

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF UNION GAS LIMITED

Union Gas Limited has applied for approval to change its gas commodity, storage and transportation rates effective January 1, 2016.

Learn more. Have your say.

Union Gas Limited has applied to change its rates to better reflect how it supplies natural gas to its customers. The proposed changes include the following:

- A change in the reference price used to set rates on a quarterly basis for a majority of its customers; and
- A change to how it allocates costs to the different types of customers that it serves.

An average residential customer would see the following annual bill impact, but these impacts would only start in 2018:

Residential Customer – Service Area	Approximate Bill Impact
Southern Ontario (Windsor to Hamilton)	Decrease of \$20
Northern Delivery Area (North Bay to Kapuskasing)	Increase of \$26
All Other Delivery Areas	Decrease of \$1.50 – \$51.50

Other customers in Union Gas Limited's service area, including businesses, will also be affected.

THE ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD IS HOLDING A PUBLIC HEARING

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) will hold a public hearing to consider the application filed by Union Gas.

We will question Union Gas on the case. We will also hear arguments from individuals and from groups that represent the customers of Union Gas. At the end of this hearing, the OEB will decide whether to approve the changes that Union Gas has requested in this application.

The OEB is an independent and impartial public agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a financially viable and efficient energy sector that provides you with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

BE INFORMED AND HAVE YOUR SAY

You have the right to information regarding this application and to be involved in the process.

- You can review the application filed by Union Gas on the OEB's website now.
- You can file a letter with your comments, which will be considered during the hearing.
- You can become an active participant (called an intervenor). Apply by **August 25, 2015** or the hearing will go ahead without you and you will not receive any further notice of the proceeding.
- At the end of the process, you can review the OEB's decision and its reasons on our website.

LEARN MORE

Our file number for this case is **EB-2015-0181**. To learn more about this hearing, find instructions on how to file letters or become an intervenor, or to access any document related to this case, please select the file number **EB-2015-0181** from the list on the OEB website: www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/notice. You can also phone our Consumer Relations Centre at 1-877-632-2727 with any questions.

ORAL VS. WRITTEN HEARINGS

There are two types of OEB hearings – oral and written. The OEB will determine at a later date whether to proceed by way of a written or oral hearing. If you think an oral hearing is needed, you can write to the OEB to explain why by **August 25, 2015**.

PRIVACY

If you write a letter of comment, your name and the content of your letter will be put on the public record and the OEB website. However, your personal telephone number, home address and e-mail address will be removed. If you are a business, all your information will remain public. If you apply to become an intervenor, all information will be public.

This hearing will be held under section 36 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, S.O. 1998 c.15 (Schedule B).



A train rumbles through the Prince Street crossing in Lansdowne.

Lansdowne residents want train horns silenced

WAYNE LOWRIE
Gananoque Reporter

A plea from a Lansdowne resident to silent the horn blasts of trains passing through the village fell on deaf ears at a recent township council meeting.

Local realtor John White said the horn blasts – as many as 200 times a day from the 50 trains that pass through the village – disturb villagers' sleep, harm their health and disrupt their quality of life.

He asked the council of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands to work with CN Rail to have the train horns silenced at the Prince Street crossing between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

In a well-researched presentation to council, White cited World Health Association statistics about noise pollution, rankings of the decibel levels of common noise and the experience of the City of Brockville, which banned train horns a few years ago.

But Mayor Joe Baptista said White's idea of banning horns might cost the township too much. The mayor cited a news story about the City of Brantford in which the city found it would cost about \$1.3 million to do a study on train noise that was required by the railways before they would silence their horns.

And while White is talking only about the Prince Street crossing, there are many train crossings in the TLT, Baptista said. If the township had horns banned in Lansdowne, it might lead to demands for equal treatment from other residents, he said.

The mayor added that a U.S. study found that banning horns resulted in a 60% increase in accidents at the affected crossings.

Baptista said a previous council considered a similar request from Lansdowne residents and ordered a report from township staff. But that council rejected the idea after receiving the report.

In his presentation, White noted the 2010 petition signed by 135 residents and the fact that it was rejected by council at the time. But he said that residents hope that the new council might be more reasonable and sympathetic to their concerns.

White quoted the WHO as saying that noise pollution is responsible for tens of thousands of deaths each year because of elevated blood pressure, increased stress, ulcers, vertigo, anxiety and disturbed sleep.

"Excessive noise seriously harms human health and interferes with people's daily activities at school, at work, at home and during leisure time and it can disturb sleep, cause cardiovascular and psychophysiological effects, reduce performance and provoke annoyance responses and changes in social behaviour," White quoted the WHO as reporting.

White cited other studies that found that noise harms people's health even when they sleep. Scientists at Imperial College in London monitored the blood pressure of 140 sleeping volunteers who lived near Heathrow airport. Their research discovered that the volunteers' blood pressure rose when a plane flew overhead, although the volunteers were asleep.

White said that 20 freight and 30 Via Rail trains pass through Lansdowne every day, each blowing its horn four times. (The horn blasts – long, long, short, long – are Morse Code for the let-

ter "Q," which centuries ago were meant to announce the arrival of the queen, White said. The tradition stuck and the Q code is still used today, said White, dryly adding "I hardly doubt that the queen will be visiting our village anytime soon.")

"The use of a 140-decibel train horn to protect crossings has become noise pollution and a late night auditory assault on the community," he said.

Brockville banned train horns at four crossings several years ago and the city has reported no problems, White said. The city paid \$150,000 to study and upgrade the crossings so that the horns could be silenced.

Adjusting those figures for inflation, White figured that banning the horns at the Prince Street crossing would cost the township about \$50,000.

White said that normal conversation is about 60 decibels, an idling bulldozer at 85 decibels can cause permanent hearing damage after an eight-hour day, while a clap of thunder at 120 decibels can cause immediate damage.

In comparison, train horns blast at 140 to 152 decibels, he said.

To punctuate his presentation, White pulled out an air horn from his pocket and gave a quick, short blast in the council chambers, startling councillors and the audience.

"That was less than 120 decibels and it shocked you," he told council members. "Imagine that 200 times a day, 365 days a year. Imagine a baby sleeping at night and children trying to get their rest to go to school the next day. Parents trying to sleep for work the next day. Imagine that eight times every hour between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m."