



Régie de l'énergie  
DOSSIER: R-3824-2012  
DÉPOSÉE EN AUDIENCE  
Date: 31 JANV. 2013  
Pièces n°: NON

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**TERASEN GAS INC.**

*COTÉE*

**BIOMETHANE APPLICATION**

Régie de l'énergie  
DOSSIER: R-3824-2012  
PIÈCE NO: C-FCEP-0011  
Date: 31 JANV. 2013

**DECISION**

**December 14, 2010**

**BEFORE:**

**D.A. Cote, Panel Chair/Commissioner  
A.A. Rhodes, Commissioner  
L.A. O'Hara, Commissioner**

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### COMMISSION ORDER G-194-10

#### APPENDICES

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 8, 2010 Terasen Gas Inc. filed an Application for approval of what it describes as an end-to-end business model encompassing the purchase of biogas and/or Biomethane for sale to its customers. The Application was filed against the backdrop of the continued evolution of British Columbia's energy policy. The most recent addition, *The Clean Energy Act*, received Royal Assent on June 3, 2010 and, in the view of the Applicant, has given renewed and heightened importance to its role in the development of renewable resources, the reduction of GHG emissions, the reduction of waste through the use of biogas and biomass as well as its role in promoting energy efficiency. Further, Terasen has noted that federal, provincial, regional and municipal governments have all become increasingly focused on climate change and the impact of pollution and have adopted policies to favor renewable energy forms as key to solving environmental challenges.

Terasen Gas is developing a number of initiatives which it believes are aligned with BC Government Policy and the *Clean Energy Act*. These are outlined in its 2010 Long Term Resource Plan that is currently before the British Columbia Utilities Commission. The Biomethane Service Offering Application is the first of these initiatives that has come before the Commission. This Application is made up of three components:

- The Biomethane Supply Model which addresses the acquisition of a reliable supply of biogas.
- The Biomethane product offering which consists primarily of a rate offering allowing for the notional sale of Biomethane to Terasen customers on a voluntary basis.
- The cost allocation and recovery model addressing the recovery of costs for the product offering from the various customer groups.

This Biomethane Service Offering which includes all elements of the biomass model has been referred to as the Biomethane Program or Program within this Decision. Terasen's Application seeks approval of a number of Orders encompassing rates, cost recovery, supply and post implementation review which are related to the Program. Key among these are the following:

approval of two projects, the Catalyst Project in Abbotsford, BC and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Project in Salmon Arm, BC; the allocation of costs between all non by-pass customers and voluntary Biomethane gas purchasing customers and a set of criteria allowing for the filing of future supply contracts.

In its review of the Application, the Commission Panel raised and examined a number of issues in reaching the determinations made in this Decision. The first group of these includes the following: the alignment with British Columbia's energy objectives and Provincial Government policy, the adequacy of supply for these and future Projects and the level of customer demand for this type of program. On the basis of this examination, the Panel is satisfied the Program is in alignment with both British Columbia's energy objectives and Provincial Government policy and there is sufficient demand and supply to justify moving forward. Accordingly, the Panel has determined the two Projects are in the public interest and has approved both of them as well as the related capital costs. However, the Panel in reaching this determination has noted that it would be prudent for TGI to thoroughly test the proposed model in the marketplace before reaching a conclusion as to its full market potential.

The second group of issues is related to how the Biomethane Program will work and includes the following:

- Terasen's proposed role in the biogas upgrading process;
- The criteria for future projects;
- The risk of stranded assets and other project risks;
- Principles for cost allocation and recovery; and
- Post implementation review and reporting.

With respect to Terasen's proposed role in the upgrading process, the Panel has made no finding on the acceptability of this and directs that the upgrading business be sufficiently distinct so as to be severable if the Commission were to determine that this function should be conducted through a separate entity in the future. Concerning the criteria for future projects to be approved on a

streamlined basis, the Panel has added criteria limiting the total production of Biomethane for all projects to 250,000 GJ per year during the test period and set a maximum commodity price at \$15.28 per GJ. In addition, the Panel has approved the cost allocation methodology as proposed by Terasen as reasonable and in the public interest. Finally, the Commission Panel directed the post implementation review and reporting period be reduced from the requested five years to two years.

In this Decision, the Commission Panel has allowed Terasen Gas to move forward with a Biomethane Program on a test basis for a two year period. In introducing limitations on scope and a term for the test, the Panel believes that Terasen will learn valuable lessons which can be applied to the development of a model which will sustain the Program over the long term. It believes that taking this approach is prudent and in the best interests of TGI ratepayers.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Application is submitted by Terasen Gas Inc. (Terasen, Terasen Gas, TGI or the Company) for approval to introduce an end-to-end business model for the acquisition of a Biomethane gas supply and the sale of this renewable energy to its customers.

### 2.1 Application

TGI and its affiliated companies sell and deliver natural gas to residential, commercial and industrial customers throughout British Columbia (BC). They provide service to 940,000 customers and which represents over 95 percent of gas users in the Province. Their operations are subject to regulation by the British Columbia Utilities Commission (Commission, BCUC).

By Application dated June 8, 2010 Terasen applied for approval of a Biomethane Service Offering and Supporting Business Model, for approval of a Salmon Arm Biomethane Project and for one in the Abbotsford area (the Application). Terasen Gas proposes to develop an initial supply of Biomethane from two projects:

- a farm in Abbotsford, BC where a project partner will collect agricultural waste and use anaerobic digestion and upgrading technology to develop Biomethane which will be delivered to Terasen for injection into the distribution system (the Catalyst Project); and
- a landfill project in Salmon Arm, BC where raw biogas will be produced in a landfill by a project partner and then upgraded to pipeline quality Biomethane by Terasen (the CSRD Project, or the Salmon Arm Project).

Biogas is a gas substantially composed of methane that is produced by the breakdown of organic matter (biomass) in the absence of oxygen. Biomethane is renewable energy and refers to biogas that has been upgraded to primarily methane by the removal of other constituents, so that it is safely interchangeable with natural gas in the distribution and transmission system. (Exhibit B-1, p. 7)

The end-to-end business model for a Biomethane program proposed by Terasen in the Application has three parts encompassing models for the acquisition of a supply of biogas, the sale of Biomethane to its customers and the allocation and recovery of costs.

Terasen states that market research suggests there is a strong desire on the part of customers to purchase renewable clean energy. It further states that the data presented in the Application supports the position that demand for the product will exceed the capability of the initial projects to supply it. This has resulted in Terasen proposing a phased approach which it states is both flexible and scalable allowing supply and demand to be balanced. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 1-3) Worthy of note is a letter from the Assistant Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, expressing the government's support for the Biomethane Service Offering. In it he states that:

“[t]he objectives of this proposal align with the policy actions of the BC Energy Plan, the BC Bioenergy Strategy and the British Columbia energy objectives of the *Clean Energy Act* (the Act), particularly the objectives in section 2(g) “to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” and section 2(j) “to reduce waste by encouraging the use of waste heat, biogas and biomass.” (Exhibit E-1)

## **2.2 Orders Sought**

TGI seeks Commission approval of a number of orders pursuant to the *Utilities Commission Act* R.S.B.C. 1996 c. 473 (the Act, UCA). Listed in their entirety in Appendix A to this Decision, they include the approval of rate related orders, cost recovery related orders for both voluntary participant customers and all non-bypass customers, supply project related orders and post implementation review orders.



### 2.3 Regulatory Process

The Regulatory Process is described in detail in Appendix B. Nine organizations registered as Interveners for the Application. They are as follows:

- Catalyst Power Inc.
- BC ARD Corporation
- BC Bioenergy Network
- British Columbia Power and Hydro Authority (BC Hydro)
- British Columbia Old Age Pensioners' Organization *et al* (BCOAPO)
- Elemental Energy Inc.
- Commercial Energy Consumers Association of British Columbia (CEC)
- BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA)
- BP Canada Energy Company

Among these the BCOAPO, CEC, BC Hydro and BCSEA actively participated in some or all of the Processes.

### 2.4 Context and Key Issues

TGI is seeking approval for the introduction of an end-to-end business model encompassing the acquisition of a supply of Biomethane and the sale of this renewable energy to its customers. As a starting point, Terasen has proposed that the supply of Biomethane be developed from two initial projects which were broadly described earlier in Section 2.1. These projects represent two different approaches to securing raw biogas and then upgrading it to allow it to be injected into the natural gas pipeline system. The first of these projects, the Catalyst Project, represents the traditional supply side management process for Terasen where the product has been purchased in its final form. The second, the CSRD Project, represents a significant departure from this as Terasen

moves up the supply chain to provide the biogas upgrading service role. The Catalyst Project and the CSRD Project will be collectively referred to as “the Projects”, in this Decision. The Biomethane Service Offering including all elements of the business model will be referred to as the Biomethane Program or Program.

A significant part of the Application is centered upon an examination and justification of the Projects and the resale of Biomethane from them. However, the Application goes much further in that it proposes a model which the Company will use as a basis for development of a broader Biomethane product offering in the future. Included in the model are the following:

- A set of future project selection criteria which, when satisfied, will allow for a streamlined regulatory process.
- A departure from the traditional supply side management processes utilized by Terasen.
- A set of principles governing the allocation of costs and their recovery from ratepayers.

It is further proposed that this model be reviewed through a post implementation report and workshop, which is contemplated to occur five years following the launch of the initial project.

Given the potential size and scope of the initiative being proposed by Terasen, the Commission Panel needs to consider issues far beyond those needed to reach a determination on the Projects. In reaching its Decision, the Panel also needs to consider the impact of the alternative positions it may take on the issues arising and assess the suitability of the model and whether changes are necessary to protect the public interest in the period which lies ahead. In what follows, the Panel will provide an outline of the Program before examining each of the key issues it believes to be important in reaching a determination as to whether the Application is to be accepted and whether changes to the proposed model are required. Accordingly, following a description of the key elements of the Program, the Panel will initially examine the following issues:

- How the Program aligns with British Columbia energy objectives and Policy;

- The adequacy of supply of biogas;
- The level of customer demand for the Projects and others like them.

The Panel will then examine some of the broader issues related to the model including:

- Terasen's proposed role in the biogas upgrading process;
- The criteria for future projects;
- The risk of stranded assets and other project risks;
- Principles for cost allocation and recovery; and
- Post implementation review and reporting.

### 3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1 Overview

The *Clean Energy Act*, S.B.C. 2010 c. 22 (*CEA*) received Royal Assent on June 3, 2010. In Terasen's view it has given a renewed and heightened importance to its role in developing renewable resources, reducing GHG emissions, reducing waste by using biogas and biomass as well as promoting energy efficiency. The Commission Panel considers the following British Columbia energy objectives included in section 2 of the *CEA* are germane to the Application:

- (d) to use and foster the development in British Columbia of innovative technologies that support energy conservation and efficiency and the use of clean or renewable resources;
- (g) to reduce BC greenhouse gas emissions
  - (i) by 2010 and for each subsequent calendar year to at least 6 percent less than the level of those emissions in 2007....;
- (h) to encourage the switching from one kind of energy source or use to another that decreases greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia;
- (j) to reduce waste by encouraging the use of waste heat, biogas and biomass.

In addition, federal, provincial, regional, and municipal governments are increasingly focused on climate change and pollution, adopting policies in favour of renewable forms of energy as a key part of the solution to environmental challenges. The Provincial Government has also explicitly stated its support for biogas project development in the 2008 Bioenergy Strategy document.

(Exhibit B-1, Appendix B-7, p. 8) Moreover, Terasen notes that many of the logical partners in the development of Biomethane projects are municipalities or regional districts because landfills and sewage treatment facilities owned and/or operated by them are often excellent sources of raw biogas. Terasen Gas submits the capture of biogas, and its upgrading to pipeline quality Biomethane, can help local governments generate revenue and meet the municipal GHG emission targets by way of the beneficial use of waste methane rather than flaring it. (Exhibit B-1, p. 27)

The end-to-end business model proposed by the Company is made up of the three components listed below and described subsequently in more detail:

- *The Biomethane supply model* - which addresses the logistics of acquiring a reliable supply of biogas, safely and reliably upgrading it to Biomethane and injecting it into TGI's distribution system;
- *The model for offering Biomethane product to customers* - which consists primarily of the formulation of a rate offering to allow the notional sale of Biomethane to those Terasen customers who are willing to pay a premium price for this product; and
- *The cost allocation and recovery model* - which addresses the related cost recovery of this product offering from various customer groups. (Exhibit B-1, p. 2)

#### 3.1.1 Supply of Biomethane

Terasen states that its partners will be responsible for the collection of raw material and the facilities required for production of biogas. However, for the process to upgrade biogas into Biomethane TGI has introduced two models. In the first model, Terasen will negotiate a contractual relationship to purchase upgraded Biomethane from project partners, providing these independent operators can meet Terasen's financial and technical standards. In the second, Terasen's preferred model, it will own and operate the upgrading facilities "to ensure reliability, safety and the continuous flow of product from the Biomethane supply project to the customer." In all cases, Terasen proposes to retain control of the interconnection facilities to control the injection of Biomethane into the distribution system. (Exhibit B-1, p. 2)

#### 3.1.2 Sale of Biomethane to Customers

Based on its market research, Terasen believes its customers have a "significant interest in purchasing Biomethane from Terasen Gas as an environmentally superior option to conventional natural gas."

Terasen proposes to take a phased approach to launch this program in recognition of the limited availability of Biomethane at this time. The first phase of the Biomethane product offering (the Offering) will involve making a blended Biomethane product available to residential customers starting with a blend of 10 percent Biomethane and 90 percent conventional natural gas. Phase two will involve launching the same 10 percent blend for small and large commercial customers on January 1, 2012. Terasen also plans to sell Biomethane to on-system transport customers and off-system wholesale customers. Eventually, Terasen's goal is to expand its offerings as the Program matures and new supply sources are developed. (Exhibit B-1, p. 3)

### 3.1.3 Cost Allocation and Recovery

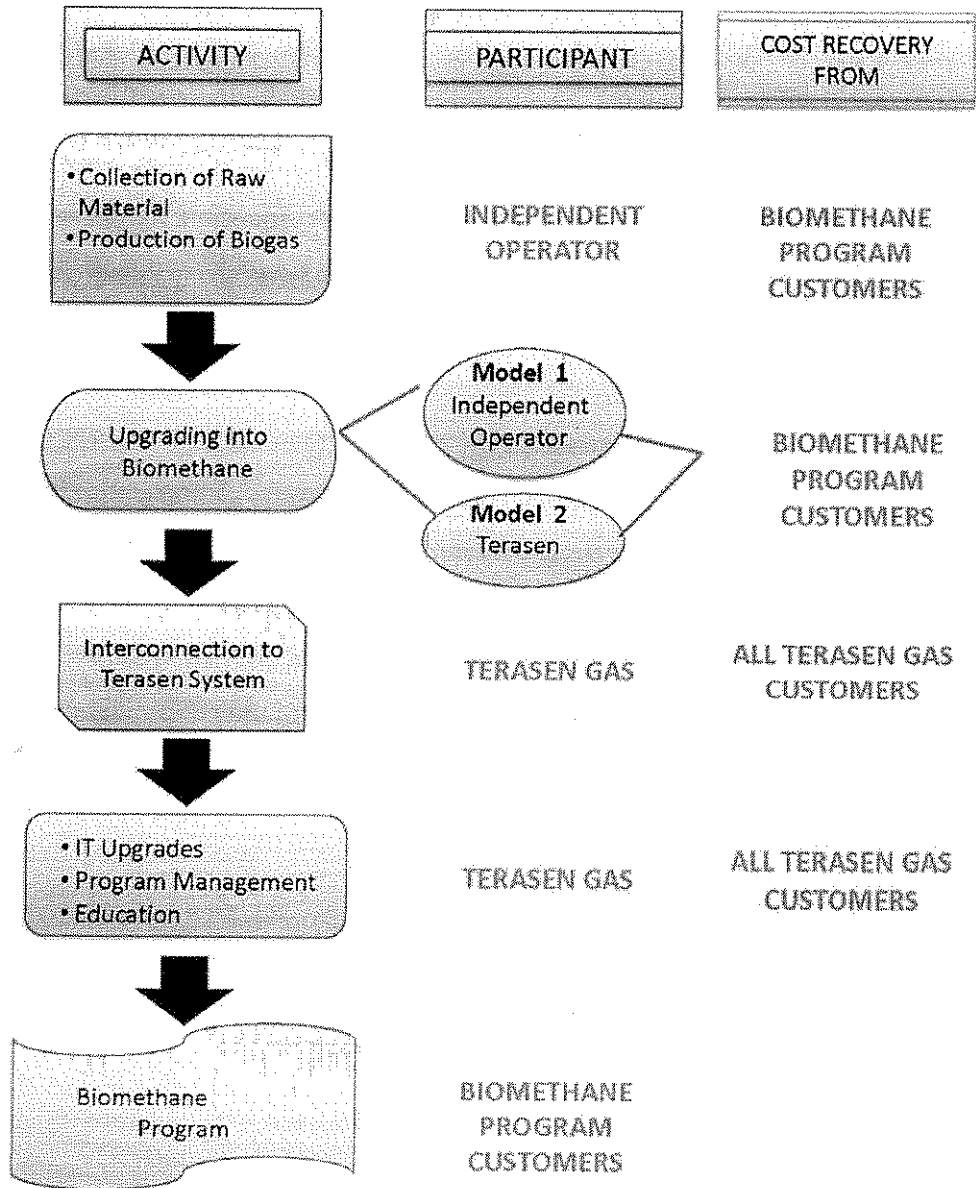
Terasen Gas states that the Offering will be a premium product and accordingly customers choosing to participate will have to pay a higher price to reflect the actual higher cost of the Biomethane. Terasen proposes the following cost allocation and pricing principles for its new end-to-end business model:

- *Customers should bear the cost of the energy they choose to consume. Therefore, Terasen intends to aggregate the biogas acquisition and upgrading costs and proposes to recover them as a commodity cost for Biomethane from those customers who opt for the Program. In those cases where Terasen buys the upgraded Biomethane from an independent operator that cost would be included as a commodity cost.*
- *Costs associated with making the Biomethane service offering available to all customers should be borne by all non-bypass customers. Terasen envisages these costs to include quality monitoring, IT upgrades, program management and customer education with some marketing involved.*

(Exhibit B-1, p. 3)

The Biomethane Service Offering Model is depicted for the reader's benefit in the diagram below.<sup>1</sup>

## BIOMETHANE SERVICE OFFERING MODEL



<sup>1</sup> Diagram was created from information in Exhibit B-1

#### 3.1.4 Notional Delivery

Terasen Gas proposes what it describes as a “notional delivery” of Biomethane. The Company explains that “notional delivery” is a concept used in the trading of commodities, where delivery is notional rather than real. Terasen is of the view that the interchangeability of Biomethane with conventional natural gas allows for this concept to be used in the Application, as the end user will not be able to differentiate between the products. Terasen draws the analogy between the residential Customer Choice Program where gas marketers are responsible for delivery of natural gas to the system, but their particular customers may not actually receive those molecules of natural gas, as individual molecules are not tracked. (Exhibit B-1, p. 15)

The Commission Panel has some concern about the applicability of notional delivery to the Offering. The Application is premised on the fact that Biomethane is a different product than natural gas with different carbon properties. Terasen is asking customers to agree to pay a premium for a different and arguably superior product which the customer may or may not receive. It is important that Terasen be able to communicate this distinction as part of its marketing program so there is no misunderstanding on the part of the consumer.

### **3.2 Outline of Projects**

TGI has included two supply projects in the Application for the Commission’s consideration. They represent concrete examples of the two supply models described earlier. The Projects are described in more detail below.

#### 3.2.1 Catalyst Project

The first project brought forward by Terasen is an agricultural waste to Biomethane project located in Abbotsford, BC. The project partner is Catalyst Power Incorporated (Catalyst). In this project, which represents the first supply model, Terasen is purchasing upgraded Biomethane with a relatively small capital investment required only in distribution main and interconnection facilities.



Highlights of this Project and key provisions of the supply agreement are summarized as follows:

Highlights of the Project:

- Catalyst investment in the digestion, gas collection and upgrade technology: \$ 5 Million; and
- Terasen investment as shown below:

**Table 3-1: Capital Cost Summary**

Item	2010 Estimate
Interconnection (valves, meter, regulator)	\$ 77,300
Quality Monitoring	282,500
Main and Main Connection Costs	227,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 587,700</b>

Source: Exhibit B-1, p. 100

The injected Biomethane is forecast to displace the quantity of natural gas required to serve more than 875 households annually, based on Lower Mainland typical household demand of 95 GJ per year, and thus reduce GHG emissions by at least 4,000 tonnes annually based on the minimum projected supply. Assuming a 10 percent blend, this converts to 8,750 customers. The range of expected annual GHG emissions associated with the Catalyst Agreement is shown below.

**Table 3-2: Annual CO<sub>2</sub>e reduction**

	Minimum Contract Amount	Maximum Contract Amount
Gigajoules ("GJ") of Natural Gas displaced	84,000	180,000
Tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e per gigajoule	0.050	0.050
Tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e reduced	4,200	9,000

Source: Exhibit B-1, p. 101

Key provisions of the Catalyst supply agreement:

- Quantity: Minimum annual delivery of 84,000 GJ;
- Term: 10 years;
- Price: As negotiated with Catalyst, falls within the range of expectations;
- Quality: Terasen Gas quality specifications; and
- Other: The non-performance definition and excuse from non-performance for maintenance in the agreement strike a balance between committing both Catalyst and Terasen to deliver and accept pipeline quality Biomethane and allow both companies sufficient flexibility to solve minor operational issues which may arise.

A number of measures have been incorporated into both the agreement and the facilities themselves to mitigate a range of potential risks. These risks are further addressed in Sections 4.7 and 4.9.

Terasen states that Catalyst has conducted significant public consultation in its efforts to get the necessary agriculture and land use approvals in place to allow the construction and operation of an anaerobic digester and biogas upgrading system on the site. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 94-105)

### 3.2.2 CSRD Project

This biogas project will be located at the regional landfill within the city limits of Salmon Arm, BC. The project partner is the Columbia Shuswap Regional District. Terasen states that in this case it will be purchasing raw biogas and investing in upgrading equipment along with the distribution main and interconnection facilities, which include gas quality monitoring, pressure regulation and odorizing. Highlights of the proposed project and key provisions of the supply agreement are summarized as follows:

## Highlights of the Project:

- CSRD investment in the landfill gas capture, collection and flare system: \$ 4.8 Million
- Terasen Gas investment in upgrading and interconnection facilities as shown below.

**Table 3-3: Capital Cost Summary**

Item	2010 Estimate
Interconnection (valves, meter, regulator)	\$ 395,500
Quality Monitoring	242,000
Main Connection Costs	45,100
Upgrading Plant (Installed)	1,621,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,304,400</b>

Source: Exhibit B-1, p. 89

It should also be noted that in this Project funding from the provincial government's Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) fund and the BC Bioenergy Network (BCBN) of some \$500,000 will reduce the Terasen capital expenditure to \$ 1.8 Million.

The injected Biomethane will displace the quantity of natural gas required to serve more than 300 households annually, based on North Okanagan typical annual household demand of 100 GJ, and thus reduce GHGs by approximately 1,500 tonnes per annum as shown in the Table below.

**Table 3-4: Annual CO<sub>2</sub>e reduction**

	Expected Contract Amount	Maximum Contract Amount
Gigajoules ("GJ") of Natural Gas displaced	30,000	45,000
Tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e per gigajoule	0.050	0.050
Tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e reduced	1,500	2,250

Source: Exhibit B-1, p. 91

Key provisions of the supply agreement:

- Quantity: 30,000 GJ per annum;
- Term: 15 years, with a yearly automatic renewal after the first 15 years;
- Price: As negotiated with CSRD, falls within the range proposed as an economic test for future projects;
- Quality: a raw gas quality specification; and
- Other: CSRD is required to make commercially reasonable efforts to maintain equipment and supply the best quality gas possible.

Again, a number of measures have been incorporated into both the agreement and the facilities to mitigate a potential supply risk, operational risks and risk of stranded assets. These are addressed in further detail in Sections 4.7 and 4.9.

Finally, Terasen states the CSRD has indicated that there are no outstanding claims or concerns in the planned project area. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 83-94)

### **3.3 Criteria for Future Projects**

One of the numerous approvals Terasen is seeking is an order that future supply contracts for the purchase of biogas or Biomethane which meet the criteria described in the Application meet the filing requirements in sections 71(1)(a) and 71(1)(b) of the *UCA*. It states that an early adoption of this framework will facilitate growth of the supply industry “by establishing clear and achievable parameters for our potential supply partners.” This Section addresses the criteria which have been proposed.

#### 3.3.1 Guiding Principles for Development of Biomethane Supply

TGI intends to apply the following guiding principles to the development of future Biomethane supply:

- a) **Project Economics:** A cost of service (COS) model will be used to evaluate the attractiveness of projects, with the estimated capital and operating costs borne by Terasen and the estimated production costs of Biomethane as key inputs. Each project will be evaluated against a COS threshold that will represent the maximum cost of Biomethane delivered to the Terasen system.
- b) **Gas-Processing Technology:** Terasen will use proven technology to ensure reliability and safety with technology being evaluated on the basis of cost, output gas purity and gas recovery.
- c) **Working with biogas Project Proponents:** Terasen will work with project proponents to mitigate project risks.
- d) **Cost Recovery:** Terasen will capture all capital and operating costs associated with the supply projects, including regulated return on capital investments in an aggregated Biomethane cost of gas calculation that will be recovered from customers participating in the Biomethane Program.
- e) **Gas Quality:** Biomethane that is injected into the system must meet minimum Terasen gas quality specifications.
- f) **Injection Location:** Terasen will evaluate all projects on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the injection location has sufficient local demand to utilize Biomethane.
- g) **Contract Length:** Long term contracts, preferably ten years or more to allow for a stable supply and a reasonable capital depreciation period.
- h) **Project Design for Mobility:** Terasen will engineer facilities in order to minimize the risk of stranded assets.
- i) **Investment Arrangement:** Terasen's preferred model is to invest in upgrading equipment to retain maximum control of gas quality and safety. It will invest in sufficient equipment to ensure that quality and safety specifications are met and that there is a means of stopping Biomethane supply on short notice. In all cases, Terasen will reserve the right to refuse gas if customer safety or asset integrity is at stake.

(Exhibit B-1, pp. 74-76)

### 3.3.2 Maximum Biomethane Cost

Terasen proposes to apply a maximum cost as a screen for the supply of Biomethane. This will ensure it has adequate flexibility in developing new sources of supply while protecting Biomethane

customers from undue rate increases. Further, Terasen notes BC Hydro's entrance into the biogas market by way of the Call for Community Biomass Energy projects. TGI states that "a given maximum rate for Biomethane helps create a better understanding for potential biogas producers of the relative economic benefits of using their biogas for upgrading to Biomethane vs. combustion to create electricity to sell to BC Hydro." (Exhibit B-1, p. 76)

TGI approach to determining the maximum Biomethane cost is addressed below.

### 3.3.2.1 BC Hydro's RIB Tier 2 Rate

Terasen Gas states that because there are no available external benchmarks specific to Biomethane the price of new British Columbia based electricity supply, a competing clean energy source, provides an appropriate initial reference point or proxy for Biomethane pricing until the market is better developed. By Order G-124-08 the Commission directed BC Hydro to establish the Residential Inclining Block (RIB) Tier 2 rate at BC Hydro's cost of new supply at the plant gate, grossed up for losses. Terasen states that because this rate is linked to the cost of new clean electricity supply, it is an appropriate price cap for Biomethane after adjusting for thermal efficiency and allowances for its distribution costs. Accordingly, Terasen proposes that, until such time as an alternative market-based mechanism becomes known, it will seek to develop Biomethane projects at a maximum unit cost based on the following calculation:

**Table 3-5: Proposed maximum Unit Cost**

BC Hydro Tier 2 Rate: <sup>84</sup>		8.78 ¢/kWh		
Conversion to Gigajoules	*	277.778	=	\$24.389/GJ
90% Efficiency Adjustment	*	0.90	=	\$21.950/GJ
Terasen Gas Rate Schedule 1 (LML) Basic Charge	-	\$1.800/GJ	=	\$20.150/GJ
Terasen Gas Rate Schedule 1 (LML) Delivery Charge	-	\$3.145/GJ	=	\$17.005/GJ
Terasen Gas Rate Schedule 1 (LML) Midstream Charge	-	\$1.725/GJ	=	\$15.280/GJ

Source: Exhibit B-1, p. 77

Should this formula be accepted, Terasen plans to use a maximum unit cost of \$15.280 per GJ as “the default financial litmus test for the time being.” In Terasen’s rate structure this price would be comparable to the commodity price for conventional natural gas. Finally, Terasen proposes to adjust the maximum forecast rate to reflect the unit cost changes in the various components included in the calculation. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 76-77)

### 3.3.2.2 Alternatives Considered for Economic Test

In developing its proposed economic test, TGI considered and rejected five alternative methodologies as follows:

- **BC Hydro Clean Energy Rate:**
  - \$0.13 per kWh (Clean Energy call) which, using the above conversion formula, translates into a comparative price for Biomethane of \$25.83 per GJ. Terasen notes that while Biomethane costs will be streamed directly to Terasen customers, the higher clean electricity costs will be mixed into a large pool of lower-cost electricity to BC Hydro customers to form the RIB Tier 2 rate. As a result, the Clean Energy Rate would be too expensive and not comparable to the blended electricity rates actually charged to customers. Accordingly, Terasen states that “it must protect its competitive standing” and that due to its transparency, the RIB Tier 2 rate is the superior solution.
  - \$150 per MWh (Bioenergy Phase 2 Call RFP) which, using the same multiplier of 277.778 kWh per GJ is equivalent to BC Hydro offering \$41.667 per GJ of electricity made from raw biogas. Applying again the above conversion formula results in a competitive alternative proxy of \$30.83 per GJ of Biomethane delivered to a Terasen customer. For the same reasons stated above, Terasen rejected this alternative. However, Terasen states it “may need to review this rationale as the market for Biomethane develops so as to remain competitive in sourcing biogas and Biomethane in British Columbia.”
- **South East False Creek District Energy System (SEFCDES):** This option was not pursued because it might be less relevant as the SEFCDES only serves a small, high-end showcase development neighbourhood in Vancouver. Further, Terasen states that the rate structure is not truly comparable to those of large scale utilities because District Energy System rates could include more services and product offerings than the typical price for services provided by electricity or natural gas utilities.

- **Dockside Green Energy (DGE):** Terasen states that the DGE rate structure, serving one high-end neighbourhood in Victoria, encompasses a mix of a fixed amount for floor space and a variable amount for energy which is first charged to strata corporations, which then allocate the costs to individual strata unit owners. This in turn makes a direct translation between energy consumption and cost more complex. Accordingly, Terasen also rejected this option.
- **Gas Commodity Rate Cap** (a multiple of the existing natural gas commodity rate to set a fixed percentage premium): Terasen also eliminated this methodology because there is no apparent relationship between factors driving natural gas market prices and the cost of producing Biomethane. Further, Terasen notes as GHG neutral Biomethane is a fundamentally different product than conventional natural gas, therefore “imposing a pricing relationship between the two would be difficult to justify.”
- **No Cap:** Terasen states that because the Biomethane service offering is fully optional for customers who may leave it at any time, setting no price cap “would be consistent with market-based economic principles of determining the price and therefore the availability of a product as being whatever the market may bear.” Ultimately, however, Terasen decided that, given the lack of customer experience with this type of offering, and given that this is only the first phase of a multi-phase product roll-out, there should be a price ceiling for the product to build up both the level of customer comfort and education until the market is more mature.

(Exhibit B-1, pp. 76-80)

### 3.3.3 Regulatory Review of New Supply Projects and Contracts

For future biogas or Biomethane supply contracts TGI proposes a streamlined process in which it will only file the supply contract for acceptance under section 71 of the *UCA*, with no additional information. Terasen would choose not to apply for approval of expenditures pursuant to section 44.2 of the *UCA*. Terasen proposes the following criteria for this streamlined process:

1. The projected supply meets the proposed economic test with the maximum price for delivered Biomethane re-calculated from time to time based on updates to the BC Hydro RIB Tier 2 rate;
2. The supply contract is at least ten years in length;
3. Terasen has, by agreement, retained final control over the injection location;
4. Terasen is satisfied that the upgrade technology is sufficiently proven;



5. Terasen has, by agreement, reserved the right to refuse gas if customer safety or asset integrity is at stake; and
6. The partner is a municipality, regional district or other public authority, or is a private party with a track record in dealings with Terasen or that posts security to reduce the risk of stranding.

(Exhibit B-1, p. 80)

#### 3.3.4 Post Implementation Review

Terasen states that in requesting approval for streamlining the development of future Supply and Tariff Offerings, it acknowledges a requirement for a thorough review of the Biomethane Program's success in the future. Terasen proposes that the review be conducted through a Post Implementation report and workshop, both occurring five years after the launch date of the residential Biomethane Program.

Terasen further states that this timeline should allow it adequate time to validate its research into residential and commercial markets, and to develop additional supply projects to help this industry to mature. In the meantime, Terasen proposes to report on the developments of this new program through its revenue requirement applications related to the end-to-end business model and report the Biomethane gas cost as a part of the quarterly gas cost reporting established with the Commission. (Exhibit B-1, p. 81)

### **3.4 Pricing Methodology**

Terasen notes that the Biomethane gas which is sold to customers is expected to be more expensive than conventional natural gas for the foreseeable future. As outlined in Section 3.1.3 of this Decision, Terasen has, based upon a set of principles, developed a methodology for allocating certain costs to all TGI customers and others specifically to Biomethane Program customers who have voluntarily signed up for the offering.

For all non-bypass customers Terasen is proposing setting up non-rate base deferral accounts to capture costs incurred which are applicable to this group for the period prior to January 1, 2012 (encompassing the remainder of the 2010-2011 revenue requirements period). Following this it proposes to recover the costs from the non-bypass customer group through their amortization over the ensuing three year period. Based on projections, the impact on non-bypass customers from 2012 to 2019 varies from \$0.004 to \$0.006 per GJ with a levelized rate impact of \$0.004 per GJ. Terasen calculates the incremental revenue requirements over this period to be \$4,084,100 resulting in an annual incremental cost of 38 cents for a customer using 95 GJ per year. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 107-111)

TGI states that the Biomethane costs will be recovered from the voluntary group of Biomethane Program customers through a Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge (BERC). To capture any variance between forecasted BERC and actual costs, TGI seeks Commission approval for a further deferral account. The Company has calculated the initial BERC to be \$9.904 GJ and has requested this amount be effective October 1, 2010. This will apply to 10 percent of the total gas used (the Biomethane portion) and will be adjusted annually based on deferral account balances. Customers choosing this option will do so under Rate Schedule 1B which has been applied for in this Application. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 112 -118)

## 4.0 KEY ISSUES AND DETERMINATIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

Having laid out the key attributes and a framework for the Program in Section 3.0, we will now examine the issues related to the Application. We will begin by examining the key elements of the Application in terms of its alignment with British Columbia's energy objectives and Provincial Government policy and continue with a discussion of the adequacy of supply and related demand issues. This will demonstrate that in the Panel's view there is justification for proceeding, at a minimum, with the Projects. Additionally, our examination will provide a basis upon which to discuss issues related to how to most effectively roll out the Program and protect the public interest. These include the criteria for future projects, the risk of stranded assets, principles for cost recovery, other project risks and post implementation review and reporting.

### 4.2 Alignment with British Columbia's Energy Objectives and Provincial Government Policy

The Panel finds that the Application is consistent with government policy as outlined in the *CEA* and elsewhere.

As noted earlier, section 2 of the *CEA*, sets out British Columbia's energy objectives. Relevant objectives include:

- (d) to use and foster the development in British Columbia of innovative technologies that support energy conservation and efficiency and the use of clean or renewable resources;
- (g) to reduce BC greenhouse gas emissions;
  - (i) by 2012 and for each subsequent calendar year to at least 6 percent less than the level of those emissions in 2007;
- (h) to encourage the switching from one kind of energy source or use to another that decreases greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia;

(j) to reduce waste by encouraging the use of waste heat, biogas and biomass.

“Greenhouse gas” is a defined term which means: “any or all of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride and any other substance prescribed by regulation.” (*Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act* S.B.C. 2007, c. 42 s. 1)

However, Terasen’s evidence is that Biomethane is greenhouse gas neutral with zero carbon intensity, making it, in a pure form, greener than the electricity which is consumed in the province. (Exhibit B-10, BCUC IR 2.4.1)

The *Carbon Tax Act*, S.B.C. 2008, c. 40 (CTA) is also relevant. Schedule 1 to the CTA contains a Table which sets out the rate of tax applicable to various types of fuel, including natural gas. However, by section 1 of the CTA, neither methanol produced from biomass nor methane produced by waste in a landfill is considered to be a “fuel” for the purposes of the Table and is therefore arguably not subject to a carbon tax.

TGI states that it has received confirmation from the British Columbia Ministry of Finance that Biomethane itself is exempt from the carbon tax but that there is some uncertainty surrounding the tax treatment of Biomethane blended with natural gas. Terasen is seeking to obtain clarity from the Ministry on this issue. (Exhibit B-12, BCSEA IR 2.21.1)

The publication of the British Columbia government entitled “BC Bioenergy Strategy – Growing our Natural Energy Advantage” provides insight into the process, government policy and the resultant carbon footprint. Essentially, as noted above, bioenergy is energy which is derived from organic biomass; biomass being waste material which is often produced from normal daily activities and includes renewable sources such as manure, municipal waste, sewage and wood debris. When this biomass is converted to energy, it is considered to be a clean source of energy. This is because gas which would simply be released into the atmosphere naturally is used to produce energy, in place of non-renewable sources, thus reducing the greenhouse gases which would otherwise be released into the atmosphere.

The publication states: “[b]ioenergy is absolutely critical to achieving B.C.’s climate goals and economic objectives” and the government indicated that its bioenergy strategy would create new economic opportunities and “establish British Columbia as the hub of a global supply network of bioenergy resources, technologies and services.”

The Application includes letters of support, including a letter dated April 5, 2010 from the BC Sustainable Energy Association which states: “[a]ppropriately carried out and regulated, the use of renewable biogas would cause net reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in BC relative to business as usual.” As noted previously, the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources also supports the Biomethane Program as being in alignment with Provincial policy actions and objectives.

Section 44.2 (5) of the *UCA*, requires the Commission to consider a number of matters prior to accepting an expenditure schedule filed by a public utility under section 44.2. Relevant to this application are: the applicable of British Columbia’s energy objectives, Terasen’s most recent long term resource plan filed under section 44.1, if any, and the interests of persons in British Columbia who receive or may receive service from the public utility.

#### Applicable British Columbia Energy Objectives

The applicable objectives were set out in detail in Sections 3.1 and 4.2 above.

The Commission Panel is of the view that the process of converting biomass to biogas to usable Biomethane uses innovative technology, as evidenced by the government’s commitment to its bioenergy strategy. Biomethane is also considered to be clean and is a renewable resource. Further, the use of Biomethane in place of natural gas will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as explained above, and the Biomethane Program entails the use of biomass and biogas.

The Commission Panel also considers the carbon tax to be another clear expression of government policy aimed at reducing carbon and the fact that Biomethane is not considered subject to the tax (albeit in a pure form) provides additional support for the Program.

**The Commission Panel therefore finds that the Application is consistent with British Columbia's energy objectives and Provincial Government energy policy.**

#### TGI's Most Recent Long Term Resource Plan

Terasen filed a long term resource plan under section 44.1 on June 27, 2008. The long term resource plan included five year capital plans and statements of facilities expansion, although no specific approval was requested. The only issues of any contention were carved off and made the subject of a separate proceeding, being Terasen's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Application. The long term resource plan was accepted in its modified form by Commission Order G-194-08 dated December 15, 2008.

The Commission Panel sees nothing in Terasen's long term resource plan which is inconsistent with the Biomethane Program.

#### The Interests of Persons in British Columbia who Receive or May Receive Service from Terasen Gas

The Commission Panel considers that allowing customers to opt to select the more expensive Biomethane product is in the interests of Terasen's customers at this time, as it will provide maximum customer choice. In the future, it may be unnecessary to allow for this choice, as the carbon tax increases and prices of natural gas and Biomethane adjust in accordance with market forces. A portion of the expenditure will be recovered from all non-bypass customers and, considering the relatively small cost of making the Program available, the Commission believes that it is in the interest of Terasen customers whether or not they choose to participate.

### 4.3 Biogas Supply

To evaluate the merits of the Application, the Commission must determine if there is enough evidence in this proceeding to forecast that the potential Biomethane supply in TGI's service area can support the planned offering. Within the Application, Terasen performs an evaluation and concludes that the potential Biomethane supply is sufficient. (Exhibit B-1, p. 66)

In order to estimate the future potential of Biomethane, TGI undertook a four step process that included: i) quantifying the total amount of bioenergy in BC; ii) identifying and excluding bioenergy resources not suitable for Biomethane; iii) estimating the range of supply, and iv) developing a short term supply estimate. This process involved collecting data from sources who have studied BC's bioenergy, making reasonable estimates of future events, and engaging potential partners who have an interest in Biomethane production. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 62-65)

Supported by this preliminary estimation, TGI believes there is sufficient raw biogas to produce enough Biomethane to support its planned offering and estimates Biomethane supply in 10 years could be in the range of 2.24 to 5.6 Petajoules ( PJ).<sup>2</sup> Terasen also noted that there is strong interest from various potential partners to work with it to develop Biomethane projects within its service territory. (Exhibit B-1, p. 66, as amended by Exhibit B-1-1)

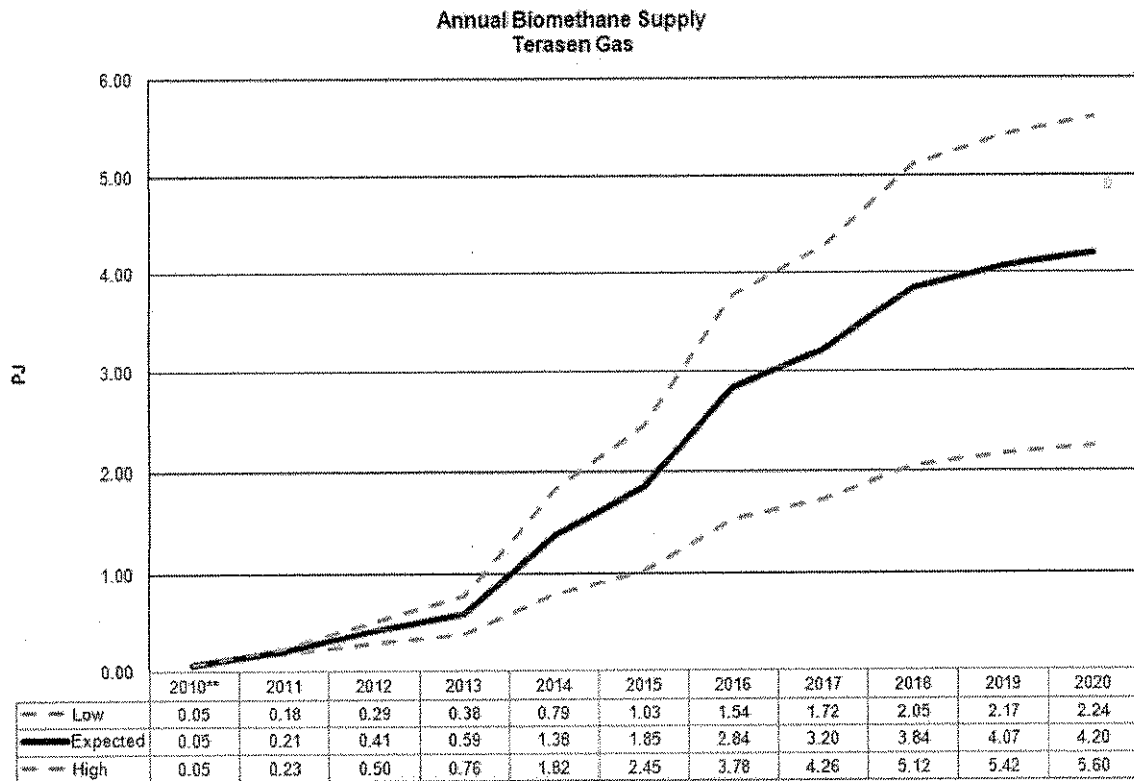
However, Terasen notes that the sources of the energy and estimated supply of Biomethane are not well established. It is Terasen Gas' position that the first four years of the estimate are more accurate than the long-term forecast, but both long-term and short-term estimates are subject to some uncertainty. (Exhibit B-1, p. 65)

A graphic demonstration of Terasen's estimated availability of Biomethane until 2020 has been included below:

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<sup>2</sup> One Petajoule is 10<sup>6</sup> Gigajoules and Terasen's total forecast energy consumption for 2011 was 161.8 PJ in the 2010-2011 Revenue Requirements Application made to the Commission on June 15, 2009.

Figure 4-1: Terasen Gas Forecast for Annual Biomethane Supply (PJ)



Source: Exhibit B-1, p. 65 as amended by Exhibit B-1-1

TGI's projection of Biomethane supply indicates that initial supplies will be much lower than the potential supplies reached in 2020. It forecasts Biomethane supplies in 2010 to be 0.05 PJ and to be in the range of 0.18-0.23 PJ in 2011. (Exhibit B-1, p. 65 as amended by Exhibit B-1-1) Given that Biomethane supplies are not yet well established (Exhibit B-1, p. 65), the Company has proposed risk-management techniques to address potential Biomethane supply shortfalls. Terasen suggests that these techniques, which include limiting program enrollment and reserving the right to purchase carbon offset credits or remove customers from the program provide the Company with an additional safety net if needed. (Terasen Final Submission, p. 44)

No Intervener raised concerns regarding matters of Terasen's Biomethane supply.



## Commission Determination

The Commission Panel believes that Terasen has reasonably identified potential sources of biogas in its service area and evaluated the likelihood of Biomethane production. However, this is a new type of venture and there is little independent evidence to corroborate these estimates. The Commission Panel is satisfied that Terasen understands this difficulty and related impacts, and has made reasonable attempts to formulate an estimate given these constraints. **The Commission Panel accepts TGI's estimate of its potential Biomethane supply and finds this supply to be sufficient to justify moving forward with the Biomethane Program but the Panel also acknowledges the limited data available to support this estimate.**

As noted, the Commission Panel accepts that there is a risk that the Biomethane supply estimates may be inaccurate. The Commission Panel further notes that TGI has attempted to mitigate this risk by proposing policies that allow it to purchase carbon offset credits or limit service in certain circumstances. **The Commission Panel finds that TGI has proposed reasonable techniques to address the risk of Biomethane shortfalls if short-term supply estimates are overstated. Further, the Commission Panel approves TGI's proposal to purchase carbon offsets and to recover costs through the Biomethane Variance Account in the event of under-supply of Biomethane, at a per gigajoule unit price not to exceed the difference between the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge and the Commodity Cost Recovery Charge in effect at that time.**

### 4.4 Product Demand

A fundamental consideration is determining whether there is sufficient demand from the BC consumer to justify the implementation of a comprehensive Biomethane gas offering program within the province. Terasen, as a means of providing background in its Application, provides an overview of the types of green business models or programs deployed in North America and their participation rates. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 28-29) In addition, Terasen commissioned TNS Canadian Facts (TNS) to conduct primary research as a means of evaluating and validating potential BC residential and commercial markets for a biogas program as well as the market drivers and factors affecting

different price points. (Exhibit B-1, p. 35)

In its review of voluntary renewable energy market programs in North America, Terasen notes that there are three primary types of programs:

- Contribution programs – those designed to allow customers to contribute to a utility managed fund for renewable energy project development.
- Energy-based programs – those allowing customers for a premium to purchase a certain amount of energy from sources which are renewable.
- Carbon offset programs – those which provide the customer the option of offsetting their GHG emissions through the purchase of carbon offsets.

Of these, Terasen notes that energy-based programs had the highest level of success. Further, the Company reports that according to National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) the top ten green programs in the US in 2008 had participation rates ranging from 5 percent to 21 percent and all ten were some type of energy-based scheme. Overall, the participation rate for all programs reported on had a mean of 2.2 percent and a median of 1.2 percent, numbers which have increased steadily over the previous six years. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 28-30) Terasen reports that if the average were relied upon, the uptake in this jurisdiction would result in over 16,000 signups for the Biomethane Program. This exceeds anticipated production at the two current supply projects in the Application. (Exhibit B-1, p. 46)

Terasen commissioned a survey of residential and commercial customers. Key findings of the survey as reported are as follows:

1. Both residential and commercial customers strongly support Terasen's investment in and the offering of biogas programs (67 percent support investing in biogas projects and 65 percent support offering programs).
2. Both customer markets also show preference for an energy-based program. When presented with a choice between biogas and carbon offsets, customers favoured the former by a three to one margin. Further, 56 percent of residential and 47 percent of commercial customers indicated they would sign up for a biogas program as opposed to 24 percent of

residential and 35 percent of commercial who would do so with a carbon offset based program.

3. When given a choice as to whether customers would prefer a program that was paid for by customers who signed up for a biogas offering and paid a premium as opposed to all customers bearing the cost 47 percent of residential and 60 percent of commercial customers preferred a universal price increase (to all customers) while 26 percent supported a premium price increase. However, a large number (27 percent) did not state a preference or did not know how to answer the question. When questioned further about the level of increased costs customers would be willing to pay if all customers had to pay (amounts between 0.5 and 3 percent were explored), there was a strong support for a modest percentage increase in cost (between 0.5 and 1 percent). This support lessened as the cost premium approached 3 percent.
4. With respect to price premiums and blends with a voluntary program, there was a strong preference for a 10 percent price premium on the commodity and for a 10 percent blend of biogas and corresponding GHG reductions (46 percent for both residential and commercial). The preference dropped significantly for higher prices and blends of biogas and GHG reductions.
5. Assuming the program was offered on a voluntary basis, 16 percent of residential and 10 percent of commercial customers indicated a disposition to enroll. These numbers drop as the price level is raised. Terasen reports that this equates to an estimated 120,000 residential customers and 9,200 commercial customers.

On the basis of this research Terasen has concluded that a renewable energy program where customers enroll to have a portion of their natural gas come from biogas will be most effective. Terasen further concludes that the number of customers who would support a universal cost increase if it were moderate, is supportive of its proposed hybrid model where some costs associated with the Program are borne by all customers. Finally, it has concluded that the research supports rolling out the Program first to residential customers due to their higher participation potential and their preference for an initial offering of a 10 percent cost increase for a 10 percent blend to maximize household involvement. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 35-47)

In response to BCOAPO IR 1.4.3, Terasen indicated that it undertook to reflect some of the characteristics of the top ten green programs in its proposal. Included among these are the following: the choice of a renewable energy program, the consideration of marketing strategies such as those identified in Chartwell's "Helping Customers Live a Sustainable Lifestyle 2007"

(Exhibit B-1, Appendix C-2), and the use of a lower price option in the introductory phase of the program.

None of the Interveners expressed concern with respect to Terasen's estimate of customer demand and how this was integrated into Program development. However, the BCOAPO did express some concern with respect to the use of the mean rather than the median as related to the level of "take up" rates in the secondary research. In spite of these concerns, it stated it did not "believe that TGI's estimated total demands for green offerings are a cause for concern in this proceeding." (BCOAPO Final Submission, p. 3, emphasis in original)

### **Commission Determination**

The body of research presented by Terasen demonstrates that there is a willingness among customers to actively support what has been described as "green pricing" programs. The information provided by NREL indicates that there is significant variance among the US jurisdictions reviewed with respect to the level of participation. Ignoring for a moment the results and attributes of the ten most successful programs, the fact that the mean participation rate for all programs was 2.2 percent, which would result in an uptake rate of 16,000 households in BC, provides some comfort notwithstanding the concerns raised by BCOAPO that the median of 1.2 percent was a more appropriate measure. By contrast, the TNS survey indicates there may be a potential participation rate as high as 120,000 households if customer actual participation rates match customer intentions measures.

The Commission Panel notes that the TNS survey undertaken by Terasen was with BC residents only and is more representative and better reflects the customer views and intentions as well as the unique market conditions within the province of British Columbia. Accordingly, we put more weight on this survey in spite of the fact that it measures intentions rather than actual results as was the case with the NREL Report. However, in doing so the Panel acknowledges there is a potential for a relatively high participation rate (perhaps as many as 120,000 households) but is not persuaded that the case for this has been adequately made. In our view, the most appropriate way

to determine the actual market potential as differentiated from customer intentions is to test it within the BC market.

Terasen, in the view of the Panel has chosen a model which has been designed to reflect much of what has been learned from successful programs in other jurisdictions as well as from the primary research conducted within BC. Firstly, the choice of an energy-based program is very much in keeping with the success stories from other jurisdictions. Moreover, it is an appropriate response to what was learned through research in the BC market where both residential and commercial customers indicated a strong preference for this type of model. We also consider the choice of a 10 percent premium for a 10 percent blend of biogas to be a good choice given the fact that the TNS survey indicates a strong preference for these percentage levels.

**The Commission Panel finds that the research presented by Terasen supports the position that there is likely to be sufficient demand to justify moving forward with a Biomethane Program.**

#### **4.5 Commission Determination on the Projects**

As noted in the above, the Commission Panel is satisfied there is sufficient demand for and supply of Biomethane to move forward with the Projects. Further, the Panel is satisfied the Program is in alignment with British Columbia's energy objectives and government policy. **Accordingly, we approve the Purchase Agreements with the CSRD and Catalyst, and expenditures related to the facilities for both of these Projects.**

However, the Panel remains concerned that the model proposed by Terasen Gas has yet to be tested in the British Columbia marketplace. In our view it would be prudent for TGI to gain knowledge and experience by a thorough testing of the Program before any firm determination can be made as to the full market potential. The two Projects will provide a reference case which will serve as a basis for future projects. **Therefore, we have determined the scope of the Biomethane Program should be limited until such time as actual results can be analyzed and more definitive conclusions drawn.** This will be discussed further in Section 4.6, Criteria for Future Projects.

#### 4.6 Terasen's Role in Biogas Upgrading Process

TGI takes the position that its ownership and operation of the upgrading facilities will promote the efficient development of Biomethane supply projects and ensure that the Biomethane, which is to be injected into the distribution system, will arrive "safely and economically" with dependable flow. (Exhibit B-1, p. 6) As discussed earlier, the upgrading process purifies raw biogas to remove contaminants, producing Biomethane, which is directly substitutable for natural gas.

As discussed previously, Terasen Gas proposes two business supply models. In one, CSRD, Terasen will purchase raw biogas from a supplier and upgrade that gas to Biomethane. This model will therefore entail Terasen's investment in the facilities required to upgrade the biogas to Biomethane. This is above and beyond its investment in the facilities necessary to measure the flow of gas, connect to the TGI distribution system and test the gas to ensure its compatibility with natural gas, which is a requirement under both business models.

Terasen notes that its proposed investment in the upgrading facilities is minor in comparison with the significant capital investment involved in the development and collection of raw biogas, a field which it does not intend to enter, as this is currently outside its area of expertise. Nonetheless, its capital investment is acknowledged to be "material." (Exhibit B-1, pp. 6, 76)

Terasen states that the upgrading of biogas to Biomethane "is purely a gas processing and gas management step" falling within its core expertise and that TGI "is best positioned in most cases to ensure that the biogas is upgraded in a manner that will best ensure a consistent and reliable supply of Biomethane.... ." (Exhibit B-1, p. 71)

TGI describes the advantages of its ownership of the upgrading facilities as follows:

- Terasen is able to best ensure the safe, reliable and economic delivery of Biomethane to the distribution system;
- Terasen's retention of control over the upgrading process allows it to optimize operations and balance final gas quality with total volume of Biomethane; and

- Terasen's point of control being further upstream of the measuring and monitoring point gives Terasen greater control of gas quality and customer and equipment safety.

(Exhibit B-1, p. 71)

Terasen summarizes its position: "Terasen Gas must own and operate equipment to upgrade raw biogas to Biomethane in order to ensure safe and reliable operation of Biomethane supply projects." However, Terasen Gas does concede that when appropriate project partners can be found, there will be an opportunity for the development of "an independent Biomethane upgrading industry in British Columbia." (Exhibit B-1, p. 72)

Terasen advises that in the natural gas industry, raw gas producers may own and operate the upgrading facilities, or the raw gas may be upgraded in third party facilities. (Exhibit B-1, p. 73)

Terasen also notes that at the time it filed its Application there were "no operating biogas upgrading plants in the province and therefore no experienced operators." (Exhibit B-3, BCUC IR 1.2.2)

Terasen Gas suggests that, as its ownership of the upgrading equipment as utility assets best ensures the reliability of supply, this should be the preferred ownership model, absent other commercial reasons favouring third party ownership. Terasen submits that this supports a flexible approach to the issue. (Terasen Final Submission, p. 29) Terasen further suggests that "commercial realities" will favour TGI's ownership and operation of the upgrading facilities as its involvement as an experienced, reputable and reliable partner will assist developers in obtaining financing. It also suggests that less financing will be needed in total if it owns the upgrading equipment instead of the developer. It further states that "[d]evelopers have indicated that a partner with experience in gas processing and gas technology is attractive." (Exhibit B-2, BCUC IR 1.2.2; Terasen Final Submission, p. 31)

Terasen also submits that, to the extent that its involvement in the upgrading operation might discourage other market participants, such a line of enquiry is misplaced and that "[p]rotecting potential third party suppliers (if and when they exist) from competition...to encourage new market

participants cannot be the end objective of public utility regulation as defined by the [Utilities Commission] Act.” It submits that the Commission only has jurisdiction over the competitive landscape for ownership of upgrading facilities to the extent that such ownership is ultimately related to the quality, reliability and cost-effectiveness of Biomethane service.” Terasen adds that “logic would suggest that the longer-term effect of insulating third parties that might be interested in owning upgrading facilities from competition with an efficient producer like TGI will be inefficiencies that result in higher overall costs of supply to customers.” (Terasen Final Submission, p. 31)

Terasen’s evidence is that the only constraint it is placing on potential third party involvement in the upgrading process is that they are “able to demonstrate they are capable of providing a reliable and safe source of Biomethane.” (Exhibit B-3, BCUC IR 1.26.1)

To the BCOAPO, “the nub of the issue is whether to permit the regulated monopoly distribution utility to venture into a commodity supply venture, and how to reconcile this intrusion into the unregulated, competitive supply market with the need to develop more environmentally benign ways of sourcing household energy.” The BCOAPO offers only “strings-attached” support for the Application, stressing that in its view, “biogas marketing and project costs are, for the most part, best undertaken by non-utility entities” and that this “should not be taken as a template or precedent for the utility to venture further into the gas commodity refining and supply line of business.” (BCOAPO Final Submission, p. 3)

Terasen maintains the view that its venture into the upgrading industry should be done through Terasen Gas itself in its current structure as opposed to through a non-regulated business or through a separate, regulated entity. It’s position is that all upgrading activities are subject to regulation by the Commission, given the definition of “public utility” in the *UCA*, and its application to a “person...who owns or operates...equipment or facilities...for... the production...of natural gas...or any other agent [i.e. Biomethane] for the production of ... heat ... to or for the public or a corporation for compensation...” Terasen states that the definition of public utility covers both the upgrading of biogas to Biomethane and the notional sale of the Biomethane to customers and that



any entity that sells upgraded Biomethane either to the public or to Terasen will be subject to the Commission's regulatory oversight.

However, Terasen suggests that regulation of this business need not be active, but "passive" as the pricing issue can be addressed in the review of the purchase agreements. (Exhibit B-3, BCUC IR 1.1.1)

Terasen states that the "BCOAPO has not articulated how or why TGI's supply model will impair fair competition, prevent a competitive marketplace, or negatively impact ratepayers" and suggests that its evidence in respect of its (or a reliable partner's) need to own and operate biogas upgrading equipment was not challenged. It further suggests that the BCOAPO did not address its other areas of evidence relating to the development of a competitive marketplace. (Terasen Reply, p. 4)

#### **Commission Determination**

Assuming, without necessarily deciding that upgrading processes are subject to regulation by the Commission, the Commission Panel remains concerned about Terasen's entry into a new area of business. The Commission Panel is not convinced that Terasen must be involved in the upgrading process to ensure the quality of product, reliability of delivery, and safety of the operation. The Commission Panel is of the view that Terasen's testing and control of the product in its interconnection facilities, prior to its inclusion in the distribution system, which will happen under either proposed business model, will provide that measure of protection. However, the Commission Panel is prepared to allow the CSR Project to proceed considering grants have been obtained to reduce the cost (and risk) of the project.

The Commission Panel makes no finding on the acceptability of Terasen's involvement in performing the upgrading at this time, particularly as there may be an industry developing which might result in a competitive business environment for future upgrading projects. As this is a new business for Terasen, the Commission Panel rejects Terasen's submission that it is or will

necessarily be an “efficient producer” and that its involvement in the upgrading process necessarily promotes “cost effectiveness”. In addition, the Commission Panel notes that the upgrading of biogas does not have the significant upfront capital investment and potential economies of scale typical of a natural monopoly. Upgrading of biogas may therefore evolve to an industry made up of a number of separate, small upgrading businesses. The use of a separate entity, owned by Terasen, will maintain the advantages Terasen’s cites in terms of its reputation, experience and expertise. **Accordingly, the Commission Panel directs that Terasen’s costs of the upgrading project be segregated so they may be compared with costs of other potential upgrading operations by other industry participants in the future. The Commission Panel further directs that the upgrading business be kept sufficiently distinct so as to be severable, should the Commission determine that this business ought to be conducted through a separate entity in the future.**

#### 4.7 Criteria for Future Projects

As outlined in Section 3.3 of this Decision, TGI has proposed that the process for regulatory review of future new supply projects and contracts be streamlined. Within the Application it has sought an order to allow future supply contracts that meet the criteria described within Section 8.4 of the Application to also meet the filing requirements in sections 71(1) (a) and 71(1) (b) of the *UCA*. (Exhibit B-1, p. 133) Accordingly, the Company proposes to file supply contracts only under section 70 [sic] without additional supporting information. (Exhibit B-1, p. 80)

In its Final Submission, Terasen states that the Commission can accept an energy supply contract under section 71 or it can require additional evidence in support of the public interest. Terasen argues that many of the public interest considerations will be the same, while acknowledging there will be differences which will exist among future supply contracts with respect to terms of the agreements including price. Accordingly, TGI submits that the potential for redundancy in the Commission’s review of what are relatively small supply projects makes it desirable for an efficient public interest review process and the criteria (outlined in Section 3.3 of this Decision) provide an appropriate reference point. (Terasen Final Submission, p. 34)

Both the CEC and BCSEA generally support the proposal put forward by Terasen with respect to establishing criteria for acceptance under section 71. BCSEA notes that it provides a balance between efficiency and regulatory oversight. (BCSEA Final Submission, p. 7) The CEC submits that because of the small size of the projects being considered, it would be inappropriate to burden this new initiative with undue regulatory process. However, the CEC submits that the Commission should consider two additional criteria; continued prospects for customers buying the service and continued backup plans for mitigation of risk for the magnitude of supply under contract. (CEC Final Submission, p. 3) BCOAPO provided no specific submissions with respect to the criteria issue.

Terasen states that concerns underlying the CEC's recommendation for the additional criteria have been adequately addressed in the proposal. (Terasen Reply, p. 2)

The Commission Panel acknowledges the need to promote regulatory efficiency where appropriate and in the public interest. However, in doing so, it underlines the importance of establishing criteria that are sufficiently precise and comprehensive to ensure the public interest continues to be met in the future. The Panel believes there are a number of issues arising from the criteria which have been proposed by Terasen. Firstly, there is concern as to whether the RIB Tier 2 rate proposed by Terasen as a price ceiling is appropriate. Secondly, the Panel has concerns with respect to scope of the criteria being proposed and believes that consideration of further criteria should be undertaken in reaching a determination on this.

As outlined previously in Section 3.3.2.1 of this Decision, TGI states that the justification to use RIB Tier 2 pricing as a proxy for Biomethane pricing is based upon two factors:

- the lack of external benchmarks specific to Biomethane; and
- the fact that RIB Tier 2 pricing (currently \$15.28) reflects the price of new British Columbia based electrical supply which is viewed as a competing clean energy source.

On this issue the CEC, while stating it is comfortable with the proposed \$15 ceiling, submits the RIB Tier 2 rate may not be the most appropriate way to regulate Biomethane as BC Hydro's rates may vary for numerous unrelated reasons. (CEC Final Submission, p. 3) BCSEA submits that it agrees with TGI's reliance on the RIB Tier 2 rate as a benchmark for establishing an appropriate cost at least until an alternative market-based mechanism is found. (BCSEA Final Submission, p. 5)

No other Intervener took a position on the price ceiling.

Terasen Gas points out in its Reply that there are currently no external pricing benchmarks for Biomethane and the RIB Tier 2 rate is only an initial reference point and it will propose a price ceiling change in the event it becomes necessary in the future. (Terasen Reply, p. 2)

With respect to the scope of criteria, the Panel notes again that this is a completely new business undertaking for Terasen. While the research conducted indicates there is good potential, this has yet to be proven in the BC marketplace and, in spite of expectations, it could result in failure. The potential impact of this is raised by BCOAPO in its Final Submission where it notes its main concern relates to the impact of the cost of stranded assets on non-participants if the commercial venture is unsuccessful. BCOAPO acknowledges that the small cost, the review process and the ability to remove and resell the installation if required, serve to mitigate its concern. (BCOAPO Final Submission, p. 3)

### **Commission Determination**

The Commission Panel accepts that there is a need for streamlining of the approval process as it is likely that many of the projects which will be proposed in the future will be small in size and subjecting them to rigorous scrutiny in each case would not be in the public interest. **Accordingly, we have determined that future energy supply contracts for the purchase of biogas or Biomethane that meet the criteria listed in Section 3.3.3 of these Reasons with the following additional criteria will meet the filing requirements in sections 71(1)(a) and 71(1)(b) of the Act:**

- **The total production of Biomethane for all projects undertaken under what has been approved in this Decision does not exceed an annual purchase in each year of 250,000 GJ.**
- **The maximum price for delivered Biomethane on the system is set at \$15.28 per GJ.**

The Panel is encouraged by the initiative Terasen Gas has taken with this Biomethane Program and, subject to certain conditions raised within this Decision, is supportive of moving forward with additional projects in the future. However, the Biomethane Program is a new initiative and has not been tested in the marketplace. If the Panel were to approve future projects with no limitations as proposed by Terasen in the Application, it could be placing the ratepayer at risk for what in total could be a substantial amount. We do not believe this would be in the public interest. However, we are not convinced that the risk is so great that all future initiatives should be held back pending full testing of the model as suggested by the comments of BCOAPO. Therefore, we have provided in our determination that TGI can purchase a total of 250,000 GJ annually which will allow some latitude for TGI to proceed with some additional projects before returning to the Commission with the results from what has been undertaken and recommendations for the future. Nevertheless, the Panel would like to be clear that in spite of this, we view these initial programs as a test phase only. The results from these projects will very much determine whether the Program will continue and whether the model as proposed is suitable. We acknowledge the recommendations of the CEC with respect to additional criteria but given the limitations we have set, it is premature to add these criteria at this time. Further, even with these criteria as Terasen has acknowledged, the Commission retains the right to depart from them and require further process. (Exhibit B-3, BCUC 1.24.3)

The Commission Panel notes the comments of CEC with respect to tying the pricing ceiling for future projects to the RIB Tier 2 rate as proposed by Terasen and has similar concerns with respect to the potential for future price changes. However, the Panel is satisfied that setting the rate ceiling at \$15.28 per GJ which corresponds to the current RIB Tier 2 rate is reasonable as it provides Terasen with sufficient discretion to operate with some flexibility with the initial projects.

#### 4.8 Risk of Stranded Assets

A stranded asset is an asset that is worth less on the market than it is on a balance sheet due to the fact that it has become obsolete in advance of complete depreciation. Stranded costs related to stranded assets are inevitable in any industry where the regulatory environment changes dramatically, and partial or full compensation for stranded costs is usually considered fair play for monopoly services suddenly thrust into a competitive market place. Today, the debate continues regarding the extent to which the regulatory compact entitles utilities to recover the cost of stranded assets in future rates. Depending on circumstances, utilities have been allowed to recover the entire investment or a partial investment from their regular customers over a certain amortization period. There may even be situations where no recovery would be permitted. This larger question cannot be answered in this proceeding but, nevertheless, the following should be considered in this context of uncertainty regarding the ultimate responsibility over stranded assets.

This Section addresses the risk of the Projects in the event those ventures are not commercially successful. Related to the risk of failure to supply is the potential for permanent termination of the contract by project partners that would leave Terasen's installed facilities idle. This is a particular concern in the case of the CSRD Project where Terasen Gas is investing in the upgrading facilities.

TGI submits that the risk of stranded assets is modest to start with and that Terasen has taken appropriate steps to mitigate that risk contractually:

- The overall investment required by Terasen is low, being \$1.8 Million for CSRD and \$0.6 Million for Catalyst;
- There is little risk of stranding associated with lack of customer demand, as the Biomethane generated by the two projects would be consumed based on the conservative measure of industry average demand;
- The 15-year and 10-year terms for the CSRD and Catalyst Projects respectively provide longer term supply of biogas and a reasonable period over which to recover equipment costs;

- Under the contracts, Terasen has the right to enter the site and physically recover its facilities after a specified period of non-performance. The majority of facilities used for the project could be recovered and used for other projects. In addition, the CSRD contract provides Terasen with a termination payment in excess of the estimated value of the stranded assets and moving costs whereas the Catalyst contract provides Terasen with appropriate security against stranding; and
- Advancements in upgrading technology will have little impact on the success of the CSRD project, as the current equipment recovers as much as 95 percent of the methane in raw biogas. As a result, any technological improvements over time will result in only minor efficiency improvements and would therefore not make the current technology obsolete.

(Terasen Final Submission, pp. 24-25, 28)

BCOAPO submits that its main concern (apart from whether this is appropriate utility activity at all) is “the risk of stranded costs being visited upon non-participants if the venture is not successful commercially.” However, BCOAPO acknowledges that in this case the relatively small cost, the post-implementation review, and the configuration of the installation to facilitate removal and resale, all mitigate that concern. Finally, BCOAPO submits that Biomethane is a technology which should have an opportunity to incubate under the aegis of the utility, so long as financial risks to non-participants are contained, and that the proposed projects may be a useful and necessary “kickstart” for future green initiatives by other parties. (BCOAPO Final Submission, pp. 2-3)

The CEC submits that the investments proposed by Terasen are modest, the risks relative to those investments are well identified and Terasen has plans for substantial risk mitigation should they be realized. Accordingly, the CEC agrees with Terasen’s summary of its evidence. (CEC Final Submission, p. 2)

### **Commission Determination**

The Commission Panel finds that the total capital investment required by TGI for the Projects is relatively low; especially after allowing for the funding received from the Innovative Clean Energy fund and from the BC Bioenergy Network. The Commission Panel also notes the supporting

Intervener submissions on this matter and finds that Terasen has taken reasonable steps to mitigate the ultimate risk of stranded assets in terms of the specific structure of contracts it has negotiated. Finally, the Commission Panel finds that there is little risk of stranding due to lack of customer demand as the estimates used for projections are on the conservative side.

With regard to future projects, the Commission Panel finds that the Guiding Principles for Development of Biomethane Supply, the proposed contract language as well as the price ceiling, a predetermined production quantity limit and the shorter time period to be allowed for the test period will serve to mitigate concern over the risk of stranded assets. This should be true even in the cases of future projects that will not receive special funding.

#### **4.9 Principles for Cost Recovery**

As illustrated in the Biomethane Service Offering Model diagram in Section 3.0, Terasen proposes that customers opting for the Biomethane Offering should pay the full costs of the Biomethane gas supply while all Terasen Gas customers will share the costs related to the interconnection and monitoring equipment as well as the cost of IT upgrades, program management and customer education. This Section outlines the proposal in more detail to address the question: Should any costs be shared by all Terasen customers at all?

##### 4.9.1 Rate Setting

Terasen seeks approval for its proposed rate, tariff provisions, cost allocation methodology, and accounting treatment pursuant to sections 44.2, and 59 to 61 of the UCA. These are listed in Appendix E.



#### 4.9.2 General Cost Recovery Principles

TGI proposes that customers opting into the Offering and committing to purchase Biomethane should pay the full costs to supply pipeline quality Biomethane gas. Where Terasen will acquire raw biogas for upgrading, the acquisition costs of the raw biogas, and the costs of owning and operating the upgrading equipment will be fully recovered via the Biomethane rate. Similarly, for those projects where Terasen will acquire pipeline-ready Biomethane, these costs will be fully recovered via the Biomethane rate. Terasen states that incremental Customer Works LP (CWLP) charges related to processing customer enrolments in the Biomethane Program and ongoing O&M such as customer drops, moves and changes will be fully recovered from only the Biomethane Program customers via the Biomethane rate. (Exhibit B-1, p. 17)

However, Terasen Gas states that some costs are being incurred in order to give all customers the choice of participating in the Biomethane Program, and that all customers obtain environmental benefits from Terasen offering Biomethane as an option. Terasen further states that costs incurred to provide this choice and deliver environmental benefits should be allocated to all customers of the utility because this is consistent with the implementation of other programs, such as the Customer Choice Program. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 107-108)

All operating and maintenance and capital costs included in the determination of the rate impacts, including the allocation of costs between all customers and those choosing to participate in the Biomethane Program, are shown in the following two tables.

**Table 4-1**  
**Terasen Gas Inc. – Biogas O&M Details**

Line	Particulars	(\$ thousands)		
		2010	2011	2012 <sup>1</sup>
1	<b><u>O&amp;M Costs - All Customers</u></b>			
2	Labour Costs - One FTE	25.0	100.0	100.0
3				
4	Computer Costs - Additional Reporting	-	-	10.0
5				
6	Customer Education	160.0	240.0	300.0
7	Internal Reporting Changes	0.8	2.4	-
8	Inbound Calls			6.4
9	Fees & Administrations Costs	160.8	242.4	306.4
10				
11	Inbound Calls	7.2	28.7	-
12	Rate Changes	-	4.0	-
13	Application Support	165.6	-	-
14	Contractor Costs	172.8	32.7	-
15				
16	<b>Total O&amp;M Costs - All Customers</b>	<b>358.6</b>	<b>375.1</b>	<b>416.4</b>
17				
18	<b><u>O&amp;M Costs - Catalyst Project (3 months in 2010)</u></b>			
19	Electrical Power	1.0	2.0	2.0
20	Equipment Maintenance	1.0	2.0	2.0
21	Other	14.5	29.0	29.6
22	Total Catalyst Materials & Supplies	16.5	33.0	33.7
23				
24	<b><u>O&amp;M Costs - Salmon Arm Project (6 months in 2010)</u></b>			
25	Electrical Power	11.5	46.0	46.9
26	Equipment Maintenance	1.3	5.0	5.1
27	Other	1.3	5.0	5.1
28	Total Salmon Arm Materials & Supplies	14.0	56.0	57.1
29				
30	Total Materials & Supplies	30.5	89.0	90.8
31				
32	<b><u>O&amp;M Costs - Biogas Customers (Customer related)</u></b>	14.6	82.4	56.9
33				
34	<b>Total O&amp;M Costs - Biogas Customers</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>171.4</b>	<b>147.7</b>

35  
 36 <sup>1</sup> Years subsequent to 2012 are adjusted by inflation

Source: Exhibit B-1, Appendix J-1, p. 1

**Table 4-2**  
Terasen Gas Inc. – Biogas Capital Details

Line	Particulars	(\$ thousands)		
		Catalyst	Salmon Arm	Total
1	<b>Capital Costs - All Customers</b>			
2	Meters	77.3	395.5	472.8
3	Distribution Measurement & Regulating	282.5	242.0	524.5
4	Distribution Main Extension	227.9	45.1	273.0
5		587.7	682.6	1,270.3
6				
7	<b>Capital Costs - Biogas Customers</b>			
8	Upgrader	-	1,621.8	1,621.8
9				
10	<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	587.7	2,304.4	2,892.1
11				
12	CIAC (ICE and BCBN funding)	-	(515.6)	(515.6)
13				
14	<b>Capital Costs net of CIAC</b>	587.7	1,788.8	2,376.5
15				
16	Note: All spending occurs in 2010 except \$96.1 thousand of the upgrader spent in 2011			

Source: Exhibit B-1, Appendix J-1, p. 2

#### 4.9.3 Determination of Costs Related to System Changes

TGI commissioned an IT consulting firm to assess the required business system changes and estimate the costs required to implement the new Offering, including customer enrolment, program management, nominations, customer billing and rate setting. Terasen states that the system impact analysis has taken into consideration the existing initiative to replace the current customer billing system and move customer care services in-house. Terasen believes it has developed a cost-effective and workable solution along with supporting processes and systems to implement a Biomethane Program in British Columbia. (Exhibit B-1, p. 109)

#### 4.9.4 Costs to be Allocated to all Customers

Costs that will be allocated to all Terasen Gas distribution customers will include:

- Cost of service related to gas analyzing equipment, meters, transmission or distribution pipeline extensions constructed to receive the injection of Biomethane;

- Capital costs for application development and configuration of the current customer billing system and modifications to supporting processes to support accepting on-line enrolment requests, configure the new Biomethane tariff and provide additional reporting;
- On-going operating costs related to additional customer inquiry calls, quarterly updates to the tariff rate, customer education costs, including costs associated with marketing the Program, and a new full time position of biogas Program Manager.

Terasen proposes the creation of a non-rate base deferral account to capture costs applicable to all customers incurred prior to January 1, 2012. It further proposes to recover these costs from all non-bypass customers by amortizing them through delivery rates commencing January 1, 2012 over a three year period. The forecast levelized rate impact for these customers is \$0.004 per GJ. By way of example, Terasen states that for a residential customer using 95 GJ per year, the annual incremental cost is 38 cents. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 110-111)

#### 4.9.5 Costs to be Allocated to Biomethane Program Customers

Costs to be allocated to Biomethane Program customers include the cost of purchasing Biomethane and raw biogas, including upgrading costs, as well as the ongoing administrative O&M costs directly related to Biomethane customers such as customer enrollment, removal of customers from the program and billing adjustments.

Terasen proposes to recover these costs through a Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge. As this rate will be based on forecast costs, Terasen seeks Commission approval of a deferral account, the Biomethane Variance Account (BVA), to capture the difference between actual costs and revenues collected through the BERC rate. Terasen has calculated the BERC rate as \$ 9.904/GJ and seeks approval of the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge at this amount effective October 1, 2010. (Exhibit B-1, p. 117)

By electing to participate in the first phase of the Biomethane Program offering, residential customers will pay a gas commodity price based on a 10 percent Biomethane and 90 percent natural gas blend. Terasen submits its proposal results in a minimal rate impact for all non-bypass customers, and a Premium Service rate that reflects the premium cost of Biomethane. It also points out that there is a longer-term customer interest in ensuring that its product offerings meet the expectations of customers and potential customers and also submits “[a]ll customers benefit from initiatives to retain and add throughput to the Terasen system because added throughput spreads system costs over a larger base, thus resulting (all else equal) in lower delivery rates.” Finally, Terasen submits that the proposed rates are just and reasonable, given the benefits to all customers associated with the premium offering, and the principled basis Terasen has proposed for cost allocation. (Terasen Final Submission, pp. 19, 51)

#### 4.9.6 Intervener Submissions

BCOAPO strongly supports “thoughtful and economical efforts to increase the use of renewable resources and reduce GHG emissions in the province” and believes that such efforts are in the public interest. However, BCOAPO submits that the costs of achieving that goal must be distributed appropriately and through correct mechanisms. While BCOAPO has some concerns, it supports the Application noting the small annual costs to non-participants. (BCOAPO Final Submission, pp. 2-3)

BCSEA supports the concept that customers in the Biomethane Program should pay for the cost of Biomethane and all customers should pay for the cost of making the Biomethane Program available. BCSEA agrees with Terasen that the principle is analogous to the Commission-approved treatment of the Customer Choice Program. (BCSEA Final Submission, p. 6)

The CEC supports Terasen’s efforts to address the long term management of risk by way of this initiative to ensure retention and addition of customers to the system in order to spread distribution costs over a larger base. The CEC submits that Terasen’s rates should be set on the basis of cost causality for utility service rates and believes that the Shareholder should not be

inherently responsible for the cost of any of the proposed Biomethane Service. The CEC further submits that Terasen has correctly defined cost allocation methodologies appropriate for utility service and has proposed to apply them correctly. Finally, the CEC notes that the allocation of marketing, advertising, promotion and education back to all customers appears to be standard practice and that there is no quality evidence on the record to support alternative cost-allocation methodologies. The CEC submits that the Commission should give weight to the fact that the magnitude of the expenditures for this new service does not warrant revision of the cost allocation methodology at this time. "The broad interest of customers in GHG reduction and the potential for renewable options makes the cost allocation to all customers appropriate." (CEC Final Submission, pp. 4-5)

#### **Commission Determination**

The Commission Panel is cognizant of the new post *CEA* environment which is challenging TGI to innovate and adapt its utility service model. In this regard, the Commission Panel agrees with Terasen and the CEC that it is in the long term interest of all Terasen utility customers that new initiatives contribute to retention and the addition of throughput in the system, which will result in system costs being spread over a larger base. The Commission Panel also notes the dual role of the Commission in balancing the interests of ratepayers and the utility.

**It is in this context that the Commission Panel approves the cost allocation methodology proposed by Terasen Gas for the test period as just and reasonable.** It is important to consider this finding as a test period approval only, as another determination will be required at the point of the review for Phase 1. The Commission Panel also notes the "strings-attached" support given by BCOAPO. Because in this Application the small levelized annual cost to non-participants, (estimated at 38 cents to an average customer) is not material, it is relatively easy to approve the methodology. Small programs like this give Terasen an opportunity to develop the markets and test customer demand under the auspices of the utility regulatory model. However, as the Biomethane business grows and matures the issue of "who pays" becomes more significant. In the long term, once the markets have evolved, a time may come to take a fresh look at the role of the

utility vis-a-vis competitive markets as discussed in Section 6.0.

The Commission is concerned that distribution (or transmission) pipeline extensions to connect the projects are included in the costs allocated to all customers. These costs can vary widely from project to project, and arguably are more akin to upgrading costs. However, considering the relatively modest amount of those connection costs for the two projects at hand and the test period nature of this approval, the Commission will only require that this cost be identified and monitored.

The Commission Panel notes that TGI has budgeted \$160,000, \$240,000 and \$300,000 for customer education in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively, but has not sought approval of these. The Commission accepts that these expenditures will be recorded in the appropriate deferral account. However, the Panel notes that recovery in future rates of these amounts will be subject to future review by Commission.

Specific approvals for the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge, the Biomethane Variance Account and other components of the approvals sought will be addressed in Section 5.0.

#### **4.10 Other Project Risks**

This Section addresses project risks other than risk of stranded assets for the CSRD and Catalyst Projects and summarizes Terasen's mitigation measures.

##### 4.10.1 Risk to Gas Supply Portfolio

TGI states that quantity of biogas and Biomethane from the Projects will not impact its overall gas supply portfolio. At these early stages with low levels of supply, entering the two agreements will not cause Terasen to alter its other portfolio or planning practices or contracts. Terasen further states that because of this, the amounts of new supply promised will not leave the Company vulnerable to either additional market purchases or access to alternative sources of conventional

gas to replace biogas or Biomethane that is not delivered. However, Terasen also states that as additional biogas and Biomethane purchase agreements come on line it will reassess the impact on its overall portfolio. Finally, Terasen points out that the Catalyst agreement includes the full costs of replacement gas in the non-performance remedies within the agreement. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 92, 101, 102)

#### 4.10.2 Risk of Failure to Supply Biomethane

In the case of the CSRD Project, Terasen notes that the composition of buried waste in the Salmon Arm landfill is not fully predictable and therefore neither is the gas production from the landfill. As a result, there is the potential for an interruption in either supply of raw gas or Biomethane. It states that it has mitigated these risks in two ways:

- From the gas system perspective, planning will be done assuming that biogas is not available;
- From a financial perspective, the compensation for sale of gas is based on sellable (purified) gas. The CSRD will not receive any payments unless Terasen can successfully upgrade the biogas and inject it into the distribution system. Further, there is also a minimum supply requirement that if not met will trigger a contractual default.

(Exhibit B-1, p. 92)

In the case of the Catalyst Project, Terasen explains that failure of Catalyst to provide gas to the Company could result from events such as loss of waste stream supplies (anaerobic digester feedstock), failure to meet gas specifications, breach of contract or poor financial health resulting in interruption to operation. Terasen states that it has addressed these risks through a non-performance clause in the agreement. (Exhibit B-1, p. 102)



#### 4.10.3 Operational and System Risk

Terasen Gas takes the position that “in the unlikely event that a failure of the biogas upgrading equipment occurs”, contaminants harmful to the pipeline or disruptive to customer service could occur. In order to mitigate this risk, Terasen will ensure the upgrading system be designed to self-monitor for abnormal conditions and, as owner of the upgrading equipment, will always have the final control of the gas quality. Should Biomethane not meet these specified quality, Terasen will immediately stop delivery to customers and evaluate the problem with the CSRD. (Exhibit B-12, p. 93)

To mitigate the same concerns in the case of Biomethane delivery from Catalyst, the agreement requires that Biomethane must meet Terasen Gas specifications and includes the right of Terasen to interrupt delivery from the project if the gas does not meet these quality specifications. The Catalyst facilities will also be linked with TGI’s gas control system to allow real time monitoring of the quality sampling equipment. Terasen further states that the pressurized flows of conventional natural gas will automatically backfill and replace the lost flow of Biomethane during any such stoppage. (Exhibit B-1, p. 102)

#### 4.10.4 Facilities Cost Risk

Terasen states there is some risk that costs for the facilities could be higher than expected, but notes it has followed best practices for cost projections and used conservative estimates for interconnection and monitoring equipment to mitigate this risk. Terasen further states that for the upgrading plant it has negotiated a fixed price contract with the supplier. Finally, Terasen notes that in the CSRD cost-of-service analysis it has included a 10 percent contingency allowance on capital costs. (Exhibit B-1, p. 93)

In the case of the Catalyst Project, Terasen has followed the above practices for the interconnection and monitoring equipment to mitigate risk. In addition, it has included a 20 percent contingency allowance on capital costs. (Exhibit B-1, p. 103)

## Commission Determination

The Commission Panel finds that Terasen Gas has taken prudent steps to mitigate risks inherent in innovative new projects such as the CSRD biogas and Catalyst Biomethane Projects. However, the Commission Panel notes that after the test period there will be a requirement for a more comprehensive review of who owns the upgrading facilities as discussed in Section 4.5. This review should also provide an opportunity for a further risk assessment.

### 4.11 Post Implementation Review and Reporting

In its Application, Terasen acknowledges that following implementation a thorough review of the Biomethane Program will be necessary. The Company proposes that the review be carried out five years following the Program launch and be made up of two components; a post-implementation report and a workshop. The report and workshop will address the following elements:

- How many and what types of supply projects have been developed;
- Customer segmentation;
- Enrollment and attrition Rates; and
- Review of the costs incurred and their recovery.

Terasen notes that the five year time span will be sufficient to allow the industry to mature through the development of additional projects and to validate the research which has been conducted into the residential and commercial markets. In the ensuing period, Terasen proposes to report on the development of the Program through its revenue requirement applications as well as report on the costs of Biomethane gas as part of the regular quarterly gas cost reporting which has been established with the Commission. (Exhibit B-1, p. 81)

BC Hydro had no comments in its submissions with respect to the post-implementation review and reporting process. Likewise, the BCOAPO had no comments concerning the timing and review of the Program. However, based on the BCOAPO's stated position that the Projects should be made a

“one off” and not be taken as a template for further ventures into the gas commodity refining and the supply line of business, it can be inferred that it is BCOAPO’s view the timeline for review of the Projects could be shortened. (BCOAPO Final Submission, p. 3) BCSEA stated in its submission that it was in support of what Terasen has proposed. (BCSEA Final Submission, p. 7) The CEC recommends that the Commission request annual reporting encompassing on-going investment expenditures, operating costs and updated projections for customers, as well as volumes and costs in addition to what has been proposed. (CEC Final Submission, p. 5)

In Reply to the CEC submission, Terasen states that if the Commission wishes it to address the additional information in annual reports it will do so. However, it notes that what has been proposed is redundant as it will be addressed more appropriately in TGI’s future resource plans and/or revenue requirements applications. Terasen concludes by pointing out that the costs for what it describes as redundant reporting will be borne by customers. (Terasen Reply, p. 3)

#### **Commission Determination**

As outlined in Section 4.6, the Panel has placed limits on total Biomethane production for all projects undertaken in this program. Our purpose is to allow Terasen the flexibility to expand the program from the two Projects. However, we also want to ensure there is the opportunity for stakeholders to better understand and review the success or failure of this Program and whether the proposed Biomethane Offering Model is appropriate before it is allowed to grow to the point where it would be difficult to reverse without a significant financial impact. In keeping with this view, the Panel finds the five year time period proposed by Terasen for a full review of the program to be unnecessarily lengthy. We believe that reducing this time period to a period of two years will allow TGI sufficient time to launch some additional projects and undertake the analysis necessary to provide an adequate basis for review. **Accordingly, the Commission Panel, to safeguard the public interest, has determined that Terasen will be granted a period of two years from the date of the Order issued concurrently with this Decision for review and preparation of further applications in support of expansion of this Program.**

The Panel, acknowledging the CEC recommendations, expects Terasen's analysis and report to be comprehensive. Our requirements include but are not limited to examination of the following information:

- Full financial review of all projects (individual and aggregate numbers) which have been undertaken;
- Validation of the market research;
- Enrollment and attrition rates;
- Costs and assessment of customer marketing/education programs;
- Customer segmentation and targeting;
- Assessment of Pricing Methodology and Principles for Cost Recovery;
- Future Projects that are under consideration
- Forecasts of Biomethane supply as well as customer demand and anticipated update for the next ten year period.

## 5.0 OTHER APPROVALS REQUESTED

### 5.1 Biomethane Variance Account

The Commission Panel approves the creation of a rate base deferral account, called the Biomethane Variance Account, as proposed by Terasen. This account will capture costs to procure and process consumable Biomethane gas as well as revenues collected through Biomethane energy recovery components of rates. The Commission Panel finds the BVA to be a reasonable mechanism to accumulate any differences in Biomethane service costs and revenues. Further, the Panel accepts Terasen's quarterly reporting process and Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge rate setting mechanism as proposed in the Application as this methodology is consistent with the Company's existing gas reporting and rate setting methodologies.

Commencing January 1, 2012, the treatment of all costs related to and resulting from ongoing Biomethane operations will be reviewed by the Commission as a component of Terasen's Revenue Requirements Application (RRA). **Within TGI's RRA for 2012 and onwards, Terasen is directed to include a separate section providing actual and forecasted Biomethane operating, maintenance and capital costs and an analysis of these costs.** This disclosure is to include, amongst other things, a breakdown of costs incurred by category of past and projected years and an explanation of the financial results experienced and expected in the test period. Details of all accumulations within the BVA should also be provided.

The Commission Panel further approves Terasen's request for two new non-rate base deferral accounts (New Deferral Accounts) to capture the following costs, as described by the Application, incurred prior to January 1, 2012:

- i) Costs of service associated with the capital additions to the delivery system; and
  - ii) Operating and maintenance costs applicable to all customers (attracting AFUDC).
- (Exhibit B-1, pp. 110-111)

As costs associated with the New Deferral Accounts will be incurred in the remaining portion of the revenue requirement period, the Panel accepts the proposed deferral treatment until January 1, 2012.

In the Application, the Company seeks to recover costs accumulated in the New Deferral Accounts from all non-bypass customers over a three year period by amortizing them through delivery rates commencing January 1, 2012. (Exhibit B-1, p. 111) **The Commission Panel approves this request as an acceptable recovery period given the nature and forecasted extent of these costs.**

**As part of its 2012 Revenue Requirements Application, TGI is directed to report the total values accumulated in the New Deferral Accounts from inception as well as a breakdown of the costs accumulated in the accounts by nature and dollar amount. Further, the Company is directed to present within its annual regulatory report to the Commission, the total value of each of these deferral accounts, net of any amortization. This is to be done each year until the remaining balance is \$nil.**

Terasen also seeks to set the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge at \$9.904/GJ and seeks approval that the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge is set at this amount effective October 1, 2010. (Exhibit B-1, p. 117) Because the rate of \$9.904/GJ is well below the maximum rate of \$15.28 previously established in Section 4.6, **the Panel accepts the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge at \$9.904 for all Rate Schedules effective October 1, 2010 to recover forecasted costs.**

## 5.2 Rate Schedules

TGI seeks approval of rate schedules of both Phase 1 and 2 of the proposed Offering. TGI proposes that the Commission approve Rate Schedules 1B and 11B and amendments to Rate Schedule 30 effective October 1, 2010 (Phase 1), and also approve Rate Schedules 2B and 3B for commercial customers effective January 1, 2012 (Phase 2). TGI notes that Rates Schedules 1B, 11B and the amendments to Rate Schedule 30 reflect the rate methodology described in this Application. Rate Schedules 2B and 3B reflect methodology which TGI indicates is consistent with Phase 1 as well as

offering higher blends of Biomethane which TGI believes may appeal to commercial customers. TGI also requests an amendment to its General Terms and Conditions to include reference to the Biomethane Offering. (Exhibit B-1, pp. 52-53 as amended by Exhibits B-1-1 and B-3)

TGI believes it is important to approve both Phase 1 and 2 Rate Schedules at this time for two reasons. The first reason is to avoid the additional regulatory cost to review Phase 2 as a separate proceeding in the future, especially given the body of evidence submitted in this proceeding, and secondly to avoid future delays on timely expansion. (Terasen Final Submission, p. 40)

TGI indicates its intent to file with the Commission additional tariff schedules when the opportunity to expand the program exists. Also, TGI notes that the Biomethane rollout to other regions and rate classes will be driven by customer uptake rates in Phase 1 combined with supply availability. TGI proposes that as such, customer offerings and rate schedules could be modified from time to time. (Exhibit B-1, p. 53)

CEC submits that the proposed phase in of the TGI Biomethane service is reasonable and sensible and agrees that setting rates now is appropriate and may avoid unnecessary regulatory proceedings. (CEC Final Submission, p. 4)

BCSEA accepts TGI's explanation for offering the Biomethane Program to residential customers initially and later expanding the program to make it available to commercial customers and possibly offer Biomethane blends higher than the 10 percent proposed in Phase 1. Also, BCSEA accepts TGI's rationale for seeking approval for the Phase 2 rate schedules at this time. (BCSEA Final Submission, p. 6)

BCOAPO and BC Hydro express no position on tariff matters.

### Commission Determination

**The Commission Panel approves TGI's Biomethane new Rate Schedules 1B, 11B, 2B and 3B and the proposed amendments to existing Rate Schedule 30 as well as requested changes to TGI's General Terms and Conditions.** The Commission Panel finds that sufficient evidence has been presented in this proceeding for it to determine that the proposed Rate Schedules are just and reasonable based on the proposed allocation methodology. It therefore approves them for Phase 1 and 2 of the Biomethane Program. However, if the new Rate Schedules 2B and 3B, when filed, deviate from the methodology described in the Application, the Commission may determine further regulatory process is necessary for those Rate Schedules. **In addition, the Panel directs TGI to provide to the Commission any future proposed Biomethane Rate Schedules or amendments to schedules at least 60 days in advance of their proposed effective date.** If the Commission identifies Biomethane program matters for those Rate Schedules that deviate from the methodology described in the Application, the Commission may determine that further regulatory process is necessary before approving any proposed rate offerings or changes related to TGI's Biomethane Program.



## 6.0 OTHER COMMISSION PANEL CONSIDERATIONS

This Application for approval of a Biomethane Program and Supporting Business Model is just one of a number of projects Terasen is contemplating as means of dealing with the new environment which has resulted from passage of recent legislation including the *Clean Energy Act*. A number of other new initiatives have been outlined as being under consideration within the Company's 2010 Long Term Resource Plan which was filed with the Commission in July of this year. Collectively, these represent a significant departure from the role Terasen has traditionally played as a public utility. As the Company moves forward with what is a new business model, the issue becomes how to best reconcile those instances where it has moved to a different position on the supply side or is undertaking activities which are more characteristic of a non monopolistic company dealing within a competitive market. In undertaking these new initiatives questions arise as to whether they should be allowed within a regulatory framework and where this leaves the ratepayer with respect to who bears the risk.

This Hearing has dealt with a number of questions related to Terasen's departure from the status quo. Included among these are the following:

- The provision of biogas upgrading services representing a move up the supply chain.
- Principles governing the allocation of costs to ratepayers.
- The risk of stranded assets and resultant question of who pays.

In order to facilitate the process and avoid unnecessary impediments, the Commission Panel chose to deal with this application with the understanding that it represents a test program which will provide valuable information and answers to the question as to how best to handle this model on a go forward basis. Accordingly, the Panel provided direction with respect to Terasen's proposal to own the upgrading facilities in some instances, share costs for the Program among various ratepayer groups and place overall risk for the Program on the broad ratepayer group. However, the Commission Panel would like to be clear that these decisions were made to facilitate the test program only. Following the filing of the Post Implementation report, the Commission may decide

to fully review the model and make other determinations based on the information or lack thereof in that report.

As to the larger questions involving the impact of Terasen's proposed new business model, the Commission Panel does not consider it appropriate to answer these questions within the context of this Hearing. However, we do believe that the changes being contemplated and the issues which arise from them are significantly important to warrant a formal process to deal with them at a future date.

## 7.0 SUMMARY OF DIRECTIVES

This Summary is provided for the convenience of readers. In the event of any difference between the Directives in this Summary and those in the body of the Decision, the wording in the Decision shall prevail.

	<b>Directive</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	The Commission Panel therefore finds that the Application is consistent with British Columbia's energy objectives and Provincial Government energy policy.	27
2.	The Commission Panel accepts TGI's estimate of its potential Biomethane supply and finds this supply to be sufficient to justify moving forward with the Biomethane Program but the Panel also acknowledges the limited data available to support this estimate.	30
3.	The Commission Panel finds that TGI has proposed reasonable techniques to address the risk of Biomethane shortfalls if short-term supply estimates are overstated. Further, the Commission Panel approves TGI's proposal to purchase carbon offsets and to recover costs through the Biomethane Variance Account in the event of under-supply of Biomethane, at a per gigajoule unit price not to exceed the difference between the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge and the Commodity Cost Recovery Charge in effect at that time.	30
4.	The Commission Panel finds that the research presented by Terasen supports the position that there is likely to be sufficient demand to justify moving forward with a Biomethane Program.	34
5.	Accordingly, we approve the Purchase Agreements with the CSRD and Catalyst, and expenditures related to the facilities for both of these Projects.	34
6.	Therefore, we have determined the scope of the Biomethane Program should be limited until such time as actual results can be analyzed and more definitive conclusions drawn.	34

7.	Accordingly, the Commission Panel directs that Terasen's costs of the upgrading project be segregated so they may be compared with costs of other potential upgrading operations by other industry participants in the future. The Commission Panel further directs that the upgrading business be kept sufficiently distinct so as to be severable, should the Commission determine that this business ought to be conducted through a separate entity in the future.	39
8.	<p>Accordingly, we have determined that future energy supply contracts for the purchase of biogas or Biomethane that meet the criteria listed in Section 3.3.3 of these Reasons with the following additional criteria will meet the filing requirements in sections 71(1)(a) and 71(1)(b) of the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total production of Biomethane for all projects undertaken under what has been approved in this Decision does not exceed an annual purchase in each year of 250,000 GJ.</li> <li>• The maximum price for delivered Biomethane on the system is set at \$15.28 per GJ.</li> </ul>	41
9.	It is in this context that the Commission Panel approves the cost allocation methodology proposed by Terasen Gas for the test period as just and reasonable.	51
10.	Accordingly, the Commission Panel, to safeguard the public interest, has determined that Terasen will be granted a period of two years from the date of the Order issued concurrently with this Decision for review and preparation of further applications in support of expansion of this Program.	56
11.	Within TGI's RRA for 2012 and onwards, Terasen is directed to include a separate section providing actual and forecasted Biomethane operating, maintenance and capital costs and an analysis of these costs.	58
12.	The Commission Panel approves this request as an acceptable recovery period given the nature and forecasted extent of these costs.	59
13.	As part of its 2012 Revenue Requirements Application, TGI is directed to report the total values accumulated in the New Deferral Accounts from inception as well as a breakdown of the costs accumulated in the accounts by nature and dollar amount. Further, the Company is directed to present within its annual regulatory report to the Commission, the total value of each of these deferral accounts, net of any amortization. This is to be done each year until the remaining balance is \$nil.	59

14.	The Panel accepts the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge at \$9.904 for all Rate Schedules effective October 1, 2010 to recover forecasted costs.	59
15.	The Commission Panel approves TGI's Biomethane new Rate Schedules 1B, 11B, 2B and 3B and the proposed amendments to existing Rate Schedule 30 as well as requested changes to TGI's General Terms and Conditions.	61
16.	In addition, the Panel directs TGI to provide to the Commission any future proposed Biomethane Rate Schedules or amendments to schedules at least 60 days in advance of their proposed effective date.	61

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December 2010.

*Original signed by:* \_\_\_\_\_

DENNIS A. COTE  
PANEL CHAIR

*Original signed by:* \_\_\_\_\_

ALISON A. RHODES  
COMMISSIONER

*Original signed by:* \_\_\_\_\_

LIISA A. O'HARA  
COMMISSIONER



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

ORDER  
NUMBER G-194-10

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IN THE MATTER OF  
the Utilities Commission Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, Chapter 473

and

Application by Terasen Gas Inc.  
for Approval of a Biomethane Service Offering and Supporting Business Model  
and  
for the Approval of the Salmon Arm Biomethane Project and  
for the Approval the Catalyst Biomethane Project

**BEFORE:** D.A. Cote, Panel Chair/Commissioner  
A.A. Rhodes, Commissioner December 14, 2010  
L.A. O'Hara, Commissioner

#### O R D E R

**WHEREAS:**

- A. On June 8, 2010, Terasen Gas Inc. (Terasen Gas) filed an application (the Application) for approval of rate schedules, related deferral accounts, a cost recovery mechanism and a Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge to support a Biomethane Service Offering;
- B. The Application also sought approval of an expenditure schedule in respect of two Biomethane supply projects: the Salmon Arm Biomethane Project and the Catalyst Biomethane Project, and sought acceptance of the associated energy supply contracts;
- C. On June 23, 2010, the Commission issued Order G-109-10 establishing a Written Public Hearing Process and a Regulatory Timetable;
- D. The Commission has reviewed the Application, the evidence, and the submissions, and for the reasons set out in the Decision issued concurrently with this Order, concludes that the Application should be approved subject to certain additional terms and directives included in this Order and the Decision;

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

ORDER  
NUMBER G-194-10

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**NOW THEREFORE** pursuant to the provisions of the *Utilities Commission Act* (the Act), the Commission orders as follows:

1. The Commission approves Rates Schedules 1B, 2B, 3B, 11B, the amended Rate Schedule 30, and the amendments to Terasen Gas' General Terms and Conditions described in Section 6 of the Application.
2. The Commission will accept, subject to timely filing, the new Rate Schedules 1B, 11B, the amended Rate Schedule 30, and the amendments to Terasen Gas' General Terms and Conditions, in accordance with this Order and the Decision.
3. The Commission will accept for filing, on or after January 1, 2012, the new Rate Schedules 2B and 3B in accordance with this Order and the Decision.
4. The cost allocations, deferral accounts, and accounting treatment for the costs associated with the Biomethane Program requested by Terasen Gas and described in Section 10 of the Application are approved as described in the accompanying Decision.
5. Terasen Gas may purchase carbon offsets and recover the costs through the Biomethane Variance Account in the event of under-supply of Biomethane, at a per gigajoule unit price not exceeding the difference between the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge and the Commodity Cost Recovery Charge in effect at that time.
6. The Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge is set at \$9.904/GJ effective October 1, 2010.
7. Pursuant to section 71 of the Act, the following energy supply contracts are accepted as filed:
  - the Purchase of Biogas Agreement with the Columbia Shushwap Regional District; and
  - the Purchase of Biogas Agreement with Catalyst Power incorporated.
8. Pursuant to subsection 44.2(3) of the Act, the following expenditures are in the public interest and are accepted:
  - the expenditures relating to the facilities required for the Salmon Arm Project; and
  - the expenditures relating to the facilities required for the Catalyst Project.
9. Future Biomethane Program supply contracts for the purchase of biogas or Biomethane filed with the Commission that meet the criteria described in Section 8 of the Application (p. 80), with the following changes and additions, meet the filing requirements described in sections 71(1)(a) and 71(1)(b) of the Act :
  - i. The total production of Biomethane from all projects undertaken under what has been approved in this Decision does not exceed an annual purchase of 250,000GJ;



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UTILITIES COMMISSION

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ii. The Maximum price for delivered Biomethane on the system is set at \$15.28.

10. Terasen Gas is directed to:

- Maintain separate records of project costs related to Biomethane upgrading facilities to allow for cost comparisons to other upgrading operations;
- Keep the Biomethane upgrading process sufficiently distinct so as to be severable should the Commission determine that this business ought to be conducted through a separate entity in the future;
- Include in its next Revenue Requirements Application, in accordance with this Order and the Decision, details of costs for all deferral accounts created by this Order;
- Provide to the Commission any future proposed Biomethane rate schedules, or amendments to schedules, at least 60 days in advance of their proposed effective date;
- File a Post-Implementation Report that provides the information described in Section 8.4.4 of the Application within 2 years of the date of this Order;
- Hold a post-implementation Workshop for the interveners in this proceeding and any interested stakeholders at which it will address the contents of the Post-Implementation Report; and
- Comply with all other directives in the Decision.

**DATED** at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2010.

BY ORDER

*Original signed by:*

D.A. Cote  
Panel Chair/Commissioner

**APPROVALS SOUGHT*****Rate Related Orders***

1. An order pursuant to sections 59-61 of the Act approving:
  - (a) the new Rate Schedules 1B, 11B, and the amendments to Rate Schedule 30;
  - (b) the new Rate Schedules 2B and 3B effective upon filing of the rate schedules with the Commission, but in any event not before January 1, 2012;
  - (c) the proposed amendments to Terasen Gas' General Terms and Conditions, specifically, the addition of new definitions relating to the Biomethane Service, and the introduction of a Section 28 – Biomethane Service.

***Cost Recovery Related Orders (All Customers)***

2. An order pursuant to sections 59-61 of the Act approving:
  - (a) the allocation of costs to all customers and the accounting treatment of those costs as described in Section 10 of the Application.
  - (b) a non-rate base deferral account attracting AFUDC to capture the O&M costs applicable to all customers incurred prior to January 1, 2012, and to recover these costs from all non-bypass customers by amortizing them through delivery rates commencing January 1, 2012 over a three year period.
  - (c) a non-rate base deferral account to capture the cost of service associated with the capital additions to the delivery system incurred prior to January 1, 2012, and to recover these costs from all non-bypass customers by amortizing them through delivery rates commencing January 1, 2012 over a three year period.

***Cost Recovery Related Orders***

3. An order pursuant to sections 59-61 of the Act approving:
  - (a) the allocation of costs to Biomethane Program customers and the accounting treatment of those costs as described in Section 10.6 of the Application.

## APPENDIX A

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- (b) the cost recovery methodology applicable to Biogas processing related assets.
- (c) a rate base deferral account to capture the costs incurred by Terasen Gas to procure and process consumable Biomethane gas and the revenues collected through the Biomethane energy recovery component of rates, and thereby accumulate any differences (the "Biomethane Variance Account").
- (d) the Biomethane Variance Account balance quarterly reporting process and the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge rate setting mechanism on a basis consistent with the Company's existing gas cost reporting and rate setting mechanisms, as described in Section 10.7 of the Application.
- (e) Terasen Gas purchasing carbon offsets and recovering the costs through the Biomethane Variance Account in the event of under-supply of Biomethane, at a per gigajoule unit price not to exceed the difference between the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge and the Commodity Cost Recovery Charge in effect at that time.
- (f) the Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge at \$9.904/GJ effective October 1, 2010.

### ***Supply Project Related Orders***

- 4. An order pursuant to section 71 of the Act accepting as filed:
  - (a) the Purchase of Biogas Agreement with the CSRD; and
  - (b) the Purchase of Biogas Agreement with Catalyst Power Incorporated.
- 5. An order pursuant to section 44.2 of the Act that the following capital expenditures are accepted by the Commission and are in the public interest:
  - (a) The expenditures relating to the facilities required for the Salmon Arm Project described at Table 9-1 of the Application; and
  - (b) The expenditures relating to the facilities required for the Catalyst Project described at Table 9-4 of the Application.
- 6. An order that future supply contracts for the purchase of Biogas or Biomethane filed with the Commission that meet the criteria described in Section 8.4, meet the filing requirements in sections 71(1)(a) and 71(1)(b) of the Act.

***Post-Implementation Review Orders***

7. A direction that Terasen Gas, within 5 years of the date of this order:
  - (a) file a Post-implementation Report that provides the information described in Section 8.4.4 of the Application; and
  - (b) hold a Post-implementation Workshop, to be attended by Terasen Gas, and any interested stakeholders and interveners, at which Terasen Gas will address the contents of the Post-implementation Report.

### THE REGULATORY PROCESS

By Order G-109-10 dated June 24, 2010, the Commission established a written hearing process and the following Timetable.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DATE (2010)</b>
Workshop	Thursday, June 24
Intervener Registration Deadline	Monday, July 5
Commission Information Request No. 1	Friday, July 16
Intervener Information Requests No. 1	Friday, July 23
Terasen Responses to Information Requests No. 1	Friday, August 6
Commission Information Request No. 2	Friday, August 20
Intervener Information Requests No. 2	Monday, August 23
Terasen Response to Information Requests No. 2	Friday, September 3
Terasen Written Final Submission	Friday, September 10
Intervener Written Final Submissions	Monday, September 20
Terasen Written Reply Submission	Tuesday, September 28
Oral Argument (if Required)	Friday, October 8

The Commission received Final Submissions from:

- Terasen on September 10, 2010
- CEC on September 20, 2010
- BC Hydro on September 20, 2010
- BCSEA on September 20, 2010
- BCOAPO on September 21, 2010

Terasen submitted its Reply Submission responding to final submissions of CEC, BC Hydro, BCSEA and BCOAPO on September 27, 2010.

IN THE MATTER OF  
the Utilities Commission Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, Chapter 473

and

Terasen Gas Inc.  
Application for Approval of a Biomethane Service Offering,  
Supporting Business Model, for the Approval of the Salmon Arm Biomethane Project  
and for the Approval the Catalyst Biomethane Project

**EXHIBIT LIST**

<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>COMMISSION DOCUMENTS</i>	
A-1	Letter dated June 10, 2010 – Commission comments on the Application and Notice of Workshop
A-2	Letter dated June 24, 2010 – Regulatory Timetable
A-3	Letter dated June 25, 2010 – Appointment of Commission Panel
A-4	Letter dated July 5, 2010 – Release of Confidential Application Documents to BC Bioenergy Network
A-5	Letter dated July 16, 2010 – Commission Information Request No. 1
A-6	Letter dated August 20, 2010 – Commission Information Request No. 2
A-7	Letter dated October 4, 2010 – Cancellation of Oral Argument scheduled for Friday, October 8, 2010
<i>APPLICANT DOCUMENTS TGI</i>	
B-1	<b>TERASEN GAS INC. (TGI)</b> Letter Dated June 8, 2010 - Application for Approval of a Biomethane Service Offering and Supporting Business Model, for the Approval of the Salmon Arm Biomethane Project and for the Approval the Catalyst Biomethane Project
B-1-1	Letter dated June 23, 2010 – Filing errata to the application

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<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
B-1-2	Confidential Letter dated June 8, 2010 – TGI CONFIDENTIAL Appendices I J-3 to the Application
B-1-3	Confidential Letter dated September 1, 2010 - TGI CONFIDENTIAL Contract Amendment to Confidential Appendix I-2
B-2	Letter dated June 25, 2010 - Workshop Presentation Materials
B-2-1	Letter dated July 8, 2010 – Response to Workshop Undertaking
B-3	Letter dated August 6, 2010 - TGI Response to BCUC IR No. 1
B-3-1	CONFIDENTIAL Letter dated August 6, 2010 - TGI CONFIDENTIAL Response to BCUC IR No. 1
B-4	Letter dated August 6, 2010 - TGI Response to BCOAPO IR No. 1
B-4-1	CONFIDENTIAL Letter dated August 6, 2010 - TGI CONFIDENTIAL Response to BCOAPO IR No. 1
B-5	Letter dated August 6, 2010 - TGI Response to BCSEA IR No. 1
B-5-1	CONFIDENTIAL Letter dated August 6, 2010 - TGI CONFIDENTIAL Response to BCSEA IR No. 1
B-6	Letter dated August 6, 2010 - TGI Response to CEC IR No. 1
B-7	Letter dated August 17, 2010 - TGI Response to BCSEA IR No1.20.2
B-8	Letter dated August 17, 2010 - TGI Response to CEC IR No1.10.1-2
B-9	Letter dated August 17, 2010 - TGI Response to BCUC IR No. 1 Attachment 43.1.6 Redacted
B-10	Letter dated September 2, 2010 – TGI Response to BCUC IR No. 2
B-11	Letter dated September 2, 2010 – TGI Response to BCOAPO IR No. 2
B-12	Letter dated September 2, 2010 – TGI Response to BCSEA IR No. 2
B-13	Letter dated September 2, 2010 – TGI Response to CEC IR No. 2

<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>INTERVENER DOCUMENTS</i>	
C1-1	<b>CATALYST POWER INC. (CP)</b> Online registration dated June 16, 2010 – Requesting Intervener status by Christopher Bush
C2-1	<b>BC AGRICULTURE COUNCIL (BCAC)</b> Online registration dated June 16, 2010 – Requesting Intervener status by Mathew Dickson
C3-1	<b>BC BIOENERGY NETWORK (BCBN)</b> Online registration dated June 23, 2010 – Requesting Intervener status by Sandy Ferguson
C3-2	Letter dated June 23, 2010 – BCBN Filing Undertaking of Confidentiality by Sandra Ferguson
C3-3	Letter dated June 23, 2010 – BCBN Filing Undertaking of Confidentiality by Michael Weedon
C3-4	Online registration dated June 24, 2010 – BCBN addition of Michael Weedon
C4-1	<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA HYDRO AND POWER AUTHORITY (BC HYDRO)</b> - Online registration dated June 23, 2010 – Requesting Intervener status by Tatiana Noskova
C5-1	<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA OLD AGE PENSIONERS' ORGANIZATION (BCOAPO) VIA EMAIL</b> Letter Dated June 23, 2010 - Request for Intervener Status by Jim Quail and James Wightman
C5-2	Letter Dated July 23, 2010 - BCOAPO Information Request No. 1
C5-3	Letter Dated August 23, 2010 - BCOAPO Information Request No. 2
C6-1	<b>ELEMENTAL ENERGY INC. (EEI)</b> - Online registration dated June 25, 2010 – Requesting Intervener status by Richard Hopp
C7-1	<b>COMMERCIAL ENERGY CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION (CEC)</b> -Letter dated June 29, 2010 – Requesting Intervener Status
C7-2	Letter Dated July 23, 2010 - CEC Information Request No. 1
C7-3	Letter Dated August 23, 2010 - CEC Information Request No. 2
C8-1	<b>BC SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION (BCSEA)</b> -Letter dated July 5, 2010 – Requesting Intervener Status
C8-2	Letter dated July 7, 2010 – Advising that W.J. Andrews to serve as their counsel
C8-3	Letter Dated July 21, 2010 - BCSEA Information Request No. 1



**APPENDIX C**

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<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
C8-4	Letter Dated August 23, 2010 - BCSEA Information Request No. 2
C9-1	<b>BP CANADA ENERGY COMPANY (BPE)</b> Online registration dated July 6, 2010 – Requesting Intervener status by Cheryl Worthy

*INTERESTED PARTY DOCUMENTS*

D-1	<b>UNION GAS LIMITED (UGL)</b> Online registration dated June 16, 2010 - Request for Interested Party Status by Patrick McMahon
D-2	<b>FLOTECH SERVICES NA, LTD (FLOTECH)</b> Online registration dated June 17, 2010 - Request for Interested Party Status by Sean Mezei
D-3	<b>ENBRIDGE GAS DISTRIBUTION INC.</b> Online registration dated June 17, 2010 - Request for Interested Party Status by Lesley Austin
D-4	<b>LIFE SCIENCES BC (LSBC)</b> Online registration dated June 24, 2010 - Request for Interested Party Status by Bob Ingratta
D-5	<b>MANITOBA HYDRO (MH)</b> Online registration dated June 29, 2010 - Request for Interested Party Status by Ashley Jansen

*LETTERS OF COMMENT*

E-1	<b>MINISTRY OF ENERGY, MINES AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES</b> – Letter dated August 3, 2010 supporting TGI's Application
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCBN	BC Bioenergy Network
BCOAPO	BC Old Age Pensioners' Organization, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC, federated anti-poverty groups of BC, and Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre
BCSEA	BC Sustainable Energy Association
BERC	Biomethane Energy Recovery Charge
BVA	Biomethane Variance Account
BC	British Columbia
BC Hydro	British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority
Commission, BCUC	British Columbia Utilities Commission
CEA	Clean Energy Act
CEC	Commercial Energy Consumers Association of British Columbia
Catalyst	Catalyst Power Incorporated
CSRD	Columbia Shuswap Regional District
COS	cost of service
CWLP	Customer Works LP
DGE	Dockside Green Energy
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GJ	gigajoule
ICE	Innovative Clean Energy
IT	Information and Technology
NREL	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
O & M	Operating and Maintenance

**APPENDIX D**

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PJ	petajoule
RIB	Residential Inclining Block
RRA	Revenue Requirements Application
SEFCDES	South East False Creek District Energy System
Terasen, TGI or the Company	Terasen Gas Inc.
the Act or UCA	Utilities Commission Act

**SECTIONS OF UTILITIES COMMISSION ACT**

Section 44.2 states:

**Expenditure schedule**

**44.2 (1)** A public utility may file with the commission an expenditure schedule containing one or more of the following:

- (a) a statement of the expenditures on demand-side measures the public utility has made or anticipates making during the period addressed by the schedule;
- (b) a statement of capital expenditures the public utility has made or anticipates making during the period addressed by the schedule;
- (c) a statement of expenditures the public utility has made or anticipates making during the period addressed by the schedule to acquire energy from other persons.

(2) The commission may not consent under section 61 (2) to an amendment to or a rescission of a schedule filed under section 61 (1) to the extent that the amendment or the rescission is for the purpose of recovering expenditures referred to in subsection (1) (a) of this section, unless

- (a) the expenditure is the subject of a schedule filed and accepted under this section, or
- (b) the amendment or rescission is for the purpose of setting an interim rate.

(3) After reviewing an expenditure schedule submitted under subsection (1), the commission, subject to subsections (5), (5.1) and (6), must

- (a) accept the schedule, if the commission considers that making the expenditures referred to in the schedule would be in the public interest, or
- (b) reject the schedule.

(4) The commission may accept or reject, under subsection (3), a part of a schedule.

(5) In considering whether to accept an expenditure schedule filed by a public utility other than the authority, the commission must consider

- (a) the applicable of British Columbia's energy objectives,

## APPENDIX E

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- (b) the most recent long-term resource plan filed by the public utility under section 44.1, if any,
  - (c) the extent to which the plan is consistent with the applicable requirements under sections 6 and 19 of the *Clean Energy Act*,
  - (d) if the schedule includes expenditures on demand-side measures, whether the demand-side measures are cost-effective within the meaning prescribed by regulation, if any, and
  - (e) the interests of persons in British Columbia who receive or may receive service from the public utility.
- (5.1) In considering whether to accept an expenditure schedule filed by the authority, the commission, in addition to considering the interests of persons in British Columbia who receive or may receive service from the authority, must consider and be guided by
- (a) British Columbia's energy objectives,
  - (b) an applicable integrated resource plan approved under section 4 of the *Clean Energy Act*,
  - (c) the extent to which the schedule is consistent with the requirements under section 19 of the *Clean Energy Act*, and
  - (d) if the schedule includes expenditures on demand-side measures, the extent to which the demand-side measures are cost-effective within the meaning prescribed by regulation, if any.
- (6) If the commission considers that an expenditure in an expenditure schedule was determined to be in the public interest in the course of determining that a long-term resource plan was in the public interest under section 44.1 (6),
- (a) subsection (5) of this section does not apply with respect to that expenditure, and
  - (b) the commission must accept under subsection (3) the expenditure in the expenditure schedule.

Section 59 states:

**Discrimination in rates**

59 (1) A public utility must not make, demand or receive

(a) an unjust, unreasonable, unduly discriminatory or unduly preferential rate for a service provided by it in British Columbia, or

(b) a rate that otherwise contravenes this Act, the regulations, orders of the commission or any other law.

(2) A public utility must not

(a) as to rate or service, subject any person or locality, or a particular description of traffic, to an undue prejudice or disadvantage, or

(b) extend to any person a form of agreement, a rule or a facility or privilege, unless the agreement, rule, facility or privilege is regularly and uniformly extended to all persons under substantially similar circumstances and conditions for service of the same description.

(3) The commission may, by regulation, declare the circumstances and conditions that are substantially similar for the purpose of subsection (2) (b).

(4) It is a question of fact, of which the commission is the sole judge,

(a) whether a rate is unjust or unreasonable,

(b) whether, in any case, there is undue discrimination, preference, prejudice or disadvantage in respect of a rate or service, or

(c) whether a service is offered or provided under substantially similar circumstances and conditions.

(5) In this section, a rate is "unjust" or "unreasonable" if the rate is

(a) more than a fair and reasonable charge for service of the nature and quality provided by the utility,

- (b) insufficient to yield a fair and reasonable compensation for the service provided by the utility, or a fair and reasonable return on the appraised value of its property, or
- (c) unjust and unreasonable for any other reason.

Section 60 states:

**Setting of rates**

**60 (1)** In setting a rate under this Act

- (a) the commission must consider all matters that it considers proper and relevant affecting the rate,
- (b) the commission must have due regard to the setting of a rate that
  - (i) is not unjust or unreasonable within the meaning of section 59,
  - (ii) provides to the public utility for which the rate is set a fair and reasonable return on any expenditure made by it to reduce energy demands, and
  - (iii) encourages public utilities to increase efficiency, reduce costs and enhance performance,
- (b.1) the commission may use any mechanism, formula or other method of setting the rate that it considers advisable, and may order that the rate derived from such a mechanism, formula or other method is to remain in effect for a specified period, and
- (c) if the public utility provides more than one class of service, the commission must
  - (i) segregate the various kinds of service into distinct classes of service,
  - (ii) in setting a rate to be charged for the particular service provided, consider each distinct class of service as a self contained unit, and
  - (iii) set a rate for each unit that it considers to be just and reasonable for that unit, without regard to the rates fixed for any other unit.

(2) In setting a rate under this Act, the commission may take into account a distinct or special area served by a public utility with a view to ensuring, so far as the commission considers it advisable, that the rate applicable in each area is adequate to yield a fair and reasonable return on the appraised value of the plant or system of the public utility used, or prudently and reasonably acquired, for the purpose of providing the service in that special area.

(3) If the commission takes a special area into account under subsection (2), it must have regard to the special considerations applicable to an area that is sparsely settled or has other distinctive characteristics.

(4) For this section, the commission must exclude from the appraised value of the property of the public utility any franchise, licence, permit or concession obtained or held by the utility from a municipal or other public authority beyond the money, if any, paid to the municipality or public authority as consideration for that franchise, licence, permit or concession, together with necessary and reasonable expenses in procuring the franchise, licence, permit or concession.

Section 61 states:

**Rate schedules to be filed with commission**

**61** (1) A public utility must file with the commission, under rules the commission specifies and within the time and in the form required by the commission, schedules showing all rates established by it and collected, charged or enforced or to be collected or enforced.

(2) A schedule filed under subsection (1) must not be rescinded or amended without the commission's consent.

(3) The rates in schedules as filed and as amended in accordance with this Act and the regulations are the only lawful, enforceable and collectable rates of the public utility filing them, and no other rate may be collected, charged or enforced.



(4) A public utility may file with the commission a new schedule of rates that the utility considers to be made necessary by a rise in the price, over which the utility has no effective control, required to be paid by the public utility for its gas supplies, other energy supplied to it, or expenses and taxes, and the new schedule may be put into effect by the public utility on receiving the approval of the commission.

(5) Within 60 days after the date it approves a new schedule under subsection (4), the commission may,

(a) on complaint of a person whose interests are affected, or

(b) on its own motion,

direct an inquiry into the new schedule of rates having regard to the fixing of a rate that is not unjust or unreasonable.

(6) After an inquiry under subsection (5), the commission may

(a) rescind or vary the increase and order a refund or customer credit by the utility of all or part of the money received by way of increase, or

(b) confirm the increase or part of it.

