

May 12, 2026

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Appellant:

M12616 - Nova Scotia Power Inc. - Appeal by Swati K Patel of a Decision of the Dispute Resolution Officer

I have reviewed your appeal of a decision by the Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO) dated December 8, 2025.

My review included the following documentation:

- The DRO's file and decision, dated December 8, 2025;
- Your appeal of the DRO decision, dated December 10, 2025;
- NS Power's response to your appeal, dated December 29, 2025;
- Your response to NS Power's response, dated January 2, 2026; and
- NS Power's responses to the Board's information requests (IRs), dated March 16 and April 20, 2026.

SUMMARY

I understand you are seeking an explanation for NS Power's method of usage estimation in your bills and its reconciliation of the charges after you provided a meter reading.

You believe that NS Power did not follow *Regulations* 5.1 and 6.4 in a transparent manner, and its system failure after the 2025 cyber incident resulted in a financial burden on your part.

You request NS Power's transparent reconciliation of the charges so that your bills are based on accurate usage.

APPEAL OF THE DRO DECISION

You appealed the DRO decision dated December 8, 2025, on the following grounds:

- 1) Your bills included estimated usage caused by the cyber incident with no clear explanations of how charges were calculated; and

- 2) The DRO did not address the usage history inconsistency and NS Power's calculation of the charges in your bills.

The DRO for NS Power 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 final written DRO decision.

In his decision, the DRO stated:

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

[Exhibit P-2, p. 3]

BACKGROUND & FINDINGS

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

Date	Event
January 6, 2023	You started account [REDACTED] Halifax, with \$126 security deposit.
July 16, 2024	NS Power started your connection at [REDACTED]
May 16, 2025	NS Power issued an estimated bill for the period between March 14 and May 16, 2025.
July 18, 2025	NS Power issued a reconciled bill for the period between March 14 and July 14, 2025.
July 23, 2025	You called NS Power with billing concerns. NS Power explained that your previous bill was estimated then adjusted, including the security deposit return.
September 17, 2025	NS Power issued an estimated bill for the period between July 14 and September 17, 2025.
November 18, 2025	NS Power issued an estimated reconciled bill for the period between July 14 and November 18, 2025.
November 20, 2025	You appealed to the DRO for the bills for the period between March and November 2025.
November 28, 2025	NS Power responded to the DRO regarding your appeal.
November 29, 2025	The DRO requested that you submit a photo of your meter reading.
December 1, 2025	You submitted the photo which showed a reading of 77,647.
December 5, 2025	NS Power issued a bill for the period between November 18 and December 1, 2025 based on your meter reading.
December 8, 2025	You informed the DRO that you did not agree that the matter was resolved. The DRO issued his Decision.
December 9, 2025	You appealed the DRO's Decision to the Board.
December 10, 2025	NS Power sent you an email notification that the December 5 bill was reconciled using the meter photo you sent.



NS Power's *Regulations* state:

5.1 METER READING

When reasonably possible, meters shall be read bi-monthly; however, the Company may read meters on a monthly basis.

POST CARD METER READING

In the event that the Company is unable to obtain meter readings, for billing purposes, during the Company's normal business hours, having exercised due diligence in the usual practice of meter reading, it may leave a prepaid postage card on the premises which will indicate the normal reading date, and upon which the Customer shall without delay record the reading of the meter, thereafter immediately returning the card to the Company.

ESTIMATED METER READING

If the Company is unable to obtain a meter reading due to circumstances beyond its control, or due to the failure of the Customer to return a post card reading, then the amount of power and energy used by the Customer shall be estimated by the Company using the best available data. In the event that estimated meter readings are required five (5) consecutive times, then the Customer shall make suitable arrangements to ensure that the meters are read by the Company during the Company's normal business hours. Should the Customer fail to make such suitable arrangements, the Company may disconnect the supply of electric service to the Customer or may require that the Customer relocate the meter in accordance with the Regulation 4.1. In the event that actual meter readings are obtained subsequent to estimated readings, the Company shall make the necessary adjustments.

...

6.4 DISPUTED BILLING FOR ELECTRIC SERVICE

(1) Where a customer advises the Company that all or a portion of his bill or any matter relating to the provision of electric service is in dispute, the Company shall:

- (a) record the date, time and place where the complaint is made;
- (b) promptly investigate the matter in dispute;
- (c) upon completion of the investigation, advise the customer of the results thereof; and
- (d) attempt to resolve the matter in an informal manner.

(2) In the event that a customer disputes a portion of a billing, then the customer shall pay or make satisfactory arrangements to pay the amount of arrears which is not in dispute, to the Company, within five days of the date upon which the customer advises the Company of the dispute or the due date, whichever is later. Failure of the customer to pay or make satisfactory arrangements to pay to the Company the amount of arrears which is not in dispute, as set out above, shall constitute a waiver of the customer's rights to dispute the matter, and the Company may then proceed to disconnect the electric service provided in accordance with these regulations. Should the customer and the Company be unable to accurately determine the amount which is not in dispute then the entire amount of the bill, or bills, at issue shall be deemed to be in dispute.

(3) If the Company and the customer are unable to resolve a dispute in a mutually satisfactory manner, the customer may contact the Company's Dispute Resolution Officer or his designate. The Dispute Resolution Officer shall be appointed by the Company and have no direct line responsibility for billing, credit, collection or electrical supply to the customer.



(4) The Dispute Resolution Officer shall consider both sides and after review, render his decision promptly. The customer has 12 days from notification of the decision to appeal, in writing, to the Board. No disconnection in relation to a disputed bill shall be made until twelve days after the decision of the Dispute Resolution Officer is given and the customer is notified thereof.

...

Below is the summary of the charges, based on the copies of your bills for [REDACTED] NS Power provided.

Bill date	Reading	Usage	Daily usage	Amount due	Billing period
September 18, 2024	53,743 (read Sep 16)	893	14.4	\$218.91	Jul 16 – Sep 16, 2024 (62 days)
November 19, 2024	55,679 (read Nov 15)	1936	32.3	\$400.12	Sep 16 – Nov 15, 2024 (60 days)
January 21, 2025	60,240 (read Jan 17)	4561	72.4	\$893.12	Nov 15, 2024 – Jan 17, 2025 (63 days)
March 18, 2025	64,708 (read Mar 14)	4468	79.8	\$898.89	Jan 17 – Mar 14, 2025 (56 days)
May 16, 2025	66,473 (estimated)	1765	28.0	\$384.24	Mar 14 – May 16, 2025 (63 days)
July 18, 2025	71,030 (read Jul 14)	6322 - 1765 = 4557	37.4	\$895.44 - \$142.03* = \$753.41	Mar 14 – Jul 14, 2025 (122 days)
September 17, 2025	73,578 (estimated)	2548	39.2	\$536.84	Jul 14 – Sep 17, 2025 (65 days)
November 18, 2025	77,376 (estimated)	6346 - 2548 = 3798	29.9	\$780.45	Jul 14 – Nov 18, 2025 (127 days)
December 5, 2025	77,647 (read Dec 1)	271	20.8	\$61.55	Nov 18 – Dec 1, 2025 (13 days)

On November 28, 2025, NS Power explained to the DRO that, during the periods following the cyber incident when it cannot retrieve their meter readings remotely, NS Power recommends customers manage their account balance by paying either the estimated amount in their bills or the amount from the same period last year, and that the estimate will be reconciled on the bill that follows an actual meter reading with no interest nor late fees on outstanding balances. NS Power also stated that if a customer provides a picture of their meter reading, it will adjust the bill accordingly.

On December 8, 2025, you told the DRO that you did not agree the matter was resolved following the reconciled bill NS Power issued using the meter reading picture you provided. You voiced your concerns regarding the estimates after the cyber incident and the difference between the high consumption for one billing cycle and the consumption noted in the December 2025 bill.



On December 29, 2025, NS Power explained that most of the bills it issued to customers before July 2025 were based on estimated consumption because it could not access the meter data remotely following the cyber incident. NS Power started manual meter reading late June 2025 and reconciled discrepancies between estimated and actual consumption through adjustments on subsequent bills.

On January 2, 2026, you asked whether the estimates NS Power made during the cyber incident period were reasonable and based on the best available data and whether the reconciliation correctly assigned usage to the right periods.

NS Power explained, in response to the Board's information requests IR-1 and IR-5, that historical usage must be calculated using the same premises with the same seasonal flag based on the month the customer is billed:

Winter for January, February, March, November and December bills,
Summer for April, May, June, July, August, September and October bills.

First, NS Power calculates your average historical usage using previous bills that carry the same seasonal flags, then multiply the calculated average usage with the number of days during the service period of a certain bill to estimate your usage for that bill.

The estimated bill dated May 16, 2025 (summer)

NS Power used historical usage from the May and July 2024 bills from the previous occupant of the property and your September 2024 bill (your first bill at [REDACTED] since your connection started on July 16, 2024), all with summer flags, totaling 5,211.34 kWh for 186 days. Your average usage was calculated at 28.016 kWh/day (5,211.34 kWh divided by 186 days). Therefore, your estimated usage between March 14 and May 16, 2025, was 1,765 kWh (28.016 kWh/day x 63 days).

The bill dated July 18, 2025

The \$142.03 refund was the \$126 security deposit you paid on January 6, 2023, plus \$16.03 interest. NS Power explained that you reached two years of satisfactory payment history at the time the July 2025 bill was issued, therefore NS Power refunded you the security deposit and the interest it earned.

The interest was calculated using 1% below RBC prime interest rate, prorated to the number of days the security deposit was held (307 days in 2023, 366 days in 2024 and 168 days in 2025).

The estimated bill dated September 17, 2025 (summer)

The historical usage from your September 2024 and July 2025 bills, both with summer flags, was 7,215.23 kWh for 184 days, equaling an average usage of 39.21 kWh/day. Your estimated usage between July 14 and September 17, 2025, was 2,548 kWh (39.21 kWh/day x 65 days).

The estimated bill dated November 18, 2025 (winter)

The historical usage from your November 2024, January and March 2025 bills, all with winter flags, was 10,965.38 for 179 days. This means your average usage was 61.26 kWh/day. Your usage between July 14 and November 18, 2025, was estimated at 3,798 kWh (61.26 kWh/day x 62 days).



The bill dated December 5, 2025

This bill was issued off cycle based on the meter read you provided NS Power on December 1, 2025. In response to the Board's information request IR-3, NS Power explained that the meter read from your photo (77,647 kWh) was higher than the estimated meter read from November 18, 2025 (77,376 kWh), and therefore, NS Power charges you for the 271 kWh difference, no adjustment to the previous estimated November 2025 bill needed.

CONCLUSION

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.

The Board understands that NS Power's billing adjustment process following the cyber incident might have caused confusion and lengthy inquiries for the customers. The Board is conducting a separate investigation into the cybersecurity incident under M12273, which encompasses a broader review of its impact on customers. The Board is also reviewing NS Power's Customer Information System (CIS) modernization initiative under M11884. Accordingly, a final decision in this matter will be deferred pending the outcome of those proceedings. The Board reminds NS Power that no interest shall accrue on any outstanding amounts related to this billing dispute while the matter remains under review.

Yours truly,



Darlene Willcott, LL.B.

Member

c. Kathleen Murray, Regulatory Counsel, NS Power

