



**ORDER NUMBER
G-330-24**

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

and

FortisBC Energy Inc.
FEI Radio-off Advanced Metering Infrastructure Meter Option

BEFORE:

E. B. Lockhart, Panel Chair
B. A. Magnan, Commissioner

on December 11, 2024

ORDER

WHEREAS:

- A. On August 7, 2024, FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) filed an application (Application) with the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC), pursuant to sections 59 to 61 of the *Utilities Commission Act* (UCA), seeking approval of proposed terms and conditions and fees and the associated proposed amendments to FEI's General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs) to its Tariff to implement the Radio-off Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Meter Option effective February 1, 2025;
- B. FEI requests that the live spreadsheet provided as Appendix A to the Application be held confidential in perpetuity, pursuant to Rule 18 of the BCUC's Rules of Practice and Procedure;
- C. By Order C-2-23 dated May 15, 2023, the BCUC granted a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the AMI Project;
- D. By Order G-235-24, dated August 28, 2024, the BCUC established a regulatory timetable for review of the Application, which included, among other things, public notice, BCUC information requests (IRs), letters of comment, and final argument and reply to letters of comment;
- E. On October 16, 2024, in response to BCUC IR 4.1, FEI submitted, as Attachment 4.1, a revised version of the amendments it proposes to the GT&Cs of its Tariff (Amended GT&Cs); and
- F. The BCUC has reviewed the Application including the evidence, submissions and associated documents in the proceeding and makes the following determinations.

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to sections 59 to 61 of the UCA and for the reasons outlined in the decision accompanying this order, the BCUC orders as follows:

1. FEI is approved to implement the Radio-off AMI Meter Option, effective February 1, 2025, including the terms and conditions and fees and the associated changes to FEI's GT&Cs to its Tariff contained in the Amended GT&Cs as filed in Attachment 4.1 in response to BCUC IR 4.1. The approved Radio-off Option Standard Charges include:
 - Per-Premises Setup Fee – Pre-commencement of \$61.00
 - Per-Premises Setup Fee – Post-commencement of \$105.00
 - Per-Read Fee of \$21.00
2. FEI is directed to file the revised Tariff pages for BCUC endorsement within 30 days of the date of this order.
3. Unless otherwise ordered by the BCUC, FEI's live spreadsheet provided as Appendix A to the Application is to be held confidential as it contains commercially sensitive and market competitive information.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 11th day of December 2024.

BY ORDER

Electronically signed by Blair Lockhart

E. B. Lockhart
Commissioner

DECISION

1.0 Background

By Decision and Order C-2-23 dated May 15, 2023 (AMI Decision), the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) granted a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project. The AMI Decision determined that FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) should offer a 'radio-off' option for those customers who refuse to allow FEI to connect the meter on their premises via wireless technology (Radio-off AMI Meter Option) and that those customers should pay the additional costs of having their advanced meters installed with the internal communicating radio turned off and having their meters read manually.¹

On August 7, 2024, FEI filed an application (Application) with the BCUC, pursuant to sections 59 to 61 of the *Utilities Commission Act*, seeking approval of proposed terms and conditions and fees and the associated proposed amendments to FEI's General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs) of its Tariff to implement the Radio-off AMI Meter Option effective February 1, 2025.

By Order G-235-24 dated August 28, 2024, the BCUC established a regulatory timetable for review of the Application, which included, among other things, public notice, BCUC information requests (IRs), letters of comment, and final argument and reply to letters of comment. In response to BCUC IRs, FEI filed a revised version of the amendments it proposes to the GT&Cs of its Tariff (Amended GT&Cs) adding greater clarity in section 18.3.² The BCUC received two letters of comment by the deadline. On October 31, 2024, FEI filed its final argument and reply to letters of comment.

FEI submits that the proposed Amended GT&Cs and associated fees in respect of the Radio-off AMI Meter Option are just and reasonable and consistent with the BCUC's AMI Decision.³

2.0 Issues Raised in Letters of Comment

In a letter of comment dated September 3, 2024, Jennifer McIntock states that British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority has received many complaints about its smart meters and the fires that happen with them. McIntock submits that it is safer to have workers read the meters or have owners read and report their own meters.⁴

In a letter of comment dated September 16, 2024, Curtis Bennett expresses doubt over the adequacy of the science used for the safety of wireless technology.⁵

¹ Decision and Order C-2-23, dated May 15, 2023, Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Project, p. 52.

² Exhibit B-3, Attachment 4.1.

³ FEI Final Argument, p. 1.

⁴ Exhibit D-1.

⁵ Exhibit D-2.

Position of FEI

In reply FEI submits that the letters of comment do not address FEI's proposed Radio-off AMI Meter Option or related matters and therefore are out of scope for this proceeding. In FEI's view, both letters provided reasons why the writers believe the BCUC should not approve FEI's implementation of AMI, a matter that the BCUC has already decided. Further, FEI submits that in the AMI Decision, the BCUC found that FEI's proposed AMI technology complies with Health Canada's Safety Code 6 and that the weight of scientific evidence continues to demonstrate that the radiofrequency exposure limits set out in Safety Code 6 are sufficient to protect FEI's customers.⁶

3.0 Panel Determination

Having reviewed the Application and evidence in the proceeding, the Panel approves FEI to implement the Radio-off AMI Meter Option including the Amended GT&Cs, effective February 1, 2025.

The Panel notes that despite having the opportunity to do so, neither letter of comment addresses the items for which FEI seeks BCUC approval, namely the amendments to its GT&Cs for those customers who refuse to allow FEI to connect the meter on their premises via wireless technology. The Panel finds that the items addressed in the letters of comment — the science, safety and cost-effectiveness of AMI technology — are outside the scope of this proceeding. Further, the writers' comments relate to matters already decided by the BCUC in the AMI Decision.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 11th day of December 2024.

Electronically signed by Blair Lockhart

E. B. Lockhart
Panel Chair

Electronically signed by Bernard Magnan

B. A. Magnan
Commissioner

⁶ FEI Final Argument and Reply to Letters of Comment, p. 9.