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: Residential two-tier electricity rates

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

Name (first and last): Joanna and Bram van den berg

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The BC Utilities Commission is authorized to collect and publish a person or organization's personal information when they participate in a matter before the Commission under sections 26(c) and 33.1(r)(ii) and (iii) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA). Subject to FOIPPA, all documents filed in respect to an application will be placed on the public record.
Letter of Comment

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.

[Please write your comments in this box]

We live on Gabriola Island, where there is no natural gas available. So we and everyone else on the island (and all of the Gulf Islands) use electricity to warm our homes. We built a new house in 2012, with high standard insulation, with LED lighting and new Energy Star appliances, with 2 heat pumps as the main heat source and a propane fire place. Despite all of this in the winter time, depending on the temperature, our Hydro bill is 50 to 65% higher than in the summer, all because of the high second tier rate. We cannot monitor our consumption either. We have a smart meter since 2012, but BC Hydro was unable to connect it to their network until April 2016. They replaced the meter with a new one and from that date it is connected. But we still cannot access our hourly/daily consumption data to monitor our electricity use. After one of my recent (early August) calls to the customer service department, it was made clear that it can be up to 6 months before BC Hydro is able to provide those data. There was no explanation why it takes that long. So we cannot use the tool BC Hydro is promoting to see our energy consumption.

The first tier maximum is way too low for people using electricity for heating and we all pay dearly. To avoid high electricity bills people use wood stoves (old and new) as the main heat source and burn everything they can lay their hands on, like wet wood, branches, beach wood etc. The result of trying to avoid this high second tier rate is high woodsmoke pollution, (high PM2.5), having a huge impact on people’s health (asthma, cancer, other respiratory problems).

Conclusion.
The current system has a big impact on people (financially and health wise) who do not have access to natural gas. At least the first tier maximum should be doubled for those households and the second tier should be a sliding scale.
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