

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **CREATING ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR ALL**

**WINNIPEG, MB – Thursday, January 23, 2020**

Journalists are invited to attend an important hearing at the Public Utilities Board tomorrow, **Friday, January 24, 2020** where a diverse panel of Manitoba ratepayers will speak about their lived experience as it relates to energy efficiency and costs.

The Public Utilities Board is currently reviewing the first proposed three-year plan of **Efficiency Manitoba**, the new Crown Corporation taking over Manitoba Hydro PowerSmart and other energy efficiency programs. The new Plan, which includes electricity and natural gas programs, is to begin on April 1, 2020. The overall goal is to help Manitobans reduce their energy consumption and save money on their monthly bills.

The Consumers Coalition made up of the Consumer's Association of Canada (Manitoba) and Winnipeg Harvest, is represented by the Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) at the hearing. The Consumers Coalition is partnering with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO), a non-profit organization representing 26 northern First Nations and represented in the hearing by P. Michael Jerch Law Corporation (Jerch Law). The Consumers Coalition and MKO are providing a Ratepayers Panel so the Board can hear directly from ratepayers.

The Ratepayers Panel will include a person from Cross Lake First Nation who has electric heat that costs \$400 to \$500 in winter months; a ratepayers from Otterburne who also is a dairy farmer, and one Winnipeg renter who has a limited income.

### **EXPERT CONSULTANTS**

The Consumers Coalition has also submitted reports by four expert consultants. The Coalition is concerned that input from the public, including from low-income Manitobans into the Efficiency Manitoba plan is lacking. The experts have said that overall, Efficiency Manitoba has had limited interaction with the public, low income and hard-to-reach customers in the design of its three-year plan. A more effective, transparent and meaningful process would have sought early engagement with First Nations, Métis and Indigenous communities as well as the general public.

Experts also recommend that Efficiency Manitoba create a more detailed project management plan and increase its proposed residential and income-eligible program budgets, to better meet the needs of Manitoba's households. Experts have also addressed the need to increase electrification as a heating source in Manitoba to meet climate change goals and achieve significant savings. Both geothermal heat pumps and cold climate air source heat pumps offer the potential for substantial reductions in electricity consumption. Efficiency Manitoba should

increase its emphasis on heat pumps as an electric efficiency measure, and make it available to low income, eligible customers at no cost.

**RATEPAYERS PANEL** – Friday, January 24, 2020 at 9 am

**CLOSING ARGUMENTS** by PILC on behalf of the Consumers Coalition – Monday, January 27, 2020. Closing arguments by Jerch Law on behalf of MKO – Tuesday, January 28, 2020.

The PUB hearing, which runs from 9 am to 4 pm, is open to the public and media, at 400 Portage Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Live stream of the hearing available at: <http://www.pubmanitoba.ca/v1/live-stream.html>

Gloria Desorcy, Executive Director, CAC Manitoba and Katrine Dilay, Attorney, are available for interviews.

### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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