I moved to Innisfil in June 2012 because I had been laid-off from my job as an Office Administrator in Markham. I believed that the cost of living would be more manageable here in Simcoe County and I was optimistic that I would be able to find a job. I was wrong on both counts.

I was not quite 58 when all this was happening in my life and even though I job hunted like mad, it turns out there are very few employment opportunities for someone like me here in Simcoe County – older … not young, thin or blond.

So I applied for and was accepted into the SEA (Self-Employment Assistance) program and learned how to become a business owner, because the way I see it, self-employment is better than no employment at all.

Four years later, at just past 62 years old and I’m still trying to get my business to a viable point where it makes a profit so I can pay my living expenses, including my hydro bill. The only control I have on my hydro is consumption, which I do my best to use during off-peak hours.

I analyzed my current hydro bill dated February 16, against the first one, dated

July 18, 2012. I am appalled to see that delivery charges have increased by 40%, in less than 5 years. How does the Government think someone like me, not quite a senior with so little income (sadly I qualify for the OESP at $30.00 a month), can afford to keep paying these kinds of rates and still afford to buy groceries and other essentials? How has a province as rich as Ontario allowed this kind of insanity to occur, that its residents have to make this kind of horrible choice?

Recently the Wynne government announced a rebate of the 8% provincial tax on my hydro bill and another 17% on top of that, for a total of 25%. Who knows for how long? Probably until after the next election anyway.

With my January hydro bill, I got a notice that the 8% provincial tax will be rebated but it had not been applied to January and maybe not even until July 1. On Jan/25, I spoke to a CSR at InnPower. She advised me that since the government had implemented the 8% rebate very quickly, InnPower’s billing system could not be adjusted fast enough to apply the rebate in January. InnPower hoped to have the rebate in place for the February bill and that any months missed would be credited retroactively.

InnPower is applying the HST to the gross amount of my bill and not the net (less the OESP). Why?

When I go into a store and buy an item on sale, the taxes are applied to the net amount of the item, not the original amount at which the item was priced. Why would the process be any different for my hydro bill?

I called InnPower to have the process explained and spoke to a CSR. I found her to be disdainful and impatient. I ‘walked’ her through the tax which had been applied to my bill, and was told that that’s how InnPower had been instructed to do it.

I find that a lot of InnPower’s customer service personnel to have the same attitude and have to wonder if it’s because they know (from my address) that I live in Sandycove Acres and think that the residents here are stupid because we’re older or assume that we all have dementia because it’s primarily a senior’s community. I felt insulted and frustrated because I really didn’t get answers that satisfied my questions.

Later, I spoke to the same CSR again and she advised me that it was the OEB’s instructions to apply the taxes in the way they had been – to the gross. Is this correct? If so, why?

To add insult to injury, I got another notice with my February bill, which states that InnPower has applied to the OEB for an increase of $10.69, a 22.3% increase. If it is granted that means there has been a whopping **71%** increase in delivery charges since 2012! Why? Doesn’t InnPower how to run this essential service efficiently?

Why has InnPower asked for this increase?

Does the government give with one hand and InnPower take it back and then some, with the other?

Is CPP and Old Age Security Pensions going to increase 71%?

Why hasn’t InnPower merged with Alectra so that the distribution costs can be shared by a much larger consumer base?

What kind of municipality and province am I living in?