



Renters of Saskatoon and Area (ROSA) ask the SaskPower rate review panel to:

1. Develop an effective, equitable low income affordable energy rate program, to protect the essential economic sustainability and safety needs of the residents who, by utility policy, rent in deepening poverty, in consultation with systemic eviction experts and low income tenant stakeholders, and
2. Ensure a more effective and broader emergency protection from residential utility disconnects due to arrears, as extreme heat fatality risks are now high in Saskatchewan.

Housing is neither adequate, affordable nor safe under human rights standards, if costs of utilities interfere with the affordability of basics such as rent, food and disability or health needs.

The Saskatchewan government remains responsible for ensuring maximum available funding and policy resources urgently to housing human rights priorities of great housing insecurity and risks of homelessness.

Saskatchewan has already unsuccessfully charged what experts consider the highest provincial energy rates in Canada, for vulnerable fixed-income deep-poverty households in great need of reliable protection from energy poverty and displacement. ⁱ

SaskPower's current conservation program missed the higher priority safe affordable Adequate Housing duties, seen in Saskatchewan Tenants' deep utility poverty, increased food bank usage, high housing insecurity in a low-income rental crisis, and dangerous displacement into homelessness in extreme weather. Many renters were unequally left out of SaskPower's pandemic economic recovery rebates.

A tenant in deep poverty, recently pointed out SaskPower's unsustainable options: "When I was phoning [SaskPower] I thought, 'Do I take the \$100 for my income tax rebate and put it on my bill, or do I go buy myself a tent because I may need to live in it?'"ⁱⁱ



A recent energy poverty study illustrates fair human rights energy priorities of both a low-income affordable rate program and emergency protections from disconnect, before Saskatchewan's programs. ⁱⁱⁱ

The most equitable low income affordability program model to meet Saskatchewan's already deeply destabilized tenants' needs for inclusive, targeted sustainability, is found in the Ontario Energy Support (OES) program.

This SaskPower gap in equitable safe, affordable, eviction-preventing duties to tenant households small and large, young and old, already resulted in dangerous overcrowding or unpayable bills, once priced out of safe homes, to extremes of eviction into homelessness.

Saskatchewan's extreme climate risk dangers and growing barriers to access sustainable energy in appropriate rentals, also increases the urgent need for more equitable utility affordability rates for the vulnerable single parents, caregivers and isolated senior tenants in poorly ventilated public housing and other at-risk low income aging apartment buildings.

Tenants with disabilities tend to experience greater utility needs for additional vital daily or long-term disability challenges. SaskPower rate increases directly interfere with fair and just affordability for this often fixed-income vulnerable population.

This fundamental low-income policy gap unsustainably costs us a fair, safe and equitable province for all, for the future too.

ⁱ <https://www.energyhub.org/electricity-prices/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/sask-opposition-affordable-1.6452400>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://cela.ca/working-paper-energy-justice-poverty-a-case-study-for-ontario/>