



June 8, 2020

Ref: 111389

Ms. Lori Mindnich  
President  
Southern Interior Local Government Association

Email: [yoursilga@gmail.com](mailto:yoursilga@gmail.com)

cc: [Premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Premier@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Ms. Mindnich:

Premier John Horgan has forwarded a copy of your May 6, 2020 letter regarding BC Hydro's COVID-19 Relief Program and municipal utilities.

BC Hydro and a number of other utilities are providing bill relief to their customers impacted by COVID-19. These are measures implemented by the utilities to mitigate the impacts faced by their customers. In all cases, these are utility programs with deferred amounts to be repaid by utility customers. The BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) sets rates for BC Hydro, FortisBC and other utilities, and it will determine how any shortfall is best recovered.

For example, FortisBC has already put a number of measures in place to help all customers at this time. It has continued to work directly with customers to assist them, on a case-by-case basis, to reach mutually agreeable bill payment arrangements that may include options, such as equal payment plans, payment deferrals, partial payments and customized payment plans.

Similar measures are being undertaken by other utilities. The City of New Westminster has implemented a very similar program to BC Hydro's, with both bill credits and payment plans. Pacific Northern Gas, with similar revenues to the City of Penticton's electrical utility, and Corix, which has similar revenues to the City of Grand Forks' utility, have both submitted applications to the BCUC for similar measures to FortisBC's program.

The Province is providing a number of COVID-19 supports for local governments. Local governments have been authorized to borrow, interest-free, from their existing capital reserves to help pay for operating expenses, such as employee salaries. School tax remittances have been delayed until the end of the year, providing significant relief to local governments facing cash flow issues. Local governments have also been given greater flexibility to carry debt for an additional year.

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**Ministry of  
Energy, Mines and  
Petroleum Resources**

**Office of the Minister**

**Mailing Address:  
PO Box 9060, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2**

**Telephone: 250 953-0900  
Facsimile: 250 356-2965**

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Ralston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bruce Ralston  
Minister