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Sent: Thursday, October 1, 2020 9:43 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Letter of Comment - [REDACTED]

Thank you for submitting a letter of comment to the Ontario Energy Board. We will hold a public hearing before making a decision on this application. Your letter will be given to the decision-makers for this case. Your comments will be taken into consideration as long as they relate to issues in the case and are within the Ontario Energy Board's legal authority to decide.

You will receive a copy of our decision when it is released.

For privacy reasons, we keep only your full name on the letter. We remove any other personal and contact information. The letter with your full name and your comments will then become part of the public record. This means that it will be posted on our website and will be available at our offices for the public to review. If you want the applicant to respond to your letter, you need to send a copy directly to the applicant because your address and other contact information will be removed from the public copy at the Ontario Energy Board.

The Ontario Energy Board

-- Comment date --

2020-10-01

-- Case Number --

EB-2020-0040

-- Name --

Jordon Gromadzki

-- Phone --

[REDACTED]

-- Company --

-- Address --

[REDACTED]

-- Comments --

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments with regards to application EB-2020-0040.

As you know 2020 has proven to be a very difficult year for thousands of residents across the Niagara region, due to covid-19. Respectfully, I submit the following points to support a decision to deny the application submitted by NPEI to the OEB to increase distribution rates:

- The Niagara region is comprised of many seniors who simply cannot financially afford an increase on their hydro bill. This is demonstrated by extra dispensing fees for medications, additional costs in transportation on taxis in the absences/reduction of public bus

transportation services as well as grocery delivery fees. You can imagine that our most vulnerable demographic has had several unexpected expenses hit them this year. The federal government has recognized this already and provided aid in the form of an additional tax-free payment, to cover these extra costs mentioned – please recognize the burden our seniors have undertaken and do not make it worse.

- Students across the Niagara region have also been delivered relief in the form of a temporary suspension of payment collection for those who rely on the OSAP. It was recognized that students (who may be customers of NPEI, I know many personally) required assistance and by halting payment collection funds would be available for more pressing needs. Please do not make them pay the price simply because they are trying to gain/improve their education and therefore become a more reliable and loyal customer of NPEI in the future.

The province recognized they need support and did everything possible to not burden them even more during these times, please also do the same.

- Many businesses have still not fully recovered from their losses experienced over the past 4-6 months and it is expected that recovery, if even possible, won't be realized until mid-late 2021. Please support our businesses, especially those smaller businesses, by not applying additional fees while they try to recover and provide employment for the residents of Niagara and return economic benefit to our many communities who really do rely on them.

- The burden to the average Canadian citizen financially has been calculated at approximately \$10k based on the current spending due to covid-19, so far. Respectfully, it would be both irresponsible and distasteful to add to this running total. Please realize that it would be better to set people up for success and provide them with the runway they need to recover from covid-19 opposed to layering on more burden in the form of costs.

- I follow NPEI on facebook, almost daily they post messages about different relief programs and other provincial support avenues to its customers (residential and business). It would seem very hypocritical and insincere to share these posts then slam its customers with additional charges in the form of distribution fees. It is important to not only have NPEI remain accountable to its culture in supporting its customers but also have them stand by their word when they say they want to have an open dialog with customers who may be struggling to pay their hydro bill. Even a one-time bill credit was issued to customers to provide relief, please recognize the fact that this is not the time for increased fees.

As households and businesses across this country tighten their belts and find ways to save, it would be the wrong message to send during these times to approve NPEI to increase distribution rates. I understand there may be increased operational costs and I'm sure an analysis has been done to prove this but there are many opportunities to make organizations more efficient and reduce operating costs – it would be better for NPEI to realize these opportunities opposed to shifting concerns downwards to its customers.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration on the impact this would have on those who already cannot afford the basics.

Jordon Gromadzki