

Top Issues for May 25, 2017

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Top Issues

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FRONT PAGE HEADLINES (GTA NEWSPAPERS)

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these summaries are those of the media cited and do not reflect the views and opinions of the Ontario Public Service.

CALENDAR

May 25, 2017

Premier Wynne to make an announcement and hold a media avail

9:00 a.m. / Timmins: Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne holds a photo-op at YMCA of Timmins prior to making an announcement. Media availability follows. (376 Poplar Avenue)

Minister Moridi to make a regenerative medicine announcement

9:00 a.m. / Toronto: Ontario's leading stem cell and regenerative medicine scientists gather for the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine's Annual Symposium, where the Reza Moridi, minister of Research, Innovation and Science, makes a regenerative medicine announcement at 9 a.m. (Auditorium, 2nd Floor, Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning, 686 Bay Street)

MPP McMahon and MP Gould to announce infrastructure funding

10:00 a.m. / Oakville: MP Karina Gould and MPP Eleanor McMahon announce infrastructure funding. (Burloak Water Purification Plant, 3380 Rebecca Street)

Minister Moridi to attend the launch of several cancer research initiatives

10:00 a.m. / Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research announces the launch of several large-scale cancer research initiatives. Research, Innovation and Science Minister Reza Moridi will attend. (OICR, MaRS Centre, 661 University Ave., Suite 510)

NDP Leader Horwath and NDP by-election candidate Krmpotich discuss hospital overcrowding and frontline healthcare cuts

12:00 p.m. / Sault Ste. Marie: Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath and NDP byelection candidate Joe Krmpotich discuss hospital overcrowding and frontline healthcare cuts. Media availability follows. (Sault Area Hospital, 750 Great Northern Road, corner of Lukenda Drive and Hospital Parking Lot)

Ontario to Recognize Outstanding Accessibility Leaders

1:00 p.m. / Toronto: Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Accessibility, will join Her Honour the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and the Honourable David C. Onley to present the third annual David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility. (Lieutenant Governor's Suite, Queen's Park)

TOP ISSUES

Issue: Thames Valley Trustees Vote To Close Five Rural Schools

☐ Southwestern Ontario's largest school board is closing five more school between London and Lake Erie, boosting the board's school-closing toll to more than 50 in the last 20 years. After a months-long battle by parents and rural communities to prevent the closing, trustees with the Thames Valley district school board decided to close Springfield, New Sarum, Sparta, South Dorchester, and Westminster elementary schools.

☐ Board staff recommended the closing after a review of a dozen schools from Dorchester to Port Stanley. Among other boundary changes and recommendation, the plan calls for two new schools to be built - one in Belmont, another in southeast St. Thomas - at a combined cost of \$27.5 million.

☐ The Thames Valley board has closed 47 schools since 1998, and opened 16 new schools. With nearly 15,000 empty student spaces in its schools, enrolment has fallen by more than 5,000

students since 1998.

☐ Westminister elementary school, Springfield, South Dorchester, and New Sarum schools will all close in June 2020 if the board gets provincial funding for the two new builds, Sparta will close in June 2018 and reopen as French immersion in time for the next school year.

☐ Board figures show the latest closings and consolidations will eliminate 421 empty student spaces and save taxpayers more than \$400,000 a year.

Newspapers: "Five more rural schools axed; Thames Valley trustees vote to shut springfield, New sarum, sparta, Westminister and south Dorchester schools," London Free Press, Jennifer Bieman, A2

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: CUPE Warns of Widening Hospital Funding Gap

☐ CUPE executives question the province's motives as it decided to increase funding at Sault Area Hospital more than other Northern Ontario hospitals, while Sault Ste. Marie faces a by-election.

☐ The majority of Northern Ontario hospitals received a two per cent funding increase, while the Sault Area Hospital received a 3.8 per cent increase in funding amounting \$5.5 million in 2017.

☐ According to Michael Hurley of CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, the consensus amongst health-care stakeholders is that hospitals need at least a five per cent increase in funding in order to just maintain existing services.

☐ The province's budget announcement in April only set out a 3.1 overall increase in provincial funding for hospitals, with most Northern Ontario hospitals only receiving a two per cent increase.

☐ Hurley says to bring hospitals to last year's 3.5 per cent increase, funding for Health Sciences North in Sudbury would have to increase by \$10.15 million, instead of the \$5.8 million allocated by the government.

☐ Similarly, North Bay Regional Health Centre would need a \$6.4 million increase in funding instead of \$3.67 million; Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre would need \$7 million instead of \$4 million; Lake of the Woods in Kenora would need \$971,000 instead of \$555,011 and Timmins and District Hospital would need a \$2.38 million increase instead of \$1.36 million.

☐ Hurley predicts that the Northern hospital funding gap will grow next year. The province has promised an overall 4.7 per cent increase for health care in 2018-2019, which is said to be closer to the actual cost pressures that hospitals face.

☐ Hurley cautions that if this year's two per cent increase is any indication, Northern hospitals will not see anything like the promised 4.7 per cent.

Newspapers: "Grits playing politics: Union; CUPE warns of widening gap between hospital needs and funding," North Bay Nugget, A1.

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Alberta Proposed Act to Overhaul Workplace Rules

- ☐ The Fair and Family-Friendly Workplaces Act was introduced in Alberta on Wednesday. This act would be the first major overhaul of Alberta's workplace rules in almost 30 years.
- ☐ The act proposes that workers who have been with their employer for at least 90 days be allowed to take unpaid leave if they are sick, injured, had a death in the family, a missing child or were victims of domestic violence.
- ☐ The act would also bring maternity and compassionate leave up to federal standards.
- ☐ It proposes overtime pay at 1.5 hours per every hour instead of straight time and minimum annual vacation of two weeks off paid at 4 per cent of an employee's salary.
- ☐ Furthermore, the act would allow a union to be certified without a secret ballot if over 65 per cent of employees had verified membership cards.
- ☐ Labour Minister Christina Gray said "Our government could not allow legislation that touches the lives of so many to be disregarded any longer... This legislation would bring Alberta's workplaces into the 21st century."
- ☐ Opposition Wildrose Leader Brian Jean says his party supports parts of the act that deal with unpaid leave, but they do not support sections that involve changes to the labour code, including changes to union certification votes.
- ☐ Jean suggests the bill be split into two and says "It's our hope that the NDP government will recognize that these compassionate care components are separate and distinct from the labour code changes that require greater consultation."
- ☐ Progressive Conservative Leader Jason Kenney says the act would attack workplace democracy and criticizes the proposed changes to union certification.
- ☐ The Alberta director of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business suggests that the legislation will burden employers with higher costs.
- ☐ Guy Smith, president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, supports the proposed legislation as a good compromise that would make the handling of labour disputes more fair and efficient. He also says the union hopes the government would further include a ban on replacement workers during strikes.
- ☐ The Alberta Federation of Labour strongly supported the legislation, including the change removing the secret ballot in certain cases.

Newspapers: "Alberta introduces first overhaul of workplace rules in almost 30 years," John Cotter, Calgary Herald, A2.

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: FAO Report Find A \$21 Billion Net Expense For Hydro Rate Reduction

- ☐ The provincial financial accountability officer Stephen LeClair has found that over the next three decades Ontarians will pay \$21 billion for hydro despite the province's Fair Hydro Plan which lowers electricity costs by 25 per cent.

☐ LeClair's report says that the Fair Hydro Plan will cost the province \$45 billion over 29 years while saving ratepayers \$24 billion. This will leave a total of a \$21 billion net expense. He added that these estimates are only applicable if "the province is able to achieve and maintain a balanced budget over 29 years."

☐ If the province cannot maintain a balanced budget the estimates grow to anywhere from \$69 billion to \$93 billion

☐ LeClair says that although ratepayers will achieve savings of \$24 billion it will not be spread evenly over time and electricity costs are expected to increase by 2027.

☐ He further questioned whether or not the province is bankrolling the cut through its electricity utility Ontario Power Generation which could mean an additional \$4 billion in interest costs.

☐ Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk will be conducting her own review of the hydro rate plan later this year.

☐ Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said, "we've always said that the proposed Fair Hydro Plan will cost more over the long term, but it will share the costs of our investments more fairly over a longer period of time and lower bills by 25 per cent on average starting this summer."

☐ The minister added that the likelihood of the province needing to borrow money for the plan was "extremely unlikely." He also said that the government's plan to lower costs in the electric power system, perhaps through technological developments, were not included in the FAO's analysis.

☐ Ontario PC energy critic Todd Smith has said that the hydro plan will do little to fix the long term problems facing Ontario's power system. NDP energy critic Peter Tabuns said that Ontarians will be upset when they find their bills are to be higher for decades after only a few years of relief.

☐ Tabuns adds, "they'll be going up 7% a year until about Year 10, and then after that they'll be about 12% higher than they otherwise would have been ... Not even future generations – people who are ratepayers right now are going to get hit hard starting five years from now and they'll be hit hard for decades, quite literally."

☐ Toronto Sun writer Lorrie Goldstein argues that the plan will leave Ontarians with "worthless, or near-worthless electricity generating systems operating at the very end of their lifespans" soon to be overtaken by better technologies.

☐ David Reevely of the Ottawa Citizen points out that the government will be managing the entire plan through the Ontario Power Generation utility which keeps it off the province's books. He argues that the plan "exemplifies the exact attitude that got us into trouble in the first place." He also argues that neither the NDP nor PC have meaningful alternatives.

Newspapers: "Hydro rate cuts to cost \$21B: watchdog," Toronto Star, Robert Benzie, A8.

"Wynne's hydro cuts will raise costs long-term: report," Globe and Mail, Justin Giovannetti, A10.

"Shock to the system," Toronto Sun, Antonella Artuso, A8.

"Wynne hydro plan just Liberal snake oil," Toronto Sun, Lorrie Goldstein, A8.

"Hydro-bill cuts will cost province \$21 billion more than will be saved," Ottawa Citizen, David Reevely, A1.

Television: CBC, 6:00 pm (20); CBCNN, 5:30 pm (6); CHCH, 6:00 pm (10); CFTO, 6:00 pm (8); City, 6:00 pm (4); CJOH, 6:00 pm (11); CKCO, 6:00 pm (15); CKPR, 6:00 pm (12); CKVR, 6:00 pm (6); CTVNN, 5:00 pm (3); Global, 6:30 pm (8); Global, 6:00 pm (16); MCTV, 6:00 pm (17)

Radio: None

Issue: Metrolinx To Appeal Bombardier Ruling

- ☐ Metrolinx has filed an appeal questioning the decision reached by an Ontario judge that preserved their contract with Bombardier Transportation.
- ☐ The appeal has deepened the dispute between Metrolinx and Bombardier over Bombardier's ability to fulfill its train orders in Toronto.
- ☐ In April a judge ruled that Metrolinx could not cancel its \$770 million contract with Bombardier without first going through dispute resolution.
- ☐ Earlier in May, Metrolinx reached a deal with French manufacturer Alstom for light-rail vehicles has back up in case Bombardier does not deliver.
- ☐ A Metrolinx spokesperson confirmed that the appeal was filed and that the point of the appeal is to seek clarification over the amount of time Bombardier has to fix problems with its vehicles. The spokesperson added that Metrolinx will continue with the dispute resolution process.
- ☐ Bombardier made a statement on Wednesday saying that it is "deeply concerned" about the effect of Metrolinx's legal actions on transit users and taxpayers.

Newspapers: "Metrolinx to appeal Bombardier ruling," Toronto Star, Staff, A2.

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Sellers Rushing To List Homes To Get In On Recent Price Gains

- ☐ After government intervention and the near-collapse of Home Capital Group Inc., sellers are hurrying to list their homes to get in on the recent price gains. This new dynamic is making buyer rethink their purchases and sellers asking why they aren't attracting the bidding wars they expected.
- ☐ Home Capital seems to be cooling down a housing market that climbed as much as 33 per cent in March from a year earlier. Data from the Toronto Real Estate Board shows listings rose 47 per cent in the first two weeks of the month from the same period a year earlier, while unit sales fell 16 per cent. The average selling price in the Toronto area was \$890,284 through May 14, up 17 per cent from a year earlier but down 3.3 per cent from April. The annual price gain is down from 25 per cent in April.
- ☐ Recent competition for homes had some potential buyers so eager they were buying properties "sight unseen," said Shawn Zigelstein, a Toronto-area agent Royal LePage Your Community Realty. Others made offers without an inspection. According to Century 21 Millennium Inc. brokerage owner Joanne Evans, the ability to sell your homes on the low side to spur bidding wars is not going to work anymore.
- ☐ Brokers say some owners are taking their homes off the market because they were seeking the same high offers that were spreading across the region recently. But now, Case Feenstra, another agent at Royal LePage Real Estate Services says, "In less than one week, we went from having 40 or 50 people coming to an open house to now, when you are lucky to get five people."

Newspapers: "Owners cash out as buyers face remorse; Government intervention, Home Capital's near-collapse have changed perceptions," Toronto Star, Kim Chipman, B2

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Minister to Overhaul Ontario Jails, Following Release of Sapers Report

☐ Marie-France Lalonde, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, says she is determined to make Ontario an international model for humane correctional practises - indicating plans to follow the Sapers report for reforms to solitary confinement in Ontario.

☐ Two weeks ago, the Sapers report was released by independent corrections adviser and federal corrections ombudsman Howard Sapers. The report investigates solitary confinement and Ontario's segregation practises.

☐ The Sapers report concluded that most of the individuals held in solitary confinement "should not be there" and segregation has become a default method for dealing with mentally ill prisoners.

☐ This report was released following news attention concerning inmate Adam Capay who was held in solitary confinement at Thunder Bay Jail.

☐ Lalonde called the Sapers report "fair" and pledged to tackle each of its 63 recommendations. "Every one of those recommendations is important," she said.

☐ Lalonde says she intends to introduce new legislation this fall to reflect Sapers' recommendations. She also pledged to establish independent adjudicators and correctional facilities to oversee solitary confinement cases.

☐ Once the reforms are complete, Lalonde says that Ontario will be "a leader". She says, "I think we want to lead in a direction where everyone will line up to be a correctional officer because of the recognition will be there, and individuals who have the misfortune of coming into our justice system, we'll give them an ability to go back to a society that will provide a fairer chance to reintegrate. It's not going to be easy. It's not going to be overnight."

☐ Lalonde did not say whether addressing the recommendations meant they would be directly implemented or how much the reforms would cost.

Newspapers: "Ontario jails to be overhauled, minister says ;New vision is announced on the heels of a watchdog's blueprint for reform of solitary confinement rules," Patrick White, Globe and Mail, A6.

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Ontario Ombudsman Investigates Licence Suspension Process

☐ The Ontario ombudsman Paul Dubé announced that he would be investigating how the Ministry of Transportation communicates news of licence suspensions and reinstatements to motorists.

☐ Dubé said, "we have heard from drivers who went for years without knowing their licences were suspended ... When they finally found out, it was through their insurance company or police, not the ministry - which then treated them as brand new drivers, requiring them to go through the graduated licensing program to have their licences reinstated"

☐ The ongoing complaints, despite efforts by the ministry and the ombudsman to

improve communication, suggests “an underlying systemic problem” Dubé said.

☐ The press secretary to Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca said that the ministry “takes the concerns of the ombudsman very seriously.” The press secretary adds that the ombudsman’s investigation will assist with the internal work the ministry is already doing to find effective ways to notify drivers of suspensions.

☐ In March The Toronto Star ran a story on John Strachan who did not receive notice of his license suspension, which occurred in 2013, until this past February when he was stopped by the OPP and told he was driving under suspension.

☐ During this time Strachan renewed his licence plate sticker at least twice, purchased another car and renewed his auto insurance several times. No one told him that his licence was suspended.

☐ After the Star ran this story more than 100 readers came forward with similar experiences.

Newspapers: “Watchdog to investigate licence suspensions,” Toronto Star, Robert Benzie, A1.

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Procter And Gamble Announces Impending Shutdown In Brockville

☐ Brockville’s largest private-sector employer, Procter and Gamble, announced its impending closure on Wednesday. It is set to close as early as 2020, moving production to West Virginia, costing 480 jobs locally. The company will work with each employee individually towards their desired outcomes.

☐ Jeff LeRoy, a P&G company communications spokesperson said that while the local site had exceeded the company’s performance expectations, the decision came after a years-long review of “how the company goes to market.” He said the company has been examining how to redesign and transform its supply network in North America for four years.

☐ The property upon which the new plant in West Virginia is located is “three to four” times the size of the Brockville site, which will permit the company to integrate, on-site, with suppliers of raw materials they use to make their products. The site in West Virginia is also closer to large “retail population centres,” which means the company will have a “closer proximity to the retail customers.” The plant in Brockville mostly produces Bounce and Swiffer products. Meanwhile, the plant in Belleville’s northeast industrial park employs about 800 people fulltime, and its main focus is the Always brand of feminine-hygiene products.

☐ Leeds-Grenville MPP Steve Clark said the closure is a “devastating announcement” and plans to co-ordinate with other levels of government to “explore every possibility of reversing the company’s regrettable decision to close a profitable plant.” He went on to blame the provincial government for the closure, saying “we’ve seen a hollowing out of the manufacturing sector.” However LeRoy said provincial policies were not a factor in their decision and that local politicians cannot get the firm to reverse their decision.

☐ Mayor David Henderson said the city will work at marketing the site to try to find another employer, which makes the nascent regional economic development commission all the more important.

Newspapers: "Procter and Gamble closing Brockville plant; Facility to close in 2020 or 2021 as company shifts to West Virginia plant, costing 480 jobs," Kingston Whig-Standard, Sabrina Bedford and Ronald Zajac, A6
"City tried concessions to keep P&G viable," The Brockville Recorder & Times, Ronald Zajac and Sabrina Bedford, A1
"Procter & Gamble closing city plant, cutting 480 jobs; Local production of Bounce, Swiffer moving to U.S. plant, Brockville facility to close in 2020," The Brockville Recorder & Times, Sabrina Bedford and Ronald Zajac, A1
"Belleville still 'important'; As Procter & Gamble preps to close Brockville plant, a sister facility down the 401 is safe," The Brockville Recorder & Times, Luke Hendry, A2
"P&G plant closure will end 480 jobs," Ottawa Citizen, A12

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Ontario Launches Online Tracker To Monitor Opioids' Impact

☐ The new online tracker launched by the province to monitor opioids' impact shows that more than 400 Ontarians died from an overdose in just the first six months of last year. The access to this data is part of a strategy to fight addiction and overdose deaths.

☐ The "opioid tracker" has more than 13 years' worth of statistics, listing cases that required medical care, hospitalization or resulted in death, and is meant primarily for health-care workers, but is also accessible to the public.

☐ A joint statement from Health Minister Eric Hoskins, Chief Medical Officer of Health David Williams, and Chief Coroner Dirk Huyer, said "The opioid crisis in Ontario is a growing and evolving problem, and one we are continuing to work diligently to combat." Hoskins said the statistics are "alarming," and opioid overdose has become the third-leading cause of accidental death in the province. However, he said Ontario's year-over-year increase is far less than British Columbia's 80% jump from 2015 to '16.

☐ It will be a few more months before Ontario has anything close to real-time tracking of fatalities from opioids, including illicit fentanyl. The Office of the Chief Coroner has begun adding all death investigation cases as of May 1 to the database, which captures information such as the victim's age, sex, geographic location of death and type of drugs involved.

☐ Federal Health Minister Jane Philpott has expressed frustration with those provinces and territories that have not provided data in the midst of a public health crisis. In BC, the Coroners Service release monthly reports on overdose deaths.

Newspapers: "New data on opioid use may help combat crisis; More than 400 people died of overdose in first half of 2016, 11% increase from 2015," Toronto Star, Kristin Rushowy, A9
"Ontario's new online tracker confirms opioid epidemic sweeping east," The Globe and Mail, Karen Howlett, A1
"Opioid ODs steadily on the rise: Website stats," Toronto Sun, A8

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: City Council Votes On Relief Line Subway, Extension of Line 1

☐ City council has voted to proceed with planning work for the relief line subway, but it remains uncertain who will pay to build the vital but as-yet-unfunded transit project.

☐ In a vote of 42-1, councillors endorsed a city report that gave the green light for city and TTC staff to advance the design of the first phase of the relief line, which the TTC has identified as Toronto's most pressing transit priority. Mayor John Tory called the vote a "big step forward," for the city's transit plans. However, he restated calls for the province to help fund the subway, which is estimated to cost \$6.8 billion and has no secure funding commitment from any level of government.

☐ Tory handed out flyers at a subway station to urge commuters to contact their local MPPs and Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca to "let them know that funding for the relief line is a priority." Del Duca responded and said the government has already "invested more in transit in Toronto than any other government in the province's history."

☐ As part of the relief line report, councillors also voted to proceed with design work for an extension of the TTC's Line 1 (Yonge-University-Spadina) subway north to Richmond Hill Centre. The first phase of the relief line would have eight stops and be 7.5 kilometres long, but no funding commitments have been received for it yet. However, the federal government has signalled it is willing to pay for up to 40 per cent of the cost of new transit projects.

☐ In a letter to TTC CEO Andy Byford, Tory described Line 1 as the "backbone" for people to move around the city and notes the long-term solutions to over-crowding will be "SmartTrack, ATU (Automatic Train Control) and the downtown relief line." TTC spokesman Brad Ross said the agency will consider the mayor's letter and request and reply to him directly.

☐ Council also approved a new route for the line that would see it run beneath Carlaw Ave. instead of Pape Ave. south of Gerrard St. E. TTC staff plan to report back in 2019 with a refined cost, design and delivery schedule.

Newspapers: "Council moves ahead with relief line plan; Project still unfunded as Mayor John Tory reiterates call for province to help pay for subway, estimated to cost \$6.8B," Toronto Star, Ben Spurr, GT1

"Mayor asks TTC for solutions," Toronto Sun, Shawn Jeffords, A18

"Projects come together; Council votes for preliminary work on 2 transit possibilities," Toronto Sun, Shawn Jeffords, A18

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Councillor To Bring Motion to Alert MPPs of Social Housing Repair Needs

☐ Councillor and chair of Toronto's affordable housing committee Ana Bailao will table a motion at this week's council meeting requesting Mayor John Tory to send personal letters to Toronto MPPs about the concerning state of social housing in their ridings.

☐ Bailao proposes that the letters outline "the number of units at risk of closing without provincial funding."

☐ Bailao says "it's important that MPPs have this information at their fingertips." Bailao wants council's endorsement to "depoliticize" the issue.

☐ Bailao's motion is seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy.

☐ For weeks, Tory has campaigned for the provincial government to pay one-third of the funding needed for social housing repairs.

☐ According to an internal database, within the next five years, half of Toronto Community Housing developments will be in "critical" condition if additional funding for repairs is not obtained.

☐ In 2013, Council approved a 10-year, \$2.6 billion repair plan to be cost-shared by all three levels of government.

☐ According to Bailao's motion, the city of Toronto has exceeded its share and has spent over \$1 billion towards Toronto community housing.

☐ The motion suggests that the city cannot solve the social housing repair problem on its own. It says approximately 7,500 units are at risk of closure by 2023 if additional funding is not received.

☐ According to the motion, the 2017 provincial budget "did not promise to match federal funding nor provide new funding to fund one-third of capital repairs to TCH buildings".

Newspapers: "Councillor wants MPPs up to speed on social housing repair," Betsy Powell, Toronto Star, GT2.

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Quebec-California Cap-And-Trade Auction Sells Out Current Allowances

☐ Ontario will hold its second cap-and-trade auction on June 6. The latest Quebec-California auction sold all of its current allowances which is an improvement over the last auction which saw only 18 per cent be sold.

☐ Ontario is expecting to join the Quebec-California market. In the province's first auction it brought in \$427 million for green programs although the provincial government has warned of possible volatility in the carbon market.

☐ Ontario initially projected its cap-and-trade budget to be \$1.9 billion per year but the budget projects \$1.8 billion for the current fiscal year and \$1.4 billion annually starting the following year. The government says that such adjustments allow for market fluctuations.

☐ The government is investigating regulatory changes that would lead to an increase in the number of free allowances that will be distributed to large emitters in Ontario to help prevent them from moving to areas without carbon pricing.

☐ Since January 1 cap-and-trade in Ontario has added 4.3 cents per litre to gasoline prices and about \$80 a year to natural gas home heating costs.

Newspapers: "Quebec-California cap-and-trade auction sells out current allowances," The Chronicle Journal, Allison Jones.

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Opinion Columns on High-Speed Rail

☐ In a column in the Star, Martin Regg Cohn writes that Premier Kathleen Wynne is proclaiming Ontario's biggest-ever infrastructure project - a high-speed train - as her \$20-billion legacy.

☐ With a potential high-speed rail with westward stops in Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo and London, Cohn says that a fast train to Montreal isn't as smooth as it sounds, especially not for that billion dollar price. He says people may not use it or pay because business travellers and tourists come and go - without coming back often enough to build a business around it.

☐ Meanwhile, in a comment on the National Post, Terence Corcoran also writes that the Toronto-London-Windsor plan is a guaranteed money loser, if one looks at history and the latest financial and economic analysis. In a report - the Preliminary Business Case for High Speed Rail on the Toronto To Windsor Corridor - one of the world's leading transportation-consulting firms, Steer Davies Gleave, runs through various scenarios and projections that make it clear that all version of the rail scheme are guaranteed to be net cash drains.

☐ Steer Davies Gleave says that despite big losses for revenue from the high-speed rail, it actually has big economic benefits. The benefits include travel time for people who will use the train rather than driver their cars (\$7 billion), and drivers will also save another \$9 billion in lower operating costs for their automobiles - and almost \$3 billion in reduced congestion time. Corcoran writes that these numbers are meaningless in assessing the financial case for high-speed rail because cash losses will still be incurred, at a minimum of \$15 billion for the shorter route to London.

Newspapers: "Will high-speed rail be worth it for Ontario?," Toronto Star, Martin Regg Cohn, A9
"High speed to fiscal ruin," National Post, Terence Corcoran, FP13

Television: None

Radio: None

Issue: Legal Aid Ontario Moves to Cut Refugee Services and Seeks Funding

☐ Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) moves to reduce services for refugees and seeks additional government funding, amidst a \$26 million deficit.

☐ LAO has launched a consultation process to look into the "difficult choice" to temporarily suspend some of the services, starting July 1.

☐ With the number of refugees increasing, immigration advocates have raised concerns about the vulnerable individuals who would be affected by a cut in services.

☐ It is still uncertain which services will be cut to address LAO's 40 per cent shortfall in its immigration and refugee program.

☐ The program cost approximately \$20 million annually for the past few years, but costs have risen to \$27 million last year and are expected to increase to \$33.6 million in 2017-2018.

☐ Although federal funding was increased to \$13.7 million in 2016-2017, it will fall back to \$8.9 million for the following two years and to \$7 million for three years after that.

☐ Graeme Burk, a spokesperson for LAO, says "the reality is demand for refugee services has increased, and without additional funding to meet that increased demand, LAO must take immediate steps to ensure it operates within its means."

☐ According to Canada Border Services Agency, the number of people making refugee claims at crossings in Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Sarnia rose to 433 claims in January. If that rate

continues, 5,196 claims are expected by the end of the year in comparison to the total 3,865 claims in 2016.

☐ Debbie Douglas, executive director for the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, supports LOA negotiating for more funding, but disagrees that it should cut refugee services.

☐ Douglas says, "it is unfair for immigrants and refugees to be held hostage in this political budgetary back-and-forth."

☐ Burke points out that "the problem for LAO is that our work assists many vulnerable people outside of refugee services".

☐ LAO says it is making widespread changes in order to balance its budget, including a salary freeze for staff and senior management, and not filling vacancies where possible.

☐ The justice department says it works closely to monitor the volume of refugees and with the provinces and territories, provide additional funds for the next two years to deal with the added pressures.

Newspapers: "Refugees 'in the crosshairs' as Legal Aid Ontario battles for government funding, advocates warn," Shanifa Nasser, CBC News.

Television: None

Radio: None

FRONT PAGE HEADLINES (GTA NEWSPAPERS)

May 24, 2017

TORONTO STAR

- * Watchdog to investigate licence suspensions (with photo)
- * Stoicism, solidarity and sweeping arrests (with photo)
- * Homeless death rate 'staggering,' activists say (with photo)
- * Who let the bedbugs in? An Airbnb cautionary tale (with photo)

TORONTO SUN

- * Britain on high alert (with photo)
- * Electric circus (with photo)

GLOBE AND MAIL

- * Britain clamps down on security as police expand bombing probe (with photo)
- * Final election count preserves BC Liberals precarious minority
- * Russians discussed how to influence Trump through his aides, US officials claim
- * Ontario's new online tracker confirms opioid epidemic sweeping east

NATIONAL POST

- * The bomber, the backpack, the detonator (with photo)
- * Police probe links between Manchester, Paris, Brussels
- * Liberals make jet mess worse
- * Canada could be on the hot seat at NATO summit (with photo)

TV NEWS SUMMARY (6:00 P.M. EDITION)

Stations surveyed: Global, CFTO, City TV, CJOH, CHCH, CFPL

Disclaimer

May 24, 2017

GLOBAL – 5:30 PM (Toronto)

- 1) The Manchester bombing investigation into possible accomplices has led to police raids and at least three arrests in addition to one yesterday.
- 2) Toronto police are seeking the public's help in locating a 25-year-old York University student who went missing on Friday.
- 3) Mayor John Tory is calling for more provincial funding as city council debates the alignment of the downtown relief line. Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca has responded by highlighting investments in major Toronto transit projects.
- 4) Students and parents protested the construction conditions of a 35-storey condo next to John Fisher Public School this morning.
- 5) U.S. President Donald Trump met with Pope Francis at the Vatican today.
- 6) Weather.
- 7) A pro-life group is speaking out against a small Christian school after it banned a pregnant student from attending her graduation celebration on moral grounds in Maryland.
- 8) Global News features a charity that raises awareness and funds for eating disorder treatment in Canada in its "Making A Difference" segment.
- 9) Ariana Grande has put her Dangerous Woman tour on hold following the suicide bomb attack outside her concert at Manchester Arena on Monday.
- 10) Toronto band Broken Social Scene performed on stage in Manchester last night.
- 16) Ontario's financial accountability officer says Ontarians will be paying a net \$21 billion over the next three decades for short-term savings under the Liberal government's Fair Hydro Plan.
- 18) The University Health Network has found there were 74 medically assisted dying inquiries in Ontario last year, 74 per cent of which were cancer patients.
- 19) Health Minister Eric Hoskins says data on opioid deaths will be used to help track and assess preventable overdose deaths.

GLOBAL – 6:30 PM (National)

- 1) There are suspicions the Manchester suicide bomber had accomplices who remain at large. The attacker had returned from a trip to Libya days before the bombing.
- 2) Manchester police are conducting raids across the city and have arrested several suspects in connection to the bombing. Family members of the attacker have also been arrested.
- 3) More armed soldiers in combat uniforms are now patrolling major landmarks in London. Some of them have been closed to tourists until further notice.

- 4) Students at a music school near the site of the Manchester bombing paid a touching tribute to the victims today.
- 5) Global News interviews a former Manitoba prosecutor who demonstrates how easily illicit fentanyl can be obtained over the phone. Ontario has also announced a link to traffic opioid overdoses in the province.
- 6) Global News interviews an Ottawa mother who for personal reasons has made ending the opioid epidemic her cause.
- 7) The New Democrats are widening their election lead in an important riding that could determine British Columbia's next government.
- 8) Ontario's financial accountability officer says the province's Fair Hydro Plan will cost \$45 billion over the next three decades to save taxpayers \$24 billion on their electricity bills in the short-term.
- 9) U.S. President Donald Trump met with Pope Francis at the Vatican today.
- 10) U.S. President Trump is being criticized for his handling of sensitive information after he told the Philippines President he would send nuclear submarines to the Korean Peninsula.

CFTO – 6:00 PM (Toronto)

- 1) British officials believe the Manchester suicide bombing is part of a network. Five men and a woman have been arrested as more victims are identified.
- 2) The U.K. terror threat level remains at critical. Manchester residents are continuing to visit memorials for the victims of Monday's suicide bombing attack.
- 3) British police have released surveillance camera images of a man believed to be suicide bomber Salman Abedi. More explosives have been found which could have been used in follow-up attacks.
- 4) A 15-year-old girl is one of 14 victims named so far by family in the Manchester attack.
- 5) Ariana Grande has suspended her Dangerous Woman tour following the suicide bomb attack outside her concert in Manchester on Monday.
- 6) Toronto band Broken Social Scene began its European tour in Manchester last night despite the recent attack.
- 7) Breaking News: Another man has been arrested in the Manchester bombing investigation.
- 8) Ontario's financial accountability officer says the Fair Hydro Plan will end up costing the province \$45 billion in the long-term. Ontario's auditor general is also questioning the accounting methods behind the plan.
- 9) Weather.
- 10) Toronto City Council has voted in favour of advancing with the planning and design work of the downtown relief line and Yonge subway extension. Mayor John Tory is asking for a commitment of provincial funding for the relief line.
- 11) Nearly 200 Parkdale residents who have been on a rent strike to protest above-guideline rent increases have been issued eviction warnings.

City TV – 6:00 PM (Toronto)

- 1) The TTC Transit Union has said that the new TTC Presto gates are a safety hazard as they are not

connected to the fire system and would not automatically open with fire alarms.

- 2) Stouffville police have arrested a woman for stealing a package off the porch of a house.
- 3) An accused sex offender who had travelled to the United States and broken the conditions of bail made a brief court appearance in Toronto today.
- 4) Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer has released a report on the province's Fair Hydro Plan.
- 5) Toronto Mayor John Tory was at Pape Station today to hand out flyers urging TTC riders to call the Ministry of Transportation to commit to funding to build the downtown relief line.
- 6) Nearly 1,000 military personnel have been deployed to increase security in London after the bombing at a Manchester concert this week.
- 7) British police have made a fifth arrest in connection to the attack. London hospitals are preparing for the possibility of another attack.
- 8) US President Donald Trump has met and spoken with Pope Francis. President Trump will be meeting with NATO tomorrow.
- 9) Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has also landed in Brussels ahead of the NATO meeting tomorrow.
- 10) Weather.
- 11) The Police Services Board has tabled a motion to dismantle the Student Resource Officers Program.
- 16) The province has launched an online tool for health professionals to access opioid data.
- 17) The Toronto District School Board will be voting on a risk assessment study regarding the condo development next to John Fisher Public School tonight.

CJOH – 6:00 PM (Ottawa)

- 1) Ottawa Community Housing has announced that they will be building a mixed-income mixed-use village in Little Italy.
- 2) Proctor and Gamble has announced the closure of their Brockville plant.
- 3) The Ottawa Senators won their game against the Pittsburgh Penguins last night.
- 4) TSN Reporter Ian Mendes recapped the hockey game last night.
- 5) Weather.
- 6) A fifth person has been arrested in connection with the bombing at a Manchester concert.
- 7) US President Donald Trump has landed in Brussels and will be attending a meeting with NATO tomorrow.
- 8) A 23-year-old Ottawa woman has passed away after falling off a cliff in Croatia.
- 9) A funeral will be held for an Ottawa teacher who died in a car crash last week. The teacher had pending criminal charges of sexual assault and exploitation.
- 10) The federal government has announced they will be paying an additional \$142 million to try to save

the Phoenix Pay System.

11) The province's Financial Accountability Office has released a report on the Fair Hydro Plan.

CHCH – 6:00 PM (Hamilton)

1) The family of a young Waterdown girl who was hit and killed by a van last week is speaking out for the first time.

2) Eighty four pedestrians have been hit by vehicles on Hamilton roads this year.

3) Hamilton police are looking into a sudden death this afternoon.

4) Waterloo police say police in Tennessee are looking for a Hamilton man wanted for second degree murder in the death of his girlfriend.

5) There are reports that the bomb maker in the Manchester bombing could still be on the loose.

6) More details about some of the victims in the Manchester bombing.

7) A mosque that was attended by the alleged suicide bomber in the Manchester bombing is condemning the attack.

8) Artwork meant to be auctioned off to raise money for healthcare in Brant was stolen late last night.

9) The province launched websites today detailing the trend of opioid use and subsequent deaths that could occur.

10) Both the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General say Ontarians will be paying \$21 billion over the next three decades to get short term savings under the government's hydro plan.

17) A new list of water and wastewater projects have been approved under the Canada-Ontario clean water and wastewater fund agreement and the bulk of them are in the Niagara Region.

CFPL – 6:00 PM (London)

1) A fifth person has been arrested in connection to the investigation into Monday's deadly bombing in Manchester, England.

2) Canada's terror threat level remains at medium following the Manchester attacks.

3) A 26-year-old man is facing several charges after a five hour standoff with London police on Monday.

4) The crown wrapped up its case today at the manslaughter trial of Frederick Oag in London.

5) There was evidence today that the London man who was mistaken for the suspect in a St. Thomas jewellery store robbery was not kicked or punched during an arrest.

6) Weather.

7) The federal government is providing over \$18 million for 22 projects that will improve water infrastructure in London, while the province will chip in with over 9 million.

8) Five area elementary schools are slated to shut down over the next three years after Thames Valley trustees voted for closures.

9) Despite controversy, the city of London has permitted a four-storey 142-unit condominium to be built on a lot alongside Fanshawe Park Road.

10) Next week, city council will debate whether to create incrementally larger penalties for concerts that exceed decibel level limits.

11) A long weekend at Rondeau Provincial Park has resulted in thousands of dollars' worth of damage, assault, and heavy drug and alcohol abuse.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these summaries are those of the media cited and do not reflect the views and opinions of the Ontario Public Service.

RADIO NEWS SUMMARY (6:30 A.M. EDITION)

May 25, 2017

CBC Radio (Toronto)

1) Cherry Street is closed at Commissioner's road due to a 6-alarm fire at the GFL garbage depot.

2) Toronto police say a 5-year-old boy died after veering off a cycling path and getting hit by a car.

3) Last night, Toronto District School Board trustees voted on an agreement with the developer of a controversial condo tower slated to be built beside John Fisher Public School.

4) In a new report called 'Growing Up', city planners make a number of recommendations for condo developers to fit families into their designs.

5) Researchers in Toronto are receiving \$2.6-million in a grant for indigenous maternal and child healthcare programs. It is part of an effort to close the gaps in healthcare between aboriginal and non-aboriginal families.