ORDER **M12149**

NOVA SCOTIA ENERGY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT

\- and -

N THE MATTER OF an investigation pursuant to s.19 of the *Public Utilities Act* into certain matters arising from a **Joint Use Agreement** between **NOVA SCOTIA POWER INCORPORATED** and **BELL ALIANT**

BEFORE: Richard J. Melanson, LL.B., Member

ORDER

The Board decided to initiate this proceeding because of two individual complaints processed in 2024-2025. One complaint related, in part, to the way service connections and disconnections were handled under the Joint Use Agreement. The other complaint was about the different rebate schemes available to customers depending on whether NS Power or Bell owned the joint use utility poles. The Board found that a review of these issues had potential ramifications that go beyond the interest of individual complainants.

The Board determined that an investigation pursuant to s.19 of the *Public Utilities Act* should be made into the following two issues:

1) Whether the Joint Use Agreement is unreasonable, insufficient, or unjustly discriminatory because there are different rebate schemes depending on whether an area is serviced by joint-use poles owned by NS Power or Bell Aliant.

2) Whether the provision of electric service connections and the disconnection and removal of service connections are being delayed or impacted by the processes used under the Joint Use Agreement.

On May 8, 2025, NS Power filed a Letter of Intent with Bell dated March 25, 2025.

The Board issued its Decision on March 19, 2026. The Board agrees that if the Letter of Intent is formalized and applied in accordance with its terms, it should address the issues raised in this proceeding.

The Board directs NS Power as follows:

1. To provide a report within three months of the final agreement between Bell and NS Power being executed in 2026. The report should provide information on whether the new line extension and rebate processes are fully implemented, and any material changes between the terms of the Letter of Intent and the final agreement. The report should evaluate whether the quarterly ownership settlements and broader reconciliation processes maintain the agreed 60/40 ratio, whether any additional costs are being incurred that may be passed on to ratepayers, and that customer connection timelines are consistent across all areas. If, by June 30, 2026, there is no finalized agreement between NS Power and Bell, the Board will consider what further reporting may be required.

DATED at Halifax, Nova Scotia, this 19th day of March 2026.

Crystal Henwood

Clerk of the Board