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The Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities
Prince Charles Building
120 Torbay Road, P.O. Box 21040
St. John's, NL A1A 5B2

Attention: Ms. Cheryl Blundon
Director of Corporate Services & Board Secretary

Dear Ms. Blundon:

Re: NL Hydro Application for Approval of Net Metering Program – December 2016
NF Power Application for Approval of Net Metering Service Option – Dec. 19/2016
(The Applications)

The Consumer Advocate is of the view that the Applications recently made by both Newfoundland Power (NP) and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro (NLH) are significant, new initiatives in this province and will attract interest among consumers of electrical power.

While the information presented by the utilities in these Applications, and in their Replies to the RFIs, provides some technical information, the public interest would be better served if this information was disseminated by way of a public hearing. Such a hearing will attract interest among those who anticipate utilizing net metering services and it is anticipated that the media will take some interest in this concept which is being finally introduced into this province.

It is anticipated that both Applications will be consolidated to allow for an efficient single public hearing. Practical information coming from a hearing will allow consumers to undertake their own informed cost/benefit analysis when deciding whether to avail of this net metering option. Consumers also need to know how quickly they need to act, having regard to the 5 MW cap. A public hearing will allow the evidence supporting the Applications to be tested. Consumers will then have the opportunity to hear more about net metering in an open, transparent forum and will be able to make informed decisions accordingly.

It is not anticipated that the public hearing would be lengthy – maybe a day or two – as the witness list would likely be confined to representatives of the utilities. Nevertheless, the value of a public hearing for consumers should not be underestimated. In the result, a public hearing is requested on this issue.

Yours truly,



Dennis Browne, Q.C.
Consumer Advocate

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CC

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