

Sixth Floor, 900 Howe Street, Box 250  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6Z 2N3Phone: 604-660-4700  
BC Toll Free: 1-800-663-1385  
Fax: 604-660-1102  
www.bcuc.com

## 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](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

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)

Reg and Nancy Forsyter

Date:

August 9, 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.

August 9, 2016

Reg and Nancy Forster

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Sirs:

**Re: Rural Electricity Rates**

We are a rural residential electricity customer of FortisBC without access to natural gas. We have only lived on Anarchist Mountain just east of Osoyoos B.C. for the last 6 months, moving from the Lower Mainland.

We were warned by neighbours when we moved about the exorbitant cost of electricity up here. We understand the high cost of electricity in our area is a direct result of the Government and the BCUC requiring electric utilities to implement a two-tiered pricing system that wasn't properly designed to address the diverse set of electricity consumers that exist in BC. We understand the RIB, as structured ignores the fact that there is a small percentage of BC residents who use electricity for space and water heating (due to no access to natural gas) and will, regardless of their efficiency levels, always consume far more electricity than the BC average. This is because most BC residents, particularly those in major urban areas, have access to natural gas and use that fuel for space and water heating, significantly reducing their need to consume electricity since 75% of the average energy used in single-detached homes in BC is for space and water heating.

**Conservation Steps taken to Reduce my electricity Consumption**

It only took us one bill to find that out first hand what they were talking about. Our first bill for 28 days at our new house was \$257.18. This was after we had already gone into frugal mode in our electricity consumption as there is no way we will be able to afford high electricity bills on our fixed pension incomes. We had already taken the following steps to reduce our electricity consumption:

- Spent over \$700 on LED bulbs
- Turned off all our electric baseboard heaters and strictly heated our house with our wood burning stove.
- Unplugged all appliances when not being used
- Used no exterior lighting

- Had to stop using master bedroom ensuite as this bathroom was too cold due to heat from wood stove didn't reach that room enough to warm it up
- Wore fleece jackets around house on the cold days of January - April to keep warm
- Washed all laundry using cold water

Much to our dismay our bills were still high the following 2 billing cycles.

#### Energy Conservation Considered but Unaffordable due to Electricity Costs

We considered supplementing our wood burning stove so our house was more comfortable by installing a ductless heat pump system, but the heat pump uses electricity to help convert the air to heat so running it would be unaffordable, as the electricity it uses would be at the Block 2 rates. Burning wood is more economical for us due to the cost of electricity even though I know the adverse effects wood burning has on the environment.

Prior to moving to our new house, we had considered of purchase an electric vehicle to reduce our carbon footprint but with the electricity rates up here, the cost of charging it here would not make it economical as charging the car would be at the Block 2 rates

#### Old House vs New House Comparison

Our new house in Osoyoos is only 10 years old, only 2100 square feet and is made with 2x6 construction. Our house inspector says we have more than adequate insulation in the attic and all the windows are double paned. All my lights are LED and we only turn on lights when absolutely necessary. We have turned down our electric hot water tank to as low as possible. We have good sun exposure to assist in warming our house on clear cold days and heat the house strictly by wood burning stove. We do not cool our home in the summer. Our average monthly electrical bills for the period January 11, 2016 - June 8, 2016 for lighting and our hot water only is over \$156 a month.

My previous home in Surrey BC was over 40 years old, over 3200 square feet and was made of 2x4 construction. That is over 1000 square feet more than our new home in Osoyoos. My combined monthly equal instalments for electricity and natural gas was \$129 (hydro \$53 and natural gas \$76). We had no wood burning stove. We heated our house and water strictly with natural gas and weren't concerned as much about energy consumption as our monthly bills weren't considered excessive.

The comparisons are staggering when you consider the size differences in the houses and the fact we heat our new home by burning wood. You could just imagine what our electricity bills would be if we turned on our electrical baseboard heaters. I have heard of people with bills in excess of \$900.

Something has to be done to address the inadequacies in the rates you charge residents that don't have access to natural gas and depend on electricity to heat their homes. We are supplementing people who use natural gas to heat their homes and water. We are getting bumped up to the higher Block 2 rates to heat our homes and for the majority of our electrical use.

The Government has encouraged the BCUC to implement the RIB as part of its clean energy policy. However, the consumption of hydro-electricity produces no greenhouse gas emissions and the RIB as structured is forcing rural electricity consumers such as ourselves to switch to wood-burning which produces greenhouse gas emissions and a variety of other air pollutants.

The only way to mitigate the adverse impacts that the RIB is having on rural users with no access to natural gas is to change the pricing system. Either change the Block 2 rate to take into account we have to heat our homes and water with electricity, or by replacing the two-tier system with some combination of a flat rate/ time-of-use pricing system. Something has to be done to change the pricing policy for people without access to natural gas to make the pricing system fair.

Thank-you for taking the time to listen to our comments and concerns.

Reg and Nancy Forster