

FW: Ontario Minister of Finance: Q&A: Ontario energy minister Glenn Thibeault on... - CBC.CA News

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From: Bevan, Andrew (OPO)
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2016 4:54:33 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Orsini, Steve (CAB)
Cc: MacKenzie, Rebecca (OPO)
Subject: RE: Ontario Minister of Finance: Q&A: Ontario energy minister Glenn Thibeault on... - CBC.CA News

Yep certainly is

From: Orsini, Steve (CAB)
Sent: September-14-16 3:47 PM
To: Bevan, Andrew (OPO)
Subject: FW: Ontario Minister of Finance: Q&A: Ontario energy minister Glenn Thibeault on... - CBC.CA News

Is it worth adding in "farmers" with residential and small business? We are missing a whole sector that will benefit.

From: Infomart Alerts [mailto:FPinfomart.alerts@infomart.com]
Sent: September-14-16 3:38 PM
To: Orsini, Steve (CAB)
Subject: Ontario Minister of Finance: Q&A: Ontario energy minister Glenn Thibeault on... - CBC.CA News



Infomart Alert for: **Ontario Minister of Finance**



Q&A: **Ontario** energy minister Glenn Thibeault on Liberal energy policy

CBC.CA News
Wed Sep 14 2016, 2:07pm ET
Section: Kitchener-Waterloo
Byline: CBC News

Among the **Ontario** Liberal government's priorities for the next session, outlined in Monday's throne speech, is a plan to offer **hydro rebates to residents and small businesses to help offset high electricity rates**.

Provincial energy minister Glenn Thibeault joined Craig Norris, host of The Morning Edition on CBC Radio 1 in Kitchener Waterloo, to discuss the rebate and the government's other energy policy decisions.

The following has been edited for length and clarity.

CBC: How is this going to save Ontarians money?

Thibeault: "The first thing I think is important to recognize is that all families across the province are going to be saving about 8 per cent on average on their bills. We're rebating the provincial portion of the HST on their bills immediately. As soon as we get that legislation to pass and [get] started that will be January 1st. For our northern, rural and remote communities and families, we've been hearing a lot about the delivery charge, and that they're having difficulty with that. We're actually going to double the rural rate protection plan to 20 per cent, so saving them about \$40 per month. And then, of course, we can't forget about small and medium-sized enterprises, so we've got a program in place to help them as well."

Why can't this be done immediately? Why January 1st?

Thibeault: "It is an aggressive timeline in terms of looking at how we can implement this, and we have to work with the over 70 LDCs (local distribution companies) that we have in the province to be able to get that done. We want to get this through the House as quickly as possible to try and find a way to get this done quickly, and I know some of the opposition parties are saying they'd like to see this done quickly, so I am hoping to get their support."

What do you say to the criticism that this savings is just coming out of our own pockets?

Thibeault: "I think we need to look at this in perspective. We've built, over the last decade, a really clean, reliable and safe electricity system, and I think now it's important to be able to look at having a balanced budget next year and that the first beneficiaries of this balanced budget should be the families of **Ontario**. Giving them a little bit of relief on their hydro and electricity bills, I think is key, and doing that for all families across the province, especially for farms and small businesses who will also see this 8 per cent reduction, it's a way to recognize those who need to benefit first from our balanced budget."

A total of \$1 billion is being kicked around for the cost of this rebate. How is it that \$1 billion doesn't affect balancing the budget?

Thibeault: "So Minister (Charles) Sousa, our minister of finance in the province, he's going to be releasing the public accounts very shortly and there will be all the specific details that outline how we're still on target to balance our books. We've done all that heavy lifting to ensure that now that we've got these balanced books and that Ontarians are the ones who benefit from this."

Gas bills in Kitchener are going to be going up by about \$75 because of the provincial government's cap-and-trade program. Can you explain why that's a fair cost to place on rate payers?

Thibeault: "The cost that you're talking about is not just specific to Kitchener-Waterloo. It's province-wide and that was announced when we brought forward the cap-and-trade initiative that said that on average, bills across the province will be going up about \$5 for every home that has natural gas. That was an announcement that was done earlier. For us, making sure that we're transparent about what the costs are, making sure that we meet our climate change objectives and making sure that our families and our kids have air to breathe and water to drink and lakes to swim in is key. Everyone understands that there's a cost to acting on climate change and that's what we're doing. A good thing about the cap-and-trade system is that if people start to act on changing their behaviour and reducing the GHGs (greenhouse gases) that they're using they can actually reduce that monthly amount in terms of what they're going to be paying. But on the \$5 specifically that we've been saying all along, that's the cost that natural gas companies will be putting on the bills as part of the overall climate change action plan."

Do you think that higher fees are the best way for the government to implement climate change policies?

Thibeault: "Higher fees are not something that's going to be implemented by the government. Those are the fees that the gas utility are putting on in terms of what they're seeing with their costs. We have to do something about climate change, and that's what we've acted on. The people have told us loud and clear that we've got to do our part. The whole point of cap-and-trade is a better mechanism for us because we can reduce GHG emissions. It's better than a flat carbon tax, it's a tax on everything. And then we have programs in place designed to help Ontarians reduce carbon emissions and thereby they can lower their personal cap-and-trade cost impacts."

Kitchener is one of only two cities that operates its own gas utility. Kingston is the other. Do you take the public nature of these utilities into account when you compare them to privately owned utilities?

Thibeault: The IESO (Independent Electricity Systems Operator) is the one that looks at all of the options and how our system operates, so if it's a non-utility generator, if it's a publicly operated utility generator, the entire system is operated and looked at by the IESO and they're the ones that find the mandate and the time to ensure that we've got the power that we need. I think the important thing to look at is that over the last ten years we've built a system that is safe, that is reliable and that is clean, and so when you're talking about the specifics of the Kitchener gas utility, I

understand that question, but it's really the IESO that really makes the decision."

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