[redacted]

-- Name --
Ashley Nogueira

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

-- Comments --
To the Ontario Energy Board:

I am writing as a residential customer of E.L.K. Energy Inc. to formally express my opposition to the proposed electricity distribution rate increase scheduled to take effect May 1, 2027, and to raise concerns regarding the manner in which notice of this proceeding was communicated to me.

1. Inadequate Notice and Lack of Consent to Electronic Communications

I recently became aware of E.L.K. Energy's application to increase electricity distribution rates. Unfortunately, the notice was directed to an email account to which I had lost access, as the account was locked. I did not receive notice by regular mail.

To the best of my knowledge, I have not expressly consented to receiving important regulatory notices exclusively by electronic means. If E.L.K. Energy maintains that I previously provided such consent, I request that it produce documentation establishing when, how, and under what terms that consent was obtained.

Furthermore, if I inadvertently provided consent to electronic delivery at any time, I hereby expressly withdraw that consent, effective immediately, to the extent permitted by applicable law.

I request that E.L.K. Energy update its records to reflect my current contact information and ensure that all future notices, including those concerning regulatory proceedings, rate applications and material changes affecting my electricity account, are delivered by regular mail to my service address.

The email address presently associated with my account does not reflect my current contact information and should not be relied upon for the delivery of important notices.

I am particularly concerned that the notice establishes October 12, 2026, as the deadline for requesting a different hearing format or applying for intervenor status. As a result of the communication difficulties described above, I was not afforded a meaningful opportunity to consider participating before that deadline.

I respectfully request that the OEB:

Confirm whether E.L.K. Energy was authorized to provide notice exclusively by electronic means in my circumstances;
Clarify the applicable requirements for notice and whether those requirements were satisfied;
Accept and consider this correspondence as a formal letter of comment notwithstanding the October 12, 2026 deadline identified in the notice;

Advise whether any procedural accommodation is available should I wish to seek further participation in this proceeding; and
Direct E.L.K. Energy, where within the Board's authority, to address my request concerning future communications.
2. Opposition to the Proposed Rate Increase

According to the notice, E.L.K. Energy is seeking approval for a residential electricity bill increase of approximately $5.63 per month for a typical customer consuming 750 kWh.

While this may appear to be a relatively insignificant amount when considered in isolation, it represents approximately $67.56 annually, before accounting for any other future rate adjustments.

I am a single mother raising two children, and every dollar has always counted in my household.

Like many Ontario families, I am responsible for maintaining a home, providing food, transportation, clothing, education and other necessities for my children, while managing the continuously increasing costs of everyday living.

Electricity is not a discretionary expense. It is an essential service required to maintain a safe and functional home.

I cannot simply choose to stop purchasing electricity when the cost becomes unaffordable.

I therefore question why residential customers should be expected to absorb yet another increase without clear and compelling evidence demonstrating that the additional revenue is necessary, reasonable and unavoidable.

3. Financial Accountability and Operating Efficiencies

Before approving any increase, I respectfully submit that E.L.K. Energy should be required to demonstrate that it has exhausted reasonable opportunities to reduce operating expenses, improve efficiency and manage its existing resources.

In particular, I ask the OEB to closely examine:

Whether the proposed operating expenditures are necessary and reasonable;
Whether administrative, management and other overhead costs have been appropriately controlled;
Whether proposed capital expenditures are essential, properly prioritized and supported by demonstrated operational needs;
Whether reasonable alternatives to increasing residential distribution rates have been adequately considered; and
Whether the proposed increase represents a fair allocation of costs between residential and other customer classes.
Families are routinely required to adjust their household budgets when expenses increase. We defer purchases, eliminate discretionary spending, negotiate expenses and make difficult decisions about what we can afford.

It is reasonable to expect a regulated utility to demonstrate comparable financial discipline before seeking permission to recover additional revenue from its customers.

4. Concerns Regarding Deferred Cost Recovery

The notice further indicates that E.L.K. Energy is proposing a rate mitigation strategy that would defer the recovery of certain costs to future years.

Although this may reduce the immediate financial impact on customers, I am concerned that it may simply postpone rather than eliminate the financial burden.

I respectfully request clarification regarding:

The total amount proposed to be deferred;
The anticipated period over which those deferred amounts would ultimately be recovered;
Whether additional carrying charges or interest would be applied;

The anticipated cumulative impact on residential customers; and
What safeguards would prevent deferred costs from contributing to further significant increases in future years.
A temporary reduction in the immediate rate impact should not be characterized as meaningful relief if residential customers are ultimately required to pay the same or greater amounts in subsequent years.

5. Cumulative Affordability and Residential Ratepayer Protection

I ask the OEB to consider the cumulative financial impact of utility increases on ordinary households.

The proposed increase does not occur in isolation.

Residential customers are already managing rising costs associated with housing, groceries, property taxes, insurance, transportation and other essential services.

For a single-parent household, these increases can be particularly difficult to absorb because there is often only one income available to meet the family's financial obligations.

An additional $5.63 each month may not appear substantial when evaluated independently. However, when multiple service providers and institutions impose similar increases, the combined effect can be significant.

At what point are residential consumers expected to say that enough is enough?

I recognize that utilities must maintain reliable infrastructure and deliver safe, dependable services. I am not suggesting that legitimate and necessary expenditures should be disregarded.

However, the burden should remain on E.L.K. Energy to establish that its proposed rates are just and reasonable, and that the costs it seeks to recover are properly supported.

Residential customers should not be expected to accept rate increases merely because a utility has requested them.

6. Requested Relief

In light of the foregoing, I respectfully request that the Ontario Energy Board:

Accept this correspondence as a formal letter of comment in proceeding EB-2026-0032.
Review the adequacy of notice provided to affected customers, particularly where electronic communication may have been used without current, informed consent.
Require E.L.K. Energy to substantiate the necessity and reasonableness of its proposed expenditures and revenue requirements.
Closely scrutinize the proposed rate mitigation and deferred cost recovery arrangements to ensure that customers are not exposed to unreasonable future financial burdens.
Give meaningful consideration to the affordability concerns of residential customers, particularly single-parent and single-income households.
Deny the proposed residential rate increase, or alternatively, approve only those amounts that are demonstrated through sufficient evidence to be necessary, prudent and just and reasonable.
Provide information concerning the process by which residential customers may review the evidence supporting the application and submit further comments before the Board renders its decision.
7. Conclusion

As a single mother of two children, I work hard to maintain financial stability and provide a secure home for my family.

I understand that operating costs can increase. However, I also believe that regulated utilities have an obligation to demonstrate fiscal responsibility, transparency and accountability before seeking additional revenue from the households that depend on their services.

The fact that an increase amounts to only a few dollars each month does not make it insignificant to the families

who must pay it.

I respectfully ask the Board to consider not only the financial requirements of E.L.K. Energy, but also the financial realities of the residential customers who will ultimately bear these costs.

Thank you for your consideration. I request written acknowledgement that my comments have been received and placed on the record of this proceeding.

Respectfully submitted,



-- Was AI used for the letter of comment? --
Yes