

Dear Members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Utilities Board,

I am writing to formally oppose the approval of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's 2025 Capital Budget Application. We believe that the continued approval of such applications—particularly in light of the numerous rate increases already granted to both NL Hydro and Newfoundland Power over the last several years—fails to take into account the significant financial strain being experienced by individuals, families, and institutions across our province.

Over the past few years, both the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador have provided financial assistance through rate mitigation programs to alleviate the burden of high energy costs. However, despite this support, many people and institutions are still struggling with the ongoing impacts of high inflation, particularly the rising costs of living driven by the global health crisis pandemic, and the subsequent interest rate hikes by the Bank of Canada. Unfortunately, most vulnerable populations—including individuals, families, seniors, people with disabilities, students, small businesses, academic institutions, faith-based organizations, and municipalities—have not seen corresponding increases in their incomes to match these rising costs.

Basic needs such as shelter, groceries, utilities, medications, and transportation have become increasingly unaffordable for many. For middle-class families, additional expenses such as childcare, education, rent or mortgages, and extracurricular activities like sports and the arts are also becoming more difficult to manage. This financial stress is not just a matter of household budgets; it has deep impacts on physical and mental health. Individuals struggling with economic hardship are at a higher risk of mental illness, addiction issues, and, in extreme cases, suicide. These issues do not only affect the individual, but also their families, friends, coworkers, and communities.

We are deeply concerned that if the proposed budget is approved and energy rates continue to rise, many individuals and businesses may be at risk of having their power cut off, particularly during the harsh winter months. In a northern climate like Newfoundland and Labrador, access to heating is a basic human right, and without adequate support or financial assistance, many will be forced to choose between paying for utilities and other essential needs. We are especially concerned about those who rely on programs such as the heating allowance from the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, which has not kept pace with the rising costs of energy.

We urge the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Utilities Board to exercise strong leadership in this matter. While it is essential for NL Hydro and Newfoundland Power to operate within a reasonable financial framework, we believe that they must also be held accountable to the realities faced by consumers. The government's financial assistance to these utilities should not be used as a justification for further rate hikes when so many in our province are struggling to meet basic needs.

Additionally, we strongly encourage the NL PUB to explore ways to foster competition in the energy generation and distribution sectors, much like the role the Canadian Radio-television

and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) plays in regulating the telecommunications industry. Competition could bring down costs and improve service, benefiting consumers and ensuring that Newfoundland and Labrador's energy infrastructure remains sustainable for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your prompt response to this important issue and trust that you will carefully weigh the financial and social implications of approving this capital budget application.

Yours Sincerely,

Glenn Roil

Global Award-Winning Mental Health Advocate

National Basic Income and Poverty Elimination Advocate

Award Winning Human Rights Champion

Government of NL Mental Health Care and Treatment Review Board Member

Canada Without Poverty President and Board Member

Stigma Zero Referral Partner