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October 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 Second Quarter (Q2 F2021)
 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q2 F2021 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

Customer Complaints

Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC

	Q2 F2020	Q3 F2020	Q4 F2020	Q1 F2021	Q2 F2021
Total Complaints*	185	152	146	192	123
BCUC	29	26	27	13	18

*Total Complaints include the BCUC

Complaint volumes decreased from 185 in Q2 F2020 compared to 123 in Q2 F2021. This decrease is likely due to the significant reduction in credit action including reductions in disconnections due to COVID-19 and suspension of time expired orders for meter exchanges. Complaints from the BCUC had decreased with 18 in Q2 F2021 as compared to 29 in Q2 F2020.

Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints

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

The majority of complaints were completed within internal and external targets. The average resolution time in Q2 F2021 was four days.

Table 3 Complaints by Source

	All Sources									
	Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021	
BC Hydro	74	40%	67	44%	64	44%	107	56%	66	54%
BCUC	29	16%	26	17%	27	18%	13	7%	18	14%
Better Business Bureau	1	1%	5	3%	4	3%	6	3%	3	2%
Government*	81	43%	54	36%	51	35%	66	34%	36	30%
Media and Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	185	100%	152	100%	146	100%	192	100%	123	100%

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

The majority of complaints were received by BC Hydro and represent 54 per cent of the total in Q2 F2021. This is followed with complaints received by Government with 30 per cent of the total and the BCUC with 14 per cent for the same period.

Complaints submitted from Government represent 36 of the 123 total complaints in Q2 F2021, with 17 of those complaints submitted from MLA offices.

Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources

	All Sources									
	Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021	
Credit	47	25%	39	26%	25	17%	9	5%	9	7%
Billing and Payments	25	14%	31	20%	44	30%	118	61%	39	32%
Customer Crisis Fund	18	10%	16	11%	21	14%	15	8%	20	16%
SMI	45	24%	21	14%	2	1%	1	1%	6	5%
Non-Customer Service	28	15%	37	24%	25	17%	23	12%	26	21%
Other	22	12%	8	5%	29	20%	26	14%	23	19%
Total	185	100%	152	100%	146	100%	192	100%	123	100%

Complaints related to billing are the leading category with 32 per cent of the total in Q2 F2021. This is a significant reduction compared to Q1 F2021 of 61 per cent. This decrease is due to the reduction of complaints related to the COVID-19 Relief Program once the program ended. There were unusually low credit related issues in Q2 F2021 due to the continued suspension of credit related activities including disconnections.

Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC

	BCUC									
	Q2 F2020		Q3 F2020		Q4 F2020		Q1 F2021		Q2 F2021	
Credit	10	34%	11	42%	4	15%	0	0%	0	0%
Billing and Payments	10	34%	7	26%	13	48%	10	77%	10	55%
Customer Crisis Fund	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
SMI	1	3%	3	12%	1	4%	0	0%	3	17%
Non-Customer Service	4	14%	3	12%	3	11%	2	15%	3	17%
Other	4	14%	1	4%	5	19%	1	8%	2	11%
Total	29	100%	26	100%	27	100%	13	100%	18	100%

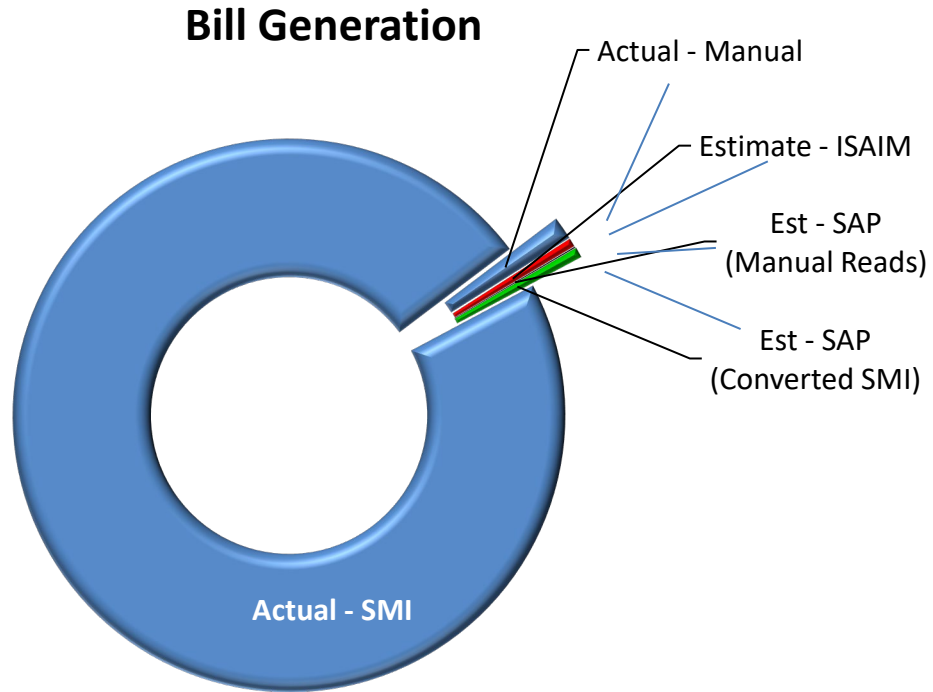
The leading complaint categories from the BCUC for Q2 F2021 are related to billing and payments with 55 per cent. This is followed by both Non Customer Service and SMI issues with 17 per cent each.

Consecutive Estimates

Q2 F2021 sees Consecutive Estimates decrease dramatically since the previous quarter. This is due to the restart of manual meter reading after a suspension in Q4 F2020 and Q1 F2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consecutive Estimates are still slightly higher than the same time last year, this is to be expected as some meters continue to be unread; customers with vulnerable residents (e.g., care homes) and in some remote communities (e.g., Indigenous communities requesting isolation). In addition, limited travel and minimising staff at BC Hydro offices has caused some delays in replacement of failed meters and network equipment.

For September 2020, 99.3 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 September 2020. Bills based on actual reads rebounded this quarter and are holding steady at 99.3 percent, which is only slightly lower than the same time last year which averaged 99.5 percent. This small decline may be difficult to gain back with some communities isolating due to COVID 19 and some premises still being avoided (such as care homes).

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



Bill Issued Using:	September 2020		
	Volume	%	%
Actual - SMI	1,361,313	97.5%	99.3%
Actual - Manual	18,536	1.3%	
Estimate - ISAIM	6,953	0.5%	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	943	0.1%	0.7%
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	8,421	0.6%	
Total	1,396,166	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 decreased by 54 per cent since the previous quarter (Q1 F2021).

Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q2 F2021

	Jun 2020	Sep 2020
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,312	4,769
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	614	1,660
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	17,862	3,568
TOTAL	21,788	9,997

In September 2020, 9,997 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 54 per cent decrease since the prior quarter (Q1 F2021) and a 21 per cent increase since the same period the prior year (8,294 total consecutive estimates in Q2 F2020).

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 8,337 of these bills. The remaining 1,660 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 54 per cent decrease in total consecutive estimates is a direct result of a significant reduction in consecutive estimates for manually read meters. This reduction is the lagged effect of manual meter reading restart in June, which is slightly offset this month by a rise in estimates for automated read meters.

Table 7 Causes of Missed Reads by Number of Estimates

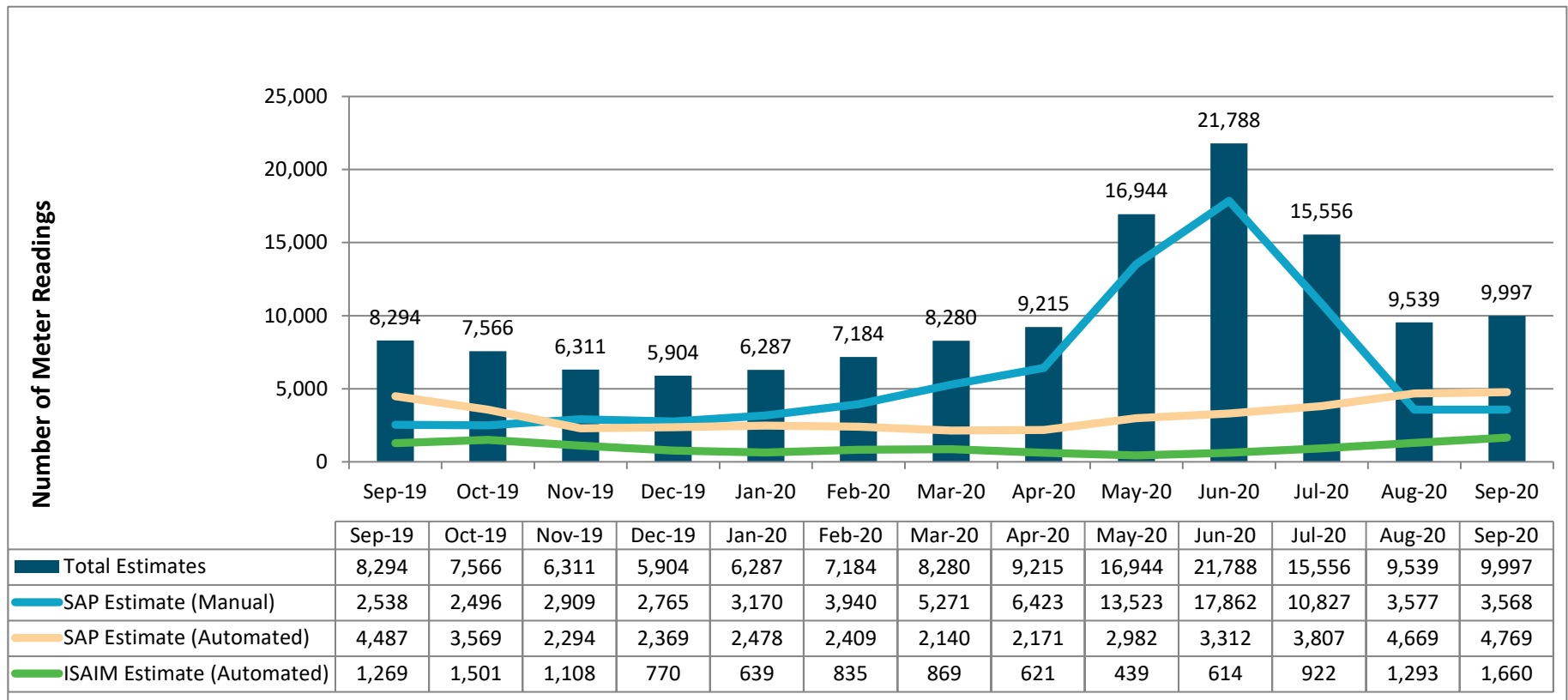
Category	2-3 estimates		4-5 estimates		6+ estimates		Grand Total	
	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)	Meters	(%)
Customer impact nil/low								
Vacant	321	5	276	22	1,257	48	1,854	19
Disconnected	23	0	47	4	219	8	289	3
Customer-side Power Outage	67	1	115	9	536	21	718	7
Subtotal	411	7	438	35	2,012	77	2,861	29
Meter Replacement	461	8	231	18	240	9	932	9
Estimated Automated Reads								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	1,528	24	87	7	7	0	1,622	16
Intermittent Comms – SAP	3,041	50	141	11	101	4	3,283	33
Estimated Manual Reads								
Customer Access	89	2	97	8	88	3	274	3
Other	224	4	89	7	146	6	459	5
Recently unconverted	375	6	182	14	9	0	566	6
Grand Total	6,129	100	1,265	100	2,603	100	9,997	100

The above **Table 7** summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q2 F2021, 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 49 per cent of estimated reads between ISAIM (16 per cent) and SAP (33 per cent) estimates. Vacant accounts comprise an additional 19 per cent of estimates. The remaining six categories have relatively low volumes, each 9 per cent or less, making up the remaining 33 per cent.

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (48 per cent) and customer-side power outages (21 per cent). These two categories, along with disconnected meters (8 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, 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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