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Ontario Energy Board  
Via Email: [ConsumerRelations@oeb.ca](mailto:ConsumerRelations@oeb.ca)

December 24, 2019

Sirs,

I write to complain about Enbridge Gas Distribution. I allege that they have breached the Ontario Energy Board's Consumer Charter ( [https://www.oeb.ca/sites/default/files/OEB\\_Consumer\\_Charter.PDF](https://www.oeb.ca/sites/default/files/OEB_Consumer_Charter.PDF) ), specifically "You have the right to fair, reasonable and timely complaint resolution processes ... natural gas companies are required to handle complaints in a fair, reasonable and timely manner."

Their conduct also violates their Conditions of Service document ( available via <https://www.enbridgegas.com/About-Us> ), section 6.10, which states "Enbridge is committed to providing excellent service and to ensuring that relationships with customers are conducted with integrity and in a responsible, fair, honest and ethical manner."

### **Discontinued and Re-established Mail Service**

I received my bill dated May 13, 2019, by mail and paid it in the normal fashion. When I realized I had not received any bills from Enbridge by mail for some time, and getting very confused on the Enbridge on-line system, I asked on Facebook how I could receive my bills by mail (See Annex 1).

As shown in Annex 1, I was given incorrect information; the screenshots referred to in the Facebook exchange are attached as Annex 2. Note that my 'phone records indicate the call to 1-877-362-7434 was placed on October 23, 2019, at 4:22pm and lasted a little under sixteen minutes.

The three critical points that became evident through the exchange are:

- Enbridge designed its system so as to make resuming regular mail delivery very time consuming
- Enbridge has either
  - Deliberately withheld information from its customer service representatives, or
  - Knowingly provided them with incorrect information, or
  - Instructed them to lie

- As noted in the last three posts of the Facebook exchange, Enbridge is extremely reluctant to provide correct information regarding resumption of regular mail delivery in public.

Roughly two weeks after this exchange, I again contacted Enbridge via Facebook and repeated my original question. I was provided with two numbers that I should call, the choice depending on the area in which I live. It was not disclosed that the number provided for the “Enbridge Gas area” was, in fact, the number for Enbridge’s internal Ombudsman. See Annex 3.

I called the number provided on November 13 at 4:34pm and left a message requesting a resumption of mail service. Enbridge’s voice-mail promised a response within two days.

Having heard nothing from them, I left another message on November 22 at 4:25pm. Shortly after leaving that message, I received a voice-mail from the Enbridge Ombudsman informing me that my mail-service had been re-established and apologizing for the delay which had been caused by a high volume of calls.

### **Widespread Nature of Enbridge’s Scheme**

I believe that my experience was no mere glitch but merely a part of a major operation by Enbridge to forcibly convert its bills-by-mail customers to electronic billing. In support of this, Annex 4 shows three redacted posts by third parties on social media; I will make the full screenshots available to the Board upon request. Note that I believe two of the three names on the posts to be pseudonyms.

### **My Complaint**

It is clear that this regulated company has engaged in a deliberate policy of changing its customers’ billing preferences without their knowledge or consent; that post-facto inquiries by these customers is met not just with obfuscation, but with deliberate falsehoods; and that Enbridge’s internal Ombudsman’s office is complicit in this scheme as evidenced by its ‘high volume of calls’ and not finding it necessary to speak with me directly about the situation.

Customers of any firm should not be lied to; this is particularly true when the company is a regulated monopoly. Enbridge not only changed my ‘delivery preference’ without my knowledge or consent, they did not deal with the problem in the “fair, reasonable and timely manner” specified by the Ontario Energy Board’s consumer charter, choosing instead obfuscation and deliberate falsehoods; this was part of a larger scheme affecting many customers.

The board must act in order to ensure that natural gas consumers in Ontario are dealt with in a transparent manner, free of falsehoods, and that the edicts of the Ontario Energy Board are

not flouted so lightly.

## **Resolution**

I suggest it would be appropriate for the Board to order Enbridge to:

- Make conversion from 'eBill' to mail delivery simply readily available via its on-line platform;
- Write a letter of apology to all customers affected in the past year by the implementation of their plan to unilaterally change delivery preferences; and to include with this letter a postage-paid card that, if mailed back to the company, will result in the client being switched back to regular mail delivery
- Provide each client account affected by the unilateral change with a credit of \$1,000 to be applied against future natural gas bills.
- Spend at least \$1-million on advertising outlining the intent and implementation of the scheme and accepting full responsibility for their failure to act with integrity
- Ensure that those senior officers of the firm who did not veto the scheme, or who became aware of it while it was underway and did not cancel it, are no longer employed by Enbridge or its subsidiaries.
- Refrain from making any claim in connection with any application to the board that demand for mailed bills is low.

Sincerely,

James Hymas  
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## Annex 1: First Facebook Exchange with Enbridge Social Media



**James I. Hymas** ▸ **Enbridge Gas**

October 23 · 🌐

I want my bill sent by mail.  
How do I get my bill sent by mai?

6 Comments 1 Share



Like



Comment



Share



Oldest ▾



**Enbridge Gas** Thanks for the question. Go into My Account, and then go to your Bill Delivery preferences and switch there. That should do it.

Like · Reply · 4w



**James I. Hymas** There does not appear to be any such option.

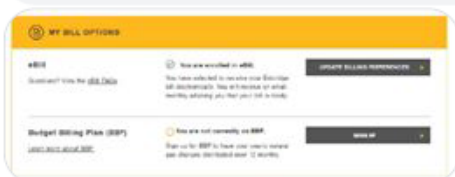
I attempted to update my billing preferences via [screenshot 1].

This screen claims I am enrolled in eBill - I have no recollection of enrolling in this and it was certainly never intended. However, I clicked "Update Billing Preferences" and arrived at [screenshot 2, below].

Ha-ha! So much for easy on-line account management! I have to call a number. After guessing my way through a very poorly designed menu, I eventually spoke to somebody who identified herself only as "Deb". She claimed not to have a rep ID number or anything along the lines of what was expected.

"Deb" claims that paper billing is no longer an option. She disclaims any knowledge of what Enbridge has told me on its own website and on Facebook.

What is going on?



Like · Reply · 4w



**James I. Hymas**



Like · Reply · 4w



**Enbridge Gas** James, could you please direct message your contact info to us here and we will reach out to you in order to get this settled. Thank you.

Like · Reply · 4w



**James I. Hymas** Enbridge Gas - why do you want to keep this secret?

I don't understand why the process required to continue receiving my bills by mail - as I did until a few months ago - should be secret.

Like · Reply · 4w



**James I. Hymas** So what about it, guys? What's the procedure for getting the invoices sent to me via regular mail? Surely there's no big secret or personal information involved.

Like · Reply · 4w



Write a reply...



Annex 2:  
Screenshots Referenced In Annex 1



## MY BILL OPTIONS

### eBill

Questions? View the [eBill FAQs](#)



**You are enrolled in eBill.**

You have selected to receive your Enbridge bill electronically. You will receive an email monthly advising you that your bill is ready.

**UPDATE BILLING PREFERENCES**



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### Budget Billing Plan (BBP)

[Learn more about BBP](#)



**You are not currently on BBP.**

Sign up for BBP to have your yearly natural gas charges distributed over 12 months.

**SIGN UP**



## Electronic Bill (eBill)

ON

OFF

You will receive an email when your bill is ready for you to view.

Do you want to include a copy of your bill?

- ☐ No thanks, I will log in to MyAccount to get a copy of my bill.
- ☒ Yes, send via email\*
- ☐ Yes, send via text\*\*

\* All accounts under this profile will be switched to receive copy of bill.

\*\*Standard text messaging rates will apply. If you ever change your cell phone number, you can update it under the Manage My Account tab.

## Paper Bill

If you are on eBill and would like to switch to paper call 1-877-362-7434.





### Annex 3: Second Facebook Exchange with Enbridge Social Media



**James I. Hymas** ▸ **Enbridge Gas**



November 5 at 4:04 PM · 🌐

I want my bill sent by mail. How do I get my bill sent by mail?

1 Comment



Like



Comment



Share



Oldest ▾



**Enbridge Gas** James, if you are in an area formerly served by Union Gas, please call 1-877-362-7434. If you are in an Enbridge Gas area, please call 416-495-6155.

Like · Reply · 2w



Write a comment...



## Annex 4: Social Media Remarks by Third Parties

▶ Enbridge Gas

December 19 at 3:22 PM · 🌐

Your paperless system does not work for everyone. Granted you want to be Green, but this is ridiculous! You want to get paid mail me a bill!

2 Comments



Like



Comment



Share



Oldest ▾



James I. Hymas You have to call the Ombudsman's office. If you are in an area formerly served by Union Gas, call 1-877-362-7434. If you are in an Enbridge Gas area, call 416-495-6155. They will restore your regular billing by mail ... well, they restored mine, anyway!

Enbridge has behaved disgracefully in this matter. I will be complaining to the Ontario Energy Board.

Like · Reply · 47m · Edited



1

James I. Hymas thank you very much!  
Very terrible service. They didn't even send us a notice of the change

Like · Reply · 3m



1



Enbridge Gas



November 26 at 9:42 AM · 🌐

Imagine Enbridge decides FOR YOU that you need e-invoicing WITHOUT your consent!!!! And the email you get will not take responses! BAD..... Provide me a gas generator that runs efficiently to make electricity then you would be really helping me.

4 Comments



Like



Comment



Share



Oldest ▾



**James I. Hyman** Enbridge has been really sleazy on this one. You have to phone the Ombudsman (!) at 416-495-6155.

Like · Reply · 3w



**[Redacted]** Some basics in life, a paper statement billing and a phone no. is that too much to ask from our monopolies in our society.

Like · Reply · 3w



Write a reply...



**[Redacted]** Have you tried finding a phone no. on their site? IMPOSSIBLE, they really do not want to talk to their clients... monopolies wow.

Like · Reply · 3w

 says:

November 26, 2019 at 6:56 pm (Edit)

if you really want your blood to boil, Enbridge switched my 82 year old mother to this email billing scam. she is completely electronically illiterate, does not have email or a computer. somehow, they associated the account with my email address. nice.