

November 25, 2019

Mayor Jim Watson  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Dear Mayor Watson,

**Re: Water billing rates in the City of Ottawa**

I am writing on behalf of the Eastern Ontario Chapter of the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI), as a voice for condominium corporations in the City of Ottawa, to express disappointment and concern at the city's current water billing structure.

As you are aware, the City of Ottawa's current water billing structure, in effect as of April 1, 2019, is a tier-based system where the rate charged for the consumption of water (that is, drinking water and related water charges) is based on the amount of water **actually consumed** (please find attached to this letter a table indicating the current water billing rates, for your reference). Fees are the lowest for Tier 1 and increase gradually with each tier. The new system's objective, as stated on the City of Ottawa's website, is to encourage water conservation – an objective which condominium corporations and unit owners in Ottawa are happily willing to contribute towards.

The problem with this new billing structure for condominiums, however, is that the consumption used to determine the applicable rate is often taken from one or more "bulk" metres. As a result, even if condominium units are individually using less water, residents are still paying more per cubic metre because, collectively, they are likely to fall under Tier 4 and to be charged at the highest rate. I would like to emphasize that, under the current structure, the combined rate for properties falling under Tier 4 (180 m<sup>3</sup> and over) is \$3.73 per cubic metre. (\$1.97/m<sup>3</sup> for water and 1.76/m<sup>3</sup> for wastewater).

We can see the logic in higher fees for bulk metered user, such as apartment complexes, where the end user is unlikely to feel the incentive to conserve water and energy if it is already built into the rental costs. Condominium owners, however, are significantly more invested in, and impacted by, the operation of their complex. For this reason, they are more incentivized to implement measures to conserve water (such as a water reduction program, implemented by their boards of directors) than their apartment building counterparts.

As you will also be aware, there are over 1060 condominiums in Ottawa representing tens of thousands of voters who are very concerned about the current situation and how these metering changes have disproportionately affected them. The City of Ottawa's existing water billing structure results in the majority of condominium unit owners, including seniors on a fixed income and millennials saving up for a

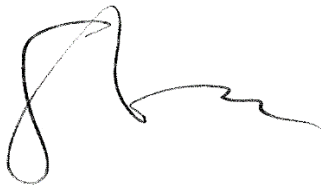
down payment on a home, being charged at the highest rate and having to pay the highest amount per cubic metre regardless of their actual water consumption.

CCI Eastern Ontario urges the City of Ottawa to consider the effects of its current water billing structure on condominiums and to adopt a more reasonable approach. One possible solution would be to base the billing "Tier" on the bulk amount divided by the number of units in the condominium building. This approach would allow condominium residents to be charged based on their actual water consumption while also meeting the City of Ottawa's objective to promote water conservation, thereby producing a more equitable solution for all.

Over the coming weeks, please anticipate receiving postcards from concerned condominium constituents in support of the comments set out above. CCI Eastern Ontario, and its members, hope that the foregoing, and the postcards, will bring sufficient attention to this matter that the issue will be reconsidered and addressed.

Yours truly,

**CCI EASTERN ONTARIO CHAPTER**



Nancy Houle  
President

Enc.

**CC: Ottawa Councillors**

Matthew Luloff	Laura Dudas
Jan Harder	Jenna Sudds
Eli El-Chantiry	Glen Gower
Theresa Kavanagh	Rick Chiarelli
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