

To Whom It May Concern:

The objective of this letter is to strongly protest and challenge the changes being considered as outlined in File EB-2020-0246 as well as demonstrate the unfairness and negative effects that will be caused to seasonal property owners by this action.

Allowing the implementation of Hydro One's new R2 class by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is biased against the current Seasonal Rate Class. The treatment or even consideration based on any class or category is legally defined as discriminatory. The OEB states that their goal is to promote financially viable and efficient energy at a reasonable cost. However, this cost should be fair and equitable to all residents. Hydro One's proposal has levels of decreasing costs for some residents by moving substantial increases to the Residential Low Density Class into which most seasonal cottage owners fall. This is the only Class that is targeted to see their energy bills increasing, especially those who use the least energy.

In general, there appears to be an erroneous assumption that cottage owners are affluent people who do not have to live on a strict budget. The truth in many cases, like in the rest of the population, is that a large proportion of cottagers are retired and living on a modest fixed income, which does not always increase with inflation. For example, my husband and I are senior citizens living on a pension. He is a disabled Veteran in a wheelchair and on oxygen 24/7. I am one of his caregivers with my own health issues. Instead of vacationing abroad, we, like most cottagers, chose to invest in our rural community and support and contribute to the economy and welfare of our Madawaska Valley permanent residents for the last 50 years. We care about our country and our planet and strive to be energy conscious; for example, by adjusting our routines, when possible, to off-peak hours energy usage.

The graph sent to Hydro One customers indicates that seasonal residents that use less power will pay more money on their energy bills than their permanent low density neighbours, usually residing in larger homes and using power all year round. In no way is this fair or just. Hydro's proposal offers little incentive to continue practising conservation when we are being penalized monetarily. Power is constantly running through the same lines for both groups whether cottagers are there or not. We are also paying for hydro year round at our permanent residences. Please consider, when making decisions regarding File EB-2020-0246, that the proposed rate increases will cause financial strain and hardship in many cases.

After recently speaking to contacts at both Hydro One and OEB, I realize there are ongoing blames and disputes between themselves, with OEB even reprimanding Hydro One. I was told that, over the last few years, Hydro One has been either overcharging or undercharging their customers even though Smart Meters should have indicated their actual usage. Hydro One has not taken responsibility for these errors and inefficiencies. Instead, their solution is to make up for their monetary shortfalls on the backs of Seasonal Class resident customers. What is unthinkable is that the OEB states they do not plan to reconsider their decision to eliminate the Seasonal Rate Class but are still willing to review written opinions, most of which will inevitably be to keep the Seasonal Rate Class to keep from "paying more for using less". Instead, make "delivery costs equal for everyone & pay for what you use". Let's keep things uncomplicated, uniform and impartial for all, keeping everyone in one "class".

We hope that, after consideration of all written comments and suggestions, your decisions will reflect fair and unprejudiced actions. I look forward to reading the review process minutes and will consider your resolutions very carefully.