

Today's News - Wednesday, October 19, 2016

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This morning, Premier Kathleen Wynne spoke at the Toronto Regional Board of Trade Transit Summit.

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Also today:

- Today Ontario passed legislation that will rebate the provincial portion of the HST from electricity bills as of January 1, 2017. The Ontario Rebate for Electricity Consumers Act, 2016 will reduce electricity costs by 8 per cent on the amount before tax, an average savings of about \$130 annually or \$11 each month, for about five million residential consumers, farms and small businesses. Rural electricity ratepayers will receive additional relief, decreasing total electricity bills by an average of \$540 a year or \$45 each month. Commercial, institutional and industrial ratepayers would also benefit from up to 34 per cent lower electricity costs through the expansion of the Industrial Conservation Initiative. Making electricity more affordable is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

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- Ontario intends to make it easier to vote and engage more people in the democratic process, including youth. Today, Attorney General Yasir Naqvi intends to introduce the Election Statute Law Amendment Act that would, if passed, implement a number of recommendations made by Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer to promote voter participation and improve the voting experience, modernize the election process, and provide clearer rules to parties and candidates before and during elections. Key measures include:
 - o Engaging more young people earlier in the democratic process by allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote with Elections Ontario on a new provisional register, with the minimum age to vote remaining 18
 - o Making it easier for voters to get to polling stations by moving the scheduled election date from fall to spring to take advantage of the longer daylight hours and warmer weather
 - o Allowing for the use of electronic vote tabulators at voting stations so that votes can be counted more quickly and accurately.

To help improve representation of people living in Ontario's northernmost communities,

including Indigenous people, the bill would also establish the Far North Electoral Boundaries Commission to consider the creation of up to two additional ridings in province's far North. Together with the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015 and the proposed Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, this bill builds on the government's plan to transform provincial elections in Ontario.

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Our government's four-part economic plan to build Ontario up invests in people's talents and skills, including helping people get and create the jobs of the future by expanding access to high-quality college and university education. It includes making the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history —\$160 billion over 12 years — part of which is our Moving Ontario Forward plan to build roads, transit and infrastructure. Our plan includes fostering a dynamic, supportive environment for business to thrive, including investing in a low-carbon economy driven by innovative, high-growth, export-oriented businesses. And it includes creating a secure retirement pension plan for workers to have the retirement they deserve.