

Date Submitted: April 12, 2018

Proceeding name: FortisBC Inc. 2017 Cost of Service Analysis & Rate Design

Are you currently registered as an intervener or interested party: No

Name (first and last): Eldon Beix

City: Kaslo

Province: British Columbia

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone number: [REDACTED]

Comment:

Sir/Madam My Name is AL Beix and I live in Kaslo, BC. I have been a Fortis Customer in Kaslo since Fortis acquired West Kootenay Power in May of 2004. I am writing today to express my concern over Fortis BC's proposed rate changes. While I have no particular voice in terms of the provinces senior citizens I believe my views are shared by the tens of thousands of BC's senior citizens living in Fortis monopoly service areas on fixed incomes. I find it ironic that when it comes to rental properties the BC Government has gone to great lengths to restrict via legislation how much landlords are allowed to increase property rental rates and these rate increases would appear to be tied - or at least guided by - the annual cost of living increase. Whereas Fortis is applying for rate increases that in some cases exceed 500% of the old rate for the same service. Specifically..... Meter Testing Fortis Application - currently \$25, increased to \$135 Comment - Given that Fortis supplies the meters and the consumer has no alternative, why is Fortis even allowed to charge the consumer to test a Fortis supplied meter? From my perspective as a consumer if a meter is suspected as being inaccurate Fortis should test and replace as necessary at no charge to the consumer. False Site Visit Fortis Application - Charge \$175, increased to \$246 Comment - Regardless of what this charge is for, a 140% increase of the rate would in any other arena be considered, at best excessive and at worst criminal. In a normal arena where there is not a monopoly such an increase would cause the wholesale exit of Fortis customers to a competitor. Unfortunately for us here in Kaslo and many (if not all) of Fortis service area this option is not available to us as consumers due to the Fortis monopoly. Over and above the preceding comments I should also like to suggest that since the 2004 acquisition of West Kootenay power there has been a gradual, unstoppable increase in electricity rates to the point that now in the peak winter months my personal electricity bill approaches \$1000 every two months and our current Equalized payment plan is \$300/ Month year round for heat and lights. I expect that to rise at the end of the current payment year. These increases fly in the face of areas that are served by Fortis natural gas as shown in the graph shown on Fortis BC Web page at <https://www.fortisbc.com/NaturalGas/Homes/Rates/Pages/default.aspx> Titled Historical data (Mainland, Vancouver Island, Whistler) Cost of natural gas per gigajoule (GJ)* (Graph Attached) Whilst I recognize that

there is not a direct co-relation between gas and Electricity rates. The trend in gas pricing causes me to ask if the utilities commission should not recognize this disparity and for areas that are not - and perhaps cannot ever be - serviced by natural gas, Fortis should be required by the commission to provide lower rates per KWH to help consumers without access to Natural gas achieve a cost of living in line with Natural Gas Customers for the cost of heat. As a Senior citizen on a fixed family income, all of the foregoing causes me to ask how long I will be able to afford living in a Fortis monopoly service area such as Kaslo. The favor of a reply to my concerns is requested and I look forward to receiving same at your earliest possible convenience. Regards AL Beix Kaslo, BC, [REDACTED]

