



THE WATCHDOG

Newsletter

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OMBUDSMAN RELEASES 2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Record 37% increase in
complaints, historic bid to expand
mandate mark "banner year" for
Ombudsman

Ontario Ombudsman André Marin's [2013-2014 Annual Report](#), released on June 23, highlighted several firsts for his office: A record 26,999 complaints received, an unprecedented number of ongoing large-scale investigations, and the first-ever government bill to extend Ombudsman oversight into the "[MUSH](#)" sector (municipalities, universities, school boards, hospitals and long-term care homes, children's aid societies and police).



The Ombudsman's Office has also been conducting its largest systemic investigation to date, involving billing and customer service problems at

JUNE 2014

The Ombudsman investigates public complaints about Ontario government agencies. His office oversees more than 500 provincial ministries, agencies, tribunals, boards, commissions and Crown corporations.

[FILE A COMPLAINT ONLINE](#)

Ombudsman Ontario

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MUNICIPAL OVERSIGHT

The Ombudsman spoke at a conference organized by research publication Public Sector Digest on June 20, discussing the value of municipal oversight, and the need for more transparency.

[Watch a video of his speech](#)

Hydro One, which has reached a milestone 8,000 complaints.

“This year has been an exceptional one... for both the sheer volume of public complaints and the historic progress that was achieved towards modernizing our mandate,” Mr. Marin says in the report, noting that it also includes numerous “examples of cases where we assisted to humanize government, often for the most vulnerable members of society.”

- › [Read the report \(PDF\) | HTML](#)
- › [Press release \(PDF\)](#)
- › [Ombudsman's remarks \(PDF\)](#)
- › [Facts and highlights \(PDF\)](#)
- › [Check the status of our ongoing investigations](#)

Watch our [short video](#) with some of the report's highlights:



In the news

Catch up on the [media coverage](#) following the release of the Ombudsman's 2013-2014 annual report:

- › [The Ombudsman was interviewed by Metro Morning on June 25, 2014. Listen to his interview here.](#)
- › [Ontario government mistake cost families nearly \\$1M. ombudsman says \(Metro News\)](#)
- › [Hydro One a 'slippery pig' with shocking number of complaints \(Toronto Sun\)](#)
- › [Hydro One bills have unleashed 'incredible' number of complaints to Ontario ombudsman \(National Post\)](#)
- › [Hydro One billing mistakes still haunt utility, ombudsman says \(Toronto Star\)](#)
- › ['Horrific conditions' in crowded jails signal need for overhaul, says](#)



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Interested in receiving announcements and information about our Sharpening Your Teeth investigative training? We will no longer be including that information in our general newsletter. Please [sign up for our new training newsletter here](#) if you would like to be informed about upcoming courses. If you'd like to stop receiving the new SYT newsletter at any time, [please click here](#).

CASE SUMMARY - GOING THROUGH WITHDRAWAL

Two weeks before Christmas, a woman was distressed to learn that Hydro One had taken \$8,390 from her bank account. She had authorized automatic payments to the utility through her account, but was astonished by the unexpectedly large bill. When she called Hydro One to ask why the amount was so high, its customer service staff told her it was a “catch-up” bill to make up for 22 months of estimated billings that it determined were too low.

Ombudsman staff raised the woman's case with Hydro One officials, who acknowledged that, in fact, they had failed to obtain a meter reading during the 22 months. They agreed to repay the woman the entire amount.

[John Howard Society](#) (Ottawa Citizen)

Anyone who has information relevant to our ongoing investigations can contact our office at 1-800-263-1830, file an online complaint or email: info@ombudsman.on.ca.



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Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario | Bureau de l'Ombudsman de l'Ontario

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