

Text of Hydro increases leaves many ratepayers holding a financial bag.

The CEO of North Bay Hydro suggests that the two year increase in the number of overdue customer accounts reported recently by the OEB can be deceiving.

He attributes the increase to the fact that the figures are cumulative and contain delinquent customers who have died and students who have left the area.

Both sets of figures are comparable since they are both cumulative and include customers who have discontinued service for whatever reason. In addition, why the CEO would suggest that all students who have left the area are scofflaws is beyond me.

What is deceiving is the local Hydro and City officials' failure to admit North Bay Hydro's role in being part of the problem of spiraling hydro bills which results in more consumers being overwhelmed by the financial burden.

Mr. Wilcox' statement that hydro is not a free product and that not paying your hydro bill is not acceptable is stating the obvious. What is also not acceptable is North Bay Hydro padding customer delivery charges with unnecessary charges and then obscuring the fact.

Here is a quote from the recent North Bay Hydro delivery rate decision by the OEB.

“NBHDL has included an amount for ROE equal to \$2,187,380 or 9.30%.

This is allowed in accordance with Board policy but it is not a legal requirement of the Board. This results in an increase in taxable income and the amount of taxes included in rates. This increases customer delivery charges on a yearly basis by the amount mentioned above.”

The amount of tax on this overcharge will be \$575,000 per year being paid to the Province of Ontario. Creating this type of liability for North Bay citizens is pure folly and represents a direct loss to taxpayers and also completely nullifies any advantage North Bay citizens hoped to gain by retaining ownership of North Bay Hydro.

Instead of offering superfluous explanations, Mr. Wilcox would do better to see that customers' delivery rates represented value for their money.