



Office of the
Utilities Consumer
Advocate



Annual Report 2022-2023



utilitiesconsumer
advocate

Alberta

Honourable Nathan Neudorf Minister of Affordability and Utilities 423 Legislature Building
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Neudorf:

The Power & Natural Gas Consumers' Panel last met on July 12th, 2023, to review the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate's (UCA) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2022-23, as mandated. The Panel includes representation from key municipal, business, and agricultural associations, as well as a cross-section of public members with diverse expertise on utility issues. As representatives of the ratepayers that the UCA is mandated to represent, we assess that the knowledge and expertise of the UCA provides a significant return on investment for small business, farm, and residential ratepayers.

High inflation negatively impacted many households, farms, and small businesses across Alberta creating an affordability crisis that was exacerbated by volatile electricity prices. While the Government introduced the Regulated Rate Option Stabilization Program, the UCA complemented these efforts through ramping up its consumer education program through a winter utility awareness campaign to inform consumers of their retail energy options to help them save money.

The Panel would also like to highlight the following from the UCA Annual Report:

- Over \$63 million in avoided utilities costs for consumers from UCA evidence cited in Alberta Utilities Commission rate decisions.
- The UCA conducted a large winter utility consumer awareness campaign to remind customers they have options when it comes to purchasing power and natural gas in Alberta, and that they can visit ucahelps.alberta.ca for more information on their options, and UCA services.
- There were over 815,000 visits to UCA website where consumers learned about their utility service options and what to consider as they chose the products and providers that best met their household and/or business' needs.
- Over 21,000 Albertans called the UCA Mediation Team regarding their utility services with over 1000 calls resulting in mediations to help resolve disputes with their retailers.
- The UCA's Winter Utility Reconnection Program protected 470 households who might otherwise have faced dangerous freezing temperatures without power or heat.
- The Panel reviewed the UCA's key performance metrics, both their processes and targets, and the Panel's recommendations are accurately reflected in the Annual Report.
- The UCA has also consistently achieved operational surpluses against its budget allocations over the past few years. Ratepayers only pay for the UCA's actual

expenditures, meaning that the UCA is cost-efficient as well.

Taken together, the Panel recommends you accept this Annual Report, and recover the UCA's 2022-23 expenditures from the Balancing Pool and Natural Gas Distributors through the usual Ministerial Orders issued annually. The Panel looks forward to a continued effort to ensure the concerns of small business, farm, and residential energy utility consumers are understood and addressed.

Sincerely,

Annette Clews

Chair, Power and Natural Gas Consumers' Panel

Honourable Nathan Neudorf
Minister of Affordability and Utilities
423 Legislature Building Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Neudorf:

RE: ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022-23

The Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate's (UCA) activities over the past year focused on supporting small business, farm, and residential utilities consumers through the affordability challenges brought on by high inflation. These efforts were aligned with Service Alberta's and subsequently Affordability and Utilities' business plan outcomes to protect consumers and make everyday life more affordable for them.

Finally, UCA operations provided consumer education and mediation services to consumers to help them understand and choose the services best suited to their distinct household and/or business' needs, and to resolve any disputes with their utility providers in a timely and efficient manner.

The UCA will continue to assist small business, farm, and residential consumers with their utilities services as Alberta's economy recovers. The UCA will continue to innovate its programs and services in order to ensure they continue to deliver exceptional value to utilities ratepayers.

Sincerely,

Chris Hunt Advocate

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1. Executive Summary

The UCA works with small businesses, farmers, and residential consumers to help reduce their energy costs through representing their interests at regulatory proceedings and advising them on their options for energy utility services.

High inflation negatively impacted many households, farms, and small businesses across Alberta creating an affordability crisis that was exacerbated by volatile electricity prices. While the Government introduced the Regulated Rate Option Stabilization Program, the UCA complemented these efforts through ramping up its consumer education program through a winter utility awareness campaign to inform consumers of their retail energy options to help them save money.

The UCA intervened in 19 Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) proceedings during fiscal 2022-23. These regulatory proceedings examined the various components that go into delivery charges and other regulated charges on power and natural gas bills.



**Over \$63 million
in cost
disallowances.
Saving consumers
money!*

- The AUC agreed with UCA on 61% of issues contested with utility companies during these proceedings.
- UCA evidence and arguments cited in AUC regulatory decisions resulted in cost disallowances of over \$63 million, real savings that helped preserve a competitive business environment and protect consumers.

*Consumers saved
\$22 for every \$1
spent on UCA
Regulatory Affairs!*

The UCA Operations Section advises small business, farm, and residential consumers on their energy utility services options through the UCA's mediation and consumer education programs.

- The UCA Mediation Team provided timely and efficient dispute resolution between consumers and their utility providers. The UCA received 21,927 calls and 2,107 emails from consumers in fiscal 2022-23, resulting in 1,038 mediations by the UCA. These mediations required the UCA to contact the utility provider on behalf of the consumer to resolve a dispute.

*21,927 calls from
Albertans and mediation
services for
1,038 customers*

- The UCA directly helped reconnect 46 households under the Winter Utility Reconnection Program which reconnected 470 households overall. This initiative was a last line of consumer protection for households entering winter in Alberta without essential heat and power services.

The UCA's consumer education program conducted 78 outreach events. This outreach was complemented by 815,745 consumer visits to the UCA website, over 2.4 times more than the previous year.

During Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the UCA informed more consumers about their utility options, helped consumers resolve disputes with the utility providers, and helped contain consumer electricity costs, while delivering its services even more efficiently. The UCA delivered all its programs for just under \$6 million in 2022-2023 providing a modest operational surplus from a budget of nearly \$6.7 million. The UCA continues to innovate and deliver value to the electricity and natural gas ratepayers who fund it.

2. Introduction

The UCA empowers small business, farm, and residential consumers of electricity, natural gas, and water utility consumers in Alberta through its three core functions:

Advocacy ▶

The UCA acts as the voice of electricity and natural gas consumers in dozens of regulatory proceedings every year to ensure the lowest-possible rates for Alberta utility consumers, consistent with safe, reliable, reasonable service. The UCA works closely with other governmental departments and agencies, as well as utility service providers, to ensure that consumer interests are addressed in policies, regulations, and industry practices.

Mediation ▶

When consumers have exhausted known avenues of issue resolution, the UCA will investigate and attempt to resolve their concerns through mediation with utility companies.

Education ▶

The UCA provides information and advice to consumers so they understand their utility services, and how to make informed choices about how to purchase electricity and natural gas based on their individual circumstances.

The UCA's mandate is set out in Schedule 13.1 of the *Government Organization Act*.

Vision

Alberta's small business, farm, and residential utility consumers are confident the UCA provides them with the information and representation they need to protect their interests.

Mission

The UCA advocates, mediates, and educates for Alberta's small business, farm, and residential utilities consumers to provide the information they need to make informed decisions about their utilities services, mediate disputes with their utilities providers, and represent the interests of electricity and natural gas consumers at regulatory proceedings to ensure they receive reliable services at reasonable prices.

3. UCA Advocates

Regulatory Affairs Program Activities

The UCA advocates for safe, reliable, cost-effective utility service that meets the needs of consumers today and tomorrow. The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) reviews hundreds of applications each year through regulatory proceedings. The UCA typically intervenes in the few dozen proceedings annually that could have the most impact on consumers. Most of the AUC proceedings where the UCA intervenes address service quality, terms and conditions, or rates for consumers. The UCA intervened in 32 AUC proceedings during 2022-23; 19 of those proceedings were concluded and a decision issued by the end of the fiscal year on March 31st, 2023. UCA evidence and arguments cited by the AUC in its decisions prevented unjustified expenses from being downloaded to consumers.

The AUC may accept a "Cost Disallowance" based on evidence from interveners. E.g. An applicant may request \$6 million for new computers. The UCA presents evidence to show they only need \$4 million. The AUC accepts the evidence and disallows this cost; this represents a cost disallowance of \$2 million (6 million minus 4 million).

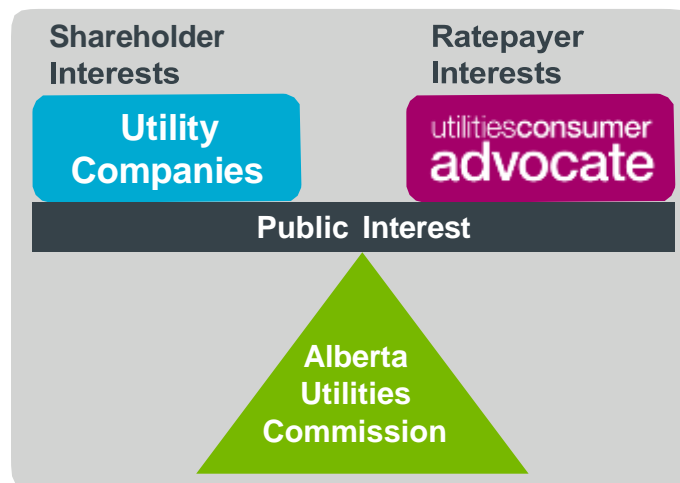


Table 1 below summarizes the participation and value of UCA regulatory interventions in AUC proceedings since 2013. **These cost disallowances are significant, totaling \$1.9 billion since 2013, and over \$63 million during 2022-23.** The UCA has included a performance measure of a rolling three-year average for cost disallowances to adjust for the variance in the number of AUC proceedings and decisions that occur from year to year. For 2022-23, that rolling three-year average was \$146 million.

Table 1 - UCA Participation in AUC Regulatory Proceedings 2020-23			
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
# of proceedings, for which an AUC decision was issued in the FY	63	33	19
# of issues contained in those proceedings	245	255	177
# of issues UCA Intervened in	140	115	77
AUC agreed with UCA on (% of issues)	76%	58%	61%
UCA Regulatory Affairs Program Costs (millions of dollars)	\$3.12	\$2.56	\$2.91
UCA Evidence/Argument cited in AUC Decision as Cost Disallowances (millions of dollars)	\$281	\$92	\$63
Cost Disallowances per \$ invested in UCA Regulatory Affairs	\$90	\$36	\$22
Rolling Three Year Average of Cost Disallowances (millions of dollars)	\$243	\$181	\$146

Note: The significant variance in annual cost disallowances is largely tied to the value of issues being examined by the AUC in their proceedings and the decisions published in each fiscal year. For example, AUC Decision 2941-D01-2015 Generic Cost of Capital included cost disallowances of \$239.6 million and was published on March 23, 2015; had it been published nine days later, it would have counted against 2015-16 statistics.

During Fiscal Year 2022-23, the UCA participated in the Alberta Utilities Commission’s “Maximum Investment Levels” proceeding regarding residential standards of service and maximum investment levels for utilities portion of costs for providing service to new houses. UCA evidence and arguments cited in the AUC decision saved consumers over \$17 million by avoiding unnecessary infrastructure development connection costs that are socialized across all customers on the electric distribution system. These connection costs included proposed requirements for upgraded service for amperage and conduit.

Table 2 below demonstrates the strong return on investment consumers have received from the UCA’s Regulatory Affairs program during 2022-23; for every \$1 dollar invested, almost \$22 in cost disallowances were recorded. Nevertheless, this return is significantly below the targeted three-year rolling average on >\$50 in cost disallowances for every \$1 invested. Some of the contributing factors to this decline were the AUC held fewer rate proceedings during this fiscal year, and several of the most important rate proceedings will not see decisions issued until 2023-24. The UCA will explore opportunities to intervene in more proceedings in 2023-24 in order to find more cost disallowances for consumers.

Table 2 – UCA Regulatory Affairs Performance Measures			
Performance Measures	Target 3 year rolling average	Actual 3 year rolling average	2022-23
Cost disallowances per dollar invested in UCA Regulatory Affairs.	>\$50	\$49	\$22
Success rate on the issues contested at the AUC	>66%	64%	61%
% of Regulatory Affairs budget spent on external legal counsel and contractors.	<75%	67%	67%

As well as regulatory interventions, the UCA continued to undertake “best practices” research and provide input to the AUC, Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO), Department of Affordability and Utilities, and industry bodies, on policy related to terms and conditions, distributed energy resources, and metering practices.

The UCA was an active participant, representing consumer interests, in discussions regarding AUC Rules and AESO initiatives, including the AESO’s ongoing transmission/distribution integrated planning workshops, and bulk regional tariff design consultations.

The UCA continues make utility rate relief a priority during the current economic challenges brought on by the pandemic. Some of the largest amounts of rate relief this past year were achieved through the UCA’s regulatory interventions such as the Maximum Investment Levels proceeding and the UCA intervention in the ATCO Electric and FortisAlberta Cost of Service Review, which resulted in an additional \$20 million in rate relief for consumers.

Regulatory Affairs Program Objectives

The UCA Regulatory Affairs program supports the following Affordability and Utilities 2023-26 Business Plan Outcomes and Key Objectives:

Affordability and Utilities Outcome 1 - Everyday life is more affordable for Albertans	
Key Objective 1.1	Lead, facilitate and coordinate the Government of Alberta’s ongoing efforts to identify and advance opportunities to address affordability and cost of living concerns of Albertans.
Key Objective 1.3	Educate, mediate and advocate for Alberta’s small business, farm, and residential electricity, natural gas and water consumers through the Utilities Consumer Advocate.
UCA Regulatory Affairs Program Objectives	
One	Assist regulatory decision-makers with gaining a richer understanding of issues under their consideration by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intervening in regulator proceedings; • conducting independent analysis of applications to regulatory agencies (particularly the AUC); and • presenting evidence and arguments on behalf of small business, farm, and residential consumers of electricity and natural gas.
Two	Pursue results oriented regulatory interventions and consumer focused input into GOA policy development concerning energy issues by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responding to government priorities and policy direction by providing expert analysis and advice that represents consumers’ best interests; and • prioritizing effort to issues of significance to consumers because of their financial, service quality, precedential, or other regulatory implications. See Appendix B – Proceeding Intervention Criteria for more details.

Three	Ensure timely UCA reporting of regulatory results, successes and future challenges, including informing the Minister of Affordability and Utilities on critical issues arising from regulatory applications.
Four	Reduce regulatory burden by identifying opportunities to address reoccurring regulatory issues and improving standardization of terms, tariffs, and conditions through collaboration with industry and other stakeholders, generic regulatory proceedings, or updates to regulation.

4. UCA Mediates

Mediation Program Activities

The UCA received 21,927 calls from Albertans through the 310-4UCA (310-4822) line during 2022-23, and 2,107 emails to UCAhelps@gov.ab.ca. The majority of calls to the UCA are customers looking for advice and information about their utility situation. Mediation Officers provided consumers with a list of retailers and product offers, education about the energy market, and information that will help a customer to make an informed choice about their service. Of the total calls and emails, 1,038 provided mediation services. These services included investigating concerns raised by consumers and attempts to resolve their concerns through mediation with utility companies. The most common reasons for mediation are: billing issues; early exit fees; concerns about billing and customer service; and disconnections for non-payment or non-application.



Of 21,927 calls, **1,038** received mediation services

A consumer from the County of Grande Prairie set up an account with a competitive retailer in December 2022. Six months later, over the summer they received a large catch up bill for their property from the regulated retailer and the service was disconnected. The consumer tried multiple times to resolve the issue. The retailers insisted both meters were billing at his property. After the UCA investigated, it was determined that the addresses for the consumer's home and his neighbour's home were reversed in the site catalogue and the competitive retailer set him up for the wrong meter. Through UCA intervention the service was reconnected and the entire six months of billing with the competitive retailer was reversed and returned to the customer.

Each year, the UCA participates in the AUC's Winter Utility Reconnection Program. The UCA is supplied with the names and contact information for Albertan consumers whose electricity and/or natural gas services are being disconnected at the beginning of the winter season. Multiple attempts are made to reach those individuals through phone calls and letters in an effort to assist in the reconnection process. This includes providing information and advice, mediating payment arrangements, and connecting consumers with support programs, if required. As part of the AUC Winter Utility Reconnection Program, in October 2022 the UCA received 2,489 files from retailers for



46 households reconnected

investigation, and in partnership with the AUC and participating natural gas/electricity retailers, successfully reconnected services to 470 households who were without electricity and/or natural gas services as of November 1, 2022. The UCA directly helped reconnect 46 disconnected households during the 2022-23 winter season who had not come to an arrangement with their retailer. This work continued into the New Year to ensure every file was verified before it was closed.

Table 3 – UCA Mediation Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Service Targets	2022/2023 Actuals
Abandoned Call Rate	7%	7%
Calls answered within 30 seconds	80%	77%
Average Days to Close an Energy Utility Mediation	14 days	9 days
Average Days to Close a Water Utility Mediation	28 days	11 days
Winter Utility Disconnection Program completed	December 15th	January 25th

Mediation Program Objectives

The UCA Mediation program supports the following Affordability and Utilities 2023-26 Business Plan Outcomes and Key Objectives:

Affordability and Utilities Outcome 1 - Everyday life is more affordable for Albertans	
Key Objective 1.3	Educate, mediate and advocate for Alberta’s small business, farm, and residential electricity, natural gas and water consumers through the Utilities Consumer Advocate.
UCA Mediation Program Objectives	
One	Resolve disputes between consumers and energy service providers through timely and effective mediation.
Two	Contact disconnected residential consumers through the Winter Utility Reconnection Program in order to assist with activating their gas and/or electricity service during winter months.
Three	Support Affordability and Utilities by advising the Minister of critical and sensitive issues and on trends identified from mediation activities.

5. UCA Educates

Consumer Education and Awareness Program Activities

The UCA Consumer Education and Awareness Program includes three complementary components:

1. the www.ucahelps.alberta.ca website;
2. UCA social media channels; and
3. UCA consumer outreach program.

Website

The www.ucahelps.alberta.ca website is the foundation of the UCA Consumer Education and Awareness Program. The UCA website provides an important objective source of information for consumers about retail choice, their monthly bills, helpful tips and hints, and where to go for help. The site also includes detailed information about the energy markets, and utility regulatory processes and decisions. The website includes a cost-comparison tool so that consumers can easily review the products available in their area. During 2022-23, the UCA ran an advertising campaign that resulted in 593,442 visits to the UCA website. Over the entire course of 2022-23, there were 815,745 consumer visits to the UCA website, over 2.4 times more than the previous year. The website provides Albertans with helpful information on what their options are when it comes to purchasing power and natural gas for their homes and businesses.

Social Media Engagement

The number of UCA social media engagements (Facebook and Instagram likes, shares, and comments) was 85,734 for 2022-23 which was an increase of 470% over 2021-22. The increase is assessed to be from consumers' concerns with high regulated electricity and natural gas retail prices during the winter months, and the advertising campaign mentioned earlier that included a large digital and social media component that made sharing UCA posts easy.

Consumer Outreach Program

This past year, the Consumer Education Team's delivery of outreach activities was still largely virtual through online webinars and presentations. In-person activities resumed late in the fiscal year as COVID-19 health protection measures were lifted. The Consumer Education Team conducted a total of 78 events. The team continued a strategy of indirect engagement with relevant stakeholder organizations, with a focus on small business associations, such as chambers of commerce and specific associations in the tourism sector and manufacturing. Education resources were shared with these organizations for distribution to their membership. These activities also enabled the Consumer Education Team to share feedback that facilitated improvements to the UCA website and social media posts, as well as referrals to the UCA Mediation Team and the identification of regulatory and policy issues to the Regulatory Affairs Section.

Consumer Education and Awareness Program Objectives

The UCA Consumer Education and Awareness program supports the following Affordability and Utilities 2023-26 Business Plan Outcomes and Key Objectives:

Affordability and Utilities Outcome 1 - Everyday life is more affordable for Albertans	
Key Objective 1.3	Educate, mediate and advocate for Alberta’s small business, farm, and residential electricity, natural gas and water consumers through the Utilities Consumer Advocate.
UCA Consumer Education Program Objectives	
One	Electricity and natural gas consumers are aware of the energy utility service options available to them.
Two	Electricity and natural gas consumers know where to find independent and impartial information tools to assist in choosing their provider.
Three	Electricity and natural gas consumers are aware of the regulatory protections and oversight of the utilities sector, natural gas and electricity markets.
Four	Electricity, natural gas, and water utility consumers understand the line items on their monthly utility bills.
Five	Electricity, natural gas, and water utility consumers are aware of mediation services available to them if they have a dispute with their utility provider.
Six	Electricity, natural gas, and water utility consumers know where they can learn more about electricity, natural gas, and water utilities issues.

6. Financial Information

Table 4 summarizes the UCA's financial results (unaudited) for 2022-23.

Table 4 – Financial Report, 2022-23 Fiscal Year ending March 31 st , 2023			
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS ¹			
(thousands of dollars)	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23
Expense	Budget	Actual	Variance
Operations	947	829	118
Mediation Services	757	745	12
Regulatory Affairs	3425	2905	520
Consumer Education & Awareness	1517	1502	15
Power & Natural Gas Consumers Panel	16	5	11
Valuation/Depreciation Adjustment	0	(18)	(18)
Total Expense	6662	5968	676
¹ The UCA is funded 80 per cent by the Balancing Pool and 20 percent by Natural Gas Utilities.			

For FY 2022-23, the UCA had an overall budget surplus of \$676 thousand. The surplus was the result of the following:

- The Regulatory Affairs program, which had a surplus of over \$520 thousands, was the single largest contributor to the overall variance, due to vacant staff positions and fewer AUC proceedings requiring legal services and technical consultants.
- Operations had a surplus of over \$118 thousand due to a lower levy for Department of Affordability and Utilities Ministry Support Services (Corporate Services).
- By leveraging some virtual meetings, the Power and Natural Gas Consumer's Panel reduced its expenses significantly and continued its trend of running large surpluses relative to its budget allocation.
- There was an \$18 thousand valuation credit reflecting reconciliation of vacation day liability for staff following the Government reorganization and transfer of the UCA between ministries.

7. Power & Natural Gas Consumer's Panel Activities ---

The Power and Natural Gas Consumers' Panel met four times during 2022-2023. During the May 2022 meeting, the Panel reviewed the UCA Annual report for 2021-22 and recommended its acceptance by the Minister of Service Alberta.

The Panel met again in September 2022, heard from a variety of stakeholder presentations, and identified affordability as a growing concern for consumers that would likely be exacerbated by high power and natural gas market prices projected for winter 2022-23. The Panel recommended the UCA continue to focus on affordability in its regulatory interventions and policy development input.

The Panel met again in late October 2022 and discussed affordability approaches and their mandate following the move from the Ministry of Service Alberta to Affordability and Utilities. The Panel recommended the UCA work more closely with other departments and non-government organizations to increase consumer awareness of their options, shifting from direct outreach to a 'train-the-partner' approach to better educate organizations that work directly with key consumer groups such as seniors, students, newcomers, and small businesses.

During their March 2023 meeting, the Panel discussed the Regulated Rate Option, Local Access and Municipal Franchise Fees, and billing consistency and clarity. They identified key considerations on these issues and made several recommendations to Department officials for how consumer concerns could be mitigated and addressed.

8. Appendices

Appendix A

Mandate

The UCA is established by the *Government Organization Act*, Schedule 13.1.

The Act assigns the following responsibilities to the UCA:

- (a) to represent the interests of Alberta small business, farm and residential consumers of electricity and natural gas before proceedings of the Alberta Utilities Commission and other bodies whose decisions may affect the interests of those consumers;
- (b) to disseminate independent and impartial information about the regulatory process relating to electricity and natural gas, including an analysis of the impact of decisions of the Alberta Utilities Commission, other bodies and the courts relating to electricity and natural gas;
- (c) to inform and educate consumers about electricity, natural gas and water utilities issues;
- (d) to disseminate independent and impartial information to assist electricity and natural gas consumers in choosing a distributor, provider or retailer, including
 - (i) complaints made under this Schedule, the *Electric Utilities Act* or the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and the outcome of any recommendation, hearing or settlement,
 - (ii) investigations, orders, administrative penalties or convictions conducted, awarded or made under the *Electric Utilities Act*, the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* or the *Consumer Protection Act*,
 - (iii) compliance records of a distributor, provider or retailer in adhering to the standards and codes prescribed under the *Electric Utilities Act*, the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and the *Consumer Protection Act*, and
 - (iv) any other matters the Utilities Consumer Advocate considers necessary to carry out the purposes of this clause;
- (e) to assist in the resolution of any consumer issue, complaint or dispute between a consumer and a distributor, provider or retailer relating to the provision of electricity, natural gas or water as the Utilities Consumer Advocate considers appropriate and, if a resolution is not reached, to refer the complaint to the person, body or authority the Utilities Consumer Advocate considers appropriate;
- (f) to develop and undertake activities that the Utilities Consumer Advocate considers appropriate for the purposes of
 - (i) preventing the disconnection of electricity or natural gas provided by a retailer or provider to a consumer, or

- (ii) facilitating the reconnection of electricity or natural gas provided by a retailer or provider to a consumer;
- (g) to carry out such other responsibilities relating to electricity, natural gas and water as the responsible Minister determines.

Appendix B

Proceeding Intervention Criteria

The UCA may intervene in a proceeding based on the combination of the priorities below (high, medium or discretionary) and the resources available.

Proceeding and Policy Priorities:

1. Base load high priority work - mandatory participation

- Generic Cost of Capital
- General Revenue Applications (GRAs), General Tariff Applications (GTAs) and all subsequent related proceedings including
 - Interim requests that are excessive
 - Review and Variance requests
 - Appeals to the Alberta Court of Appeal
- Retail energy and non-energy proceedings and all subsequent related proceedings
- Regulated Rate Initiative proceedings including PBR and Capital Trackers

2. Medium priority work - participation depending on constraints

- Policy matters and generic proceedings that affect multiple un-affiliated utilities
 - AUC initiated
 - Utility Asset Disposition
 - Code of Conduct
 - Minimum Filing Requirements
 - Service Quality
 - Distribution Inquiry
 - Department of Affordability and Utilities initiated
 - Harmonization of regulations
 - Market consultations
 - Others

- Industry initiated
- Transmission constraint management
- Policy matters for affiliated utilities that have the potential to set precedents
 - Pension management
 - Others
- Complaints by or on behalf of specific customers

3. Discretionary work/Optional participation

- Facilities Applications
- Needs Identification
- Markets - AESO Rules
- National Energy Board matters related to TransCanada Alberta System (NGTL)
- Interim filings
- Compliance filings
- True up or rider applications
- Research on policy implications of emerging technologies on utilities

Issue Intervention Criteria:

Within proceedings, the UCA will take positions on specific issues based on the following criteria. The validity of these specific criteria and the success on specific issues will be monitored and modified on an ongoing basis.

1. Impact on Alberta consumers - Potential benefit or harm

(a) Costs

- (i) timing
- (ii) magnitude
- (iii) direct channel to consumers
- (iv) reasonableness or prudence

(b) service reliability and quality

- (i) for all service types (retail, distribution, transmission and wholesale)
- (ii) for both physical operations and customer service

(c) terms and conditions of service

(d) Intergenerational equity

- (e) Legitimate or reasonable request from constituents
- 2. Past successes or failures on specific, related or similar issues
 - (a) Have we exhausted all avenues?
 - (b) Was the best case put forward?
- 3. Resource availability to address the specific issues
 - (a) Internal
 - (b) External
- 4. Regulatory precedent, support or impact
 - (a) Aligned with the regulatory compact
 - (b) Within Alberta
 - (c) In other Canadian jurisdictions
 - (d) In other jurisdictions including the US
- 5. Regulatory Affairs principles to be defended
- 6. Alternative means exist for addressing the issues (i.e. another proceeding or policy input)
- 7. Are the UCA's interests adequately represented by other interveners?

Appendix C

Power & Natural Gas Consumers' Panel Biographies

Panel Mandate

Created under s. 7 of the *Government Organization Act*, the Power and Natural Gas Consumer's Panel ("the Committee") is an advisory agency accountable to the Minister of Affordability and Utilities ("Minister") and responsible for providing advice and guidance regarding current and emerging energy consumer issues.

Panel Members FY 2022-2023

Annette Clews, Chair, Public Member



Annette Clews lives in Sundre, Alberta. She has owned a small business since 2017, transitioning the company to a web-based store in 2019. From 2013 to 2017, she was an adjudicator on the Surface Rights Board and Land Compensation Board for the province of Alberta. Annette was a councillor for the Town of Sundre from 2001 to 2008, then acting Mayor from 2008 to 2010.

In 2010 Annette was elected Mayor and served in this capacity until 2013. During that time, she completed several certifications, including basic economic development, municipal development board, municipal affairs assessment review board, municipal finance courses, incident command system ICS, dispute resolution, and effective leadership skills. During her time as Mayor, she successfully completed many projects for the community that required multiple levels of government involvement.

In 2009, Annette and other council members from local communities were recognized at AUMA, winning the Minister of Municipal Affairs Award of Excellence for inter-municipal cooperation. In 2013, Annette received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal for dedication to her community.

Mike Pashak, Member representing Alberta Urban Municipalities Association



Mike is a third-generation property owner on Sylvan Lake, and is in his second term on Council for the Summer Village of Half Moon Bay. He is President of the Association of Summer Villages of Alberta, which provides a forum for all Summer Villages and represents the interests of members at all levels of government. Mike is an executive-level business professional with 30 years of experience in the electric utility industry. He has a proven ability to build relationships with governments, regulators, industry peers and stakeholders.

Humphrey Banack, Member representing Alberta Federation of Agriculture



Mr. Humphrey Banack and his family operate a 7000-acre third generation grains and oilseeds farm in the Round Hill area, 50 miles southeast of Edmonton. His farm has grown from a small mixed operation into a larger, more complex operation requiring considerable management time. Humphrey has been involved with the Alberta Federation of Agriculture since 2003, serving as president for four years. He served as Vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture from 2011 to 2017, meeting agricultural producers from across Canada and around the world. Mr. Banack was born and raised in the Round Hill area and has been deeply involved in the community his entire life. He understands the growing challenges that rural communities face today such as decreasing population, increasing costs, and providing the necessary programs that enliven rural communities.

Faith-Michael Uzoka, Public Member



Faith-Michael Uzoka (BSc, MS, MBA, PhD) is a Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Computing at Mount Royal University (MRU), Calgary. He has about 30 years of university teaching and research experience in four countries. Michael is an accomplished scholar with over 100 academic publications that have made global impacts in various aspects of human endeavour, especially in medical decision support systems. He has worked with research collaborators to develop award-winning innovations; e.g., automatic pill dispenser, smart medical assistant, and a system for the early differential diagnosis of tropical confusable diseases.

Michael served as a Canadian Commonwealth Scholar, Carnegie African Diaspora Fellow, and Research Development Officer (MRU). He is passionate about equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and places a high premium on EDI's value in governance and community relations. Michael chairs the EDI Committee of the Faculty of Science and Technology and sits on the President's Advisory Committee on EDI at MRU.

Karen Rosvold, Member representing Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)



Karen Rosvold was elected to the RMA Board of Directors in November 2022 as the Director for District 4. Karen has served as a councillor for the County of Grande Prairie since winning a by-election in May 2016. During that time, she concurrently served on the board for the Family Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA). She also continues to serve on the boards for the County of Grande Prairie Library, Grand Spirit Housing Management, and many more. Committee work for the RMA includes the Affordable Housing Task Force, the AFRRCS Council and the FCSS Steering Committee.

Karen and her husband live near LaGlance, Alberta. They continue to farm approximately 3,000 acres of land and raise around 300 head of cattle together with their son and his family. In addition to farming and her public service, Karen has worked in customer service, property management, automotive service, and finance. Being a proud mother and grandmother, she feels driven to make a difference for her family in her community.

Don Oszli, Member representing Alberta Chambers of Commerce



Don Oszli is a Managing Partner in the public accounting firm, Pivotal LLP. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Alberta and is a Chartered Accountant, Certified Management Accountant and Certified Internal Auditor. Throughout his career, Don has chaired a number of industry association committees, including the Travel Alberta Board of Directors, Red Deer Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Institute of Chartered Accountants Audit

Committee, Alberta Chambers of Commerce Executive, Red Deer Regional Airport Authority and The Leadership Centre. Since 2017, Don has served as the Chair of Parkland Class, a not-for-profit corporation and registered charity employing 600 people and providing disability support for adults and children in need. He became a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 2004 and was awarded the Gus Bakke Memorial Award by the Canadian Home Builders Association, as well as the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award. For the past 25 years, Don has taught at the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Alberta and created new professional development course material. He has authored numerous publications, including Orientation to Public Practice (Level I and Level II) and Public Accounting Registration Criteria (PARC) Modules 3, 4 and 5, published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Richard Dunn, Public Member



Richard Dunn is a Professional Engineer with extensive senior-level experience with major Canadian energy producers who brings a solid understanding of a broad range of government-related matters, including policy and regulatory development as well as complex regulatory applications.

Collaborating extensively with Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders, governments, regulators and other industry players, Richard's teams have focused on delivering involved regulatory applications as well as efficient and evidence-based policy and regulatory development, considering factors such as environmental science, health, social, economics, engineering, and safety. Examples of relevant policy and regulatory development include royalty and tax program design as well as greenhouse gas policy and regulation.

Richard holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Mechanical Engineering degree from the University of British Columbia and a Master of Engineering in Chemical Engineering from the University of Calgary. He has served on several boards, including the Executive of the Business Council of British Columbia and the University of Calgary Senate. Richard and his wife Bev are proud to have three adult children and two grandchildren.

Michael Ng, Public Member



Michael Ng is a professional engineer (PEng), project manager (PMP), and operational lead with diverse industry experience. Born and raised in Alberta, he started his career as a field engineer in Alberta's oil patch, Michael advanced into design work, working as an electrical engineer on refineries. When an opportunity arose in project management, Michael shifted his career into the utility industry, executing over \$800 million in projects for a transmission facility owner (TFO). His career highlights include the system upgrades associated with the Keephills 3 generator, installing Alberta's first phase-shifting transformer, and successful energization of the Heartland Transmission Line, including Alberta's first SOOkV gas-insulated line. Most recently, Michael returned to oil and gas, and served as an operational director for a consulting company, leading organizational change and strategic planning, while driving performance through a tumultuous economy. Michael has also focused on AC (alternating current) interference mitigation in his career. He developed a standardized approach for this work within the TFO, completed his MBA Capstone project on this topic, and later continued to advance AC mitigation through his latest role in the service industry.

Appendix D

Glossary

Alberta Electric System Operator – the not-for-profit organization that manages and operates the provincial power grid.

Alberta Utilities Commission - regulates the utilities sector, natural gas and electricity markets to protect social, economic and environmental interests of Alberta where competitive market forces do not.

Balancing Pool – The Balancing Pool is responsible to help manage certain assets, revenues and expenses arising from the transition to competition in Alberta’s electric industry.

Cost Disallowance – A cost disallowance is the difference between costs in a regulated utility’s application to a regulator, and the cost the regulator approves. The UCA uses cost disallowances as a performance indicator but only counts those where a regulator has cited UCA evidence and/or arguments in its decision.

Distribution Utility – is responsible for the local delivery of electricity, natural gas, or water services within a specific service territory, often one or more municipalities.

Energy Retailer – companies that sell electricity and/or natural gas directly to customers and provide billing services for energy distributors.

Transmission Utility – is responsible for the transportation of large volumes of electricity or natural gas, usually over large distances across the province.

Utility Payment Deferral Program Act – legislation that enabled financial support to utilities to enable them to provide payment deferrals to customers during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.