
From: Michael Brophy
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 8:39 AM
To: Batul Rahimtoola ; BoardSec
Cc: Richard Carlson
Subject: Re: OEB Letter - Seeking Input on Virtual Hearings

I am writing in response to your request for feedback on virtual hearings. Pollution Probe has participated in OEB proceedings that have used Zoom and these have generally worked well once stakeholders became familiar with the technology. We provide the following comments for consideration.

- Virtual hearings are an appropriate approach given the circumstances.
- In the case that stakeholders experience internet connectivity issues, there is an option to call into Zoom via phone and that option should continue to be available as a backup.
- One key to successful Zoom facilitation is the skills of the Zoom host. In our experience so far this has been positive.
- Breakout rooms for witnesses have taken more time than typical conferring during a panel. This should be used efficiently or additional hearing time may be required.
- A test/prep session has been a good approach to ensure that all stakeholders can navigate Zoom and set expectations for protocols during a proceeding.
- Having options for intervenors, witnesses or other groups of stakeholders to caucus (particularly during a settlement conference) is essential. This can be achieved through break-out rooms.
- Pollution Probe recommends that the OEB remain with electronic filing only and not return to paper filing. This has been a more efficient and cost-effective approach.

Don't hesitate to reach out should you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Mike

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