

Chris Sandve

Chief Regulatory Officer

Phone: 604-623-3726

Fax: 604-623-4407

bchydroregulatorygroup@bchydro.com

January 31, 2023

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 Third Quarter (Q3 F2023)
 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates**

BC Hydro writes to submit its Q3 F2023 Summary Report of Customer Complaints and Consecutive Estimates.

Customer Complaints

Table 1 Total Complaints Volume from All Sources and BCUC

	Q3 F2022	Q4 F2022	Q1 F2023	Q2 F2023	Q3 F2023
Total Complaints*	89	138	93	137	109
BCUC	15	18	15	24	28

*Total Complaints include complaints received through the BCUC

The total number of customer complaints decreased from 137 in Q2 F2023 to 109 in Q3 F2023. The decrease could be attributable to fewer credit complaints due to the winter moratorium for disconnections and the Government of B.C.'s Affordability Rebate, which reduced or eliminated overdue balances for many residential customers.

Complaints received through the BCUC increased from 24 in Q2 F2023 to 28 in Q3. This increase was mainly due to a campaign from residents in Qualicum Beach about our Street Light Replacement program, as well as an increase in Design complaints.

Table 2 Response Time to Customer Complaints

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

The average response time to customer complaints in Q3 F2023 was three days. The majority of complaints were investigated and responded to within five business days. Complex investigations involving multiple departments were investigated and responded to within ten business days.

Table 3 Complaints by Source

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2023		Q3 F2023	
BC Hydro	43	48%	74	54%	40	43%	72	53%	43	39%
BCUC	15	17%	18	13%	15	16%	24	18%	28	26%
Better Business Bureau	4	4%	6	4%	4	4%	5	3%	3	3%
Government*	27	31%	39	28%	34	37%	36	26%	34	31%
Media and Other	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Total	89	100%	138	100%	93	100%	137	100%	109	100%

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

The largest number of complaints were received by BC Hydro with 43 (39% of the total) in Q3 F2023. This is followed by complaints received through Government with 34 (31% of the total) and the BCUC with 28 (26% of the total).

Of the 34 complaints received through Government in Q3 F2023, seven were received from MLA offices, 23 from the Office of the Minister, and three from the Ombudsperson's office.

Table 4 Complaints by Category – All Sources

	All Sources									
	Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2023		Q3 F2023	
Credit	13	15%	17	12%	20	22%	30	22%	15	14%
Billing and Payments	11	12%	24	17%	13	14%	10	8%	12	11%
Customer Crisis Fund	6	7%	11	8%	5	5%	2	1%	4	4%
SMI	5	6%	4	3%	3	3%	2	1%	4	4%
Non-Customer Service	27	30%	29	21%	33	36%	85	62%	57	51%
Other	27	30%	53	39%	19	20%	8	6%	17	16%
Total	89	100%	138	100%	93	100%	137	100%	109	100%

Table 5 Complaints by Category – BCUC

	BCUC									
	Q3 F2022		Q4 F2022		Q1 F2023		Q2 F2023		Q3 F2023	
Credit	4	27%	2	11%	4	27%	14	58%	3	11%
Billing and Payments	4	27%	7	39%	2	13%	4	17%	4	14%
Customer Crisis Fund	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SMI	0	0%	2	11%	0	0%	1	4%	2	7%
Non-Customer Service	4	27%	1	6%	7	47%	3	13%	17	61%
Other	3	19%	6	33%	2	13%	2	8%	2	7%
Total	15	100%	18	100%	15	100%	24	100%	28	100%

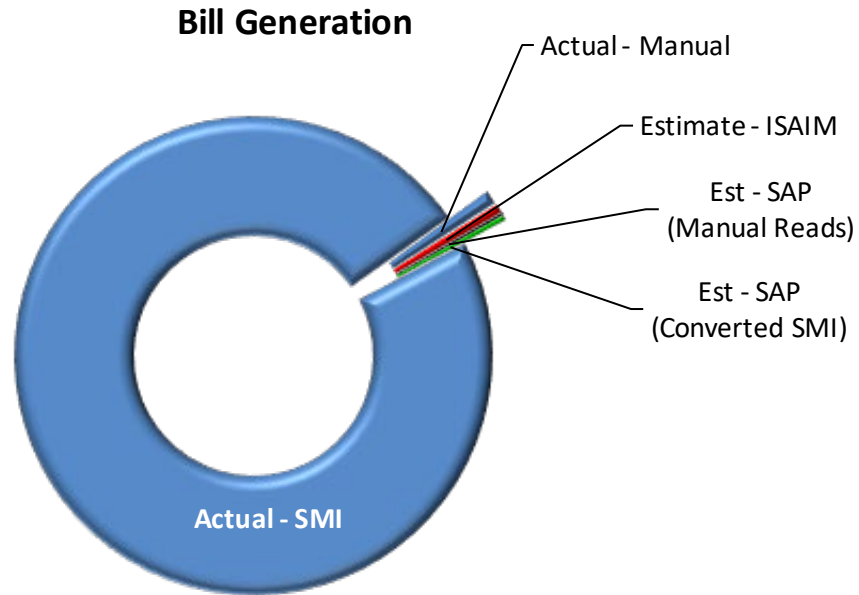
The Non-Customer Service category totaled 57 complaints (51% of the total) in Q3 F2023. There were 15 Design complaints, largely related to service connection delays, 19 Field complaints, 12 of which were related to the Street Light Replacement project, and two related to Site C construction. There were 13 complaints related to Conservation and Energy Management, mainly resulting from program rebates. Of the 17 Other category complaints, five were due to reliability of service, four were about the Residential Inclining Block Rate, and one was related to how rates are charged at public electric vehicle fast charging stations.

Of the 28 complaints received by BCUC in Q3 F2023, four were related to Billing and Payments and three were related to Credit, all of which were due to disconnections. Nine of the 17 Non-Customer Service category complaints were related to the LED streetlights that were installed in 2020 as part of the Street Light Replacement project in Qualicum Beach. BC Hydro has been in discussions with the Town of Qualicum Beach, who own the streetlights, and have presented them with various options they can pursue to address the issues that have been raised.

Consecutive Estimates

In Q3 F2023, the number of Consecutive Estimates decreased to 7,608 compared to 8,953 in the previous quarter. For December 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 versus estimates for December 2022.

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



Bill Issued Using:	December 1-31, 2022		
	Volume	%	%
Actual – SMI	1,384,664	98.0%	99.5%
Actual – Manual	12,745	0.9%	
Estimate – ISAIM	8,448	0.6%	
Est - SAP (Manual Reads)	2,629	0.2%	0.5%
Est - SAP (Converted SMI)	4,627	0.3%	
Total	1,413,113	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 kVARh).

Assessment of Meter Reading Performance

In December 2022, 7,608 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 – Q3 F2023

	Sep 2022	Dec 2022
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read SAP Estimate	4,139	3,180
Accounts with Automated Reads – last read ISAIM Estimate	1,609	1,142
Accounts with Manual Reads – last read SAP Estimate	3,205	3,286
Total	8,953	7,608

SAP estimates that are based on monthly historical data accounted for 6,466 of these bills. The remaining 1,142 were ISAIM estimates.

The 15% decrease in total Consecutive Estimates this quarter is due to a 29% decrease in SAP estimates for automated meters as well as a smaller decrease in ISAIM estimates (23%). Consecutive Estimates for manually read meters increased by 3%, offsetting the improvement in automated meters. The increase in Consecutive Estimates for manual reads is consistent with seasonal trends and can be attributed to increasingly poor weather conditions.

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	234	6	246	22	1,205	42	1,685	22
Disconnected	33	1	27	3	239	8	299	4
Customer-Side Power Outage	41	1	84	8	686	24	811	11
Subtotal	308	8	357	33	2,130	74	2,795	36
Meter Replacement	894	24	286	28	354	13	1,534	20
Estimated Automated Reads								
Intermittent Comms – ISAIM	1,055	27	57	6	4	0	1,116	14
Intermittent Comms – SAP	867	24	106	11	136	5	1,109	15
Estimated Manual Reads								
Customer Access	109	3	75	7	66	2	250	3
Other	386	10	143	14	154	6	683	9
Recently Unconverted	103	3	17	2	1	0	121	2
Grand Total	3,722	100	1,041	100	2,845	100	7,608	100

[Table 7](#) above summarizes the causes of all missed meter reads that resulted in bills issued based on consecutive estimates in Q3 F2023, including automated and manually read meters.

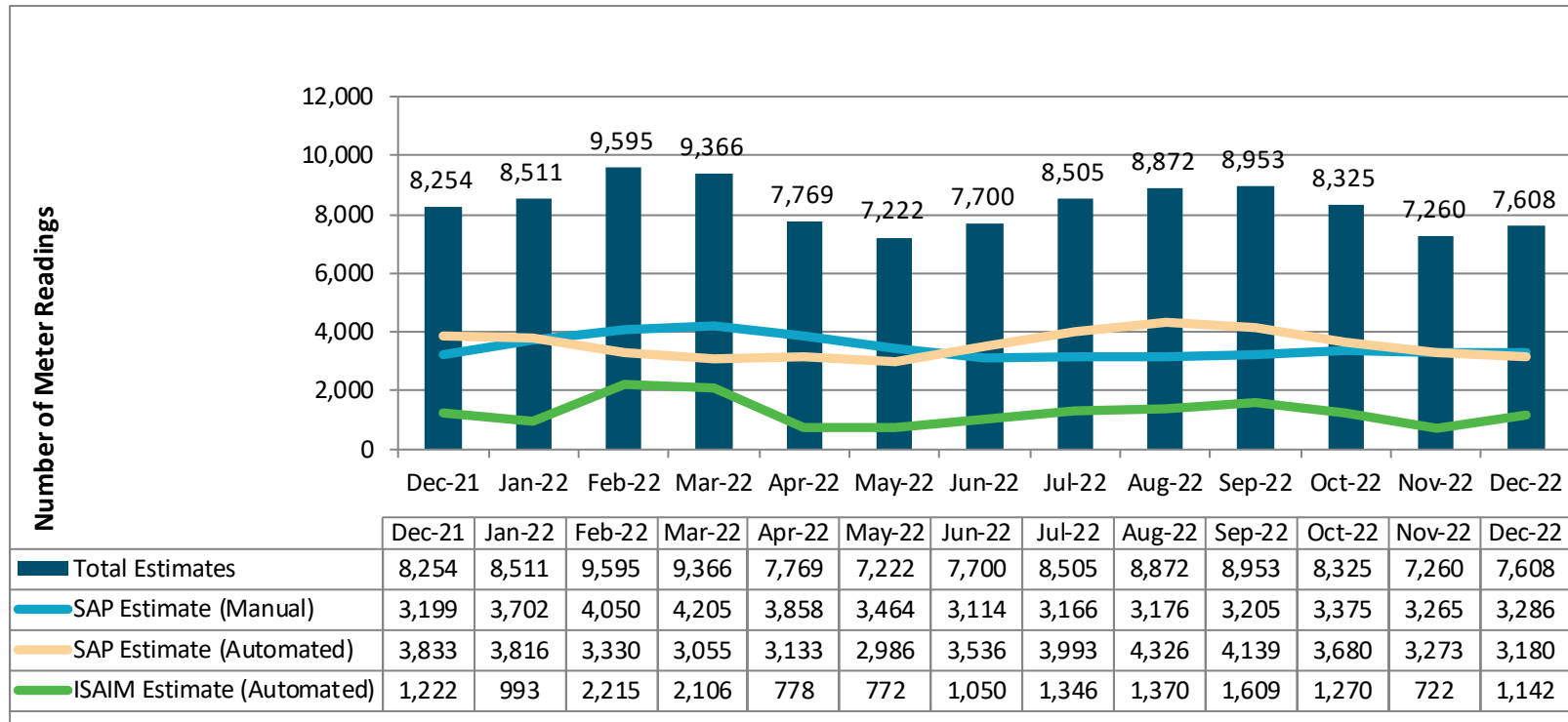
The largest category, at 36%, has low or no customer impact. This category includes accounts that are vacant (22%), services with the line side breakers turned off (11%), and disconnected services (4%).

The second largest category contributing to the overall number of consecutive estimates is intermittent communications of automated meters, which accounts for 29% of estimated reads and includes ISAIM (14%) and SAP (15%) estimates.

Meters pending replacement have increased in recent months to 20%. This is partly due to storms both diverting line crews from exchange work and impacting the efficiency with which other field crews can work. We are focusing on reducing these numbers by assigning work to external contractors who have capacity to complete the work within the next quarter.

For those meters with six or more consecutive estimates, the most significant causes are vacant accounts (42%) and customer-side power outages (24%). These two categories, along with disconnected meters (8%), comprise 74% of accounts with six or more consecutive estimates and do not impact customer billing.

Figure 2 Meter Readings Requiring Two or More Consecutive Estimates, December 2021 to December 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
Chief Regulatory Officer

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