

Date Submitted: September 30, 2019

Proceeding name: BC Hydro CCF Pilot – Year One Evaluation Report

Are you currently registered as an intervener or interested party: [REDACTED]

Name (first and last): Cheryl Leite

City: Salmon Arm

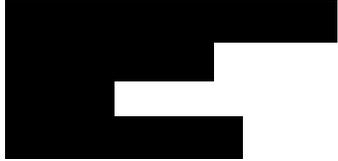
Province: British Columbia

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone number: [REDACTED]

Comment:

Letter updated as attached.



REVISED LETTER

September 30, 2019

British Columbia Utilities Commission
900 Howe Street
Vancouver, BC
V6Z 2S9

Attention: Complaints

To Whom It May Concern:

**RE: British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority Customer Crisis Fund Pilot Program
Public Proceeding (Order G-195-19)**

Further to my letter dated September 19, 2019, I wish to add the following comments.

Within the last few days, I have received notice of a *rent increase* for my apartment, effective January 1st, which will increase my monthly rent by another \$21.00 monthly (an additional \$252.00 annually). As well, the ICBC rates have increased dramatically, and I do not yet know what my new rate will be until I renew my license early in 2020.

As well, BC residents are paying the highest cost in the country for fuel to drive our vehicles, which also includes the carbon tax. The cost of fuel affects everything I have to purchase, including the cost of food. My food costs over the last six months have *increased* by another *\$100.00 per month*, without purchasing any more food products than just the basics I normally buy. Also, I very seldom eat out in a restaurant, as I can't afford to.

Additionally, Telus increases their rates for telephone, cable, and internet without prior notice, as well as BC Hydro, when they choose to do so, so I am constantly checking my bill for any increases.

With all these increases, my pension income is not increasing at the same rate. I, as well as anyone else am concerned, as to how all these increases are going to affect myself, with respect to affordability to pay all of these additional costs.

These are additional reasons why I am very concerned with BC Hydro adding this rate charge for a Crisis Fund to “all” BC Hydro customers right across the board, without regard to an individual’s income.

Further to my letter of complaint dated September 17, 2018 forwarded to you, and the email communication dated September 16, 2019 received from the Commission.Secretary@ bcuc.com, regarding the public proceeding (**Order G-195-19**) to review the Year One Evaluation Report filed by BC Hydro, I wish to submit the following comments.

I adamantly object to being charged for this controversial fund, as it has been made mandatory and I feel it is just another tax grab, by BC Hydro, the amount for which we are also being taxed. This is in actual fact a “charitable fund” for which we have had no choice in paying. If there are those who want to pay into this fund, then that decision should be voluntary on their part, not mandatory.

As well, the same rate is being applied to all BC Hydro customers, right across the board, regardless of their income.

I also reject the CCF Rate Rider Amendment Application filed by BC Hydro on July 31, 2019, seeking approval of a reduction to the CCF Rate Rider to \$0.13 per month. **I reject the CCF Rate Rider in totality.**

I am a single senior (72 years of age), having to closely monitor all of my monthly expenses, as I live on limited income (pension) and costs of everything, including hydro, heating, fuel and auto insurance, as well as food and clothing, continue to increase dramatically. My pension income does not increase at the same rate, to meet these challenges.

I do not own my own home, I live in an apartment. Any medical costs including dental, eye glasses, etc., come directly out of my own pocket. I cannot afford any extra medical insurance that many individuals can afford. There is a lot that I have had to give up, and that I simply cannot afford to do. Everyone has to make choices. As well, I am aware that many people (including those on limited income) have animals that they have to feed as well. While I do love animals, owning an animal also has associated costs, including food and vet bills. This is another choice that those individuals are making. It is not a necessity, if in fact, they are complaining that they cannot afford their hydro bills.

I raised three children, and also experienced many financial challenges along the way, including divorce. I also suffered injuries as a result of two motor vehicle accidents (not my fault) during my working career. It took 10 years to have both of those matters settled. In the meantime, the cost of therapy came out of my own pocket. Nobody paid those expenses for me.

I lived “close the bone” accompanied with a lot of stress during that time, and there was nobody offering to help pay my monthly expenses. At times I worked over 60 hours a week at

two jobs, to make ends meet. Subsequent to retiring, I went through a bankruptcy. I have been carefully rebuilding my credit rating since that time, as well as recording almost every penny I spend. I also maintain all of my expense records, so that I can keep on budget. Sometimes it is difficult to stay within my budget, especially when/if unforeseen expenses arise.

Even after I retired, I was lucky to find part-time work for a couple of years, until I broke my shoulder, after which I was off work for a period of a few months. Subsequent to that I broke my hip in 2015. I have not worked subsequent to that time. At age 72, just who is going to hire me? I also have other health issues, including disability issues. I have not received assistance with those medical expenses either. So how does *BC Hydro/BC Utilities Commission* had the audacity to ask me to pay for someone else's hydro expenses??

Most tax incentives are shelled out by government to families with children. Little is available for seniors.

I also would like to add that many of those individuals who are in support of this fund, are those that have or are benefiting from these grants, and of course they are going to support it.

I understand that there were substantial administrative costs to set up this fund. Customers required to pay for this fund also have not been provided with a Statement from BC Hydro, showing the *total amount* of administrative costs, the *total amount that has been collected from BC Hydro customers to date*, total amount of tax collected, number of customers that have received the grant funds, how much they received and for what duration. This should be a concise/comprehensive statement that is made available. All BC customers should be entitled to receive that information prior to this hearing.

While this may be only a small amount on every customer's monthly bill, cumulative with all BC Hydro customers, it amounts to a very large cash grab. To put it bluntly, it is socialism.

If BC Hydro is allowed to continue collecting money from every BC Hydro customer for this fund, (which in actual fact is a charitable fund) how many more corporations are going to follow suit and create a similar program for their corporation? What will be the cumulative impact on customers?

British Columbia taxpayers are subject to the highest taxes across the country, the highest costs for ICBC insurance rates, etc., increasing rates for BC Hydro, and enough is enough. BC Hydro has publicly announced that they are going to decrease BC Hydro rates for this year, increasing them steadily once again starting next year. With this announcement, they certainly do not require the funds they are collecting for this "Customer Crisis Fund Pilot."

This clearly explains how this extra expenses affect me. I have struggled to make ends meet, most of my life on a single income, and as a retiree, I still have to monitor very closely my income and expenses.

I am not in favour of allowing this Customer Crisis Fund Pilot Program to continue, unless it is changed to “voluntary participation” only.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Leite