



Notes for Law Amendments Committee Dec. 7, 2015 re Bill 141

My name is Barry Zwicker and I am the President of Scotian WindFields and a few other associated renewable energy companies. SWFI is generally the parent of the others.

I have been directly involved with the renewable energy sector since 1999 and actively through SWFI since Jan. 2007.

I am here today to draw your attention to several very serious concerns related to the current drafting of Bill 141.

While I understand the lion's share of the Bill is focused upon dealing with the recently announced rate stabilization plan there are a few very serious negative inclusions in this legislation that is not consistent with Government stated objectives and I believe they have a number of unintended consequences.

It was very clear during the election process and subsequent actions that this government seems dedicated to making changes that in some way will cut into the current energy monopoly enjoyed by NSP and make the provider more responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens and businesses of Nova Scotia. That I clearly support in spades.

This legislation is taking several steps backwards as it related to the ability of citizens,, non-profits and yes small businesses to either get in a more sustainable situation or survive.

One of the key costs that every citizen, non-profit and business operator faces is "energy". I don't have to tell you the percentage increases we have all experienced over the last few years. From my days as an economic development officer through to helping our church to my own personal home it is the one cost that continues to climb with no sign of slowing down.

One opportunity these groups have to take positive action and attempt to control their destiny is through the net metering

program. This program enables all of the above groups to become their own power generators to some level while staying connected to the NSP grid. The essence of the net metering program lets you and me as home owners use our own resources to produce renewable energy to supply some of our energy needs. In my personal case I have 19 panels on my roof. I get almost all the hot water I need from two of the panels and the rest are Solar PV panels where in the summer I get most of my electricity I use supplied by the sun. In fact I generate more than I need on a lot of days. In the winter not so much. This is why the ability to utilize the grid as a place to put the excess I use and then get credit for it helps me as a home owner to level out my energy costs. This is the same for non-profits, municipalities and small businesses.

Now to the point:

Section 23 (4) (b) lowers the currently permitted name plate capacity of a system utilizing the Net Metering program from a potential of 1MW down to 20KW. This reduction will not impact most homes but it will impede a number of non-profits and a lot of small businesses. This is a real regressive back peddling and does not make any sense to citizens or business operators. We are currently dealing with one such business and reducing the size as proposed starts to question the economics of the project and the motives of the Government for bringing such a change forward.

Stating with Section 23 parts (8)-(11) introduces the concept of a tariff that again homeowners and small businesses and non-profits will have to pay to NSP for using the grid as temporary storage. These sections do not provide any specifics as to their intent. There has been no background as to what it is trying to achieve or what costs NSP are encountering that it might try to offset. Back to my own situation for a minute. During the summer months when I am at times generating more than I am using and pushing it onto the

grid there is no reduction in my base charge to reflect that nor is there any additional costs to NSP to have this renewable energy put on the distribution system. I suspect it is being utilized by my neighbour who has not seen the light yet to install solar. So what could it possibly be for? Worst still there is no clarity as to when this tariff might be applied. For example would it be applied at each billing period or on an annual basis. There is a huge difference. Solar energy is generally captured during our summer months and not so much when we have two feet of ice and snow on the roof. So if the tariff was to be reconciled once a year it would have a much different impact than if it were monthly or every second month. The key here is it appears just to be a money grab opportunity for NSP being put in legislation and this item never made it to any of the consultation during the development of this legislation.

I wanted to keep this to a couple of points so if there are any questions I would love to be given the opportunity to respond.

Barry Zwicker

