



ANDY FILLMORE

MAYOR | LE MAIRE | ME'R

902.490.4010 | mayor@halifax.ca | @andyfillmorehfx

September 8, 2025

David Roberts
Pink Larkin
Consumer Advocate
1463 South Park Street
Suite 201
Halifax, NS B3J 3S9

droberts@pinklarkin.com

Re: Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board Matter M12257

Dear Mr. Roberts,

I am writing on my own behalf, not on behalf of the Halifax Regional Council, about the Halifax Regional Water Commission's application for a rate increase (M12257) that will be considered by the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board at a hearing commencing on September 15, 2025.

In the past month I have heard directly from a large number of HRM residents about the Halifax Water Commission's proposed 36.6% increase to water rates. In fact, my office has received over 2,000 emails from residents across the municipality. These people expressed deep concern about the impact of the rate hike from their perspectives as families that are already stretched to the limit; as seniors on fixed incomes; renters concerned about further escalating rents; small business owners already facing very tight margins; and community organizations that already struggle to meet the needs of the people they serve.

The scale and impact of this proposed hike is clearly scary to them. When coupled with ongoing affordability challenges, that recent public opinion research shows is the number one issue in Canada today, an increase of this magnitude will be more than many can bear. I note that I did not receive any messages in support of the rate increase.

I am writing to draw your attention to this unprecedented number of voices raising concerns about the proposed rate increase. Not only must this rate application receive the highest level of scrutiny possible, but every effort should be made to limit the amount of any increase. In that regard, it becomes a significant part of your responsibility to speak for the people raising concerns.

I have been advised that the framework of a settlement agreement to limit rate increases to 5% in each of the next five years has recently been proposed by the Rental Housing Providers of Nova Scotia. This is considerably less than the 36.6% increase requested that if approved would be fully implemented by April 1, 2026, just seven months away. While it may be a challenge to finalize a settlement proposal by the September 9, 2025, deadline, this proposal or others could be brought forward at the NSRAB hearing where I hope the voices of those who have made representations to both the board and their elected representatives will be heard and considered.

A rate increase of this magnitude is more than a technical adjustment; it represents a significant financial burden for thousands of households and small businesses already struggling with affordability pressures. As noted in many of the emails, residents fear they will be forced to make difficult choices between paying for essential utilities and meeting other basic needs.

Affordable, safe, and reliable water service is a public necessity, not a luxury. While I understand Halifax Water must maintain critical infrastructure and ensure long-term sustainability, the approach must balance fiscal responsibility with community impact.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. It is my hope that Halifax residents' voices are at the centre of this decision-making process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P.A. Fillmore", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andy Fillmore
Mayor of Halifax

Cc:
Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board
Halifax Regional Water Commission
Halifax Regional Council
HRM Chief Administrative Officer
Rental Housing Providers Nova Scotia