

Minister's Message *Delivering Fairness and Choice*

Ontario's *2017 Long-Term Energy Plan* is primarily about the consumer. At its heart, *Delivering Fairness and Choice* makes an important commitment: we will strive to give customers more choices in their energy use and ensure that Ontarians, their families and their future continue to be at the center of everything we do.

We have already taken steps through *Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan* to make the system as affordable as possible. *Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan* reduced electricity bills for residential consumers by an average of 25 per cent, and will ensure that electricity rates won't exceed the rate of inflation for four years. These benefits aren't limited to residential consumers; as many as half a million small businesses and farms are also benefitting from the reduction¹. Lower-income Ontarians and those living in eligible rural and northern communities are receiving even greater reductions, as much as 40 to 50 per cent². These measures were the right thing to do. They're better for Ontario, and fairer for families.

Ontarians are fortunate. We are benefitting from the years of investment we have made in the province's electricity system. We can be proud of what we all have accomplished. Our investments in clean generation have given us a system that is 90 per cent free of the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change³. Our investments are delivering a robust supply of electricity, one that is expected to meet Ontario's electricity demand into the middle of the next decade, but makes us well positioned to plan for and meet future challenges⁴.

Our success in building a clean and reliable electricity system means we can maintain our focus on helping Ontarians and their families. It has also allows us to support the electrification of the transportation sector to reduce our GHG emissions. We are also taking direct action by implementing measures, such as renewable natural gas, to facilitate a reduction in GHG emissions in the broader energy sector. The Province will continue to work towards reducing its GHG emissions, and meeting its emissions targets.

Delivering Fairness and Choice would not have been possible without your suggestions and advice. This report is the product of one of the most extensive consultations and engagements my Ministry has ever undertaken. Thousands of organizations, communities, businesses, and citizens wrote to us. Hundreds came to the 17 open

¹ Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017

Ontario Ministry of Energy News Release, <https://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2017/05/ontario-passes-legislation-to-lower-electricity-bills-by-25-per-cent.html>

² FACT 2

³ IESO, Power Data – Supply Overview - <http://www.ieso.ca/power-data/supply-overview>

⁴ IESO, Ontario Planning Outlook

houses that were held across the province. We met with representatives of over 100 different First Nation and Métis organizations and communities.

In written submissions and at meetings, you told us that affordability is a top priority and that you wanted more control and choice over how you use and pay for electricity. Our government has listened to what you had to say. *Delivering Fairness and Choice* recognizes that senior citizens in Mississauga use energy differently than a family in North Bay. Pricing pilots are underway to help inform new electricity pricing plans that could give consumers increased choice, and the ability to reduce their monthly electricity bills.

Delivering Fairness and Choice ensures consumer protection remains a top priority for this government. We have already given the Ontario Energy Board the authority to prohibit disconnections during certain periods of time when customers are more vulnerable, such as over the winter months. We will now give added protection to consumers living in condominiums and other multi-unit residential buildings who are billed for electricity by private companies who provide metering services to their unit. These consumers will benefit from increased oversight from the Ontario Energy Board over fees charged by those providers. Consumers will also benefit from the Board's new *Consumer Charter* which ensures all energy consumers have the right to a fair, reasonable and timely process for resolving their complaints.

On another front, the Ministry of Energy is working with local distribution companies to redesign electricity bills to give consumers easily accessible information they find valuable and can use. The electricity bill is, after all, the most common way for consumers to receive information about their electricity system.

Ontario is also looking out for consumers by keeping pace with a rapidly changing technology landscape. The costs of new wind and solar energy installations are coming down, and new smart grid and storage technologies are becoming more readily available. Updates to the province's net metering framework will increase the ability of consumers to generate their own renewable electricity and receive a credit on electricity bills for any extra power they send to their local distribution company.

All of this is possible because Ontario has a stable electricity system that produces a steady supply of electricity⁵. *Delivering Fairness and Choice* is using this opportunity to move ahead with innovative ideas for managing the system and reducing costs. Initiatives such as Market Renewal will ensure the province has appropriate sources of electricity at the fairest possible price. This could save Ontarians up to \$5.2 billion over a 10-year period.⁶

⁵ IESO, Ontario Planning Outlook

⁶ Brattle Group, prepared for the IESO, A Benefits Case Assessment of the Market Renewal Project (2017)

Electricity though is just one part of the province's energy picture. Ontarians depend on fossil-fuels such as gasoline and natural gas to power their cars and heat their homes.⁷ *Delivering Fairness and Choice* incorporates both the fuels and electricity sectors, while recognizing their uses need to be coordinated. The strong foundation of our electricity system together with conservation and low-carbon technology incentive program initiatives will empower households, businesses and communities to manage their energy usage, and transition to a low-carbon future.

The good news in *Delivering Fairness and Choice* is that because of the investments we all made, Ontario's energy system is ready to meet any of the challenges we can see looming on the horizon. It hasn't always been easy, and more work remains to be done. But, as I said before, the government will keep Ontario's families and their future at the heart of everything we do.

⁷ Fuels Technical Report, p. 7, <http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/en/files/2016/10/FTRandModules.pdf>
Fuels Technical Report, p. 11, <http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/en/files/2016/10/FTRandModules.pdf>