

**Chris Sandve**

Chief Regulatory Officer

Phone: 604-623-3726

Fax: 604-623-4407

[bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com](mailto:bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com)

October 28, 2022

Sara Hardgrave  
 Acting Commission Secretary and Manager  
 Regulatory Services  
 British Columbia Utilities Commission  
 Suite 410, 900 Howe Street  
 Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

Dear Sara Hardgrave:

**RE: British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC or Commission)  
 British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro)  
 Fiscal 2023 Second Quarter (Q2 F2023)  
 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

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BC Hydro writes to submit its Q2 F2023 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

**Customer Complaints**

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

	Q2 F2022	Q3 F2022	Q4 F2022	Q1 F2023	Q2 F2023
Total Complaints*	126	89	138	93	137
BCUC	19	15	18	15	24

\*Total Complaints include complaints received through the BCUC

The total number of customer complaints increased from 93 in Q1 F2023 to 137 in Q2 F2023. This increase is largely the result of a letter writing campaign in response to the electrocution death of an eaglet on Gabriola Island that received widespread news coverage. BC Hydro executives received a total of 31 letters in response to this incident.

Complaints received through the BCUC increased from 15 in Q1 F2023 to 24 in Q2. This increase was mainly due to disconnections for non-payment as a result of increased credit action for outstanding accounts over 120 days.

**Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints**

	Q2 F2022	Q3 F2022	Q4 F2022	Q1 F2023	Q2 F2023
Average Response Time (Days)	4	3	3	3	3

The average response time to customer complaints in Q2 F2023 was three days. The majority of complaints were investigated and responded to within internal and external targets of five business days and ten business days for complex responses involving multiple departments.

**Table 3 Complaints by Source**

	All Sources									
	Q2 F2022		Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2023	
BC Hydro	63	50%	43	48%	74	54%	40	43%	72	53%
BCUC	19	15%	15	17%	18	13%	15	16%	24	18%
Better Business Bureau	6	5%	4	4%	6	4%	4	4%	5	3%
Government*	38	30%	27	31%	39	28%	34	37%	36	26%
Media and Other	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

The largest number of complaints were received by BC Hydro with 72 (53% of the total) in Q2 F2023. This is followed by complaints received through Government with 36 (26% of the total) and the BCUC with 24 (18% of the total).

Of the 36 complaints received through Government in Q2 F2023, 12 were received from MLA offices, 19 from the Office of the Minister, and five from the Ombudsperson's office.

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

	All Sources									
	Q2 F2022		Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2023	
Credit	19	15%	13	15%	17	12%	20	22%	30	22%
Billing and Payments	15	12%	11	12%	24	17%	13	14%	10	8%
Customer Crisis Fund	6	5%	6	7%	11	8%	5	5%	2	1%
SMI	9	7%	5	6%	4	3%	3	3%	2	1%
Non-Customer Service	28	22%	27	30%	29	21%	33	36%	85	62%
Other	49	39%	27	30%	53	39%	19	20%	8	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC**

	BCUC									
	Q2 F2022		Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2023	
Credit	2	11%	4	27%	2	11%	4	27%	14	58%
Billing and Payments	5	26%	4	27%	7	39%	2	13%	4	17%
Customer Crisis Fund	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SMI	1	5%	0	0%	2	11%	0	0%	1	4%
Non-Customer Service	4	21%	4	27%	1	6%	7	47%	3	13%
Other	7	37%	3	19%	6	33%	2	13%	2	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

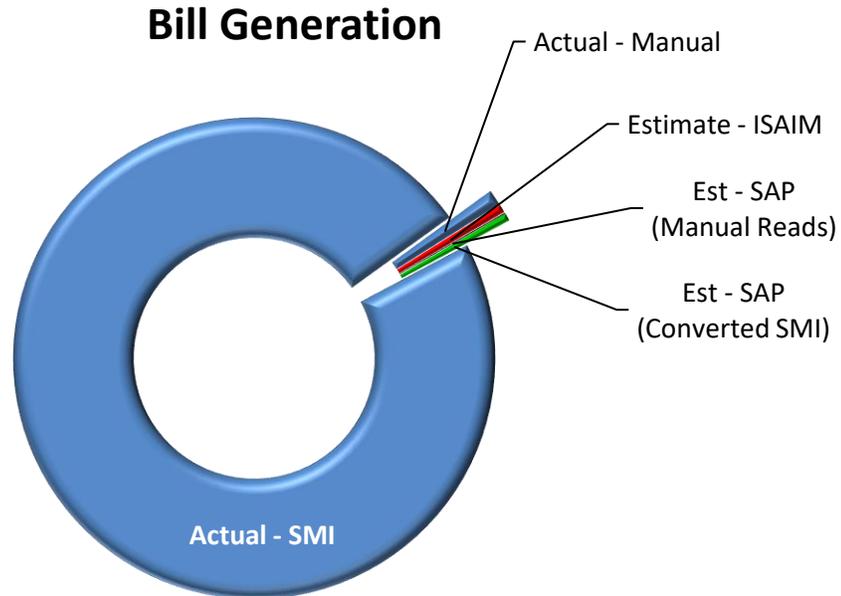
The Non-Customer Service category totaled 85 complaints (62% of the total) in Q2 F2023, including 31 complaints regarding the eaglet’s death that occurred in July 2022. There were nine Design complaints, largely related to service connection delays, and 15 Field complaints related to Site C construction which had resulted in the Hudson’s Hope water treatment plant malfunctioning. BC Hydro has recently provided an additional \$2.5 million in funding to Hudson’s Hope to provide potable water and repairs to the water treatment plant. There were ten complaints related to Conservation and Energy Management, mainly resulting from program rebates, and 30 Credit complaints (22% of the total), 21 of which were due to disconnections for non-payment.

Of the 24 complaints received by BCUC in Q2 F2023, four were related to Billing and Payments and 14 were related to Credit. This is largely due to an increased effort by BC Hydro to collect on past due accounts which resulted in a higher number of disconnections, particularly in August.

### Consecutive Estimates

In Q2 F2023, the number of Consecutive Estimates increased to 8,953 compared to 7,700 in the previous quarter. For September 2022, 99.4% 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 September 2022.

**Figure 1 Sources of Meter Reads for Invoices Issued, September 2022**



Bill Issued Using:	September 1-30, 2022		
	Volume	%	%
Actual – SMI	1,404,615	97.8	99.4
Actual – Manual	15,121	1.1	
Estimate – ISAIM	7,840	0.5	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	1,210	0.1	0.6
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	7,014	0.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,435,800</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 kVARh).

## Assessment of Meter Reading Performance

In September 2022, 8,953 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.

**Table 6 Consecutive Estimates by Meter Reading Category – Q2 F2023**

	<b>Jun 2022</b>	<b>Sep 2022</b>
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,536	4,139
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	1,050	1,609
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,114	3,205
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>8,953</b>

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 7,344 of these bills. The remaining 1,609 were ISAIM estimates.

The 16% increase in total Consecutive Estimates this quarter is due to a 50% increase in ISAIM estimates, as well as smaller increases in SAP estimates for automated meters (17%) and manually read meters (3%). The increase in ISAIM estimates is consistent with seasonal trends and can be attributed to foliage obstructing the meters' signals.

**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	335	6	148	17	1,286	45	1,769	19
Disconnected	55	1	38	4	224	8	317	3
Customer-Side Power Outage	65	1	84	10	730	26	879	10
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2,240</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>2,965</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Meter Replacement</b>								
	<b>516</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Estimated Automated Reads</b>								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	1,505	29	48	6	7	0	1,560	18
Intermittent Comms – SAP	2,254	42	116	14	105	4	2,475	27
<b>Estimated Manual Reads</b>								
Customer Access	101	2	72	8	74	3	247	3
Other	165	3	82	9	92	3	339	4
Recently Unconverted	252	5	36	4	1	0	289	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,248</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,836</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,953</b>	<b>100</b>

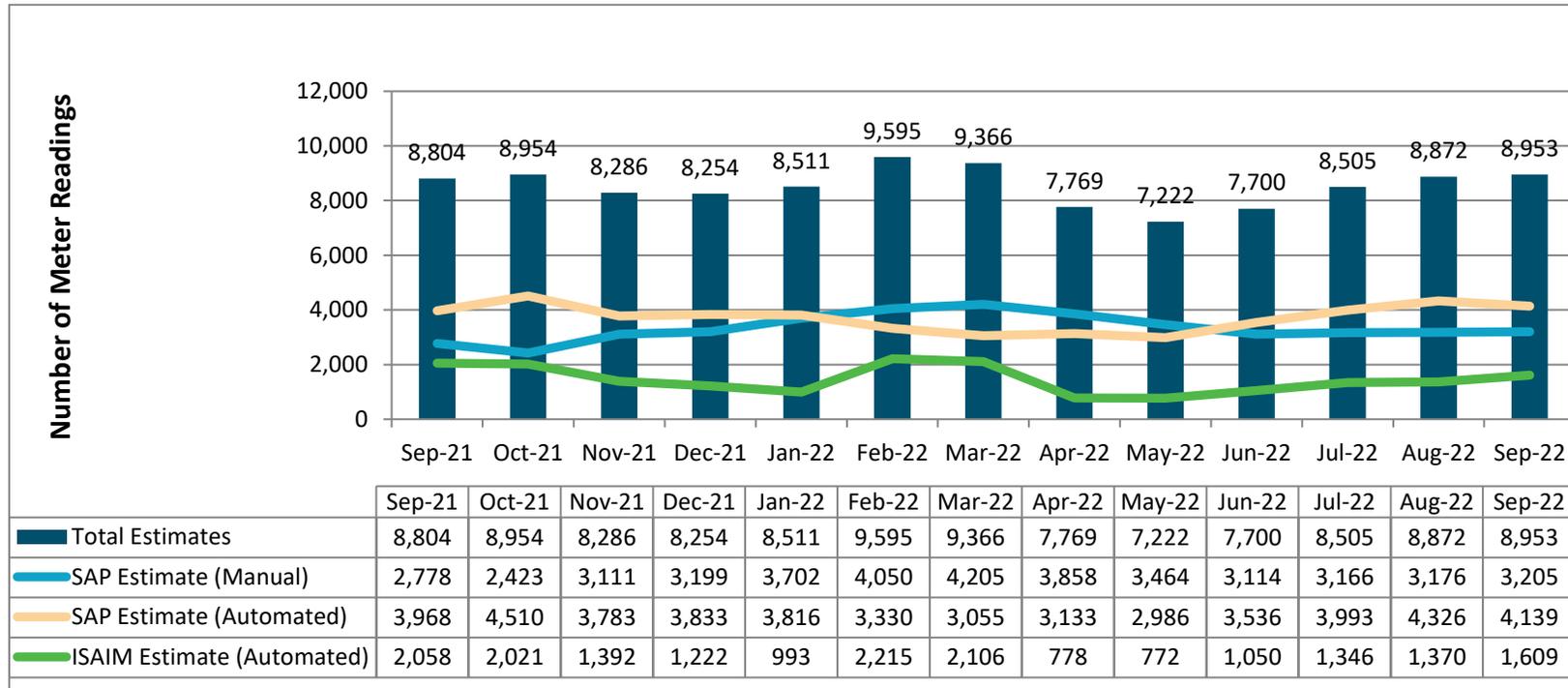
[Table 7](#) above summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q2 F2023, including automated and manually read meters.

The largest category contributing to the overall number of consecutive estimates is intermittent communications of automated meters, which accounts for 45% of estimated reads and includes ISAIM (18%) and SAP (27%) estimates.

The second largest category, at 33%, has low or no customer impact. This category includes accounts that are vacant (19%), services with the line side breakers turned off (10%) and disconnected services (3%).

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (45%) and customer-side power outages (26%). These two categories, along with disconnected meters (8%), comprise 79% of accounts with six or more consecutive estimates and do not impact customer billing.

**Figure 2 Meter Readings Requiring Two or More Consecutive Estimates, September 2021 to September 22, Converted and Non-Converted Meters**



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Acting Commission Secretary and Manager  
Regulatory Services  
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For further information, please contact Alicia Henderson at 604-623-4381 or by email at [bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com](mailto:bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com).

Yours sincerely,



Chris Sandve  
Chief Regulatory Officer

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