



Iain Rankin

MLA, Timberlea-Prospect

House of Assembly of Nova Scotia

May 20, 2025

Dear Minister Tilley,

I'm writing to raise concerns over Halifax Water's recent application to the Utility and Review Board proposing a 16.2% increase in residential rates in 2025-26. Over the next two years, combined increases for water, wastewater, and stormwater services would drive the average household bill up by more than \$300.

If approved, these hikes would leave residents in the Halifax Regional Municipality with some of the highest wastewater charges in the country. While I understand the pressure Halifax Water is under to modernize aging infrastructure and meet the demands of a growing population, an increase of this magnitude isn't something many households can absorb right now.

The provincial government has recently secured \$170 million through the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund, creating a timely opportunity for the province to help ease the burden on residents. These federal funds are intended to support essential infrastructure projects, including those Halifax Water is planning. I encourage your department to work closely with Halifax Water to explore how this funding could be used to reduce or avoid the proposed rate increases.

However, if public funds are to be made available, there must be clear conditions attached. Halifax Water has experienced several recent operational issues that raise legitimate concerns about financial and operational management. Any investment of public money should be tied to stronger oversight and a long-term financial plan that ensures rate stability. Residents deserve predictability and transparency, not steep increases every few years.

Investing in infrastructure is essential, but it must be done in a way that keeps services affordable for those who rely on them. I appreciate your attention to this matter and hope to see the province take an active role in finding a better path forward.

Sincerely,

Hon. Iain Rankin
MLA, Timberlea-Prospect