

# Reprint Island Tides

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## Time of use billing on the way? Commentary by Patrick Brown

BCHydro has denied that the universal installation of smart meters throughout BC will be accompanied by compulsory time-of-use (TOU) billing for electricity. However, BCHydro has suggested that there may be a number of customers who may be interested in voluntarily implementing TOU payments for power, and in that case, of course, the smart meters would be necessary.

Meanwhile BCHydro justifies the cost of smart meter installations purely through efficiencies in the grid supplying BC residents, businesses, and industries, and by detecting and eliminating electricity theft (mainly supplying marijuana grow-ops).

However, since simple grid optimization could be largely accomplished through use of smart meters located at key points on the grid (not necessarily at every customer location) and since grow-ops can be expected to make connections to the grid in ways that avoid meters of any sort, it seems possible that these justifications are a smoke screen for the real reasons for smart meter installation.

Therefore, as BCHydro has not yet announced those 'voluntary' TOU rates mentioned above, it would be of interest to BCHydro customers to know what TOU rates are in Ontario where smart meters have been installed.

### Tiered Prices In Both Provinces

Currently, the Ontario Energy Board has two sets of regulated prices, TOU prices and a tiered price (like BC). The Ontario tiered prices for residential customers are 6.8¢/kWh below the threshold and 7.9¢/kWh above the threshold; the threshold is 600kWh per month in summer (May 1–Oct 31) and 1,000kWh per month in winter (Nov 1–Apr 30). This compares with BC's current prices of 6.67¢/kWh below the threshold and 9.62¢/kWh above the threshold. BC's year-round threshold is 1,350kWh for a two-month period. BCHydro has also applied for substantial rate increases over the next few years. ✍

#### Ontario's TOU Rates & Times

**Off-peak** = 5.9¢/kWh

7pm–7am, all day weekends & statutory holidays

**Mid-peak** = 8.9¢/kWh

Summer: 7am–11am and 5pm–7pm

Winter: 11am–5pm

**On-peak** = 10.7¢/kWh

Summer: 11am–5pm and 7am–11am

Winter: 5pm–7pm

*The dates for Ontario's TOU are the same as for the tiered rates (see below), summer from May 1 to October 31, and winter from November 1 to April 30.*