category, disconnected services is the largest cause of consecutive estimates, accounting for 24 per cent of estimated reads. Vacant accounts with consecutive estimates is at 15 per cent of estimates. The remaining five categories have very low volumes, each 6 per cent or less, making up the remaining 15 per cent. It is not expected that there are fewer Customer-side Power Outages than in previous months, however we have not been able to identify which of the meters are in this condition as meter reads have not been attempted.

Meters with six or more consecutive estimates continue to be mainly comprised of causes that have no customer billing impact. Vacant accounts (46 per cent), disconnected meters (15 per cent), and customer-side power outages (9 per cent), comprise 71 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, June 2019 to June 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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