

Ministry of Energy

Office of the Minister

77 Grenville Street, 10th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2C1
Tel.: 416-327-6758

Ministère de l'Énergie

Bureau du ministre

77, rue Grenville, 10^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2C1
Tél. : 416-327-6758



MC-994-2021-690

November 16, 2021

Dear Energy Stakeholder:

The Ontario government is committed to providing electricity and natural gas customers with more options to better track and manage their energy use so they can find ways to conserve energy and save money. On September 2, 2021, a new regulation was filed ([O. Reg. 633/21](#)) that requires Ontario's electricity and natural gas utilities to implement the Green Button data standard. This regulation came into effect on November 1, 2021.

Owners of large commercial and multi-residential buildings participate in the Energy and Water Reporting and Benchmarking (EWRB) initiative, and use ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager® to report energy, water and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data to the ministry on an annual basis. ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager® is a free building energy benchmarking tool owned by the US Environmental Protection Agency and licensed for use in Canada by Natural Resources Canada.

Currently, Portfolio Manager does not accept uploads of data in the Green Button data standard format, nor the automatic transfer of Green Button data from utilities into Portfolio Manager. In September, I wrote to the Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Canada's then-Minister of Natural Resources, with respect to this matter, encouraging changes that could help automate parts of the EWRB process to make it simpler and more streamlined for submitting energy data. A copy of this letter is attached for your awareness.

I will continue my efforts by engaging the new federal Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson. Know that under my leadership, the Ontario Ministry of Energy remains committed to meaningful engagement with valued stakeholders and advancing regulatory reforms to streamline reporting processes. In the meantime, you may wish to write to Minister Wilkinson as well, to share your views with respect to this matter, by email at nrcan.minister-ministre.nrcan@canada.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Smith", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Todd Smith
Minister

Attachment

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MC-994-2021-637

September 24, 2021

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, PC, MP
Minister of Natural Resources
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
rncan.minister-ministre.rncan@canada.ca

Dear Minister:

Congratulations on your recent re-election. I hope that in the weeks and months ahead we will be able to meet in person in Toronto or Ottawa. However, in the meantime I would appreciate your attention to this particular matter.

I am seeking your support and your ministry's advocacy in working with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enable ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager® to upload energy data in the Green Button format, offering an advantage to Ontario and various US state energy consumers seeking energy conservation opportunities. Conservation is a top priority of our government as it helps families and businesses reduce their energy bills, improve home comfort and make businesses more competitive. To that end, Ontario is working to provide customers with more options to better understand their energy use to help them find easy and affordable ways to lower their usage and keep more money in their pockets.

On September 2, 2021, a new regulation was filed that will come into effect on November 1, 2021 in Ontario that requires Ontario's electricity and natural gas utilities to implement the Green Button data format. Green Button is a data standard that allows households and businesses to access their energy and water data in a common format and share that data with mobile phone apps and software of their choice, to help them identify conservation and energy efficiency opportunities in their homes or businesses. We are excited about the potential for the standardized Green Button data format to help Ontarians save money, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improve the performance of their buildings.

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The Ontario Ministry of Energy also administers the Energy and Water Reporting and Benchmarking (EWRB) initiative that requires owners of most large privately owned commercial and multi-residential buildings to report their energy and water usage, and GHG emissions, to the ministry annually. The EWRB program and the Green Button regulation both work to help Ontarians be more aware of their energy usage, reduce their energy bills, lower GHG emissions and improve the energy efficiency of buildings.

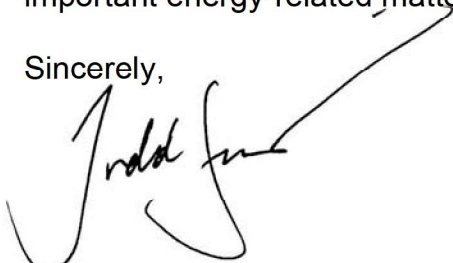
EWRB program participants use ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager® to report their energy, water and GHG data to the ministry, and we appreciate Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) leadership in managing the relationship with the EPA to license and Canadianize Portfolio Manager. Currently, Portfolio Manager does not accept uploads of data in the Green Button data standard format. If Portfolio Manager were able to accept and process data that has been structured in the Green Button format, a format that is used in several US states as well as Ontario, and/or support automatic import of data using Green Button's Connect My Data feature, it would automate much of the EWRB reporting process, making it easier and encouraging more building owners and operators to report to the program with Portfolio Manager and increase their conservation efforts.

Facilitating easier use of Portfolio Manager would be a major benefit to Ontario businesses regulated by the EWRB program, to NRCan in its important work of promoting energy efficiency in Canadian buildings, and to US jurisdictions like California and New York that have implemented Green Button requirements and have building energy reporting requirements that use Portfolio Manager. To date, over 50 US utilities have signed on to the Green Button initiative.

I appreciate the collaboration that my ministry staff have with their federal counterparts on the status of the Portfolio Manager software.

I wish you all the best as you work to serve Ontarians and Canadians on a variety of important energy-related matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Smith", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Todd Smith
Minister