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www.bcuc.com**British Columbia
Utilities Commission**

Letter of Comment

In accordance with the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, to submit a letter of comment concerning an application currently before the Commission, please provide a completed form to commission.secretary@bcuc.com. If email is unavailable, please mail the form to the address above. By doing so, you acknowledge that all letters of comment are published with the author's name as part of the public evidentiary record, both in print copy and on the Commission's website. All personal contact information provided on this page is removed before posting to the website. Forms must be received by the Commission by the last filing date included in the proceeding's regulatory timetable before final arguments.

Proceeding name

Are you currently registered as an intervener or interested party?

Name (first and last)

City

Province

Email

Phone number

Letter of Comment

Name (first and last)

Alex Giovannelli

Date:

29-Aug-16

Comment: Please specify the reasons for your interest in the proceeding, your views concerning the proceeding, any relevant information that supports or explains your views, the conclusion you support and any recommendations. The Commission may disallow comments that do not comply with the Rules of Practice and Procedure.

Dear BC Utilities Commission,

A year ago I moved from Calgary to Anarchist Mountain. Anarchist Mountain is a rural acreage community located 15 Km East of Osoyoos, BC. The area is NOT served by natural gas infrastructure and hence residents are held captive to electricity for our heating needs. When I retired and moved from Alberta to BC, I realized some things would be more expensive; however, I was shocked to see how expensive my electricity power bills were over the winter season. Despite living in a warmer climate, having a smaller home, and making all efforts to conserve energy, my total power cost was over double what I paid in Calgary for both gas and electrical power combined. When reviewing my bill and speaking with a Fortis representative, I quickly learned about the BC Utilities practice of tiering electrical power rates based on consumption as a way of promoting conservation. This policy may be effective for those households that have the ability to use alternate cost effective means (i.e. natural gas) for space and water heating; but for those that are held captive to electrical power, residents have no ability to stay within the lower tiered power pricing level over the winter period and are unfairly penalized with exorbitant power bills over the colder months through no fault of their own.

Case in point. My home on Anarchist Mountain is only a few years old, it was built to modern building codes and energy conservation standards including energy efficient windows and ample thermal insulation. My home makes use of a heat pump and electric furnace. The electric furnace engages when the heat pump is no longer effective below 5 deg C. Water tank is heated by electrical power. Since being shocked with my first winter power bill, I began to only heat a few rooms with highest use, and significantly turn down our thermostat to an uncomfortable level. We also reduced the frequency of washing of dishes/clothes and took shorter showers. Despite these efforts, our electric power costs associated with heating our home and water remained punitive and prohibitive. I began to investigate other options of heating. Solar heating comes with a very high capital cost and based on climatic conditions is not suitable on the mountain due to the little sunshine received over the winter months.

Unfortunately and reluctantly, for these reasons, last month I purchased and installed a wood burning stove. I am not happy about increasing my carbon footprint by burning wood, however the current discriminatory practice imposed by BC utilities for those that have no other economical heating options, has created a punitive cost environment where more residents will be forced to increase their carbon footprint and deteriorate air quality by burning wood. The present rate tiering policy is a failure, it is totally contradictory to the rationale of promoting conservation and support the environment in the first place.

I am very concerned with how electricity rates are structured, the discriminatory rate practice, and the negative impact these high electricity rates are having on our community. I strongly encourage the BC Utilities Commission to implement a different program that truly encourages conservation, is fair for all and in particular for those that are held captive to electrical power (through no fault of their own) for their space and water heating.