



**ORDER NUMBER
G-79-20**

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

and

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority
COVID-19 Customer Relief Program Application

BEFORE:

D. M. Morton, Panel Chair
A. K. Fung, QC, Commissioner
T. A. Loski, Commissioner
R. I. Mason, Commissioner

on April 7, 2020

ORDER

WHEREAS:

- A. On April 3, 2020, the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro) filed an application with the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) for its coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Relief Program (Application), pursuant to the Direction to the British Columbia Utilities Commission Respecting COVID-19 issued by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on April 2, 2020 (Order in Council No. 159 or Direction). Specifically, BC Hydro sought approval for the following:
- (i) Pursuant to sections 59 to 61 of the *Utilities Commissions Act* (UCA), amendments to BC Hydro's Electric Tariff in order to implement BC Hydro's COVID Relief Fund for Residential Customers under Rate Schedules (RS) 1101, 1105, 1107, 1121, 1127, 1148, 1151 and 1161 as required by section 3(1)(a) of the Direction;
 - (ii) Pursuant to sections 59 to 61 of the UCA, approval to allow BC Hydro to defer to the Customer Crisis Fund (CCF) Regulatory Account: (i) in addition to the amounts BC Hydro already defers as approved by Order G-166-17, those credits provided to customers under the COVID Relief Fund for Residential Customers; (ii) BC Hydro's costs to administer this relief; and (iii) interest costs as required by section 3(3)(a) of the Direction. Additionally, approval to allow BC Hydro to reduce the amounts in the CCF Regulatory Account by amounts collected by BC Hydro pursuant to the CCF Rate Rider set out in Rate Schedule 1903 of BC Hydro's Electric Tariff as required by section 3(3)(b) of the Direction;
 - (iii) Consent under section 63 of the UCA to waive charges for eligible commercial customers receiving service under RS 1205, 1234, 1300, 1301, 1310 or 1311 during the period from the date that is the later of April 1, 2020 and the date on which an eligible commercial customer ceased operating until June 30, 2020 as required by section 3(2) of the Direction and in accordance with BC Hydro's business practices;

- (iv) Pursuant to sections 59 to 61 of the UCA, approval of the following Electric Tariff Supplements in order to implement BC Hydro's COVID-19 relief measures for eligible industrial customers, as required by section 3(1)(b) of the Direction:
 - i. Amendments to Tariff Supplement No. 90 Mining Customer Payment Plan (TS 90);
 - ii. New Tariff Supplement No. 97 RS 1823 and RS 1828 Customer Payment Plan (TS 97);
 - iii. New Tariff Supplement No. 98 Coal Mining Customer Payment Plan (TS 98); and
 - iv. New Tariff Supplement No. 99 Copper Mining Customer Payment Plan (TS 99);
 - (v) Pursuant to sections 59 to 61 of the UCA, with respect to the Mining Customer Payment Plan Regulatory Account, established by Order G-34-16 pursuant to Order in Council No. 123 dated February 29, 2016, to reflect costs associated with the following COVID-19 relief measures:
 - i. To defer certain amounts arising in connection with TS 90, TS 97, TS 98 and TS 99, the waived charges for eligible commercial customers described above and BC Hydro's cost of administering this relief for eligible commercial and industrial customers, as required by and specified more fully in section 3(3)(c)(i) to (v) of the Direction;
 - ii. In relation to the amounts referred to in subparagraph (i) above, interest determined in a fiscal year at a rate equal to BC Hydro's weighted average cost of debt in that fiscal year; and
 - iii. To reduce the balance in the Mining Customer Payment Plan Regulatory Account by amounts paid to BC Hydro by eligible industrial customers under TS 90, TS 97, TS 98 and TS 99, as applicable, for the purpose of reducing the account balances referred to above, as required by section 3(3)(d) of the Direction;
- B. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020 the Government of BC declared a state of emergency and a public health emergency. The COVID-19 pandemic has had financial impacts on BC Hydro customers due to changes in employment and businesses closures, shutdowns and curtailments. On April 1, 2020, the Government of BC announced that rate relief is to be provided to BC Hydro's residential, small business and large industrial and mining customers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - C. Order in Council No. 159 issued to the BCUC, pursuant to section 3 of the UCA, provides direction to the BCUC in respect of relief required by BC Hydro to provide relief to certain customers impacted by COVID-19;
 - D. The terms used in this Order, unless otherwise defined within this Order, have the same meaning given to them in the Direction where applicable;
 - E. On April 6, 2020, the BCUC issued information requests to BC Hydro, received responses from BC Hydro, and held a web-based Streamlined Review Process to review the Application; and
 - F. The BCUC reviewed and considered the Application in accordance with Order in Council No. 159 and considers that approval is required as directed. The BCUC has not reviewed the Application for its regulatory justification.

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to Order in Council No. 159 to the BCUC respecting COVID-19 relief and sections 59 to 61 and 63 of the UCA, the BCUC orders as follows:

- 1. Electric Tariff amendments included with the Application as Appendix D are approved effective April 7, 2020.

2. Electric Tariff Supplement No. 90 Mining Customer Payment Plan, included with the Application as Appendix E, is approved effective April 7, 2020.
3. Electric Tariff Supplement No. 97 RS 1823 and RS 1828 Customer Payment Plan, included with the Application as Appendix F, is approved effective April 7, 2020.
4. Electric Tariff Supplement No. 98 Coal Mining Customer Payment Plan, included with the Application as Appendix G, is approved effective April 7, 2020.
5. Electric Tariff Supplement No. 99 Copper Mining Customer Payment Plan, included with the Application as Appendix H, is approved effective April 7, 2020.
6. BC Hydro is directed to file updated Electric Tariff sheets reflecting the amendments within 15 business days of the date of this Order.
7. The BCUC consents to BC Hydro waiving charges for eligible customers served under BC Hydro's Electric Tariff Rate Schedules 1205, 1234, 1300, 1301, 1310 and 1311 who have closed their business as a result of COVID-19 from the later of April 1, 2020 and the date of the closure of the business until June 30, 2020.
8. BC Hydro is authorized to defer to the CCF Regulatory Account: (i) in addition to the amounts BC Hydro already defers as approved by Order G-166-17, those amounts credited to customers under the COVID Relief Fund for Residential Customers; (ii) BC Hydro's costs to administer the COVID Relief Fund for Residential Customers; and (iii) in relation to the balance in the CCF Regulatory Account, interest determined in a fiscal year at a rate equal to BC Hydro's weighted average cost of debt in that fiscal year.
9. BC Hydro is authorized to reduce the amounts in the CCF Regulatory Account by amounts collected by BC Hydro pursuant to the CCF Rate Rider set out in Rate Schedule 1903 of BC Hydro's Electric Tariff.
10. BC Hydro is authorized to defer to the Mining Customer Payment Plan Regulatory account the following amounts:
 - (i) The account balances of eligible industrial customers incurred under TS 90, TS 97, TS 98 or TS 99, as applicable, if those account balances are impaired and have not already been deferred under section 3 of the Direction to the BCUC Respecting Mining Customers;
 - (ii) Any other amounts that are payable to BC Hydro by those eligible industrial customers, if those amounts are impaired;
 - (iii) Any taxes paid by BC Hydro on behalf of those eligible industrial customers on the account balances referred to in subparagraph (i) and the amounts referred to in subparagraph (ii);
 - (iv) The costs incurred by BC Hydro in administering the programs for eligible industrial customers under TS 90, TS 97, TS 98 and TS 99 and the program for waiving electricity charges for eligible commercial customers as contemplated in Directive 7 above;
 - (v) The amounts payable by eligible commercial customers and waived by BC Hydro pursuant to Directive 7 above; and
 - (vi) In relation to the amounts referred to in subparagraphs (i) to (v) above, interest determined in a fiscal year at a rate equal to BC Hydro's weighted average cost of debt in that fiscal year.
11. BC Hydro is authorized to reduce the balance in the Mining Customer Payment Plan Regulatory Account by amounts paid to BC Hydro by eligible industrial customers under TS 90, TS 97, TS 98 and TS 99, as applicable, for the purpose of reducing the account balances referred to in Directive 10(i) above.

12. BC Hydro is directed to track the accruals in the CCF Regulatory Account resulting from the COVID-19 relief measures separately from the rest of the accruals directed in BCUC Order G-166-17.
13. BC Hydro is directed to report monthly to the BCUC, commencing May 1, 2020 and for a period of six months thereafter, on the activities of the CCF Regulatory Account as a result of a) the COVID-19 relief measures, and b) the CCF program. The activities to be reported for the COVID-19 relief measures include:
 - a. Bill credits provided to customers under the COVID-19 relief fund for residential customers,
 - b. BC Hydro costs for administering the COVID-19 relief measures for residential customers,
 - c. Interest costs, and
 - d. Amounts paid to BC Hydro pursuant to RS 1903.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 7th day of April 2020.

BY ORDER

Original signed by:

D. M. Morton
Commissioner