Tony Thoma - Consumer Representative
Supplemental Comments on Priorities for the IESO

1) Reliability issues with this year's past weather extremes.

Communications issues between consumers and the distributor and transmitter need significant improvement. Many residential customers were without power for a number of days. Frustration was felt due to lack of communication and update status from local utilities and transmitter. The need to provide continuous updates of restoration efforts and priorities with updated timing would be appreciated so that homeowners can make decisions to protect their assets. It appears that some LDCs have good communications protocols and use latest technology. If we are all paying the same rates why can't there be a standard across the province?

With these weather extremes the state of the physical assets is being questioning. Can the robustness of the infrastructure handle these events? What is the state of deferred maintenance of the assets and how do we know that each LDC is following the same level of replacement and upgrades? Can the risk of weather related damage be minimized by re-engineering during periods of replacement?

2) Residential participation in the market

Many in the energy market have assumed that residential market behaviour is inelastic and demand reduction or load shifting programs should only focus on large industrial and commercial enterprises. I would agree under the current rates that there is little motivation for residential participation. With the convergence of TOU rates and a high percentage of the bill being consumed by the GA there is little financial motivation for consumers to react. The presentation at the SAC from an Oklahoma utility was very refreshing in that we were able to see that there are ways to engage the residential consumer market. I would like to recommend that the IESO and OPA bring these types of rate designs forward to the OEB and the Ministry.