

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 <mailto: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: BCUC RIB Rate Report

Are you currently registered as an intervener or interested party? [Yes / No] No

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Letter of Comment

Name (first and last): Christina Postnikoff

Date: 07/11/16

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.

I am a [REDACTED] Hydro customer. I heat with electricity. The bills are very high. I would not like to see the bills go any higher. In 2015 the electricity bill was three times higher than 2005 and was 10% of income. This puts me in energy poverty, which I did not know about till this year. The municipal utilities were not included in Fortis BC survey. I live in a smaller, older home that would have to be rebuilt to be energy efficient. I have just the basic appliances, no dishwasher or clothes dryer. My electricity use is fairly consistent, yet there was an increase in consumption over the years. This was perhaps because of keeping seniors warm.

In 2003 heated with oil total consumption 9397 Kwh cost \$645 yr

In 2005 heating with electric furnace consumption 16,915 Kwh cost \$1172 yr

2015 heating with electric furnace consumption 29,925 Kwh \$3000 yr

The BC Hydro and Fortis BC reports do not recognize the difference between electricity for essential service, such as heating/wells/water and non-essential service.

A low-income senior with health concerns cannot lower their temperature as much as others. Offering a voluntary non-tiered time of use rate for those customers would not help.

People who heat with electricity and have no access to gas or who cannot afford to switch to gas should not be punished with high electricity prices for an essential service. One wonders how long natural gas will be available to consumers. The City of Vancouver recently announced that it is banning or reducing natural gas by 2050. Newbuilds by 2020 will not allow natural gas. In a letter to the City of Vancouver, Fortis B.C. denounced the move, claiming it will cost an average family of four \$1,500 per year in additional energy costs.

A Fraser Institute recent study found that energy poverty disproportionately affected lower-income Canadian households, particularly households making \$47,700 or less per year. The Fortis BC study should have included the highest/lowest/average bill for each billing period for each income bracket.

On the Industry Canada website there is a page written by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives titled Eliminating Energy Poverty, Achieving Climate Justice: The Need for a Smooth Transition to Zero Carbon BC Homes

Below is excerpt from this article which I have copied because it is very hard to keep up with new energy

policy and others may not know it:

“It is both desirable and possible to eliminate fossil fuel combustion and carbon emissions from BC’s housing stock by 2040. Developing sustainable homes in BC will require a balanced public policy approach that includes carefully designed pricing structures and aggressive support of targeted energy efficiency improvements.

Climate action demands that GHG emissions be reduced and eliminated, and is compatible with an aggressive program of energy efficiency investments. But a smooth transition requires more attention to be paid to impacts on low-income households and other vulnerable populations – fighting energy poverty can lead to fairer and more effective policies for BC households.

We recommend the following next steps for the BC government:

- Develop a long-term vision of green buildings in complete communities
- Fight energy poverty
- Increase the progressivity of tiered pricing
- Move cautiously on time of use pricing
- Phase out natural gas
- Mandate energy audits for older housing stock
- Retrofit multi-unit buildings and rental housing stock
- Accelerate financing reform
- Establish progressively higher building regulations and marketplace standards for appliances
- Invest in skills development for green jobs

Energy conservation is important but it is very imperfect. It is very unfair to make such broad recommendations when you don’t know the particular situation of any household. You can have a high electricity usage for heat and have an overall low environmental impact footprint, while having low electricity heating usage and still having a high overall environmental impact.

Consumers should be provided with scientific information on how the conservation is actually helping the environment.

"Lower income households are more vulnerable to the negative effects of rising energy costs-something policymakers should consider when devising energy policy," said Kenneth Green co-author of the Fraser Institute study. This does not seem to be happening in British Columbia.

Thank you.