



Technical Standards and Safety Authority

Minutes of the Natural Gas Advisory Council

Meeting on November 1st, 2023

Minutes of the Natural Gas Advisory Council Meeting of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) held virtually at 2 p.m. on the 1st day of November 2023.

Present: Martin Luymes (Chair), Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Institute (HRAI); Sunaina Menezes, TSSA Consumers Advisory Council & Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM); Alan Reitzel, Reitzel Heating and Sheet Metal Ltd; Greg St. Louis, Director, Kitchener Utilities; Neil Waugh, President, NPL Canada

Alexandra Campbell, VP, Communications & Stakeholder Relations; Kelly Hart, Director of Fuels Safety Operations; Gary Highfield, Manager, Engineering, Fuels Safety Program; Ammara Khan, Stakeholder Relations Manager, A. Raval, VP Operations; Olga Sousa-Dias and Kathy Pearsall, TSSA Advisory Council Support

1. Welcome and Constitution of Meeting

The Chair, M. Luymes, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

a) Safety Moment

For the safety moment, G. Highfield described an incident of a propane heater that exploded after gas was resupplied to a cottage, and an explosion that occurred in a bakery when a propane stove was replaced with an electric one. These accidents happened recently in Canada, not in Ontario, and speak to the need for good communication, qualified technicians, and authorized contractors.

2. Adoption of November 1, 2023 Agenda

Council adopted the agenda as presented.

3. Adoption of April 3, 2023 Minutes

Council adopted the minutes as presented.

4. Review of Action Items from Last Meeting

Pipeline strikes data are on today's agenda.

A. Vella has renewed his membership. He is no longer employed at CSA. The Chair noted it remains to be determined whether he is with another employer and eligible to sit on the advisory committee.

5. Chair's Update

The Chair spoke to a serious industry concern within the climate file that has implications for the TSSA and safety enforcement.

Enbridge Gas has created a company called Enbridge Sustain that is being managed within the gas utility to promote heat pumps and renewable technologies. Enbridge Sustain is directly competing with the HVAC community, quoting on commercial buildings, working with home builders, and offering residential retrofits. Much like the Enercare and Reliance water heater programs of the past, the utility will own the equipment.

In the past, when water heater and furnace rentals turned into a significant business, the ancillary business inside the utility operated at a below-cost pricing model, making it hard to compete. At least 80% of water heaters in peoples' homes are now owned by Reliance, Enercare, or a rental company, which are the legacy products of the utilities being in the business and sold off.

In addition to HRAI members, the OEB, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Small Business, and the Federal Competition Bureau have expressed concern about the launch of the non-regulated business within Enbridge. Discussions with Enbridge have been transparent. HRAI members want a level playing field.

G. St. Louis commented that Enbridge Sustain has received \$200 million from the Canadian Infrastructure Bank. Enbridge Sustain has stated it is operating separately, outside of the regulated business.

The Chair said Enbridge has confirmed to him that the business is being run separately and unregulated within the utility. This is unprecedented, except when Enbridge ran its water heater business as a non-utility program before being advised by the OEB that it needed to separate that it out.

When the HRAI lawyer submitted a letter to the OEB as to how the business should be regulated, the OEB did not know about it, despite Enbridge being at the end of a five-year rate hearing. The lawyer scoured the evidence but found no reference to Enbridge Sustain. Enbridge says Enbridge Sustain is the future.

A. Reitzel has not yet encountered Enbridge Sustain.

On a separate matter, HRAI asked at the plenary session about the status of the gas technician program being migrated to Skilled Trades Ontario. HRAI members are wondering why things are moving so slowly. There may be a political block. A. Campbell said TSSA has heard nothing.

6. Council Administration

A. Khan spoke to these items.

Tracey Teed Martin, Director, Engineering Services, Enbridge, has joined the council representing large Utilities/Distribution.

G. St. Louis has renewed his memberships for another term.
R. Vanhevel has not yet renewed.

There is one vacancy for Utilities/Distribution (CNG or LNG or hydrogen or RNG). The Chair asked if there are any candidates. A. Khan said there are not and invited suggestions. G. Highfield said he has a few names at Sotarix, now owned by Superior Propane, that could be invited. [Action]

7. Construction Heat Webinar - Nov 2, 2023

G. Highfield said himself, Kelly Hart, and Sandra Cooke will present at the webinar regarding responsibilities associated with construction heat, turn-ons, initial inspections, etc. Best practices are not always followed. Enbridge will present as well.

The Chair said Canadians for Property Built Homes has asked HRAI to weigh in on the appropriateness of furnaces being used in the construction process. At the legislature two days ago, the Hon. Todd J McCarthy was invited by London NDP MPP Terence Kernaghan to weigh in. T. Kernaghan said if builders insist on using them they should be required to disclose on the agreement to purchase that the house has a used furnace. The minister deflected the comment and left the door open. The HRAI trusts authorities like TSSA and Enbridge to do their due diligence, however, there is a lot of misuse and abuse of rules. The Chair asked for a TSSA perspective.

G. Highfield said TSSA will address this during its webinar presentation tomorrow. TSSA approval requires that the equipment be approved by the manufacturer for construction heat. It must also be cleaned prior to going to the customer.

The Chair said the issue is how well the rules are enforced in the field. Post drywall, he asked if the enforcement adequate is for final inspection. This long-

standing issue will be in the public eye again because Canadians for Property Built Homes has been persistent.

G. Highfield said TSSA is in discussions with Enbridge.

G. St Louis said this is the first time he has heard of it and will follow up with his team.

The Chair said the solution is to say that no furnace manufacturer will permit their products for construction heat which will compel builders to use other forms of heat.

8. Issue Prioritization

A. Campbell said TSSA is committed to the priorities within the five-year Strategic Plan. Council members are invited to table issues via the Agenda Item Request Form.

TSSA is seeking a volunteer to attend a scheduled website test with Lisa Hall either in person or online. It will take 30 to 40 minutes. The Chair said he or a colleague will volunteer. G. St. Louis said he will invite someone.

9. Pipeline Strikes Data Trends

The 2022 DIRT report from the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance (ORCGA) can be found at the following link:
<https://orcga.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ORCGA-Dirt-Report-2022.pdf>

G. Highfield said this is a useful report showing regional damages in Ontario by utility type, activity type, and reductions in damages over time.

Ontario is doing well with getting high locate requests, but there are still lots of damages. A request is a call to One Call. A notification is One Call notifying utility owners. One request will result in multiple notifications.

The Chair asked if the report includes hydro lines. G. Highfield replied it is all utility. Natural Gas and Telecommunications continue to be the primary facilities affected by events reported in DIRT. The Chair noted that provinces with more natural gas relative to electric will have a greater number of incidents.

10. Reflections on Fuels Plenary Updates

The Chair invited council members to raise comments or complaints. He noted that this council raises few complaints compared with other councils.

There were no comments or complaints.

The Chair asked when the next NGAC meeting will take place. O. Sousa-Dias said it is set for the first week of March 2024. Invitations will be sent out in December.

The Chair said the CMPX 2024 show will be held March 20-22, 2024 at the Metro Convention Centre South Building and is almost sold out. Between 10,000 and 15,000 participants are expected. He is co-chairing the Learning Forum Committee. TSSA members are invited to attend.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.