

Rising hydro rates reflect cost of power

David Field, The Daily News

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B.C. Hydro is embarking on a \$6-billion regeneration plan to significantly upgrade the province's aging electricity generating and transmission infrastructure.

Our group, B.C. Citizens for Green Energy, would like to applaud Hydro for making this major reinvestment in the province's public electricity infrastructure. It is long overdue and well-warranted.

B.C. Hydro's regeneration plan includes a number of crucial projects aimed at meeting the public's current and future demands for clean, reliable electricity. A prime example is the \$800-million upgrade planned for the 80-year-old Ruskin Dam and Powerhouse located in Mission. The Ruskin Dam was built in 1930 and has not received any significant upgrades or modifications since the last generator was added in the 1950s.

Yes, the cost of these upgrades will put "upward pressure" on hydro rates.

However, residential electricity rates in B.C. are currently among the lowest in North America and have been kept artificially low, in part, by putting off upgrades and equipment updates such as those proposed for the Ruskin Dam.

Moreover, most of our hydroelectric infrastructure in B.C. was built in the decades following the Second World War and is showing its age. B.C. Hydro's regeneration plan and reinvestment in the province's core public energy assets is therefore as vital as it is overdue.

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