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April 26, 2022

Patrick Wruck
Commission Secretary and Manager
Regulatory Support
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 2022 Fourth Quarter (Q4 F2022)
Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q4 F2022 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

Customer Complaints

Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC

	Q4 F2021	Q1 F2022	Q2 F2022	Q3 F2022	Q4 F2022
Total Complaints*	189	137	126	89	138
BCUC	18	18	19	15	18

*Total Complaints include complaints received through the BCUC

Complaint volumes increased from 89 in Q3 F2022 to 138 in Q4 F2022. In Q4 F2021 we had 189 complaints, so the volume in Q4 F2022 is down from last year. The volume in Q4 F2022 is within the norm of the previous five years with the exception of Q4 F2021. In Q4 F2021, there were a high number of Reliability complaints due to unplanned outages as well as those regarding Credit and Billing due to disconnections and high bills.

Complaints received through the BCUC also increased from 15 in Q3 F2022 to 18 in Q4 F2022, which is the same number received in Q4 F2021.

Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints

	Q4 F2021	Q1 F2022	Q2 F2022	Q3 F2022	Q4 F2022
Average Response Time (Days)	3	4	4	3	3

The majority of complaints were completed within internal and external targets of five business days and for complex responses, which involve multiple departments, ten business days. The average response time in Q4 F2022 was three days.

Table 3 Complaints by Source

	All Sources									
	Q4 F2021		Q1 F2022		Q2 F2022		Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022	
BC Hydro	92	49%	71	52%	63	50%	43	48%	74	54%
BCUC	18	9%	18	13%	19	15%	15	17%	18	13%
Better Business Bureau	7	4%	3	2%	6	5%	4	4%	6	4%
Government*	72	38%	45	33%	38	30%	27	31%	39	28%
Media and Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Total	189	100%	137	100%	126	100%	89	100%	138	100%

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

More than half of the complaints were received by BC Hydro directly, with 74 (54% of the total) in Q4 F2022. This is followed by complaints received through Government with 39 (28%) and the BCUC with 18 (13%).

Of the complaints received through Government in Q4 F2022, 14 were received from MLA offices, 21 directly from the Office of the Minister and four from the Ombudsperson's office.

In January 2022, there was a letter writing campaign to BC Hydro regarding reliability in the Garden Bay area on Vancouver Island after extended outages due to storms at the beginning of that month. Of the 74 complaints received by BC Hydro in Q4 F2022, 22 of them (30%) were related to this campaign. The Garden Bay area is heavily-treed and encounters many storms. Multiple outages occurred from December 25, 2021 to January 2, 2022, which were caused by snow-laden tree branches falling on overhead power lines. Sudden overload immediately after re-energization and adverse weather conditions, resulted in subsequent outages. To address this issue, BC Hydro initiated additional tree pruning/removal in the area in January 2022 and review of equipment protection settings is also underway.

Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources

	All Sources									
	Q4 F2021		Q1 F2022		Q2 F2022		Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022	
Credit	35	18%	23	17%	19	15%	13	15%	17	12%
Billing and Payments	34	18%	17	12%	15	12%	11	12%	24	17%
Customer Crisis Fund	18	10%	10	7%	6	5%	6	7%	11	8%
SMI	3	2%	9	7%	9	7%	5	6%	4	3%
Non-Customer Service	45	24%	56	41%	28	22%	27	30%	29	21%
Other	54	28%	22	16%	49	39%	27	30%	53	39%
Total	189	100%	137	100%	126	100%	89	100%	138	100%

Complaints in the Other category lead with 53 (39% of the total) in Q4 F2022. This increase is largely due to the complaints about reliability of service from the Garden Bay area residents. There were 29 complaints (21%) in the Non-Customer Service category, nine of which were for Design and six for Conservation and Energy Management regarding Power Smart products and BC Hydro’s electric vehicle charging stations. Consistent with Q4 2021, there was an increase in Billing and Payment complaints, with 24 (17%) due to higher than usual winter bills, which is considered to be within seasonal norms.

Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC

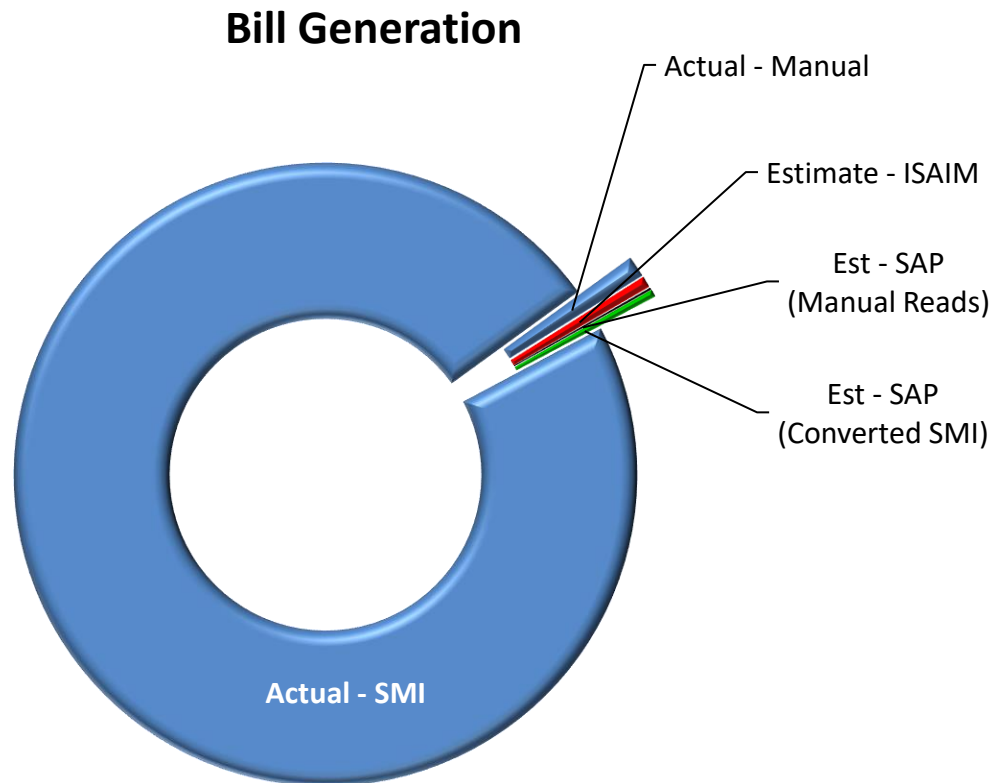
	BCUC									
	Q4 F2021		Q1 F2022		Q2 F2022		Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022	
Credit	7	39%	5	28%	2	11%	4	27%	2	11%
Billing and Payments	8	44%	5	28%	5	26%	4	27%	7	39%
Customer Crisis Fund	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SMI	1	6%	2	11%	1	5%	0	0%	2	11%
Non-Customer Service	2	11%	4	22%	4	21%	4	27%	1	6%
Other	0	0%	2	11%	7	37%	3	19%	6	33%
Total	18	100%	18	100%	19	100%	15	100%	18	100%

The two leading complaint categories received through the BCUC in Q4 F2022 were Billing and Payments with seven complaints (39% of the total) and Other with six complaints (33%). Six of the seven Billing and Payments complaints were about high invoices. The Other category of complaints in Q4 F2022 were evenly split with two each regarding Reliability, Planned Outages and Rates.

Consecutive Estimates

In Q4 F2022, Consecutive Estimates increased compared to the previous quarter. For March 2022, 99.5% of bills were issued based on actual reads and Itron SAP AMI Integration Module (**ISAIM**) estimates. Figure 1 identifies the sources of meter reads (converted and manual reads) that received actual vs. estimates for March 2022. Although Consecutive Estimates increased, the number of bills based on actuals remained constant. This is because the increase in estimates is largely attributable to ISAIM estimates, which use actual reads obtained in days leading up to the bill date to extrapolate the estimate and therefore are considered as good as actuals.

Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, March 2022



Bill Issued Using:	March 2022		
	Volume	%	%
Actual - SMI	1,550,837	97.8	99.5
Actual - Manual	17,447	1.1	
Estimate - ISAIM	9,368	0.6	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	1,894	0.1	0.5
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	6,114	0.4	
Total	1,585,660	100.0	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

The overall number of Consecutive Estimates has increased by 13% since the previous quarter.

Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q4 F2022

	Dec 2021	Mar 2022
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,833	3,055
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	1,222	2,106
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,199	4,205
TOTAL	8,254	9,366

In March 2022, 9,366 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 13% increase since the prior quarter (Q3 F2022) and a 27% increase since the same period the prior year (7,367 total Consecutive Estimates in Q4 F2021).

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 7,260 of these bills. The remaining 2,106 were ISAIM estimates.

The 13% increase in total Consecutive Estimates is due to a large increase in ISAIM estimates (72%), along with a moderate increase in SAP estimates for manually read meters (31%), and a moderate drop in SAP estimates from automated meters (-20%).

The increase in ISAIM estimates was due to an intermittently communicating router in Vancouver that impacted over 1,000 meters. The router has been replaced with a router utilizing a more reliable communication method (cellular vs WiMax) and the new router is performing well. Consecutive estimates for manually read meters have continued to increase due to continued snowy conditions in the north preventing meter access. Consecutive estimates for manually read meters are expected to be reduced significantly in the next quarter as the weather improves, allowing access to resume.

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	242	4	166	16	1,290	46	1,698	18
Disconnected	47	1	24	2	211	7	282	3
Customer-side Power Outage	70	1	105	10	686	26	861	10
Subtotal	359	7	295	29	2,187	79	2,841	31
Meter Replacement	404	8	313	30	222	8	939	10
Estimated Automated Reads								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	2,014	33	48	5	15	1	2,077	20
Intermittent Comms – SAP	1,421	27	162	16	86	3	1,669	18
Estimated Manual Reads								
Customer Access	134	3	77	8	71	3	282	3
Other	1,071	20	119	12	158	6	1,348	15
Recently unconverted	195	4	14	1	1	0	210	2
Grand Total	5,598	100	1,028	100	2,740	100	9,366	100

Table 7 above summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q4 F2022, including automated and manually read meters.

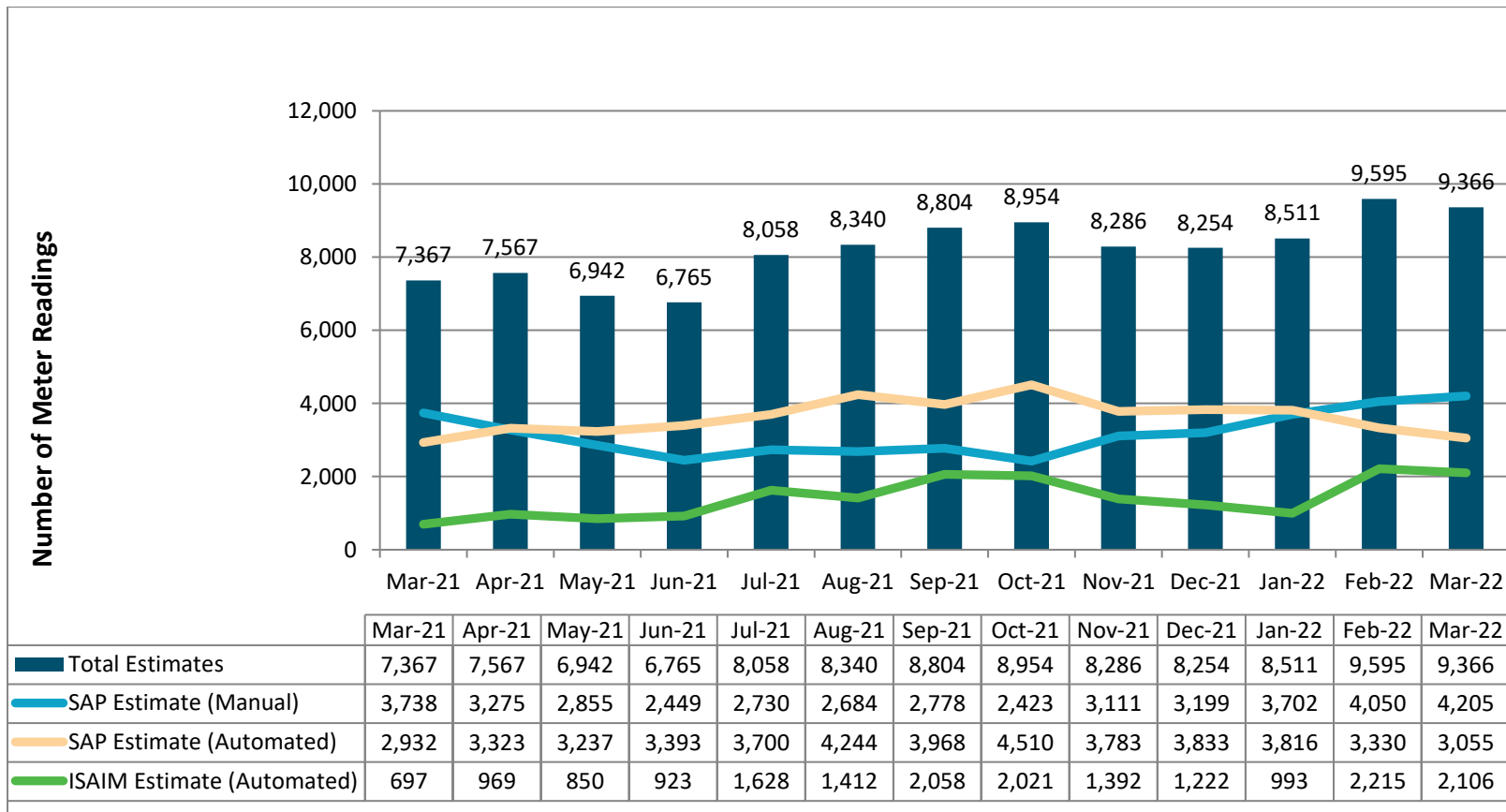
The largest category contributing to Consecutive Estimates overall is intermittent communications of automated meters, which accounts for 38% of estimated reads including ISAIM (20%) and SAP (18%) estimates.

The second largest category, at 31%, has low or no customer impact. This category includes accounts that are vacant (18%), services with the line side breakers turned off (10%) and disconnected services (3%).

The “Other” category is higher than usual at 15%. Currently this category is dominated by challenges due to poor weather conditions. The remaining three categories have relatively low volumes, totaling 10% or less, and make up the remaining 15% of the overall total.

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (46%) and customer-side power outages (26%). These two categories, along with disconnected meters (7%), comprise 79% 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, March 2021 to March 2022, Converted and Non-converted Meters



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For further information, please contact Alicia Henderson at 604-623-4381 or by email at bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Sandve
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