

April 30, 2026

[REDACTED]

Tye Laframboise

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Laframboise:

**M12536 – Nova Scotia Power Inc. – Complaint by Tye Laframboise – Overhead Wires Approval**

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On October 30, 2025, you filed a complaint with the Nova Scotia Energy Board (Board) regarding Nova Scotia Power's (NS Power) decision to deny your request to convert your underground service to overhead service.

The Board undertook the following steps in its review of this matter:

- Your initial complaint dated October 30, 2025;
- Your initial response to the Board, dated November 3, 2025;
- NS Power's reply to the inquiry, dated November 13, 2025;
- Your response to NS Power's reply, received on November 24, 2025;
- NS Power's response to Board staff IRs, received February 20, 2026; and
- Review of the *Public Utilities Act*.

In response to Board staff's questions, you explained that you engaged with a contractor to upgrade the electrical panel from 100 amps to 200 amps, to accommodate the conversion of an oil heating system to a heat pump system. However, the upgrade will also require an upgrade of your service wire. You proposed converting your current underground service to an overhead service to avoid damage to your property and your neighbour's property which would result from excavation activity associated with installation of an underground service replacement. However, NS Power refused your proposal.

In its initial response, NS Power noted that the properties on your street are row houses currently serviced by an underground residential distribution (URD) system, and that your unit shares two exterior walls with neighbouring units. NS Power further explained that the installation of mixed service on row houses does not comply with its internal standard or applicable national standards, and stated the following:

... electrical service must be provided either entirely overhead or entirely underground (see Attachment 1). A combination of both methods is not permitted. This requirement

ensures installations are safe and compliant with the *Canadian Electrical Code* and the *Canadian Standard Association Standards*.

[Exhibit L-2, p. 2]

NS Power further explained that mixed services among units of the same row houses could pose a safety risk to customers, emergency responders, and contractors, due to the possibility of misidentifying the location of service entry points and disconnections. In addition, there is no suitable location on your unit to accommodate the weatherhead required for overhead service.

In the November 24, 2025, response, you expressed concern about the high financial burden of underground service upgrades. In addition, you raised a few questions:

1. A consideration of whether the cost allocation for upgrading underground wiring is equitable and fair
2. A review of whether overhead services could be installed in the neighbourhood of Bareng Court, and clarification on whether homeowners could collectively decide to switch their electrical services
3. Clarification on whether a site-specific engineering evaluation was completed, or whether one can be arranged.
4. Guidance on the most practical, reasonable and financially conscious options available for upgrading to 200A service, whether overhead or underground

[Applicant's Letter, November 24, 2025, p. 7]

In response to Board Information Requests (IRs), NS Power explained the company conducted a preliminary investigation into your property jointly by NS Power's Chief Electrical Inspector and the Regional Engineering Manager via virtual meeting and online resources. NS Power reaffirmed that the proposed conversion does not comply with their internal standards or the applicable national standards. Under the *Canadian Electrical Code (CEC)* Rule 6-112(4), service conductors must maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of one metre from any window.

In response to IR-2, NS Power explained that based on Section 2.11 of the NS Power *Regulations* and Sections 13.4(7) and (10) of the *Utility Service Requirements* the underground service upgrade is a sharing expense between NS Power and customers:

- (a) ... All upgrades to the customer-owned electrical system, from the URD box to the service entrance, are the responsibility of the homeowner. These upgrades depend on the customer's chosen design, installation method, construction timeline, and selected contractor.
- ...
- (b) ... NS Power's responsibility includes infrastructure up to the URD box. Any required utility-side upgrade associated with supporting a 200-amp service would be expected to fall under the free service allowance.

[Exhibit L-3, IR-2, p. 1]



The relevant paragraph in NS Power's *Regulations*, Section 2.11, sets out the requirements related to secondary services and states:

Secondary Services - The Company is not required to install underground secondary voltage services; however, in the event the Company installs an underground distribution system, consideration will be given towards the supply and installation of such electric services by the Company, at the customer's expense. The customer will be responsible for ownership, maintenance and replacement when necessary, except that in special circumstances such as may be encountered in a total underground urban system, it may be practical for the Company to own and maintain the total system including the secondary services. In the case of an individual underground residential service from a normal overhead system; the Company will allow the customer credit for the equivalent cost of an overhead service it would otherwise provide.

The relevant paragraph in NS Power's *Utility Services Requirements*, Section 13.4 addresses customer responsibilities. Specifically, Sections 13.4(7) and (10) state:

Customer is responsible for all the following at their cost:

...

- 7) The developer and/or Customer shall be responsible for all aspects of the supply and installation of the individual services from the URD box to the residence. The connection of the services in the URD box shall be made by NSPI.

...

- 10) The homeowner shall own and maintain their own service from the URD box to the residence.

The Board recognizes your concern about the high costs associated with replacing your existing underground electrical service with an upgraded underground electrical service and appreciates your objective to convert to efficient heat pumps. However, NS Power has explained that replacing your underground service with an overhead connection would not comply with the electrical code and would pose a significant safety hazard. Ensuring that electrical installations adhere to safety requirements must be given priority.

After reviewing the circumstances in this matter, the Board finds that NS Power's refusal to convert your underground service to an overhead connection was done to avoid a potential hazardous safety concern.

Regarding cost responsibility, the Board notes that Section 57 of the *Public Utilities Act* states: "The public utility shall be responsible for all electric lines, fittings and apparatus belonging to it or under its control upon the customer's premises". However, that section is silent regarding responsibility for costs. NS Power's *Regulation 2.11* states that the Company is not required to install underground secondary voltage services, but if it does, it will be at the customer's expense. It also states that the customer will be responsible for ownership, maintenance and replacement of underground service installations. Sections 13.4(7) and (10) of NS Power's *Utility Services Requirements* outline customer's responsibilities from the URD box to the residence, including all aspects of the supply and installation. In this case,



the Board finds that costs associated with upgrading the underground electrical service are the customer's responsibility and therefore dismisses your complaint.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer L. Nicholson', with a large loop at the start and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer L. Nicholson, CPA, CA  
Member

c. Kathleen Murray, Regulatory Counsel, NS Power

