

1 **Q. (Reference Application Schedule B, Distribution Feeder Automation, page 15)**
 2 **It is stated "A total of 13 downline reclosers are planned for installation in**
 3 **2024." Why install 13 reclosers rather than 5 or 100?**

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 5 A. Newfoundland Power prioritizes the deployment and installation of automated downline
 6 reclosers annually to provide efficiency and reliability benefits for customers in response
 7 to equipment failures and severe weather.¹ Downline reclosers are installed in locations
 8 that are intended to optimize their benefits for customers. Optimal locations for
 9 downline reclosers are selected based on the Company's established deployment
 10 scenarios, a distribution feeder's geographic location, customer demographics, and other
 11 factors.²

12
 13 Newfoundland Power does not intend to automate all of its distribution feeders at once.
 14 Report *4.5 Distribution Feeder Automation*, filed as part of Newfoundland Power's *2020*
 15 *Capital Budget Application*, outlined a five-year plan to install an average of 15 downline
 16 reclosers at an average expenditure of \$881,000 annually. The installation of 13
 17 downline reclosers at a total expenditure of \$888,000 proposed in Newfoundland
 18 Power's *2024 Capital Budget Application* is consistent with this plan.

19
 20 The deployment of automated distribution equipment in this manner will provide the
 21 Company more flexibility in the operation of the distribution system. This includes:
 22 (i) reducing the overall number of customers who experience an outage; (ii) more timely
 23 restoration of feeders following extended outages; and (iii) more efficient use of line
 24 crews and operation field staff in responding to customer outages.

25
 26 Increasing the level of automation at the distribution feeder level increases the efficiency
 27 of operations under both normal and emergency conditions by enhancing the Company's
 28 response to outages. This, in turn, improves service to the Company's customers.
 29 Distribution feeder automation has become commonplace in modern utility operations.
 30 Utilities are employing automated equipment in their distribution systems with the most
 31 common being downline reclosers.³

¹ The operational benefits of downline reclosers are most pronounced during major events. For example, the operation of six downline reclosers during Hurricane Fiona on the west coast in September 2022 avoided approximately 1.7 million customer outage minutes. See Newfoundland Power's *2024 Capital Budget Application, Schedule B*, pages 17 and 18.

² See Newfoundland Power's *2024 Capital Budget Application, Schedule B*, page 15.

³ See report titled *Grid Modernization: A Snapshot*, Centre for Energy Advancement through Technological Innovation. The report identified that 18 of 21 utilities surveyed have employed automated downline reclosers in their distribution systems.