General Complaint - NS Power and municipal electric utilities

Reference Number: 250902002

Submitted on: Tuesday, September 02 2025 at 07:13:57 PM (ADT)

Contact Information

Name on account:	Blarney Stone Restaurant	
Account number:	**********	
Business contact:	Sean MacLeod	
Account address:	Address 1:	**********
	Address 2:	**********
	City:	**********
	Province:	**********
	Postal code:	**********
	Country:	**********
Email Address:	**********	
Mailing address:	Address 1:	**********
	Address 2:	**********
	City:	**********
	Province:	**********
	Postal code:	**********
	Country:	**********
Telephone number:	**********	
Alternate phone number:	**********	

Complaint Information

Type of complaint: Metering Issues

Additional details:

Formal Complaint Against Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSP) Filed with the Nova Scotia Energy Board (NSEB) Introduction We are a commercial customer of Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSP) and are billed under the Commercial General Demand: Rate 11. Our account is supplied by single-phase service measured by a meter that records both total kilowatt hours (kWh) consumed and the maximum 15-minute demand in kilowatts (kW). Rate 11 contains two billing components: Demand Charge: $10.554 per kW of maximum demand, per month. Energy Charge: 15.623 ¢ per kWh for the first 200 kWh per month per kW of maximum demand, and 12.326 ¢ per kWh for all additional kWh. This structure differs significantly from residential metering, which is based solely on cumulative kWh consumption. Regulatory and Fairness Considerations For demand-based billing to be fair, the following conditions must be met: Demand must be measured at consistent and predictable intervals. The demand register on the meter must be reset at the conclusion of each billing cycle to ensure that subsequent billing periods capture only their respective peak demand.

Failure to reset the meter disadvantages customers—particularly commercial entities, such as restaurants, whose demand varies seasonally due to refrigeration, air conditioning, and heating loads. Chronology of Events April 24 to June 3, 2025: NSP was unable to remotely read our Smart Meter. NSP issued an estimated bill during this period, assigning a peak demand of 16.3 kW. Based on historical usage, this estimate was reasonable. June 28, 2025: NSP manually read the meter. The reading indicated a demand of 20.0 kW. NSP subsequently credited the prior estimated bill and rebilled the account using the actual kWh recorded and the 20.0 kW demand value. Because demand is calculated over a single 15-minute interval, the rebilled demand figure unfairly inflated charges. Seasonal increases in June demand—caused by refrigeration and air conditioning—were captured in one extended billing period. Had the demand register been reset as required, this inflated demand would not have distorted the earlier estimated billing period. Admission by NSP Through discussions with NSP, the following admissions were made: Certain demand meters in use cannot be manually reset when read in the field.

	NSP acknowledged this limitation in our case and replaced our meter with one that permits manual resetting of the demand register. This raises significant regulatory concerns. Customers lacking specialized knowledge of demand billing may have been overcharged without recourse. The reliance on estimated billing, coupled with NSP's inability to reset demand meters manually, results in systemic unfairness to customers with variable demand profiles. Regulatory Failures This situation illustrates multiple failures by NSP: The use of estimated demand charges without proper safeguards against seasonal distortions. The deployment of Smart Meters incapable of being properly reset during manual reads. The absence of an adequate contingency plan when Smart Meter data could not be retrieved remotely, despite approval of Smart Meters by the NSUARB in June 2018.
Did they contact the utility?	Yes
How did the utility respond?	
How do they want the complaint resolved?	We respectfully request that the NSEB require NSP to: Conduct a comprehensive review of all accounts billed under demand-based rates during periods of estimated billing, to ensure fairness and to issue credits where overbilling is identified. Provide a full inventory of Smart Meters currently in service that cannot be manually reset for demand billing purposes. Establish and disclose a firm completion date for replacement of such meters with models that are capable of proper manual reading and resetting. Submit a contingency and compliance plan addressing how NSP will ensure accurate demand billing in the event of future failures of Smart Meter remote reading systems. NSP's billing practices during this period were unfair, inconsistent with the principles of accurate demand measurement, and detrimental to demand customers. Regulatory intervention is necessary to protect affected ratepayers, ensure fair billing practices, and compel NSP to establish adequate safeguards against recurrence.
Supporting documents uploaded:	• Email - 2025-08-25 947 AM - To Chris Lanteigne.pdf • Email - 2025-08-06 305 PM - To Adam.pdf