## Halton Hills Hydro applies for hydro rate increase

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Residents living in Halton Hills may see a \$4 increase to their monthly hydro bills.

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and Halton Hills Hydro Inc. hosted an information session in Acton Monday night regarding the possible increase of hydro rates starting in 2016.

"We've made a proposal to the Ontario Energy Board to increase rates effective May 1," Halton Hills Hydro president and CEO Art Skidmore said. "That doesn't necessarily mean what we've applied for has been approved."

Every five years, Halton Hills Hydro examines its cost of service and decides if the rate needs to be increased.

"That's where we look at our costs and our capital infrastructure and we put it all together and determine our revenue requirements," Skidmore explained. "Based on that revenue requirement that is then allocated to the various rate classes, it is determined if rates cover the revenue requirement or if rates need to increase to cover that revenue requirement."

Between operating costs, system improvements, line extensions and equipment replacements, as well as staffing costs and a shift to monthly billing, the increase for 2016 was determined at \$3.99 per household. But residents shouldn't be afraid of that number, Skidmore said.

"Although it's a staggered number, there are things coming off to lessen the impact," he said, pointing to the current charges for the Dec. 2013 ice storm recovery. "In essence, the rates won't change that much after Nov. 1, 2016 from where they are now."

By November of next year, residents will only see around a \$2.07 increase should the application be approved.

Before Halton Hills Hydro submitted their rate application to OEB on Aug. 28, the company held a number of focus group sessions and talked to local businesses to gather their input.

"We have done a lot of customer engagement prior to making this rate application," Skidmore said, noting a number of telephone and online surveys. "The surveys had a bunch of questions to shape what customers' expectations are of Halton Hills Hydro."

Residents with questions are encouraged to call Halton Hills Hydro with any concerns at 519-853-3701.

"We want customers to understand why we're putting up rates," Skidmore said. "We're not just putting up rates for the sake of putting up rates, there's sound decision points behind this."



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