

March 5, 2026

[REDACTED]

Beverley Burlock

[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Burlock:

**M12563 - Nova Scotia Power Inc. - Appeal by Beverley Burlock of a Decision of the
Dispute Resolution Officer**

I have reviewed your appeal of a decision by the Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO) dated October 23, 2025.

My review included the following documentation:

- The DRO's file and decision, dated October 20, 2025;
- Your appeal of the DRO decision, dated October 23, 2025;
- The meter test results, received on November 18, 2025;
- Your additional information, received on November 20, 2025;
- NS Power's response to your appeal, dated December 3, 2025;
- NS Power's response to the Board's request for comment on the filling delivery inquiry, dated February 19, 2026; and
- NS Power's response to the Board staff's information request (IRs), dated February 23, 2026.

APPEAL OF THE DRO DECISION

In his decision, the DRO stated:

In the context of Board approved Regulations 5.1, 5.5, and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act Regulations, N.S Power has appropriately billed the Customer for on-premise consumption at [REDACTED]

[Exhibit B-4, p. 3]

You appealed the DRO's decision, dated October 20, 2025, as you feel that your August 2025 bill was higher than it should be, but you have a greater concern with your February 2025 bill. For that bill, you noted you were charged for usage well above what you have ever used in the past for the same period, and that you did not change your lifestyle or heating system.

In your additional information, you included billing amounts charged for several bills covering April to June, and June to August, for 2024 and 2025, and December to February for 2023, 2024, and 2025. In that filing, you also noted:

NEVER have I had such an astronomically high usage or billing as this winter. Which, as I said, meant my accumulated credit for the following months has been greatly affected.

I should have made a complaint then, but regretfully, I didn't.

...

I STRONGLY OBJECT to these two bills, especially the latest.

[Exhibit B-3, p.3]

The DRO is an independent third party; his role is to address and ideally resolve disputes with NS Power that cannot be resolved through normal customer channels. He is not an employee of NS Power or the Board. Decisions of the DRO are binding on NS Power but not on the customer. Customers may appeal DRO decisions to the Board within 12 days of receipt of the DRO's final written decision.

BACKGROUND

You received your August 2025 bill, which showed higher usage than expected compared to the same period in previous years. Based on this, you contacted NS Power to dispute the bill. NS Power offered to test the meter, and when a representative of NS Power came to take the meter, he looked over your paper bills with you. It was during this review that you noticed the bigger issue, the December 2024 to February 2025 bill, in which your daily kWhs consumed were much higher than previous years (86.0/day vs 66.9/day in 2023 and 68.4 in 2024). NS Power did not agree with you and indicated that the amount you were billed for was correct for both the February 2025 bill and the August 2025 bill. In your appeal to the Board, you also noted that the August 2025 bill covered four months, but you were already charged for the previous two months (April to June).

The following table summarizes some of the key events in the evidence before the Board:

Date	Event
Sep 4, 2025	You contacted the DRO to formally dispute the two bills. The DRO responded to you on the same day, outlining his role and asked NS Power to provide its position on the matter.
Oct 8, 2025	You emailed NS Power and the DRO advising that your meter had been changed on October 3 and a new one was installed. In this correspondence, you noted that the past winter was not as cold as the previous one and voiced your concerns about the February 2025 bill.
Oct 20, 2025	DRO requested NS Power confirm when the meter test results could be expected. On the same day, NS Power provided the meter test results to the DRO.
Oct 20, 2025	The DRO issued his final written decision and advised you that you may request an independent meter test by Measurement Canada, and that you could appeal his decision to the Board.
Oct 23, 2025	You appealed the DRO's Decision to the Board.

Below is the summary of your usage, based on actual meter reads from the copies of the bills NS Power provided on February 23, 2026.



Bill date	Reading	Usage	Daily usage	Note
Feb 20, 2024	45786.22	4309	68.4	
Apr 18, 2024	49220.35	3452	56.6	
Jun 19, 2024	50469.60	1249	20.1	
Aug 21, 2024	51115.94	646	10.3	1895 (1249+646) Apr to Aug (125 days, 15.2/day)*
Oct 22, 2024	51781.26	665	11.1	
Dec 18, 2024	54388.13	2607	44.2	
Feb 19, 2025	59807.77	5420	86.0	
Apr 17, 2025	63371.65	3564	62.5	
Aug 20, 2025	65619.00	2274	18.8*	2274 from Apr to Aug (121 days, 18.8/day)*
Oct 22, 2025	66097.00	478	9.6	

*calculated by Board staff based on the usage and days between actual meter reads

Your meter was tested on October 20, 2025, with the results provided to you and the DRO on October 20th. The meter test indicated that your meter was operating within approved accuracy limits. Given this result, NS Power and the DRO determined that the usage from April 17, 2025, to August 20, 2025, is what you should be billed for over the full four months, and the total amount owing took into account this usage and any payments made during those four months, in which your bills were based on the estimated meter reading. They also determined that since the meter was accurate, you were also billed the correct amount in February 2025.

Your usage and the cyber incident

Regarding your concern that the recorded usage might be an error, NS Power argued that actual meter readings and an accurate meter determined that not to be the case. Regarding the cybersecurity incident, NS Power had explained in previous matters before the Board that the incident only affected NS Power's capability to communicate with the meters to obtain the meter reads, not the meters' accuracy. When your meter was read, any over-or under-billing due to estimated readings would be reconciled. Since the meter test results showed that the meter was operating within expected accuracy limits, the amount of electricity consumed over the four months, and previous usage was correctly billed.

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

As noted above, there was some confusion in your August 2025 bill, not just in the usage, but that you were being charged for four months, as opposed to two. From the summary table above, your actual usage from April 17, 2025, to August 20, 2025, was 2274 kWh. This usage multiplied by the Board-approved rate, plus four months of base charges, is what NS Power must charge you over the full four months between actual meter reads. Since there was one billing period covering two months of estimated usage, the total amount you paid over that billing period was credited to your account.

When looking at the base charges, the total figure of \$202.79 that NS Power credited towards the August 2025 bill included two months of base charges and the estimated usage amounts. For the June 2025 bill, you were charged \$38.34 in base charges and \$164.45 for usage (\$202.79). For your August bill, you were effectively charged for just two more months of base charges and actual usage, after adjusting for the amounts noted above that were credited to your account.



In other matters previously with the Board, NS Power addressed the issue of its billing system not being able to break out the usage and base charges being credited as separate line items but is looking at doing so in future system updates. This system limitation, regarding not breaking out base charges separately from usage, likely contributed to confusion about the charges on the August bill.

Another issue with NS Power's bills is the way the kWh per day charge is shown for estimated readings. If a bill was underestimated, the next bill will include what you used, plus the shortfall of what you used and not charged for, but it makes it look like all that usage was for those two months only. The kWh per day numbers on bills that are for estimated bills or follow an estimated bill will not be an accurate reflection of the energy used in those periods, but rather will show what you were billed for, and should not be used for comparison purposes with bills for the same billing periods in other years.

After the switch to smart meters, NS Power no longer required meter readers, so when the cybersecurity incident happened, and its systems could not communicate with meters, NS Power did not have the manpower to be able to go out and read its tens of thousands of customers' meters in the short term. As such, the utility estimated power usage for several billing periods until it could find enough people to go out and obtain actual meter readings.

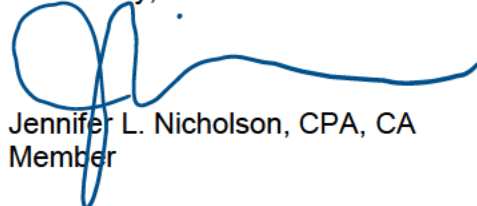
In his decision, dated October 20, 2025, the DRO explained that "a customer's usage is a function of lifestyle, heating systems, appliances and other equipment used, as well as a range of other factors beyond NS Power's control (for example, outside temperatures, including extreme temperatures and fluctuating temperatures, faulty wiring, ground faults, or theft of power)". The Board agrees with the DRO and notes that how you consume electricity on your end of the meter is not the responsibility of NS Power; as such, it comes down to meter accuracy to determine if you were billed correctly. Neither NS Power nor the DRO have any way to determine what caused the larger usage shown on your February 2025 bill.

DECISION

Pursuant to the *Public Utilities Act*, the Board is responsible for the general supervision of all public electric utilities operating in Nova Scotia, including NS Power. Among other things, the Board's jurisdiction includes approving *Regulations* that determine how NS Power is allowed to provide electric service to customers, and the rules they (and customers) must follow. In reviewing matters such as your appeal, the Board's role is to determine whether NS Power has properly applied the Board's approved *Regulations* in dealing with its customers.

Based on the reasons discussed above, the Board finds that NS Power followed the Board-approved *Regulations* and has appropriately billed you for electrical consumption at your property and properly applied any payments and credits based on the estimated reading. Your appeal is therefore dismissed.

Yours truly,



Jennifer L. Nicholson, CPA, CA
Member

c. Kathleen Murray, Regulatory Counsel, NS Power

