

## SAC Feedback From Tony Thoma - Residential Consumer representative

### Terms of Reference Discussion Paper

It is assumed that the reference in the Bill

*“The OESO may, or when directed by the Minister shall, establish one or more processes by which consumers, distributors, generators, transmitters and other persons who have an interest in the electricity industry may provide advice and recommendations for consideration by the OESO.”* that the word “shall” means that the SAC will continue to serve as a group

- 1) One advisory committee should suffice. The SAC could have a structure of sub-committees focused on things such as conservation, reliability, fuel mix etc... These could be standing committees or adhoc committees depending on the nature of the topic. Additional stakeholder groups could be added to the SAC but this has to be limited to ensure that the group is not too large and stays functional.
- 2) Though SAC occasionally conducts a “deep dive” on a subject the SAC must stay strategic vs operational. Operational issues, questions and education can be conducted off line with the help of OESO staff. Members of the SAC have an obligation to consult with their stakeholder constituency understanding that in some cases there is a competitive nature among these constituency members.
- 3) Transparency will be the largest challenge for the new OESO. Even today the OPA is challenged through Freedom of Information act to release information. Residential consumers continue to see contracts for assets awarded but these costs end up being buried in the Global Adjustment.
- 4) With regard to SAC member three-year-term this may not be long enough depending on the member and the group they represent as it may take a number of years for a SAC member to become fully educated and integrated with the committee so the recommendation would be for longer terms. Member attendance, training and performance would have to be agreed to.
- 5) An annual election of Chair and Vice-Chair is probably appropriate. The public sector typically do not trust "appointments" so election by the SAC is preferred. The Chair and Vice-Chair should have option of extending their roles for a year to maintain consistency
- 6) Three public meetings per year are appropriate
- 7) The breakdown of in-camera and closed meetings will have to be determined by the level of transparency that is required to satisfy the public but still keep commercially sensitive information private.
- 8) “Information only” topics can take up valuable time during scheduled meetings. Recommendation is to use more modern techniques to share this information with SAC members. With webinars, "eLearn" technologies we could do all this on line in synchronous and/or a-synchronous modes and obtain reasonable level of participation and feedback.
- 9) Residential representation is a difficult task as this is the largest group of stakeholders but the least engaged and informed group. The stakeholding process needs to move forward with using the LDCs and the Energy Board to provide a collection mechanism of comments and complaints they receive at their call centers and forward these to the SAC representative.
- 10) Committee effectiveness can be measured by a self-assessment of committee members or an independent review (Provincial Auditor perhaps)
- 11) The Terms of Reference for the merged organization needs to address the transparency issue. Transparency is the biggest issue for residential consumers. As an example recent political decisions to axe certain generation projects are being questioned. There must have been a technical and/or reliability reason why a certain size plant was to be constructed in a certain area. Why then is such a project cancelled? Also long term planning for generation mix and

transmission has to be integrated and the costs of executing this plan must be transparent and not be buried in the Global Adjustment.

#### Ring Fencing Discussion Paper

- 1) The "Not in my Backyard" attitude has created political intervention on what should have been sound technical and reliability decision on asset contracts (Generation type, capacity, location and transmission). The general public and residential consumers would want to know that sound decisions are being made, understand the costs and how these are going to be paid for. If any residential consumers are being advantaged or disadvantaged by these decisions proper stakeholding in those communities is required.
- 2) Residential consumers are expecting typical consolidation savings as a minimum (physical space, overhead costs, consolidation of senior management, consolidation of computer systems, HR, Finance, IT etc.). The largest opportunity for savings is in the potential seamless integration of evaluation of capacity, transmission, power quality and reliability system planning resulting in higher quality evaluations and decisions

#### Publication of Data Discussion paper

- 1) System planning integration between the two organizations should be explored. The public needs to know short term and long term requirements and what our options are for these. In some cases where there are multiple solutions this needs to be debated in open and sometime political forum to discuss factors such as cost, reliability, environmental, Aboriginal interests, and other factors. We must understand and take into consideration that supply mix decisions influence jobs in Ontario. Regional planning may be on the horizon as well. Residential customers want to know why investments were made in some areas and not in others. Many municipal economic development departments are actively encouraging investment in their communities based on some of these assumptions.
- 2) The merged company can continue to produce real time and future forecasts. What is missing in these documents is outlining the impact of political policy on items such as fuel mix.
- 3) The residential consumer of tomorrow will be more interested in the details of their energy bill. Today's simple TOU rates do not provide enough gap between On and off peak for consumers to participate in the market and the fixed costs are approaching 50% of the total costs. Consumers will be challenging their suppliers for more details as they look for opportunities to lower costs.
- 4) The role of the merged organization to provide information to the residential consumer should focus on education in not only on how the system works but what the pros/cons and risks are to the various short and long term decisions that are being made.