Introduction

The Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) is responsible for ensuring that customers served by regulated service providers receive safe and reliable electricity and gas services. One aspect of reliable service is customer care, which encompasses such matters as telephone access to the company, billing timeliness and accuracy, timely response to customer disputes, and interaction with customers in a prompt, courteous, and satisfactory manner.

On December 19, 2003, the EUB issued Directive 003: Regulated Service Provider (RSP) Service Quality and Reliability Performance, Monitoring, and Reporting Plan, which set out the standards by which a regulated service provider’s customer care and service performance will be measured, monitored, and reported. The goal was to promote better customer service by ensuring that customer bills are accurate and timely and that complaints are resolved promptly and fairly.

While the EUB considered the initial standards to be reasonable, it committed to performing a review of the standards after a year’s experience to ensure that the benchmarks established remained fair and appropriate. Commencing January 1, 2004, the regulated service providers compiled and submitted quarterly reports to the EUB on their customer service performance relative to the established standards.

Review of Performance

To date, the regulated service providers have been successful in achieving the standards established for all the measures of customer service. In the area of billing performance, it became evident that the initial standards for timeliness and accuracy were set too low. The EUB discussed this matter with the regulated service providers collectively as part of the annual review of the results. All were in agreement with the EUB’s proposal to reset the standards to more closely reflect the actual performance in the market.

Revisions to the Billing Performance Standards

The EUB will revise the standards for billing timeliness and accuracy performance effective January 1, 2006. Starting on that date, the performance standards will require that no more than 0.500% of the bills rendered to customers fall outside the scheduled billing date and that no more than 1.00% of the bills rendered to customers are found to be inaccurate. The standard for both performance measures was initially set at 3.00%.

If you have any questions with regard to *Directive 003*, please contact Fino Tiberi, of the Utilities Branch, by telephone at (403) 297-3542 or by e-mail at Fino.Tiberi@gov.ab.ca.

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