

**Subject:**  
**Date:**

EB-2015-0004 FW: Public comment re: Ottawa Hydro rate application  
May-12-15 2:42:08 PM

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**From:** Ronald Eade [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** May-12-15 2:41 PM  
**To:** BoardSec  
**Subject:** Public comment re: Ottawa Hydro rate application

May 12 2015

Sir/Mme,

I am writing as a residential consumer of Ottawa Hydro services regarding its application for a rate increase.

To be clear, its application for yet higher fees is completely unwarranted, in my opinion. I understand that among its supporting documentation is a consumer survey that allegedly supports the utility's position.

I realize your time is valuable, but wish to make only a couple of salient points:

1) The Ottawa Hydro-commissioned survey is utterly self-serving as questions are designed to deliver the intended result: Higher fees. As someone who received an unsolicited phone call by a survey taker recently to answer (numerous) questions, I was astonished that not one question addressed the utility's apparent inability to earmark sufficient funds in years past to maintain and enhance infrastructure requirements. Now we're told the status quo is insufficient to keep up with rising demands on the system -- why, I ask, is this suddenly a surprise? Isn't that what strategic planning is supposed to achieve? Are there no financial planners at Ottawa Hydro?

We are asked repeatedly in the survey about Hydro's education program (as if I, as a ratepayer, have any insight whatever in this area, or even care), Hydro's delivery of electricity at home and across the grid (I have no problem with electricity delivery to my home, but cannot comment about reliability for others across the city because I do not live there), and generally whether I favour maintaining if not enhancing the infrastructure (of course I favour maintaining if not enhancement of the grid -- who would say no to that?) But a series of positive replies to those questions does not mean I approve how Ottawa Hydro runs its affairs, nor does it mean I applaud paying even higher rates.

2) The underlying problem is that Ottawa Hydro, like the city water and sewer utility, is operated as a tax-generating revenue stream and not a business that prudently plans and sets adequate money aside for maintenance and upgrades (as you and I might have rainy day money set aside for a new furnace, or roof). Ottawa City Council has come to expect generous annual dividends paid by Ottawa Hydro to help with the city's endless cash-flow needs, which precludes any effective and long-term prudent function as a utility. In this

immediate instance, when more money is apparently required for infrastructure maintenance and upgrades then the mentality is to simply tax-and-spend more: In this case, increase Ottawa Hydro rates to do what should have been financially anticipated and planned for many years earlier.

Long gone are the founding principles in the early 1900s, apparently, when Ontario Hydro was created to generate and deliver power at cost to consumers to ensure the economic and industrial vibrancy of a formerly great and prosperous province.

In that context, Ottawa Hydro's application for more seems typical of the tax-and-spend philosophy that is eviscerating what used to be the nation's economic juggernaut province.

Kind regards,

Ron Eade,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]