

Sent: Saturday, May 24, 2025 1:16 PM
To: Office of the Registrar <Registrar@oeb.ca>
Subject: Redacted - Letter of Comment - EB-2025-0014

-- Name --
ABDUL ALEEM

-- Do you reside in the impacted service area? -- Yes

-- Comments --
To: Ontario Energy Board
Subject: Objection to Proposed Electricity Distribution Rate Increase by Oshawa PUC Networks Inc. (EB-2025-0014)
Date: May 24, 2025

Dear Members of the Ontario Energy Board,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the application submitted by Oshawa PUC Networks Inc. to increase electricity distribution rates effective January 1, 2026. As a residential customer consuming approximately 750 kWh monthly, the proposed increase of \$6.70 per month represents a significant burden, especially in the current economic climate.

Economic Context:

While Canada's headline inflation rate decreased to 1.7% in April 2025, primarily due to a 12.7% drop in energy prices following the removal of the federal consumer carbon tax, core inflation measures have risen. The CPI median and CPI trim increased to 3.2% and 3.1%, respectively, indicating persistent underlying inflation pressures.

Furthermore, essential expenses continue to rise:

Natural Gas: Enbridge Gas has increased its delivery charges and gas supply commodity charges effective April 1, 2025. Although the federal carbon charge was removed, the overall impact on bills varies, with some customers experiencing increases due to higher market prices for natural gas and transportation services.

Home Insurance: Premiums in Ontario have risen by 5.45% in 2025, driven by increased claims from extreme weather events and higher rebuilding costs.

Auto Insurance: After significant increases in 2023 and 2024, auto insurance premiums are projected to rise by an average of 7.5% in 2025.

Telecommunications: Rogers Communications has announced increases of \$7 per month for internet services and \$3.50 per month for cell phone plans in 2025. Bell Canada has also implemented a \$5 monthly increase for internet services in Ontario.

Enercare Services: Customers now receive direct billing from Enercare for services such as water heater rentals and HVAC maintenance, adding to monthly expenses.

These cumulative increases in essential services strain household budgets, making any additional fixed costs, such as higher electricity distribution rates, particularly challenging for middle-class families.

Impact on Households:

The proposed \$6.70 monthly increase translates to an additional \$80.40 annually. For many households, this amount could cover essential needs such as a week's worth of groceries or a portion of monthly transportation costs. Given that electricity is a non-discretionary expense, families cannot easily reduce consumption to offset the increased charges.

Request for Consideration:

I urge the Ontario Energy Board to consider the following:

Economic Burden: Assess the cumulative financial impact on households already facing rising costs in essential areas.

Alternative Solutions: Encourage Oshawa PUC Networks Inc. to explore cost-saving measures or alternative funding mechanisms that do not disproportionately affect residential customers.

Phased Implementation: If an increase is deemed necessary, consider a phased approach to allow households time to adjust their budgets accordingly.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns. I trust that the Ontario Energy Board will act in the best interest of consumers and ensure that any rate adjustments are both justified and equitable.

Sincerely,