



The bi-monthly bulletin of the Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN)

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- **Advocates call for a federal Low-Income Home Energy Efficiency program**

Canada is currently one of the few Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries without a national low-income energy efficiency program. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have long-running programs in place. As a result, LIEN joined with leading affordable housing, construction, environmental and anti-poverty groups and Toronto Mayor David Miller to publicly call on the federal government to implement a national energy efficiency program for low-income households.

Canada's poorest spend 13% of their income on energy, compared with just 4% for average-income Canadian households. Energy inefficient housing is a key factor, yet low-income households are the least able to afford retrofits. To view the September 25th media release, click on the following link:

<http://www.lowincomeenergy.ca/A55AB4/lien.nsf/All/greenplan>

- **2nd Smart Meter discussion paper released by SHSC: *Energy poverty in social housing***

The Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) has released its second discussion paper about the impact of Smart Metering of electricity use in individual units in social housing. The second paper, titled *Energy Poverty in Social Housing*, examines issues of affordability from the tenant perspective. Among the recommendations endorsed by the SHSC is the implementation of a lower electricity rate for social housing, in recognition of the reduced ability of poor and senior households to pay for their energy costs. The two discussion papers and recommendations are available at:

<http://www.shscorp.ca/shscnew/content/docs/Smart%20meters%20and%20social%20housing.pdf>

- **LIEN continues to press for Ontario Home Energy Affordability Program for low-income households at the OEB**

LIEN intervened in the Enbridge Gas 2007 Rates proceeding at the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) to request that a rate affordability program for low-income consumers be considered. The Board has asked all intervenors to respond to LIEN's submission about the OEB's jurisdiction in this matter. Depending on the outcome of the jurisdictional issue, it is unclear whether the low-income rate affordability program issue will be able to be considered in the current rates proceeding. We may be directed to another another forum, such as a generic proceeding.

- **LIEN calls for increased spending on DSM for low-income natural gas consumers**

As a result of the Ontario Energy Board's Natural Gas Demand Side Management (DSM) Generic proceeding, Union Gas and Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. are required to spend annually – over the next three years – 14% of their respective residential DSM budgets or \$1.3 million on low-income programs, whichever amount is greater. LIEN intervened in this proceeding and argued for a higher proportion to be spent on low-income programs (18% of the total DSM budget). The two gas utilities are consulting with LIEN and other stakeholders in the development of their low-income programs.

- **Update on low-income CDM spending/programs**

On July 13, 2006, Energy Minister Dwight Duncan gave a directive to the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to assume responsibility for the coordination and funding of the delivery of electricity conservation and demand-side management (CDM) programs by local distribution companies (LDCs) in Ontario. Two advisory committees are working on program design and delivery for the \$400 million LDC CDM fund which will run for three years, starting in October 2007. This initiative continues CDM programs after the expiry on September 30, 2007 of \$163 million worth of OEB-approved CDM plan spending by LDCs. LIEN is monitoring the development of the new LDC CDM fund programs with respect to the inclusion of targeted low-income programs.

LIEN has also written to the Ontario Power Authority because there was no reference to low-income consumers in their CDM discussion paper released in September 2006. LIEN emphasized the need to include adequately funded programs specifically designed to achieve deep reductions in energy use for low-income consumers in the OPA's CDM plan.

LIEN Currents is issued bi-monthly by the Low-Income Energy Network for members and others interested in solutions to energy poverty in Ontario. For more information, contact Zee Bhanji at bhanjiz@lao.on.ca or 416-597-5855 ext. 5167. You can also visit our website at www.lowincomeenergy.ca

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