

NOVA SCOTIA ENERGY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT

— and —

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION by EFFICIENCYONE for approval of the 2027-2031 Demand-Side Management (DSM) Purchase Agreement between EfficiencyOne and Nova Scotia Power Incorporated, the establishment of a final agreement between the parties, and approval of a 2027-2031 Demand-Side Management (DSM) Resource Plan



Opening Statement of the
Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs
AND

Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO)/Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative

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Opening Statement

Kwe. Good morning, Chair and Members of the Board.

My name is Tamara Young and I am the Chief of Pictou Landing First Nation and Co-Lead for the Energy, Mines and Environment Portfolio with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs.

I am appearing today on behalf of the Assembly and Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn, or KMK, as interveners in the proposed Demand-Side Management Purchase Agreement between EfficiencyOne and Nova Scotia Power for 2027 to 2031, as well as Demand-Side Management Resource Plan.

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs represents all 13 Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia, and together with members of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council, District Chiefs, and the Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief, we make up the highest decision-making body for the Rights Implementation and Consultation processes for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

Under the direction of the Assembly, the KMK Office works toward Rights Implementation, and coordinates consultation on behalf of eleven of the thirteen Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. It is mandated to support the Assembly in the Mi'kmaq-Canada-Nova Scotia tripartite Made-in-Nova Scotia process, concerning the implementation of Mi'kmaw Aboriginal and Treaty rights. On behalf of all thirteen communities, KMK also coordinates energy initiatives and provides technical energy and mines support, often working closely with EfficiencyOne.

The reason we are here today, is because the outcome of this matter will directly affect programs that have delivered significant benefits to our Mi'kmaw communities.

Since 2018, the Mi'kmaw Home Energy Efficiency Program has been operating in our communities, thanks to partners that include the Province, Sustainable Housing and Efficiency Nova Scotia.

As you may be aware, our Mi'kmaw communities face some unique circumstances. In many of our communities the housing conditions have resulted in substantial energy costs, because of the age and quality of our residential buildings and the structure of our multi-generational families. Through the Mi'kmaw Home Energy Efficiency Program, we have been able to receive some assistance with these challenges.

The Mi'kmaw Home Energy Efficiency Program has supported more than 1,800 Mi'kmaw homes across our thirteen communities. In each case, the program begins with a home energy assessment identifying opportunities for improvement. Recommended measures are then discussed with homeowners and community housing managers before work is completed, at no cost to participants.

These improvements have included enhanced insulation, air sealing, heat pump installations, and other measures that reduce energy use while improving comfort and health within the home. Heat pumps have also provided families with lower heating costs and more effective cooling during increasingly warm summer months. This, in turn, contributes to climate change resiliency.

Beyond improving housing conditions, the Program has also supported local economic development by creating opportunities for Mi'kmaw-owned businesses and contractors to carry out the work within their own communities.

The impact of the program is clear as provided in the Mi'kmaw Home Energy Efficiency Project Impact Report 2025 available on the Efficiency Nova Scotia's website:

- More than **1,800** Mi'kmaw homes have benefited from energy efficiency improvements.
- Participating households are expected to save more than **\$42 million** in lifetime energy costs.
- Approximately **65,637 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions have been avoided.
- Families are experiencing lower energy bills, healthier homes, and greater year-round comfort.

These outcomes extend well beyond individual households. They reduce overall electricity demand, lower system costs for all ratepayers, contribute to provincial climate objectives, and demonstrate that community-led energy efficiency investments deliver measurable public benefits.

The proposed Demand-Side Management Plan will continue to support these critical upgrades for remaining homes, furthering the strong example of what can be achieved when our Mi'kmaw communities and provincial partners work together to address energy affordability, housing quality, and climate action.

The Assembly was encouraged to see the forward-looking plan that transitions from retrofits to a Residential New Construction program, including incentives for solar PV installations. Ensuring homes are comfortable and efficient, with low (or no) energy bills from Day 1, will provide benefits throughout the entire life of the home. Investing in a community solar program as part of the 2027–2031 Demand Side Management Plan is a critical step toward strengthening our energy future. Solar generation helps keep more energy dollars within our communities while improving long-term energy security. By combining solar installations with conservation and efficiency initiatives, we can reduce our dependence on external energy sources, create local employment and training opportunities, and advance our environmental stewardship responsibilities for future generations. A dedicated solar program is not only an investment in clean energy—it is an investment in community resilience, self-determination, and sustainable economic development.

EfficiencyOne has taken the time to listen to Mi'kmaw communities and to keep improving and evolving the measures available to our communities. Our feedback has been reflected in the proposed Plan for 2027 through to 2031, including through increased support for community-led maintenance such as heat pump cleaning, follow up reporting after energy grades have been completed and continued energy efficiency education for community members, and expanded opportunities for our Mi'kmaw community members to become certified Energy Advisors - supporting their own communities.

These improvements reflect a genuine collaboration and show that programs work best when Mi'kmaw voices have a meaningful role in shaping how they're designed and delivered.

For the Assembly, this proceeding is not simply about approving another utility program. It is about ensuring that a proven working relationship can continue to deliver tangible benefits to our Mi'kmaw families, all the while increasing energy efficiency, affordability, and environmental stewardship.

The Demand-Side Management programs for Mi'kmaw communities remain cost-effective, provide measurable benefits for customers, and represent a prudent investment in Nova Scotia's electricity system. The experience of Mi'kmaw communities demonstrates that these investments do more than improve energy efficiency—they build long-term resilience.

For these reasons, the Assembly encourages the honourable Board to ensure that sufficient funding is committed to DSM that permits the Mi'kmaw-specific programs and other community support at the proposed funding level in the 2027-2031 DSM Plan.

Continued investment in these programs will build upon the partnership already established to help Mi'kmaw families lower their energy costs, improve the health of their homes, and become more energy and environmentally aware.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Wela'lioq. Thank you.