

Ground Current Pollution Working Group Of the Utility Advisory Council

Terms of Reference

Background

The Utility Advisory Council passed a motion on Wednesday, February 7, 2007 to form a working group to discuss the issues and concerns of Bill 143. Bill 143, Ground Current Pollution Act, 2006 is a bill that has been ordered referred to the standing committee on Justice Policy and has the following purpose:

1. To define objectionable current flow on ground rods, commonly known as stray voltage, and to prohibit electricity providers from causing occurrences of objectionable current flow.
2. To establish a time frame for electricity providers to respond to complaints about objectionable current flow, to require an investigation of complaints and, if an investigation shows that an electricity provider is responsible for an occurrence of objectionable current flow, to require the provider to remedy the problem in a timely manner.
3. To create an offence and penalty for failing to remedy the problem that gave rise to a complaint in a timely manner.
4. To provide that the Ministry of Government Services develop and implement a plan to eliminate objectionable current flow in Ontario.

The problem of ground current pollution was initiated due to concerns arising in the farm industry but has extended to cover many more areas.

Scope

The Working Group was given the task of providing advice on overall direction and understanding regarding stray voltage and stray current issues in Ontario.

Roles and Responsibility

The UAC was created to act as an advisory body in making recommendations and for providing comments regarding Ontario Regulation 22/04.

The electrical distribution industry and other stakeholders represented on the UAC have established this working group to discuss the issues and concerns of Bill 143.

The working group will provide:

- 1) Definitions for terms such as “stray voltage” and “stray current”
- 2) Results of Investigating previously documented ranges of what is “objectionable” and how that is measured.
- 3) Review of mitigating procedures to address stray voltage issues such as increasing neutral sizes, isolators, and additional grounding and bonding.
- 4) Identify the potential size of the problem in Ontario for example by identifying the number and types of farms potentially affected.
- 5) Assess the potential affect of the legislation as it currently is written.
- 6) Recommend possible changes to the bill or existing legislation.
- 7) Collect information on what other jurisdictions are doing.

It is the Working Group’s responsibility to update the UAC at each meeting on progress to date.