



February 4, 2014

B.C. Utilities Commission
Box 250, 900 Howe Street
Sixth Floor
Vancouver, B.C.
V6Z 2N3

Re: BC Hydro Smart Meter Choices Program

We moved into our current residence in August 2009 and enrolled in BC Hydro's equal monthly payment plan. Until last year our hydro meter was read every other month. The last time our meter was read was on February 27, 2013 and every subsequent bill has been an estimate.

BC Hydro's current meter reading charges are \$20 monthly for radio-off meters and \$35 monthly for legacy meters. There would be a specific cost involved for a meter reader to arrive at the meter site. This cost would be the same whether the meter was a radio-off meter or a legacy meter. Once the meter reader was on site, there would be a relatively trivial time difference between downloading the radio-off meter data and reading the legacy meter. I suggest that the additional \$15 monthly charge for reading a legacy meter is totally unwarranted to recover BC Hydro's costs. I believe this \$35 charge is designed to migrate legacy meter residents towards BC Hydro's preferred meter alternatives. The Minister has acknowledged that the \$35 monthly charge would result in many residents switching from their legacy meters.

I believe BC Hydro Hydro has indicated that these meter reading charges are a cost recovery measure rather than a new revenue stream. If our meter is actually read at the end of this month then our meter is read on an annual basis. A \$420 (\$35 x 12 months) meter reading charge goes well beyond cost recovery. I suggest that, by any reasonable standard, a \$420 meter reading charge could be considered grossly excessive and punitive and appears designed to migrate legacy meter residents to BC Hydro's preferred alternatives while generating additional revenue.

BC Hydro rates have historically included a built-in meter reading charge. I have seen references to \$9 monthly. I believe that both the radio-off and legacy meter reading charges of \$20 and \$35 respectively are excessive. I further believe that there is no valid justification for the additional \$15 charge (above that charged for a radio-off meter) for reading a legacy meter. I suggest that an annual meter reading fee of \$50 to \$60 may be sufficient to allow BC Hydro to recover their annual meter reading costs. I would encourage the BC Utilities Commission to rule on the BC Hydro Smart Meter Choices Program that meter reading charges would be nil (no charge) or limited to \$5 monthly for both radio-off and legacy meters.

Yours truly,

Terry Reid