



LETTER No. L-12-00

ROBERT J. PELLATT
COMMISSION SECRETARY
Commission.Secretary@bcuc.com
web site: <http://www.bcuc.com>

SIXTH FLOOR, 900 HOWE STREET, BOX 250
VANCOUVER, B.C. CANADA V6Z 2N3
TELEPHONE: (604) 660-4700
BC TOLL FREE: 1-800-663-1385
FACSIMILE: (604) 660-1102

VIA FACSIMILE

March 2, 2000

TO: Interested Parties to the ABC Transportation Service Tariff

**Re: BC Gas Utility Ltd.
Agency Billing and Collection Transportation
for Residential and Commercial Customers**

As stated in Commission Letter No. L-59-99, the Commission remains committed to providing viable competitive options so that all customers have alternative sources for their natural gas requirements. The Market Unbundling Group Report ("MUG report" dated August 6, 1999) provided an investigation into an Agency, Billing and Collection Transportation ("ABC-T service") tariff under three different arrangements (section 7.3, page 58). This included a load shaped tariff, a hybrid (partial load shaping) and a full-unbundled alternative. The preferred selection of most of the participants was for full unbundling with mandatory balancing.

Therefore at this time, the Commission wishes to gauge interest for the preferred (non-load shaped) option so those residential and commercial customers can buy gas directly from suppliers. Your response to the following questions will be helpful in assessing that interest.

- 1.0 Are you interested in the ABC-T service option for residential and commercial customers and would you commit resources to achieve that objective? If so, please describe the extent of the resources and the intended involvement.**
- 2.0 If the target date for a system wide implementation is November 1, 2001, what is the timing and required tasks (filing and review of the ABC-T service tariff, review of codes of conduct, licensing, development of an educational program, etc.) that are expected to be in place to successfully meet that target date?**

There is the option of implementing a pilot project to limit costs and assess the markets' acceptance of the concept. In that context, the following questions have been developed.

- 3.1 If the number of customers able to participate in the full rollout was to be capped, what are the minimum numbers of customers that you require in order to ensure a viable program?**
- 3.2 If participation were conditional on geography, what would be your preference (coastal/interior)?**
- 3.3 If participation was conditional based on rate class, what would be your preference (residential/commercial)?**
- 3.4 For the initial rollout, would a one-year contract term be viable?**

- 3.5 Are you committed to an interface design process that would require the commitment of resources beginning April 2000? (BC Gas has indicated that without significant marketer participation in the development of electronic interfaces, manual processes would be able to support only a limited number of customers.)**
- 3.6 Would fixed customer entry dates be a significant barrier to entry for an initial rollout? If there were limited entry dates would two per year be sufficient?**

Your response to these questions will ultimately assist the Commission in determining if the implementation program should proceed. Please respond to the foregoing questions by March 20, 2000. If you wish to discuss the matter, please contact Robert Brownell at (604) 660-4700.

Yours truly,

Original signed by:

Constance M. Smith
for: Robert J. Pellatt