



RESIDENTIAL METERING AND BILLING ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

May 23, 2025

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Background

Early in 2025, NB Power's residential customers began expressing concerns regarding their higher-than-expected December 2024 power bills. Customers noted bills were significantly higher year-over-year and month-over-month and raised questions about NB Power's metering and billing systems.

NB Power took immediate action and conducted an internal review to ensure systems were working as they should and that customers were only paying for the electricity they were using. The internal review concluded that the following factors contributed to higher-than-expected bills

- number of billing days on the bill
- impact of the rate increase on year-over-year electricity costs
- weather impacts that would affect month-over-month energy usage or year-over-year energy usage
- changes in household energy usage

In order to validate that there were no issues related to NB Power's metering and billing systems as well as newly installed smart meters, the NB Power Board of Directors and the Province of New Brunswick directed NB Power to engage an independent third party to conduct an independent operational assessment.

Independent Assessment

An independent third party, KPMG, performed an operational assessment from January to April 2025 that looked into reports of higher-than-expected residential bills by

- looking at a sample of customer bills to make sure the amount of power they used was recorded and charged correctly
- checking customer information to find out why some people's power bills are higher than expected
- seeing if there's a pattern between people who got a new smart meter in the last year and those who didn't
- testing meters to ensure they are working properly
- comparing how much power customers with very high power usage in December 2024 used in the past

The Assessment concluded that the primary factors contributing to higher-than-expected residential customer bills for December 2024 were

- higher rates
 - on April 1, 2024, the cost of electricity went up
- increased power usage due to
 - colder weather
 - more days on the bill
 - fewer power outages compared to December 2023

The Assessment further concluded that there was no evidence that either conventional meters or smart meters were overstating the power consumption levels of NB Power residential customers in December 2024.

The assessment contained two recommendations for NB Power to

- conduct a proactive residential customer outreach initiative that contacts customers who have seen a significant increase in their electricity bills compared to the prior year
- develop and implement customer awareness programs related to power prices and power consumption to help residential customers to better anticipate their bill amounts

Actions

NB Power knows customers want predictability for their electricity bills especially during the winter heating season when temperatures drop and it takes more energy to heat their homes.

NB Power is a cost-of-service utility which means rates are set on the cost of delivering electricity to New Brunswickers. In addition to keeping costs low, so we can keep rates low for customers, NB Power is committed to taking the following actions to help customers understand and manage their energy use.

Action	Timeline
NB Power will conduct a proactive residential customer outreach initiative that contacts customers who have seen a significant increase in their electricity bills compared to the prior year	Began in May 2025 and will be ongoing
NB Power will roll out an education campaign and materials on what drives electricity usage and impacts your bills	Beginning December 1, 2025 and will be ongoing
NB Power is committed to enhancing information on our website with more information on weather and its potential impact on bills	Beginning October 1, 2025 and will be ongoing
NB Power will open up its Equalized Payment Plan program for budget billing to customers with arrears up to \$1,200	Complete

Action	Timeline
NB Power will send check-in letters for all customers on the Equalized Payment Plan that speak to any increases in rates	Beginning in June 2025 and will be ongoing
NB Power is committed to standardizing billing days for everyone with smart meters	Within 90 days of full deployment
NB Power will promote the customer portal so customers can access their energy usage in real time	Ongoing
NB Power will launch a Vulnerable Populations Committee with government departments and social groups to find more ways to support those struggling with affordability	Beginning in May 2025 and will be ongoing
NB Power will test 500 meters annually to ensure accurate recording of usage	Beginning in April 2026 and will be ongoing
NB Power will apply to the New Brunswick Energy & Utilities Board to introduce optional time-of-use rates, helping customers have more control over their bill by using electricity during lower-cost, off-peak periods	After smart meter deployment is complete
NB Power will promote energy efficiency programs and offer tips to manage energy usage	Ongoing

Reporting

NB Power will provide the Minister with an update on this Action Plan by March 31, 2026.

