

DRO Final Written Decision re Donna Himmelman dispute re billing/consumption

2 messages

nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com <nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 30, 2026 at 2:58 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: customerrelations@nspower.ca

Don Farmer, P. Eng., Dispute Resolution Officer (D.R.O.)**nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com**Donna Himmelman

After review and consideration of all of the following and attached, my Final Written Decision in the matter follows.

I will begin with my Role Statement as Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO) in matters of dispute between N.S.Power and their Customers : **I am not an employee of Nova Scotia Power** or the Nova Scotia Energy Board. I am appointed by Nova Scotia Power to satisfy the Regulations of the Board with respect to dispute resolution. My role is to address, and hopefully resolve, disputes with Nova Scotia Power that cannot be resolved through normal Customer channels. In my role I investigate N.S.Power's interpretation, and application, of Board approved Regulations. I do not have any jurisdiction over N.S.Power's day-to-day operations. My Decisions are binding on Nova Scotia Power but not on the Customer. Customers may appeal my Decisions (within 12 days of receipt of Final Written Decision) to the Board.

Your Dispute in summary is: that you have service from N.S.Power at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Account # Account [REDACTED]); that you now live alone at the premise; that you dispute your bills "from N.S.Power since January 2026"; that per the attached ledger your Jan 2026 bill was \$1,654.12, your March bill was \$1274.84, and your May bill was \$818.57; that your outstanding balance as of 21 May was \$3,747.53; that you had "a new central heat pump installed in November of 2023 and my kitchen renovated with all new appliances in May of 2024"; that you indicate that in a conversation with a N.S.Power representative that you "told her that I was not using my woodstove for auxiliary heat since my husband passed, and she said right away that it was likely the reason for the increase in my bills"; that your highest historic bill was \$726.64 in March 2025; that your May, July, Sept and Nov 2025 bills were based on estimated meter readings (reading record attached – "U" means unread); that your January, March, and May 2026 bills were based on actual meter readings; that once an actual meter reading is obtained following estimated meter readings, all previous estimation error is reconciled (see more detailed explanation below); that I Instructed N.S.Power to test your serving meter for accuracy; and that test results indicate that meter #2446483 is operating within prescribed accuracy limits.

Board approved Regulations relevant to this matter are 5.1, 5.5, 6.4, and 6.7 – copy attached. Also relevant and attached are the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act Regulations.

Specific bills can be other than expected if they are based on estimated – as opposed to actual – meter readings. Once an actual meter reading is obtained, following an estimated reading for billing purposes, any estimation error is fully reconciled in following bills, that are based on actual readings, as a result of the cumulative, and self-reconciling nature, of the meter reading process. The self-reconciling process is more fully explained in the immediately following paragraph.

The “Cumulative Nature” of power meters is similar to the odometer in a car. They are not reset to zero after a reading is taken from them. The meter (when brand new) starts at, and displays, the number zero and that number increases as energy - measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh) - is delivered through it. It stops registering energy usage when no power is being delivered and resumes when power starts to be delivered again. When power starts again the meter does not return to zero but adds to the previous number indication. The displayed number increases proportional to the rate at which energy (kWh) is being delivered. It performs much like the odometer in a car which accumulates miles in proportion to how far one drives and at what speed, as well as how often, one starts and stops. If an error is made in reading a meter on one occasion, it will not affect the number displayed on a subsequent reading. If for example a reading of 1000 is reported as 100, the next time a reading is taken it will still be something in excess of 1000 – so if a Customer was billed for 100 Kwh when it should have been 1000, the Customer gets a short term “break” on being billed for 900 Kwh that were actually consumed, however if the next reading taken is 1500, that Customer will be billed for 1400 Kwh at that time. The net is that the Customer has been billed for 1500 Kwh consumption over a two-bill period even though there was a meter reading error. ($100 + 1400 = 1000 + 500$). The same effect occurs if the meter reading is estimated, or erroneously reported, either higher or lower than the fact.

Once an actual meter reading is obtained following estimated meter readings, all estimation error is reconciled. Your estimated usage over the May to Nov 2025 periods were clearly lower than actual usage.

Meter #2446483 is operating within prescribed accuracy limits

Final Written DRO Decision : In the context of Board approved Regulations 5.1 and 5.5, N.S.Power has appropriately billed the Customer for service to [REDACTED] (Account # Account [REDACTED]).

This Decision can be issued in conventional letter form, via regular mail, upon request.

You may appeal this decision to the Nova Scotia Energy Board (NSEB) if you wish; their contact information is: P.O. Box 1692, Unit M, Suite 300, 1601 Lower Water St. Halifax, N.S., B3J 2S3; Email - board@novascotia.ca ;Telephone - 902-424-1332 ,Toll Free in NS: 1-833-809-0040 ; Fax - 902-424-3919

Don Farmer, P.Eng.

Dispute Resolution Officer

PS

You may not accept the results of the N.S. Power meter test, as I have accepted them, and wish to have the meter tested by Measurement Canada.

Regulation 5.5 of the Regulations that govern N.S. Power's operations, as approved by the Board., stipulates that if a customer disputes the amount of electricity consumed from the meter, the following shall occur:

- a) Initiate a check on the meter reading to ensure the original reading was correct and advise the customer.
- b) If the customer is not satisfied, the Company shall do an "As found Meter Test" on the meter in the Company's Measurement Canada certified facility to verify the reading is within the allowed tolerances, and advise the customer of the results..
- c) If the customer is still not satisfied, the customer may request an independent meter test be performed by Industry Canada (Measurement Canada).

Steps (a) and (b), as well as a review of the matter by the DRO per Regulation 6.4, is hereby complete. Regulation 5.5 (c) indicates you may request the meter be tested by Measurement Canada. The N.S.U.A.R.B. may require you to complete the Measurement Canada test before considering or ruling on your appeal to this decision.

The local office of Measurement Canada can be reached by phone at 902-426- 2525. If you elect to proceed to Measurement Canada, they will upon receipt of your request, formalize a written process of notification to both you and N.S. Power to arrange to retrieve the disputed meter from N.S. Power for an official test. NSPI Regulation 6.7 titled Dispute Test, indicates that upon notice from Measurement Canada, N.S. Power will arrange to ship the disputed meter to Measurement Canada for testing. When testing is complete, a written report on findings will be provided by Measurement Canada to both N.S. Power and you - their Customer. If the meter is found to be accurate, N.S. Power will charge you a fee as outlined in the Board approved Schedule of Charges Section 7.1. The current fee is \$46.00 for a satisfactory meter test result. If the meter is found to be outside the allowable limits, Measurement Canada will provide details as to the level of inaccuracy for required account adjustment. In the latter case, the \$55.00 fee would not be charged.

From: Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2026 11:19 AM
To: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com
Cc: [REDACTED]; Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>
Subject: RE: DRO 11 June re Donna Himmelman dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

Mr. Farmer,

The first attachment is a copy of the tests results on the meter that previously serviced the subject premises, Meter #2446483.

The second attachment is a letter to the customer advising of the results of the meter test.

Teri

From: Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>
Sent: June 11, 2026 2:52 PM
To: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com
Cc: [REDACTED]; Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>
Subject: Re: DRO 11 June re Donna Himmelman dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

Mr. Farmer,

NS Power has ordered Meter #2446483 for removal and accuracy testing. Once complete, test results will be provided to both the DRO and the Customer.

Derek.

From: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com <nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2026 9:25 AM
To: Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: DRO 11 June re Donna Himmelman dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

****Exercise Caution** - This is an external email from: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com.
Beware of links or attachments from external sources. If you are unsure, click "Report Email" to submit for review.**

Don Farmer, P. Eng., Dispute Resolution Officer (D.R.O.)

nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com

N.S.Power Customer Relations

N.S.Power is hereby Instructed to test meter #2446483 for accuracy and report test results to the Customer and the DRO.

Don Farmer, P.Eng.

Dispute Resolution Officer

From: Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2026 9:09 AM

To: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com

Cc: [REDACTED]; Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Subject: Re: DRO 10 June re Donna Himmelman dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

Mr. Farmer,

NS Power visited the property on April 10 as part of a request made for a check read on the subject account. The reading obtained on the day of that visit was 69438. This was to confirm that the reading on the March bill of 67382 was correct or not.

No meter test has been completed on the meter servicing the premise.

Derek.

From: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com <nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 2:39 PM

To: Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Subject: DRO 10 June re Donna Himmelman dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

****Exercise Caution - This is an external email from: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com.
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Don Farmer, P. Eng., Dispute Resolution Officer (D.R.O.)

nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com

N.S.Power Customer Relations

The Customer indicates (following 8 June email) : “When I suggested that maybe my meter was faulty he said he would send a technician out to look at it. He arranged a time between 12 and 4 pm on Friday, April 10, as I wanted to be home when the technician arrived in case I had any questions. On April 10 at 8:15 in the morning I am coming down the stairs of my home when I see a guy scurrying across my lawn to a NSPower vehicle and quickly drive away. I have not heard or seen anything from NSPower since and my anxiety spikes too much to make another call.”

Was the serving meter tested for accuracy ?

Don Farmer, P.Eng.

Dispute Resolution Officer

From: Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 3:10 PM

To: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com

Cc: Donna Himmelman [REDACTED] Customer Relations

<customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Subject: Re: 8 June email to the DRO from Donna Himmelman - dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

Mr. Farmer,

Access for the DRO has been granted on subject account# [REDACTED]

The first attachment is a copy of the account ledger for the subject account.

The second attachment is a copy of the meter reads obtained for the subject account.

Meter connections to our billing system have been restored and customer billing has returned to normal. Once the meter is read, either remotely or in-person, the bill is reconciled automatically to reflect actual usage.

The customer's meter reads for January, March and May were all true reads.

It is NS Power's position that the customer has been billed appropriately.

Derek.

From: Donna Himmelman [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 11:22 AM

To: Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Subject: Re: 8 June email to the DRO from Donna Himmelman - dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

****Exercise Caution - This is an external email from [REDACTED]**
Beware of links or attachments from external sources. If you are unsure, click "Report Email" to submit for review.**

Hi Derek:

Yes, I do wish to provide consent to release my account information [REDACTED] to the Dispute Resolution Officer.

Thanks,

Donna Himmelman

On Tue, Jun 9, 2026 at 10:37 AM Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca> wrote:

Mr. Farmer,

Access for the DRO has not been granted on the subject account.

Donna, if you wish to provide consent to release your account information to the Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO), please reply to this email stating your permission.

Derek.

From: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com <nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, June 8, 2026 4:05 PM

To: [REDACTED]; Customer Relations
<customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Subject: 8 June email to the DRO from Donna Himmelman - dispute re billing/consumption Account [REDACTED]

****Exercise Caution** - This is an external email from: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com.
Beware of links or attachments from external sources. If you are unsure, click "Report Email" to submit for review.**

Don Farmer, P. Eng., Dispute Resolution Officer (D.R.O.)

Telephone (902) 428-6202, Toll-free 1-877-428-6202, Fax (902) 835-7744

nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com

Donna Himmelman; N.S.Power Customer Relations

Donna

In response to your following email, I will begin with my Role Statement as Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO) in matters of dispute between N.S.Power and their Customers : **I am not an employee of Nova Scotia Power** or the Nova Scotia Energy Board. I am appointed by Nova Scotia Power to satisfy the Regulations of the Board with respect to dispute resolution. My role is to address, and hopefully resolve, disputes with Nova Scotia

Power that cannot be resolved through normal Customer channels. In my role I investigate N.S.Power's interpretation, and application, of Board approved Regulations. I do not have any jurisdiction over N.S.Power's day-to-day operations. My Decisions are binding on Nova Scotia Power but not on the Customer. Customers may appeal my Decisions (within 12 days of receipt of Final Written Decision) to the Board.

If you have not already done so, please contact N.S. Power by telephone at 1-800-428-6230 and give them your consent, to release your account information, to me. Alternatively, N.S.Power may contact you by email seeking consent after they receive this email.

Please copy N.S.Power at the email address above on all future email to me. They will similarly copy you on their email to me related to this matter.

Your dispute is in part a "consumption dispute". A fundamental point I must make in such disputes is that N.S.Power's responsibility is to deliver power to the metering point. They have no role or responsibility with respect to how that energy is consumed on the premise. On-premise usage is a function of lifestyle, heating systems, appliances and other equipment used, as well as a range of other factors well beyond N.S.Power's ability to address or control (outside temperatures, faulty wiring, ground faults, theft of power). Meter accuracy thus becomes the "acid test" in determining if appropriate usage is being billed. The test to confirm meter accuracy is an "as found" meter accuracy test, performed by N.S.Power in their Measurement Canada accredited meter shop, followed by a meter test by Measurement Canada if the Customer wishes to have an independent meter test performed

Specific bills can be other than expected if they are based on estimated – as opposed to actual – meter readings. As part of my investigation of this matter, I will determine if estimated meter readings are a factor in your dispute. Once an actual meter reading is obtained, following an estimated reading for billing purposes, any estimation error is fully reconciled in following bills, that are based on actual readings, as a result off the cumulative, and self-reconciling nature, of the meter reading process. The self-reconciling process is more fully explained in the immediately following paragraph.

The "Cumulative Nature" of power meters is similar to the odometer in a car. They are not reset to zero after a reading is taken from them. The meter (when brand new) starts at, and displays, the number zero and that number increases as energy - measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh) - is delivered through it. It stops registering energy usage when no power is

being delivered and resumes when power starts to be delivered again. When power starts again the meter does not return to zero but adds to the previous number indication. The displayed number increases proportional to the rate at which energy (kWh) is being delivered. It performs much like the odometer in a car which accumulates miles in proportion to how far one drives and at what speed, as well as how often, one starts and stops. If an error is made in reading a meter on one occasion, it will not affect the number displayed on a subsequent reading. If for example a reading of 1000 is reported as 100, the next time a reading is taken it will still be something in excess of 1000 – so if a Customer was billed for 100 Kwh when it should have been 1000, the Customer gets a short term “break” on being billed for 900 Kwh that were actually consumed, however if the next reading taken is 1500, that Customer will be billed for 1400 Kwh at that time. The net is that the Customer has been billed for 1500 Kwh consumption over a two bill period even though there was a meter reading error. ($100 + 1400 = 1000 + 500$). The same effect occurs if the meter reading is estimated, or erroneously reported, either higher or lower than the fact.

N.S.Power

Please provide me with N.S.Power’s position in the matter as well as copies of relevant account statements, meter reading information, and relevant computerized notes or notices.

Don Farmer, P.Eng.

Dispute Resolution Officer

From: Donna Himmelman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2026 1:21 PM
To: nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com
Subject: Donna Himmelman - Account number [REDACTED]

Good afternoon:

I would like to file a formal dispute regarding the bills I have received from Nova Scotia Power since January/2026. Copies are attached.

The breach of customer information in 2025 affected a lot of people in Nova Scotia and at first I thought I was unscathed. I did not fully understand my bill due December 22, 2025, so I called the billing department, and it seems that the staff had a regular script to advise customers that bills may seem to be off due to estimates being done since March 2025, and that my meter was not actually read until November 2025. If my bill due in December seemed high to me it was in fact playing "catch up" with under estimations during the year. She asked if there were any changes made to my home or situation and I explained that my husband passed away in 2023 so I am now the only person living in my house. I had a new central heat pump installed in November of 2023 and my kitchen renovated with all new appliances in May of 2024. I also told her that I was not using my woodstove for auxiliary heat since my husband passed, and she said right away that it was likely the reason for the increase in my bills. I was not satisfied with this explanation, as I thought my updated appliances would be more energy efficient resulting in a decrease or at least an even amount of energy used as before. I then went through all my past bills for several years and deemed that the bill could be correct, given the estimating of bills, so I paid it in full.

Then at the end of January I received my first bill for 2026 and I was astonished at the amount due of \$1,654.12 to say the least! My anxiety went through the roof and I did not call about it as I figured I would just get the same story as before. I decided to wait until my next bill arrived to see if a mistake was made and it would show a correction. I was very wrong. The bill I received at the end of March was for another \$1,214.13 totalling \$2,928.96!!

I finally got my anxiety under control enough to make a call to NSP on April 8. I spoke with Kajethan in the billing department. He looked up my account and said that the meter reads added up correctly since November and that my bill was correct. I tried to explain that I could not possibly use the amount of power I was being billed for and that my bills over the last 3 years had never been that high. Seemingly getting no satisfaction I asked to speak with his manager and he said no. I asked again to speak to someone in higher authority and he told me there was no one!?! I then told him I thought something might be wrong with my smart meter. He then transferred me to someone called Nan in the Energy Advisors and Support Department (technical department I assumed).

After getting the same story from Nan that my bill is correct as the meter reads match up with the kWh used, I raised my voice a bit and said I was able to do the math. I asked him to look at my history and situation logically. He finally looked back through the last several years of billing and agreed that my current power consumption appeared to be excessive. YES, FINALLY I felt that I was getting through to someone. When I suggested that maybe my meter was faulty he said he would send a technician out to look at it. He arranged a time between 12 and 4 pm on Friday, April 10, as I wanted to be home when the technician arrived in case I had any questions.

On April 10 at 8:15 in the morning I am coming down the stairs of my home when I see a guy scurrying across my lawn to a NSPower vehicle and quickly drive away.

I have not heard or seen anything from NSPower since and my anxiety spikes too much to make another call.

Since then, I received my last bill in May for a whopping total of \$3,747.53. I have never paid this much for power in an entire year let alone for 6 months!!

I have sought legal advice and was advised to contact you about my situation. I do not intend to pay any money on my account until you look into this issue. I have no problem paying an amount that is correct.

Regards,

Donna Himmelman

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7 attachments

-  **Donna Himmelman Meter Test Results.pdf**
93K
-  **Donna Himmelman Meter Test results letter .pdf**
156K
-  **NEW Electricity and Gas Inspection Act Regulations - Copy.pdf**
329K
-  **Regulation 5.1 Estimated Readings.pdf**
30K
-  **Regulation 5.5 - Copy.pdf**
30K
-  **Regulation 6.4 - Copy.pdf**
28K
-  **Regulation 6.7 - Copy.pdf**
26K

Customer Relations <customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Tue, Jun 30, 2026 at 3:06 PM

To: "nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com" <nspdisputeresolution@gmail.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] Customer Relations
<customerrelations@nspower.ca>

Mr. Farmer,

NS Power has noted the DRO's Final Written Decision on the subject account.

Teri

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