

# CBC Radio Transcripts - Thunder Bay Windsor Interviews With Premier Wynne: March 3, 2017

---

**From:** Electronic Media <cab.amedia@ontario.ca>  
**To:** "@CAB-Trans CO" <cab-transco@msgov.gov.on.ca>, "@CAB-Trans PO" <cab-transpo@msgov.gov.on.ca>  
**Date:** Fri, 03 Mar 2017 17:50:52 -0500  
**Attachments:** 20170303 - Thunder Bay Radio - Premier Wynne.doc.docx (20.19 kB); 20170303 - CBC Windsor - Premier Wynne.doc (46.08 kB)

---

\*As requested by Jennifer Beaudry

---

[CBC WINDSOR INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER WYNNE](#)  
[THUNDER BAY RADIO INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER WYNNE](#)

## CBC WINDSOR INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER WYNNE

Date: March 3, 2017  
Station: CBC Radio (Windsor)  
Length: 10:40 minutes  
Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne

CBC Windsor: We now know the government's plan for power in Ontario. Yesterday Ontario revealed its latest strategy to deal with rising energy costs and it comes after the NDP released its plan to tackle the hydro file. That included, among other things, a 30 percent reduction in electricity costs and the buyback of Hydro One shares that have been sold so far. Patrick Brown told us yesterday that if he was premier he would halt the sale of Hydro One and reopen expensive wind and solar, other alternative energy contracts. And this afternoon we're joined by Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne. Good afternoon Premier.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Good afternoon Bob.

CBC: Now I know you've taken a lot of heat over several months because of rising energy costs and some say that your announcements yesterday are merely preparing for the next election. And to that point Premier, why didn't you offer a 25 percent reduction on energy costs back in January when you announced an 8 percent reduction.

PREMIER WYNNE: So Bob, what we've been doing is we've been looking for ways to make a substantial reduction in electricity prices. We've done a number of things – And you're right, the latest thing that we did before the announcement yesterday was to take 8 percent off peoples' bills, which is the provincial portion of the HST. And in the run up to that, what we heard from people was that that's not enough; you know that it's not going to make a big enough dent in people's bills; that they need something more substantial and they need it right away. So we've been looking at everything. And I know you talked about some of the things that the opposition parties suggested and we'll come back to those, but where we landed was that there has been about \$50 billion dollars of investment in the electricity system over the last decade or so. There had been neglect – You know that's not a partisan comment. It's Liberal governments, Tory governments, NDP government that had not made the investments in the system that needed to be done. We had to make those investments, but there's a cost associated with that. And right now the current generation is being asked to shoulder the majority of those costs. And what we what we determined was that if we could spread those costs over a 30 year period, rather than a 20 year period, we could give folks on average a 25 percent reduction by summer.

CBC Windsor: But of course there is criticism of that: You're just pushing debt onto future generations.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well it's the same thing that we do when we mortgage a home. You know, if you don't have the cash on hand to pay upfront for a home – or in this case an electricity system upgrade – then you need to amortize that over a period of time. And the first strategy was 20 years; it's not long enough because the current generation is being asked to pay too much because this is a \$50 billion dollar investment in our electricity system to bring it up to two to grade to build new capacity and make it reliable and clean because we shut down the coal plants and we needed to replace that power. So it's a very expensive upgrade. And so that's why it's fair to ask this generation but also the coming generation because they will be they will be using that asset into the next couple of decades.

CBC: Of course either way you cut it Premier, it's still Ontario taxpayers who are paying for this discount and will be for years down the road. So it doesn't really address the issue of high energy costs.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well you know what it does is it spreads – You're right, it spreads the cost out as a mortgage does. And if we had not made the investments that we made then we would not have a clean electricity grid and we wouldn't have reliable power. And you know you're in a part of the province where manufacturing is incredibly important and the auto industry particularly needs a reliable source of electricity and that isn't what we had in Ontario in 2003. When we came into office under the previous Premier, there was not a reliable supply. We were having brownouts and blackouts and we really needed to make these investments. And so now we need to make sure that they're paid for fairly over a reasonable period of time.

CBC: To the manufacturing point of view, what are you offering in the way of relief to Ontario's manufacturing sector because of course you have heard there are threats of leaving Ontario or not expanding due to high energy costs.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well it's interesting. We've seen an enormous investment in the auto sector in the last even five months. I mean there's \$730 million dollar investment from Ford in both their Windsor and Oakville plants, along with GM investment, Fiat-Chrysler investments, so we've seen a lot of investment. And it's interesting the Automotive Policy Research Center put out a report on February 13th that basically said that electricity prices in Ontario were not having a negative impact on Ontario's auto sector, so there are other factors at play. You know, the taxes, we are very competitive in terms of our tax rates. We have a highly educated workforce. So the auto sector and you know Windsor being a prime example of that is really well positioned in in terms of the auto sector in North America right now.

CBC: I don't argue with the investments that have been made but I'm only repeating what the manufacturers are telling us.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well and I hear that. But, you know, actions actually speak louder than words and so over the past five months we've seen \$2 billion dollars of new investment in Ontario's auto sector. What we've done in this in this plan is we have actually expanded the Industrial Conservation Initiative. So smaller companies – so some of the companies for example that would be in the supply chain for the auto sector – would qualify for the Industrial Conservation Initiative. And that program can help businesses save up to 30 percent of their electricity bill. So we are very cognizant of helping business at the same time that we help residents.

CBC: Just one more question on the manufacturing point of view. Yes, there has been investment in the auto industry, but there are many more manufacturers in Ontario, other than auto.

PREMIER WYNNE: Of course, of course. I was just using auto as an example.

CBC: But they haven't gotten the investments that the auto industry have and they are still dealing

with high energy costs.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well and that's why you know that's why we've expanded the ICI, the Industrial Conservation Initiative. Mom and Pop shops, Bob, who are you know on main streets and in communities around the province – so those are very small businesses – they are they are going to see the average 25 percent reduction. More businesses will qualify for the ICI, as I said. So everybody will see some reduction. But you're right: There's more work that we need to do for some of those medium and smaller medium businesses and we're going to continue to work with them.

CBC: All right. Another aspect to this file is the sale of Hydro One. And I know you said that you want to get to some of these points that the opposition have made, so I will give you the opportunity. Why is the government insisting that it go forward when so many people say it should be the public utility and whatever profit generated goes back to Ontarians instead of shareholders?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well the issue that we're addressing and has been top of mind for people in the province is the cost of their electricity bills. Broadening the ownership of Hydro One has nothing to do with electricity prices. So what the NDP was suggesting would not take one cent off one person's electricity bill. And so you know, it's really a red herring in this discussion. I understand that it sounds like it's a solution, but it's really not. And we're looking for real practical solutions that are going to take people's bills down.

CBC: Well then the one thing that is true is the salaries of Hydro One executives. And of course, you know, that many people are saying they're just way too high.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well I understand that. And you know, we've made we've made changes in terms of the way compensation transparency works with government agencies. Hydro Ones required to post the salaries of their four top executives. That's according to the rules of the Securities Commission, so they operate under those rules. What's really important is that we have a well-run company and that at the same time we're able to build infrastructure because remember the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One has to do with being able to use an asset that's been owned by the people of Ontario to build new assets that the people of Ontario will own and that building is extremely important. You know I know that people in Windsor are very aware of infrastructure with the building of the parkway. You know that kind of infrastructure build is not possible unless we have the funding to do it.

CBC: You yourself have said many times many mistakes have been made on the energy file by all governments going back to Mike Harris. Is it even possible to fix this now?

PREMIER WYNNE: I believe it is. And I would you know I'd go back before Mike Harris. I think that we can we can hold previous Liberal, NDP and Conservative governments responsible because those investments were not made over time. So yes I always believe it's possible to find solutions. And I think that the structural changes that we are making because on top of the spreading out of the payback of those investments that I talked about we're also going to be tackling distribution charges. And you know there are there are people in the province who live in rural and more remote communities where they're paying very high distribution charges. And so we're going to we're going to take those distribution charges down to the level of what an urban consumer would pay and that's a structural change and it's much fairer for people who are paying those high costs. So I think it is possible to resolve these issues, but it is hard work. You know, we had to look at everything, and this is a plan we've landed on. And so by summer people will start to see these reductions.

CBC: Good to talk to your Premier and thank you very much.

PREMIER WYNNE: Thank you very, very much. Take care.

CBC: That is Premier Kathleen Wynne. And what do you think of her new power plan? We have talked to all three provincial leaders this week. Who do you think has the best handle on power in Ontario? You can post your thoughts on our Facebook page.

---

## THUNDER BAY RADIO INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER WYNNE

Date: March 3, 2017

Station: Thunder Bay Radio

Length: 9:06 minutes

Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: A couple of things that are going to make a difference to people in the northern part of the province. The first is, something that will affect everybody in the province, all residents who pay electricity and live in the province are going to see by summer an average of about a 25 per cent reduction on their bill. So, it'll be between 23 and 28 per cent but they will see that, they'll see that relief on their bills. For people who live outside of urban areas and are in more remote communities, they are paying very high and distribution charges. So, for example, people who are covered by Atikokan power or Hydro One (inaudible), they will see an additional reduction because of their distribution charges being so high and we're going to bring those distribution charges down to about the rate of what an urban or Toronto resident would pay. So that's going to be on top of 25 per cent. It could be another 10 or 15 per cent reduction for those folks.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: It's customers who are in the Hydro One, the Northern Ontario Wires, Lakeland Parry Sound, Chapleau, Sioux Lookout, Atikokan, Algoma. Those are the, those are the customers who are paying disproportionately high. And if people are in bigger centers, their distribution charges tend not to be as high as outside of those centers.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Right and right. And the 25 per cent is the 8 per cent that's already in place. And then, on top of that, 17 per cent what customers in Thunder Bay and elsewhere in the province will also see on top of the 25 per cent is if they are low income families, they will see an additional reduction if they apply for the Ontario Electricity Support Program. So we're actually increasing the Ontario Electricity Support Program and that is as I say that's for low income consumers.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: We heard very clearly from people around the province, in every corner of the province, that they were looking for a substantial reduction on their bills, and they told us that, you know, the 8 per cent alone was not enough. But, what we knew is that if we could get a 25 per cent reduction and then on top of that where there were special issues like the distribution and like the low income, that we'd be starting to see that significant change that people were looking for. And these are these are very structural changes, you know, we're actually changing the way the system works. The way we're getting the 25 per cent reduction is by spreading out the payment period for the investments that have been made in the system over the last decade or so, spreading those out over a 30-year period rather than a 20-year period. That's a structural change, the distribution charges in the electricity support program. We're taking those off the rate base, taking those off people's electricity bills and putting them on the tax base so. So those are the kinds of fundamental change that people were looking for.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: I think we have to work together on this. We've made a commitment as a province to do everything we can to clean up the mercury Grassy Narrows. You know I have met with the scientist Dr. Rudd. We have a plan here, but, you know, since the contamination the federal government has been involved in terms of the compensation board and so on, so we certainly will be reaching out to the minister to bring them into the conversation in a significant way.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: I think this is a shared responsibility. I think it's the community. I think it's the provincial government. I think it's the federal government, and those are the partners who have always been involved in this issue and so I'm pretty confident that we can have an important interaction with the federal government on this. Having said that, we're moving ahead. We are not, you know, we're not waiting, we're moving ahead. And my hope is that the scientists who are out there looking, for example, for the sites of the leakage into the river to confirm those and figure out how we get that stock to soon as possible and then and move forward on the other initiatives so we

get that get that water cleaned up

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Absolutely, I mean, I think that there's no question that the Thunder Bay jail is a huge issue. I think what the work that's going on right now is just a setting of priorities among the different facilities in the province because there are, you know, there are a couple of other situations that are not adequate. And I think that although Howard Sapers is looking at segregation and that is, you know, that's of primary importance and it's a very important thing that we that we need to address, we're also going to be able to get more information about the system as a whole and, as part of that, where are the where are the top priorities in terms of capital projects.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Well I think it's near the top. But that's me just talking off the top of my head. Not quite - I mean I have had input, certainly from Michael Gravelle and Bill Mauro on this. They're very concerned about it. They have really advocated for a new facility there. And so we're, you know, we're taking this very seriously as we look at the priorities around the province.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Well my understanding is that parties like the Northern party have popped up from time to time. I believe that we are much stronger together. And, in fact, you know the reason that we're going to have a Northern Boundary Commission to give us some advice on whether we should create another one or two ridings in the Far North is because I think there does need to be even better representation at Queen's Park. I just want to say that the, you know, our representatives at Queen's Park and in my cabinet have been fantastic. Glenn Thibeault, Michael Gravelle and Bill Mauro, and before that David Oraziotti, they've been terrific representatives. And I think at the same time it would be great to have some more representation from the North. So I am quite convinced that Ontario's economy is better off if we are one province.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: As I say I think this is something that has come up in the past. I think we have to pay attention to the concerns that that have prompted the party to pop up at this point. But, I can tell you that every policy that we bring forward, we are very, very cognizant of the impact in the North and how do we make sure that the pieces that are going to affect people in the North are addressed. So they the electricity, the hydro policy is a perfect example of that, where some of the most serious concerns that we've heard about distribution have been from Northwestern Ontario, and so, you know, I was determined that as we brought this fair hydro rate policy forward that we would address distribution and so that's, you know, in large part why you see it there.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: No, that's good. Thank you very much. It's a pleasure.