

Communications Snapshot – Fair Hydro Plan

Communications Objectives

- Raise awareness about Ontario's commitment to lower electricity costs for ratepayers through the rollout of Fair Hydro Plan (FHP) initiatives.

Context

- Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan was announced by Premier Wynne and Minister Thibault on March, 2017.
- The FHP would lower electricity bills by 25 per cent on average for all residential consumers in the province.
- The eight per cent rebate announced in October 2016 **is included** in the 25 per cent savings proposed in the FHP.
- The FHP proposes to bring in additional savings to Ontario consumers through initiatives that include:
 - Refinancing a portion of the global adjustment (GA) to defer costs over a longer term period.
 - Enhancing electricity support and conservation programs and provide additional funding through new social programs:
 - Enhance the Rural or Remote Electricity Rate Protection (RRRP) program
 - Expand the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)
 - Create a First Nations On-Reserve Delivery Credit
 - Establish an Affordability Fund. Ontario, in collaboration with Hydro One, is establishing an Affordability Fund to provide energy efficiency measures to Ontarians who aren't eligible for low-income conservation programs, and who otherwise couldn't make energy efficiency improvements without financial assistance. No legislative amendments are required to establish the Affordability Fund.
 - Expand eligibility for the Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI) for manufacturers and greenhouses with peak demand greater than 500 kW and less than 1 MW. Amendments to O. Reg. 429/04 have already been made to expand eligibility to ICI effective July 1, 2017
 - Identifying market efficiencies through energy agencies and modernizing Ontario's electricity market through market renewal initiatives.
- The programs that require legislation and/or regulatory amendments are:
 - Refinancing a portion of GA
 - Enhancing Distribution Rate Protection
 - Expanding OESP
 - Establishing a First Nations On-Reserve Delivery Credit
 - Funding electricity support programs through the tax base.
- Timing for announcements/social media push(es) relating to milestones and developments of the Fair Hydro Plan initiatives is dependent on the passing of relevant legislation and regulation.

Target Audience

- All electricity consumers in Ontario
- Consumer subgroups: Residential households, small businesses, farms, medium sized businesses (those not RPP-eligible or ICI-eligible), large businesses, municipalities, post-secondary institutions, schools, hospitals (MUSH sector)

Key Messages

- Ontario is lowering electricity bills by 25 per cent on average for all residential customers as part of a significant system restructuring that will address long-standing policy challenges and ensure greater fairness.
- Starting this summer, Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan would provide households with this 25 per cent break. Many small businesses and farms would also benefit from the initiative. People with low incomes and those living in eligible

rural communities would receive even greater reductions to their electricity bills. As part of this plan, rate increases over the next four years would be held to the rate of inflation for everyone.

- These measures include the eight per cent rebate introduced in January and build on previously announced initiatives to deliver broad-based rate relief on all electricity bills.
- Taken together, these changes will deliver the single-largest reduction to electricity rates in Ontario's history.

Strategic Approach

- Use May 11 introduction of legislation milestone to continue increasing awareness of the Fair Hydro Plan and how its measures would lower electricity rates across the province
- Raise awareness province-wide using earned media materials and also target residential rate payers at home with bill inserts and TV advertising. Support LDCs with a comprehensive communications package.
- Reactive materials will include updated Q&As, key messages and issues management plan.

Issues & Mitigation

The below are generic FHP issues, mitigation strategies and key messages. This section will be modified on an ongoing basis.

Issue/Consideration	Mitigation Strategy	Key Message
Saving money for consumers now will result in rising costs for future consumers	Emphasize market renewal and innovative technologies that could result in savings for future consumers	We rebuilt our system; \$50B invested, eliminated coal But asked one generation to pay for it all This Plan is a fairer way to pay for our system
Cost of these initiatives will stop Ontario from balancing the budget	Emphasize that it will help businesses stay competitive and reduce financial pressure on families. GA Refinancing is not expected to have a fiscal impact.	Ontario balanced the budget in 2017-18 while continuing to invest in the economy, our people and a healthy, clean and prosperous low-carbon future.
Reducing bills by an additional \$20 a month is not enough. The government is providing a little relief to all consumers, when they could instead have done more for those that needed it most.	Draw attention to enhancement of Ontario Electricity Support Program and other initiatives which are targeted at the most vulnerable consumers – RRRP enhancement, Affordability Fund	Lower-income Ontarians and those living in eligible rural communities would receive even greater reductions, as much as a 40 to 50 per cent cut

Tactics & Rollout

	April/May 2017	May/June 2017	June 2017 to Fall
Regional Rollout Examples: • MPP Template • Speeches • Media event • Op-ed, media pitch • Editorial board meeting	• MPP echo announcements • Minister speaking engagements (ongoing)	• MPP echo announcements • Minister speaking engagements (ongoing)	• Ministry and MPP echo news releases/announcements/Backgrounders/Key messages/QA (dependent on relevant legislations and/or regulation passage)
Earned Examples: • News release, etc. • Remarks • Event • Calls/emails to targeted audiences • Multilingual media • Fact sheets • House Statement	• Preconditioned earned media: examples of innovative technology success stories • LDC Toolkit development (FAQs, matte stories, digital assets)	• Announce the introduction of legislation on May 11th via a news release and media avail to follow afterwards • House statement • QAs • Targeted media outreach • Deliver toolkit to LDCs	• LDC communications with customers • Bill inserts
Digital / Social Examples: • Web content • Twitter/Facebook • Keyword / interactive web • Blogger outreach • Videos	• Web and social media content development (ongoing)	• Updated web and social media content (aligned with TV creative)	• Next phase of digital campaign • Develop sharable content with focus on bill savings
Paid <i>(must include budget)</i> Examples: - TV/radio/newspaper - Online banners/ads - Advertorial - Householder/direct mail	• Radio ads • Digital banner ads	• TV ads (timing TBC)	• TV ads (timing TBC) • Radio (TBC)

Evaluation

- Monitor and track
 - media reactions and editorials
 - incoming correspondence
 - response by opposition MPPs
 - awareness of and reaction to advertising via PO omnibus survey (TBC)