



## **NEWS RELEASE – March 1, 2016**

### **Local utilities warn customers of electricity bill phone scams during Fraud Prevention Month**

**Ajax, ON** – Ontarians lose tens of thousands of dollars every year to phone scams related to their electricity bills – a crime that has been active in more than seven provinces and targeted thousands of businesses according to the RCMP.

For Fraud Prevention Month, Veridian Connections (“Veridian”) and other electric utilities are working together through the Electricity Distributors Association (“EDA”) to protect Ontarians by providing tips to help them deal with suspicious phone calls.

As consumer-facing utilities that deliver reliable power to their communities, they take the safety and well-being of customers and employees very seriously.

“We have noticed an increase in phone scams over the past few years and the fraudsters are getting more sophisticated, often combining new technology with age-old tricks to get people to send money or give out personal information,” explains Veridian’s Rob Scarffe, Executive Vice President, Customer Service & Information Technology. “These phone scams continue to be a source of great frustration for our customers as well as for us. We urge everyone who receives one of these calls to hang up immediately and report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre.”

Here are some tips on how you can stay safe from electricity bill phone scams:

- NEVER give your personal or financial information.
- If someone calls and threatens to disconnect your electricity if you don’t make a payment right away by pre-paid credit card or wire transfer, say NO and HANG UP!
- Report the incident to your utility and the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) at 1-888-495-8501. This agency collects information on fraud and works closely with the police to solve these crimes.

Follow @EDA\_ONT and @VeridianTweets on twitter this month for more fraud prevention tips using the hashtag #FPM2016 and visit the EDA’s [website](#) for more information.

### **About Veridian Connections**

*Veridian Connections, serving more than 119,000 customers, is about to become the fifth largest municipally owned electric utility in Ontario after the merger of large utilities west of Toronto is completed. The City of Pickering, the Town of Ajax, the Municipality of Clarington and the City of Belleville jointly own Veridian Corporation, the parent company to Veridian Connections. The utility has a successful history of effective growth through two mergers and five acquisitions, and now serves nine communities east and north of Toronto more efficiently than any other large non-contiguous utility in Ontario. Veridian has a keen focus on reliability, customer communication and helping to lower customers' electricity bills through the delivery of innovation conservation programs and reasonable rates. Veridian not only contributes to local communities through industry leading financial returns, but also helps build stronger communities through the support of youth, health, economic development, education, the arts, the environment and the disadvantaged. Industry leading employee programs, public safety and a focus on employee engagement has created an environment that has attracted six consecutive Canada's Greenest Employer awards and one Top GTA Employer award. Veridian has now diversified into renewable energy, and will be establishing other value added offerings for its customers.*

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