
From: Andrew Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 3:07 PM
To: Office of the Registrar <Registrar@oeb.ca>
Subject: Public Comment – EB-2025-0051 (Burlington Hydro Rate Increase)

Dear Ontario Energy Board,

I am writing as a resident and ratepayer in Burlington to strongly oppose Burlington Hydro's proposed electricity distribution rate increase, scheduled for January 1, 2026 (OEB File No. EB-2025-0051).

If approved as filed, this application would increase residential bills by \$9.84/month and small business bills by \$17.81/month. That is a significant burden at a time when families, seniors, and local employers are already grappling with elevated costs for groceries, housing, interest rates, and now retaliatory U.S. trade tariffs impacting our manufacturing sector. We are in a period of economic fragility, not expansion.

This is not the time to increase rates beyond inflation. Burlington Hydro's ask is nearly triple the current CPI and far exceeds the rate increases approved for other Ontario utilities. The utility has failed to demonstrate why this sudden and outsized hike is necessary or justified.

Key concerns include:

- **The SCADA/ADMS capital project appears discretionary and premature.** Burlington Hydro has not proven it cannot safely operate with its current systems until these upgrades can be phased in during a future rate cycle.
- **Burlington Hydro has a track record of overestimating capital needs.** In 2021, the utility collected funds for a \$3M road project that was never completed on time. The OEB rightly ordered it to return those funds to ratepayers.
- **The proposed increase lacks prudence and affordability.** The OEB has a duty to ensure "just and reasonable" rates. Approving a hike of this magnitude when other utilities are staying within inflationary bounds would create precedent for unjustified cost pressures across the province.
- **The utility is financially sound.** Burlington Hydro earned near its allowed return on equity under the current rate structure. That suggests it has the internal capacity to manage investments more efficiently without leaning on ratepayers.

Ontario families are already making tough choices. Asking them to absorb higher utility bills now, when costs for everything else remain elevated, is unfair and unsustainable.

I respectfully urge the Board to reject this proposed increase in full, or at the very least, remove any capital projects that do not meet strict ACM materiality and necessity thresholds. We deserve better cost discipline from our regulated utilities—especially now.

Sincerely,

Andrew Smith

City of Burlington, ON