



Hyron Youth Development Council
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Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities
120 Torbay Road
P.O. Box 21020
St. John's, NL
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RE: Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro General Rate Application

The Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro Revised General Rate Application is of particular interest to the Hyron Youth Development Council in Labrador West.

Although there are no increases scheduled for 2007 in Labrador West, the proposed phased in increases between 2008 and 2011 are a cause for concern. The Public Utilities Board approved an increase for Labrador West just three years ago, which saw electricity rates raise by 200 per cent. Another 18.5 per cent increase is slated to start in 2008 and as a community stakeholder we think any additional increases are unjustified.

Labrador West is less than 250 kilometres away from one of the largest hydroelectric facilities in the world. Add to that the fact the Iron Ore Company of Canada digested of its Twin Falls generating facility, so the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador could move ahead with the development of the Upper Churchill River development and we believe the area has a good case to ask for lower electricity rates.

The latest proposed increases will be detrimental to all residents of Labrador West, however, middle and low-income workers will be the most affected. IOC and Wabush Mines provide electricity rebates to their employees while residents struggling to make a living have to bear the burden of exorbitant increases. Youth make up a large portion of that population.

With an improving economy, more and more youth are moving back home in hopes of gaining meaningful employment. While the jobs are attained easily enough, many young people today are unable to move out on their own. The cost of living has increased dramatically over the last few months, with rents almost doubling, and for the first time ever Labrador West has a hidden homeless population. People unable to make rent are living out of friends' and families houses, staying in hotels or living out of vehicles. An increase in electricity will only alleviate the problem.

Outmigration is also a concern for the Hyron Youth Development Council. The council is committed to keeping the youth from Zone 2 in Labrador. The area has a lot of offer its

young people; however, with the cost of living on the rise and another potential power increase in the works, keeping youth in the region is an uphill battle. Paying more for heat and light is not going to keep young people in our communities. With an aging population, Labrador needs more youth to stay at home to make the area sustainable.

Youth facilities and not-for-profit organizations will also be impacted by a hydro increase. Facilities like the Wabush Recreation Centre, the Labrador West Youth Centre, the Labrador City and Wabush arenas, the Carol Lake Curling Club and the community's schools are already having a difficult time keeping on top of rising electricity costs. A further increase could eat into youth programming, which in turn hurts our youth.

The Public Utilities Board needs to take all these factors into consideration when taking a possible electricity increase into account. It seems Labrador West is subsidizing the increased cost of oil even though the area runs on hydroelectric power. While the region does pay less for electricity than the rest of the province, it is an isolated area with an extreme climate and residents should see benefits as a result.

The Hyron Youth Development Council sincerely hopes the board will consider the comments put forward today and decide to reject Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's request for increased rates between 2008 and 2011. A reversal of the 18.5 per cent increase would also be welcome. We look forward to a favourable response in the near future.

Regards,

Christie Meadus
Chair
Hyron Youth Development Council

Pam Bennett
Vice-chair
Hyron Youth Development Council