

Let me point out the obvious: the rural rate increase applied for by Nelson Hydro has nothing to do with the cost of or the supply of electricity. It's nothing more than a blatant attempt by the administration and council of the City of Nelson to tax rural residents, something they have tried repeatedly to do over many years.

The rational and COSA are so obviously skewed, so dishonest as to be self-evident of true intention and the undeniable conflict of interest that Nelson has with rural residential electrical customers. And I say "Nelson" as a simple identifier because Nelson Hydro is not a separate entity. It is not a proper business, does not keep proper books or separate, clear financial statements. It is no more than a revenue collecting arm of the City of Nelson and abuses that position in an embarrassingly childish manner.

The most glaring example would be the greatest factor used in the COSA: the allocation of virtually all the cost of external purchased, higher-cost electricity to rural customers. If there was any truth to the contention that the rural customers incur significantly higher costs then why is it necessary to base the argument upon such an obvious, flimsy and self-serving twisting of facts? Mr Love has stated to me in the past that Nelson would not have to purchase the external power if it didn't have the rural customers. But then Nelson chooses to keep these customers and makes enormous profit from them. Talk about sucking and blowing at the same time.

Imagine if this situation involved a water supply. That a town controlled and charged for the only water source, a river that passed through it. And charged the people down river more than it charged the people in town under the guise of more pipe, less dense customer base. The town makes enormous, unjustified profit to serve itself alone. This would not be allowed anywhere in Canada and for good reason. Electrical supply in monopoly situations is as essential as water and with no alternative supply the customers depend upon the regulating authority to ensure a fair deal for all.

The very act of trying to ascribe all the external power purchases to rural customers is the definition of discrimination. Why segment rural from urban, why not commercial or high-consumption users? Why not efficient from non-efficient. This discrimination is obvious, self-serving and a false construct: clear evidence of the underlying intention to tax outside the city limits.

The funny business with numbers in COSA is also so laughable as to be an insult to the intelligence of the BCUC. As is the foot-dragging by NH on the commission's order to refund from last year. I sincerely hope the commission can straighten all this out.

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