

Morning Media Scan: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan - November 24, 2017

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MEDIA SCAN: HYDRO RATE REDUCTION PLAN

November 24, 2017

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Print Coverage

National Post: Hydro One mulls use of pre-paid meters; Electricity; FP8; 2017.11.24

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ILLUSTRATION: Craig Glover, London Free Press / If the Ontario Energy Board allows Hydro One to move forward with prepaid meters, they would be offered to customers as a choice, an official said.;

IMAGES: Craig Glover, London Free Press / If the Ontario Energy Board allows Hydro One to move forward with prepaid meters, they would be offered to customers as a choice, an official said.

[NTNP_20171124_National_FP8_04_I001.jpg];

DATeline: TORONTO

WORD COUNT: 375

Hydro One mulls use of pre-paid meters; Electricity

Hydro One is considering allowing its customers to use pre-paid meters for their electricity use. The proposal is contained within a massive Ontario Energy Board application, which also asks for a rate increase of 0.5 per cent this year and 4.8 per cent next year.

The application says the pre-paid meters would minimize Hydro One's financial risk by requiring customers to pay for energy before using it - in particular for customers who are deemed to be a high collection risk.

But Hydro One's executive vice-president of customer care and corporate affairs said it would not be used as a collection tool, adding that the language in the application to the OEB is very generic and "somewhat out of context."

If the OEB allows Hydro One to move forward with pre-paid meters, they would be offered to customers as a choice and wouldn't be forced upon anyone, Ferio Pugliese said.

The NDP believes the move would allow Hydro One to circumvent a winter disconnection ban.

"They're going to move forward with this and they're going to go after anyone who has a bad credit score, anyone who's in arrears - anyone who they think is vulnerable," said energy critic Peter Tabuns.

Hydro One's application says once the pre-paid amount on a meter is used up, "power is cut off until the customer is able to load the meter with more credits."

But Pugliese said that would "absolutely not" be the case, noting Hydro One was the first utility to voluntarily stop winter disconnections.
"We are not about to go about the business of disconnecting people, especially remotely once something like this runs out," he said.
Energy Minister Glen Thibeault stressed that pre-paid smart metres are in very preliminary stages and their inclusion in the approximately 2,000 page application is a small detail. They would be opt-in for customers, he said.
"This is about giving people choice," he said. "This isn't ... a Trojan horse. It's two paragraphs in a rate application that may not even get through."
If the OEB gives its approval, Hydro One would study the pre-paid meters idea, then find vendors, then test the technology, then field test it, Pugliese said, stressing the idea is in a very preliminary stage.

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North Bay Nugget: Liberal hydro policies destroying Ontario; A5; 2017.11.24

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Liberal hydro policies destroying Ontario

To the editor: Are the Liberals deliberately destroying Ontario with their hydro policies? Lets start with the Liberals'green energy policy where they paid up to 40 cents a kWH for wind power and 80 cents a kWH for solar power and for the next 13 years we are still on the hook because they did not want to buy cheap hydro electric power back in 2010.
It was only after they recognized they created an energy crisis in 2016 did they purchase cheap excess hydroelectric power from Quebec.
The green energy contracts the Liberals signed led up to Ontario having the highest hydro rates in North America, which lead to thousands of homes being in arrears on their hydro bills in 2015 while it costs Ontarians roughly \$1 billion a year to get rid of our excess hydro to neighbouring jurisdiction which are our competitors.
So in 2017 the Liberal solution to this energy crisis is a false 25 per cent rate reduction on our hydro rates -yes they did remove the eight per cent HST that they added on to our hydro bill to begin with in 2010, but they did not cancel the eight per cent we pay so we still pay it but in another way. Lets just call this a Liberal shell game.
Can the Liberals explain to me why I should thank them when they have more than tripled our rates since taking office which has forced them to offer multiple temporary rate reduction programs in which they are robing Peter to pay Paul? Going back to this temporary false hydro rate reduction just before next year's election, This 25 per cent rate reduction plan will cost Ontarians \$45 billion for \$24 billion in temporary savings if the government balances its books for the next 30 years. If this can't be done, this Liberal shell game could end up costing Ontarians up to \$93 billion.
After the four years of a temporary rate reduction, get ready for these rate increases annually. A leaked Liberal document shows could this be why Hydro One wants to install pay-as-you go hydro meters.
So if the CEO of Hydro One makes \$4.5 million a year now what will he make when these rate increases kick in? Ross Ayotte Smiths Falls

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