

August 21, 2026

[REDACTED]

Jillian Coxhead

[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Coxhead:

M12804 - Nova Scotia Power Inc. - Appeal of a Decision of the Dispute Resolution Officer

This is the Board's decision on your appeal from a decision by the Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO).

The following documentation was filed with the Board:

- The DRO's file and decision, dated March 9, 2026;
- Your appeal of the DRO decision, dated April 13, 2026;
- NS Power's response to your appeal, dated May 11, 2026;
- Your response to NS Power's response, dated May 27, 2026;
- NS Power's response to Board information requests (IRs), dated July 10, 2026;
- Your response to the Board's IRs, dated July 13, 2026;
- Your meter test result, dated July 31, 2026; and
- Your additional submission dated August 19, 2026.

I understand you are disputing your 2026 bills due to a large increase in the recorded consumption compared to previous years. You question if the cyber incident compromised NS Power's meter readings.

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.

In his decision, the DRO stated:

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

[REDACTED] NS Power is hereby instructed to review the Customer's Equal Billing Plan calculation for compliance with Board approved Regulation 5.3 or to establish a Payment Agreement compliant with Board approved Regulation 6.5.

[Exhibit S-2, page 2]

BACKGROUND & FINDINGS

You started account [REDACTED] with NS Power at [REDACTED], in August 2020. Analog meter [REDACTED] was installed at your property in June 2022. On July 3, 2026, your analog meter was removed for testing and replaced with a digital meter.

NS Power's *Regulation 5.1* states the following about meter readings:

METER READING

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

...

ESTIMATED METER READING

If the Company is unable to obtain a meter reading due to circumstances beyond its control ... 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 actual meter readings are obtained subsequent to estimated readings, the Company shall make the necessary adjustments...

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Your Meter and the Meter Test

On March 5, 2026, during your appeal with the DRO, you declined a meter test because NS Power said it would have to replace your analog meter with a digital meter after the analog meter was removed for testing.

On July 10, 2026, NS Power responded to the Board's IR-1(e) that a digital meter operates the same way as an analog meter, but with a digital display and without communication technology, and that your analog meter would be held for six months after being tested, in case you wished to have it tested by Measurement Canada, then would be recycled. Analog meters are no longer in production; therefore, NS Power replaces customers' analog meters with digital meters. You agreed to a meter test. NS Power removed your meter for testing on July 3, 2026, and provided the test results on July 31, 2026, which show your meter operates within prescribed accuracy limits.

On August 19, 2026, you contacted NS Power regarding your August 2026 bill which showed your meter was read on August 13, 2026. You mentioned that nobody has been to your property to read the meter, according to your camera footage. NS Power provided a picture of your meter taken by the NS Power employee who did your meter read that



showed the actual meter read of 69,703 kWh on meter [REDACTED]. The information matches what is shown on your August 2026 bill. The Board finds no reason to question this meter read. There could be many reasons why your camera footage does not show the NS Power employee who came to your property to do the meter read.

Your Usage

The tables below show the summary of your usage, based on the information before the Board.

Table 1: 2024

Bill date	Reading	Usage	Daily usage	Account balance	Service period
February 14, 2024	42964 read Feb 9	4487	71.2	\$1,463.36	December 8, 2023 – February 9, 2024 (63 days)
April 15, 2024	48799 read Apr 12	5835	92.6	\$1,704.70	February 9 – April 12, 2024 (63 days)
June 14, 2024	52252 read Jun 11	3453	57.6	\$1,582.43	April 12 – June 11, 2024 (60 days)
August 15, 2024	54115 read Aug 13	1863	29.6	\$1,478.98	June 11 – August 13, 2024 (63 days)
October 16, 2024	56017 read Oct 10	1902	32.8	\$552.78	August 13 – October 10, 2024 (58 days)
December 13, 2024	59637 read Dec 9	3620	60.3	\$1,065.93	October 10 – December 9, 2024 (60 days)

Your Equal Billing amount was set at \$489/month for the second half of 2024. Your average actual usage in 2024 ranged from 29.6 to 92.6 kWh/day.

Table 2: 2025

Bill date	Reading	Usage	Daily usage	Account balance	Service period
February 14, 2025	65023 read Feb 11	5386	84.2	\$1,421.85	December 9, 2024 – February 11, 2025 (64 days)
April 14, 2025	69461 read Apr 8	4438	79.3	\$2,324.70	February 11 – April 8, 2025 (56 days)
June 13, 2025	72093 estimated	2632	39.9	\$2,321.91	April 8 – June 13, 2025 (66 days)
August 15, 2025	74053 estimated	1960	31.1	\$2,744.16	June 13 – August 15, 2025 (63 days)
October 16, 2025	69748 read Oct 9	287	1.6	\$1,745.40	April 8 – October 9, 2025 (184 days)
December 12, 2025	70773 estimated	1025	16.0	\$1,685.42	October 9 – December 12, 2025 (64 days)



Your Equal Billing amount was changed to \$414/month for the first half of the year and \$550/month for the second half of the year. Your average actual usage was between 79.3 and 84.2 kWh/day in the non-estimated bills, except for the October 2025 bill (addressed below).

According to NS Power's response to the Board's IR-2, it estimated your usage during the service period when an actual meter read was not available by calculating the average daily usage from bills issued the previous year with the same seasonal code and then multiplied that by the number of days in the current service period.

The Board finds that by using your historical usage to estimate current usage during the periods when an actual meter read was not possible, NS Power complied with *Regulation 5.1* by using the best available data.

The June 2025 bill covers 66 days (April 8 – June 13, 2025). NS Power used the usage from your June, August and October 2024 bills, totaling 7,218 kWh, divided by 181 days to get the average usage of 39.88 kWh/ day. Your estimated usage for this billing period was calculated at 2,632 kWh (39.88 kWh/day multiplied by 66 days).

Similarly, for the August 2025 bill, your average usage from the August and October 2024 bills was 31.11 kWh/day. Your usage for this billing period was estimated at 1,960 kWh (31.11 kWh/day multiplied by 63 days).

In the October 2025 bill, NS Power:

- credited you back for the 4,592 kWh it charged you in the June 2025 bill (2,632 kWh) and August 2025 bill (1,960 kWh); and
- charged you for the 287 kWh (69,748 kWh read in October 2025 less 69,461 kWh read in April 2025).

This bill, therefore, reconciled the June and August 2025 bills. Your average usage between April 8 and October 9, 2025, was calculated as 287 kWh divided by 184 days = 1.6 kWh/day. This means NS Power **overestimated** your usage in the two estimated bills. You said you were evacuated in August and September 2025 because of a wildfire and your power was off. The 287 kWh usage during this billing period appears to reflect that. However, since your payments have not caught up to the monthly Equal Billing amount, your account balance was over \$1,700 in this bill.

For the December 2025 bill, NS Power used your usage from your December 2024 bill (3,620 kWh for 60 days) and your October 2025 bill (287 kWh for 184 days), equaling 3,907 kWh for 244 days, to calculate your average usage in these two bills at 16.02 kWh/day (3,907 kWh divided by 244 days). NS Power then used that historical average usage to estimate your usage for 64 days in the December 2025 bill at 1,025 kWh (16.02 kWh/day multiplied by 64 days).



Table 3: 2026

Bill date	Reading	Usage	Daily usage	Account balance	Service period
February 13, 2026	75931 estimated	5158	81.9	\$2,716.78	December 12, 2025 – February 13, 2026 (63 days)
March 3, 2026	94087 read Mar 2	23314	291.4	\$5,812.95	December 12, 2025 – March 2, 2026 (80 days)
April 16, 2026	98939 read Apr 13	4852	115.5	\$6,767.69	March 2 – April 13, 2026 (42 days)
June 15, 2026	3291 read Jun 12	4352	72.5	\$7,071.21	April 13 – June 12, 2026 (60 days)
August 17, 2026	4197 read Aug 13 69703	906 1639	41.0	\$7,624.53	June 12 – August 13, 2026 (62 days)

Your Equal Billing amount remains at \$550/month. The Equal Billing amount due in the August 2026 bill is \$3,400.

NS Power explained that it cancelled the estimated bill dated February 13, 2026, because of an input error and replaced it with the bill dated March 3, 2026, with a true meter read. The actual meter read of 94,087 kWh on March 2, 2026, was much higher than the estimated meter read of 75,931 kWh in the February 2026 bill. This means NS Power largely **underestimated** your usage in the December 2025 and February 2026 bills. As a result, this March 2026 bill is a catch-up bill for the period from October 9, 2025, to March 2, 2026. With a usage of 24,339 kWh (94,087 kWh read in March 2026 minus 69,748 kWh read in October 2025), divided by 144 days, your average usage during the entire 5-month period is 169 kWh/day, a large contrast to the 1.6 kWh/day in your October 2025 bill and in line with the 115.5 kWh/day usage in your April 2026 bill.

On June 16, 2026, you said that you have had your panel off for the past 60 days to prove the meter did not read properly, and that you would take a digital meter as your current meter is causing issues with your billing. You didn't clarify what "having your panel off" entails in your response to the Board's IRs. Your June 2026 bill shows your usage of 72.5 kWh/day during this billing period, in line with your usage in 2024.

The Board understands your frustration receiving multiple estimated bills that did not show your actual usage over a long period of time and regrets the confusion of usage calculation in the reconciled bills that followed. However, since your March, April and June 2026 bills were all based on actual meter reads, and the meter test result shows that your meter operates within prescribed accuracy limits, the Board accepts the calculated energy charges in these bills.

Your Equal Billing Plan

On March 9, 2026, the DRO instructed NS Power to review its calculation for your Equal Billing Plan or to establish a Payment Agreement. NS Power informed the DRO the next day that your \$550 monthly payment remains.



On July 13, 2026, you said you agreed to pay a maximum of \$400 a month, with the arrears to be adjusted due to the wrong estimates and improper readings of your meter. However, since the Board accepts the recorded actual usage in the non-estimated bills NS Power issued for your account, your arrears remain.

NS Power responded to the Board's IR-3 that the \$550/month was a budget settlement agreement for 36 months. NS Power explained that your ongoing usage is approximately \$364/month alone, and the arrears payment of \$197/month needs to be added for 36 months, totaling \$561, to retire your arrears balance of over \$7,500, currently without late fees and interests. If you were to pay only \$400/month, it would only cover your usage for the month and a minimal portion of the arrears, resulting in the arrears balance growing even larger. The Board understands that the multiple estimated bills and the catch-up bills carrying large balances create a financial burden for you.

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 the financial burden of high energy bills that you experience, despite being on an Equal Billing Plan. However, the Board finds that NS Power complied with the *Regulations* by using historical consumption data to estimate your usage when actual meter reads were not possible and then reconciling those estimates correctly following an actual meter read.

The Board upholds the DRO's decision. With respect, your appeal is dismissed. The Board notes that it is conducting a separate investigation into the cybersecurity incident under M12273 which encompasses a broader review of its impact on customers.

The Board directs NS Power to contact you within thirty days of this decision to work out a payment arrangement plan with a reasonable monthly amount that can help retire your outstanding balance within an acceptable time frame. The Board notes *Regulation* 6.5(2)(a) which requires NS Power to offer customers a payment agreement "that provides for reasonable terms and conditions ... consistent with the customer's ability to pay".

Yours truly,



Marc L. Dunning, P.Eng., LL.B.
Member

c. Kathleen Murray, Regulatory Counsel, NS Power

