

Throne Speech Announces Electricity Cost Relief, New Child Care Spaces

Balanced Plan Will Build Ontario Up and Help People in Their Everyday Lives

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NEWS

As part of its balanced plan to build Ontario up and help people in their everyday lives, the Ontario government intends to introduce legislation that, if passed, would rebate an amount equal to the provincial portion of the HST on residential, farm and small business electricity bills as of January 1, 2017. Rural electricity ratepayers would receive additional relief and commercial, institutional and industrial ratepayers would also benefit from lower electricity costs.

The government also announced that it will create an additional 100,000 licensed infant to preschool child care spaces within the next five years.

The government's plan was outlined in the Speech from the Throne delivered today by the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Ontario's Lieutenant Governor. The speech opened the second session of the province's 41st parliament.

The plan will continue to create economic growth and good jobs — the government's number-one priority. The government will also balance the budget next year, in 2017-18, and Ontario's debt-to-GDP ratio will decline — a sign of economic strength and fiscal responsibility.

The government's plan will help people in their everyday lives by:

- Delivering electricity cost relief through legislation to rebate an amount equal to the provincial portion of the HST on electricity bills — a saving of about \$130 annually for the typical Ontario household; eligible rural ratepayers would receive additional relief, resulting in average savings of about \$45 a month or \$540 a year. Eligible small businesses would also benefit from the rebate and eligible larger businesses would also benefit from the plan through the expansion of the Industrial Conservation Initiative
- Creating an additional 100,000 licensed child care spaces for 0- to 4-year-olds within the next five years, bringing the number of spaces created since 2013 to 156,000 and doubling the current capacity for the 0-4 age group
- Putting a new emphasis on math skills, expanding experiential learning, implementing free tuition for thousands of low- and middle-income students and encouraging more young people to turn their good ideas into start-up companies
- Investing in skills training that aligns with the job market of today and tomorrow
- Continuing to increase nursing care hours to enhance home care, reducing wait times for specialists, and connecting a family doctor or nurse practitioner to every Ontarian who wants one
- Continuing to make historic infrastructure investments in schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and transit

- Building a competitive business environment driven by innovative, low-carbon industries, including attracting international investment, continuing to cut red tape and implementing a cap and trade program to help people and businesses fight climate change
- Continuing to work with its federal and provincial partners to enhance the Canada Pension Plan

The Throne Speech outlines the next steps in the government's economic plan to build Ontario up and deliver on its number-one priority to grow the economy and create jobs. The four-part plan includes helping more people get and create the jobs of the future by making a high-quality college and university education more affordable. The plan is making the largest infrastructure investment in hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and transit in Ontario's history and is building a low-carbon economy driven by innovative, high-growth, export-oriented businesses. The plan is also helping working Ontarians achieve a more secure retirement.

QUOTES

"Ontario's economy is still in transition, but our recovery is firmly on track. While many are benefiting from the growth we've achieved, others have yet to share in Ontario's resurgence. Our government understands the challenges people face and shares their concerns. With our balanced and proven plan to build Ontario up, we begin this new legislative session focused on economic growth that creates good jobs and committed to delivering real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help more people in their everyday lives."

— Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario

QUICK FACTS

- Over the last two years, Ontario's economy has grown by 6.1 per cent
- In the first quarter of this year, Ontario's real GDP growth was higher than that of the United States and all other G7 countries
- Ontario unemployment this year has reached an eight-year low
- In September 2014, the Premier's mandate letters to ministers — 30 in total — were made available to the public for the first time. Mandate letters outline the specific priorities for each member of cabinet and their ministry. The Premier will be releasing new mandate letters to ministers in the coming weeks.

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- [Read the Speech from the Throne](#)