



December 29, 2025

REDACTED

Lisa Wallace
Chief Clerk of the Board
Nova Scotia Energy Board
1601 Lower Water Street, 3rd Floor
Halifax, NS B3J 3S3

Re: M12616 – DRO Appeal – Swati Patel

Dear Ms. Wallace:

In the Nova Scotia Energy Board's (Board, NSEB) letter dated December 11, 2025, the Board directed as follows:

By copy of this letter, the Board directs Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NS Power, the Company) to file a response with the Board to the enclosed appeal on or before **2:00 PM on Monday, December 29, 2025**. NS Power must also provide a copy of their response to the appellant, Ms. Swati Patel.

Ms. Patel is appealing a decision by the Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO) dated December 8, 2025. The complete DRO file as provided by the DRO pertaining to this decision is included as **Confidential Attachment 1**. Attached as **Confidential Attachment 2** are the relevant customer account and communication notes from NS Power's CIS database.

Please accept the following summary of activities and communications pertaining to the December 8, 2025, DRO decision being appealed by Ms. Patel:

- July 23, 2025 – NS Power spoke with Ms. Patel regarding her billing concerns. NS Power explained that her previous bill was estimated and later adjusted following an actual meter read. The adjustment accounted for 122 days of usage and included the return of her security deposit. The customer expressed concern that the bill remained high for a four-month period. NS Power noted that MyEnergy Insights were not yet available for this bill to provide a detailed breakdown. This is referenced on page 1 of 1 in **Confidential Attachment 2**.

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- November 20, 2025 – Ms. Patel contacted the DRO to formally dispute her bills for the period of March 2025 to November 2025 and requested a review of her account. She expressed concerns about higher-than-expected charges following the cyber incident and questioned the accuracy of estimated billing. Ms. Patel asked for recalculation based on actual consumption and confirmation that a formal dispute file had been opened. This is referenced on pages 3 to 4 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- November 20, 2025 – The DRO responded to Ms. Patel’s email, clarifying his role and advising that customers must first exhaust NS Power’s normal Customer Relations channels before filing a formal dispute. He provided instructions for contacting NS Power and outlined the process for escalation if the matter could not be resolved. This is referenced on pages 1 to 2 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- November 2025 – Ms. Patel informed the DRO that she had been unable to reach NS Power and requested to proceed with filing a formal dispute. She provided consent for the release of her account information to support the DRO’s investigation. This is referenced on page 1 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- November 27, 2025 – The DRO responded to the customer and NS Power. He summarized his role and asked NS Power to provide its position in the matter as well as relevant account documentation. This is referenced on pages 6 to 7 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- November 28, 2025 – NS Power provided its position to DRO, stating the following:

[...] While meters continue to accurately record energy usage, we are not currently able to retrieve this information remotely and apply it to the bill. As a result, we are continuing to provide billing in two ways: estimated bills and physical meter reads. Our customers will never pay for power they do not use. Any differences between estimated and actual usage will be addressed and accurately reflected in a future bill. This customer’s meter was last read on July 14th and subsequent bills have been based on estimated reads.

NS Power recommends paying the estimated amount, or the amount from the same billing period last year, to help manage account balances. It’s important to remember that an estimate is just that —an estimate — and it will be reconciled on the bill

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when the meter is read by a meter reader. During this time, we are not charging interest or late fees on outstanding balances.

If the customer would like to provide a picture of their meter read showing the read of the d1 screen, NS Power will use this information to adjust the bill based on the actual usage. The bill could be higher or lower based on the reading that is provided.

It is NS Power's position when we are able to retrieve the current read from the meter, the bill will be adjusted to reflect the actual usage.

NS Power attached the account ledger and meter reads for the subject account [REDACTED]. This is referenced on pages 8 to 11 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.

- November 29, 2025 – The DRO emailed Ms. Patel requesting that she submit a photo of the current reading on her meter to NS Power using the Company's online submission link. This is referenced on page 12 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- December 1, 2025 – Ms. Patel advised that she had submitted the photo. This is referenced on page 13 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- December 8, 2025 – NS Power confirmed receipt of the meter read provided by the customer for meter #2445360, showing a reading of 77,647. The Company advised that a reconciled bill based on actual usage was attached. This is referenced on pages 14 to 16 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- December 8, 2025 – The DRO emailed Ms. Patel indicating that the matter appeared to be resolved and asked her to confirm agreement. He advised that if she did not agree, a Final Written Decision would be issued, which could be appealed to the NSEB. This is referenced on page 14 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- December 8, 2025 – Ms. Patel advised the DRO that she did not agree the matter was resolved and requested issuance of a Final Written Decision. She noted concerns regarding the reconciliation applied to her account, including the size of the adjustment and the reliance on estimated usage prior to the actual meter read. Ms. Patel referenced the difference between the reconciled bill and her subsequent bill based on actual usage and asked that the dispute remain open for formal determination. This is referenced on pages 17 to 18 of 25 in the DRO

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file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.

- December 8, 2025 – The DRO issued his Final Written Decision pertaining to this appeal, finding as follows:

In the context of Board approved Regulation 5.1, N.S. Power has appropriately billed the Customer for service to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This is referenced on pages 21 to 23 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.

- December 8, 2025 – Ms. Patel advised the DRO that she still had concerns regarding the accuracy of the reconciliation and the transparency of the calculations applied to her account. Ms. Patel requested guidance on available options and indicated that she may appeal to the NSEB but wished to confirm whether any additional steps or alternative channels were available before proceeding. This is referenced on page 24 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- December 9, 2025 – The DRO advised Ms. Patel that once a decision is issued, the DRO withdraws from the matter. He explained that the customer's options then become: (1) appeal the decision to the NSEB or (2) work with NS Power to implement the decision. The DRO provided contact information for the NSEB and confirmed that if the decision was not acceptable, Ms. Patel should appeal to the Board. This is referenced on page 25 of 25 in the DRO file attached as **Confidential Attachment 1**.
- December 9, 2025 – Ms. Patel appealed the DRO's decision with the NSEB.

NS Power agrees with the DRO's decision that NS Power has appropriately billed Ms. Patel.

Following the cyber incident, NS Power was temporarily unable to access meter data, as the meters were unable to transmit information remotely via the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) network. As a result, most bills issued prior to July 2025 were based on estimated consumption. To ensure billing reflected actual energy usage, NS Power began manual meter reading in late June. As actual readings were obtained, any discrepancies between estimated and actual consumption were reconciled through adjustments on subsequent bills, in accordance with Section 5.1 of the Regulations.

Ms. Patel's bill dated May 16, 2025, was based on an estimated usage of 1,765 kWh for the 63-day period from March 14 to May 16. This estimate was generated using historical consumption data for the property and seasonal factors. The total energy

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charges on this bill were \$327.60, with a base charge of \$38.34, bringing total charges before tax adjustments to \$365.94. Copies of Ms. Patel's bills from 2025 have been attached as **Confidential Attachment 3** for reference.

An actual meter read was obtained from Ms. Patel's meter on July 14, 2025, showing a reading of 71,030. This was the first actual read following the period of estimated billing; the previous actual read was 64,708 on March 14, 2025. Based on these readings, NS Power calculated a consumption of 6,322 kWh between March 14 and July 14, a period of 122 days. This replaced the previously estimated usage and formed the basis of the July 2025 bill. As part of the reconciliation process, NS Power credited \$365.94 for the estimated energy charges previously billed in May and applied the correct charges for the full-service period. The July bill also included a deposit refund and interest credit¹, reducing the total amount due to \$753.41.

Her subsequent bill dated September 17, 2025, was based on an estimated usage of 2,548 kWh for the 65-day period from July 14 to September 17. The energy charges on this bill were \$472.93, with a base charge of \$38.34, bringing total charges before tax adjustments to \$511.27.

The next bill, dated November 18, 2025, was also based on an estimated usage of 6,346 kWh for the 127-day period from July 14 to November 18. This estimate reflected cumulative usage since the last actual read and resulted in energy charges of \$1,177.88, with a base charge of \$76.68, bringing total charges before tax adjustments to \$743.29 after credits for prior estimated amounts. As part of this billing, NS Power refunded the entire amount of the September 17 estimated bill, ensuring that Ms. Patel was not charged twice for the same period and that her account reflected only the most recent estimate until an actual read could be obtained.

On December 1, 2025, Ms. Patel submitted a photo of her meter showing a reading of 77,647. This confirmed her actual usage to be 6,617 kWh² for the entire period from July 14 to December 1, 2025. Prior to this, Ms. Patel had already been billed for an estimated 6,346 kWh on her November 18 bill. Because her actual usage was higher than the estimate, there was no credit applied. Instead, the difference of 271 kWh³ had to be billed. At the current energy rate, 271 kWh equals \$50.30 in energy charges, which was reflected on the December 1 reconciled bill. This means Ms. Patel was charged only for the additional electricity she actually used beyond the previous estimate, ensuring her account accurately reflects her total consumption. NS Power's CIS records and billing documentation confirm that the estimated charges were replaced with actual usage data.

¹ As Ms. Patel was a new customer, she selected the security deposit option, which requires a deposit equal to three months of service. Ms. Patel reached two years of satisfactory payment history, triggering the return of her deposit with interest.

² Calculation: 77,647 (December 1 actual read) – 71,030 (July 14 actual read) = 6,617 kWh

³ Calculation: 6,617 kWh actual – 6,346 kWh estimated = 271 kWh

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NS Power sincerely apologizes for any confusion that estimated billing has caused. The Company recognizes that this situation has been challenging for customers and appreciates their patience as accounts are reconciled based on actual usage. To support customers during this time, NS Power is not applying late fees or penalties on any outstanding balances. Customers will be notified in advance before any late fees on unpaid amounts are reintroduced.

Please consider the enclosed information confidential due to the personal nature of the information that has been provided. NS Power has forwarded a copy of this correspondence to Ms. Patel by e-mail.

Yours truly,



Kathleen Murray
Regulatory Counsel

Encl.

c. Ms. Swati Patel

REDACTED (CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REMOVED)

Patel DRO Appeal Attachment 1 has been removed due to confidentiality.

REDACTED (CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REMOVED)

Patel DRO Appeal Attachment 2 has been removed due to confidentiality.

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Patel DRO Appeal Attachment 3 has been removed due to confidentiality.