



September 28, 2010

RE: BOARD FILE #EB-2010-0136 - ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION RATE CHANGE

Attention Board Secretary Kirsten Walli:

In response to the Notice of Application and Written Hearing for an Electricity Distribution Rate Change posted in the September 23rd edition of the Whig Standard, ***Please be advised that I am strongly opposed to this rate change, and am forced to ask when is enough, enough?***

About a month ago, in the Letters to the Editor section of the Whig, there was an article with the heading "Hit with Double Whammy". At the time, I thought, FINALLY, someone is commenting on the double whammy we've been given with the hydro rates. But no! This person was talking about the eco fees that were hidden in the HST Tax.

Recently, everyone was hit with your new 3-tiered rates for electricity, along with the increase in delivery charges. Even the lowest rate in this new system is more than we were previously charged, and on top of all these increases – we have been also hit with the newly implemented HST. Talk about piling on!!

As a person that has been conscientiously trying to cut down on my electricity consumption for some time now, I am discouraged by the way Hydro has decided to tackle the problem of supposedly conserving energy. In my efforts to conserve, I started doing only 2 loads of laundry a week. Sometimes only 1 load per week. I changed my setting cycle to cold water wash when possible, and am finding myself doing laundry after the magical hour of 9 p.m. Doesn't everyone like to do laundry at that time after a busy day?

My family used to like to sit down and eat around 5 p.m., but now I don't usually even start to cook until 5 – because that's also a "magical" hour when rates are somewhat lower. No lamp in my house is ever plugged in until it needs to be used - the same with the microwave, toaster and coffee maker. Every night I watch TV in the dark unless I have company in, and the night lights I used to leave on for safety's sake are a thing of the past.

Last year during the hot months, I had my air conditioner on 24/7. That is the only luxury I afforded myself. I cannot tolerate heat, and become physically ill. This year, I turned my air conditioner on only when I couldn't stand the heat anymore, and turned it off around 7 p.m. That is the only difference in electricity consumption (where personal choice could affect the difference) – and my last bill was almost double for the same time period of last year. Tell me what more I can do?????

My husband is on CPP Disability, and I too am on a fixed pension, and cannot afford one cent more in increases anywhere. The 2010 increase in our monthly benefits was less than \$2 per month, but since May of this year, 3 increases came into effect with regards to the Hydro One billing alone. Everything naturally goes up in price on a regular basis, but now a lot of things cost more simply because of the HST. Just to survive on a month-to-month basis, we have been living on (and have maxed out our credit line), and we now, quite regularly, use credit cards to buy necessities. No way to live, but we have no other choice.

I now notice things like my neighbors (who both have good incomes coming in), but have their walkway lit up with lights that come on every day around 6 p.m. and don't go off until 7 a.m. I can see their big screen TV playing through their living room window, and on a regular basis, if nobody is home, it too magically comes on at 6 p.m. just so their house appears occupied to anyone on the outside. They have electronically operated waterfalls/ponds throughout their property that run all during that same time period. They are actually quite nice to look at, but they all use electricity, and the owners show no concern for either conserving energy for the planet, nor mindful of the cost on their monthly bill.

Many of my other neighbors have lights all over their houses for the majority of the evening. Some leave their outside front light on all night long. But they too are two-income families that don't worry about such things as electricity rates. Hydro One needs to find another way of charging for usage. This current way is like the teacher that keeps the whole class in for detention, just to punish a guilty culprit that hasn't fessed up to their crime. There is a reasonable amount of energy that people need just to survive. What about a decent quality of life!!

You seem very willing to ask for increases to our cost for electricity consumption, and for charging us for Smart Meters (that none of us asked for), but I have yet to see it mentioned how the consumer will see a saving passed on to us for all the meter readers you no longer need to employ. How about some fair play here?

We shouldn't all be forced to sit in the dark at night, almost pass out from the heat, or freeze in the winter months. I know several elderly people that wouldn't turn their air conditioning units on this past summer for fear of what it would do to their hydro bill. I fear for these same people this winter, who for the same reason will not adjust their thermostats. You ought to be ashamed to show so little regard for the concerns and welfare of your consumers.

Every time Hydro One requests a rate increase, they always site the reason as being "maintenance on existing poles and lines etc. Your rates rake in a lot of money per year, and yet these poles are still not maintained??? Many people are wondering whether these rate increases are somehow tied into helping to pay the wages of the Hydro One employees. How would we know the truth?

It seems everywhere I go, I hear someone complaining about their hydro bill, and the HST. I don't believe I've ever heard so many complaints about the hydro, and in such large numbers. I can only hope that others also take this opportunity to voice their concerns, as I am doing now.