



ORDER NUMBER
G-81-20

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

and

FortisBC Energy Inc.
Application for Approval of
COVID-19 Customer Recovery Fund Deferral Account

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, FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) and FortisBC Inc. (FBC) (collectively FortisBC), filed an application with the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) for approval, pursuant to sections 59 to 61 and 91 of the *Utilities Commission Act*, of the following for each of FEI and FBC (Application):
- (i) The discretion to offer a three-month bill payment deferral to residential customers, and to small commercial customers served under FEI Rate Schedules 2, 2B, 2U and 2X and FBC Rate Schedule 20 and certain Rate Schedule 22 customers that meet the Rate Schedule 20 size restriction, who have been directly impacted financially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - (ii) The discretion to offer bill relief in the form of bill credits for three months, starting April 1, 2020 through to July 1, 2020, to small commercial customers served under FEI Rate Schedules 2, 2B, 2U and 2X and FBC Rate Schedule 20 that have been ordered to temporarily close their businesses to comply with public health orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and
 - (iii) Establishment of a rate base deferral account for the COVID-19 Customer Recovery Fund to record (1) any unrecovered revenue resulting from customers being unable to pay their bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be tracked separately by rate schedule, (2) any bill payment deferrals provided to customers due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent payments of those deferred amounts; and (3) any bill credits provided to customers due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- B. FortisBC states that the Application was filed in response to the growing impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic in British Columbia and the State of Emergency declared in the province;

- C. On April 6, 2020, the BCUC issued information requests (IRs) to FortisBC, received responses by FortisBC, and held a web-based Streamlined Review Process to review the Application; and
- D. The BCUC reviewed the Application and FortisBC's responses to the BCUC IRs and finds that interim approval is warranted. The BCUC also considers that establishing a public hearing process and a regulatory timetable is warranted.

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to sections 59 to 61 and 91 of the *Utilities Commission Act*, the BCUC orders as follows:

1. FEI is granted interim approval to:
 - (i) offer a three-month bill payment deferral starting April 1, 2020 to residential customers, and to small commercial customers served under Rate Schedules 2, 2B, 2U and 2X who have been directly impacted financially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - (ii) offer bill relief in the form of bill credits for three months, commencing April 1, 2020 through to July 1, 2020, to small commercial customers served under Rate Schedules 2, 2B, 2U and 2X that have closed their businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - (iii) establish a rate base deferral account for the FEI COVID-19 Customer Recovery Fund to record and track separately by rate schedule (1) any unrecovered revenue resulting from customers being unable to pay their bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be tracked separately by rate schedule, (2) any bill payment deferrals provided to customers due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent payments of those deferred amounts; and (3) any bill credits provided to customers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. These approvals are provided on an interim and refundable basis, effective the date of this Order.
3. FEI is directed to refund/recover the difference between the interim approvals and permanent approvals, as determined by the BCUC following its final determinations on the review of this Application.
4. FortisBC must provide notice of the Application and a copy of this order, electronically where possible, to all registered interveners in the FortisBC Multi-Year Rate Plan Application for 2020 to 2024 and the FEI 2016 Rate Design Application.
5. A public hearing process is established, as set out in the regulatory timetable attached as Appendix A to this order.

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

FortisBC Energy Inc.
Application for Approval of
COVID-19 Customer Recovery Fund Deferral Account

Regulatory Timetable

Action	Date (2020)
Intervener Registration	Thursday, April 23
Interveners to advise BCUC of their intent, if any, to submit written Information Requests on this Application to FEI	Thursday, April 23
Further process	To be determined