



# THE WATCHDOG

## Newsletter

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FRANÇAIS

## A HYDRO ONE DISCONNECT

Hydro One has pledged to stop threatening to cut off power during the winter to customers with unpaid bills, after Ombudsman André Marin exposed the practice as cruel and misleading.

“Cutthroat tactics that may be appropriate in a competitive private sector business are inappropriate for a public sector organization in a monopolistic situation,” Marin said during a one-year update on his investigation into billing and customer service on March 11. “We know for a fact that electricity would never be disconnected because it’s against [Hydro One’s] policy, yet Hydro One is threatening [to do just that].”

Mr. Marin spoke to Hydro One senior staff about the disconnection issue on February 20, but did not receive a reply until the day before the press conference - and then it was a tepid response with a rewritten warning letter that stated the utility would still disconnect customers depending on “weather conditions”.



After his press conference, Hydro One finally agreed to remove the

MARCH 2015

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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### UNIVERSITY OUTREACH

The Ombudsman and senior staff are frequently asked to speak about the role of the Office and our jurisdiction. Catch up on the presentations by following tweets at [#OOLive](#).

disconnection warning from the letter it sends customers in arrears.

Since the update, Marin's office has received more than 300 new complaints about Hydro One. The investigation wrapping up and a report will be released later this spring, but we continue to take and resolve individual complaints.

[Read the latest investigation update](#)

[Watch the press conference](#)

### News coverage

- › [Ombudsman blasts Hydro One for threatening to leave customers in the cold \(Toronto Star\)](#)
- › [Keep public oversight on Hydro One: Editorial \(Toronto Star\)](#)
- › [Hydro One issuing empty disconnection threats: Ombudsman \(Canadian Press\)](#)
- › [Reeveley: Hydro One's threats to cut customers off 'cruel and deceitful.' ombudsman says \(Ottawa Citizen\)](#)

## COMING TO A MUNICIPALITY NEAR YOU



Since 2008, the Ombudsman has been the default investigator for complaints about closed municipal meetings. In the past month, he has issued reports on meetings in the [Town of Bracebridge](#), the [City of Niagara Falls](#) (and [a second meeting here](#)), the [Village of Casselman](#), and the [Municipality of South Huron](#).

[Read all his closed-meeting reports](#)

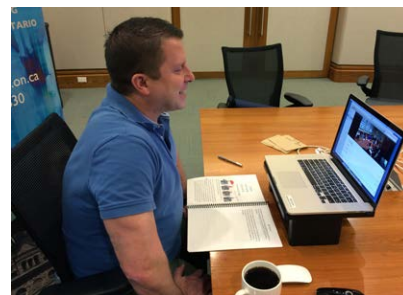
## INVESTIGATIONS UPDATE

### Hydro One:

We've received more than 10,300 complaints and the Special Ombudsman Response Team has almost wrapped up its investigation on the larger-scale, systemic problems at the utility. The report will include concrete recommendations to improve service for customers.

### [Ontario direction to police on de-escalation:](#)

The Ombudsman's preliminary findings and recommendations have been drafted and will be sent to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services for a response in the coming weeks, after which his report will be



Mr. Marin Skyped with a law class at the University of Manitoba in March 4, touching on the role of the Ombudsman, [the expansion of his mandate with Bill 8](#) to include universities, and some of his systemic investigations.



He also spoke about police oversight during a third-year sociology class at Carleton University on March 24.

Senior Counsel Wendy Ray and Director of Investigations Sue Haslam made a presentation to the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance on March 20 about the new university oversight.



Next up, Mr. Marin will be speaking at the [Club Canadien de Toronto](#) on April 21 (in French only).

### LINK UP WITH US!

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finalized and published.

**Adults with developmental disabilities in crisis:**

We continue to resolve individual cases and take complaints - more than 1,200 to date. The large-scale systemic investigation continues, and the Ombudsman expects to release a report later in 2015.

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](mailto:info@ombudsman.on.ca).



**STAY CONNECTED**

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