



# Technical Standards and Safety Authority

Minutes of the Natural Gas Advisory Council

Meeting on October 13, 2022

Minutes of the Natural Gas Advisory Council meeting of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) held at 9:00 a.m. on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of October 2022.

**Present:** Shawn Khoshaien, Enbridge Gas Inc.; Martin Luymes, Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Institute (HRAI); Sunaina Menezes, TSSA Consumers Advisory Council & Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM); Greg St. Louis, Kitchener Utilities; Andy Vella, Canadian Standards Association (CSA); Ron Vanhevel, Rheem Canada; Neil Waugh, NPL Canada Inc.

Alexandra Campbell, VP, Communications & Stakeholder Relations; Olga Dias-Sousa, Executive Assistant; Gary Highfield, Manager, Engineering, Fuels Safety Program; Kristian Kennedy, Manager, Stakeholder Relations; Anil Lal, Manager, Engineering & Technical Services, Fuels Safety Program; Nameer Rahman, Policy Advisor; Bonnie Rose, President and Chief Executive Officer; Sam Sadeghi, Director, Fuels Safety Program.

**Regrets:** Alan Reitzel, Reitzel Heating and Sheet Metal Ltd.

## 1. Welcome & Constitution of Meeting

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

### a) Safety Moment

For the safety moment, Council was shown a short video on the safety implications of ice storms.

## 2. Adoption of the October 13, 2022 agenda

Council adopted the agenda as presented.

## 3. Approval of April 7, 2022 minutes

Council adopted the minutes as presented.

## 4. Review of Action items from last meeting

There were no action items in the minutes.

## 5. Chair's Update

The Chair spoke briefly to his annual report, treating it as read.

There were no questions or comments from council members.

## 6. Council Administration

### a. Membership Renewal – Neil Waugh

K. Kennedy advised that N. Waugh has decided to renew his membership on the council.

There were no questions or comments from council members.

## 7. Construction Heat Update

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The Chair spoke to the issue. He noted that requests have been made by homebuilders to have information sessions, which have been scheduled by Enbridge to give a status update on procedures for construction heat. The issue is less controversial and there is an emerging consensus about construction heat and when signoffs can be done – a process managed by Enbridge.

S. Khoshaien mentioned that an Enbridge communication session is now scheduled. G. Highfield noted it is on the Oct. 24 and he will attend.

G. St. Louis commented that his utility is outside Enbridge territory and meets with contractors and homebuilders annually and is following suit with Enbridge on construction heat outreach.

## 8. Red Seal/Skilled Trades Ontario transition

The Chair provided an update, stressing that details on the transition of the fuel's trades to Skilled Trades Ontario (STO) are not fully worked out yet. He spoke to the industry desire for minimal disruption to industry and for grandfathering. HRAI has met with the new CEO and registrar and deputy registrar of STO. STO has a lot of work to do to stand up the organization before it can take on matters like a Red Seal for gas technicians. The Chair asked about time frames from TSSA's perspective.

N. Rahman commented that the TSSA-to-STO transition process and on working through the details of the transition plan, including possible policy issues, which will take approximately three years to complete.

The Chair noted that TSSA and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities came close to concluding a memorandum of understanding a number of years ago (before the College of Trades was set up). A lot of the legwork was done at that time, including an apprenticeship training standard, so these existing elements might make the transition more straightforward.

S. Sadeghi raised a concern that was brought to his attention from private colleges. Because of the move to an apprenticeship, this is seen as a risk to private colleges as they cannot compete with public colleges that offer fuels certificate programs. He has made clear to them that he cannot influence the STO decision and that it is government policy direction. The Chair acknowledged that this is a legitimate concern. Training delivery is an area that needs to be considered, including public colleges' capacity to meet expected industry demand for training.

N. Rahman speculated that grandfathering is likely to be part of the process. He said there will be multiple consultation rounds to discuss the best path forward.

S. Sadeghi recommended this should be a standing agenda item.

**Action:** Make the Red Seal transition a standing information item on the agenda.

## 9. Labour relations update for fuels inspections

A. Campbell noted the TSSA inspector strike is now over. A collective agreement was ratified by TSSA inspectors on Thanksgiving weekend and TSSA employees will be back to work Oct. 18. There was also a collective agreement signed with TSSA engineers during the inspector strike. With respect to inspection backlogs, most of the backlog was related to elevating devices. S. Sadeghi noted that the Fuel Safety team will work on getting caught up with the backlog, post labour disruption.

N. Waugh sought confirmation that the collective agreement is a two-year agreement. A. Campbell confirmed that it is a two-year agreement.

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#### 10. Pipeline Strikes Data Trends

A. Lal spoke to the issue. He noted some of the data was covered at the Fuels plenary session. Recent data trends suggest a seasonal correlation. Trends this year are similar to trends last year. Seven-year historical data from 2012 suggests a consistent pattern of pipeline strikes. Regional data suggests the Greater Toronto Area has the highest numbers but saw a decline before the pandemic. The overall number is steady despite all the economic activity in the province. The highest reported incidents happen at construction sites and private dwellings, but over the years pipeline strikes at construction sites have gone down while private dwellings have gone up. Recent pipeline incidents confirm this trend. S. Sadeghi commented that TSSA is pleased to see the trend toward stabilization but education on best practices is still required. TSSA is looking to compliance support options to reduce pipeline strikes.

S. Khoshaien commented that Enbridge has seen the reverse: A spike in third party damages. It is not a significant increase but is worth noting. In 2022 so far there has been an increase, likely a post-COVID-19 phenomenon. S. Sadeghi confirms that TSSA data for 2022 is seeing that trend too. He added that TSSA would be willing to work with Enbridge on non-compliant actors. S. Khoshaien mentioned there is an Enbridge damage prevention strategy that Enbridge can share. S. Sadeghi said there is an existing TSSA-Enbridge forum that can be leveraged for information-sharing on pipeline strikes.

The Chair asked if TSSA's data can capture when an incident may have multiple causes. A. Lal said strikes may be multiple causes, but TSSA's old data collection system, from which most of the data is collected, could not capture multiple causes.

The Chair asked what excavation education would look like. S. Sadeghi said it would include compliance support outreach by the Compliance Support team and Regional Supervisors/Inspectors. Where compliance support does not work, TSSA if necessary, will resort to enforcement. Second, he asked about data from other jurisdictions to benchmark against TSSA data. S. Sadeghi said TSSA does not track data from other provinces but indicated there may be opportunities through the national common ground alliance (CCGA) to share information.

**Action:** Engage CCGA to find out if data from other provinces can be collected to determine how Ontario compares with other jurisdictions.

#### 11. Contractor Audit Program Overview

S. Sadeghi spoke to this item. He provided an overview of the TSSA contractor audit program as well as the future plan and outlook, including exploring opportunities to streamline the process.

The Chair asked if TSSA is on track to audit all contractors within the desired three-year cycle. S. Sadeghi noted that TSSA is behind on account of the inspector strike. The plan was for a three-year cycle to audit all contractors – so approximately 3,000 per year.

The Chair asked if TSSA is comfortable with the fact that all work is not being reviewed as part of the Contractor Audit program. He understands this process would be popular with contractors but advised that the direction of the program should be data-driven. S. Sadeghi commented that ultimately it is the contractor that is responsible for compliance. Second, he added that TSSA is developing risk-based criteria to determine which audits are better done in-person as opposed to virtually. B. Rose confirmed that the contractor audit is part of the next strategic plan.

G. St. Louis asked how distributors can feed in information about non-compliant actors into the audit program. S. Sadeghi mentioned that TSSA has investigators to follow up with repeat offenders. The first option is compliance support, but if that does not work TSSA resorts to enforcement, including



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prosecution. S. Sadeghi recommended utilities leverage the TSSA fuels technical services desk for reporting purposes.

S. Khoshaien advised that TSSA eventually do an effectiveness assessment on the program.

**Action:** Share Technical Services Desk with council members.

### 12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.