

1 **Q. (Reference Application Schedule B, pages 29 and 30 of 98) For the Extensions**  
2 **(Pooled) project, what “independent agencies” were used to derive the number of**  
3 **new customers? Please advise if the COVID-19 pandemic could impact the number**  
4 **of new customers available to NP in the foreseeable future and if this analysis has**  
5 **been undertaken.**

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7 A. The forecast number of new customer connections for Newfoundland Power’s 2021  
8 *Capital Budget Application* was based on the Conference Board of Canada’s forecast of  
9 housing starts and completions dated February 12, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

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11 While it is possible that the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis could impact the  
12 number of new customer connections over the forecast period, any potential impacts are  
13 currently unclear. The Conference Board of Canada has provided no direct linkage  
14 between its forecast housing starts and completions and the ongoing pandemic crisis.<sup>2</sup>

15  
16 Newfoundland Power continues to assess the impact of the pandemic on its operations.<sup>3</sup>  
17 Should customer and load growth vary from forecast, so too will the capital expenditures  
18 that are sensitive to growth.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Given the nature of Newfoundland Power’s customer base, customer growth is primarily influenced by housing starts and completions.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in its Spring Provincial Outlook dated June 17, 2020, the Conference Board of Canada references demand for new housing has been stymied by the shrinking of the population in Newfoundland & Labrador.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, part (c) of the response to Request for Information CA-NP-063.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see the 2021 *Capital Budget Application, Volume 1, 2020 Capital Expenditure Status Report, Page 1 of 13*, which shows a reduction of approximately \$1.7 million in 2020 forecast distribution expenditures from budget due to a reduction in the forecast number of customer connections for 2020.