

Evening Transcripts: Premier Wynne's Interviews On Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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NEWSTALK 1010 INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE

Date: March 2, 2017
Station: CFRB (Toronto)
Length: 10:52 minutes
Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne

NEWSTALK 1010: Today Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that she's moving forward with a 17 per cent reduction on monthly bills this summer, your hydro bills that is, on top of the 8 per cent rebate of the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax that took effect January 1st. And Premier Kathleen is here to discuss it with us. Good afternoon.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Good afternoon.

NEWSTALK 1010: I have to say right out of the gate, before coming into work today I was unloading some groceries in front of my house and my neighbour who knows that I do the show said, "Hey, I heard you're going to be talking to the Premier today. Can you ask her something for me?" And I said, "Uh-oh." (Laughter) But actually you know what –

PREMIER WYNNE: Uh-oh for you or uh-oh for me?

NEWSTALK 1010: Maybe for the both of us. You'll be the judge I guess. But I think he asked a very valid question. He said for me to ask you, "Are we really supposed to buy today's announcement as anything but, you know, politics as usual?"

PREMIER WYNNE: Well you know I hope what today's announcement will mean to your neighbour and to everyone else in Ontario, all the residential consumers who pay electricity prices, that it – I hope it means that they will see a reduction. I mean that's what it should mean to them. You know

I've made this decision, we've put this package together – it's taken a while, Ryan, because it's hard. I mean we made a decision to take the 8 per cent off people's bills but to put together other initiatives that were going to help people across the board, it wasn't easy. We looked at everything, and we made this decision because this is the thing that will help the most people and will make the system the most sustainable. It's a really big structural change.

NEWSTALK 1010: Today you said the governments of all stripes have made mistakes on the hydro profile that have led to the problems that now burden ratepayers here in 2017. Your party's been in government for over a decade. Shouldn't getting this wrong mean that you don't deserve a chance to get it right, that you should be punished in the next election for what you call a mistake? I mean your party has driven hydro rates up by 80 per cent between 2004 and 2014. Shouldn't we be punishing you for that?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, Ryan, here's the thing. What I said in my remarks and what I will say again is that this hasn't been a 10-year challenge. This is over 50 years that governments of all stripes, Liberals, Conservatives, NDP, did not make the investments that needed to be made. And yes, we've made those investments. We've invested \$50 billion to upgrade the system you know? To build transmission lines, to build dams, to build towers in the north to make sure that the system was reliable and that it was accessible to everyone, and that it's clean. It's a clean electricity grid. But there's a cost associated with that. And what I did today was make that system fairer you know? And I can't speak for previous governments, you know. I can't speak for the Tory and the NDP governments and the former Liberal governments who didn't make those investments. All I can do is say we knew that we had to make investments in the system or else it was going to fail. In 2003, the system was degraded. We were seeing blackouts and brownouts. That couldn't continue because – you know businesses wouldn't come here if we didn't have a reliable electricity grid. So, we do now. But what I'm saying to folks in Ontario today is yeah, there's a certain amount that you have to be expected to pay but you don't have to pay for all of the sins of the past and all of the benefits in the future. Let's spread it over 30 years.

NEWSTALK 1010: It is a little rich, and I think hard for a lot of ratepayers to believe that you automatically had some sort of epiphany over the last year when your party has been responsible – just your party – responsible for driving higher rates up by 80 per cent in a span of 10 years between 2004 and 2014. I mean you had to know that it was hurting people. I've heard from people for six, seven years about this.

PREMIER WYNNE: Well and we've been – we've been working – you know since I've been the Premier, Ryan, we've actually been working to take costs out of the system. We did renegotiate contracts like the Samsung contract you know? We did make decisions, for example, like not building new nuclear. So you're right. We knew that there were challenges with the cost of electricity. We tried to make changes that were going to help people. They were just too narrow in scope. We needed to do more. But I think what's really important is that we recognize that the investments that we've made, when you talk about the period from 2004 to 2017, there has been work done like shutting down the coal-fired plants, like rebuilding all those lines, like building those towers, that means the system's reliable in a way that it wasn't in 2003, and that's the neglect that had to be addressed.

NEWSTALK 1010: The Auditor General reported that your government overpaid \$9.2 billion for wind and solar power alone and that we here in Ontario are paying twice the US average for wind and three and a half times the US average for solar power. Instead of mortgaging the future like we are today. Why not repeal the green energy contracts your government has signed?

PREMIER WYNNE: Because it would cost billions of dollars. It would be a very long-term process and there would be enormous legal costs associated with that. We looked at it, Ryan, you know. Trust me, we looked at everything, you know. I looked at all the possibilities. I talked to experts and academics about what we could do and ripping up those contracts is really not a viable option. There would be huge costs associated with it and quite frankly the opposition is acknowledging that you know? That there would be huge costs associated with that. And that's why the smoothing of the costs over time and making sure that as we sign contracts going forward that they are at a much

lower rate and that we don't make those same decisions in the future.

- NEWSTALK 1010: All right, you mentioned it. Let's talk about the future green energy deals. Will you continue to sign these costly green energy deals? I understand you've got potential deals on your desk right now that need to be signed in the next few days, applicants that are looking to cash in on sweetheart deals your government has offered under the Green Energy Act –

- PREMIER WYNNE: Well the costs are way down.

- NEWSTALK 1010: Are you going to be signing those deals though?

- PREMIER WYNNE: The costs are way down, Ryan. So yeah, are we going to continue to have renewable energy in Ontario? Yeah we are. The air's clean, we're not having smog days. But are the costs of those contracts going to be much, much lower? Absolutely.

- NEWSTALK 1010: So you're saying they won't continue to burden the taxpayer or the hydro ratepayer in the province of Ontario as they have over the last few years?

- PREMIER WYNNE: Did you say won't or will?

- NEWSTALK 1010: That they won't.

- PREMIER WYNNE: No, exactly. Because the cost of solar and wind has come down and we will continue – we will continue to generate clean, renewable energy in Ontario but at a much lower cost in terms of those renewable contracts.

- NEWSTALK1010: All right, the rate cuts themselves will start to show up on hydro bills in June. Is that correct?

- PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, by the summer. Yup.

- NEWSTALK1010: Okay, in a household that pays about \$135 a month should see that cost drop to about \$101?

- PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah, and then on top of that, and I know we're in the GTA right now, but one of the other things we've heard about from people is the distribution costs outside of the urban areas, and so people who are paying very high distribution costs are going to see those reduced as well to the level of what a person in an urban area, like downtown Toronto, would pay.

- NEWSTALK1010: All right, a lot of people like Jay's neighbour, who Jay mentioned off the top of the segment here, are talking about the politics of this, the politicking of it all. What about after the election? If you win another majority government, how long is this 17 per cent rate cut going to last?

- PREMIER WYNNE: So we've put this in place as a permanent change to the system. I mean that's why we talk about it is a structural change. You know, some of the changes we've put in place, like taking the Ontario Electricity Support Program off the rate base and putting it on the tax base, that's a structural change. Sharing the cost of these investments over 30 years, that's a structural change, and that's not going to change after the next election. That's in place for the 30 year period.

- NEWSTALK1010: All right, so that is something set in stone?

- PREMIER WYNNE: That is set in stone. Well, for 30 years.

- NEWSTALK1010: Okay. Because, I mean, listen. There are a lot of people who have made the comparison, and I'll make it straight to you. Before the 2014 election, you said there would be a cut to auto insurance premiums, an average of 15 per cent by August of 2015. You failed to achieve even half of that. You said the 15 per cent cut had always been a stretch goal. Well, will we be seeing more stretch goals from your government when it comes to hydro?

- PREMIER WYNNE: So, Ryan, in terms of the 15 per cent cut on auto insurance. There are companies in Ontario that have achieved a 15 per cent reduction. Absolutely, there are. And are we continuing to work to take more cost out of auto insurance, you know, the cost of fraud, and so on? Yes, we are. But there have been reductions. Some companies are down to 15 per cent or more, and we will continue to work towards that, absolutely.

- NEWSTALK1010: All right. But when it comes to hydro, is this just another stretch goal from your government to try and get back in office? Because it sure smells that way.

- PREMIER WYNNE: Well here's the thing. People are going to see these reductions on their bills, and they will see these reductions on their bills by the summer. And those changes will stay in place, election or no election.

- NEWSTALK1010: And when you say that, when these people are seeing the goals, the reductions in their hydro bills, is it not your goal for them to look at that bill and say, "Hey, wait a minute. The Liberals aren't so bad. I'm going to check that box next time I get in a polling station"?

- PREMIER WYNNE: It's my goal that people will look at their electricity bills and they'll be able to pay them, and they won't have to worry about whether paying their electricity bill is going to mean that they can't either feed their kids, or give their kids the money to go on a field trip, or be able to look after their families. That's what's driving me on this. I've talked to many, many people around the province whether they've e-mailed me or I've met them when I'm out in communities, and what is motivating me on this is to make sure that people are able to look after themselves and look after their families, and that they're paying a fair price for electricity that reflects the electricity that they're using to the greatest degree possible.

- NEWSTALK1010: Very quick human question for you, Premier Kathleen Wynne. The citizen, do you remember when you had this, I call it an "epiphany," but you had this wakeup call, maybe to the idea that people were really struggling, and you needed to do more. When was it for you?

- PREMIER WYNNE: It was over a year ago, Ryan. That's how we got to the taking 8 per cent off people's bills, and the realisation as we did that that it still wasn't enough. So this has been some time where we've been looking for ways to give people relief, and that's why we're doing this today.

- NEWSTALK1010: Madam Premier, we appreciate you joining us here on The Rush.

- PREMIER WYNNE: Thanks a lot Ryan. Thanks, Jake.

- NEWSTALK1010: Thank you.

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Interview with Premier Wynne On Her Hydro Rate Reduction Plan 1

Source: CBC

Mar 2, 2017 6:03 PM (3)

- Anchor: I had a chance to speak to the Premier after today's announcement to ask her whether this was about Ontario's power or about who's in power in Ontario.

- Anchor: The frustration over the high cost has been building for some time now. A lot of people are asking today if the urgency now to deal with this issue is because we're coming up to an election next year. Can you understand how voters might be sceptical about, you know, what's behind this?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Yeah. The timing. I hear you. It's a good question. But the fact is that we've for some time been working to take costs out of the system. So for more than a year, we've been looking for ways to take costs out of the system. So we renegotiated some big contracts, like the Samsung contract, you know. We put in place the Ontario Energy Support Program because we know

that low income families need support and we took the 8 per cent off people's bills, but all of those things still weren't enough to help people who really needed support.

- Anchor: Do you feel that your government staying in power may depend on fixing this electricity issue in our province and fixing these prices?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: You're going to have to talk to the people of Ontario the day after the provincial election. I just can't – I can't make those kinds of predictions, and I have to work every day to solve the problems and fix the issues that people are facing in the province. And whether there's an election or not, those are the things that are my responsibility. And as I said, this has been a concern for some time. It's a legitimate question to say why has it taking so long. We've been working on it. It is very complicated. I mean we looked at everything. We looked at all different options and this is what we've landed on and we're going to move as quickly as possible to make sure people see these reductions by summer.

- Anchor: Now the Premier and I spoke for almost 10 minutes. You can see our full conversation on Facebook right now. We'll have with Kathleen Wynne for you in about 20 minutes right here.

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Interview with Premier Wynne On Her Hydro Rate Reduction Plan 2

Source: CBC

Mar 2, 2017 6:42 PM (19)

- Anchor: After months of outrage, a move by the Liberal government today that they hope will take the heat off them on hydro costs. When I spoke to Premier Wynne earlier, I also wanted to know about the soaring cost of living. I brought up some of the concerns you've sent us during our series looking at housing and rentals in Toronto called "No Fixed Address".

- Anchor: We've been hearing from thousands of people, landlords and tenants, and they're telling us that getting – it's getting too expensive to live in Toronto and a big part of that equation is hydro as they pay. Will this make a difference to those people? Will it help to keep people in our city, which is kind of the engine that runs this province?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: I hope so. I mean, I think that it will make a difference to – it will make a difference to people, anybody who pays for electricity will see a change in their electricity bill. Landlords will be required to pass along the savings to tenants. So, you know, it is absolutely my expectation and my hope that this is going to make a difference to anyone who pays electricity in their residence in the province.

- Anchor: We spoke to body from Vancouver as part of this series and they were saying that there's a fear here that Toronto might turn into what they're calling a "generational ghost town" where we can't keep young people –

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: That was somebody in Vancouver?

- Anchor: They said that – and they're saying that they saw what happened in Vancouver and they feel like Toronto is on the verge of something similar. Are we fearful that we're going to lose our young, talented people in this town because they just can't afford to live here anymore? And it's not about hydro, it just about housing, finding affordable housing.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Yeah, and I think it is a concern. I mean we have a different housing market than Vancouver, so, you know, it's a bit of an apples to oranges comparison.

- Anchor: But we are losing young people. They are telling us over and over, they just can't afford the rent here.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: No I hear that, and I don't think there's a quick fix to that. We've been in

conversation with the Real Estate Board. We've been working with the federal government and city officials to see if there are things that we can do. You know, we increased the rebate on the land transfer tax. It was a small thing, but it was something to acknowledge the challenge of first-time home buyers. I think there's more that we probably have to do. I don't know what those things are.

- Anchor: Rent control, maybe that's something we're hearing from them, that young professionals say that we need some kind of rent control.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Yeah it's an interesting question because buildings that were built after 1991 are not under rent control.

- Anchor: And we've had somebody – \$1,000 their rent has gone up and they've had to leave that apartment.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: So I think that those are good questions that we have to look at. Again, I don't have the answers to those questions, but there are anomalies in some of our systems and our regulations here in Ontario that we need to look at and we're willing to look at what could be done.

- Anchor: And finally, just back to hydro, just what do you have to say to our viewers and listeners in urban areas in this city that have been struggling to pay their hydro bills? How is your announcement today going to make their lives better in our province?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: So what I would say to them and to all of the people beyond the GTA, we've heard you, we've listened, and we've heard the concerns, and the action that we're taking today is about making your electricity bill fairer and you'll see that change by the summertime.

- Anchor: Appreciate your time.

- Anchor: And you can watch my full interview with the Premier online on Facebook and there right now, you can watch our roundtable discussion on housing and rental problems in Toronto. Just head to facebook.com/cbctoronto.

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Interview With Premier Wynne On Her Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

Source: Global

Mar 2, 2017 6:16 PM (19)

- Anchor: Today, the Wynne government unveiled its long promised hydro rate relief package. Now it comes with the headline of 25 per cent off hydro prices but it includes the already implemented 8 per cent HST rebate – apparently 17 per cent off hydro prices did not have the same ring. To talk more about this, I'm joined from Queen's Park by Premier Kathleen Wynne. Premier, thank you for joining us.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: It is a pleasure, Alan. Thank you.

- Anchor: Why go this way? Why decide to move the cost of the system further down the road to a new generation?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: So we've done a couple of things, Alan. We are spreading the cost of the investments that we've made over a longer period of time. Right now, people are paying for investments that were necessary in the system and people are paying for those in higher electricity prices, steeply high electricity prices right now, and what we have said is, 'You know what? It will be fairer if we can instead of having those costs paid over 20 years, if we spread it over a 30-year period – because really the people who are paying electricity prices right now are paying for neglect that was in the system and investments that were needed because of that neglect, and that's years, that's all levels – sorry all parties that have formed government have not invested in the system over time and so, people are paying for that. And they're also paying forward for assets that are going to

be used for people in the future. So spreading those costs over 30 years rather than 20 years is a fairer way to go. But the other thing we have done, Alan, is we are going to move to take distribution costs down, because there are people who live in rural communities outside of urban centres who are paying proportionately very high distribution charges that they can't control, and we're going to bring those down as well.

- Anchor: But why not attack the system and change it, because you did not go after these energy contracts. You left them all alone and your Energy Minister has admitted that those are too expensive and have had I believe in his words "sub-optimal outcomes".

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well we looked at everything, Alan. We really did. And there have been some voices that said you should just rip up those contracts. We looked at how we could renegotiate or change those contracts. It would cost hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars in the long-run. There are hundreds of contracts and so we determined, Alan, that that was actually going to be more costly to the system. There would be lawsuits, and what we decided was this was a much more fair way of bringing people's costs down. The other thing is it would take years. It would take years to make those changes in those contracts. So on the cost, on top of the time, what we know is that people need reductions right now. And you know that, Alan. You have been following this. You know that people have talked to you for months. The 8 per cent reduction that we have put in place in January is not enough. They need more people – people need to see greater reductions in their electricity bills and so that's why we are taking this course.

- Anchor: Now Premier, you like to refer sometimes to your family and your grandchildren, especially when you talk about green energy programs, cap and trade, leaving the planet a better place, for example. I'm wondering how you explain to those same grandchildren about the bill you're going to hand them for the energy system?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, what I would say to them is that right now their mom and dad are having to pay a lot more for electricity which means they cannot do other things, you know? So I would say to any kids my grandkids' age – they are seven and five and three right now – and I would say to them you know, 'We want your mom and dad to be able to make sure that you have money for field trips and be able to take you places and be able to buy food for you and make sure that you have child care. We want your parents to be able to pay for those things, and so we are going to take their electricity prices down right now. That means that when you are their age, when you are a little bit older, you are going to have to pay some of that cost as well. But everybody will pay for assets that we will all use.'

- Anchor: Premier, thank you so much for your time.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much, Alan.

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Premier Kathleen Wynne Talks About The Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

Source: CFTO

Mar 2, 2017 6:23 PM (18)

- Anchor: And the Premier joins us now to talk about this. I guess there were a lot of Libby the horse farmers out there that you were listening to. You know, before we talk about where we're going, let's talk about where we've been, how we ended up in this situation. You talked about mistakes.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: I talked about Liberal, NDP, Conservative governments not making the investments that needed to be made in the system so that by 2003 we were looking at a pretty degraded electricity system. And we've made investments over the last 10-plus years to build new transmission lines, to build new towers in the north, dams in the south. So we've made a lot of investments in the system, and a second issue that we've had to deal with, and a mistake that has been made, is that a lot of these costs we've asked this generation to pay for when, in fact, the assets that have been built and the changes that have been made are going to last for many

generations to come.

- Anchor: If you were look 10 years in the future, what are the energy prices going to be compared to today?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: We've said for the next four years increases will be at the rate of inflation around 2 per cent and then as we developed a long-term energy plan we'll see what those prices and increases will be over the long-term. What we know is right now people need the relief. They need to know that that reduction is going to stay in place over time and that electricity bills will not jump up in price over the next couple of years.

- Anchor: And what do you say to cynics who talk about this as a re-election ploy and wonder why it wasn't done last year?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, it's a good question in terms of how long it's taken us. You know, for some time, over a year, we've been looking for ways to reduce costs. We renegotiated the Samsung contract and that took over a billion dollars out of the system. We made the decision not to invest in new nuclear and took 8 per cent off of people's bills as of this January. But that turns out – all of that turns out not to be enough. And so that's why, since last November, we have been looking for more ways to reduce people's electricity bills and that's the plan we brought forward today.

- Anchor: But you know some are saying it's an election ploy.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, people may say that. What I know is, when people get their bills this summer they will see on average 25 per cent reduction that will help them to look after their families, that will relieve them of a burden that has been a lot to carry over the last few years. People in rural communities as well, Ken, will see more of a reduction because many people in rural communities are paying a distribution charge that's exponentially higher than people in urban communities and so on top of the 25 per cent they may see another 10, 15 per cent reduction and that will help them with those very high distribution costs.

- Anchor: Premier, I appreciate you sitting down to explain this further.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much.

- Anchor: Thank you.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Take care.

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CTV News Interviews Premier Kathleen Wynne About Hydro Cuts

Source: CJOH

Mar 2, 2017 6:06 PM (4)

- Anchor: Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne joins us now about these changes to the electricity system. I've heard you earlier today say this has nothing to do with re-election and politics. I find that – I'm not suggesting you're not telling the truth – I do find that hard to believe because I think as a politician, your job is to get re-elected. Surely you're looking at the polls. Surely you're looking at this issue as a major, major problem for the Liberals that could, in fact, end up defeating you in 2018.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: So, you know, I don't think those are mutually exclusive ideas. Sure. There's always a political – there's always a political reality that any politician is dealing with, that any leader is dealing with. But, Graham, the issue of people having to choose between paying their rent or paying their electricity bill or looking after their families adequately, that is a much more pressing issue than any political narrative, and that is the point I'm making. The reason that we need to act on this is that there are families across the province, there are seniors who paying too much for their electricity bills. It's not fair, and it has to be dealt with. That is what is driving these

changes.

- Anchor: Premier Kathleen Wynne, we appreciate your time from Queen's Park today. Thank you very much.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much, Graham.

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CP24 Interview With Premier Kathleen Wynne About New Hydro Costs

Source: CP24

Mar 2, 2017 5:00 PM

- Anchor: Good evening. Relief is on the way from soaring electricity bills across the province, but those savings carry a big price tag.

- Anchor 2: Premier Kathleen Wynne says bill rates will be cut an average of 17 per cent by June. Now that is on top of an 8 per cent HST rebate announced earlier this year. But in order to give people a break now, it will cost the province more in long-term interest rates, an extra \$1.4 billion annually over 10 years.

- Anchor: All right, joining us now live to speak about the new hydro plan is Premier Kathleen Wynne at Queen's Park. Nice to see you Premier. Thanks for being here tonight. Let's talk about those extra interest payments, \$25 billion over the extra term of the cycle here. Now some cynics would say this is just an expensive way to win the next election campaign for your party.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, you know, Nick, what this is about is people who are having too much trouble paying their electricity bills. And what we have said is that all of those investments that had to be made – you know we had to build the system, it had been neglected for years by subsequent governments, Liberals, Conservatives, NDP. We had to make investments. We've made the investments. And now we're stretching the cost, we're spreading the cost of paying for those investments over a longer period of time. Instead of 20 years, we're paying over 30 years. And that means we can take costs out of the system so people by the summer will see a 25 per cent reduction in their electricity bills, and there's a fairness component here, Nick. It's fair that people should pay for those investments, pay for those assets over the life of the asset. And that means not all those costs should be paid right now. We can spread them over the 30 years.

- Anchor 2: Premier, to follow-up on what Nick was saying, is this an epiphany about the hydro situation, or really, is this an attempt, with the polls not being in your favour right now, to curry favour?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well it's actually neither, Stephanie, because we've been trying for some time to find ways to reduce electricity costs. The 8 per cent reduction that went on to people's bills in January was part of that. We put in place the Ontario Electricity Support Program for low-income families. That was part of trying to help people. We made a decision and renegotiated the Samsung deal. That was part of taking costs out of the system. So, for some time, we've been looking for ways to lower electricity costs, but all of those things, together, weren't enough. We needed to do more and that's why we're bringing forward a 25 per cent reduction. And you know those electricity prices will stay down at least over the next four years, the increases will only be at inflation rates.

- Anchor: Let's talk about the Green Energy Act, Premier, because we're overpaying for power that, in some cases, we don't or can't use, and then we found out last year because the Ontario taxpayers, ratepayers, weren't using enough energy, suddenly our bills went up again because of that. So there seems to be a conflict here. You say you're hearing the anger, you're hearing the frustration about these tax bills, but it seemed like the Green Energy Plan on that side of the deal or the equation has kind of been a failure.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, you know, if you think about the electricity system in 2003 when we

came into office under my predecessor, we had a system that was brownouts and blackouts. There were smog days. We've shut down all the coal plants. Yes, we've invested in renewable and wind and solar energy. But we've also built towers and built dams and built capacity. We've got a clean energy system now. We don't have smog days. So it's a really clean electricity grid, and it's reliable, which it wasn't in 2003. But there's a cost associated with that. And, yes, some of those contracts were very high, and the cost of those we are paying for now. And if we could redo those contracts, could they be lower? Maybe. But the reality is, those contracts are in place and we need to spread the cost of those assets – which will be in place for decades – we need to spread those costs over a longer period of time, as you would with a mortgage you know. If you re-mortgage your home and pay for it over a longer period of time, you can get those costs down. And that's exactly what we're doing.

- Anchor: Okay, Premier Wynne. Thanks for joining us and thank you for defending your new hydro plan. Appreciate this.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much. People see reductions by summer.

- Anchor: Okay, we'll look forward to those on our bills.

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Interview with Premier Wynne on Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

Source: CKVR

Mar 2, 2017 6:02 PM (2)

- Anchor: Joining us now to discuss the plan further is Premier Kathleen Wynne. Premier, thank you for making some time for us today.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Great, Tony. Thanks very much for having me.

- Anchor: Now you've acknowledged how difficult a situation customers have been in. I have to ask you, how do you feel about putting all of that extra debt on to Ontario taxpayers?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, here is thing Tony, we've made a lot of investments in a system that was pretty degraded when we come to office under my predecessor in 2003. We had brownouts and blackouts. The system had been neglected and that's not a partisan comment. It was Liberal and NDP and Conservative governments who had not made the upgrades that needed to be made. We've done that. We've invested about \$50 billion in new dams, and towers, and power lines and renewable energy, wind and solar and so we have a clean, renewable grid. We have shut down the coal-fired plant. We're not having smog days. So we have made a lot of changes but there is cost associated with that. And so what we're doing is spreading the cost, spreading the payment for those investments over a longer period of time. Rather than 20 years, we're spreading that cost over 30 years. So I think that's fair. I think that it's fair to ask, yes, this generation to pay for part of that but also to ask the next generation to pay for assets that they're going to be using and benefitting from as well.

- Anchor: Okay, now is this the only option you had to cut electricity bills?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well we looked at everything, Tony. We looked at all options. We looked at the contracts that were in place. We looked at ways to help people, but we're doing other things too. We're going to be changing the distribution costs, especially for people who live in areas where the distribution costs are very high. And so people, for example, who are served by InnPower are going to see their distribution costs go down because they're disproportionately higher than people who live in urban centres and so we've said that's not fair because those are costs that people can't control. So we're going to reduce those distribution costs to about what someone would pay in a more dense urban centre.

- Anchor: So the government does have some power then when it comes to that delivery charge?

That's one of biggest things we hear people complain about.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, so here the thing. What we have said is that we're going take those very high distribution costs and take part of it on to the tax base rather than asking ratepayers to pay for that. Likewise with the Ontario Electricity Support Program, which is a program to help people who live in low income, we're going to take that program, which is really a social program, and we're going to put it on tax base, take it off people's electricity bills, because it is only fair that it be shared by all of the society.

- Anchor: Okay, everyone will be watching their bills by summer for those cuts.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Yeah, by summer people will see those costs reduced on to their electricity bills okay?

- Anchor: Okay. Premier Wynne, thanks for your time.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks Tony.

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Interview with Premier Wynne On Her Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

Source: CKCO

Mar 2, 2017 6:37 PM (20)

- Anchor: Now to more on the provincial government's plan to cut hydro rates. With more on what this means for residents of Waterloo Region, we are joined by Premier Kathleen Wynne. Premier Kathleen Wynne, back in the fall, you admitted that your government actually made a mistake by letting rates soar. How did they get so high in the first place?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, the story of how rates have gotten so high, Rosie, actually goes back quite some time. It goes back to the reality that governments, year over year – so whether Liberal or NDP or Conservative really – over a period of 40 or 50 years did not make the investments that needed to be made. When we came into office under my predecessor in 2003, we had a system that was degraded. It was burning dirty coal. We've shut down all the coal plants. We've made about \$50 billion in investments over the last decade or so, but there is a cost associated with those upgrades. We have a clean electricity grid now but there is a cost that has to be paid. And what we're saying is that we need to spread that cost over a longer period of time. What is happening right now is that people are paying at a rate that would pay off those costs over a 20-year period. We're saying we need to spread that over a 30-year period, which will be fairer for people today and will mean that, yes, people into the next generation will pay for some of those assets as well, but they will be using those assets. They will be benefitting from those assets.

- Anchor: And when it comes to this plan, we now know that customers in rural areas – they'll get a big break, a 53 per cent cut to their bills. How exactly would that work?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: So depending on where people live and who their distribution company is, they will see a larger reduction on their distribution costs. Because people who are living in rural communities and more remote communities are paying a disproportionately high distribution cost, and so what we've said is, you know what, that's not fair. They can't control that cost, and so we're going to take those distribution costs down to the – about what an urban customer would pay and that means that people who are paying, you know, twice their electricity bill in distribution costs in rural communities, they will see those distribution cost go down. So on top of the 25 per cent they may see another 15 or 20 per cent reduction.

- Anchor: Now some critics say you are just robbing Peter to pay Paul. What is your response to that?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: My response is that if an asset is going to last for 30 years or longer, then it's fair that people who are benefitting from that asset would pay their share over that period of

time, over the life of asset, which is why stretching those payments over a 30-year period is fairer.

- Anchor: Premier Kathleen Wynne, thank you very much for joining us.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks Rosie.

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Interview with Premier Wynne On Her Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

Source: CFPL

Mar 2, 2017 6:19 PM (11)

- Anchor: The provincial government officially announced its plan that will see an average 17 per cent reduction in our hydro bills. For more on that we are joined now by Premier Kathleen Wynne. Thank you, Premier Wynne, for taking the time. Now the first question: A lot of critics say this plan just means taxpayers will end up paying more in the long run. Now what is your response to that and do you think it's fair to ask future generations to carry these extra costs?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: So Kelda, the fairness in this is that right now we have got people paying electricity bills that include costs of rebuilding a system that had been neglected for many years. And what we are saying is that if we spread those costs over a longer period of time – so rather than paying for the upgrades to the system that were absolutely necessary, instead of paying for those over 20 years, we pay for those over 30 years, then we can provide a 25 per cent reduction. You said 17 per cent. You're absolutely right. 17 per cent on top of the 8 per cent that we had already taken out of people's bills by removing the HST, the provincial portion of the HST. So by summer, on average, people will see a 25 per cent reduction because we are spreading those costs over a 30-year period and we will keep those costs down over the next four years.

- Anchor: The NDP, they have spoken about their plan that they say would reduce rates by as much as 30 per cent for some households, and I mean the centrepiece of that is buying back shares of Hydro One. What do you think of the plan that they have been promoting?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, what the NDP is talking about is not practical. And what we know right now, Kelda, is people need relief right now. They need immediate relief. They can't wait for a couple of years for a renegotiation and the other reality is that the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One has not put one cent of cost on anyone's electricity bills. So what we were looking for was a practical plan that would actually take people's costs down and that's what this will do. Spreading the costs of the investments in the system that had to be made, spreading those costs over a 30-year period rather than a 20 year period is fair. It means that, yes, people today will continue to pay for some of those costs but also people into the next generation will pay some of those costs because the assets are still going to be in use. On top of that, people who are living in rural communities, who are paying a very high distribution cost are going to stay on top of the 25 per cent reduction, they will see another 10 or 15 per cent reduction. So they will see a substantial reduction in the distribution costs, which is lower in our urban centres than it is in our rural centres.

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Interview with Premier Wynne On Her Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

Source: MCTV

Mar 2, 2017 6:42 PM (25)

- Anchor: Returning to our top story, hydro rates are coming down but Ontario residents will pay for it later. The Wynne government is cutting rates by another 17 per cent. You should start to feel the difference this summer. The Premier says the rate cut will help every person in Ontario, but cutting rates now will cost more in the long-run. Taking longer to pay for all the power lines, power plants and green energy will cost Ontarians an extra \$14 billion over 30 years. The Premier herself, Kathleen Wynne, joins us now from Toronto. Premier, opposition MPPs have been standing up in the legislature telling stories about people here in northern Ontario who are struggling with their hydro

bills, doing everything the Ontario government told them to do – do their laundry at night, conserving, and yet their bill still skyrocketed. Is today's hydro rate cut an admission that your energy policy failed Ontarians?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, Tony, you know, what we did today was we acknowledged that people are overburdened by their electricity bills and that the changes that we have made, the latest of which was the 8 per cent reduction, taking the HST off people's bills, is just not enough, that there's more that we need to do. We've been looking for some months for ways of reducing people's costs and today we announced a 25 per cent reduction in people's electricity bills, an average across the province. On average residents who pay electricity will see a 25 per cent reduction. We also announced – and this is really relative for the north and the rural communities, people paying very high distribution costs – we're going to bring those distribution costs down to the level that a resident in an urban area like Toronto would pay. So people who are paying very high distribution costs on top of the 25 per cent are going to see another 10 to 15 per cent reduction. So it's going to be a significant reduction for people who are quite frankly paying too much for their electricity bills.

- Anchor: Premier, your critics are questioning the timing of this move. There's an election next year and your Liberal government is not doing well in the polls. Is this rate cut really about buying votes?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: You know, as I said, Tony, we've been looking for ways to reduce people's electricity costs for time. And what is driving this change is all the voices that I've heard, that my colleagues have heard, that MPPs of all stripes have heard. And, you know, the opposition parties have been standing up in the legislature saying that they're hearing that people's electricity bills are too high, exactly the same message that I've heard. So what's driving these changes are those voices, the people who are having trouble paying for their electricity bills. They're feeling like they can't pay their rent or they can't pay their mortgage or they can't look after their kids adequately because their electricity bills are too high. That's what's driving this. This isn't about election timing. This is about the timing of families who need to have some relief, and we're delivering that relief. By the summer, on average, people will see a 25 per cent reduction in their electricity bills and it will be more in the rural and the northern communities.

- Anchor: Thanks for this, Premier Wynne.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much, Tony. Take care.

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Interview With Premier Wynne On Her Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

Source: CityTV

Mar 2, 2017 5:45 PM

- Reporter: Joining me now here at Queen's Park is Premier Kathleen Wynne. Thank you for joining us. You've made a big hydro announcement, promising relief to taxpayers. 25 per cent reduction on their bills. But you're fudging the numbers. It's not 25 per cent because you've already announced 8 per cent. So really the announcement is 17 per cent today.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, here's the thing. By the summer, everyone who pays electricity in their home will see a 25 – on average, for some it will be a bit less, for some it will be a bit more – but will see around a 25 per cent reduction. And for people who live in rural communities or in remote areas, they're actually going to see a greater than 25 per cent reduction because we're going to lower their distribution costs. So it's a significant change.

- Reporter: But there's going to be a price to pay long-term. This is not coming cheap. In essence, taxpayers are going to be paying billions over the next two, what, two, three decades to cover this cost.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, here's the thing. We've made about \$50 billion of investments in the system. So building towers, rebuilding lines, shutting down the coal plants and building generation

to supply, to fill that supply. And those investments had to be made. For decades before we came into office, under my predecessor in 2003, there had not been investments in the system. We've made those investments and there's a cost associated with those. So what we're saying is it's not fair that this generation would have to pay for all of those costs. We believe that it's more fair to spread those over a longer period of time. So instead of paying those off in 20 years, spread it over a 30-year period, as you would a mortgage, Cynthia.

- Reporter: Then why wasn't that done in the first place? And why didn't you do this two years ago? Three, four, five years ago? And are you doing this to save your political job?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: So we have been looking for – for some time, so not just starting in November but for a couple of years we've been looking for ways to take electricity costs down.

- Reporter: But even just a couple of years isn't long enough to have reacted to this situation that for many families is a crisis.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, but what I'm saying is that, over the last couple of years, it has become more acute. And if you look at the way electricity prices have been going up, it's been the last few years that they've gone very, very high, very, very quickly. So we put in place the Ontario Electricity Support Program. We put the 8 per cent in place. We renegotiated contracts like the Samsung contract. But all of that together, Cynthia, wasn't enough.

- Reporter: There is a discernible change in temperature in this province. People are angry at the Liberals. They blame the Liberals. They blame you for these skyrocketing hydro costs. At what point would you step down?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: I have a job to do and I'm doing my job.

- Reporter: So you're going to run in the next election no matter what?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: I'm running in the next election.

- Reporter: Even if the polls are dismal and perhaps a predecessor might have a better shot?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: You know, polls – the polls that are important are the polls on election day. I made a commitment in 2014 that I would implement our plan. I've been implementing our plan, and at the same time responding in a responsible way to people's concerns. The electricity prices is a huge concern, and it's my responsible as premier to fix that.

- Reporter: But is this not all about positioning yourself so that you could have another election win? I mean we've seen a lot of the announcements. You threw John Tory under the bus over the road tolls knowing that that would not go over well with the 905. You just signed – offered deals to teachers early, you know, to avoid any labour disruption. Is this all part of a grand, you know, path to try to be premier again despite the odds?

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, so here's the thing. I mean if we look at those decisions in one at a time, the tolling decision was about affordability for people. It absolutely was. There had not been regional discussion. People in the 905 –

- Reporter: But you led him to believe that he could go ahead with it and you would give your blessing.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: I'm not philosophically opposed to tolls. We have high occupancy toll lanes but people have options. But there was an affordability issue that had not been addressed and you know there had not been a regional discussion. If we look at labour peace, I mean you know we've been talking about labour peace in education for a very long time and it's very important to me that kids have that peace in their schools, that teachers are able to teach and not be worried about labour disruptions. So it's absolutely part of what I believe is important to have that labour

peace in the system whether there's an election coming or not. And the same goes for electricity prices, whether there's an election or not. There's always a political narrative. I'm a politician. There's always a political story.

- Reporter: Can a politician stay too long in the job? Come on. You've seen it. Like at what point do you know –

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: History will write that story, you know. I made a commitment in 2014 that I was going to implement my plan. I'm doing that. My job's not done and I'm going to continue.

- Reporter: Premier Wynne, thank you very much for joining us.

- Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you. Thanks Cynthia.

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