

1 **Q. (Application Volume 1, pages 1-4 and 1-5) Have most distribution utilities availed**
2 **of automatic meter reading, outage management systems and high-volume call**
3 **answering systems? Is it accurate to say that a distribution company that is not**
4 **availing of these technologies is falling short of industry best practice?**
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6 A. No, it is not necessarily accurate to say that a distribution company that is not availing of
7 these technologies is falling short of industry best practice. In many cases, unless
8 mandated by legislation or Board order, most utilities adopt new technologies once they
9 establish an appropriate business case that justifies the cost.

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11 For example, there is no “one size fits all” approach for the deployment of metering
12 technologies. The specific technology adopted by a utility generally depends on its
13 operational requirements. If a utility’s goal is to improve meter reading accuracy and
14 efficiency, Automated Meter Reading (“AMR”) technology may be appropriate. If a
15 utility’s goal is to implement dynamic rates, Advanced Metering Infrastructure (“AMI”)
16 would be required. In some cases, utilities employ a combination of metering
17 technologies to meet their objectives.

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19 While penetration rates vary among Canadian utilities, many utilities have implemented
20 AMR in some capacity. For the results of a survey conducted with respect to utilities’
21 deployment of AMR technology, see the Company’s *2006 Capital Budget Application*.¹
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23 Many utilities have also implemented outage management systems comparable to that of
24 Newfoundland Power. For the results of a survey conducted with respect to utilities’
25 outage management systems, see the Company’s *2018 Capital Budget Application*.²
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27 Newfoundland Power has not conducted a survey of how many distribution utilities have
28 implemented High-Volume Call Answering (“HVCA”) systems. However, in 2014 The
29 Liberty Consulting Group (“Liberty”) considered HVCA functionality in their report to
30 the Board following their investigation into widespread customer outages known as
31 #darkNL. In their report, Liberty stated:

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33 *“The extremely high volume of calls following a large outage dictates the*
34 *need for a technology solution. It is not cost effective or feasible to answer*
35 *this many calls with agents.”³*

¹ See the *2006 Capital Budget Application, Volume 2, Supporting Materials, Report 4.1 Metering Strategy, Appendix A*, page A-3.

² See the *2018 Capital Budget Application, Report 5.5 Outage Management System Replacement & Enhancement Appendix A*, page A-1

³ See Liberty’s *Supply Issues and Power Outages Review Island Interconnected System, Interim Report*, April 24, 2014, page 70.