

Penticton Mayor appeals to Premier John Horgan to request fair electrical subsidy

(Penticton, BC – April 20, 2020) – Mayor John Vassilaki has [sent an appeal](#) to Premier John Horgan to request a fair electrical subsidy that would enable all electrical utilities, including Penticton's, to offer its citizens and business owners relief on its power bills.

The BC Hydro COVID-19 relief package announced by Premier Horgan on April 1 is only available to BC Hydro's electrical customers, which totals approximately 95 per cent of the province's population. The remaining five per cent are serviced by Fortis BC and five municipal utilities, including the cities of Penticton, New Westminster, Nelson and Grand Forks, and the District of Summerland. As such, residents and businesses within this five per cent are not eligible for the announced bill credits and waived charges.

"We are calling for equal treatment that's being offered to the rest of the province so that we too can offer relief on power bills to our citizens and businesses," said Penticton, Mayor John Vassilaki. "To support our residents, Council has sent this letter to the premier to appeal for consistency and ensure fairness to all British Columbians."

The City is also concerned the costs of the existing BC Hydro relief program will be partly passed down to Penticton residents in the future. This could be through a taxpayer subsidy to BC Hydro or an increase in the cost of power the City purchases from FortisBC, some of which is sourced from BC Hydro.

The City is proposing a one-time subsidy to all electrical utilities, including the five municipal electrical utilities throughout B.C. This approach would ensure relief is granted to all small business and residential customers across the province and would not further burden ratepayers through long-term increases to their bill.

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