Billing Practices, Electricity & Natural Gas, EB-2014-0198

Preamble:

I am a seasonal customer of Hydro One and a year-round customer of both Powerstream and Enbridge. I buy my propane for the cottage from a non rate regulated propane supplier.

Natural Gas & Propane

I have no problem with the billing from Enbridge or my propane supplier.

There are no estimated bills from my propane supplier. I am billed for the exact metered amount of propane as it comes off the truck, volume corrected for temperature.

Both offer equal monthly and pre-authorized payment. Enbridge reads the meter every 2nd month which creates no problem as I have a monthly EPP.

Electricity

In your introduction you say you want distributors to help customers deal more effectively in managing their energy use.

This is where the wheels fall off for both my electricity suppliers. Unlike my natural gas and propane bills where I know the precise cost per cubic meter or litre, the per kwh costs are heavily hidden in the “delivery” line and metered energy costs are bumped up by a “loss” factor. And I don’t know if the kwh costs hidden in the delivery line are bumped up as well.

As well, neither Powerstream nor Hydro One shows their fixed monthly charges

So I never know my total per kwh charges over and above the TOU rates. This undercuts conservation efforts since it understates my kwh charges.

Powerstream refuses to provide a monthly bill but I have arranged for them to debit my bank account monthly for their estimated EPP amount. I do not know if they are prepared to provide an e-bill.

The Hydro One bill suffers from all the same hidden kwh charges as Powerstream.

Hydro One bills me monthly via e-post and debits my bank account on the same day each month. I see the precise consumption for every month including when I am not there. This allows me to take action when there is an unusual up-tick.

The only exception was the months from May-Nov 2013 when the Smart Meter failed and stopped transmitting. Yet I still received bills for those months saying “we read your meter on xxxx day”. I am still paying a surcharge for these 7 months of faulty bills.

As well, I am concerned about reports from Saskatchewan and places in the US that Smart Meters have caught fire. This is a particular concern at the cottage which is mostly wood siding construction.

John McGee