

Introduction

Québec's Régie de l'Énergie chose key provisions of a *mécanisme de réglementation incitative* ("MRI") for Hydro-Québec Distribution ("HQD") in D.2017-043

Several provisions remain to be resolved in Phase 3 of the proceeding

This hearing focusses on the revenue escalation mechanism

Revenue Cap Index

- Inflation measures
- X Factor
- S Factor

Y factor

Z factor

This presentation discusses views of PEG Research on these issues

Outstanding Issues



Régie de l'énergie

DOSSIER.

R. 6011.2017

DÉPOSÉE EN AUDIENCE

09/02/2018

Date

C. Boire et FQ

Pièces n°: 0057

X Factor

Régie ruled that *Facteur X* in HQD's revenue cap index should be based on *judgement* after reviewing recent PMF studies and proceedings

My review of this evidence suggests that a **0.30% X** is appropriate

The following considerations are salient in choosing X

Conditions suggesting X should be around +0.3%

- Best available recent published study (Lowry 2017) indicated a **0.39% U.S. power distributor PMF trend**
- No special circumstances suggest a different trend is appropriate for HQD
- Alberta commission recently chose a **0.30% X factor** for power and gas distributors
- Ontario commission recently chose a **0.00% X** for power distributors
- Six Canadian utilities have recently proposed X factors of **0.00% or higher**

X Factor (cont'd)

Conditions suggesting X should be higher

- BC Commission chose a **0.93% X factor** for revenue cap index of FortisBC in 2014
- HQD has had productivity growth targets on most *charges d'exploitation* of **1.00% or higher** for several years and has typically achieved its target
- Kahn X factor appraisal of HQD's revenue requis suggested a **0.67% X factor**
This was calculated on the basis of the 2005-2015 sample period
- Ratemaking treatment of input price inflation likely biased *in favor of* HQD
- Z factors are also likely to favor HQD, especially if major plant additions are eligible

Conditions suggesting X should be *lower*

Growth factor is 0.75 x growth Customers

Recent (though unvetted) estimate of **-0.9%** distributor PMF growth in Ontario

However, Ontario data are problematic in several respects

- Output index grows more slowly than customer growth by 34 basis points
- Recent change in accounting standards for most distributors slow O&M productivity
 - [retirement cost Y factor of Toronto Hydro was occasioned by this]
- Poor quality of capital cost data

Irrelevant considerations

Other recent evidence ostensibly supporting a negative X is based on seriously flawed PMF methodologies

High-level consideration of key methodological issues can inform *judgement* process and help the Regie oversee upcoming productivity study

Coyne stated yesterday that *judgement* should "address shortcomings of TFP studies"

Credentials of Productivity Witnesses

Witness (Consultancy)	Energy Utility	Utility-Sponsored	Non-Utility
	Productivity Trend Testimony	Studies	Sponsored Studies
Lowry (PEG)	Over 30	At least 25	6
Makholm (NERA)	4	3	1
Meltzen (Christensen Associates)	2	2	0
Fenrick (PSE)	3	3	0
Carpenter (Brattle Group)	2	2	0
Coyne (Concentric Energy Advisors)	1	1	0

- >>> All three witnesses who have recently advocated negative X factors have little energy utility productivity research experience and have worked exclusively for utilities on energy utility productivity issues

Productivity Basics

growth Productivity = growth Scale – Growth Inputs

Different kinds of productivity indexes for different uses

- Productivity in using capital, charges d'exploitation, and all inputs
- Productivity in providing distribution services or distribution + SALC services
- Productivity in cost containment or cost containment + marketing
- Focus on performance or calibration of a *revenue* (or price) cap index

PMF methods should be appropriate for this use

Main controversies in X factor calibration

- Measurement of scale
- Measurement of capital quantity

Methodological Issues

Brattle and Christensen studies which Concentric cites are based on flawed methodology of Dr. Jeff Makholm of NERA

Salient problems in an application to HQD

- Labor quantity treatment criticized by several witnesses and ultimately corrected
- Excludes SALC and general costs
- Volumetric scale (aka output) index is inappropriate in study for HQD
- Simple "one hoss shay" approach to measuring capital cost is sensitive to average service life assumption
- Makholm's service life assumption poorly substantiated, unreasonably low

Why service life matters

Under the one hoss shay treatment of capital cost, quantity of capital (XK_t) defined by

$$XK_t = XK_{t-1} + XK_t^{additions} - XK_t^{retirements}$$

Given a construction cost index (WKA_t), additions easily calculated since

$$XK_t^{additions} = \text{Value of Additions}/WKA_t$$

As for retirements

$$XK_t^{retirements} = \text{Value of Retirements}/WKA_{t+1}$$

XK_t growth is slower the higher is assumed average service life

>>> Average service life can be "fudge factor" producing a wide range of PMF results

Why service life matters (cont'd)

Makholm, Brattle, and Christensen assume 33 years, with no substantiation

HQD reports a 39 year service life

PEG showed in Alberta 2016 reply evidence that, with 37 year average service life, negative PMF trend with one hoss shay and Makholm's data *vanishes*

This evidence was never considered by Alberta commission and was not disputed

Review of distribution service lives suggests that average life is even higher

Summary of Corrections and Modifications to NERA/Brattle/Christensen Productivity Calculations*

	S&P Trend (volume weighted averages, Brattle sample)	
	1973-2014	1997-2014
As Reported by Brattle	0.71%	0.71%
Corrections		
Salary Escalation Correction (Metzem)	0.76%	0.59%
Correct Output Quantity Data	0.86%	0.43%
Use Gross Plant Benchmark with 20 year life	0.99%	0.28%
Use Gross Plant Benchmark with 33 year life	1.10%	0.17%
Exclude companies not included in PEG work	1.15%	0.12%
Methodological Upgrades (Major)		
Use One-Hour May with a 37 year service life and a gross plant benchmark	1.62%	0.49%
Use Geometric Decay and a 33 year service life	1.31%	0.14%
Use Geometric Decay and a 37 year service life	1.22%	0.05%
Correct Data for Mergers and Match	1.29%	0.15%
Methodological Upgrades (Other)		
Use total customers	NA	0.18%
Variances on the PEG Work (all sample averages)		
PEG using only distribution, 37 year life, GDPPI, and a common sample	NA	0.25%
PEG using only distribution, 37 year life and GDPPI	NA	0.23%
PEG with 37 year life and GDPPI	NA	0.37%
PEG with 37 year service life (Revised Testimony)	NA	0.47%
PEG testimony (Original)	NA	0.48%

* Annex 1, C-AQCIE-CIFQ-0025 Table 2
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Estimated Service Lives of Electric Distribution Assets of Select U.S. and Canadian Utilities

FERC Account	Estimated Service Lives (Years)											
	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111
Subdivisions												
Canada												
Public Service of Canada (2015)												
CEB (2016)												
EDT (2016)												
Force BC (2014)												
U.S.												
Public Service of Colorado (2016)												
San Diego Gas and Electric (2014)												
San Diego Gas and Electric (2017)												
Blue Bell Energy (2017)												
Pharos Energy (2017)												
Florida Power and Light (2014)												
PECO (2017)												
Consolidated Edison (2014)												
Duke Energy Carolinas (2016)												
PP&L (2017)												
Florida Power (2016)												
California Gas and Electric (2016)												
Southwest California Edison (2017)												
Western Massachusetts Electric (2016)												
NYSEG (2014)												
Northwest Territories Power Corp (2017)												
Energy Northwest (2016)												
Arizona Mutual (2014)												
Rocky Mountain Electric (2014)												
Truist Energy (2016)												
Public Gas and Electric (2016)												
Albuquerque Gas and Electric (2014)												
U.S. Summary Statistics												
Average	65	57	44	50	49	60	48	59	51	73	61	53
Min	40	30	24	35	30	40	30	40	30	40	40	30
Median	65	60	50	50	50	60	50	50	51	51	50	40
Max	80	80	75	80	75	80	80	75	75	75	75	75
Mean / Median	1.00	0.99	0.99	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.99	0.99	0.99	1.00	0.99	1.00
Mean without Max and Min	65.0	57.8	44.5	50.2	49.5	60.3	48.4	59.7	51.2	73.0	61.0	53.0
Adjusted / Normal Mean	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Market Calculations												
Aggregate Asset Value of Distribution Plant, Major U.S. electric utilities, 1994 ¹	\$346,880	\$388,316	\$527,310	\$1,059,970	\$1,746,492	\$3,587,804	\$4,822,026	\$7,777,140	\$14,766,347	\$27,058,051	\$46,449,000	\$79,893,000
Share of Total Distribution Plant, 1994 (%)	0.8%	1.0%	12.1%	14.2%	15.1%	6.2%	14.9%	26.9%	9.6%	5.3%	8.7%	10.7%
Weighted Average Life of Distribution Plant	55.3											



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Output Specification

Output specifications have evolved in energy utility PMF studies as *revenue* cap indexes become more popular

HQD's revenue cap index will have general form

$$\text{growth Revenue} = \text{Inflation} - X + \text{growth Customers} \quad [1]$$

Since

$$\text{growth Cost} = \text{Inflation} + \text{growth Inputs}, \quad [2]$$

X causes revenue cap index to track cost of *typical* distributor if

$$X = \text{growth Customers} - \text{growth Inputs} \quad [3]$$

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Alberta Utility Commission explicitly recognized this principle in first generic PBR proceeding

The experts in this proceeding explained that by focusing on revenue per customer as opposed to prices per unit of gas delivered, the revenue-per-customer cap plan effectively shields the revenue of gas companies from variations in energy use per customer. In these circumstances, Dr Schoechon behalf of AltaGas and Dr Cicchetti on behalf of EPCOR acknowledged that the number of customers, not the volumes sold becomes the driver of a company's revenues. The Commission agrees with Dr Lowry and his colleagues at PEG that for revenue-per-customer cap plans, the number of customers, rather than a volumetric output [is] the correct output measure for a TFP study. Using similar logic, the Commission agrees with Dr Lowry that output measures that place a heavy weight on volumetric and other usage measures should be used for TFP studies that are part of a price cap PBR plan.

But Alberta power distributors have *price* caps

Christensen used customers in recent PMF research when Eversource Energy proposed revenue cap and commission agreed

Eight other commissions (including the Regie and British Columbia) have approved PMF trends based on studies using customers as scale metric

>>> If customers IS correct output measure, bias of Makhholm's *volumetric* scale index in an application to HQD depends on trend in AVERAGE USE

$$\begin{aligned} \text{trend Volumes} &= \text{trend Customers} + (\text{trend Volumes} - \text{trend Customers}) \\ &= \text{trend Customers} + \text{trend Average Use} \end{aligned} \quad [4]$$



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Average Use Trends of U.S. Electric Utilities*

Multiyear Averages	Residential ¹		Commercial ¹		Average Growth Rate
	Level	Growth Rate	Level	Growth Rate	
1927-1930	478	7.06%	3,659	6.67%	6.86%
1931-1940	723	5.45%	4,048	2.00%	3.73%
1941-1950	1,304	6.48%	6,485	5.08%	5.78%
1951-1960	2,836	7.53%	12,062	6.29%	6.91%
1961-1972	5,603	5.79%	31,230	8.79%	7.29%
1973-1980	8,394	2.03%	50,576	2.53%	2.28%
1981-1986	8,820	0.12%	54,144	0.81%	0.46%
1987-1990	9,424	1.39%	60,211	2.29%	1.84%
1991-2000	10,061	1.15%	67,006	1.68%	1.41%
2001-2007	10,941	0.73%	74,224	0.64%	0.68%
2008-2014	11,059	-0.38%	75,311	-0.22%	-0.30%

¹ U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-861, "Annual Electric Utility Report," Form EIA-826, "Monthly Electric Utility Sales and Revenues Report with State Distributions," and EIA 0035, "Monthly Energy Review."

* Rapport des experts amendé, C-AQCIE-CIFQ-0032, Table 1

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Output Specification (cont'd)

Conclusions:

- Declining average use is chiefly responsible for *slowdown* in power distributor PMF growth since 1990 using Makhholm's methods
- Even Mr. Coyne notes that PMF slowdown is mainly due to *output*
- This slowdown has little bearing on the choice of an X factor for HQD
- After 2000, growth in average use using Makhholm method dissipates, revealing underlying problem of 33 year average service life
- Sample period becomes a hotly contested issue
- Pertinent measure of PMF growth for HQD is not "trending negative"
- Undue weight need not be placed on latest studies and decisions (e.g., Eversource)

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Recapping

Alberta commission's acceptance of Makholm's PMF methods invited (inexperienced) utility witnesses to cherry pick a favorable *truncated* sample period (e.g., 2000-2016)

Makholm himself has routinely used a much longer sample period in which PMF growth is positive (e.g., 1972-2016); he has never advocated sole reliance on a truncated sample period and recently proposed a 0.0% X factor in Ontario.

Brattle and Christensen (and Concentric) have *not* questioned Makholm's weakly supported capital cost treatment, which favors utilities, *even though these companies (like Concentric) have not used one hoss shay in past PMF studies*

Massachusetts commission recently fell for this gambit and acknowledged a -0.46% national distribution PMF trend

But in 2013 this commission *rejected* an MRI proposal by another power distributor (Unitil) based on a +1.19% PMF trend

>>> Process of judgement should not ignore key methodological issues

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Methodological Issues (cont'd)

Advantages of PEG's Methodology

Most studies (including Berkeley Lab) include SALC and general costs

Customer growth is the scale variable

>>> PMF trend more stable, does not slow markedly after 2000

PEG's PMF trend estimates have fallen over the years, but mainly due to an enlarged sample

Reasonable average service life assumption (37 years)

But geometric decay method for measuring capital cost is less sensitive to average service life assumption

Larger sample than Makholm/Brattle/Christensen use

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Statistique Canada Utility-Sector PMF Index

Concentric report also features utility sector PMF index calculated by Statistics Canada

- Component of private business sector productivity study
- Includes all electric utilities, gas distributors, water and utility industries
- **Value-added index excludes intermediate input**
- Output sensitive to declining average use of power, gas, and water
- Costs include conservation and load management

>>> Not a pertinent study

Critique of Concentric Evidence

Biased and uninformative presentation of the available evidence

Uninformative

Glosses over critically important methodological issues that

- affect appropriate weighting of recent studies and decisions
- must be considered by Regie in Phase 3 when reviewing HQD's PMF research plan

Coyne takes no position on these issues when questioned

Biased

Focuses on studies by witnesses in recent proceedings, not commission decisions or scholarly studies, when most recent witness studies

- were prepared for utilities
- used inappropriate and/or controversial PMF methods

Selectively presents favorable results from these studies

Concentric Dos and Don'ts

Inconsistently applied criteria for screening evidence

- *Don't* want to consider Dr. Lowry's study for U.S. government
Do want to consider Statistics Canada study of utility sector
- *Don't* want to consider Dr. Lowry's unvetted Alberta Reply evidence
Do want to consider Mr. Fenrick's unvetted Ontario evidence
- *Don't* want to relitigate Dr. Lowry's Alberta Reply Evidence
Do want to relitigate Christensen and Brattle evidence
- *Do* highlight recent studies that favor HQD
Don't mention the *most* recent studies, by Lowry and Makhholm, which favor consumers
- *Do* believe that every *disadvantage* HQD might face should be considered in X factor design as an "implicit stretch factor"
Don't believe that any *advantages* HQD faces should influence X design

Productivity "X" Factor: Recent Trends

The negative trend in productivity is confirmed across multiple experts and sources

Year	StatCan MFP Utility Sector Multifactor Productivity	2012 AUC Proceeding NERA Results	2016 AUC Proceeding Brattle Update of NERA	2016 AUC Proceeding PEG Study for CCA	2016 AUC Proceeding Christensen Study	Christensen Eversource Industry TFP	PSE - Hydro One Ontario Industry TFP	Makhholm EGD TFP Growth
2000	2.4%	2.1%	2.1%	1.0%	2.0%			1.9%
2001	7.9%	3.4%	3.4%	1.0%	3.2%			2.9%
2002	7.8%	1.2%	1.2%	1.7%	1.8%	-0.1%		2.2%
2003	3.0%	2.4%	2.4%	1.4%	2.1%	2.1%	0.8%	2.8%
2004	3.0%	2.8%	2.8%	1.4%	3.0%	1.9%	1.3%	3.3%
2005	2.8%	2.1%	2.1%	1.2%	2.2%	0.1%	2.2%	2.4%
2006	3.1%	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%	-2.2%	1.0%	0.2%	3.0%
2007	4.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	-0.4%	1.5%	0.8%
2008	0.5%	-4.9%	-4.9%	0.2%	-4.4%	-2.3%	0.6%	-4.9%
2009	6.7%	2.6%	2.6%	0.8%	3.7%	2.0%	-0.1%	2.9%
2010	1.5%		2.2%	0.4%	1.7%	-2.2%	0.8%	2.1%
2011	1.0%		-4.5%	0.5%	3.9%	1.9%	-1.3%	-4.4%
2012	2.4%		-2.0%	1.2%	-2.0%	0.6%	-3.9%	-2.1%
2013	3.1%		-0.2%	0.0%	-0.6%	-0.2%	-4.5%	-0.4%
2014	1.9%		1.8%	-0.1%	1.7%	1.0%	-2.0%	1.9%
2015	-2.1%					0.2%	-2.8%	-1.4%
Post-2000 Average	-1.1%	-0.7%	-0.9%	0.5%	-0.8%	-0.5%	-0.9%	-0.9%
Last 5 Years Average	-2.1%	-1.5%	-1.3%	0.4%	-1.3%	-0.5%	-2.9%	-2.0%

Adjustment for Capital Trackers

Concentric argues that X factor should be lower because HQD does not include a capital cost tracker (or C factor).

PEG notes...

- Relation of X to supplemental capital revenue has been raised in several Canadian proceedings
- Capital trackers provide extra \$\$ for costs that sampled utilities routinely incur, raising risk of double counting
- Regulators have nonetheless usually *rejected* proposals to *raise* X because companies have capital cost trackers or C factors
- Massachusetts commission *did* acknowledge this connection and raised X factor for Eversource substantially because it will have a capital cost tracker
- HQD has not forecasted high capex during this MRI
- But Regie has allowed for possibility of supplemental capital cost funding through the Z factor and HQD supports this

>>> X factor should, if anything be higher if there is a major plant Z factor
Z factor and inflation treatments also favor HQD
No "implicit stretch factor" in HQD plan



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Input Price Differential

MRIs in United States frequently use macroeconomic inflation measures like the GDPPI

Macro inflation contains substantial productivity trend of the US economy, and may differ from the industry input price trend

X factor is therefore sometimes decomposed into a productivity differential and an input price differential

This is not a concern for HQD

- Inflation measure will include a labor price index
- Changes in allowed ROE will be accorded Y factor treatment
- Productivity trend of Canadian economy is close to zero

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Stretch Factor

Propose modest 0.20% stretch factor for HQD

Recent success in containing charges d'exploitation

Cost containment incentives generated by this plan won't be strong

- 4 year term
- MTER
- Possible Z factoring of major plant additions

0.20% is the norm for average cost performers

Inflation Measures

Inflation measure recommendation depends on what is Y factored

Combustible not Y factored

Average weekly earnings + IPC Quebec

Combustible Y factored

Average weekly earnings

+ Gross domestic product implicit price index for final domestic demand

Insufficient evidence to choose HQD's proposed 3 part index

Asset price index is biggest concern

Under traditional regulation, implicit price index for capital is complex function of past construction cost trends

Unclear what asset price index would capture this trend

How Alternative Canadian Asset Price Indexes Compare to Contemplated Macro Indexes¹

EUCPI ²		Implicit Capital Stock Deflators ³						Implicit Price Indexes ⁴				IPC ⁵			
EUCPI ²		Electricity		Water		Gas		Consumer Price Index		GDP		GDP		IPC ⁵	
Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value
1990	100.0	1990	100.0	1990	100.0	1990	100.0	1990	100.0	1990	100.0	1990	100.0	1990	100.0
2016	115.2	2016	115.2	2016	115.2	2016	115.2	2016	115.2	2016	115.2	2016	115.2	2016	115.2
Average Annual Growth Rates		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016	
1990-2016	1.5%	1990-2016	2.4%	1990-2016	2.3%	1990-2016	2.1%	1990-2016	2.1%	1990-2016	1.7%	1990-2016	1.7%	1990-2016	1.9%
2007-2016	1.7%	2007-2016	2.7%	2007-2016	2.9%	2007-2016	2.8%	2007-2016	2.9%	2007-2016	1.3%	2007-2016	1.3%	2007-2016	1.8%
Standard Deviation of Growth Rates		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016		1990-2016	
1990-2016	1.7%	1990-2016	1.5%	1990-2016	1.7%	1990-2016	1.9%	1990-2016	1.8%	1990-2016	0.6%	1990-2016	0.6%	1990-2016	0.8%

Notes:
 All growth rates are computed logarithmically. For example, growth rate of 1 + 1% = 1.01.
¹ Electric Utility Construction Price Index (Statistics Canada Table 227-0031)
² Fibres and Stock of Fixed Non-Ferrous of Capital Goods (Statistics Canada Table 011-0005)
³ Implicit Price Indexes, Gross Domestic Product (Statistics Canada Table 384-0039)
⁴ Consumer Price Index (Statistics Canada Table 326-0010)
⁵ The utilities sector of the Canadian economy comprises electric, water and sewage utilities, and natural gas distributors. Indices in shaded columns have been discussed in the proceeding for possible inclusion in HED's Revenue Cap Index.

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Y Factors

Eligible Costs

- Yes: Power supplies
- Transmission
- Conservation and demand management (all)
- Weather normalization
- WACC
- Maybe: Retirement
- No: Major capital projects

Materiality Threshold:

\$15 million for each cost category, including deadzone, except power supply, transmission, conservation and demand management
 For other categories,
 Supplemental revenue = max [(Cost - \$ 15 mm), 0]
 There are numerous precedents for such cost tracker deadzones

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Z Factors

Eligible Costs

Yes *Pannes majeurs*
 Unforeseeable events in *reseaux autonomes*
Tarif de maintien de la charge
 Contributions to connections
 Changes in accounting standards
 Miscellaneous external events

No Major capital projects

Materiality Threshold: \$15 million, including deadzone

Summary of Recommendations



Summary of PEG's Recommendations

Revenue Cap Index	
Inflation Measure	Combustible included: Average weekly earnings and IPC ^{Québec}
	Combustible Y Factored: Average weekly earnings and GDP/PIFDD ^{Canada}
X Factor	0.30%
Stretch Factor	0.20%
Y Factor	
Eligible Costs	Yes: Power supplies, transmission, conservation and demand management (all) Maybe: Retirement costs
Materiality Threshold	\$15 million per annual variance
Z Factor	
Eligible Costs	<i>Pannes majeurs</i> , unforeseeable events in <i>reseaux autonomes</i> , <i>Tarif de maintien de la charge</i> , contributions to connections, changes in accounting standards, miscellaneous external events
Materiality Threshold	\$15 million per annual event

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Appendix



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