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To: BoardSec
Subject: Letter of Comment Submitted: EB-2016-0004

LETTER OF COMMENT

Comments:

I live in the center of a community (Ottawa) that does have access to natural gas, but have found myself in the same predicament as those for whom this hearing is intended.

I applied two years ago to have a gas line installed at my home (I currently heat with oil), only to discover that the gas main stopped about 10 feet from my house. After a number of exchanges with Enbridge Gas, they provided me with an estimate of \$10,000 to extend the line. I was also told that I would have to pay up front without any guarantee of when the line would be installed. I considered all this very unreasonable and declined.

I'm commenting on this issue because I consider this extremely inequitable. Is it really fair that someone should have to pay a large sum to finance infrastructure costs simply because they find themselves unfortunate enough not to have a gas main in front of their property? I raised this issue with Enbridge Gas and their comment was that it would not be fair to ask other consumers to share that cost. I disagree.

The natural gas pipeline infrastructure is really no different from so many of the utility infrastructures that we current have in Ontario...hydro, sewers, communications. Should someone be asked to pay an additional amount if the sewer in front of their house needs to be replaced? Of course not...the cost is borne by the community as a whole and these infrastructure repairs and expansions are funded by all who use that system.

I know that in Ottawa, in 2014, Enbridge Gas undertook a major project to replace aging and outdated gas mains on a major street in Ottawa. Residents of that street were not asked to fund the repairs. I was also told by an Enbridge representative that developers who want to have gas mains installed in new subdivisions are usually not charged a fee.

Because control of the gas pipeline system is monopolistic in nature, there is little room for negotiation, and it becomes a "take it or leave it scenario".

I believe that the OEB has a responsibility to see that all Ontario taxpayers are treated equitably in their access to natural gas and that the costs to ensure this equitability should be shared by all users of this utility.

Robert Pellarin



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Company: