



Office of the Premier
7th Floor, One Government Place
1700 Granville Street
Halifax, NS, B3J 1X5

October 15, 2026

Dear Premier Houston,

Nova Scotians are concerned about the skyrocketing cost of everything, and power bills are near the top of the list. Your government is now paving the way for even higher costs for Nova Scotians.

In January, you took a strong stand against a bid by Nova Scotia Power to securitize their debt.

Securitization would mean making Nova Scotians pay the full remaining value of Nova Scotia Power's (NSP) stranded coal power assets. Nova Scotians would pay NSP a \$1 billion dollar bailout through higher power rates over 30 years. In 2027 alone, the rate hike would be 2.9%, on top of existing rate increases, for a total of 6.8%. This will mean that power bills have increased by \$650 a year for the average family since you became Premier.

Back in January, you indicated that coal power assets were over-valued, and it would be unfair to hike power rates to pay NSP for them. You took to social media to compare NSP's proposed securitization plan to paying monthly payments on a car based on its value on the dealer's lot, when the car is actually in a junkyard.

Your own Department of Energy, with you as the Minister, made clear its position on this issue in no uncertain terms in its closing submission to the Energy Board in the matter of NSP's 2026-27 General Rate Application. In summary, your department stated:

- Ratepayers should not pay for the costs of these coal plants at their current valuation.
- The value of these coal plants should be 'written down' and NSP shareholders should bear a share of the costs of doing this.
- NSP knew coal was being phased out, but it kept investing in coal power plants anyways and was sluggish on transitioning to cleaner and cheaper forms of power. Because NSP knew the risks, its shareholders should bear the cost.

Yet on October 9, your government abruptly changed position and opened the door to securitization without repeating your demand that shareholders pay their fair share.

As it stands, NSP's proposed securitization application would mean a complete transfer of stranded asset costs and climate policy risk from its own books onto the backs of ratepayers.

Why should costs you previously said shareholders should bear now fall on Nova Scotian families and businesses?

This reversal is part of a concerning pattern that you have shown as Energy Minister.

In June, you dismissed the idea of hyperscale AI data centres in Nova Scotia as "not a today thing, not even a tomorrow thing." Now, you've also suddenly reversed this position and opened the door to data centre development.

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In other jurisdictions, residents near Hyperscale AI data centers have seen steep increases to power bills. Independent analysis has shown that:

- Areas near AI data centres in the United States have seen electricity prices [rise by 267%](#).
- The proposed Meta AI data centre project in Alberta will result in a [\\$460 per year increase](#) in residential power bills.
- In Virginia, even when data centres pay for their own power, the strain that their energy demand creates on the rest of the electricity system is projected to [increase power bills by up to \\$444 USD per year](#).

Nova Scotians are deeply concerned about rising power rates. In the last two weeks, the people of this province have seen you reverse your position on significant policy twice, without warning, without sufficient explanation, and without scrutiny from Nova Scotians or their elected officials. In both instances, these reversals are paving the way for higher power bills for Nova Scotians.

The people of this province are owed answers, particularly when the choices you are making will likely increase their bills. Any Energy Minister's primary concern should be making sure that people can keep the heat on; the moves you're making seem to jeopardize that.

Nova Scotians deserve an explanation longer than a social media post, and action from your government to ensure that they can afford afford the power bills this winter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claudia Chender".

Claudia Chender
Leader, Nova Scotia New Democrats