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2degrees supports practical refinements of the Code amendment omnibus #7, but reiterates regulation should remain proportionate

2degrees welcomes the ability to comment on the Authority's Code amendment omnibus #7.

The key themes from our November 2025 submission on Improving Electricity Billing in New Zealand remain relevant. 2degrees supports appropriate regulation that protects consumers and promotes competition, but regulation should be targeted at a clearly identified problem, proportionate to the consumer benefit, and justified by implementation cost and complexity. We were concerned in November 2025 that the Better Billing package risked imposing prescriptive retail regulation on matters that are part of competitive customer engagement, including invoice design and customer communications.

We welcome the majority of the omnibus amendments as generally helpful and demonstrating that customer outcomes can still be achieved without highly prescriptive invoice requirements or unnecessary system complexity.

Invoice information should not be overloaded or forced into the invoice

In November 2025, 2degrees submitted that the Authority's proposals risked overloading bills, making them more difficult to read, and undermining retailers' ability to communicate with customers in a way that suits their products, channels and customer relationships. We also submitted that some information may be desirable for customers to receive but that the invoice is not necessarily the best place for it.

Against that background, 2degrees supports proposed clause 11.32H(2A). Allowing undercharged amount information to be provided either in the invoice or in a separate written communication is a sensible and practical improvement. This flexibility is particularly important for bundled, multi-product or multi-ICP accounts, where forcing all undercharge information onto the invoice may be difficult to implement and confusing for customers.

11.32H(2B): use a fixed dollar threshold, not a dynamic percentage calculation

2degrees supports the policy intent of a threshold for the advice and support obligations because triggering the full support process for every undercharged amount, regardless of value, would be disproportionate.

However, 2degrees does not support proposed clause 11.32H(2B). A dynamic threshold based on 15% of the customer's average electricity charges over the previous 12 months would drive unnecessary complexity into retailer decision engines. It would require customer-specific calculations or estimates to be built and for these calculations to compound in complexity when you consider the application of discounts, credits, reversals, price changes, plan changes, billing frequency, partial periods, new customers, bundled products and multi-ICP accounts that may occur across the 12-month period.

That complexity creates unnecessary calculation and compliance risk. 2degrees recommends a fixed dollar threshold instead. A threshold of \$100 would be more workable and proportionate. If the Authority considers \$100 too high, a fixed \$50 threshold would still be materially preferable to the proposed dynamic 15% formulation.

Appendix B: support the generally available retail tariff plan definition

2degrees supports the proposed amendment to the definition of generally available retail tariff plan in Appendix B. It provides useful clarity that plans can still be generally available where eligibility depends on the customer's electricity end-use, equipment or load characteristics, including EVs, solar, batteries, controlled load, time-of-use patterns or other technology-enabled characteristics.

Appendix C: business day drafting is unnecessarily complex

2degrees does not support Appendix C as drafted. We understand the policy concern that Wellington Anniversary Day is treated differently from other regional anniversary days. However, creating three different definitions of business day in the Code, one for Part 6, one for Part 11A and one for the rest of the Code, drives unnecessary confusion and complexity and is not consistent with good drafting conventions.

The proposed approach would also require retailers to distinguish between different Part 11A provisions and apply different anniversary day logic depending on whether the timeframe is linked to the retailer's registered address or the customer's ICP location. If the Authority wishes to resolve the anomaly, it should adopt a simpler drafting solution, such as one consistent Code definition that removes Wellington Anniversary Day from the definition at section 1.1(1)(b) and treats all regional anniversary days as business days.

Appendix D: record retention should align with the Privacy Act

2degrees supports the intent of Appendix D to avoid requiring retailers to retain Consumer Care Obligation records for longer than reasonably necessary. This is consistent with proportionality, privacy and good information management.

However, record retention obligations should be clearly consistent with the Privacy Act. Consumer care records can include sensitive personal information relating to payment difficulty, medically dependent consumer status, vulnerability, disconnection and reconnection, and customer communications. While 2degrees supports the direction of the amendment, we encourage the Authority to ensure that the final drafting is informed by engagement with the Privacy Commissioner and reflects clear alignment with the Privacy Commissioner's expectations.

Implementation timeframe should be extended

Finally, 2degrees reiterates the implementation concern raised in November 2025: the Authority needs to consider the cumulative impact of all confirmed and proposed changes across its work programme and set realistic timeframes for retailers to implement them. In November, 2degrees submitted that implementation should be phased, and that substantial operational and technical work was required.

The fact that the Authority is consulting on further Better Billing refinements close to commencement reinforces that concern. Even helpful changes require retailers to revisit requirements, update decision engines, amend customer communications, retest and re-assure delivery. While 2degrees continues to work towards ensuring implementation with the existing timeframes, for the reasons above, 2degrees considers the Better Billing implementation timeframe should be extended to 1 April 2027 or phased accordingly. This would better support robust implementation and reduce the risk of customer confusion, rework, and avoidable technical debt.

Conclusion

2degrees welcomes the practical refinements in the redraft, particularly clause 11.32H(2A) and Appendix B, and supports a threshold for clause 11.32H(2B), provided it is expressed as a fixed dollar amount rather than a dynamic percentage calculation.

We encourage the Authority to simplify Appendix C and allow additional time, to 1 April 2027 or through an appropriate phased approach, to support orderly and effective implementation.