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www.b cuc.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

Escalating BC Hydro power rates

Are you currently registered as an intervener or interested party?

No

Name (first and last)

CRAIG KERSTENS

City

[REDACTED]

Province

BC

Email

[REDACTED]

Phone number

[REDACTED]

Letter of Comment

Name (first and last)

CRAIG KERSTENS

Date:

August 14, 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.

Dear Commission; I would like to express my disappointment in learning that the BC Hydro rates for British Columbian households and businesses are proposed to increase substantially above the "official" gov't posted inflation rate. BC Hydro rates historically have been very competitive given the source of the energy used to produce electrical power in comparison to other provinces. So I ask "What has changed?" Has BC Hydro mismanaged the business (like selling power to California and not getting paid for it!) or mismanaged operating costs and found it self in debt? NO! The **BC gov't** has used BC Hydro like a **cash cow** for years and pushed the utility hundreds of millions of dollars in debt so the ruling party can make the claim of "**NO income tax increases**".

My wife and I live in an area on the Island that is not serviced with gas. We built a house of 2000 ft2 with an energy star rating of 85. We heat with a heat pump and wood. We installed all LED lighting and keep shower duration to <5 min. Last winter was our first winter in the new house and the 3 mo bill was nearly \$600. We opted to burn more wood in a modern wood stove and the next bill was \$400. Firewood is expensive if purchased ready to burn, so to save some cost I put more labor into the firewood, but as I get older this will become more difficult. As the price of power has already edged up my neighbours are burning more wood and the atmosphere around here in the winter is thick with smoke.

I find this situation very annoying that our dear leaders have placed BC Hydro and ultimately the rate payers in. Increases above the inflation rate ought to draw an inquiry as to why and make the "leaders" come clean and justify this. Come clean and stop snowing the public. My wife and I live on a fixed pension. We don't have excess money to cover the ruling party's inept decisions when it comes to balancing the provincial budget. Just look at the mess Ontario is in with their power rates. To go down that path here is criminal. There they have pitted the metro customer against the rural customer. The rural customers are getting crushed with high transmission rates, but because they are the customer minority they are too small a voice to cause issue with the dear leaders of the gov't.

And then lets not forget all the bonuses paid to the folks at the helm. Seriously? And lousy decisions deserve a bonus? Unacceptable. So sure if I don't like what the current Liberals have done then the NDP is the answer? Hardly.

Don't crank the power rates up and drive people and business out as employment will decline, income tax will decline and gov't finds itself still spending more than it makes. We will end up in an Ontario like death spiral (\$ 300+ billion in debt!!). Good grief! All tax and utility rate payers deserve and expect better. You pay yourselves very well. **Then earn it!**

Craig Kerstens

