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Via email to: pmra.regulatory.affairs-affaires.reglementaires.arla@hc-sc.gc.ca

June 13, 2026

Re: Canada Gazette, Part I, Volume 160, Number 24, Section 4: Regulations Amending the Pest Control Products Regulations (Exemptions and Product Authorizations)

Dear Mr. Hancey,

Electricity Canada is the national voice for electricity in Canada. Our members generate, transmit, and distribute power to homes and businesses across Canada. We represent integrated electric utilities, independent power producers, transmission and distribution companies, power marketers, and system operators. Our members deliver electricity to all Canadians, in every province and territory.

On behalf of Electricity Canada, I am writing in response to Health Canada's consultation on the proposed *Regulations Amending the Pest Control Products Regulations (Exemptions and Product Authorizations)*, published in *Canada Gazette, Part I* on June 13, 2026, which propose to amend Section 4 of the *Pest Control Products Regulations*.

Electricity Canada welcomes the efforts to authorize the full range of activities—including possession, handling, storage, transport, distribution, use, and disposal—of pentachlorophenol-treated utility poles and cross-arms with no time limit. This addresses a long-standing ask from our sector, as electricity companies must make capital investment decisions years in advance. Utility poles have lengthy procurement cycles, and need assurance that poles in inventory can be put into service when required. This proposed amendment will enable utilities to plan maintenance and procurement with less regulatory uncertainty, reducing costs for customers, as well as waste.

Our sector further appreciates Health Canada's recognition of the disproportionate financial and logistical challenges facing northern and remote utilities, including the costs of transportation and disposal, seasonal installation constraints, as well as the additional time required to replace infrastructure damaged by wildfires.





Building on these efforts, we would like to offer the following recommendations to further improve efficiency, regulatory certainty and reduce cost impacts.

Electricity Canada recommends that subsection 4(5)(b) be amended to explicitly permit the transfer of uninstalled pentachlorophenol-treated poles and cross-arms between utility companies for the purpose of installation or relocation for the transmission and distribution of electricity.

Electricity companies regularly transfer inventoried capital equipment— including utility poles— to other companies as-needed, often in response to a localized shortage due to extreme weather events. As currently drafted, subsection 4(5)(b) limits “distribution” to the reassignment of ownership of an installed pole or cross-arm, without uninstalling or relocating it. This would prevent utilities from transferring uninstalled pole inventory to one another, which would hinder emergency response and delay power restoration.

Canada’s electricity sector relies on formal mutual aid frameworks under which utilities provide each other with equipment, crews, and materials to restore power following major disruptions. Wildfires in particular have emerged as a leading driver of large-scale pole losses, with single events capable of destroying hundreds or thousands of poles over very short time periods. In these circumstances, the ability to rapidly redeploy poles from a neighbouring utility’s existing inventory can mean the difference between days or weeks without power for affected communities. Restricting the transfer of uninstalled inventory would directly undermine these established mutual aid practices, fragment sector-wide emergency response capacity, and slow restoration efforts at precisely the moments when speed matters most.

Furthermore, restricting transfers of uninstalled poles between utilities will create stranded assets. The proposed regulation as written risks stockpiling usable poles in one utility’s yard while a neighbouring utility scrambles to procure replacements under long lead times and constrained supply. This outcome would be contrary to the objectives of grid reliability and the efficient allocation of resources. It is also worth noting that restricting the transfer of uninstalled poles does not meaningfully advance the core objective of reducing risks to human health and the environment. These poles already exist, have already been treated and purchased; the risk profile associated with their use does not change based on which utility installs them. Prohibiting their transfer does not reduce exposure or environmental risk, instead it simply prevents the productive use of inventory that will need to be managed regardless.



Permitting the transfer of uninstalled inventory between utilities, for the purpose of installation, would allow the sector to optimize the deployment of existing stocks across jurisdictions, reduce waste, and avoid the unnecessary procurement costs that would otherwise fall on Canadian ratepayers. It would also support smaller and remote utilities that may have limited pole reserves of their own and depend on inter-utility cooperation to maintain service continuity.

Lastly, there continues to be no approved, viable oil-based alternative wood preservative to pentachlorophenol in Canada. According to a recent survey conducted across several Canadian utilities, in order to meet the government's Electricity Strategy's goal of building new infrastructure to double Canada's electricity supply by 2050 and accelerate electrification to support competitiveness and address climate change, we are anticipating the need for over 440,000 additional poles by 2030 and 1.33 million additional poles by 2040.

While water-borne preservatives have useful characteristics, oil-borne preservatives are often preferred when it comes to certain specific applications. Companies may choose oil-borne preservative-treated poles based on the pole's location, prevailing weather and climate conditions, need for line workers to climb the pole, wildfire risk, as well as many other factors. Maintaining an affordable and reliable electricity grid requires utilities to be able to choose the most appropriate equipment for a given application—without access to an oil-borne preservative, electricity infrastructure in some areas will be less resilient, less safe, and more costly than it otherwise needs to be.

To address these concerns, Health Canada should work with potential applicants to continue exploring regulatory measures that can support the **expedited approval of oil-borne alternatives to pentachlorophenol**—alternatives that can support critical infrastructure needs while ensuring the health and safety of Canadians. Without a widely available and cost-effective alternative, utilities will be left with a narrowing set of options for preserving new wood poles, driving up procurement costs and extending lead times at a moment when the sector is being asked to accelerate infrastructure build-out. This creates direct risks to grid reliability and affordability for Canadian electricity customers.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide Health Canada with relevant feedback. We thank you for your time and consideration.



Sincerely,

Michael Powell
Vice-President of Government Relations
Electricity Canada