

Evening Media Scan - Hydro Rate Reduction - July 13, 2017

From: "Ma, Cesue (CAB)" <cesue.ma@ontario.ca>
To: "@OPO-Media Relations and Issues Management" <opo-mediarelationsandissuesmgmt@msgov.gov.on.ca>, "Bevan, Andrew (OPO)" <andrew.bevan@ontario.ca>, "McEachern, Gillian (OPO)" <gillian.mceachern@ontario.ca>, "Donelson, Philip (OPO)" <philip.donelson@ontario.ca>, "Bossin, Bryan (OPO)" <bryan.bossin@ontario.ca>, "Tomney, Genevieve (OPO)" <genevieve.tomney@ontario.ca>, "Jancik, Mike (OPO)" <mike.jancik@ontario.ca>, "@CAB-Trans CO" <cab-transco@msgov.gov.on.ca>, "Baker, Carys (ENERGY)" <carys.baker@ontario.ca>, "Berry, James (ENERGY)" <james.berry5@ontario.ca>, "Bodrug, Andrew (ENERGY)" <andrew.bodrug@ontario.ca>, "Campbell, David (ENERGY)" <david.campbell2@ontario.ca>, "Coker, Meaghan (ENERGY)" <meaghan.coker@ontario.ca>, "Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY)" <kevin.denheijer@ontario.ca>, "Esdaile, Trevor (ENERGY)" <trevor.esdaile@ontario.ca>, "Festeryga, Katherine (ENERGY)" <katherine.festeryga@ontario.ca>, "Foster, David (ENERGY)" <david.foster@ontario.ca>, "McGrath, Jessica (ENERGY)" <jessica.mcgrath@ontario.ca>, "Moseley-Williams, Kate (ENERGY)" <kate.moseley-williams@ontario.ca>, "Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY)" <colin.nekolaichuk@ontario.ca>, "Olsheski, Mark (ENERGY)" <mark.olsheski@ontario.ca>, "Ramasra, Raynier (ENERGY)" <raynier.ramasra@ontario.ca>, "Ruttan, Craig (ENERGY)" <craig.ruttan@ontario.ca>, "Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY)" <andrew.teliszewsky@ontario.ca>, "Thompson, Rachel (ENERGY)" <rachel.thompson@ontario.ca>, "Tresise, Landon (ENERGY)" <landon.tresise@ontario.ca>, "Tretiakov, Ilia (ENERGY)" <ilia.tretiakov@ontario.ca>, "Walman, Evan (ENERGY)" <evan.walman@ontario.ca>, "An, Derrick (OPO)" <derrick.an@ontario.ca>, "Leisk, Madison (OPO)" <madison.leisk@ontario.ca>, "Porter, Maddy (OPO)" <maddy.porter@ontario.ca>
Cc: "Sumi, Craig (CAB)" <craig.sumi@ontario.ca>, "Di Giovanni, Robert (CAB)" <robert.digiovanni@ontario.ca>, "Law, Sally (CAB)" <sally.law@ontario.ca>, "Stinson, Jeffrey (CAB)" <jeffrey.stinson@ontario.ca>, "Nutter, George (ENERGY)" <george.nutter@ontario.ca>, "Halford, Gavin (ENERGY)" <som.gavin.halford@ontario.ca>, "Ma, Cesue (CAB)" <cesue.ma@ontario.ca>, Electronic Media <cab.amedia@ontario.ca>, "Selvadasan, Assumpta (CAB)" <assumpta.selvadasan2@ontario.ca>
Date: Thu, 13 Jul 2017 21:00:07 -0400
Attachments: 20170713 - Media Scan - Hydro Rate Reduction (Evening Scan).doc (86.53 kB)

Evening Media Scan: July 13, 2017

MEDIA SCAN: HYDRO RATE REDUCTION PLAN

Click links below to view article:

Online Coverage

[Ottawa Citizen: Reevely: Ontario's government is underscrutinized - it doesn't need to be](#)
[Nugget: Aging Equipment And Increased Utilities Costs To Blame](#)
[The Wellington Advertiser: CWI to stop manufacturing in Erin due to hydro costs](#)
[Newswire: Ontario Energy Board Coming to Bracebridge to Hear From Consumers](#)

TV Transcripts

[None](#)

Online Coverage

Ottawa Citizen **Reevely: Ontario's government is underscrutinized**
ottawacitizen.com
Thu Jul 13 2017
Section: Local News
Byline: David Reevely, Ottawa Citizen

Ontario's legislators should consider living up to their responsibility to keep an eye on what the premier and her ministers are up to, the province's financial watchdog advises.

Stephen LeClair uses just about the mildest possible language for this in his newly released annual report. He is not by nature a bomb-thrower. His tone is respectful. But his criticism should go through the opposition parties and even backbench Liberals like a million volts.

"Do I feel we're being underused? Yes I do feel we're being underused," he says in an interview.

LeClair's job is to double-check the numbers the government uses in its budgets and forecasts. He's the provincial equivalent of the federal government's Parliamentary budget officer, a permanent pain in the tuckus to any government that wants to fiddle its figures with unrealistic assumptions or by pretending important details are irrelevant.

His and his small staff calculated, for instance, that the Liberals' "Fair Hydro Plan" cuts electricity prices by 25 per cent now by having us spend an extra \$21 billion in the future. They laid out some of the risks of Ontario's cap-and-trade plan for greenhouse gases the government would rather not talk about. They pointed out how much the government's budget plans rely on Toronto's overheated housing market's spinning off billions of dollars in land-transfer taxes.

The Liberals never wanted him but the New Democrats forced LeClair's job into being as a condition of supporting a budget when the Liberals had only a minority and needed propping up. Now they aren't using him. Mostly LeClair and his staff are coming up with their own ideas about worthwhile things to examine.

"Halllooooo!" his latest report cries out((fao-on.org»)). "I'm over here! Let me know if you need anything!"

LeClair has been a senior official in multiple ministries in the federal government and in the Northwest Territories, Alberta and Yukon (where he was deputy minister of finance). He's seen how a bunch of different systems work.

"I am looking for ways in which we can contribute more to (provincial) Parliament. From my past jobs, I know that committees can be an effective way. But I know that the committees here sometimes don't have the kind of dialogue that can bring up the big issues," he says. "What we often see is different people bringing forward their views on a subject rather than having ministers and public servants explaining the rationales for what they've done."

The opposition parties' most effective attacks on the Liberals - on any government - come from access-to-information requests and leaked documents and auditors' reports and court filings in formal investigations, not rhetorical venting. Generating that raw material is hard, grinding work, but there's a squad of experts ready to assist.

In the last year, LeClair's received four inquiries from MPPs, a pitifully low number. He's received precisely

zero from any committees of the legislature.

"The FAO would be pleased to appear before a committee to discuss a potential research request," LeClair's report says.

Maybe the legislature's finance committee could call in the finance minister to talk about implementing his budget, he suggests. The federal House of Commons does this and it seems to help MPs understand what's going on.

Other subject-matter committees (on, say, justice policy) spend much of their time scrutinizing bills passing through the legislature, which is an important part of their job. But only part.

"These policy field committees rarely undertake general studies of the ministries that fall under their mandate," LeClair says, even the multibillion-dollar ones like Health and Education. Also, maybe the legislature could adopt the practice of having the subject-matter committees study their ministries' spending instead of having one general-purpose committee do it.

If they did, perhaps they'd come up with questions about how those ministries spend their piles of public money.

All MPPs who aren't in the cabinet are supposed to monitor and challenge the premier and cabinet on how they govern and spend. That is their constitutional responsibility.

"These heavy tasks fall on the shoulders of backbench MPPs, both in the government and opposition parties. They face competing demands on their time, often lack access to useful information about economic and financial matters and historically had limited economic and financial analytical support," LeClair writes. "The FAO looks forward to working with MPPs to better understand how to support their scrutiny function."

A pause, a deep breath. "Hallooooo! Again! Let me know if I can help you do your jobs! If you feel like doing them, I mean!"

In the next election, Ontario's count of MPPs goes from 107 to 122, which will likely mean more backbench MPPs. Maybe that'll include more maverick government backbenchers, whatever party wins. It should certainly include more effective opposition legislators ready to use this powerful tool that's just lying there ready to be picked up.

dreevely@postmedia.com(mailto:dreevely@postmedia.com)

twitter.com/davidreevely((twitter.com»))

© 2017 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Nugget Aging Equipment And Increased Utilities Costs To Blame

By: Keith Dempsey/Postmedia

Thursday, July 13, 2017 10:10:25 EDT AM

<http://www.nugget.ca/2017/07/13/aging-equipment-and-increased-utilities-costs-to-blame>

The Copper Cliff Curling Club in Sudbury may be closing the doors of its more than 100-year-old club.

Board president Deb Beitschat said the club is working on "one more avenue" -- which she said she could not comment on any further -- to keep the club open. An announcement and decision might be made in the next two weeks.

When asked if she's hopeful the club will remain open, Beitschat said, "it won't be the same as it was, but in some form what we're working on will hopefully make curling stronger for the community."

The Copper Cliff Curling Club has more than 200 members.

The reasons for possibly closing up shop for good is due to aging equipment and increased costs in hydro.

"There are many issues," Beitschat said. "Our hydro rates are high and I know all (curling) clubs are

paying the hydro rates that are high."

"Even though we're using less electricity we're still paying huge bills. Everyone pays the global adjustment fee, and that's the on-peak, off-peak that we see on our bills, but on our bill, it's a one-line statement. And it's a couple thousand dollars. It's \$3,000-\$4,000. And it varies each month. You can't predict what it's based on. You can't get ahead. There's hydro costs, water costs that have gone up."

For one month, Beitschat said, the Copper Cliff Curling Club paid \$16 in water, but its waste water cost \$70.

"For water, it's the waste water that kills you," Beitschat said. "Also, too, with the new legislation for minimum wage, that's going to hurt clubs, too."

Beitschat said the Copper Cliff Curling Club is also in need of new equipment. For example, the chiller -- a machine that keeps the ice frozen -- is expensive and needs to be replaced. Doing so can cost roughly \$40,000-\$50,000.

Last season, the club paid \$40,000 for hydro, Beitschat said.

"That \$40,000 was for just our plant, not our lounge," Beitschat said. "And that's actually down. It was higher before."

The club completed renovations two seasons ago, when hydro costs were higher. The club's board agreed to make investments that would lower their hydro rates, in order to pay for a leaking roof. Their floor wasn't level, so a sand floor was installed, which would cause less water to freeze because the pipes would then be closer to the surface.

The club was saving money until last fall. But maintaining the ice was difficult due to warm temperatures during ice-making time, which forced the club to use more electricity.

Vic Fedeli, the PC MPP for Nipissing, said he talked to the Ontario Curling Association, which has 200 members, and it estimates a third to half of membership fees now go towards paying hydro bills.

"It's a slippery slope," Fedeli said. "Because of the rates increase, they end up having to increase their membership rates, and if they increase their membership rates, then they have fewer members."

Fedeli said ski hills, curling clubs and arenas in his area are all concerned by increased hydro rates.

"There's no end in sight," Fedeli said.

Sudbury MPP Glenn Thibeault said he's been in contact with the Copper Cliff Curling Club and the Sudbury Curling Club, regarding the issues both clubs are facing.

"About a year-and-a-half ago, maybe a little longer, I put the (Copper Cliff Curling Club) in touch with the Greater Sudbury Utilities Conservation Department, and they were able to work together and conserve energy, and brought down their consumption. I know back then the consumption program did reduce their bills, but obviously, to me now, after hearing what's going on in the media that it might not be enough ... there are other programs that are available through Save on Energy that they may be able to be partaking in, but I don't know what that is.

"I've reached out to Greater Sudbury Utilities and Greater Sudbury Utilities has informed me that they have now reached out to Copper Cliff Curling Club again to say, 'hey, maybe there's something we can do to help. Is that chiller running at full capacity all the time? Is there ways we can reduce the consumption?' If they're saying they need a new chiller, is that something the NOHFC can get them involved with?"

A curling club is identified as a Class B consumer, and they "don't qualify for the 25 per cent reduction that everyone is getting at home, or some of the small businesses are getting because they're too big for that," Thibeault said.

But they're also too small for the larger reductions on the Industrial Conservation Initiative, meaning the Copper Cliff Curling Club falls in between.

"I've worked with grocery stores who also fall into that category," Thibeault said. "And for example, the Lasalle Loblaws, they're able to save 22 per cent on their energy bill by following many of these Save on Energy programs."

Thibeault said he has a meeting this week planned with representatives from the Sudbury Curling Club.

"If you have old, old infrastructure that's not energy efficient, of course your costs are going to be higher than what they could be," Thibeault said.

The Copper Cliff Curling Club has launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise the \$50,000 it says it needs to stay open. The GoFundMe page can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/save-the-copper-cliff-curling-club>

The Wellington Advertiser stop manufacturing in Erin due to /
July 14, 2017

<http://www.wellingtonadvertiser.com/comments/index.cfm?articleID=36610>

Central Wire Industries (CWI) will be stopping the manufacturing portion of its wire production business in Erin due to the high cost of power.

CEO and president Paul From said manufacturing of stainless steel and nickel alloy wire products will be relocated to two of its U.S. facilities and its Perth, Ontario facility, meaning 20 to 25 people will be out of jobs in Erin.

"It really came down to the price of power in Ontario ... I mean we're paying 19 cents a kilowatt hour in that plant versus less than half in U.S. facilities," said From.

"It's just very, very difficult. These rates keep going up ... but at the end of the day, we're not unlike other companies that have left Ontario."

CWI has two plants in Canada, eight plants in the U.S. and one in the U.K.

From said the offices at the Erin facility will remain open and the building will be used mainly as a warehouse. From said the cost of power to run the equipment was a significant factor in the restructuring.

"We're using power-intensive equipment to manufacture the product and it's a big problem for us," he said.

Transition

The transition of the Erin plant will take several months.

"This is recognizing that the landscape in Ontario from the standpoint of power and jobs is in jeopardy and that's unfortunate," said From.

News wire Ontario Energy Board Coming to Bracebridge to Hear F
July 13, 2017

<http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/ontario-energy-board-coming-to-bracebridge-to-hear-from-consumers-634298783.html>

TORONTO, July 13, 2017 /CNW/ - The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is bringing its rate review process to Bracebridge tonight. The province's energy regulator has received a rate application from Hydro One to increase its distribution rates over five years beginning on January 1, 2018.

The Community Meeting in Bracebridge will be the ninth the OEB has held across the province since June 15.

The amounts requested by Hydro One in its application to the OEB relate to its distribution business and do not reflect any credits or other changes resulting from the Fair Hydro Act, 2017. Any amounts approved by the OEB will not impact the distribution line of the bill of most Hydro One customers, after the Fair Hydro Act credits and changes are applied.

The OEB will carefully review Hydro One's application. As part of its review, the OEB is holding a community meeting to help consumers:

Learn more about Hydro One's costs as described in its rate application;
Find out how they can get involved in the OEB's process; and
Provide their comments to the OEB about Hydro One's application.
What:

OEB Community Meeting on Hydro One's Rate Application

When: Thursday, July 13, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. (Doors open at 6 p.m.)

Where: Bracebridge Sportsplex Auditorium – 110 Clearbrook Trail

Media are welcome to attend.

Consumers are invited to make a five-minute presentation at the meeting by first contacting the OEB at registrar@oeb.ca or by calling 416-440-7605 or 1-877-632-2727 (toll-free within Ontario) and quoting file number EB-2017-0049.

Resources

How to get involved in the OEB's rate review processes, please visit: oeb.ca/consumervoice.

Hydro One's distribution rate application: oeb.ca/participate/applications/current-major-applications/eb-2017-0049

Fair Hydro Act's Bill Impact: Backgrounder, OEB Presentation & Hydro One Community Presentation
About the Ontario Energy Board

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is an independent and impartial public agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a sustainable and efficient energy sector that provides consumers with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

For more information, please visit the OEB website at oeb.ca or contact us directly.

Ce document est aussi disponible en français.

SOURCE Ontario Energy Board

For further information: Media Inquiries: Phone: 416-544-5171, Email: oebmedia@oeb.ca

T V T r a n s c r i p t s

N o n e