



**ORDER NUMBER
G-154-25**

IN THE MATTER OF
the *Utilities Commission Act*, RSBC 1996, Chapter 473

and

FortisBC Inc.
Complaint Regarding FortisBC Inc.'s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy

BEFORE:

M. Jaccard, Panel Chair
E. A. Brown, Commissioner

on June 23, 2025

ORDER

WHEREAS:

- A. On May 7, 2025, the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) received a complaint filed by the Town of Princeton (Princeton) regarding FortisBC Inc.'s (FBC) announcement that it would introduce a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) policy;
- B. On May 14, 20, and 22, 2025, the BCUC received additional complaints about FBC's PSPS policy from the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band, respectively (collectively, including the complaint filed by Princeton, the Complaints);
- C. On April 30, 2025, FBC issued a media release regarding the introduction of its PSPS policy, which FBC describes as a precautionary measure where electricity is shut off proactively in selected areas in advance of extreme weather to reduce potential ignition sources;
- D. Per section 10.2.1 of the Terms and Conditions set out in FBC's Electric Tariff (Electric Tariff) for Service in the West Kootenay and Okanagan Areas, FBC may suspend service of electricity whenever necessary to safeguard life or property, or for the purpose of making repairs on or improvements to any of its apparatus, equipment or work;
- E. The Complaints raise similar concerns with the PSPS policy, stating that the policy has consequences for their communities, including impacting the local economy, impacting culture due to loss of traditionally preserved foods, hindering local residents' access to basic necessities, and forcing the evacuation of high-risk individuals reliant on electrical service for medical equipment;
- F. On May 12, 2025, the BCUC issued Order G-115-25, which directed FBC to suspend implementation of its PSPS policy and file the PSPS policy with the BCUC for review;

- G. On May 20, 2025, FBC filed its PSPS policy with the BCUC and submitted its response to the complaint filed by Princeton;
- H. On May 22, 2025, the BCUC issued Order G-126-25, which established a written public hearing regarding the PSPS policy and a corresponding regulatory timetable, which required FBC to provide public notice of the BCUC's order, established an opportunity for letters of comment to be submitted, and provided FBC the opportunity to respond to the Complaints and letters of comment; and
- I. The BCUC has considered the Complaints, evidence and submissions in this proceeding and finds that the following determinations are warranted.

NOW THEREFORE for the reasons outlined in the decision accompanying this order, the BCUC orders as follows:

- 1. Directive 1 of BCUC Order G-126-25, which suspended FBC's implementation of its PSPS policy, is rescinded.
- 2. FBC is directed to continue to engage with impacted parties regarding the PSPS policy during the period between the date of this order and October 31, 2025.
- 3. FBC is directed to conduct engagement with impacted parties prior to expanding the area to which the PSPS policy applies.
- 4. FBC is directed to file the revised version of its PSPS policy with the BCUC within 30 days of any amendments being made.
- 5. FBC is directed to notify the BCUC in accordance with the PSPS policy. Such notification is to include, but is not limited to, a summary of current or forecast weather conditions, areas affected, the number of customers affected, forecast or actual outage duration, and a description of when impacted parties were notified in accordance with the policy.
- 6. FBC is directed to file a report with the BCUC by November 14, 2025, containing the information set out in Appendix A to this Decision, and to concurrently provide a copy of this report to the Town of Princeton, the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band.
- 7. The Complaints are closed.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 23rd day of June 2025.

BY ORDER

Electronically signed by Mark Jaccard

M. Jaccard
Commissioner

FortisBC Inc.
Complaint Regarding FortisBC Inc.'s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy

DECISION

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Executive Summary

On May 7, 2025, the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) received a complaint filed by the Town of Princeton (Princeton) regarding FortisBC Inc.'s (FBC) announcement that it would introduce a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) policy. FBC describes its PSPS policy as a precautionary measure where electricity is shut off proactively in selected areas in advance of extreme weather to reduce potential ignition sources.

On May 14, 20, and 22, 2025, the BCUC received additional complaints about FBC's PSPS policy from the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band, respectively (collectively, including the complaint filed by Princeton, the Complaints).

On May 12, 2025, the BCUC suspended implementation of FBC's PSPS policy and directed FBC to file its policy with the BCUC for review. On May 22, 2025, the BCUC established a written public hearing regarding the policy and a corresponding regulatory timetable, which consisted of public notice, a letter of comment period and provided FBC the opportunity to respond to the Complaints and letters of comment.

FBC's PSPS policy details the threshold weather conditions that would trigger the initiation of a PSPS event, the decision-making process of whether to shut off power, and the responsibilities for communicating with internal and external parties during PSPS protocol phases, such as Emergency Management and Climate Readiness BC, local governments, Indigenous Governments, the BCUC, and impacted customers. At this time, the PSPS policy is applicable to a portion of FBC's service territory, specifically 10 distribution feeders located in the Keremeos, Greenwood and Princeton areas.

The BCUC received 59 letters of comment in this proceeding including from the Village of Midway, the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, the Corporation of the City of Greenwood, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, the Keremeos Irrigation District, the MLA for Boundary-Similkameen Ms. Donegal Wilson, and 53 individuals. The letters of comments and Complaints share similar concerns with FBC's PSPS policy, including that the policy has consequences for their communities, will impact the local economy, hinder local residents' access to basic necessities, and force the evacuation of high-risk individuals reliant on electrical service for medical equipment.

In reviewing FBC's PSPS policy, the key consideration for the Panel was whether the policy is consistent with the Terms and Conditions of FBC's Electric Tariff (Electric Tariff) for Service in the West Kootenay and Okanagan Areas. Among other things, the Electric Tariff sets out that while FBC will endeavour to provide a regular and uninterrupted supply of electricity, it does not guarantee a constant supply of electricity. The Electric Tariff also allows FBC to suspend service whenever necessary to safeguard life or property and requires that reasonable notice of the suspension be given as the circumstances permit.

The Panel finds that FBC's PSPS policy is consistent with FBC's Electric Tariff. The Panel is persuaded that the PSPS policy, as set out, is only intended to be applied in circumstances necessary to safeguard life and property as permitted by its Electric Tariff and only to be used as a tool of last resort where other alternatives are not sufficient. Further, the Panel finds that the policy sets out that reasonable notice will be provided in advance to impacted customers as the circumstances allow, including additional steps to notify vulnerable customers.

While the Panel considers that the PSPS policy is consistent with FBC's Electric Tariff, the Panel recognizes that a suspension of service, especially during a time of extreme weather, may result in significant impacts to customers. The Panel also observes that FBC's engagement with its customers during development of the policy and ahead of its initial implementation was minimal. The Panel considers it important that FBC continue to have discussions with its customers and the communities which it serves. Accordingly, the Panel makes several directions to FBC regarding further engagement with impacted parties.

The Panel also considers it necessary that the BCUC be kept informed to ensure that the implementation of the policy aligns with FBC's Electric Tariff. Among other directives, FBC is directed to file a report with the BCUC by November 14, 2025, which shall include, among other things, a summary of its engagement with local communities, a discussion of PSPS events that occur during the 2025 Wildfire Season, if any, an assessment as to the efficacy of the PSPS policy, and lessons learned. FBC is also directed to provide a copy of this report to those who filed Complaints in this proceeding.

Lastly, as we have completed our review and have found that the PSPS policy is consistent with FBC's Electric Tariff, Directive 1 of BCUC Order G-115-25, which suspended the implementation of FBC's PSPS policy, is rescinded and the Complaints are closed.

1.0 Introduction

On May 7, 2025, the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) received a complaint filed by the Town of Princeton (Princeton) regarding a FortisBC Inc. (FBC) announcement that it would introduce a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) policy.¹ FBC's media release, which was issued on April 30, 2025, described the policy as a precautionary measure where electricity is shut off proactively in selected areas in advance of extreme weather to reduce potential ignition sources. On May 14, 20, and 22, 2025, the BCUC received additional complaints about FBC's PSPS policy from the Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB), the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS), and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band (USIB), respectively (collectively, including the complaint filed by Princeton, the Complaints, with the parties referred to as the Complainants).

The Complainants requested that the BCUC suspend the implementation of the PSPS policy and provide clarity on FBC's authority to implement proactive, rather than reactive, power shutoffs. Further, the complaints filed by LSIB and USIB requested that the BCUC maintain suspension of the PSPS policy until consultation with Indigenous Nations had taken place.²

On May 12, 2025, by Order G-115-25, the BCUC suspended implementation of FBC's PSPS policy and directed FBC to file its policy with the BCUC for review.³

On May 22, 2025, by Order G-126-25, the BCUC established a written public hearing regarding the PSPS policy and a corresponding regulatory timetable. The regulatory timetable consisted of FBC providing public notice of the order to local governments and Indigenous Governments and on its website and social media platforms, an opportunity for letters of comment to be filed, and the opportunity for FBC to provide a response to the Complaints and any letters of comment filed.⁴

2.0 Legislative Framework

Utilities Commission Act (UCA)

Section 83 of the UCA sets out the BCUC's jurisdiction regarding complaints and provides that if a complaint is made to the BCUC, the BCUC has powers to determine whether a hearing or inquiry is to be had, and generally whether any action on its part is or is not to be taken.

Section 23 of the UCA grants the BCUC general supervisory responsibility and oversight over all public utilities and empowers the BCUC to issue orders covering a broad range of areas, including safety devices (section 23(c)) and any other matters that the BCUC considers necessary or advisable for ensuring the safety, convenience, or service of the public (section 23 (g)(i)).

Section 24 of the UCA requires the BCUC, in executing its supervisory role, to make examinations and conduct inquiries necessary to keep itself informed about: (i) the conduct of the utility's business; (ii) the utility's compliance with the UCA and other laws and regulations; and (iii) any other matter in the BCUC's jurisdiction.

¹ Exhibit B1-1.

² Exhibits B2-1, B3-1, B4-1.

³ Order G-115-25, dated May 12, 2025, directives 1 and 3.

⁴ Order G-126-25, dated May 22, 2025.

Section 38 of the UCA provides that a public utility must provide and maintain its property and equipment in a condition to enable it to provide a service to the public that the BCUC considers is in all respects adequate, safe, efficient, just and reasonable.

FBC Electric Tariff

Section 10.1 of the Terms and Conditions of FBC's Electric Tariff states:

FortisBC will endeavour to provide a regular and uninterrupted supply of Electricity but it does not guarantee a constant supply of Electricity or the maintenance of unvaried frequency or voltage and will not be responsible or liable for any loss, injury, damage or expense caused by or resulting from any interruption, Suspension, Termination, failure or defect in the supply of Electricity, whether caused by the negligence of FortisBC, its servants or agents, or otherwise unless the loss, injury, damage or expense is directly resulting from the willful misconduct of FortisBC, its servants or agents provided, however, that FortisBC, its servants and agents are not responsible for any loss of profit, loss of revenues or other economic loss even if the loss is directly resulting from the willful misconduct of FortisBC, its servants or agents.

Section 10.2 of the Terms and Conditions of FBC's Electric Tariff states:

FortisBC and the Customer may demand the Suspension of Service whenever necessary to safeguard life or property, or for the purpose of making repairs on or improvements to any of its apparatus, equipment or work. Such reasonable notice of the Suspension as the circumstances permit will be given.

3.0 Submissions

3.1 The Complaints

Several of the Complaints raise concern with the PSPS policy's alignment with the UCA. For example, the Complainants cite Section 25 of the UCA and state that this section specifies that the authority to curtail services under emergency conditions rests explicitly with the BCUC. The Complaints state that FBC's unilateral decision to implement PSPS events without clear and specific authorization by the BCUC seems to be outside its scope of authority as outlined in the UCA. The Complainants also cite section 38 of the UCA and state that this provision emphasizes uninterrupted service provision to customers. The Complaints state that the intentional, anticipatory power shutoffs do not align with this requirement, given that they are based on projected rather than confirmed emergency situations.⁵

The Complainants acknowledge the intention of FBC's PSPS policy is to reduce wildfire risk; however, they submit that the interrupted supply of service via the PSPS policy presents significant consequences for their communities, in particular for vulnerable members.⁶ The Complaints raise the following concerns:

- **Health and Safety:** High-risk individuals, such as the elderly and those reliant upon medical equipment powered by electricity, could face life-threatening situations if they do not have alternative sources of power. Princeton highlights that high-risk individuals could be forced to evacuate the area.

⁵ Exhibit B1-2, p. 1; Exhibit B2-1, p. 1, Exhibit B3-1, p. 1; and Exhibit B4-1, p. 1.

⁶ LSIB, Exhibit B2-1, p. 1; RDOS, Exhibit B3-1, p. 1; and USIB, Exhibit B4-1, p. 1.

- **Service Disruption:** Outages could cut off communication, including access to 911, leaving rural communities dangerously isolated.
- **Facility Closure:** Closure of critical community facilities and educational institutions could necessitate costly and disruptive evacuation procedures and leave community members without safe refuge during extreme weather events.
- **Economic Impact:** The shutdown of local industry could have severe impacts on local businesses and hinder residents' access to basic necessities, including food and fuel.
- **Cultural Impact:** The loss of traditionally harvested and preserved foods due to power outages could undermine food sovereignty and cultural continuity.

The Complainants also express concern regarding the level of engagement FBC undertook with respect to the policy. Princeton states that FBC submitted a finalized policy to the town without collaboration.⁷ LSIB and USIB submit that FBC did not consult with either band's leadership before proposing the PSPS policy, and that the policy reflected an approach to emergency management that "imposes decisions on Indigenous lands without our consent or participation."⁸

3.2 FBC's PSPS Policy

On May 20, 2025, in accordance with BCUC Order G-126-25, FBC filed its response to Princeton and filed its PSPS policy with the BCUC for review. FBC submits that it developed its PSPS policy in response to the escalating effects of extreme weather, the impact of recent wildfires, and evolving industry practices.⁹ FBC explains that a PSPS event is the proactive de-energization of powerline(s) during periods of extreme wildfire risk, to reduce potential ignition sources.¹⁰ FBC states that its PSPS policy is intended to be a tool of last resort during periods of extreme wildfire risk.¹¹

Within the PSPS policy, FBC lays out a protocol that details the threshold weather conditions that would trigger the initiation of a PSPS event, the decision-making process of whether to shut off power, and the responsibilities for communicating with internal and external parties during PSPS protocol phases, such as Emergency Management and Climate Readiness BC, local governments and Indigenous communities, the BCUC, and impacted customers.¹²

The PSPS policy applies to a portion of FBC's service territory, specifically 10 distribution feeders listed in Appendix A to the policy that are located in the Keremeos, Greenwood and Princeton service areas. The policy states that FBC will monitor current and forecasted weather and will initiate the PSPS initiation steps if the following weather condition exist for a line/feeder:¹³

1. Sustained wind speeds in excess of 75 km/hour; and
2. A Fire Weather Index (FWI) of greater than 47.

⁷ Exhibit B1-3, p. 1.

⁸ Exhibit B2-2, p. 2; Exhibit B4-2, p. 2.

⁹ Exhibit C1-1, p. 1.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 2.

¹¹ Exhibit C1-2, p. 2.

¹² Exhibit C1-2, PSPS Protocol, Section 3.

¹³ Exhibit C1-2, PSPS Protocol, p. 4.

After the above thresholds have been met, the PSPS policy sets out additional factors that will be considered in the decision-making process, as applicable, such as:¹⁴

- a) Alternative mitigation strategies that have been taken, or can be taken prior to forecast weather conditions, to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition;
- b) Any relevant Environment Canada weather alerts; and
- c) Input from public safety partners, local and provincial governments, Indigenous communities, and critical infrastructure providers, where available.

Once the PSPS policy is initiated, the policy outlines the phases of a PSPS event as follows:¹⁵

- PSPS Monitor: Where FortisBC becomes aware of forecasted weather conditions that meet its threshold criteria more than 72 hours prior to such forecasted conditions, this phase will be initiated. This is an internal phase only, to facilitate internal coordination and initial mobilization.
- PSPS Watch: Occurs 72 hours, where possible, prior to forecasted weather conditions that meet the threshold criteria. In this phase, notifications will be sent to internal and external affected parties indicating the potential for a PSPS event.
- PSPS Watch Update: Occurs 48 hours, where possible, prior to forecasted weather conditions that meet the threshold criteria. In this phase, updates will be provided to internal and external affected parties indicating the continued potential for a PSPS event.
- PSPS Warning: Occurs 24 hours, where possible, prior to forecasted weather conditions that meet the threshold criteria. During this phase, updates will be provided to internal and external affected parties indicating that a PSPS event is likely.
- PSPS Imminent: Occurs 4 hours, where possible, prior to forecasted weather conditions that meet the threshold criteria. In this phase, a final decision will be made whether the PSPS event is to proceed, and updates will be provided to internal and external affected parties indicating that a PSPS event is imminent.
- PSPS Initiated: Power will be shutoff in identified areas 2 hours, where possible, prior to forecasted weather conditions that meet the threshold criteria.
- PSPS Restoration: Updates will be provided to internal and external affected parties during a PSPS event and once the weather conditions have passed, the restoration steps will begin.

Section 8 of the PSPS policy explains that the policy will be reviewed as required to assess its effectiveness and alignment with industry practices and regulatory requirements. FBC will consider feedback from stakeholders, including customers and public safety partners, in the review process.¹⁶

¹⁴ Exhibit C1-2, PSPS Protocol, p. 4.

¹⁵ Exhibit C1-2, p. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

3.3 Letters of Comment

The BCUC received letters of comments from 53 individuals, the Village of Midway, the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, the Corporation of the City of Greenwood, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), the Keremeos Irrigation District and the MLA for Boundary-Similkameen Ms. Donegal Wilson.¹⁷ Princeton also filed a letter of comment in addition to its Complaint following its review of FBC's PSPS policy.¹⁸

The concerns expressed by individuals who filed letters of comment opposing FBC's PSPS policy included:

- the safety of elderly and medically vulnerable populations reliant upon electricity for medical equipment;
- negative impacts on local businesses;
- spoiling of refrigerated and frozen food;
- cost of damages resulting from electrical power shutoffs; and
- loss of basic necessities during extreme weather events such as air conditioning and indoor plumbing, among other things.

The Village of Midway, the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, and the Corporation of the City of Greenwood submitted letters that had been addressed to FBC or BC government officials. These letters stated their opposition to FBC's PSPS policy and shared similar concerns to the Complaints, such as impacts on the health of vulnerable individuals, the closure of community facilities, disruptions to emergency communication services, and impacts on local businesses.¹⁹

BC Hydro submitted it was in the preliminary stages of developing its own PSPS policy. BC Hydro highlighted the potential over-lapping and non-exclusive jurisdiction under the UCA and the *Wildfire Act* and emphasized the need that any future BCUC regulation regarding wildfire safety be harmonious with the jurisdiction of the BC Wildfire Service.²⁰

The Keremeos Irrigation District noted that in a situation where the power goes out in the summertime, the water stops shortly after. The Keremeos Irrigation District stated that if this were to happen for an extended period, many businesses would not be able to operate, people in care homes would need to be evacuated, fruit crops could be damaged, water would need to be trucked in for livestock and no water would be available for fire protection.²¹

MLA Wilson stated that the potential impacts of a PSPS event are deeply concerning and urged the BCUC to reject approval of the PSPS policy in its current form until certain conditions are met.²²

¹⁷ Exhibits D-1 through D-59.

¹⁸ Exhibit B1-3.

¹⁹ Exhibit D-2, Exhibit D-3, Exhibit D-4.

²⁰ Exhibit D-54.

²¹ Exhibit D-58, p. 1.

²² Exhibit D-59, pp. 1-2.

Princeton expressed in its letter that it remained concerned about the direction and implications of the PSPS policy. Princeton specified three concerns in particular:²³

- The vague and undefined criteria for sustained wind;
- The threshold and application of the Fire Weather Index (FWI); and
- The over-reliance on forecasted weather conditions as a trigger for implementing shutoffs.

Princeton submitted that FBC's indicators could result in frequent and prolonged power outages for communities in the Similkameen and Boundary regions. Princeton anticipates that members of its community would be left without air conditioning, refrigeration, or other essential services.²⁴ Princeton also submits there are unresolved issues that FBC must address before implementing the PSPS policy, such as food security from lack of refrigeration, support for vulnerable populations, coordination with Emergency Management and Climate Readiness BC for emergency designation, definition of key terminology in the PSPS policy (i.e. sustained wind), strategies to minimize and mitigate power shutoffs, ratepayer costs, and economic impacts.²⁵

3.4 FBC's Response to the Complaints and Letters of Comment

On June 9, 2025, FBC filed its response to the remaining Complaints and letters of comment and on June 18, FBC filed a response to MLA Wilson's letter.²⁶

FBC submits that the obligation to provide service under section 38 of the UCA does not mean that a utility must provide service to customers at all times, as the Complainants argue.²⁷ Rather, FBC states that section 38 of the UCA puts obligations on a public utility to provide, and maintain its property and equipment in a condition to enable it to provide, a service that the BCUC considers is in all respects adequate, safe, efficient, just and reasonable.²⁸

FBC states that it has experienced planned and unplanned interruptions to its service in the past for repairs, weather events, motor vehicle accidents, and third-party damage. FBC references its Electric Tariff, stating that section 10.2.1, "Suspension of Service for Safety, Repairs, and Maintenance", contemplates interruptions to service like these. FBC submits that section 10.2.1 of its Electric Tariff addresses the circumstances of a PSPS event, which allows FBC to suspend service "whenever necessary to safeguard life or property" and will provide "reasonable notice" of the suspension as the circumstances permit.²⁹ FBC states that the PSPS policy is an additional measure to safeguard life and property and is consistent with its right to suspend service under its Electric Tariff.³⁰

In response to the concern raised by the Complaints and the letters of comment that the PSPS policy risks creating more harm than it prevents, FBC states that it is important to note that the conditions that would lead to a PSPS Initiation phase according to the PSPS policy are rare; however, these conditions themselves would likely result in an unplanned outage. FBC states that based on ten years of historical extreme weather data, it identifies only one occurrence of weather conditions that would have met the criteria set out in its current PSPS policy.³¹

²³ Exhibit B1-3, p. 1.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 2.

²⁶ Exhibit B1-3; Exhibit C1-6.

²⁷ Exhibit C1-4, p. 3.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, p. 4.

In its response to MLA Wilson, FBC notes that MLA Wilson’s concerns are similar to those raised in the Complaints and previous letters of comment and as such, provides reference to FBC’s responses already on the proceeding record. FBC notes that it has been actively engaged with MLA Wilson and her constituency office with respect to the PSPS policy, including attending in-person meetings in May. FBC states that it appreciates MLA Wilson’s engagement and raising concerns regarding the potential impacts of the policy.³²

3.5 Princeton Response to FBC Reply

On June 9, 2025, Princeton submitted a response to FBC’s reply. It states that significant questions and uncertainties remain unresolved following FBC’s reply. In particular, Princeton contends that while FBC reiterates its two proposed thresholds—sustained wind speeds of 75 km/h and a FWI of 47, FBC continues to omit a definition of “sustained”, which Princeton considers to be a critical term that significantly impacts the interpretation and implementation of the policy.³³

In response to FBC’s interpretation of section 38 of the UCA, Princeton states that it understands section 38 of the UCA places the responsibility on FBC to maintain its infrastructure in a manner that ensures the delivery of safe and reliable service and considers this interpretation aligns with the full clause.³⁴ Princeton provides reference to a statement by an FBC employee made in a presentation to the Princeton Town Council on May 26, 2025 regarding local infrastructure. Princeton considers the statement concerning and states that it suggests that necessary vegetation management and maintenance have not been prioritized, despite the utility’s obligation under section 38 of the UCA.³⁵

Princeton also provides reference to another statement made by an FBC employee at the same Town Council meeting in which the FBC employee stated that “The fire weather index to get to that level, they’re expecting an additional 21 days a year by the year 2030 that will be in that zone of extreme fire danger.” Princeton argues that this data point underscores the importance of long-term investment in system resilience, rather than relying on service interruptions, particularly during high-risk periods such as extreme heat events.³⁶

Princeton requests that the BCUC require FBC to engage in comprehensive and meaningful consultation with all affected communities across the Similkameen and Boundary regions.³⁷

3.6 FBC Reply to Princeton

In its response to Princeton’s June 9, 2025 submission, FBC clarifies its definition of sustained wind and statements made by its Project Manager regarding vegetation management and forecasts of increasing extreme fire danger.³⁸

FBC submits its usage of “sustained” differentiates the criterion of wind speed from gusts of wind as a PSPS threshold. It states that it will use wind speed forecasts from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Meteorological Service to provide an indication of overall windiness, rather than short bursts of higher wind speed.³⁹

³² Exhibit C1-6, p. 1.

³³ Exhibit B1-4, p. 1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 2.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Exhibit C1-5.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 1.

FBC clarifies that its Project Manager made a statement of fact that its feeder line located along Highway 5A is in a highly treed area and intended to convey, not that the line is not safe, but that the amount of brushing needed to reduce the risk equal to that of an urban area would not be practicable. Further, it states its employee was “contrasting the difference between lines identified as being higher risk for wildfire because they run through wildland forested areas as compared to those that run through urban developed areas where the risk is lower for ignition and spread of wildfire because of landscaped and paved surfaces.”⁴⁰

FBC also clarifies that its employee’s statement regarding a forecast of 21 additional days being considered the zone of extreme fire risk by 2030 was not an implication that FBC is deferring long-term investments in system resiliency. Rather, FBC states that it has been “planning and prioritizing resiliency investments in its system through its Climate Adaptation work and has been adapting its design and construction standards and materials to better withstand the changing environmental conditions in its service area.”⁴¹

4.0 Panel Determination

In reviewing FBC’s PSPS policy, the key consideration for the Panel is whether the policy is consistent with FBC’s Electric Tariff. The Panel considers the most relevant sections of FBC’s Electric Tariff in this case to be section 10.1, which sets out that while FBC will endeavour to provide a regular and uninterrupted supply of electricity, it does not guarantee a constant supply of electricity, and section 10.2, which allows FBC to suspend service whenever necessary to safeguard life or property and requires that reasonable notice of the suspension be given as the circumstances permit.

FBC’s PSPS policy states that it is a tool of last resort to proactively de-energize powerline(s) during periods of extreme wildfire risk to reduce potential ignition sources and takes into consideration any alternative wildfire mitigation strategies that can be taken. FBC’s PSPS policy also sets out communication protocols whereby notice is provided to those impacted at multiple stages in advance of an anticipated PSPS event, as well as during the event and once power has been restored.

The Panel considers that FBC must balance the risk of its powerlines being a source of ignition during extreme weather conditions with the need to maintain service to its customers. The Panel notes that FBC already has the authority to de-energize its powerlines for safety reasons in accordance with its Electric Tariff. The Panel views that this policy will add additional protocols and steps leading up these de-energizations (where practical) that may provide early notifications to communities regarding a risk of de-energization. The Panel is persuaded that the PSPS policy, as set out, is intended to be applied in circumstances necessary to safeguard life and property as permitted by its Electric Tariff and only be used as a tool of last resort where other alternatives are not sufficient. Further, the Panel finds that the policy sets out that reasonable notice will be provided in advance to impacted customers as the circumstances allow, including additional steps to notify vulnerable customers. Accordingly, **the Panel finds that FBC’s PSPS policy is consistent with the Terms and Conditions of FBC’s Electric Tariff.**

We note that many of the Complaints refer to section 25 of the UCA and suggest that that the authority to curtail services under emergency conditions rests explicitly with the BCUC, not FBC. Further, the Complaints refer to section 38 of the UCA and suggest that this provision of the statute emphasizes uninterrupted service provision to customers and that the anticipatory power shutoffs associated with the PSPS policy do not align with this requirement.

⁴⁰ Exhibit C1-5, p. 2.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Section 25 of the UCA grants the BCUC the authority to order a public utility to provide improved service, if it has found that the service provided by the public utility is unreasonable, unsafe, inadequate or unreasonably discriminatory and section 38 of the UCA requires that a public utility must provide and maintain its property and equipment in a condition to enable it to provide a service to the public that the BCUC considers is in all respects adequate, safe, efficient, just and reasonable. As noted above, section 10.1 of FBC's Electric Tariff sets out that while FBC will endeavour to provide a regular and uninterrupted supply of electricity, it does not guarantee a constant supply of electricity and section 10.2 allows FBC to suspend service when necessary to safeguard life or property. As such, while the Panel expects that FBC will endeavour to provide uninterrupted service, the Panel considers that there are circumstances where the Electric Tariff permits service to be suspended by FBC.

While the Panel considers that the PSPS policy is consistent with FBC's Electric Tariff, the Panel recognizes that a suspension of service, especially during a time of extreme weather, may result in significant impacts to customers. We have received over 60 letters of comment/Complaints in this proceeding including from local governments, Indigenous Governments and individual customers where we heard about these impacts, including that electricity is a basic necessity, not a luxury.

The Panel is concerned that many of the letters of comment and Complaints provided views that there was a lack of engagement by FBC regarding the policy in advance of its initial implementation. Given the feedback received, the Panel observes that FBC's engagement with its customers during development of the policy and ahead of its implementation was minimal. While FBC has been engaging with customers in impacted areas in recent weeks, the Panel considers that many of the issues that have come to light during this proceeding could have been addressed through earlier engagement and collaboration with impacted communities.

We consider it important that FBC continue to have discussions with its customers and the communities in which it serves so customers can continue to learn about the PSPS policy and provide their feedback to FBC. Accordingly, **the Panel directs FBC to continue to engage with impacted parties regarding the PSPS policy during the period between the date of this order and October 31, 2025.** The Panel expects this engagement to include sessions with impacted parties in the Fall of 2025 after the peak of the wildfire season to debrief on lessons learned. Further, the Panel notes that the PSPS policy as currently set out is applicable to a portion of FBC's service territory, specifically 10 distribution feeders located in the Keremeos, Greenwood and Princeton areas. The Panel expects FBC to maintain ongoing communications with its customers regarding the PSPS policy, especially if FBC considers amending or expanding the policy's service area. For this reason, **FBC is directed to conduct engagement with impacted parties prior to expanding the area to which the PSPS policy applies.**

The Panel considers it necessary that the BCUC be kept informed, pursuant to section 24 of the UCA, to ensure that the implementation of the policy aligns with FBC's Electric Tariff. For this reason, should any amendments to the policy be made, **FBC is directed to file the revised PSPS policy with the BCUC within 30 days of any amendments being made.** In addition, the Panel considers that reporting to the BCUC as set out below is warranted.

FBC is directed to notify the BCUC in accordance with the PSPS policy. The policy sets out that the BCUC will be notified at various stages of the PSPS initiation steps, including the PSPS watch/warning stages, when the PSPS event is initiated, and once restored. The Panel finds this to be appropriate. Such notification to the BCUC is to include, but is not limited to, a summary of current or forecast weather conditions, areas affected, number of customers affected, forecast or actual outage duration, and a description of when impacted parties were notified in accordance with the policy.

FBC is directed to file a report with the BCUC by November 14, 2025, containing the information set out in Appendix A of this Decision and to concurrently provide a copy of this report to the Town of Princeton, the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band.

Lastly, BCUC Order G-115-25, dated May 12, 2025, directed FBC to suspend the implementation of its PSPS policy pending BCUC review of the policy. As we have completed our review and have found that the PSPS policy is consistent with FBC's Electric Tariff, **Directive 1 of BCUC Order G-115-25 is rescinded and the Complaints are closed.**

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 23rd day of June 2025.

Electronically signed by Mark Jaccard

M. Jaccard
Panel Chair/Commissioner

Electronically signed by Elizabeth A. (Lisa) Brown

E. A. Brown
Commissioner

FortisBC Inc.
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PSPS COMPLIANCE REPORT

FBC is directed to file a report with the BCUC by November 14, 2025, containing the following information:

1. A summary of the engagement undertaken with impacted parties regarding the PSPS policy up to the filing the report, including the engagement completed in the Fall of 2025 after the peak of the wildfire season that debriefed on lessons learned. The summary should include an overview of the feedback received and any key lessons learned from the engagement processes.
2. A summary of future customer engagement planned.
3. A summary of all PSPS events that occurred during the 2025 Wildfire Season, if any, including:
 - a. The number of times each PSPS stage was initiated including an overview of the weather conditions in each case.
 - b. A description of alternative measures considered in each case, with rationale as to why they were not viable.
 - c. The total number of customers impacted.
 - d. A description of areas impacted.
 - e. The average outage duration (hours).
 - f. The average outage restoration time (hours) and a discussion on the re-energization process.
 - g. A description of communication with key, local stakeholders.
 - h. A description of when impacted parties were notified in accordance with the policy, including a description of the process by which vulnerable customers were notified.
4. An assessment as to the efficacy of the PSPS policy and a discussion of any changes expected to the policy for the 2026 Wildfire Season and/or expansion of its use.
5. A discussion on the indices used to trigger the initiation of the PSPS process (i.e. the specific sustained wind and fire weather index indices) and an assessment as to whether these indices continue to be appropriate or whether FBC considers changes are necessary. The discussion should include an assessment of weather events that did not trigger but were close to triggering the PSPS initiation steps.
6. Lessons learned from the 2025 wildfire season, irrespective of initiation of PSPS protocol or event.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

Acronym	Description
BC Hydro	British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority
BCUC	British Columbia Utilities Commission
Electric Tariff	FBC's Electric Tariff
FBC	FortisBC Inc.
FWI	Fire Weather Index
LSIB	Lower Similkameen Indian Band
Princeton	Town of Princeton
PSPS	Public Safety Power Shutoff
PSPS event	The proactive de-energization of powerline(s) during periods of extreme wildfire risk, to reduce potential ignition sources.
PSPS policy	A precautionary measure where electricity is shut off proactively in selected areas in advance of extreme weather to reduce potential ignition sources.
RDOS	the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
the Complaints	Complaints regarding FBC's PSPS policy submitted by the Town of Princeton, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band
the Complainants	Town of Princeton, the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band.
UCA	<i>Utilities Commission Act</i>
USIB	Upper Similkameen Indian Band

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EXHIBIT LIST

Exhibit No.	Description
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COMMISSION DOCUMENTS

A-1	May 12, 2025 – BCUC Order G-115-25 Suspending implementation of PSPS policy and directing FBC to file PSPS policy with BCUC
A-2	May 15, 2025 – Panel Appointment
A-3	May 22, 2025 – BCUC Order G-126-25 establishing a regulatory timetable
A-4	June 10, 2025 – BCUC letter to FBC regarding response to Town of Princeton's letter
A-5	June 17, 2025 – BCUC letter to FBC regarding response to MLA Wilson's letter of comment

COMMISSION STAFF DOCUMENTS

A2-1	May 9, 2025 – BCUC Staff submission containing BCUC letter to FortisBC Inc. (FBC) in response to Complaint filed by the Town of Princeton regarding FBC's Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
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APPLICANT DOCUMENTS

B1-1	May 7, 2025 – TOWN OF PRINCETON (PRINCETON) – Letter to BCUC regarding Complaint regarding FortisBC Inc.'s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
B1-2	May 7, 2025 – Princeton Letter to FBC regarding Complaint regarding FBC's Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
B1-3	June 1, 2025 – Princeton further Letter of Comment
B1-4	June 9, 2025 - Princeton submitting response to FBC comments
B2-1	May 9, 2025 – LOWER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND (LSIB) - Letter to BCUC regarding Complaint regarding FortisBC Inc.'s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
B2-2	May 9, 2025 – LSIB letter to FBC regarding Complaint regarding FBC's Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy

- B2-3 May 9, 2025 – LSIB Letter to Ministers regarding Complaint regarding FBC’s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
- B3-1 May 15, 2025 – **REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN (OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN)** - Letter to BCUC regarding Complaint regarding FortisBC Inc.’s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
- B4-1 May 16, 2025 – **UPPER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND (USIB)** - Letter to BCUC regarding Complaint regarding FortisBC Inc.’s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
- B4-2 May 16, 2025 – USIB Letter to FBC regarding Complaint regarding FBC’s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
- B4-3 May 16, 2025 – USIB Letter to Ministers regarding Complaint regarding FBC’s Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy

INTERVENER DOCUMENTS

- C1-1 May 20, 2025 – **FORTISBC INC. (FBC)** – Response to Princeton Letter
- C1-2 May 20, 2025 – FBC Public Safety Power Shutoff Policy
- C1-3 May 28, 2025 – FBC submitting confirmation of public notice in compliance with Order G-126-25
- C1-4 June 9, 2025 – FBC submitting response to Letters of Comment and Complaints
- C1-5 June 12, 2025 – FBC submitting response to Exhibit B1-4
- C1-6 June 18, 2025 – FBC submitting response to MLA Wilson Letter of Comment

LETTERS OF COMMENT

- D-1 May 22, 2025 – **GOLDMAN, L. (GOLDMAN)** – Letter of Comment
- D-2 May 26, 2025 – **THE VILLAGE OF MIDWAY (VILLAGE MIDWAY)** – Letter of Comment
- D-3 May 27, 2025 – **REGIONAL DISTRICT OF KOOTENAY BOUNDARY (KOOTENAY BOUNDARY)** – Letter of Comment
- D-4 May 29, 2025 – **CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GREENWOOD (CITY OF GREENWOOD)** – Letter of Comment
- D-5 May 29, 2025 – **GIBSON, M. (GIBSON)** – Letter of Comment
- D-6 May 30, 2025 – **LLOYDD, R. (LLOYDD)** – Letter of Comment
- D-7 May 30, 2025 – **JACOBS, M. (JACOBS)** – Letter of Comment
- D-8 May 30, 2025 – **HILTON, T. (HILTON)** – Letter of Comment
- D-9 May 30, 2025 – **HOFFART, F. (HOFFART)** – Letter of Comment

D-10	May 30, 2025 – BAIN, L. (BAIN) – Letter of Comment
D-11	May 30, 2025 – BURLEIGH, J. (BURLEIGH) – Letter of Comment
D-12	May 31, 2025 – ENS, L. (ENS) – Letter of Comment
D-13	May 31, 2025 – DENDAAS, B. (DENDAAS) – Letter of Comment
D-14	May 31, 2025 – ROBINSON, V. (ROBINSON) – Letter of Comment
D-15	May 31, 2025 – MILLS, J. (MILLS) – Letter of Comment
D-16	May 31, 2025 – WOODCOCK, E. (WOODCOCK) – Letter of Comment
D-17	May 31, 2025 – EYDT, M. (EYDT) – Letter of Comment
D-18	May 31, 2025 – BRUCKS, P. (BRUCKS) – Letter of Comment
D-19	May 31, 2025 – CLIFFORD, L. (CLIFFORD) – Letter of Comment
D-20	May 31, 2025 – CLIFFORD, R. (CLIFFORD, R.) – Letter of Comment
D-21	May 31, 2025 – McIVOR, N. (McIVOR) – Letter of Comment
D-22	May 31, 2025 – KOROSEC, K. (KOROSEC) – Letter of Comment
D-23	May 31, 2025 – RODRIGUEZ, T. (RODRIGUEZ) – Letter of Comment
D-24	May 31, 2025 – WAKEFIELD, A. (WAKEFIELD) – Letter of Comment
D-25	May 31, 2025 – FURMAN, P. (FURMAN) – Letter of Comment
D-26	May 31, 2025 – SORENSEN, M. (SORENSEN) – Letter of Comment
D-27	May 31, 2025 – DIXON, L. (DIXON) – Letter of Comment
D-28	May 31, 2025 – KERSEY, B. (KERSEY) – Letter of Comment
D-29	May 31, 2025 – GLANVILLE, J. (GLANVILLE) – Letter of Comment
D-30	May 31, 2025 – LUSTIG, J. (LUSTIG) – Letter of Comment
D-31	May 31, 2025 – WEST, C. (WEST) – Letter of Comment
D-32	June 1, 2025 – JAMES, A. (JAMES) – Letter of Comment
D-33	June 1, 2025 – SCHUCK, L. (SCHUCK) – Letter of Comment
D-34	June 1, 2025 – HOLLIDAY, S. (HOLLIDAY) – Letter of Comment
D-35	June 1, 2025 – NOPPE-BOND, G. (NOPPE-BOND) – Letter of Comment

D-36	June 1, 2025 – FOLKERS, S. (FOLKERS) – Letter of Comment
D-37	June 1, 2025 – LEASK, S. (LEASK) – Letter of Comment
D-38	June 1, 2025 – BLANCHETTE, A. (BLANCHETTE) – Letter of Comment
D-39	June 1, 2025 – WATKINSON, K. (WATKINSON) – Letter of Comment
D-40	June 1, 2025 – BICE, L. (BICE) – Letter of Comment
D-41	June 1, 2025 – CLARK, S. (CLARK) – Letter of Comment
D-42	June 1, 2025 – CULLEN, C. (CULLEN) – Letter of Comment
D-43	June 2, 2025 – CHRISTIAN, S. (CHRISTIAN) – Letter of Comment
D-44	June 2, 2025 – KNOPP TORGERSON, J. (KNOPP TORGERSON) – Letter of Comment
D-45	June 2, 2025 – MARSEL, W. (MARSEL) – Letter of Comment
D-46	May 31, 2025 – PETTERSON, E. (PETTERSON) – Letter of Comment
D-47	June 2, 2025 – PHILIP, S. (PHILIP) – Letter of Comment
D-48	June 2, 2025 – MACKENZIE, S. (MACKENZIE) – Letter of Comment
D-49	June 2, 2025 – TURNER, T. (TURNER) – Letter of Comment
D-50	June 2, 2025 – STICKNEY, G. (STICKNEY) – Letter of Comment
D-51	June 2, 2025 – MINOSKY, C. (MINOSKY) – Letter of Comment
D-52	June 2, 2025 – RIEDL, J. (RIEDL) – Letter of Comment
D-53	June 2, 2025 – SHAW, D. (SHAW) – Letter of Comment
D-54	June 2, 2025 – BRITISH COLUMBIA HYDRO AND POWER AUTHORITY (BC HYDRO) – Letter of Comment
D-55	June 2, 2025 – VANDERHOEK, K. (VANDERHOEK) – Letter of Comment
D-56	June 2, 2025 – HERZIG, K. (HERZIG) – Letter of Comment
D-57	June 2, 2025 – DAVIDSON, F. (DAVIDSON) – Letter of Comment
D-58	June 6, 2025 – KEREMEOS IRRIGATION DISTRICT (KEREMEOS) – Late Letter of Comment
D-59	May 29, 2025 – MLA WILSON (WILSON) – Letter of Comment

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SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS AND DIRECTIVES

This summary is provided for the convenience of readers. In the event of any difference between the determinations and directives in this summary and those in the body of the decision, the wording in the decision shall prevail.

Directive	Page
The Panel finds that FBC's PSPS policy is consistent with the Terms and Conditions of FBC's Electric Tariff.	8
The Panel directs FBC to continue to engage with impacted parties regarding the PSPS policy during the period between the date of this order and October 31, 2025.	9
FBC is directed to conduct engagement with impacted parties prior to expanding the area to which the PSPS policy applies.	9
FBC is directed to file the revised PSPS policy with the BCUC within 30 days of any amendments being made.	9
FBC is directed to notify the BCUC in accordance with the PSPS policy. Such notification is to include, but is not limited to, a summary of current or forecast weather conditions, areas affected, the number of customers affected, forecast or actual outage duration, and a description of when impacted parties were notified in accordance with the policy.	9
FBC is directed to file a report with the BCUC by November 14, 2025, containing the information set out in Appendix A of this Decision and to concurrently provide a copy of this report to the Town of Princeton, the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band.	10
Directive 1 of BCUC Order G-115-25 is rescinded and the Complaints are closed.	10