

SIXTH FLOOR, 900 HOWE STREET, BOX 250  
VANCOUVER, B.C. V6Z 2N3 CANADA  
web site: <http://www.bcuc.com>



**BRITISH COLUMBIA  
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**ORDER  
NUMBER** G-20-14

TELEPHONE: (604) 660-4700  
BC TOLL FREE: 1-800-663-1385  
FACSIMILE: (604) 660-1102

**IN THE MATTER OF  
the Utilities Commission Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, Chapter 473**

**and**

**FortisBC Inc.  
Application for a Radio-off  
Advanced Metering Infrastructure Meter Option  
Compliance Filing**

**BEFORE:** L.F. Kelsey, Commissioner  
D.M. Morton, Commissioner  
N.E. MacMurchy, Commissioner  
February 18, 2014

**O R D E R**

**WHEREAS:**

- A. Order C-7-13 dated July 23, 2013 granted FortisBC Inc. (FortisBC) a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Project (AMI Decision). The approval was subject to the condition that FortisBC confirm in writing that it would file an application for an opt-out provision by November 1, 2013, based on principles set out in the AMI Decision;
- B. On August 30, 2013, FortisBC applied to the British Columbia Utilities Commission (Commission) for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option based on principles set out in the AMI Decision (Application). The Application set out the rates and processes for customers who choose the Radio-off AMI Meter Option;
- C. By Order G-220-13 and the accompanying Reasons for Decision dated December 19, 2013, the Commission issued its decision on the Application (Decision). FortisBC was directed to comply with the following directives on or before January 27, 2014:
  - Confirm with the Commission that the enrollment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option is comparable to the process a customer must follow to obtain general electric service;
  - Report to the Commission on the process and deadlines for those customers that elect to participate in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option prior to commencement of the AMI project deployment in their region;
  - Resubmit Rate Schedule 81 incorporating all of the applicable directives outlined in the Decision.

FortisBC was also directed to submit an updated Rate Schedule 80 for approval with the Commission in order to capture any proposed changes to the False Site Visit charge;

- D. On January 21, 2014, FortisBC filed its compliance filing with regard to the aforementioned directives contained in the Decision (Compliance Filing); and
- E. The Commission reviewed the FortisBC Compliance Filing.

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**NOW THEREFORE** for the Reasons for Decision attached as Appendix A to this Order and pursuant to sections 59 and 60 of the *Utilities Commission Act*, the Commission orders as follows:

1. The Commission Panel does not accept the enrollment process as proposed by FortisBC Inc. for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option. FortisBC Inc. is directed to design an enrollment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option that is comparable to the process a customer must follow to obtain standard general electric service.
2. The Commission Panel accepts the process and deadlines as proposed by FortisBC Inc. for those customers that elect to participate in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option prior to commencement of the AMI project deployment in their region, allowing for Directive 1. of this Order.
3. The Commission Panel does not accept Rate Schedule 81 as filed by FortisBC Inc. FortisBC Inc. is directed to resubmit Rate Schedule 81 allowing for Directive 1. of this Order on or before March 20, 2014.
4. The amended Rate Schedule 80 is accepted, as filed.

**DATED** at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of February 2014.

BY ORDER

*Original Signed by:*

L.F. Kelsey  
Commissioner

Attachment

FortisBC Inc.  
Application for a Radio-off  
Advanced Metering Infrastructure Meter Option  
Compliance Filing

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REASONS FOR DECISION

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**1.0 BACKGROUND**

On August 30, 2013, FortisBC Inc. (FortisBC) applied to the British Columbia Utilities Commission (Commission) for the Radio-off Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Meter Option (Application). The Application detailed the rates and processes for customers who choose the Radio-off AMI Meter Option and was based on the principles set out in Order C-7-13 and the accompanying Decision, which granted FortisBC a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the AMI Project (AMI Decision).

By Order G-220-13 and the accompanying Reasons for Decision dated December 19, 2013, the Commission issued its decision on the Application (Decision). FortisBC was directed to comply with the following directives on or before January 27, 2014:

- Confirm with the Commission that the enrollment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option is comparable to the process a customer must follow to obtain general electric service;
- Report to the Commission on the process and deadlines for those customers that elect to participate in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option prior to commencement of the AMI project deployment in their region; and
- Resubmit Rate Schedule 81 incorporating all of the applicable directives outlined in the Decision.

**2.0 COMPLIANCE FILING**

On January 21, 2014, FortisBC filed its compliance filing with regard to the aforementioned directives contained in the Decision (Compliance Filing). The Panel has considered these directives individually below in these Reasons for Decision.

**2.1 Enrollment Process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option**

The following directive is included on page 8 of the Decision:

“FortisBC is directed to confirm with the Commission on or before January 27, 2014 that the enrolment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option is comparable to the process a customer must follow to obtain general electric service. **Processes that impose an unnecessary barrier for those wishing to avail themselves of the service are not acceptable to the Commission.**”  
[emphasis added]

On pages 2 to 3 of the Compliance Filing, FortisBC submits that “... customer signed authorization is required today for general electric residential service applications that will result in differences in payment amounts as compared to standard service.” FortisBC provides several examples of such service applications, including customers requesting First Nations tax status, customers who elect to use a pre-authorized electronic funds transfer for bill payment, and farm customers who request flat-rate general residential electric service or wish to receive a Provincial Sales Tax exemption. (Compliance Filing, p. 3)

The Panel is in agreement with FortisBC that electing to participate in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option will result in different payment amounts as compared to standard service. However, the Panel is not persuaded that the reasons for requiring a signed authorization form for the service application examples provided by FortisBC in the Compliance Filing are applicable to the Radio-off AMI Meter Option. Specifically, the examples provided by FortisBC mainly relate to external factors such as banking authorizations and taxation matters.

The Panel reiterates its position from the Decision that processes that impose an unnecessary barrier for those wishing to avail themselves of the service are not acceptable to the Commission. **Accordingly, FortisBC is directed to design an enrollment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option that is comparable to the process a customer must follow to obtain standard general electric service, which we understand includes the option to enroll online or via phone.**

## **2.2 Process and Deadlines for Customers that Elect to Participate Prior to Commencement of AMI Project Deployment in Their Region**

The following directive is included on page 19 of the Decision:

“FortisBC is directed to report to the Commission on or before January 27, 2014 on the process and deadlines for those customers that elect to participate in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option prior to commencement of the AMI project deployment in their region. The report must include the following:

- Final process and timeline for notifying customers of the scheduled AMI project deployment in their region, including the number of days notice that will be provided;
- Final process and timeline for notifying customers of both the Radio-off AMI Meter Option, and the requirements and deadlines for opting out prior to the commencement of AMI project deployment in their region; and
- The number of days ahead of AMI project deployment in their region that will be required for customers to elect to participate in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option in order to qualify for the \$60 Per-premises Setup Fee.”

FortisBC submits that customers will be provided a minimum of 30 days notification prior to the scheduled start of AMI project deployment in their region. The notification will include information on the enrollment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option and customers must submit a completed application form within the 30 day period preceding the start of scheduled AMI project deployment in their region in order to qualify for the \$60 per-premises setup fee.

The Panel finds the process and timeline for notifying customers of both the scheduled start of AMI project deployment in their region and Radio-off AMI Meter Option enrollment to be reasonable and accepts the process and timeline as proposed by FortisBC. The Panel also finds the timeframe within which customers must enroll for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option in order to be eligible for the \$60 per-premises setup fee to be reasonable and accepts the timeframe as proposed by FortisBC. However, as noted in Section 2.1 of these Reasons for Decision, FortisBC is directed to design an enrollment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option that is comparable to the process a customer must follow to obtain standard general electric service, which we understand includes the option to enroll online or via phone.

For clarity, the Panel notes that customers should be offered the option to enroll in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option prior to receiving notice of AMI project deployment in their respective region and within the 30 day period preceding the scheduled commencement of deployment. Customers that enroll after this time will not be eligible for the \$60 per-premises setup fee.

### 2.3 Rate Schedule 81

Directive 4 of the Decision states that “FortisBC must resubmit Rate Schedule 81 incorporating all of the applicable directives outlined in the Decision attached as Appendix A to this Order, on or before January 27, 2014.” Rate Schedule 81 includes the charges and terms and conditions applicable to customers that enroll in the Radio-off AMI Meter Option.

The Panel notes that the Rate Schedule 81 filed by FortisBC in the Compliance Filing is in accordance with the Decision and these Reasons for Decision with the exception of Terms and Conditions Item 1, which states:

“Radio-off Customers that have applied to the Company for a Radio-off AMI Meter by completing, signing and delivering the application form provided by FortisBC to customers for use in selecting the Radio-off AMI Meter Option, will be provided with a meter that has the integrated wireless transmit functions disabled.” (Compliance Filing, Appendix B)

As noted in Section 2.1 of these Reasons for Decision, FortisBC is directed to design an enrollment process for the Radio-off AMI Meter Option that is comparable to the process a customer must follow to obtain standard general electric service, which we understand includes the option to enroll online or via phone. **Accordingly, FortisBC is directed to file an updated Rate Schedule 81 incorporating the enrollment process as directed by the Panel in these Reasons for Decision on or before March 20, 2014.**