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Dear Ms. Ross:

M12775 – Nova Scotia Power Inc. – Annual Power Line Technician (PLT) Staffing Levels and Reliability of Service – 2025 Report

On March 31, 2026, Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NS Power) filed a report on its Power Line Technician Staffing Levels and Reliability of Service for 2025. This matter was reviewed by Steven M. Murphy, MBA, P.Eng., Member.

In a letter dated April 12, 2007, the Board directed NS Power to comply with the recommendations from the Sherrod Report dated February 26, 2007. Those recommendations focused on monitoring PLT Staffing Levels to ensure that no deterioration in performance resulted from staffing reductions. Components of that monitoring activity include conducting annual customer surveys concerning service response and maintaining a continuing record of customer service response complaints. In addition, the annual report is required to include statistics concerning changes in PLT Staffing Levels and NS Power's conclusions as to the relationship, if any, of those staffing changes to the performance results. Furthermore, the data regarding PLT staffing changes is required to include the base (target) PLT staffing level, current PLT Staffing Levels, actual attrition as compared to a five-year window projection, replacements/additions since the previous report, and revised total of required replacements.

The Sherrod Report also recommended annual reporting of outage frequency and duration performance at the regional and total system levels. However, to avoid duplication with information filed in NS Power's annual Performance Standards Report and its annual Emergency Services Restoration Plan (ESRP) drill report, the Board, in its letter of July 20, 2017 (M07963), accepted NS Power's proposal for a condensed PLT Report, which excludes the outage reporting and the ESRP update components.

The condensed PLT Report is also required to include a map of NS Power's operating regions and districts, as well as a regional breakdown of journeyman PLTs, retirements, attrition, and new apprentice hires. Narratives which supplement those tables are also to be

provided. In addition, the PLT Report is to include Supervisor Call-back and Customer Survey tables associated with power outages.

In its letter of July 15, 2020 (M09711), the Board directed that future PLT reports are to also identify the number of customers, kilometres of distribution lines, kilometres of transmission lines, number of substations, and peak load, with a breakdown under each of the four operating regions. As directed by the Board, NS Power provided the requested information.

Board Review

Based on actual PLT staffing levels in 2025, the total number of PLTs was 238, comprised of 179 journeyperson PLTs and 59 apprentices. This total was 12 fewer than the utility's internal PLT target of 250. The utility noted that despite hiring 12 new individuals, it fell short of its target due to attrition of 11 PLTs in 2025, compared to a forecast attrition of 6 PLTs for 2025 in the PLT Report submitted in 2025 on its Power Line Technician Staffing Levels and Reliability of Service for 2024. However, NS Power forecasts that it will achieve its internal PLT target of 250 in 2028, while falling short by 10 in 2026. The report also noted that in 2025 there was a lower number of retirements and resignations than forecast.

The report noted that the utility will continue to increase its workforce and has already raised its PLT targets for the years 2026–2031. It also began increasing apprentice intake in 2024. The report further stated that in 2025, NS Power partnered with the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) to add a second Power and Utility Line Work Program offering at the NSCC Sydney Waterfront Campus. In addition, to meet its PLT targets, the utility plans to adapt its hiring practices by monitoring retirements, attrition, and apprenticeship graduation rates.

NS Power is required to provide a narrative about the number and growth, or decline, in outage complaint Supervisor Call-backs each year. The report included a table showing this data by region for the years 2018 to 2025, with a separate column for Post Tropical Storm Dorian and Hurricane Fiona. In 2025, there were 76 callbacks, a decrease of 53 compared to the 129 callbacks in 2024.

NS Power reported that provincial residential customer satisfaction remained stable in 2025 compared to 2024, holding at 72% for the year. Business customer satisfaction with NS Power's restoration response in 2025 also remained at the 2024 level, which was 77%. NS Power noted that its proposed PLT staffing increases over the coming years are expected to continue improving customer callbacks, overall customer satisfaction, and business customer satisfaction results.

The following table compares combined NS Power system data for the four operating regions between 2025 and 2024.

System Information (All Regions)	2025	2024
# of Customers	558,060	553,951
Km of Distribution Lines	28,732	28,700
Km of Transmission Lines	5,464	5,407
Substations	156	196
Regional Peak Load Non-Coincident (MW)	2592	2,257

NS Power noted that the reduction in the number of substations, from 196 in 2024 to 156 in 2025, is the result of a change in how it defines a substation. The utility explained that in



previous reporting, step-down transformers were counted as standalone substations. Going forward, for the purposes of this report, NS Power has defined a substation as one with a transmission supply that serves distribution customers.

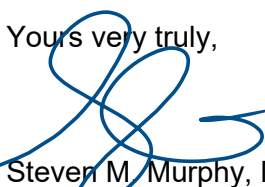
From the table above, the Board notes that, compared to 2024, the number of customers in 2025 increased by 4,109, and distribution and transmission lines were expanded by 32 km and 57 km, respectively. The all-region non-coincident peak load (MW) increased by 335 MW in 2025 relative to 2024.

The Board also notes that, as shown in Figure 7 of the report, Residential Customer Satisfaction in the Cape Breton region has declined to 65%, the lowest level recorded since 2018. In the Metro operating region, where 46% of the utility's customers are located, Residential Customer Satisfaction fell by two percentage points from 2024, reaching 69%.

The Board is concerned about the downward trend in customer satisfaction in two of the utility's four operating regions. In addition, the Board is uncertain about the need for the change in the definition of a substation and its potential impact on PLT resources and supervisor call-backs. The Board is concerned that removing these substations may prevent outage-related complaints or customer-satisfaction tracking associated with them from being captured, and the utility has not clarified whether such issues would be recorded separately.

The Board accepts NS Power's report of the 2025 results and looks forward to receiving information in next year's report regarding the 2026 results. However, the Board directs NS Power to file, within **45 days of the date of this letter**, an explanation detailing the steps it will take to correct the downward trend in Residential Customer Satisfaction in the two regions noted above, as well as how it will maintain and improve satisfaction in the other two regions. In addition, the Board directs NS Power to submit the list of the 40 substations that were removed from this year's reporting but were included in the 2024 report, along with their voltage ratings, the customer types they serve, the reason for their removal, and the impact of their removal on outage reporting, customer-satisfaction reporting, PLT resources and supervisor call-backs.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven M. Murphy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steven M. Murphy, MBA, P.Eng.
Member

