



**LETTER NO. L-32-10**

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**VIA EMAIL**

*regulatory@fortisbc.com*

April 8, 2010

Ms. Joyce Martin  
Manager, Regulatory Affairs  
FortisBC Inc.  
Suite 100, 1975 Springfield Road  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 7V7

Dear Ms. Martin:

Re: FortisBC Inc.  
Complaint by Melody Farmer  
under section 23 of the *Utilities Commission Act*  
Regarding the September 5, 2009 Power Surge near Boswell, BC

In response to the Commission's letter dated March 10, 2010, FortisBC filed its Incident Report (Report) on the September 5, 2009 power surge event near Boswell, BC.

Commission staff has accepted the Report for filing. Commission staff is aware of the possible use of station class surge arresters to mitigate this issue and requests FortisBC to file a summary report of its monitoring of ongoing research and development regarding the use of station surge arresters to limit damages in this type of power surge event within ninety days of the issue of this letter.

By this letter, as follow up to the Report, the Commission directs FortisBC to:

1. Improve its customer engagement in these circumstances;
2. Provide more aggressive vegetation management of transmission lines having distribution underbuild with respect to clearances to transmission and distribution lines for existing construction;
3. Provide an explanation as to why only 11 of the 536 customers served by Crawford Feeder 2 were severely affected by this power surge assuming it was the result of an overvoltage on the distribution system;
4. Provide an explanation as to why it does not install lightning arresters on all its residential distribution transformers as per its standard build, and provide a copy of its standard build;
5. Contact and work with the British Columbia Safety Authority to ensure proper selection of surge protection to be employed when these power surges occur;

6. Provide a report on the typical withstand of hard-wired smoke detectors and whether or not these smoke detectors will survive and properly function after a power surge of this type ;
7. Provide a report on the effect of improving the grounding of its Multi-Grounded Neutral systems with respect to mitigation of the damage to its customers;
8. Comply with the British Columbia Safety Authority requirements as outlined in the Safety Standards Act, Division 4 - Incident Reports and Investigations;
9. Provide a report on complaints by customers regarding power surge incidents that were attributable to contact between transmission and underbuilt distribution lines over the past 10 years. The report should identify the date of each incident, the number of customers that suffered damages in each incident and provide any available information about the dollar amount of the damage. The report should also discuss whether particular sections of the FortisBC system appear to be particularly susceptible to this type of incident; and
10. Provide an estimate of the total kilometers of distribution underbuilt in the FortisBC system.

FortisBC is requested to reply to these directives and provide any additional comments by not later than Monday, May 17, 2010.

Yours truly,

*Original signed by:*

*for:* Erica M. Hamilton

CMS/yl

cc: Melody Farmer  
(Via email: [melodick.farmer@gmail.com](mailto:melodick.farmer@gmail.com))

Mr. Stephen Hinde  
BCSA, Electrical Safety Manager  
(Via email: [Stephen.Hinde@safetyauthority.ca](mailto:Stephen.Hinde@safetyauthority.ca))