

Transcript: Premier Wynne's Avail at Hydro Ottawa - September 16, 2016

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PREMIER WYNNE'S AVAIL AT HYDRO OTTAWA

Date: September 16, 2016
Length: 9:58 minutes
Speaker(s): Premier Kathleen Wynne; Government and Consumer Services Minister Marie-France Lalonde

PREMIER WYNNE: I'm happy to take your questions.

Q: Premier Wynne [Inaudible] The OEB as it pertains to [inaudible] 25 per cent more. [inaudible] So, doesn't that disparity look like [inaudible]

PREMIER WYNNE: Sorry, the first part of your comment – the OEB – I didn't hear the first piece.

Q: The OEB when it goes from fix to variable rate [inaudible] could customers see 25 per cent more?

PREMIER WYNNE: The very reason that we're making the change in delivery charge is that seems to piece that actually boosts the electricity prices for rural and remote consumers. So that's exactly why the changes we're making will mean up to a 20 per cent reduction in rural rates. That's exactly why we are making a change on the delivery charges.

Q: But the OEB announcement says it could be 25 per cent more. In the end it could end up being more.

PREMIER WYNNE: Again, we'll have to see what the relationship between those things is. But what we know is that we needed to do something to support all consumers across the province. But the rural and remote users needed to have an adjustment on those delivery charges. That's why we are making those changes.

Q: Ok. And I just wanted to ask you about wind turbines. The province has a surplus of base-load hour and critics say there's no need to build more wind turbines because we export most of the power they generate at a loss already. When there is such loud opposition to many of the projects, and there's no need for them, why are we building them?

PREMIER WYNNE: Two things I need to say about that. The first is that we'll be moving into reviewing the long term energy plan very shortly. There will be a discussion about what that long term energy plan will be and how we are doing in terms of capacity. But the other thing is that we're going to be refurbishing nuclear reactors. As that power comes offline, there is going to be a need to backfill and replace it. That again will be part of the discussion in the long term energy plan process. What we won't do is go back to where we were in 2003 where we had an unreliable system that people couldn't count on. We had brownouts and blackouts. I can remember campaigning in 2003 and it was a huge issue that people couldn't rely on the system – neither residences nor businesses. We won't go back to that. We are going to do everything that we need to do to make sure that we

have an adequate supply, that we have a reliable grid for everyone in the province.

Q: [Inaudible]

PREMIER WYNNE: I'm sure Bryce has lots he could say about that. What I know is that there has been a conversation. There was a look at this and there was decision made not to go ahead with it because of the impact it would have on consumers. I think if you want more detail on that conversation, you are going to need to talk with Ray.

Q: [Inaudible]

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, you know I think that police services are making decisions to provide the strongest and best protection for people in their communities. We work with police services across the province to work on training and to provide resources but I think the police service in Ottawa has made that decision. We haven't had, as far as I know, any direct proposal.

Q: The rebate is being called a bit of a Band Aid solution [inaudible] the sticker price of hydro. [inaudible] What is being done to make sure that the actual costs of delivering and generating hydro is going to go down. [inaudible]

PREMIER WYNNE: So let me just go back to what I said in my remarks, which is that we have had to make investments in the electricity system in Ontario in order to upgrade it, in order to make sure it is clean, that it is renewable and that it is reliable. We made those investments and there is a cost associated with those. There are still people in this province who are –whose homes and whose communities are powered by diesel fuel. So there is still work that needs to be done in this province to make sure everybody has access to clean, renewable power. So I am not going to, at this point, say that our work has stopped in terms of making sure that everyone has what they need in terms of electricity. And so there is more investment that will have to be made over time. We recognized that there needs to be a change and so that is why, when Bob was Minister of Energy, we made many changes in terms of putting the Ontario Energy Support Program in place for low and middle income families who were struggling to pay their bills. We renegotiated the Samsung agreement so that there was \$3.4 billion that didn't need to be spent and we made decisions around new nuclear that saved the system in Ontario money. So we made those decisions, we recognized that there needed to be more and that is exactly why we have made the changes that we announced in the Throne Speech.

Q: [inaudible]

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, so the other thing – as we go forward, the other thing that we are going to do and we have talked about this in the context of climate change and the climate action plan, is that as we move into a cap and trade system, we recognize that there is the opportunity for people to retrofit their homes with the supports of revenue that come in from cap and trade because I think that no one would argue that investing in clean energy so that we do not have as many kids with asthma, that that's a bad thing, you know? I think that having no smog days, that's a good thing. Being a world leader in clean energy, that's a good thing. At the same time, being a world leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, that is a good thing as well. So we will, as we put the cap and trade system in place, those revenues will be reinvested in businesses to allow them to innovate, in people's homes so that they are able to retrofit their homes. So there will continue to be more ways for people to conserve and to change the efficiency of their homes and that will save their dollars.

Q: (Speaking French) Premier, federal MP Dennis Vaillancourt, who is the president of the committee on official languages, said this morning Ottawa should be bilingual. We know the city has a policy on bilingualism but there are people who feel the law should be changed so the city can become bilingual.

PREMIER WYNNE: (Speaking French) We have passed laws in the province to recognize that Ottawa has a bilingual culture and it is up to the city to decide if they want to change their politics or policies here in Ottawa. Another law from the province is not necessary.

Q: (Speaking French) So the province will not do it. You are waiting for the city to ask the province to do it.

PREMIER WYNNE: I will let the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs speak to that.

MINISTER MARIE-FRANCE LALONDE: (Speaking French) Effectively we recognize the importance of the Francophonie here in Ottawa. That is why we have a law. The region is designated at the provincial level. But the city can ask, there is a process the city can follow, to ask the province for this designation, a bilingual status. But we at the province, we have in our law, said the City of Ottawa is bilingual, we offer services in both languages.

Q: [Inaudible]

MINISTER LALONDE: (Speaking French) Mr. Paradis I believe, Denis Paradis. Listen certainly it is important that we agree that if the city makes a request, we will participate, we will help them and support them.

Q: [Inaudible]

PREMIER WYNNE: So we passed legislation at the provincial level to recognize the bilingual culture here in Ottawa and it is now up to the city of Ottawa to decide what the definition of that bilingualism is. I mean, I think it is terrific that you can live in French or in English in Ottawa, but it is up to the city to decide exactly how they want to define that bilingualism. Merci.