



THE WATCHDOG

Newsletter

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Ombudsman urges corporate culture overhaul and ongoing oversight of Hydro One

Egregious billing, customer service problems; Utility “lost sight of its public interest purpose”

On May 25, in his latest report *In the Dark*, Ombudsman André Marin called on Hydro One to overhaul its corporate culture to focus on customers and transparency, and urged the government to preserve independent oversight of the utility.

[Read the report](#)

[Press release](#)

[Facts and highlights](#)

[Ombudsman's remarks](#)

[Watch the press conference](#)

Reporting on the largest investigation in his office's history – with more than 10,500 complaints – the Ombudsman revealed a litany of egregious problems with billing and customer service arising from Hydro One's disastrous installation of a new customer information system in May 2013, which he estimates affected well over 100,000 customers.

MAY 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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**OMBUDSMAN TERM
EXTENDED UNTIL
SEPTEMBER**

On May 28, the legislative assembly voted unanimously to extend Ontario Ombudsman André Marin's term until September 14, or until the ongoing hiring process is



The report details how problems with the system transition resulted in a massive disruption of billing, including overbilling (sometimes by thousands or even millions of dollars), no bills, estimated bills, and outrageously bad customer service during the scramble to fix technical glitches. As the crisis deepened, some at Hydro One “deliberately kept the situation under wraps,” Mr. Marin writes, “even deceiving the electricity regulator, my Office and other stakeholders about the extent and nature of the company’s billing and customer service disaster.”

[READ MORE](#)

In the News

- › [Watch Power and Politics - Andre Marin's scathing report](#)
- › [Keep Hydro One under close scrutiny: Toronto Star Editorial](#)
- › [Hydro One treated billing errors with 'deflection, deception': ombudsman \(Canadian Press\)](#)
- › [Hydro One issued more than 100,000 faulty bills: Ombudsman \(Globe and Mail\)](#)
- › [Hydro One accused of deceit in damning Ombudsman report \(Toronto Star\)](#)
- › [Ombudsman uncovers 'outrageously' bad customer service at Hydro One \(Toronto Sun\)](#)
- › [Reevely: Hydro One 'lost touch with a public-service ethos,' ombudsman says](#)

OMBUDSMAN OVERSIGHT COMING SOON TO MUNICIPALITIES, UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOL BOARDS

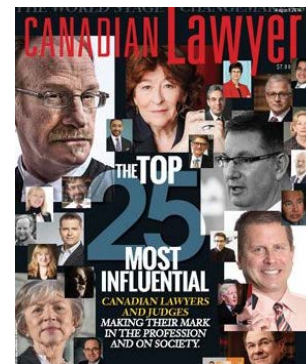
The public will be able to complain to the Ontario Ombudsman about school boards

complete. [Read more.](#)

CANADA'S TOP LAWYERS

For the third year in a row, Ombudsman André Marin has made the list of Canadian Lawyer Magazine's top 25 lawyers. "Marin continued to deliver results, tackling thorny issues such as billing and customer service issues at Hydro One and provincial direction on de-escalation of conflict situations in policing," the magazine's website states. Polls are open until June 9 to vote for the top 25.

[Case your vote for the top 25](#)



AN EYE ON HYDRO

On May 21, Ombudsman André Marin and Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk made a submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs relating to *Bill 91, Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015*. The Ombudsman spoke specifically about the need for continued independent oversight of Hydro One.



as of **September 1, 2015**, and about municipalities and universities as of **January 1, 2016**, now that the dates have been proclaimed for the relevant sections of the [Ombudsman Act, 1990](#) via the [Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act](#).

Passed by the legislative assembly on December 9, 2014, the Act – also known as “Bill 8” – extends Ombudsman scrutiny to the so-called “MUSH sector” for the first time in the office’s 40-year history.

“We look forward to bringing the same level of oversight to municipalities, universities and school boards as we always have to provincial organizations,” said Ontario Ombudsman André Marin. The ombudsman’s office has reached out to these sectors and will release more details in the coming weeks.

INVESTIGATIONS UPDATE

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

The Ombudsman is in the process of finalizing his report and is expected to release it later this year.

[Adults with developmental disabilities in crisis:](#)

Staff 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.

[Watch the video](#)

WORK WITH US!

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) for job postings, investigation updates and report releases, and more.



WE'RE HIRING!

Take a look at some of our [open positions](#), including Investigator, Early Resolutions Officer, Articling Student, and Human Resources Officer.

TWITTER EN FRANÇAIS

The Ombudsman launched a new French Twitter account ([@Ont_OmbudsmanFR](#)) at the Club canadien de Toronto on April 21. [Watch the video](#) (in French)

[André Marin va twitter en français plus souvent](#) (L'Express - French only)

STAY CONNECTED

The Ombudsman has **3,703 Facebook fans** and **31,823 Twitter followers!** Please continue to reach out to us on social media, or drop us a line at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca.

And stay connected with our office in both official languages! Follow our French Twitter account: [@Ont_OmbudsmanFR](#).

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