

**Information Systems (\$766,000)**

**Q. Provide an explanation as to why a project is planned for Customer Services (\$251,000), p. 66 of Schedule B, to enhance integration with the Handheld Meter Reading System when a project is also proposed to assess the existing Customer Service System (\$170,000), p. 70 of Schedule B. Can the expenditure of \$251,000 be deferred until the Customer Service Study is complete?**

A. While a Customer Service System (CSS) Study is proposed, given the size and complexity of the current CSS it will very likely remain in use for at least another four to five years. As such, we continue to evaluate opportunities to improve customer service and increase efficiency through enhancements that can be achieved with relatively modest investment.

The proposed project to enhance the integration of CSS with the recently acquired hand held meter-reading system, at an estimated cost of approximately \$57,000, is an example of one such opportunity to improve customer service and increase efficiency. Given the importance of CSS and hand held meter-reading to the Company's operation, and the critical inter-relationship between these two applications, it would not be prudent to defer this enhancement until after the Customer Service System Study is complete.

Further details on the proposed projects for Customer Systems are included in the Company's response to NLH-29.