

November 17, 2014

[Ontario Energy Board \(OEB\) File Number EB-2014-0140](#)

Open Letter;

I have received the notice that HydroOne is asking the OEB to increase its rates – yet again. If it were not for the fact that they have a monopoly I wouldn't care – I would find another supplier. When Ford, GM etc were building 'crap', I switched to Japanese auto manufacturers. However, I cannot do that with HydroOne.

I have always been a firm supporter of public agencies providing the principal services such as water, roads, and electricity. By their very nature, they need to be sole-sources and therefore regulated. We, the public, assume, albeit incorrectly, that our elected officials have our backs in these circumstances. The Toronto Fords have it right – (most) Politian's are not looking out for the common-good but what they can get from the system while in office (and many times thereafter office). The Ontario Government has let HydroOne and OPG run out of control for decades.

I have a 'cottage' that is serviced by HydroOne. We are there roughly a couple weekends a month. In 2002, my equal billing for electricity was \$31.00 per month. Today, it is has risen to \$100.00 per month. – an 232% increase!

The CPI in 2002 was approximately 99.5; today is about 123, A 23% increase. My electric bill has gone up 10 times the CPI. Why?

One key factor is wages. I did a little research. The recent "Sunshine" list shows 12777 employees at HydroOne and OPG on the list, that is, making more than \$100,000 per annum. I am aware of supervisors with Grade 12 education making \$120-\$130k per annum – not to mention a gold-plated benefit package that continues for employee and spouse until death. {A FP Comment reads, "Get ready to pay billions for hydro pension"}. Where else do you find this kind of benefits? I am told that Bruce Nuclear employees are paid mileage to go to work. They carpool and each passenger then charges mileage!

Compare that to a typical municipal manager responsible for several department, 10+ years' experience, and a professional engineer making \$135k per annum. Or a senior police constable in Toronto making 91K per annum. What is wrong with this picture?

A May 28, 2012 report (EB-2012-0031) on COMPENSATION, WAGES, BENEFITS sites:

1. elimination of costly incentive pay plans
2. reasonable economic increases
3. reductions and cost containment 1 in benefits improvements
4. introduction of new salary schedules with lower starting rates and lower maximum rates

5. introduction of a less costly pension plan
6. increased employee pension contributions
7. increased flexibility to contract out work
8. reduction in the hourly rate for a variety of jobs
9. increased flexibility to move staff
 - increased utilization of contingent workers
 - introduction of less costly classifications
 - greater shift scheduling flexibility
 - reduction in temporary work headquarter costs

Noble talk but where are the actions or more decisively where are the results?

In this province, we have many fixed income, low income and marginal citizens who simply cannot absorb this continual ramping up of fees. Instead, what do we do – we pay individuals and corporation excessive rates for power generated by solar and wind means. As an engineer, both of these methods of power generation are an uneconomical and an inefficient means of producing power today. To add insult to injury, the producers are provided low interest loans, long-term contracts and that the rest of have to subsidize. What a waste of taxpayer's money when healthcare, childcare, the elder, the handicapped, and more could benefit from this money. Where is the public good here?

Thomas Sowell, the American artist, said it best. "It is hard to imagine a more stupid or more dangerous way of making decisions than by putting those decisions in the hands of people who pay no price for being wrong."

It is truly a sad state of affairs. When you see and hear the abuses of power, unfulfilled promises, and plain idiotic decisions, it is no wonder citizens won't vote or become engaged in the political system. The system is broken – HydroOne is a perfect example.

I have no illusions about the future – the OEB will grant HydroOne their increase; we will continue, in spite of the Wynn's government's promise of change, continue down the same self-fulfilling path - history teaches us that fact.

If only there were an alternative!

Maybe, just maybe, the OEB could set an example; send a message. We'll see!

Best regards,

Ron Whitelock

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