

Morning Media Scan: Hydro Rate Reduction - May 2, 2017

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Morning Media Scan: May 2, 2017

MEDIA SCAN: HYDRO RATE REDUCTION PLAN

May 2, 2017

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[London Free Press: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A9; 2017.05.02](#)

Print Coverage

Sudbury Star: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A8; 2017.05.02

PUBLICATION: Sudbury Star
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SECTION: Opinion
EDITION: Final
BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein
SOURCE: Sudbury Star
KEYWORDS: wonder,money,premier,kathleen,wynne,willing
WORD COUNT: 514

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Simcoe Reformer: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A4; 2017.05.02

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Gordie Howe Bridge takes another step forward

The Gordie Howe International Bridge project has taken another major step forward with the signing of three contracts totalling \$86 million.

Phase 2 of the long-anticipated Detroit River bridge project will begin immediately by contractors retained under the agreements approved by the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority for hydro relocation services and completion of the final phase of site preparation work.

Several hydro towers near the Brighton Beach power plant will be removed and high-voltage electric lines will be buried.

"The second stage of preparatory works is another step in delivering Canadian and U.S. sites that are ready for construction to our eventual private-sector partner," said Michael Cautillo, the bridge authority's CEO.

"The more work we complete now, the more quickly our partner will be able to begin construction after financial close."

The contracts have been awarded to Prysmian Cables and Systems Canada Ltd. for cable and accessories; Valard Construction LP for transmission lines relocations, and AMS, a joint venture of Amico Infrastructures Inc. and Mid-South Contractors Ltd. for distribution line relocation.

The utility relocations as part of this work will focus on the Hydro One power corridor that supports Ontario's power grid. Work should be completed by mid-2018.

"Hydro One is proud to be a part of this transformative project," said Mayo Schmidt, president and CEO of Hydro One Limited and Hydro One Inc.

"Working with the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority to make the new bridge a reality for Canadian and American businesses and travellers is a top priority."

A tour last week of the bridge plaza site on the city's west end showed work on the previous \$50-million "early works" project is wrapping up.

That work included one-million tonnes of gravel being placed, drainage installed for the toll and customs plaza, high-powered hydro lines being moved underground, creation of storm water ponds and construction of a new four-kilometre road in Brighton Beach for local traffic.

A new pumping station is also nearing completion just south of the Brighton Beach power plant. Streetlights and curbs are already all in place for the new local "ring road" designed to go around the bridge plaza as a replacement for Broadway and Sandwich streets, but it will not open for public use until fully completed some time later this year.

The former Southwest Sales aggregate business on the riverfront just east of the power plant has been purchased by the federal government and cleared away.

The property will soon be prepped as the site for the Howe bridge towers and takeoff point heading into Detroit.

The bridge authority's next step is awarding the contract to a private sector consortium - one of three that are short-listed last year - that will build the planned Windsor-Detroit border crossing, plazas and new three-kilometre feeder road in Detroit to link the bridge to I-75 freeway.

Bridge construction should start next summer and take about 42 months to complete. This would put the Howe bridge opening scheduled some time to occur in 2022.

On the Detroit side, about two-thirds of the required properties are in the hands of Michigan's transportation department, with outstanding offers made on every property required.

Expropriation (condemnation in the U.S.) protocol has been launched by the state government against potential unwilling owners not looking to sell, including Ambassador Bridge owner Matty Moroun, who holds roughly two-dozen properties that are required.

The billionaire businessman in return has launched court challenges to stop his lands from being taken

over by the state as he hopes to delay the Howe bridge project which he views as revenue competition for his own 87-year-old year old crossing.

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Daily Observer (Pembroke): How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A5;
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Sarnia Observer: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A4; 2017.05.02

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Niagara Falls Review: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A4; 2017.05.02

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Owen Sound Sun Times: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A4;
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North Bay Nugget: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A4; 2017.05.02

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North Bay Nugget: 'Quick fix' budget leaves North behind; A3; 2017.05.02

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'Quick fix'budget leaves North behind; Government 'intent on tearing Ontario apart'

The Kathleen Wynne government released its latest budget last Thursday, and it is disappointing to say the least.
The first thing that struck me was the Liberal government's continued refusal to stop the sale of Hydro One. Their reasoning is disturbingly clear: The Liberals are using the one-time proceeds from the sale of Hydro One to balance the government's books.
Even worse, the government has lost more than \$1 billion of revenue; these funds are now going to private investors who have bought 30 per cent of Hydro One shares.

Going forward, this revenue will continue to be lost every year to private interests, instead of funding the programs and services that Ontario taxpayers rely on.

While the government has proposed to lower the hydro rates by decreasing delivery charges, this plan is funded by the taxpayer through government borrowing.

Ultimately, you and I will continue pay the full hydro bill and resulting interest on this government's debts. Instead of addressing the overwhelming number of administrative policy problems that led to the current energy crisis, the government has implemented a "quick fix" to solve its political problems.

Many families in Ontario are finding it harder to make ends meet, due to chronic underfunding of necessary government services.

Premier Wynne missed her chance to turn things around in this budget. Instead, Ontario's hospitals have been cut to the bone. There have been many nursing jobs cut and surgeries delayed due to diminished health care access and funding shortfalls. Patients are being kept in hallways, as there are not enough actual beds and rooms for them to stay in -nor is there enough health care staff to provide the needed support.

This budget increases the operational funding for Ontario hospitals by three per cent. Due to the effects of a two per cent increase in annual inflation, this results in a minor funding increase of only one per cent to Ontario hospitals.

Taking into account Northern Ontario's aging population, it is impossible to calculate how such a small increase in hospital funding will accommodate the health care needs of the ill and elderly.

The budget announces a pharmacare program for Ontarians ages 24 and younger. There has been some speculation that the Liberal government was forced into hastily rolling out a pharmacare plan in reaction to a recent NDP announcement.

The NDP has promised to implement a universal pharmacare program for everyone under age 65 upon forming government. Despite announcing their new, age-limited pharmacare plan in the budget speech, there was no budget allotment of costs in the government's accompanying financial documents.

As fewer people have health care benefits, and many cannot afford to pay for prescriptions, it is increasingly urgent that people get solid pharmacare coverage.

The problem with the government's plan is that most families will still be left without protection. With many people beginning their families later in life, primary wage earners over the age of 24 will not be covered by the government's new pharmacare strategy. Again, this appears to a frantic political fix, instead of a well-planned program for the benefit of all.

The budget was especially disappointing for Northern and rural Ontario.

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is a huge proponent of Northern Ontario economic development, through support for new investors in the mining sector, and handling of critical services for unorganized townships (eg. services boards); it will suffer a cut of \$70.3 million.

The \$37.4-million cut to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry are particularly disturbing, as the forest industry is under threat from increased American trade tariffs on softwood lumber.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, which already operates with limited resources in Northern Ontario, is being cut by a further \$47.1 million.

The Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund has been frozen. As a result, municipalities won't have any increase to the funding they desperately need to keep up with the ever-mounting costs of services previously downloaded by the province, including road maintenance, policing, social services and vital emergency services.

It feels like the North was forgotten when the government wrote this budget. For the first time since I have represented Timiskaming-Cochrane as MPP, the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission was not even mentioned, nor was the Ring of Fire development.

The Ring of Fire has the potential to be a huge economic driver of our region, and the ONTC has been a significant employer of our labour force.

One of the few mentions of the North in the budget referred to an increase in the Northern Ontario Health Travel Grant to cover more overnight stays for people going outside of their communities for medical services. Judging from this budget, the Wynne government completely fails to understand the fundamental importance of the North's valuable, resource-based economy to the success of this province.

Overall, the economy of the province is improving but only the major urban centres are benefitting, and the outlying areas are being left behind. Instead of uniting the Ontario, the Wynne government seems intent on tearing it apart. John Vanthof in the NDP MPP for Timiskaming-Cochrane.

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Cornwall Standard Freeholder: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A6;

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The Sault Star: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A6; 2017.05.02

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KEYWORDS: wonder,money,premier,kathleen,wynne,willing
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The Brockville Recorder & Times: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us? A6; 2017.05.02

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Brantford Expositor: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A4; 2017.05.02

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The Belleville Intelligencer: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; B2; 2017.05.02

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The Barrie Examiner: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; C2; 2017.05.02

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Kingston Whig-Standard: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A4;
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Windsor Star: \$86M in prep work for Howe bridge; A1 / Front; 2017.05.02

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ILLUSTRATION: Photos: Dan Janisse / Workers fish underground hydro lines Monday on the Canadian Plaza site for the Gordie Howe International Bridge.; Photos: Dan Janisse / Crews work and heavy equipment work on framing for a sewage pumping station at the Canadian Plaza.;

IMAGES: Photos: Dan Janisse / Workers fish underground hydro lines Monday on the Canadian Plaza site for the Gordie Howe International Bridge. [WIST_20170502_Early_A1_02_I001.jpg]; Photos: Dan Janisse / Crews work and heavy equipment work on framing for a sewage pumping station at the Canadian Plaza. [WIST_20170502_Early_A1_02_I002.jpg];

WORD COUNT: 605

\$86M in prep work for Howe bridge

The Gordie Howe International Bridge project has taken another major step forward with the signing of three contracts totalling \$86 million.

Phase 2 of the long-anticipated Detroit River bridge project will begin immediately by contractors retained under the agreements approved by the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority for hydro relocation services and completion of the final phase of site preparation work.

Several hydro towers near the Brighton Beach power plant will be removed and high-voltage electric lines will be buried.

"The second stage of preparatory works is another step in delivering Canadian and U.S. sites that are ready for construction to our eventual private-sector partner," said Michael Cautillo, the bridge authority's CEO.

"The more work we complete now, the more quickly our partner will be able to begin construction after financial close."

The contracts have been awarded to Prysmian Cables and Systems Canada Ltd. for cable and accessories; Valard Construction LP for transmission lines relocations; and AMS, a joint venture of Amico Infrastructures Inc. and Mid-South Contractors Ltd. for distribution line relocation.

The utility relocations as part of this work will focus on the Hydro One power corridor that supports Ontario's power grid. Work is expected to be completed by mid-2018.

"Hydro One is proud to be a part of this transformative project," said Mayo Schmidt, president and CEO of Hydro One Limited and Hydro One Inc.

"Working with the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority to make the new bridge a reality for Canadian and American businesses and travellers is a top priority."

A tour last week of the bridge plaza site on the city's west end showed work on the previous \$50-million "early works" project is wrapping up.

That work included one million tonnes of gravel being placed, drainage installed for the toll and customs plaza, high-powered hydro lines being moved underground, creation of stormwater ponds and construction of a new four-kilometre road in Brighton Beach for local traffic.

A new pumping station is also nearing completion just south of the Brighton Beach power plant.

Street lights and curbs are already all in place for the new local "ring road" designed to go around the bridge plaza as a replacement for Broadway Street and Sandwich Street. But it will not open for public use until it's fully completed some time later this year.

The former Southwest Sales aggregate business on the riverfront just east of the power plant has been purchased by the federal government and cleared away. The property will soon be prepped as the site for the Howe bridge towers and takeoff point heading into Detroit.

The bridge authority's next step is awarding the contract to a private sector consortium - one of three that are short-listed last year - that will build the planned Windsor-Detroit border crossing, plazas and new three-kilometre feeder road in Detroit to link the bridge to the I-75 freeway.

Bridge construction should start next summer and take about 42 months to complete. The would see the Howe bridge opening some time in 2022.

On the Detroit side, about two-thirds of the required properties are in the hands of Michigan's transportation department with outstanding offers made on every property required.

Expropriation (condemnation in the U.S.) protocol has been launched by the state government against potential unwilling owners not looking to sell - including Ambassador Bridge owner Matty Moroun who holds roughly two dozen required properties.

In return, the billionaire businessman has launched court challenges to stop his lands from being taken over by the state in a bid to delay the Howe bridge project, which Moroun views as revenue competition for his own 87-year-old crossing. dbattagello@postmedia.com

London Free Press: How much will Wynne's next budget cost us?; A9; 2017.05.02

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