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www.bccuc.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@bccuc.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)

Caryl Wilford

Date:

May 21, 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.

I have grave concerns about BC Hydro's proposal to make drastic changes to the E-Plus program that I use to heat my home. I purchased my home in 2005. I was not one of the original owners who took part in the E-Plus program. At the time I bought the E-Plus program was being Grandfathered and was reflected in the purchase price I paid for this house. The original owner, at a cost to him, made sure that he followed the necessary requirements that were to be in place in order to be eligible for this program. This cost was passed onto subsequent owners.

I was told by the Real Estate Agent I dealt with and the owners at the time that the E-Plus Program was not a temporary program. I educated myself on those facts before considering purchasing this home. The information that I received from the previous owners and the written material I was given confirmed to me that this was not a temporary program, that there would be no less than 30 days notice given if it was necessary to cut off my heat supply and that the power would not be cut off until other large industrial/ commercial users had their supply curtailed. Fair enough. I, like the previous owners, entered into this agreement with BC Hydro in good faith.

I went over and above what the original owner had done and replaced the wood stove with a higher efficiency one. I had a proper wood shed built to make sure I had enough wood in place to see me through a possible cut off of my heating source. We hire someone to bring in firewood, chop it and stack it. Again, I have followed through with my portion of the agreement all at a cost to me.

The proposals being made now fly in the face of these facts. It is proposed that only two days notice will be made by BC Hydro before cutting off the supply of power to heat my home for upwards of months at a time. Two days! That is absolutely ludicrous! What happens if I am not here? Will I be faced with frozen pipes and worse if I happen to be elsewhere for those two days and am unaware of the notice? The consequences of this could be horrific. Has no one at BC Hydro thought of this?

BC Hydro is now denying that the residential user does take precedence over the Commercial/ Industrial customer even though that part of the original agreement has been documented. They seem to feel they can change the rules to benefit themselves whenever they want no matter the consequences to those who entered into this agreement in good faith.

I do not have access to natural gas on this part of Vancouver Island. My only other alternative other than the wood stove mentioned above is propane which would be extremely expensive to install at this point in time. My understanding was that the lack of alternatives was the reason that the E-Plus Program was set up in the first place. It would benefit the homeowner (at an expense to him in order to be in compliance with the program's stipulations) as there was not an alternative source of power to go to. It would benefit BC Hydro in that they had surplus power that they could sell to the E-Plus

homeowner. Everyone is happy. Until BC Hydro decides to change the rules that they themselves put in place. The fact has not changed that there is still no easily accessible alternative power source that I can access .

My partner and I are seniors. We are both on fixed incomes and with the situation in the markets today our retirement savings are being quickly eroded. My partner has had two serious heart attacks. It is very much a concern that we may be faced with being cut off from our heating source at such short notice and for months at a time in the heating season or to have to replace our heating system at great cost. The threats being made by BC Hydro to change the rules to suit themselves are unconscionable.

A decision to have the E-Plus Program atrophy has been suggested. I feel this is the best solution. Those of us on this program are for the most part seniors and will be moving on sooner than later. The fact that the E-Plus is no longer Grandfathered means it will eventually die a natural death. I feel the homeowners caught in this situation are being held to ransom by BC Hydro. The changes proposed by BC Hydro will scare those who do not feel they can fight back into abandoning the E-Plus Program at great expense to themselves and allow BC Hydro to have their way. This is so wrong. An agreement is an agreement and BC Hydro, like everyone else, should have to live up to their part of the agreement. I know I have.

I would appreciate any help you can bring to bear on this issue.

Caryl Wilford

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Further to my letter above in response to Bill Bennett's seeming lack of understanding of the agreements of the E-Plus program:

Dear BCUC,

Please find below the letter I have just received from the Honorable Bill Bennett, Ministry of Energy and Mines in regards to changing the terms of the agreement for the E-Plus program.

The original agreement stated that there would be 30 days notice before the power to those homes with this program would be shut off and the expectation would be that the home owner would then go to their backup energy source. That was fine and was agreed to. BC Hydro now wants to be able to give only 2 days notice to do so. Their suggestion is that if there is no one at home that family or a neighbour should be arranged to come over to the residence and “ switch on the alternate power source”. This is a direct quote from the email received from Mr Bill Bennett. I almost choked when I read that. My backup source is a wood stove. This choice of a backup heat source was agreed to by Hydro back when this Program was put in place. Apparently the Right Honorable Minister Bill Bennett has never had to stoke a wood stove in his life or he would know that you don't just” switch it on”. Perhaps if I had a propane backup that would be feasible but I don't. I have a wood stove which requires loading , lighting, and reloading to keep the house warm and, in freezing

temperatures which is when they say they will turn the power off with two days notice, to keep my pipes from freezing and creating huge issues. The use of said wood stove was agreed upon by BC Hydro when this Program was instituted. That was when there would have been 30 days notice to be there to load, light and reload said wood stove. Not two days! And certainly not by family (of which I have none where I live) or neighbours. Absolutely ludicrous!

Yours truly,

Caryl Wilford

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]