

ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

CUSTOMER Q&A

In this Q&A, we answer some of the frequently asked questions received from our customers as part of this year's virtual public meeting.

● **Privatization, where does Manitoba Hydro stand on this issue?**

Manitoba Hydro is not considering privatization in any way, nor have we received direction from the provincial government to do so.

● **When will you be announcing your decision on the future of Manitoba Hydro International?**

Manitoba Hydro announced the reorganization of Manitoba Hydro International (MHI) on February 16 following a comprehensive review of the subsidiary's operations.

As part of this reorganization, MHI will continue to operate as a subsidiary of Manitoba Hydro. Additionally, the lines of business of MHI focused on technology solutions will continue to operate under the Manitoba Hydro International banner. All permanent MHI staff will be offered employment at Manitoba Hydro.

The international consulting business of MHI, operating under Manitoba Hydro International Utility Services (MHIUS), will be gradually wound down as current contracts expire. Existing contracts with MHIUS customers will be honoured and supported.

● **How, as a senior on a fixed income of pension, can I be assured that I will have affordable hydroelectricity for the next 20+ years?**

Manitoba Hydro currently has some of the lowest electricity rates in North America. Our recent investments in new generation and interconnections with other utilities in Canada and to the south have also set us up for a very bright future. With the shift to pricing carbon, many utilities are currently under pressure to find cleaner sources of energy and move away from burning fossil fuels. Meanwhile, Manitoba Hydro does not need to spend billions of dollars to convert our generating system because the energy we produce is already sustainable.

These investments ensure we will have an abundant supply of clean, renewable electricity to meet the growing energy needs of our customers in Manitoba, but also position us to get the maximum value for our excess energy wherever we can through exports, or through supporting new uses for energy here in Manitoba in the future. Today, our energy exports generate additional revenues that allow us to keep rates in Manitoba lower than they otherwise would be. We will continue to look for markets for our excess energy that will provide the greatest return to our customers on their investments in our system, with a view towards minimizing rate increases in the future.

● **Why do our electricity bills keep going up every year?**

Electricity rate increases help ensure Manitoba Hydro has adequate revenue and cash to maintain the electricity system and to pay for new transmission and generation projects as they come into service.

For example, as Bipole III, the Minnesota-Manitoba Transmission Project, and Keeyask Generating Station are brought into service, Manitoba Hydro needs additional electric revenue to cover the costs associated with shifting these projects from capital expenses to day-to-day operating expense – this includes payments on money borrowed to build the projects.

Even with future rate increases, Manitoba Hydro's electricity rates are expected to continue being among the lowest overall in North America.

● **Why do I have to pay a basic charge of \$8+ dollars every month on my hydro bill?**

The basic monthly charge covers costs for Manitoba Hydro that do not vary with energy use. These costs include meter reading and billing, as well as the costs associated with the installation and ongoing maintenance of the equipment installed on your property, such as the meter and service line.

● **Is Manitoba Hydro planning on adding a density fee for rural customers as has been done in Ontario?**

We are not planning a density fee for rural customers. The Manitoba Hydro Act, Section 39 (2.1) (the section on Uniform Rates), requires us to maintain the same rates for all residential customers, regardless of where they live in Manitoba.

● **What percentage of electricity currently produced in Manitoba is from solar and wind?**

On average, solar represents about 0.1% and wind represents about 3% of electricity produced in Manitoba.

● **Will Manitoba Hydro offer loans or subsidies to install solar panels in my house?**

Solar photovoltaic systems for your home are one of the many energy efficiency upgrades that qualify for financing under Manitoba Hydro's [Home Energy Efficiency Loan](#) for customers with approved credit.

Energy efficiency programming, such as incentives or rebates to help Manitobans save energy, is under the purview of Manitoba's newest Crown Corporation, Efficiency Manitoba. You can visit [Efficiency Manitoba's website](#) for more information on their latest offerings.

● **What requirements has Manitoba Hydro imposed on the wind farm operators from which it buys electricity to reduce bird and bat loss from wind generator operations?**

Manitoba Hydro requires its wind farm operators to obtain all necessary environmental permits to operate their facilities. The wind farm operators were required to conduct pre- and post-construction bird and bat migration studies. The wind farm operators also engage in ongoing monitoring programs and adjust system operations to minimize impact during migration seasons.

- **What is Manitoba Hydro doing in the way of trapping biogas from landfills and creating biogas for insertion into natural gas lines to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?**

Natural gas will continue to be a critically important energy source for Manitobans for years to come. Manitoba Hydro is very interested in biogas and is working with customers that have existing sources to discuss potential opportunities to purchase this renewable form of natural gas as a means of reducing the carbon intensity of the natural gas we sell.

A common by-product of landfills or wastewater treatment facilities, biogas is often disposed of by flaring or burning it off – producing carbon dioxide emissions. However, if that biogas is captured and cleaned, it can be added to the natural gas distribution system. This would help reduce the amount of natural gas Manitoba Hydro needs to purchase from outside of the province and, by reducing the need to flare, would also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- **With the accelerating electrification of the transportation sector, is Manitoba Hydro planning to install any public charging infrastructure? Will there be subsidies available in the near future for such equipment?**

The electrification of transportation presents a good opportunity for Manitoba Hydro's clean electricity. For over a decade, we have been closely monitoring how quickly the technology is advancing, electric vehicle adoption rates in Manitoba, new private enterprises entering the market, and what other electric utilities in Canada are doing to prepare themselves. We will engage with governments as they develop policies or strategies related to the electrification of transportation and support the industry as it evolves, all while balancing our investments to ensure we keep costs as low as possible for our customers.

- **Why is it when I see work being done on our powerlines the workers are always contractors?**

Manitoba Hydro has been using external contractors for large transmission line construction projects for many years. These projects require specialized workforces in large quantities over a relatively short period of time. Our contractors give us access to the skilled labour and specialized equipment we need to get the job done as safely, efficiently, and cost effectively as possible.

Similarly, a mix of internal crews and contractors is used to manage work peaks in the construction of distribution power lines across the province. On average over the past few years, approximately 75 per cent of this work is completed by internal crews and the remainder is contracted. Again, by using contractors we can manage these peak periods in construction efficiently and cost effectively.

- **Is there a way to improve response times to request for services by residential developers, such as service extensions?**

Extending our utility services to new residential subdivisions are complex design and construction projects. Many steps in the process require input or approvals from other parties before construction can begin. Manitoba Hydro has been working closely with municipal and city authorities to improve how quickly design drawings are approved. Once approved to start construction, the schedule can depend on various factors, such as the size of the development, weather, ground conditions, and the timing of other planned projects.

Projects of this kind typically take about 6 to 12 months from receipt of initial application to construction completion. A Manitoba Hydro Energy Service Advisor is assigned as a main point of contact to help keep developers informed on the status of the project and timeline.

In an effort to give developers more control over the timelines of service extensions, we recently launched the **Developer Choice Program** that gives developers the option to design and install their own pre-servicing of utilities in new residential developments.

We are continuing to look for ways to improve our processes and speed up both approval and connection times.

- **Homeowners need to be able to once again get self-wire electrical permits. It makes no sense to make us bring electricians into our homes. We can take a picture and send it to the inspector just as well as the electrician can. Please open this permit back up again.**

We have suspended all in-person residential electrical inspections to minimize public interactions while Manitoba is under the Code Red or critical level pandemic response. We do allow registered contractors to use pictures to complete the residential inspection process because they have the training to safely complete wiring in a manner that meets Manitoba Electrical Code requirements.