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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)

Brian Bowkett

Date:

November 25, 2016

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.

My concern is how the stepped rates implemented by Fortis BC have unfairly punished home owners using hydro-generated electricity.

A number of years ago when electricity was charged at a flat rate per kwh in [REDACTED], it made sense to install new heat pumps in my [REDACTED] home. Since I was told that the electricity that I consumed was from hydro it did not generate any significant greenhouse gases, this was an excellent way to heat and to cool my house. I did not have to think about the use of natural gas for any of my appliances and the possible negative effects on our environment.

Since then, Fortis has been allowed to raise electricity rates to unreasonable levels for “high users” such as myself, cleverly spread over a two month billing period which ensures that my usage well exceeds the minimum threshold during the winter and shoulder seasons. Although light bulbs have been switched to LEDs or CFLs, Heat pumps used instead of electric furnaces, high efficiency laundry and kitchen appliances purchased, increases in the cost of electricity has averaged 7.5% per year for me over the last 10 years. How is this revenue neutral for Fortis? How can anyone in BCUC consider this appropriate? As a senior, my income increases a paltry 1 to 2% per year if I am lucky.

Needless to say, I am far from pleased with the current rate structure. I also find it disingenuous that Fortis takes the lowest rate charged in order to compare to other electricity providers in North America, then pat themselves on the back because they come out in the bottom half of the pack. It is past time that customers such as myself be charged a less expensive rate per kwh taking into consideration that I am not using any fossil fuels to heat and cool my house thereby not generating any additional greenhouse gases. That should be worth something in the overall picture in an attempt to reduce BC’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for considering the negative impact stepped rates have on private owners who are doing their part to reduce their contribution to GHG emissions in this province by not using fossil fuels.