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February 19, 2020

British Columbia Utilities Commission  
Suite 410, 900 Howe Street  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6Z 2N3

Attention: Mr. Patrick Wruck, Commission Secretary and Manager, Regulatory Support

Dear Mr. Wruck:

**Re: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro) and FortisBC Energy Inc. and FortisBC Inc. (FortisBC)**  
**Evacuation Relief Tariff Amendment Applications (Applications)**  
**FortisBC Response to the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) Information Request (IR) No. 1**

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In accordance with BCUC Order G-256-19 setting out the Regulatory Timetable for the review of the above noted Applications, FortisBC respectfully submits the attached response to BCUC-FortisBC IR No. 1.

If further information is required, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

**on behalf of FORTISBC**

***Original signed:***

Doug Slater

Attachments

cc (email only): Registered Parties

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1.0 Reference: Evacuation Relief Tariff Application - Definitions

Exhibit B2-1, Appendix G, p. D-2

On page D-2 of Appendix G, FortisBC Energy Inc. and FortisBC Inc. (FortisBC) provides the definition of an Evacuation Order:

**Evacuation Order:** An order issued by federal, provincial, or local authorities requiring persons to immediately, or with short notice, leave their residential or business Premises in an area and not return until the order is lifted or rescinded.

1.1 Please confirm that stated evacuee assistance will only apply to Evacuation Orders issued due to a State of Emergency declared under the authority of the *Emergency Program Act*.

**Response:**

Not confirmed. FortisBC intends that the stated evacuee assistance will only apply to Evacuee Customers subject to Evacuation Orders issued by authorized levels of government, which include federal, provincial, local authorities or First Nations, pursuant to a statutory authority, including the *Emergency Program Act*. FortisBC understands that currently, in the province of B.C., a State of Emergency is typically declared under the *Emergency Program Act*.

1.1.1 If not confirmed, please explain why not, and provide the relevant statutory authority.

**Response:**

Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.1.1.

1.2 Please explain how FortisBC will confirm that Evacuation Orders are for a State of Emergency pursuant to relevant statutory authority.

**Response:**

Subject to the next paragraph, FortisBC confirms when Evacuation Orders are issued through information provided by the Province through Emergency Management BC. Evacuation Orders

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1 and other information on emergency events is available on the EmergencyInfoBC website<sup>1</sup>.  
2 FortisBC also monitors Emergency Management BC's social media channels. When an  
3 Evacuation Order is issued, FortisBC maintains a list of affected communities, including the start  
4 and end dates that Evacuation Orders have been in place. Information from FortisBC's list and  
5 Emergency Management BC is then cross-referenced with billing data to determine the  
6 customers that are affected.

7 If further or other confirmation is required, including if a situation comes to the attention of  
8 FortisBC that for some reason does not appear in Emergency Management BC information,  
9 FortisBC will also contact the relevant governing authority.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/>.

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**2.0 Reference: Evacuation Relief Tariff Application - Discussion**

**Exhibit B2-1, Discussion, p. 2**

On page 2 of the Application, FortisBC states “[t]he tariff changes would allow the Companies to provide a credit on the bill for Evacuee Customers, or to not charge Evacuee Customers, for the applicable charges for the Evacuation Period.”

2.1 Please explain if FortisBC will provide relief for premises that are destroyed. If yes, please discuss the relief that will be provided.

**Response:**

Presently, when a customer notifies FortisBC that their premise has been destroyed, regardless of the reason, FortisBC closes the account to capture the date of the destruction. In a situation where a customer’s premise is destroyed during an Evacuation Order, FortisBC would attempt to determine the date the premise was destroyed, and would close the account on the earliest of the date the premise was destroyed or the date of the Evacuation Order. Further, when the customer of a destroyed premise rebuilds and requests reconnection, FortisBC has the ability to waive certain fees, if appropriate, such as the application, reconnection, or reactivation charges.

2.2 How does FortisBC plan to deal with any potential complaints related to the administration and management of the relief arising from the proposed tariff changes?

**Response:**

FortisBC believes that any potential complaints related to the administration and management of the relief arising from the proposed tariff changes can be appropriately dealt with in the manner that all FortisBC customer concerns or complaints are presently managed and resolved.

That is, FortisBC expects to continue to work with customers on a one-to-one basis to satisfactorily resolve any issues or concerns and expects to use the same manner to resolve issues, should they arise, if the proposed evacuation relief is approved. In this regard, if a customer does not agree or believes the utility has not adequately addressed a concern, a customer always has the option to bring their concern forward to the BCUC complaints group for an independent determination should the customer feel that is necessary.

FortisBC expects the number of concerns or complaints raised by customers regarding the proposed evacuation relief to be minimal, based on the lack of concerns raised around the relief provided in 2017 and 2018, in addition to the expected negligible impact on rates. Should customer response to the evacuation relief, if approved, be greater than anticipated, as with all

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customer issues or concerns, FortisBC would work closely with the BCUC to determine any action necessary or an appropriate avenue for customers to voice their concerns.

2.3 What other risks does FortisBC anticipate in the administration and management of the relief for evacuee customers?

**Response:**

FortisBC anticipates minimal, if any, risks related to the administration and management of the relief for evacuee customers. One minor risk may be that an eligible Evacuee Customer is not initially identified.

FortisBC notes that in BC Hydro's application (Exhibit B1-1), BC Hydro proposed that it be provided with discretion on whether or not a waiver is provided under two different circumstances:

- 1) if an Evacuation Order is less than five consecutive days in duration; and
- 2) if an Evacuation Order ended more than two years before the date BC Hydro receives a request from a customer subject to an Evacuation Order or otherwise becomes aware of an Evacuation Order.

While FortisBC did not initially apply for such discretion in its Application (Exhibit B2-1), the discretion sought by BC Hydro is reasonable, as it would provide the flexibility to work with customers and take into consideration individual circumstances as well as provide for the dynamic nature of Evacuation Order boundaries, which may shift from day to day. As a result, FortisBC is amending its proposed tariff changes to include language similar to what BC Hydro has proposed with respect to also providing FortisBC the discretion to grant the evacuation relief to customers if their individual circumstances warrant. Attachment 2.3 contains FortisBC's revised proposed tariff changes,<sup>2</sup> highlighting the revisions compared to its original Application.

FortisBC believes that the revised proposed tariff changes mitigate the risk to which this information request relates through the provision to issue a bill credit if the Evacuee Customer was eligible at the time but was not identified until a later date.

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<sup>2</sup> FortisBC notes that both the FEI GT&Cs and the FBC T&Cs have undergone revisions since the FortisBC Evacuation Relief Application was filed. As such, the revised proposed tariff changes have been overlaid on the most recently approved tariffs for each company, which includes a correction to the FBC Evacuee Customer eligible Rate Schedules to eliminate a duplicate entry for RS 21 and the removal of RS 3 which was approved to be removed from FBC's Tariff through the FBC Rate Design Decision and Order G-40-19, implemented effective September 1, 2018.

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2.4 Prior to the 2017 application, how did FortisBC assist customers who had faced Evacuation Orders? Who bore the costs of such assistance?

**Response:**

Prior to 2017, FortisBC customers had not experienced extreme weather events as frequently or with the severity that caused States of Emergency to be declared in more recent years<sup>3</sup>. As such, assistance provided to customers prior to 2017 who may have been faced with challenging circumstances due to natural disasters, would have been in the form of FortisBC offering flexible payment arrangements, or through the waiver of applicable fees such as late payment or interest charges. Any administrative costs related to the provision of that assistance were included in operating expense whereas revenue variances were included in general revenue. These costs were recovered in rates pursuant to FortisBC's rate plans. For additional information on cost treatment, please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.4.1.

Page 2 of the Application states: "[t]he Companies believe that the proposed tariff changes are reasonable in order for FortisBC to have the ability to provide relief to Evacuee Customers."

2.5 Please confirm that the relief to be provided under the amendments to FortisBC Energy Inc.'s General Terms and Conditions (FEI GT&Cs) and FortisBC Inc.'s Terms and Conditions (FBC T&Cs) are to the account of ratepayers. If not confirmed, please provide the account.

**Response:**

Confirmed.

2.6 Please explain if FortisBC has sought any customer feedback on ratepayers bearing the cost of such relief.

**Response:**

FortisBC has not sought customer feedback on its proposed tariff changes, as the relief provided by these tariff changes will only be under specific circumstances and is unlikely to be applicable every year. For example, in 2019 there were no Evacuation Orders issued which

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<sup>3</sup> Prior to 2017, a Provincial State of Emergency was previously declared 14 years prior, in 2003.

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1 affected FortisBC customers. Further, the revenue associated with the relief, in years where  
2 such relief is granted, is unlikely to have a measurable or material impact on customer rates.  
3 For example, the relief provided to Evacuee Customers during 2017, as approved by G-124-17  
4 and G-124-17A, resulted in a negligible rate impact to FEI customers of 0.020 percent and FBC  
5 customers of 0.006 percent.

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9 2.7 Please discuss if the relief to be provided under the amendments to FEI GT&Cs  
10 and FBC T&Cs generates a utility benefit for the ratepayers that sufficiently  
11 justifies the cost of service.  
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13 **Response:**

14 FortisBC believes that the benefit generated by the relief provided under the amendments to  
15 FEI GT&Cs and FBC T&Cs provides a benefit to ratepayers that sufficiently justifies the cost to  
16 provide the relief. As further explained below, the cost of service associated with providing the  
17 relief is expected to be minimal, the benefit is equally available to all customers and the benefit  
18 of the proposed tariff amendments provides for ease of administration of evacuation relief to  
19 customers and potentially reduced regulatory related costs overall.

20 The relief under the proposed tariff amendments provides for the waiver or credit of certain  
21 charges that would otherwise apply to Evacuee Customers. The cost of service or the related  
22 administrative costs to provide the relief are not tracked or accounted for separately because  
23 they do not occur with any predictable frequency and the tracking/accounting exercise would  
24 create an administrative burden with limited benefit. In addition, based on past experience, the  
25 administrative costs to apply the bill credits or waivers, if and when required, are not expected to  
26 be significant, and would be absorbed as part of FortisBC's Customer Service O&M.

27 The proposed tariff changes would be available to all applicable customers so there would be  
28 equal opportunity for eligible customers to benefit from the relief. The basic premise of the  
29 utilities' tariffs is that customers who apply for service are agreeing to pay for their service and  
30 any related consumption because they benefit from that service. In the case of an Evacuee  
31 Customer, the proposed tariff amendments provide relief to Evacuee Customers because they  
32 would be unable to benefit from that service because an Evacuation Order is preventing them  
33 from accessing their premises. Additionally, depending on the circumstances of the Evacuation  
34 Order and in the interest of customer safety, FortisBC may advise customers to not attempt to  
35 shut their gas service off, or customers may be requested by FortisBC or other authorities to  
36 maintain power to their sprinklers or other tools to help mitigate community damage. In each of  
37 these examples, not only is the customer unable to benefit from the utilities' services because  
38 they are under an Evacuation Order to leave their premises, they are also being asked to leave  
39 those services running for safety purposes.

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1 Finally, FortisBC applied for the tariff amendments so that the relief would be more readily  
2 available to Evacuee Customers and approval of the tariff amendments would allow FortisBC to  
3 apply the waiver or credits in a more immediate manner to Evacuee Customers. Further, there  
4 would be small regulatory administrative benefits to both the BCUC and FortisBC to the extent  
5 that separate and standalone applications are no longer required in years when Evacuation  
6 Orders are issued.

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10 2.8 Please explain whether the relief to be provided under the amendments to FEI  
11 GT&Cs and FBC T&Cs amounts to a social assistance program. If not, please  
12 clarify how it differs.  
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14 **Response:**

15 The relief to be provided under the proposed amendments to FEI GT&Cs and FBC T&Cs does  
16 not amount to a social assistance program. A social assistance program, by its definition,  
17 suggests that a program is being provided to individuals who are not able to, or who have  
18 limited means to, financially provide for themselves. The relief that FortisBC is seeking to  
19 provide to Evacuee Customers is not based on a customer's ability to pay; it is based on the fact  
20 that an Evacuee Customer does not have the benefit of their energy service during the  
21 Evacuation Period because they are under an Evacuation Order and must vacate their home  
22 immediately or on very short notice. Thus, the Evacuee Customer is not benefiting from the  
23 energy service nor the energy being consumed at their premise during that time. Typically,  
24 charges for energy consumed with no occupants in a dwelling would be minimal.

25 Please also refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.7.  
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**3.0 Reference: Evacuation Relief Tariff Application - Discussion**

**Exhibit B2-1, Discussion, p. 3**

On page 3 of the Application, FortisBC states:

The Companies propose that if an Evacuation Order is issued and it affects some of FortisBC's customers for a period of five or more consecutive days, then the Companies could rely on the proposed Evacuation Relief tariff language, if approved, to provide the contemplated relief to Evacuee Customers for the Evacuation Period. The Companies believe that providing relief for Evacuee Customers when the duration of an Evacuation Order is five days or more is a reasonable threshold in order to ensure the administrative cost of granting the relief does not outweigh the benefit.

3.1 Please explain what criteria will FortisBC use to determine relief for evacuee customers who do not meet the five consecutive day threshold?

**Response:**

In its initial application, FortisBC did not contemplate providing relief to Evacuee Customers who were not subject to an Evacuation Order for five or more consecutive days. FortisBC believes that, in most instances, a five consecutive day threshold provides a reasonable balance between the relief provided and the level of administrative effort involved to provide the relief.

However, as discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.3, FortisBC has revised its proposed tariff changes to allow for the discretion to consider individual customer circumstances, such as being subject to an Evacuation Order for less than the five consecutive day threshold, when granting evacuation relief.

3.2 If evacuee customers, who do not meet the five consecutive day threshold, are not eligible for any relief, does FortisBC consider that fair and reasonable? In your response, please address the fact that, previously, customers were not required to meet a time-based threshold.

**Response:**

Yes, establishing a criterion where Evacuee Customers must meet a five consecutive day threshold to be eligible for relief is fair and reasonable, because it provides a balance between the relief granted to Evacuee Customers and the administrative cost associated with providing this relief.

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In addition, as discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.3, FortisBC has revised its proposed tariff changes to also allow for discretion on the time-based threshold. As a result, FortisBC would be able to consider individual circumstances in determining if relief should be granted to an Evacuee Customer on a case-by-case basis to help further ensure that the relief provided is fair and reasonable.

With respect to the relief granted in 2017 and 2018, customers were not required to meet a time-based threshold mainly due to the fact that FortisBC applied for relief subsequent to the declaration of States of Emergency and, as such, timelines were known in advance. With the experience gained, including that the average duration of Evacuation Orders for the relief provided in 2017 and 2018 was five days or longer, FortisBC has a greater understanding of the effort involved in confirming Evacuation Orders, identifying affected customers, and calculating and issuing appropriate bill credits. Thus, FortisBC considered that a five consecutive day threshold provides a reasonable balance between the relief granted and the cost associated with providing the relief.

3.3 Has FortisBC considered an appeals or reconsideration process for evacuee customers who are not eligible to relief as proposed in this tariff amendment?

**Response:**

FortisBC has not considered an appeals or reconsideration process with respect to evacuation relief because it believes that such a separate process is not necessary or required. Any questions or concerns associated with the evacuation relief will be handled through the existing process for addressing customer concerns and complaints as is discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.2. Further, as discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.3, FortisBC has revised its proposed tariff changes to include the discretion, similar to that proposed by BC Hydro, which would allow FortisBC to internally manage most, if not all, appeals or reconsiderations regarding evacuation relief based on each Evacuee Customer's individual situation and the circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

3.3.1 If yes, will this be conducted in-house or by a third party? What are the incremental administrative costs of managing this process (internal or external, if applicable)?

**Response:**

Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.3.

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3.3.2 If yes, please outline how the appeals or reconsideration process will work.

**Response:**

Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.3.

3.4 Please discuss how FortisBC determines that five consecutive days are an appropriate threshold? Please describe any assumptions, criteria, formulas and/or calculations used to determine the five consecutive day period.

**Response:**

FortisBC believes a five-day threshold provides a reasonable balance between the relief provided and the costs associated with the level of administrative effort involved. FortisBC considered several factors in the determination of this threshold including the impact on the Evacuee Customer, administrative effort, and the experience gained in 2017 and 2018.

- First, FortisBC considered that waived fees or credits that would be applicable for an average residential customer for an Evacuation Period of less than five days would be relatively negligible and, therefore, not significantly impacting a customer.
- Administrative effort was also considered in the context of the impact on the customer. That is, while there are expected to be minimal costs associated with providing relief, if the impact to the customer on a period of less than five days is low, the benefit to the collective group of customers impacted may be less likely to equal or exceed the administrative costs.
- Finally, the relief sought in 2017 and 2018 provided FortisBC with a greater understanding of the efforts required to process the bill credits and provided a point of reference on the average duration of Evacuation Orders. The table below provides the number of customers eligible for relief, the number of customers affected by an evacuation order of five days or greater, as well as the average duration of relief. In both 2017 and 2018 the average duration for Evacuation Orders was greater than five days.

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Year	Type of Energy	# Customers Receiving Bill Credits	# Customers with Evacuation Order of 5+ Days	# Customers with Evacuation Order of <5 Days	Average Length of Evacuation Order (Days)
2017	Gas	12,053	12,025	28	18.89
2017	Electric	866	599	267	8.18
2018	Gas	680	278	402	5.77
2018	Electric	1,795	1,735	60	12.28

Based on these considerations, FortisBC determined that a threshold of five days was likely to result in a reasonable balance of costs and benefits; however, as set out in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.3, FortisBC is amending its Application to request discretion on the threshold period to further support the fair and reasonable provision of relief.

For example, as shown in the table above, there are a large portion of gas customers that would have been outside of the five-day threshold period in 2018 and, as such, may not have been eligible for relief if this threshold had been in place. This may have been due to small pockets of customers impacted in isolated cases or one large group of customers. To the extent that a single Evacuation Order that lasted less than five days yet impacted a large group of customers, the administrative costs of providing relief may be offset by the collective benefits of the larger group. In examples such as this, discretion would allow FortisBC to determine if customers should be granted evacuation relief in consideration of the circumstances of the applicable Evacuation Order, even if the five consecutive day threshold was not met.

3.5 Please confirm or explain otherwise, that once an Evacuation Order is issued, the date of the Evacuation Order would indicate the start of the five consecutive day threshold? If not confirmed, please clarify whether the five consecutive day threshold commences only after a customer has evacuated their premises?

**Response:**

Confirmed. The date of the Evacuation Order would indicate the start of the five consecutive day threshold.

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3.6 In the instances where an Evacuation Order is issued, but the customer does not comply until a later date, or fails to evacuate, will the customer still be eligible for relief?

**Response:**

Yes, all Evacuee Customers will be eligible for relief from the date the Evacuation Order is applicable. FortisBC expects that most, if not all, customers subject to an Evacuation Order would comply for their own safety.

3.7 How many customers who were eligible to receive relief in 2017 exceeded the five consecutive day threshold?

**Response:**

Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.4.

3.8 Please discuss how FortisBC's proposal would be applied in a scenario where a customer is subject to Evacuation Orders that exceed five non-consecutive days.

**Response:**

As discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.3, FortisBC is requesting discretion, similar to that for which BC Hydro has applied. Such discretion would allow FortisBC to determine if a customer should be granted evacuation relief based on the individual circumstances of their specific case, even if the five consecutive day threshold was not met. This discretion would allow FortisBC to review the applicable Evacuation Orders, timing, and duration to determine if relief should be granted in the particular circumstances.

3.9 Please explain whether customers that were provided with relief approved by BCUC Orders G-124-17 and G-125-17A were confirmed to be subject to an Evacuation Order for at least five consecutive days.

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**Response:**

Customers that were provided relief, as approved by BCUC Orders G-124-17 and G-125-17A, were not required to meet a minimum threshold. As such, customers in 2017 were not confirmed to be subject to an Evacuation Order that lasted for at least five consecutive days.<sup>4</sup> As illustrated in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.4, some customers in 2017 were subject to Evacuation Orders that were less than five consecutive days in duration.

3.9.1 If yes, please provide the total cost and average cost per evacuee to complete the confirmation process.

**Response:**

As discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.9, customers provided relief in 2017 were not required to be confirmed to be subject to an Evacuation Order for at least five consecutive days. Further, as noted in the table in response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.4, there were customers who qualified for the relief in 2017 that had been under an Evacuation Order for less than five consecutive days. Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.9.2 for a discussion on the cost to complete the confirmation process.

3.9.2 Please provide the expected cost per evacuee to confirm they were subject to an Evacuation Order for at least five consecutive days.

**Response:**

Due to the variability and unpredictability of situations that lead to an Evacuation Order, FortisBC is unable to provide an estimate of the forecast cost to confirm Evacuation Order duration or the potential number of customers impacted. As such, FortisBC is unable to provide an estimate of the expected cost per evacuee.

Determining the costs associated with confirming whether a customer is subject to an Evacuation Order (regardless of the length of the Evacuation Order) would, at best, provide a high level estimate with a limited degree of certainty. This is because potential related costs are based on assumptions about the amount of time that specific employees might spend performing certain tasks.

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<sup>4</sup> Similarly, customers who were provided relief in 2018 were also not subject to a minimum threshold requirement.

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Further, FortisBC's experience in 2017 and 2018 indicates that there are components of confirming Evacuation Orders and customers impacted that are largely fixed in nature and would be incurred regardless of the number of customers impacted. This may result in a wide range in the cost per Evacuee Customer, dependent on the number of customers affected. For example, while FortisBC is not able to provide actual costs related to evacuation relief provided in 2017 and 2018, it is estimated that less than \$35,000 was absorbed in O&M each year resulting in an estimated range of \$3 to \$44 per Evacuee Customer.

3.10 Please explain if there will be a deadline on when an evacuee will be eligible to apply for relief.

**Response:**

FortisBC did not specify a deadline for when an Evacuee Customer would be eligible to request evacuation relief, although one was implicit through the existing references in the tariff to the applicable limitation period provided by law. The limitation period is generally two years.

However, as discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.3, FortisBC has revised its proposed tariff changes to include the discretion to consider requests by potential Evacuee Customers more than two years after an Evacuation Order has ended or in circumstances where the five consecutive day threshold is not met. Of course, the discretion provided in the proposed tariff changes in no way detracts from FortisBC's continued ability to rely on the limitation period both (1) as a matter of default in the Evacuation Order context, and (2) otherwise.

To the extent that FortisBC is expecting to proactively identify customers eligible for evacuation relief once an Evacuation Order is made, the number of customers likely requesting evacuation relief after the fact, and certainly more than two years after the fact, is expected to be very few.

3.10.1 If yes, please provide details of the deadline, and why it is considered necessary. Please describe any assumptions, criteria, formulas and/or calculations used to determine the deadline.

**Response:**

Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.10.

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3.10.2 If yes, please provide the estimated costs for completing the relief process in a scenario where an evacuee applied for relief after the deadline.

**Response:**

As discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.7 administrative costs associated with confirming Evacuee Customers are not separately tracked. However, FortisBC estimates that the administrative costs for completing the evacuation relief process for an Evacuee Customer who applies for relief after the fact would be minimal and likely less than \$5.<sup>5</sup>

3.10.3 If yes, please discuss if there were any evacuee customers that applied for relief as a result of the 2017 Evacuation Orders following the proposed time limitation.

**Response:**

FortisBC proactively identified the group of Evacuee Customers who were subject to Evacuation Orders in 2017 and provided that approved evacuation relief credits automatically. As such, it was not necessary for Evacuee Customers to apply for that relief. FortisBC did subsequently receive a few customer calls seeking evacuation relief. Upon investigation, FortisBC found they were eligible and granted the evacuation relief. Those few customers called FortisBC shortly after the events leading to the Evacuation Orders.

3.11 Please explain how the loss of revenue is recorded for relief provided to evacuee customers after the year in which the evacuation occurred. In other words, is the lost revenue recorded in the year of the Evacuation Order or the year the relief is provided.

**Response:**

The loss of revenue associated with relief provided to evacuee customers would be recorded in FortisBC's Flow-Through deferral accounts in the year the relief is provided. This is consistent with how FEI and FBC recorded the relief granted by the BCUC through Orders G-124-17, G-

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<sup>5</sup> Based on the assumption that additional labour would be limited to the customer service representative or billing analyst's time to review the account and confirm applicability.



British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) and FortisBC Inc. (FBC) Evacuation Relief Tariff Amendment Applications (Applications)	Submission Date: February 19, 2020
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1 125-17A, G-169-18, and G-170-18. This assumes that all customer revenue variances would  
2 continue to be recorded in the Flow-Through deferral account<sup>6</sup>, as requested in the FEI and  
3 FBC 2020-2024 Multi-Year Rate Plan Application proceeding and as previously approved in the  
4 2014-2019 Performance Based Ratemaking Plans for both FEI and FBC.

5

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<sup>6</sup> For FEI, variances in the forecast versus actual customer use rate for residential and commercial customers are first recorded in the Revenue Stabilization Adjustment Mechanism ("RSAM") deferral account, with any remaining customer revenue variances recorded in the Flow-through deferral account.

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) and FortisBC Inc. (FBC) Evacuation Relief Tariff Amendment Applications (Applications)	Submission Date: February 19, 2020
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**4.0 Reference: Evacuation Relief Tariff Application – Treatment of Revenue  
Variance**

**Exhibit B2-1, Treatment of Revenue Variance, p. 3**

Page 3 of the Application states:

Under the terms of the current Multi-Year Performance Based Ratemaking Plans (PBR Plans) approved by the Commission for FortisBC Energy Inc. and FortisBC Inc. for the years 2014 to 2019, the Companies currently record revenue variances in the respective Flow-Through deferral accounts for each company. Any variance resulting from the short-term relief for Evacuee Customers would be addressed in the subsequent rate setting process for each company.

4.1 Please explain why FortisBC has chosen to record revenue variances in the respective Flow-Through deferral accounts for each company?

**Response:**

FortisBC has chosen to record the revenue variances in the respective Flow-through deferral accounts for each company given the uncontrollable and variable nature of the relief provided. In FortisBC's 2014-2019 PBR Applications, both FEI<sup>7</sup> and FBC<sup>8</sup> describe the nature of items that will flow through to customers in rates in these Flow-through deferral accounts as follows:

This type of mechanism is used on non-controllable costs and revenues to ensure that customers pay actual costs in circumstances where the Utility does not control the level of expenditures or revenues.

Subsequently, in FortisBC's MRP Application, the Companies have proposed similar treatment for the Flow-through deferral accounts.<sup>9</sup>

In this regard, the level of Evacuation relief to be provided to affected customers in a given year, as a result of Evacuation Orders, is uncertain and beyond the control of the utilities. The uncontrollable nature of extreme weather and other catastrophic events is consistent with the description of other expenditures or revenues that are recorded in the Flow-through deferral accounts.

FortisBC notes that in the event the Flow-through deferral accounts are not approved during the MRP process or, alternatively, the Flow-through deferral accounts are approved but revenue variances are not approved for inclusion, FortisBC would require separate deferral accounts to record the revenue variances for the relief provided to Evacuee Customers. Whether FortisBC recorded the relief provided in the Flow-through deferral accounts or in separately approved

<sup>7</sup> FortisBC 2014-2019 PBR Application, page 67.

<sup>8</sup> FortisBC 2014-2019 PBR Application, page 60.

<sup>9</sup> FortisBC 2020-2024 MRP Application, Exhibit B-1, Section B2.3.5.1, page B-46 and Sections C4.2 and C4.3, pages C-109-C110.

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) and FortisBC Inc. (FBC) Evacuation Relief Tariff Amendment Applications (Applications)	Submission Date: February 19, 2020
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deferral accounts, the impact to customers is expected to be the same, assuming consistent rates of returns and amortization periods.

4.2 Please explain how the lost revenue for relief provided to evacuee customers after the year in which the Evacuation Order took place will impact the Flow-Through deferral accounts for each company. In other words, will the deferral account be impacted in the year the Evacuation Order occurred or the year the relief was provided?

**Response:**

The revenue variance related to the evacuation relief granted will be recorded in the Flow-through deferral accounts in the year the relief is provided.

The disposition or amortization of the amount recorded in the Flow-through deferral accounts will occur in the Annual Review during a future year's rate setting process. This is expected to be either the year immediately following the year in which the actual relief is granted and recorded, assuming the amount is known and included in the forecasted balances for the Flow-through deferral accounts at the time of the Annual Review filing.

4.3 Please explain if there are any additional overhead costs incurred to support the expansion of the Flow-Through deferral accounts for each company or in establishing a new deferral account.

**Response:**

FortisBC confirms that there would be no additional overhead costs incurred to either expand the respective FEI and FBC Flow-through deferral accounts, or to establish new deferral accounts in each company.

4.4 Please confirm, or explain otherwise, whether FortisBC will separately track relief costs within the Flow-Through deferral accounts for each company.

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1 **Response:**

2 No, as discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.7, FortisBC will not separately track  
3 the administrative costs associated with providing evacuation relief. This is because the  
4 administrative costs related to granting evacuation relief are not accounted for or tracked  
5 separately and are captured as part of Customer Service O&M.<sup>10</sup> As such, administrative costs  
6 associated with providing relief will not be recorded in the Flow-through deferral accounts.

7 As discussed in the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.3.11, FortisBC will, however, separately  
8 track, account for, and record any revenue variance associated with evacuation relief granted in  
9 the Flow-through deferral accounts. This is consistent with what the BCUC approved for  
10 FortisBC for the evacuation relief granted in 2017 and 2018.

11 FortisBC believes that this continues to be a reasonable approach because any administrative  
12 related costs to provide evacuation relief would be expected to be minimal as set out in the  
13 response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.7.

14  
15

16

17 4.5 If an emergency that results in an Evacuation Order is later determined to be  
18 human-caused in which FortisBC receives re-imbursement/compensation for lost  
19 revenue, please explain how the compensation will be recorded (i.e. to the  
20 account of ratepayers or to the shareholder).

21

22 **Response:**

23 In the event FortisBC receives reimbursement/compensation in such a case, it would be  
24 recorded to the account of customers in the Flow-through accounts as an offset to the revenue  
25 variance.

26  
27

28

29 4.6 Given that there will be ongoing instances where such relief is required, please  
30 explain if it's possible to forecast the cost of the relief into future revenue  
31 requirements applications, in order to mitigate the variance that is deferred to the  
32 Flow-Through deferral accounts for each company.

33

---

<sup>10</sup> Administrative costs in granting the relief approved by Orders G-124-17, G-124-17A, G-169-18, and G-170-18 were not separately tracked. Any administrative efforts associated with granting relief were supported by the overall O&M expenditures for Customer Service.

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) and FortisBC Inc. (FBC) Evacuation Relief Tariff Amendment Applications (Applications)	Submission Date: February 19, 2020
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1    **Response:**

2    Given the uncertainty and unpredictability of instances where relief may be required, FortisBC  
3    does not believe it is appropriate to include a forecast of revenue variances associated with  
4    evacuation relief in its future revenue requirement applications. Further, FortisBC believes that  
5    using actual figures from prior years, or past performance, resulting from uncontrollable and  
6    unpredictable events, is not necessarily indicative of future activity. For example, FortisBC  
7    applied for relief for 2017 and 2018; however, in 2019 no Evacuation Orders were issued  
8    applicable to FortisBC customers and as such, no relief was required. Please also refer to the  
9    response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.4.1.

10

11

12

13                   4.6.1    Please discuss if actual figures from preceding years could be used to  
14                               establish a forecast, either now or in the future.

15

16    **Response:**

17    Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.4.6.

18

19

20

21                   4.7    Excluding the costs of the relief provided to evacuee customers, please explain  
22                               whether there are annual operating costs to provide relief to customers under  
23                               evacuation orders.

24

25    **Response:**

26    While there are administrative costs associated with providing relief to customers under  
27    Evacuation Orders, incremental costs have not been incurred to date because, as discussed in  
28    the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.2.7, any associated costs have been managed within the  
29    existing O&M for Customer Service. These administrative costs would largely reflect the cost  
30    of labour associated with providing the evacuation relief and would include, but may not be  
31    limited to, monitoring the Evacuation Orders, identifying customers affected, and processing and  
32    administering bill credits or waiver of charges. Additional costs for customers would also  
33    include the cost associated with Regulatory applications.

34    Due to the uncontrollable and unpredictable nature of the events that result in Evacuation  
35    Orders, FortisBC does not have a forecast of the expected annual administrative costs  
36    associated with the cost of providing relief; however, as also noted in the response to BCUC-  
37    FortisBC IR 1.2.7, these administrative costs are expected to be minimal. To the extent that this

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) and FortisBC Inc. (FBC) Evacuation Relief Tariff Amendment Applications (Applications)	Submission Date: February 19, 2020
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Application and associated tariff amendments are approved, Regulatory related costs are expected to be largely avoided in the future.

4.7.1 If yes, please provide a detailed breakdown of the expected annual costs for fiscal 2020 to fiscal 2024.

**Response:**

Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.4.7.

4.8 Please explain whether the Flow-Through deferral accounts for each company attracts interest.

**Response:**

In the 2020-2024 MRP Application proceeding, FEI and FBC have requested to extend the use of their respective Flow-through deferral accounts that were established in the 2014-2019 PBR Plan. The proposed Flow-through deferral accounts, which would capture the variances associated from the short-term relief for Evacuee Customers, attract a weighted average cost of capital (WACC) return, which includes both an equity and interest component. Effective 2020, the forecasted WACC for FEI and FBC are 5.51 per cent and 5.83 per cent, respectively.

4.8.1 If yes, please provide the applicable interest rate (i.e. an interest-based return, a weighted average cost of capital-based return, etc.).

**Response:**

Please refer to the response to BCUC-FortisBC IR 1.4.8.

## **Attachment 2.3**

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FORTISBC ENERGY INC. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS  
DEFINITIONS

<b><i>Delivery Point</i></b>	Means the outlet of the Meter Set unless otherwise specified in the applicable Service Agreement.
<b><i>Delivery Pressure</i></b>	Means the pressure of the Gas at the Delivery Point.
<b><i><u>Evacuation Order</u></i></b>	<u>An order issued by federal, provincial, or local authorities requiring persons to immediately, or with short notice, leave their residential or business Premises in an area and not return until the order is lifted or rescinded.</u>
<b><i><u>Evacuation Period</u></i></b>	<u>The period during which an Evacuee Customer is under an Evacuation Order.</u>
<b><i><u>Evacuee Customer</u></i></b>	<u>A Customer who receives Service under Rate Schedules 1, 1U, 1X, 1B, 2, 2U, 2X, 2B, 3, 3U, 3X, 3B, and 23, and who is under an Evacuation Order.</u>
<b><i>Financing Agreement</i></b>	Means an agreement under which FortisBC Energy provides financing to a Customer for improving the energy efficiency of a Premises, or a part of a Premises.
<b><i>First Nations</i></b>	Means those First Nations that have attained self-government status pursuant to self-government agreements entered into with the Government of Canada and validly enacted self-government legislation in Canada.
<b><i>FortisBC Energy</i></b>	Means FortisBC Energy Inc., a body corporate incorporated pursuant to the laws of the Province of British Columbia under number 0778288.
<b><i>FortisBC Energy System</i></b>	Means the Gas transmission and distribution system owned and operated by FortisBC Energy, as such system is expanded, reduced or modified from time to time.
<b><i>Franchise Fees</i></b>	Has the same meaning as Municipal Operating Fees.
<b><i>Gas</i></b>	Means natural gas (including any added odorant), propane and Biomethane.
<b><i>Gas Service</i></b>	Means the delivery of Gas through a Meter Set.
<b><i>General Terms and Conditions</i></b>	Means these general terms and conditions of FortisBC Energy from time to time approved by the British Columbia Utilities Commission.

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FORTISBC ENERGY INC. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS  
DEFINITIONS

<b><i>Gigajoule</i></b>	Means a measure of energy equal to one billion joules.
<b><i>Heat Content</i></b>	Means the quantity of energy per unit volume of Gas measured under standardized conditions and expressed in megajoules per cubic metre (MJ/m <sup>3</sup> ).
<b><i>Hour</i></b>	Means any consecutive 60 minute period.
<b><i>Landlord</i></b>	Means a Person who, being the owner of real property, or the agent of that owner, who has leased or rented the property to a Tenant.
<b><i>LNG</i></b>	Means liquefied natural gas (LNG).
<b><i>LNG Service</i></b>	Means LNG fueling and fuel storage and dispensing service as set out in Section 12B.1 (CNG Service and LNG Service).
<b><i>Loan</i></b>	Means the principal amount of financing provided by FortisBC Energy to a Customer, plus interest charged by FortisBC Energy on the amount of financing and any applicable fees and late payment charges.
<b><i>Long Term Biomethane Contract</i></b>	A long term contract entered into between FortisBC Energy and a Customer for Biomethane Service, filed as a tariff supplement, for a term of no less than five Years and no greater than ten Years, and for a commitment to purchase no less than 60,000 Gigajoules in aggregate over the term of the contract.
<b><i>Main</i></b>	Means pipe(s) used to carry Gas for general or collective use for the purposes of distribution.
<b><i>Main Extension</i></b>	Means an extension of one of FortisBC Energy's mains with low, distribution, intermediate or transmission pressures, and includes tapping of transmission pipelines, installing any required pressure regulating facilities and upgrading of existing Mains or pressure regulating facilities on private property.
<b><i>Marketer</i></b>	Means a Person who has entered into an agreement to supply a Customer under Commodity Unbundling Service.
<b><i>Meter Set</i></b>	Means an assembly of FortisBC Energy owned metering, including any ancillary equipment and piping.
<b><i>Month or Monthly</i></b>	Means a period of time, for billing purposes, of 27 to 34 consecutive Days.

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## 17. Evacuation Relief

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### 17.1 Applicability

If a Customer is under an Evacuation Order for a period of five or more consecutive days, then FortisBC Energy may provide credit to an Evacuee Customer, or not charge the Evacuee Customer, for the Rate Schedule charges that are or would otherwise have been applicable during the Evacuation Period.

If a Customer is under an Evacuation Order for a period of less than five consecutive days, or if an Evacuation Order has ended more than two years before the date FortisBC Energy receives a request from an Evacuee Customer or otherwise becomes aware of the Evacuation Order, then FortisBC Energy may, in its discretion, provide credit to an Evacuee Customer, or not charge the Evacuee Customer, for the Rate Schedule charges that are or would otherwise have been applicable during the Evacuation Period.

When evacuation relief is granted, if shown on an Evacuee Customer's bill in the form of a credit to the Evacuee Customer's account, interest will not be paid on any amounts credited to the Evacuee Customer's account under this section in any circumstance.

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Customer	Means a Person who is being provided Service or who has filed an application for Service with FortisBC that has been approved by FortisBC.
Customer Charge	Means a fixed charge required to be paid by a Customer for Service as specified in the applicable Rate Schedule.
Customer Portion of Costs (CPC)	Means the Extension Cost less the FortisBC Contribution towards the Extension.
Day	Means any period of 24 consecutive Hours beginning and ending at 7:00 a.m. Pacific Standard Time or as otherwise specified in the applicable Service Agreement.
Demand	The rate of delivery of Electricity measured in kilowatts (kW), kilovolt-amperes (kVA), or horsepower (hp) over a given period of time.
Drop Service	The portion of an overhead Service connection extending not more than 30 metres onto the Customer's property and not requiring any intermediate support on the Customer's property.
Electricity	Means both electric Demand and electric Energy or either, as the context requires.
Energy	Electric consumption measured in kilowatt hours (kWh).
<u>Evacuation Order</u>	<u>An order issued by federal, provincial, or local authorities requiring persons to immediately, or with short notice, leave their residential or business Premises in an area and not return until the order is lifted or rescinded.</u>
<u>Evacuation Period</u>	<u>The period during which an Evacuee Customer is under an Evacuation Order.</u>
<u>Evacuee Customer</u>	<u>A Customer who receives Service under Rate Schedules 1, 2A, <del>3</del> 3A, 20, 21, 22A, 23A, 60, 61 or 95, and who is under an Evacuation Order.</u>
Extension	Means an addition to, or extension of, FortisBC's distribution system including an addition or extension on public or private property.

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Extension Cost	Means FortisBC's estimated cost of constructing an Extension including the cost of labour, material and construction equipment. Extensions Cost includes the cost of connecting the Extension to FortisBC's distribution system, inspection costs, survey costs, and permit costs. If, in FortisBC's opinion, upgrades to FortisBC's distribution system would be beneficial for Service to other Customers, the extra cost of this reinforcement is excluded from the Extension Cost.
Financing Agreement	An agreement under which FortisBC provides financing to a Customer for improving the energy efficiency of a Premises, or a part of a Premises.
FortisBC	Means FortisBC Inc., a body corporate incorporated pursuant to the laws of the Province of British Columbia under number 0778288.
FortisBC Contribution	Means FortisBC's financial contribution towards the Extension Cost as specified in Section 16 (Extensions).
FortisBC System	Means the Electricity transmission and distribution system owned and operated by FortisBC, as such system is expanded, reduced or modified from time to time.
Hour	Means any consecutive 60 minute period.
Landlord	Means a Person who, being the owner of real property, or the agent of that owner, who has leased or rented the property to a Tenant.
Load Factor	The percentage determined by dividing the Customer's average Demand over a specific time period by the Customer's maximum Demand during that period.
Loan	The principal amount of financing provided by FortisBC to a Customer, plus interest charged by FortisBC on the amount of financing and any applicable fees and late payment charges.
Meter Set	Means an assembly of FortisBC owned metering, including any ancillary equipment.

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Month or Monthly	Means a period of time, for billing purposes, of 27 to 34 consecutive Days. For greater clarity, the term "one month" (unless a calendar month is specified) as used herein and in the Rate Schedules, normally means the time elapsed between the meter reading date of one calendar month and that of the next. The term "two-month period" or bimonthly as used herein and in the Rate Schedules, normally means the time elapsed between the meter reading date of one calendar month and the second following calendar month.
Person	Means a natural person, partnership, corporation, society, unincorporated entity or body politic.
Power Factor	The percentage determined by dividing the Customer's Demand measured in kilowatts by the same Demand measured in kilovolt-amperes.
Point of Delivery	The first point of connection of FortisBC's facilities to the Customer's conductors or equipment at a location designated by or satisfactory to FortisBC, without regard to the location of FortisBC's metering equipment.
Premises	A dwelling, a building, or machinery together with the surrounding land.
Radio-off AMI Meter	An Advanced (or AMI) Meter with integrated wireless transmit functions disabled.
Radio-off Customer	Customers that have a Radio-off AMI Meter installed at their Customer Premises.
Rate Schedule	Means a schedule attached to and forming part of these General Terms and Conditions, which sets out the charges for Service and certain other related terms and conditions for a class of Service.
Residential Premises	Means a Premises used for residential and housekeeping requirements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) single family dwelling, including any outbuildings supplied through the same meter;</li><li>(b) single or individually metered single-family townhouse, rowhouse, condominium, duplex or apartment, carriage house, farm building, or manufactured home;</li><li>(c) at FortisBC's discretion, any other types of living quarters.</li></ul>

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Residential Service	Except as provided for in Section 6.3.1 (Partial Commercial Use) and Section 6.3.2 (Other Use), means Service for use at a Residential Premises, including a Residential Premises where a portion is used to carry on a business.
Rider	Means an additional charge or credit attached to a rate.
Service	Means the provision of Electricity or other service by FortisBC.
Service Agreement	Means an agreement between FortisBC and a Customer for the provision of Service.
Suspension	The physical interruption of the supply of Electricity to the Premises independent of whether or not the Service is terminated.
Temporary Service	Means the provision of Service for what FortisBC determines will be a limited period of time.
Tenant	Means a Person who has the temporary use and occupation of real property owned by another Person.
Transformer	Includes transformers, cutouts, lightning arrestors and associated equipment, and the labour to install.
Transmission Voltage	A nominal potential greater than 35,000 volts measured phase to phase.
Termination	The cessation of FortisBC's ongoing responsibility with respect to the supply of Service to the Premises independent of whether or not the Service is suspended.
Primary Voltage	A nominal potential of 750 to 35,000 volts measured phase to phase.
Secondary Voltage	A nominal potential of 750 volts or less measured phase to phase.
Year	Means a period of 12 consecutive Months totalling at least 365 Days.

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## **19. EVACUATION RELIEF**

If a Customer is under an Evacuation Order for a period of five or more consecutive days, then the Company may provide credit to an Evacuee Customer, or not charge the Evacuee Customer, for the Rate Schedule charges that are or would otherwise have been applicable during the Evacuation Period.

If a Customer is under an Evacuation Order for a period of less than five consecutive days, or if an Evacuation Order has ended more than two years before the date the Company receives a request from an Evacuee Customer or otherwise becomes aware of the Evacuation Order, then the Company may, in its discretion, provide credit to an Evacuee Customer, or not charge the Evacuee Customer, for the Rate Schedule charges that are or would otherwise have been applicable during the Evacuation Period.

When evacuation relief is granted, if shown on an Evacuee Customer's bill in the form of a credit to the Evacuee Customer's account, interest will not be paid on any amounts credited to the Evacuee Customer's account under this section in any circumstance.

Order No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Issued By: Doug Slater, Director, Regulatory Affairs

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Accepted for Filing: \_\_\_\_\_

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