September 18, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Ms. Crystal Henwood
Clerk of the Board
Nova Scotia Energy Board
1601 Lower Water Street, 3rd Floor
Halifax NS B3J 3S3

Dear Ms. Henwood:

Re: M12249 Application by EfficiencyOne for approval of the 2026 DSM Extension for Demand-Side Management Activities

The Small Business Advocate (SBA) has reviewed EfficiencyOne's ("EOne") application for approval of its 2026 DSM Extension for Demand-Management Activities (the "Application"), along with the responses to information requests (RIRs) and EOne's Reply Evidence. The SBA appreciates the opportunity to provide the following submissions.

The SBA is generally supportive of EOne's application to extend the DSM plan through 2026. This extension Application will help synchronize EOne's planning and operations with the NS Power ratemaking and resource planning processes, as well as with recent energy related legislation. In addition to this Application, EOne currently has an application before the Board requesting approval of a new benefit-cost test and analysis (M12282) and is expected to file an application sometime in 2026 for approval of its next 5-year plan for 2027-2031.

This Application, the SBA submits, is focused solely on the DSM Plan for 2026, specifically the extension of the previous DSM plan that was approved for 2023-2025. The Application is based on a legislation amendment to the *Public Utilities Act* that states not only that there should be an extension of the previous plan but also sets out the investment amount. As such, the scope of examination for this Application is, the SBA respectfully submits, not as wide as it would be in the normal course.

However, in the evidence that has been filed by other intervenors and experts, issues have been raised concerning certain aspects of the Application that were not expected to be raised, due to the legislative imperative that required the prescriptive framework of this Application. As such, the SBA respectfully submits that the following areas of concern should be held in abeyance in this

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Application and be brought forward in the next DSM plan application, for the 5-year period of 2027-2031.

1. In the EOne reply evidence starting on Page 7 of 17[1], EOne addressed Synapse's Evidence suggesting that the Demand Response programs for Residential and BNI (Business, Non-profits, and Industrial) are not cost effective based on the PAC test. The SBA respectfully submits that pursuing this reasoning presented by Synapse would have the effect of expanding the scope of this M12249 application while being inconsistent with the Board order to consider cost benefits of the EOne Plan at the Portfolio level. While the SBA has been in favor of Program or measure level testing, the fact remains that this issue is outside the scope of this matter and should be considered in the future filing of the EOne Five-year Plan.

2. Regarding the Demand Response programs for Residential and BNI, EOne's Reply Evidence includes, as Appendix A, Econoler's Reply Evidence[2], which replies to the Savings Verification Review (the "Peach Report"). Beginning on Page 17 of 28 of Appendix A, Econoler takes exception to what appears to be the Peach Report's concern with the benefits of the Residential and BNI Demand Response programs. The Peach Report introduces the concept of Practical Value to the Utility System and the Practical Value to Households (the latter of which is assumed to also include business entities). However, these concepts of value have not been discussed or tested, and it is unclear if Econoler, or EOne is accepting them as appropriate valuation of benefits. Notably, if those are the only 2 types of value being assessed, the SBA respectfully submits that there is no consideration of the value that participants either received or expected to receive when they chose to participate.

The SBA respectfully suggests and recommends that consideration of important program decisions, targets, funding, and cost-benefits analyses should be deferred to the future consideration of a EOne Five-Year Plan application.

ALL OF WHICH IS RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 18th day of September 2025.

Yours truly,

Melissa P. MacAdam
Small Business Advocate

[1] M12249, Exhibit E-17, EOne's Reply Evidence, pages 7-9 of 17, commencing at line 12.

[2] M12249, Exhibit E-17, EOne's Reply Evidence, Appendix A – Reply Evidence of Econoler.