

Fw: Liberal polling shows 94 per cent of **>Ontarians<** eager for hydro...

From: "Farrow, Alicia (CAB)" <alicia.farrow@ontario.ca>
To: "Betzner, Lynn (CAB)" <lynn.betzner@ontario.ca>
Date: Mon, 14 Nov 2016 07:35:36 -0500

Original Message
From: Pontikis, Maria (CAB) <Maria.Pontikis@ontario.ca>
Sent: Sunday, November 13, 2016 4:22 PM
To: Farrow, Alicia (CAB); Robert, Melanie (CAB)
Subject: Fw: Liberal polling shows 94 per cent of **>Ontarians<** eager for hydro...

FYI

Original Message
From: Forrest, Jamie (CAB) <Jamie.Forrest@ontario.ca>
Sent: Sunday, November 13, 2016 4:01 PM
To: Pontikis, Maria (CAB)
Subject: Fw: Liberal polling shows 94 per cent of **>Ontarians<** eager for hydro...

Hi Maria - FYI - she is reporting on the polling data we disclosed.

Original Message
From: Command News <fp.NEWS.JFORREST@commandnews.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 13, 2016 10:01 AM
To: Forrest, Jamie (CAB)
Subject: Liberal polling shows 94 per cent of **>Ontarians<** eager for hydro...

Profile: JFORREST / My Drawer / Ontario Political News - Clip 1 (limit 25)
Nov 13 2016 10:00:00 - Source: CP [The Canadian Press]

Liberal polling shows 94 per cent of **>Ontarians<** eager for hydro price relief (Hydro-Polling)
By Allison Jones

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO _ The month before **>Ontario<***s Liberal government announced a rebate on electricity bills, internal polling suggested that a whopping 94 per cent of residents were eager for price relief.

Polling commissioned by the government and obtained by The Canadian Press through a freedom-of-information request shows steadily increasing concern among **>Ontarians<** about their hydro rates in the months ahead of the Liberals' pledge to take eight per cent off bills.

The August survey had 83 per cent of people saying it was "very important" that the government control electricity prices. A further 11 per cent said it was somewhat important and a mere four per cent said it was "not at all" important, with a small number saying they didn't know. Fewer than half said the government was doing a good job of it.

The message in those responses was unequivocal, but even months before the September hydro relief announcement the numbers were bad

for the Liberals.

In June, 90 per cent of respondents said they were concerned about the cost of electricity. And 64 per cent said the government should prioritize affordable electricity over climate change initiatives.

A month later, 94 per cent of people said it is important that the government control electricity prices. The same percentage said their electricity bills had become much more or somewhat more expensive in the past five years.

A Sept. 1 byelection loss of a Liberal seat prompted a contrite Premier Kathleen Wynne to say she heard loud and clear from voters that hydro bills were too high and she needed to focus on "helping people with their everyday expenses."

Days later, in her government's throne speech opening the fall session of the legislature, she announced that Ontario's eight-per-cent slice of the HST would be taken off hydro bills starting in January.

That polling had confirmed what the government already knew, Wynne said.

"Those polls didn't surprise me because we were already listening to people, we already heard from people that this was an issue," she said in a recent interview.

Electricity prices have become a major political problem for the Liberals. In addition to citing it as a factor in their byelection loss, rural Ontarians booed Wynne at the International Plowing Match when she mentioned hydro, and the Liberal candidate in a Niagara West-Glanbrook was booed and jeered at a recent debate over hydro rates.

The rebate, which will cost taxpayers about \$1 billion a year, is expected to save the typical Ontario household about \$130 a year, and the government projects additional savings of about \$540 a year for rural electricity customers.

The Liberal government also recently cancelled green energy plans that will keep \$2.45 a month from being added to hydro bills, and has scrapped the debt retirement charge and deferred construction of two new nuclear reactors at Darlington, avoiding up to \$15 billion in new construction costs.

But auditor general Bonnie Lysyk has said the electricity portion of hydro bills for homes and small businesses rose 70 per cent between 2006 and 2014, and critics note that the eight-per-cent rebate comes a year after the Liberals ended a 10-per-cent Clean Energy Benefit.

The polls were conducted over several weeks each month by the Gandalf Group, the consulting firm of David Herle, who is also managing the Liberals' 2018 campaign. About 1,100 to 1,200 people were surveyed, with margins of error just below three per cent, and data was weighted to represent gender, age and regional distribution.

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