

February 26, 2021

Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge Street
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Toronto, ON, M4P 1E4

EB-2020-2046 Elimination of Hydro One Seasonal Rate Class

I wish to comment on the hearing on this case file. The proposal to shift seasonal users of Hydro One's service from the Seasonal Rate Class to Residential Low Density (R2) class will result in increases of well over 100 % for residents of seasonal dwellings who use little to no electricity during winter months.

I fall into that category. Although the estimate I received from Hydro One stated that I used on average 197.45 kwh per month, in fact that amount was heavily skewed to summer usage. During the winter the power is shut off so as not to waste power and draw unnecessary power from the grid, yet I pay distribution charges of about \$135 per billing period for zero power use. I understand the necessity to charge some overhead for maintenance despite no power use during part of the year but the scale of the proposed increase is punitive. It would appear from the chart provided by Hydro One that I will be facing an increase of over 100% for at least six months a year.

The argument that fewer users means a higher cost per user completely ignores the realities of rural life. Rural users are not charged twice the rate of urban dwellers for road or bridge maintenance, police services or other infrastructure costs, like telephone. It is a recognized fact of life that urban agglomerations are more "efficient" in terms of providing services, yet rural residents are normally not penalized for living in less populated areas. Rather costs are averaged, with urban dwellers, who benefit in other ways, helping support residents and part time residents in rural areas, to keep these areas economically alive and populated.

It is not the policy of government to depopulate rural areas, and therefore some leeway has to be provided in averaging costs across the general population. The penalization of seasonal rural residents is a very short sighted policy, which the OEB should review.

While the policy should be revisited, if it is to be put into effect it is absolutely essential that mitigation steps be taken to lessen the impact on seasonal cottage owners. An increase of over 100% is not economically justifiable or sustainable.

Sincerely,



Hugh Stephens