



December 7, 2021

Sent via email/eFile

<b>HEMLOCK SAFETY AND RELIABILITY INVESTIGATION EXHIBIT A-6</b>
---

Ms. Angela Roy  
Hemlock Utility Services Ltd.  
Suite 210 – 8399 200th Street  
Langley, BC V2Y 3C2  
aroy@berezan.ca; rberezan@berezan.ca

**Re: Hemlock Valley Electrical Services Limited – Investigation into the Safety and Reliability of Hemlock Utility Services – Project No. 1599225 – Amended Regulatory Timetable and Workshop Information**

Dear Ms. Roy,

Further to the above-noted matter, enclosed please find British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) Order G-361-21 amending the regulatory timetable to include a web-based workshop scheduled from **1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) on Thursday, January 13, 2022** (Workshop). This letter provides additional information regarding details of the Workshop.

## **Workshop**

### *General Information*

The Workshop will be in a web-based format using the Microsoft (MS) Teams platform. Interveners wishing to attend the workshop are required to register in advance via email to [Commission.Secretary@bcuc.com](mailto:Commission.Secretary@bcuc.com) or by telephone at 1-800-663-1385. A link to the workshop will be provided upon registration. Participants are requested to register for the workshop by **Thursday, December 23, 2021**.

A live web-based broadcast for the general public to stream the Workshop will be available at <https://stream.allwestbc.com/>. The Workshop will also be transcribed for the proceeding record. Transcripts are considered evidence and placed on the public record of the proceeding and the BCUC's website. Participants are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and to speak at a reasonable volume to make transcription possible. Participants will be able to join the meeting by 12:45 p.m. and are encouraged to do so to test their audio and video connections.

### *Workshop Purpose and Scope*

The purpose of the Workshop is for Hemlock Valley Electrical Services Limited (Hemlock) to discuss safety and reliability issues and concerns, and to provide an overview of Hemlock's existing and anticipated safety and reliability plans related to its distribution system and utility operations. The Workshop will also provide participants the opportunity to ask further questions regarding Hemlock's responses to BCUC and intervener information requests No. 1.

Specifically, the Panel requests Hemlock elaborate on the following at the Workshop:

- Hemlock's existing relationship with BC Hydro and the plan to create a better working relationship between the two entities;
- Hemlock's plan for future load growth and how this plan will minimize outages;
- Hemlock's Vegetation Management Strategy;
- Hemlock's existing and anticipated maintenance plans;
- Hemlock's safety considerations;
- Hemlock's emergency response and disaster management considerations;
- The timing and anticipated costs of the above; and
- Hemlock's capacity or other constraints.

In addition to an overview of each topic, the Panel requests Hemlock specifically address the questions attached as Attachment A to this letter during the Workshop.

The Workshop will proceed as follows:

1. The Panel Chair will make an opening statement and comment on procedural matters for the session.
2. Participant introductions and order of appearances.
3. Hemlock's presentation covering the topics outlined above, up to 90 minutes in length. Hemlock is expected to address the questions attached as Attachment A to this letter during its presentation. Questions of clarification may be asked as necessary. The Panel may schedule a break following this presentation.
4. A question-and-answer period will follow; during which time, Hemlock will respond to additional questions from registered interveners, BCUC staff, and the Panel.
5. If required, in order to respond to any confidential questions posed, there will be arrangements made for an in-camera session.

Any part of the process outlined above may be modified by the Panel to suit the participants, or to allow for a more effective and efficient review of the issues.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Workshop process, please contact the BCUC at [Commission.Secretary@bcuc.com](mailto:Commission.Secretary@bcuc.com), 604-660-4700 or BC Toll Free: 1-800-663-1385.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by:*

Patrick Wruck  
Commission Secretary

Enclosure

Hemlock Utility Services Ltd.  
Investigation into the Safety and Reliability of Hemlock Utility Services

### Workshop Questions

---

**a) Hemlock and BC Hydro Relationship**

- What specific steps are Hemlock taking to improve its relationship with BC Hydro?
- Please discuss the reliability risks associated with Hemlock's reliance on BC Hydro as its sole supplier and the measures that Hemlock will implement to limit these risks.
- What type of information-sharing and load planning does Hemlock engage in with BC Hydro?

**b) Hemlock's plan for future growth and how this plan will minimize outages**

- How many new customers does Hemlock anticipate will be added within the next 5, 10, and 15 years?
- What are Hemlock's infrastructure plans to meet anticipated load growth while ensuring reliability and minimizing outages?
- What types of proactive system upgrades, if any, is Hemlock planning in order to meet expected growth in new customer connection requests and to minimize disruption to existing customers resulting from these connections?

**c) Hemlock's Vegetation Management Strategy**

- What factors will be included in Hemlock's new vegetation management plan and how were these factors assessed?
- How will the new plan track the completed and outstanding vegetation work?
- How often will the vegetation management plan be updated and what factors will inform the content of updates?
- What is Hemlock's snow/ice removal plan?

**d) Hemlock's Maintenance Plan**

- What is Hemlock's expected capital expenditure schedule for the replacement of ageing infrastructure and capacity growth? Please explain (i) what major assets Hemlock anticipates will need to be added or replaced, (ii) when the expenditures are planned, and (iii) what the estimated impact on customer bills each capital expenditure will have.
- How is the reliability of Hemlock's system impacted by the current age and condition of the distribution system's major components?
- How does Hemlock plan to fully assess and monitor the material condition of its distribution system?
- How does Hemlock intend to ensure an adequate stock of necessary parts is available for maintenance of its distribution system?
- Please describe the current condition of Hemlock's distribution system and its routine inspection and maintenance program, plans to improve or update the program, and the factors that will inform updates.

- Please describe Hemlock’s plan to implement a preventative maintenance program and its anticipated impact on system reliability, including key milestones of the implementation, associated dates, and any potential challenges Hemlock anticipates.

**e) Hemlock’s Safety Considerations**

- Please discuss Hemlock’s corporate commitment to safety. What steps does Hemlock take to ensure the safety of residents and/or customers in their use of the utility’s electrical services?
- What steps does Hemlock take to ensure the safety of the general public with respect to their exposure to the electrical utility’s facilities and/or equipment?
- How does Hemlock ensure the competency and safety of employees working on behalf of the electrical utility?
- How does Hemlock ensure the safety of its contractors and any persons attending to maintain or operate assets on behalf of the electrical utility?

**f) Hemlock’s Emergency Response Plan**

- What factors form the basis of Hemlock’s emergency response and disaster management procedures?
- Which emergency situations or natural disasters does Hemlock have a procedure for?
- What are Hemlock’s procedures that it will reference in order to assess the safety of its distribution system and minimize disruption in the event of an emergency situation and/or natural disasters?
- What steps will Hemlock take to communicate with its customers in the event of an emergency?



**ORDER NUMBER**  
**G-361-21**

IN THE MATTER OF  
the *Utilities Commission Act*, RSBC 1996, Chapter 473

and

Hemlock Utility Services Ltd.  
Investigation into the Safety and Reliability of Hemlock Utility Services

**BEFORE:**

C. M. Brewer, Panel Chair  
A. K. Fung, QC, Commissioner  
E. B. Lockhart, Commissioner

on December 7, 2021

**ORDER**

**WHEREAS:**

- A. On December 14, 2020, Hemlock Utility Services Ltd. (Hemlock) filed with the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) an application to revise Section 19 (Liability of the Company re: Service) of its Electric Tariff Terms and Conditions. Hemlock proposed to include further liability provisions with respect to its supply of electricity to customers (Application);
- B. By Order G-153-21 dated May 21, 2021, the BCUC approved, among other things, Hemlock's Application to include further liability provisions with respect to its supply of electricity to its customers;
- C. In the accompanying Reasons for Decision to Order G-153-21, the Panel identified a number of operational concerns including, but not limited to, issues related to the safety and reliability of the Hemlock system. The Panel recommended that the BCUC initiate a separate proceeding to conduct a fulsome review of the safety and reliability of Hemlock's electrical distribution system;
- D. By Order G-201-21, dated June 30, 2021, the BCUC ordered a hearing to review the safety and reliability of Hemlock's electrical distribution system and system assets and customer service-related issues and established a regulatory timetable for the investigation (Proceeding), which included public notice, Letters of Comment, BCUC scoping questions, Intervener registration and Hemlock's responses to Letters of Comment, with further process to be determined;
- E. On July 30, 2021, Hemlock provided its written response to BCUC scoping questions;
- F. On August 4, 2021, the Residential Consumer Intervener Association (RCIA) registered as an intervener in the Proceeding;
- G. On August 10, 2021, by Order G-239-21, the BCUC amended the regulatory timetable to include, among other things, BCUC and intervener information requests (IRs) and directed Hemlock to provide public notice

of the order and amended regulatory timetable to its utility customers as an enclosure to their next billing statements;

- H. On August 24, 2021, the BCUC issued IR No. 1 to Hemlock, and on September 2, 2021, RCIA submitted IR No. 1 to Hemlock;
- I. By Order G-276-21, dated September 21, 2021, the BCUC amended the regulatory timetable to provide Hemlock with additional time to respond to IR No. 1 and extended the deadline to provide Letters of Comment;
- J. On October 1, 2021, Hemlock provided its response to RCIA IR No. 1 and BCUC IR No. 1;
- K. On October 15, 2021, Hemlock provided supplemental responses to BCUC IR No. 1; and
- L. The Panel has reviewed the evidence to date and determines that an amendment to the regulatory timetable is warranted.

**NOW THEREFORE** the BCUC orders as follows:

1. The regulatory timetable established by Order G-276-21, is amended, as set out in Appendix A to this order.
2. Hemlock must provide notice of this order and cover letter in a clearly visible location on the homepage of its website by Tuesday, December 14, 2021.
3. Hemlock is directed to provide a copy of this order and regulatory timetable, electronically where possible, to all of the utility's customers, the Hemlock Valley Homeowners Association, and all band offices for First Nation communities located fully or partially within Hemlock's service area, by Tuesday, December 14, 2021.
4. Hemlock and registered interveners are expected to fully participate in the workshop, scheduled for Thursday, January 13, 2022 commencing at 1:00 p.m. PST.

**DATED** at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this        7<sup>th</sup>        day of December 2021.

BY ORDER

*Original signed by:*

C. M. Brewer  
Commissioner

Attachment

Hemlock Utility Services Ltd.  
Investigation into the Safety and Reliability of Hemlock Utility Services

**REGULATORY TIMETABLE**

---

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date (2021)</b>
Hemlock to publish notice on its website homepage and provide Public Notice	Tuesday, December 14
<b>Action</b>	<b>Date (2022)</b>
Web-based Workshop	1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday, January 13
Further Process	To be determined