

**Summary of Feedback Received from Organizations that Participate in the Delivery of Manitoba
Hydro's Affordable Energy Program**

In its letter dated December 4, 2015, the Public Utilities Board ("PUB") indicated that it expects Manitoba Hydro to bring to the Collaborative Process any input from organizations delivering aspects of its current Affordable Energy Program. Manitoba Hydro provided a presentation on December 13, 2016 and held discussions with a number of organizations regarding the findings of the Bill Affordability Collaborative Process, and sought their feedback on the generic issue of energy affordability for Manitoba Hydro's lower-income customers. Invitations were extended to the following groups: Building Urban Industries through Local Development (BUILD), Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC)/Brandon Energy Efficiency Program (BEEP), North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC), Selkirk Community Renewal Corporation (SCRC), Kinew Housing, Kanata Housing, Dakota Ojibway First Nations Housing Authority (DOFNHA), Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association (MNPHA) and the Salvation Army. Three stakeholders, BUILD, NECRC and Kinew Housing, provided feedback through in-person meetings and via phone.

The majority of the feedback focused on a desire to assist those struggling with high energy bills through increased communication and collaboration. The following is a high level summary of the feedback received:

- Some of the organizations were of the view that customers may not communicate their true financial hardship to Manitoba Hydro staff, and therefore, there is a need for Customer Service Representatives to be emphatic and encourage customers to be open about their circumstances.
- Many organizations were concerned with Employment & Income Assistance (EIA) moving away from direct payments to utilities/landlords for rent and now providing clients with cash assistance. Stakeholders felt education on money management needs to be provided by EIA and mandatory for these clients.
- The stakeholders asked several questions of how Manitoba Hydro's Credit & Recovery staff members support and assist customers in crisis situations. The stakeholders noted the value and appreciate the level of assistance provided to customers.
- Many organizations did not see the Percentage of Payment Plan (PIPP) rate assistance recommendation (discussed at pages 27-28 of the Bill Affordability Collaborative Process Report) as the most valuable or cost effective option. They felt if anything was provided through rates, the assistance should be similar to the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) which provides a fixed credit to a home depending on the size and income of the household. It was viewed this option would be less expensive and would still provide further financial assistance to customers in need.
- There was a strong desire to legislate energy efficiency upgrades for the retrofit market, especially for landlords to ensure tenants have the ability to lower their energy bill.

- Manitoba Hydro's suite of complementary measures, such as the Affordable Energy Program, Neighbours Helping Neighbours, and Bill Accommodation Practices are well accepted by the organizations, and they felt collaboration was important to further reach those in need.
- Some organizations expressed concerns with converting mid-efficient natural gas furnaces to high efficient as the energy savings aren't significant and the costs are high. A look at alternative heating sources, such as solar, biomass or geothermal, was better received, where it can be made available. It was also suggested for Manitoba Hydro to consider limiting the use of electric heat or prohibiting the use of electric heat in new homes.
- A suggestion was made to direct a percentage of export sales to assist lower income customers.
- One landlord appreciated the pre-disconnect letter that is provided by Manitoba Hydro for their rental properties, as it provides the opportunity to encourage tenants to contact Manitoba Hydro to avoid a disruption in service. The landlord noted this was very effective and pro-active.