

## Media Release

### Ontario Energy Board Must Reverse Harmful Decision to Reduce Funding for Emergency Assistance

March 2, 2023

**Toronto** – The Low-Income Energy Network is calling on the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) to reverse its alarming decision to reduce the Low-income Energy Assistance Program to pre-COVID levels. The decision makes less money available to low-income people struggling to pay their utilities bills.

On February 27, 2023, the OEB announced that low-income natural gas users would only be eligible for \$500 per year for emergency assistance, and electricity users would only be eligible for \$600 per year for emergency assistance. These amounts are half of what has been available to low-income people in need of emergency assistance to pay their bills during the pandemic.

"These emergency assistance levels are simply not high enough to assist low-income people struggling with soaring bills" said Zee Bhanji, spokesperson for the Low-Income Energy Network.

The OEB highlighted that the Low-income Emergency Assistance Program ran out of funds in 2022. The Low-income Emergency Assistance Program has been chronically under-funded and often runs out of funds before the end of the year in different regions of the province. The solution is to increase funds for the program to meet the needs of all low-income Ontarians – not to lower the levels of support for those who desperately need it.

**The Low-Income Energy Network** is the leading Ontario network advocating for a robust energy affordability strategy in Ontario. It is a joint program of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario and the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

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#### Additional information on-line:

- [Low-income Energy Network – LIEN \(lowincomeenergy.ca\)](https://www.lowincomeenergy.ca)
- [Low-income Energy Assistance Program | Ontario Energy Board \(oeb.ca\)](https://www.oeb.ca)

#### For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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