



**ORDER NUMBER**  
**G-189-18**

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

and

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority  
Application Requesting Consent under section 63 of the *Utilities Commission Act* to  
Waive Certain Charges for Customers under Evacuation Orders and Evacuation Alerts

**BEFORE:**

D. M. Morton, Commissioner  
D. J. Enns, Commissioner  
W. M. Everett, QC, Commissioner  
B. A. Magnan, Commissioner  
R. I. Mason, Commissioner  
R. D. Revel, Commissioner

on October 4, 2018

**ORDER**

**WHEREAS:**

- A. On August 22, 2018, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro) applied to the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) pursuant to section 63 of the *Utilities Commission Act* (UCA) for consent to waive certain charges for residential, general, irrigation and street lighting service customers in BC Hydro's service territory subject to evacuation orders and alerts (Evacuee Customers) for the period July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018 (2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season) (Application);
- B. BC Hydro in its Application proposes the following:
  1. Providing a credit to customers for the basic charges, energy charges and street lighting rates as set out in the specific Rate Schedules under which customers receive service (Applicable Charges). The credit will be for the period customers were under an evacuation order resulting from 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season (Applicable Period) and will be applied as follows:
    - i. General Service – Basic Charge and Energy Charge;
    - ii. Residential Service – Basic Charge and Energy Charge;
    - iii. Irrigation – Energy Charge; and
    - iv. Street Lighting – all charges;
  2. Providing a credit to Evacuee Customers whose dwelling was destroyed by a wildfire during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season for all charges for service for the period immediately after the last billing period before the destruction;

3. Providing a credit for the Service Connection Charge as set out in Section 3.14 of BC Hydro's Electric Tariff for residential Evacuee Customers constructing a new dwelling if their prior dwelling was destroyed by wildfire during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season and if the connection charge is not recoverable as part of their insurance; and
  4. Waiving or not calculating the Late Payment Charge set out in section 6.3 of the BC Hydro Electric Tariff for a customer under an evacuation alert resulting from the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season until after the evacuation alert has been lifted. The waiver will not apply to a pre-established payment plan;
- C. BC Hydro further proposes that the revenue reduction resulting from providing bill credits and waivers to Evacuee Customers will be to the account of the shareholder; and
- D. The BCUC has reviewed the Application and considers that consent is warranted.

**NOW THEREFORE** pursuant to section 63 of the UCA and for the reasons outlined in Appendix A to this order, the BCUC orders as follows:

1. The BCUC hereby consents to BC Hydro providing bill credits and waivers for customers affected by the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season by:
  - a. Providing a credit for the Applicable Charges that would otherwise have applied during the Applicable Period to customers under evacuation orders;
  - b. Providing a credit to Evacuee Customers whose dwelling was destroyed by a wildfire during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season for all charges for service for the period immediately after the last billing period before the destruction;
  - c. Providing a credit for the Service Connection Charge as set out in Section 3.14 of BC Hydro's Electric Tariff for residential Evacuee Customers constructing a new dwelling if their prior dwelling was destroyed by wildfire during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season and if the connection charge is not recoverable as part of their insurance; and
  - d. Waiving the Late Payment Charge set out in section 6.3 of the BC Hydro Electric Tariff for a customer under an evacuation alert resulting from the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season until after the evacuation alert has been lifted. The waiver will not apply to a pre-established payment plan;
2. The revenue reduction resulting from BC Hydro providing bill credits and waivers to Evacuee Customers during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season will be for the account of the shareholder.
3. BC Hydro is directed to file an application pursuant to sections 59–62 of the UCA for approval for changes to the BC Hydro Electric Tariff.

**DATED** at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 4<sup>th</sup> day of October 2018.

BY ORDER

*Original signed by:*

D. M. Morton  
Commissioner

Attachment

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority  
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## REASONS FOR DECISION

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### 1.0 Background

Due to wildfires in BC during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season, numerous evacuation orders and evacuation alerts have been issued. Evacuation orders are issued because people and premises face immediate danger, requiring a swift evacuation. In 2017, during the course of wildfires, BCUC issued Order G-152-17 providing BC Hydro customers with a credit for charges incurred during the time the customers were under an evacuation order or evacuation alert.

On August 22, 2018, BC Hydro filed an application to the BCUC under section 63 of the UCA. In the application, BC Hydro seeks approval to waive certain charges to residential service, general service, irrigation, and street lighting service customers who were affected by evacuation orders or evacuation alerts due to the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season. The credit relief and waiver of certain charges would apply to the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season, and for only the time period in which an area of BC Hydro's service territory is subject to an active evacuation order and/or evacuation alert. The application stated that the costs from the evacuation relief bill credits provided to affected customers would be borne by shareholders.

### 2.0 BCUC Determination

#### *Credit for charges*

**The proposed temporary credit relief to residents and businesses that have been impacted by the 2018 evacuation orders and alerts is approved for the reasons discussed below.**

BC Hydro customers facing a mandatory evacuation order or alert during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season are unable to make regular use of any service from BC Hydro through no fault or action of their own; however, they remain bound by billing terms of BC Hydro's approved rate schedule. The BCUC finds that temporary credit relief is warranted for the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season to allow BC Hydro to relieve customers of these billing obligations while under mandatory evacuation orders or alerts and thus unable to make regular use of services as contemplated by BC Hydro's approved rate schedule. The BCUC directs BC Hydro that the revenue reduction resulting from BC Hydro providing bill credits and waivers for Evacuee Customers during the 2018 British Columbia Wildfire Season will be for the account of the shareholder.

#### *Application to Amend the Tariff*

**The BCUC directs BC Hydro to file an application to amend the Tariff in order to provide credit relief to evacuee customers beyond 2018. The hearing process to review the application will be established by the BCUC at a later date.**

The BCUC acknowledges that BC Hydro has not filed an application to amend the Tariff. However, we note that this is the second application by BC Hydro in as many years seeking the BCUC's consent to waive the application of its Electric Tariff Terms and Conditions to customers subject to evacuation orders and/or alerts due to wildfires in BC. The BCUC considers that an amendment to the Tariff may be in the best interest of both the utility and customers and ease the regulatory burden on providing relief to similarly affected customers beyond 2018. On this basis, we direct BC Hydro to file an application to amend the Tariff and satisfy the

BCUC that the proposed Tariff amendments are just, reasonable and not unduly discriminatory. The BCUC will establish a hearing to review the application to amend the Tariff at a later date.