



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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NSCR Supports North Shore Tenants in Successful Challenge of Escalating Utility Bills

Facing significantly increased hydro bills after WYSE Utilities installed submeters in their building, tenants across the North Shore reached out to North Shore Community Resources' Legal Advocacy program. The initial complaints were that hydro charges that previous and neighbouring tenants had advised were in the \$40- 50 range for two months, were now being charged \$1200 for two months.

The organization responsible, WYSE Utilities, is a submetering service that contracts with landlords to monitor the amount of electricity, water, and or gas used by individual rental units. As a condition of their tenancy agreement each tenant must sign a contract directly with WYSE Utilities to pay their utilities bills. That contract also authorizes WYSE to collect extra charges for administration of tenant accounts and provides a schedule for disconnection fees, overdue account fees, etc. WYSE Utilities can disconnect electricity, for example, if a tenant is late with payment.

Landlords using the services of WYSE Utilities were placing tenants under considerable financial pressure, in some cases contributing to the loss of affordable housing and increased cost of living for their tenants. NSCR legal advocates got in touch with [BCPIAC \(BC Public Interest Advocacy Coalition\)](#) who are well positioned to challenge utilities charges. After a long hearing process, of about a year and a half, with submissions from many stakeholders, the BC Public Utilities Commission decided last week that WYSE Utilities is in fact a utility that can be regulated, and as such, it must follow the provincial rules and regulations.

"This is a great victory for tenants who now have the protection of the BC Utilities Commission. WYSE Utilities now faces greater regulation regarding posting rates, extra charges and disconnections. Additionally, approval for any proposed rate hikes must now be heard by the BC Utilities Commission. Prior to this ruling, the tenants who had contracted with WYSE Utilities had no venue in which to challenge their bills and there was no oversight of their billing practices." – Tannis Boxer, Legal Advocate, NSCR

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About

North Shore Community Resources

Founded in 1976, North Shore Community Resources Society is a registered not-for-profit under the Societies Act of British Columbia and a registered charity regulated by the Canada Revenue Agency. Our Vision is a thriving North Shore community. Our Mission is to design and deliver programs and services that enhance individual and community well-being, social connections, empowerment and community participation. We provide programs and services for people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes. [To learn more about NSCR's work or connect with us, visit our website.](#)

North Shore Legal Advocacy Program

The North Shore Legal Advocacy Program offers low-income community members free and confidential service related to basic living needs. Our team can assist you with legal problems related to:

- Income assistance and security
- Tenancy (rental accommodation)
- Employment
- Debt
- Employment Insurance

[Learn more about the Legal Advocacy program on NSCR's website.](#)