

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** Request for Reconsideration of Water Billing Policy for Residential Tenants

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**From:** Savoia, John <[John.Savoia@hamilton.ca](mailto:John.Savoia@hamilton.ca)>

**Sent:** July 18, 2025 7:40 AM

**To:** Mini James

**Cc:** Ward 1 Office <[ward1@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward1@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 2 <[ward2@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward2@hamilton.ca)>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann <[ward3@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward3@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 4 <[ward4@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward4@hamilton.ca)>; Francis, Matt <[Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca](mailto:Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca)>; Jackson, Tom <[Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca](mailto:Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca)>; Pauls, Esther <[Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca](mailto:Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 8 Office <[ward8@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward8@hamilton.ca)>; Clark, Brad <[Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca](mailto:Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca)>; Beattie, Jeff <[Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca](mailto:Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 11 <[ward11@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward11@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 12 Office <[ward12@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward12@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 13 <[ward13@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward13@hamilton.ca)>; Spadafora, Mike <[Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca](mailto:Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca)>; McMeekin, Ted <[Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca](mailto:Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca)>; [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

**Subject:** RE: Request for Reconsideration of Water Billing Policy for Residential Tenants

Good morning,

As part of my role, I provide information regarding Council approved policies/bylaws that govern how the City charges for providing water, wastewater and stormwater services. Of course, City Council directs staff to review aforementioned policies/bylaws at its discretion.

@ Clerks – please ensure the Mini's correspondence is including in the next Council's Weekly Correspondence Listing for Council's consideration.

Regards,

*John Savoia*

Senior Policy Advisor

Corporate Services Department

City of Hamilton



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**From:** Mini James

**Sent:** Thursday, July 17, 2025 8:02 PM

**To:** Savoia, John <[John.Savoia@hamilton.ca](mailto:John.Savoia@hamilton.ca)>

**Cc:** Ward 1 Office <[ward1@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward1@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 2 <[ward2@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward2@hamilton.ca)>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann <[ward3@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward3@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 4 <[ward4@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward4@hamilton.ca)>; Francis, Matt <[Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca](mailto:Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca)>; Jackson, Tom <[Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca](mailto:Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca)>; Pauls, Esther <[Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca](mailto:Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 8 Office <[ward8@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward8@hamilton.ca)>; Clark, Brad <[Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca](mailto:Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca)>; Beattie, Jeff <[Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca](mailto:Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 11 <[ward11@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward11@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 12 Office <[ward12@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward12@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 13 <[ward13@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward13@hamilton.ca)>; Spadafora, Mike <[Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca](mailto:Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca)>; McMeekin, Ted <[Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca](mailto:Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca)>; [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

**Subject:** Re: Request for Reconsideration of Water Billing Policy for Residential Tenants

Dear John,

I appreciate your response regarding the water and wastewater billing policy. However, I must express my continued and growing concern.

I had initially attempted to bring this issue to the attention of the Mayor and City Councillors. Instead, I received a reply from your office, to which I responded. From the flow of communication, it appears you are treated as the final authority on this policy. However, I **respectfully disagree** with the idea that this matter should end with a policy staff response. This issue needs to be taken seriously and brought forward for **Council-level re-evaluation**—as is being done successfully in other municipalities without complication.

The policy, which makes landlords solely responsible for unpaid water bills, is unfair and unsustainable. Tenants who leave without paying can leave landlords with hundreds of dollars in arrears. In my own experience, a tenant's bill grew to over \$400, and I had no recourse when they vacated the property. Landlords have no control over water usage once a tenant moves in, yet we bear the full financial risk.

This policy is particularly unreasonable given the current economic pressures. Landlords are facing increased mortgage rates, rising taxes, and higher operating costs, all while rents stagnate and property values significantly drop. Meanwhile, staff are receiving regular wage increases—often 10% annually.

Other municipalities, like Durham Region, use a **Landlord-Tenant Water Billing Form** that holds tenants accountable while still ensuring ultimate responsibility lies with the property owner. This approach protects the city's financial interests **without unfairly burdening landlords**.

Therefore, I am formally requesting that this matter be added to the **agenda of an upcoming City Council meeting** for full reconsideration. The policy is outdated, unbalanced, and not in line with models used in other parts of Ontario.

Please do not treat this as a routine policy feedback email. This letter is a **formal request for escalation and action at the Council level**.

Sincerely,  
**Mini James**

Cc:

[All the Councillors and Mayor, as listed in your original message]

On Thu, 17 Jul 2025 at 19:09, Savoia, John <[John.Savoia@hamilton.ca](mailto:John.Savoia@hamilton.ca)> wrote:

Hi Mini,

Previous to the billing change in 2018, even where bills were billed directly to residential tenants, financial responsibility remained with property owners. In the event, tenants did not pay water/wastewater bills the arrears were transferred to the property tax roll. Hence, the billing policy change that Council approved in 2018, *did not* alter who is responsible for water bills as the property owner has remained the responsible party.

Hamilton has never allowed tenants to assume financial responsibility of water/wastewater charges. This is the case even with commercial tenants.

Regards,

*John Savoia*

Senior Policy Advisor

Corporate Services Department

City of Hamilton



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**From:** Mini James

**Sent:** Thursday, July 17, 2025 6:20 PM

**To:** Savoia, John <[John.Savoia@hamilton.ca](mailto:John.Savoia@hamilton.ca)>

**Cc:** Ward 1 Office <[ward1@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward1@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 2 <[ward2@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward2@hamilton.ca)>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinder Nann <[ward3@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward3@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 4 <[ward4@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward4@hamilton.ca)>; Francis, Matt <[Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca](mailto:Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca)>; Jackson, Tom <[Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca](mailto:Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca)>; Pauls, Esther <[Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca](mailto:Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 8 Office <[ward8@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward8@hamilton.ca)>; Clark, Brad <[Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca](mailto:Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca)>; Beattie, Jeff <[Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca](mailto:Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 11 <[ward11@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward11@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 12 Office <[ward12@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward12@hamilton.ca)>; Ward 13 <[ward13@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward13@hamilton.ca)>; Spadafora, Mike <[Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca](mailto:Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca)>; McMeekin, Ted <[Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca](mailto:Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca)>; [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

**Subject:** Request for Reconsideration of Water Billing Policy for Residential Tenants

Dear John,

Thank you for your detailed response and for sharing the background on the current water/wastewater billing policy.

However, I respectfully wish to express serious concern regarding the **negative impact this policy has on residential property owners**, particularly landlords. While I understand the policy was introduced in 2018 to streamline billing, **in practice, it has caused significant challenges for many homeowners.**

In my personal experience, my previous tenant initially had low water usage, but over time the bills increased to an average of \$400. Unfortunately, the tenant eventually vacated the property without settling the amount — leaving me, the landlord, to cover the full cost. **Recovering unpaid utility bills from tenants is often difficult and unrealistic**, especially when there's no direct billing relationship between the service provider and the tenant.

I also note that **Durham Region continues to use a Landlord-Tenant Water Billing Form** that holds tenants directly responsible. I am unclear as to why the City of Hamilton cannot adopt a similar approach?.

Given the **ongoing financial strain on landlords**, including rising mortgage payments, property tax increases, and declining rental rates, I believe this matter deserves urgent reconsideration.

**I kindly request that this issue be added to the agenda for an upcoming council meeting for re-evaluation**, with the aim of introducing a fairer and more balanced billing system that reflects the current economic realities faced by small landlords.

Thank you for your attention, and I remain available should you require additional information.

Warm regards,  
**Mini James**

On Thu, 17 Jul 2025 at 14:28, Savoia, John <[John.Savoia@hamilton.ca](mailto:John.Savoia@hamilton.ca)> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your email regarding invoicing for water/wastewater services in rental situations.

The issue of invoicing residential tenants for water/wastewater was reviewed in 2018 resulting in a report from City staff with a recommendation to bill only property owners of residential properties as of June 2018; that was subsequently approved by City Council.

Below is an excerpt of information related to the aforementioned billing policy that is available on Alectra's website (<https://alectrautilities.com/hamilton-water>) and I've highlighted the link to the 2018 staff report below for your reference.

### **Owners with residential properties**

Hamilton City Council approved changes to the water billing policy. All residential accounts opened on or after June 1, 2018, must be in the property owner's name(s), not the tenant(s)'s. Alectra Utilities, as the City's water billing agent, will accept payments from tenants and other non-owners. However, it is the property owner's responsibility to make sure that tenants pay the bills on time.

Existing accounts billed in the tenant's name(s) will remain until they move out. Once they move, Alectra will put the water account in the property owner's name(s). Alectra Utilities will mail the water bill to the owner's address as listed on the property taxes. To update mailing address information, contact the City of Hamilton's Taxation office.

For more information, visit these links:

- [Residential Tenant Billing Change FAQs](#)
- [City of Hamilton Report: Water and Wastewater / Storm Third Party Billing Arrangements](#)

Regards,

*John Savoia*

Senior Policy Advisor

Corporate Services Department

City of Hamilton



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mini James**

Date: Sun, 29 Jun 2025 at 19:23

Subject: Proposal for a Standardized "Landlord Tenant Form" for Water Billing

To: <[clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)>

**The Honourable Mayor and Members of Hamilton City Council City Hall**

71 Main Street West Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Horwath and Members of Council,

I am writing to you today as a property owner in the City of Hamilton to propose the formal adoption and implementation of a standardized "Landlord Tenant Form" for water and wastewater billing for rental properties.

Following discussions with the city's water billing department regarding the reference number CAS-0320190-X9P8W4, a customer service representative advised me to submit this proposal for your committee's review and approval.

The core issue many landlords face is the lack of a clear, standardized process for assigning the day-to-day responsibility of water bill payments to tenants, while ensuring the City's financial interests remain protected. The current system can lead to ambiguity, disputes, and administrative challenges for both property owners and the City.

To address this, I propose we adopt a model that has been successfully implemented in other municipalities, such as the Durham Region. I have attached for your reference a copy of the "Authorization to Bill a Tenant Form" used in the Town of Pickering (Durham Region) as a practical example of this system in action.

The proposed "Landlord Tenant Form" would function as follows:

1. **Landlord Authorization:** The property owner would complete and sign the form to authorize the City to send water bills directly to the registered tenant at the service address.
2. **Ultimate Responsibility:** The form would include a clear acknowledgement that the property owner remains ultimately responsible for all charges incurred. If a tenant fails to

pay, the debt remains with the property and the landlord is liable for payment, protecting the City from revenue loss.

3. **Clear Communication:** This establishes a transparent and officially documented arrangement, reducing misunderstandings between landlords, tenants, and the City's billing department.

Adopting this form would create a fair, efficient, and low-risk system that benefits all parties. It provides tenants with direct accountability for their consumption, gives landlords a clear process to follow, and guarantees the City's revenue stream.

Given that a proven and effective template already exists and is functioning well in a comparable Ontario municipality, I believe Hamilton can implement this practical solution with ease.

I respectfully request that the Council review this proposal and the attached sample form. I am confident that its adoption would be a positive step forward for landlords and the City of Hamilton.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James