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## OEB Launches Review of Electricity Distributors' DER Connection Policies

By David Stevens

On August 13, 2019, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) issued a letter launching a review of the requirements for licensed electricity distributors to connect distributed energy resources (DER Connections Review). The DER Connections Review is a companion initiative to the OEB's ongoing Responding to DERS consultation.

The stated purpose of the DER Connections Review is "to identify any barriers to the connection of DERs, and where appropriate to standardize and improve the connection process." The OEB indicates that it will focus on the connection of electricity generation and storage facilities connected to the distribution system, whether in front or behind the distributor's meter. Among other things, the DER Connections Review will look at connection process timelines, connection cost responsibility matters and technical connection requirements.

According to the OEB, the current rules and technical requirements for the connection of DERs (as set out in the Distribution System Code) do not reflect the recent "significant shift" in the adoption of DERs. The OEB is also concerned that there is no uniformity among licensed distributors in their DER connection processes.

The OEB's letter indicates its expectation that "there should be consistency across the province in terms of cost responsibility and process timelines." There may also be a need for standardization or consistency to be imposed for applicable technical requirements. To achieve these objectives, the OEB's DER Connections Review is expected to result in new or additional regulatory requirements that will standardize the DER connection process while ensuring reliability on the distribution system and fairness to customers in terms of cost sharing.

As a first step in the DER Connections Review, the OEB is inviting interested parties to provide comments (and/or proposed solutions) on the following issues:

- The need for standardization and clarity of definitions, terminology and regulatory rules in respect to DERs.
- The need for clear rules regarding cost responsibility for the connection of DERs to ensure fairness to DER customers and all other customers of the distributor.
- More detailed and comprehensive timelines for the connection process to ensure the timelines are well understood.
- Appropriate standardization of connection technical requirements.

Interested parties may also comment on the OEB's stated objectives for the DER Connections Review, and provide suggestions about the best approach to develop solutions for each identified issue. Interested parties are also invited to indicate their interest in participating in a working group to develop recommendations for the OEB to consider.

Comments must be submitted by September 16, 2019. After that date, OEB staff will confirm the scope of the review process (the relevant issues) and details about next steps. That process will include meetings of a working group of representatives from the electricity sector to develop recommendations to address the issues. The recommendations, which will be provided to the OEB, may include suggestions for amendments to the Distribution System Code and suggested guidance or direction to industry participants.

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