

1 **Q. Please provide the evaluation of third-party overflow options that is expected to be**
2 **completed by March 31, 2014.**

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4 A. On February 24, 2014 Newfoundland Power released a Request for Information (“RFI”)
5 to identify qualified third parties that could provide customers with outage information
6 during large scale power outages. The RFI was released to a total of 8 third party
7 vendors and requested information relating to solutions that would extend the telephony
8 capacity of Newfoundland Power’s communications infrastructure during outage events
9 and provide additional capabilities to improve customer service under these conditions.
10 On March 6, 2014 the Company received 4 responses.

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12 The four vendors that replied to the RFI offered a range of options which include: (i)
13 hosted Interactive Voice Response (“IVR”) and voice messaging service; (ii) automated
14 multi-channel texting, email, and voice messaging services; and (iii) a customer
15 preference centre application that allowed customers to establish their desired method of
16 outage communications during large scale outages. The vendors also provided budgetary
17 estimates for the solutions that were proposed.

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19 During the January 2-8, 2014 electrical system events that saw approximately ¾ of
20 Newfoundland Power customers without power at one time, the Company’s Interlialia
21 XMU+ High Volume Call Answering (“HVCA”) system and Automatic Call Distributor
22 (“ACD”) IVR systems performed well.¹ As a result Newfoundland Power is not pursuing
23 solutions that would increase the capacity or performance of its Interlialia XMU+ HVCA
24 or ACD IVR systems.

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26 The vendor responses to Newfoundland Power’s RFI provided information relating to
27 multi-channel communications capabilities that use texting, email, and voice messaging
28 to communicate outage and restoration information to customers. This technology
29 provides customers with relevant information relating to outages and restoration efforts
30 without the customer needing to call Newfoundland Power or visit the Company’s
31 website. Automated multi-channel communications has not yet been implemented by
32 Newfoundland Power and provides a reasonable next step for the Company to pursue.

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34 The responses to Newfoundland Power’s RFI also provided information relating to
35 applications that can specify a customer’s preference for receiving outage and restoration
36 information. When a large scale customer outage occurs, this technology will send
37 outage and restoration information to the customer in their specified format. This
38 technology is often associated with a multi-channel communications system.

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40 Based on the responses to Newfoundland Power’s RFI, the Company will compile and
41 release a Request for Proposal to the four vendors relating specifically to multi-channel
42 communications that utilize texting, email, and voice messaging to communicate outage

¹ See the responses to Requests for Information PUB-NP-123 and PUB-NP-132 for information relating to Newfoundland Power’s HVCA and IVR performance.

- 1 information to customers. Provided a suitable proposal is submitted to Newfoundland
- 2 Power, the Company will focus on implementing the multi-channel communications
- 3 system prior to the 2014-2015 winter season.