Afternoon Energy Media Summary - March 9, 2017

From: "Halford, Gavin (ENERGY)" <gavin.halford@ontario.ca>
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Date: Thu, 09 Mar 2017 15:00:54 -0500

Good Afternoon,

Here is a roundup of the day's news:

- Laker Energy wins contracts for Darlington Retube & Refurbishment- News Wire
- Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault promises lower electricity bills by summer- Hamilton News
- A plan for fairer hydro bills- North Bay Now
- Canada: Report Finds That Ontario's Time-Of-Use Pricing Shifts Electricity Consumption- Mondaq
- EnWin hints at delivery fee hikes for customers- Yahoo News
- Hydro rate cuts in Ontario- Wellington Advertiser
- Wynne drops in to talk about dropping electricity rates- Guelph Today
- Liberals' Hydro Shell Game Is An Expensive Band-Aid- Huffington Post
- Hydro cuts to make 'real difference' to small businesses, premier says- CBC

Please see below ***Today in Twitter*** for news articles.

March 9, 2017

Today in Twitter

- @ opg - # TBT All the way back in February when @ONEnergy Minister @GlennThibeault and OPG President & CEO, Jeff Lyash talked energy at #CNA2017 .
- @ TorontoRBOT - Hydro costs in Ontario are forcing businesses to go elsewhere. - @brownbarrie
- @ OntarioPCParty - @brownbarrie asks the Premier if she will admit their mistake and add the cost of her Cap and Trade cash grab to natural gas bills #onpoli
- @ MArsalidesCTV - Hundreds @townofinnisfil to hear from Ontario Energy Board about @InnPower rate increase application @CTVBarrieNews
- @ YorkGuardian - Ontario needs to stop the @HydroOne sale and reduce our surplus power: @OntarioNDP energy critic @Peter_Tabuns http://www. insidetoronto.com/opinion-story/ 7145037-ontario-needs-to-stop-the-hydro-one-sale-and-reduce-our-surplus-power-ndp/ …
- @ YorkGuardian - Ontario's renewable energy 'disaster' is what drives up the cost of your hydro, says @tomadamsenergy #PowerStruggle http://www. insidetoronto.com/opinion-story/ 7144988-opinion-ontario-s-renewable-energy-disaster-is-what-drives-up-the-cost-of-your-hydro/ …
- @ YorkGuardian - Don't blame renewable energy for Ontario's electricity costs, says @keithdbrooks from @envirodefence http://www. insidetoronto.com/opinion-story/ 7142799-opinion-don-t-blame-renewable-energy-for-ontario-s-electricity-costs/ …
- @ RenewOurFuture - By 2016 approximately 600 renewable energy projects with indigenous participation were underway or in development in Ontario! #onpoli

- @ KarenPtbo - Ontario taxpayers are putting in almost $5 for every $1 employees are putting into unsustainable pension plans at Ontario's energy agencies!
- @ KarenPtbo - Wonder why rates sky high? OPG employees putting in just 24% of contributions compared to 76% by the publicly owned utility aka ratepayers.

For the days images, click here

Laker Energy wins contracts for Darlington Retube & Refurbishment
By: Staff Post
For: News Wire
On: March 9, 2017

OAKVILLE, ON , March 9, 2017 /CNW/ - Today, Laker Energy is pleased to announce it has won three contracts totalling more than $54 million from the SNC-Lavalin-Aecon Joint Venture for nuclear components in support of the Darlington nuclear generating station's Retube & Feeder Replacement (RFR) project.
Included in this work are channel closures and end fitting liner assemblies for the RFR project, which Laker will manufacture entirely at its Oakville location.
"Laker Energy is committed to the Darlington RFR project," said Chris Hughes , President, Laker Energy. "We're very proud that these contracts will maintain 40 full time jobs in Oakville for the next four years."

Channel closures seal the ends of the fuel channels and prevent the escape of heavy water. Their design allows for on-line defueling, an advantage of the CANDU reactor design. Liner assemblies are installed in end fitting components and hold fuel bundles in place.

"Laker Energy has long been a valued partner in supplying nuclear components to CANDU plants," said Preston Swafford , Chief Nuclear Officer and Executive Vice-President, Nuclear at SNC-Lavalin, speaking on behalf of the JV. "The entire nuclear industry is committed to the success of the Darlington RFR project."
Once complete, the four Darlington CANDU reactors will produce safe, reliable, affordable and low-carbon energy for Ontario for another 30 years. A study conducted by Intrinsik Environmental Science, showed continued operations of the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station will remove the equivalent of two million cars from Ontario's roads annually.
Laker Energy, which employs 85 people in its Oakville facility, has supplied the Canadian nuclear industry since 1995.
"Laker Energy is not only a world-class operation, but a made-in-Ontario success story. This contract is part of the significant economic activity the Darlington refurbishment is generating in Oakville and across the province," said Glenn Thibeault , Ontario's Minister of Energy. "Ontario's nuclear energy sector, including companies like Laker Energy, supports nearly 60,000 jobs and are providing us with the technical expertise we need to build the clean, low-carbon economy of tomorrow."
The Darlington refurbishment project is a large part of Ontario's clean energy equation bringing energy to the province until 2055 and is Canada's largest clean energy project. The project and subsequent 30 years of station operation will generate a total of $89.9 billion in economic benefits for Ontario , including the preservation of approximately 3,000 jobs and an expected boost to personal income by an average of $1.6 billion per year.

About Laker Energy

Founded in 1995, Laker Energy Products emerged as a leading material organization supplying nuclear grade pipe, tubing, fittings, fasteners and other pressure retaining components to the CANDU® nuclear power industry. As customer demand for new, reliable sources for reactor components grew, our company evolved into a fully integrated, high-precision machining, assembly and testing facility. Domestically and internationally, we deliver the precision and performance demanded by our customers in the nuclear and energy industries.

Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault promises lower electricity bills by summer
By: Kevin Werner
For: Hamilton News
On: March 9, 2017

Alectra Utilities' customers could see a 27 per cent cut in their electricity costs by the summer under a proposed strategy announced by the Ontario government that promotes a 25 per cent reduction in hydro bills.

In addition, rural residents, along with small businesses, will also see “significant” savings once the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan is passed by the legislature, said Ontario Minister of Energy Glenn Thibeault, who was at Alectra’s Hamilton office March 8 for a news conference.

“It’s will depend on everyone’s bill," said Thibeault. “(But) they will see the savings by the summer. This is the single largest electrical rate reduction in Ontario’s history.”

Max Cananzi, president of Alectra’s electricity distribution company, said under the provincial plan Alectra customers could receive on average about a 27 per cent reduction on their bills, while small businesses may see on average a 28 per cent cut. He said on a monthly bill — Alectra will be sending monthly electricity bills starting May 1 to customers — from $115 to $200, the savings could be anywhere from $40 to $50.

On a sample bill distributed by Alectra officials, a monthly bill of $146.56 would be reduced to $105.77, a $39.77 reduction.

Cananzi said the savings from the provincial hydro plan are on top of the expected $40 average savings Alectra has promoted to its customers over the next 10 years as the result of merging Horizon, PowerStream, Enersource and acquiring Hydro One Brampton, which was all completed last month.

The electricity savings come from a number of initiatives by the Ontario government, said Thibeault, including extending the province’s repayment costs (identified on electricity bills as the global adjustment) from 20 years to 30 years, but will add $25 billion in interest expenses.

“Yes, it is going to cost us more over the 30 years,” said Thibeault. “It is the right thing to do because it is fairer for everybody.”

The Liberals argue since the electricity assets will be providing power to generations of people beyond the next 20 years, everybody should pay the cost for upgrading the service.

“It shouldn’t be just our generation pay for assets that will be used by many, many other generations,” said Thibeault. “So we decided as a government to extend the global adjustment payments for 30 years.”

[A plan for fairer hydro bills]
By: Glenn Thibeault
For: North Bay Now
On: March 9, 2017

On March 2, Premier Wynne announced a plan that will lower residential hydro bills by an average of 25 per cent starting this summer. This significant reduction in rates will go to every household in Ontario with no asterisks, loop holes or exceptions. And your bill won’t increase beyond inflation for at least 4 years.

I don’t have to tell you why this is needed. I have heard from people across our province struggling to deal with bills that have gone up too much and too quickly. Household budgets are stretched. Something needed to be done.

What I want to share is how we got to this point, how we’re fundamentally restructuring the system to give you the biggest rate cut in Ontario history, and why you can be certain that this change is going to be lasting.

For a long time, Ontario enjoyed one of the best electricity systems around. But for decades, governments of all stripes stopped investing. About 15 years ago, those quick-fixes caught up with us. Brownouts, blackouts and dirty coal plants were a danger to our health, our environment and our economy.

So, we closed all of Ontario's coal plants, built new transmission lines and invested in renewable energy. We now have a clean, reliable system that is going to benefit us for decades. But that came at a price. And the terms we set to finance these necessary renovations weren't fair.

In effect, we put the $50 billion cost of the rebuild onto the hydro bills of just one generation. That was a mistake. It meant high bills because you were paying for past neglect *and* subsidizing ratepayers who will benefit from these energy assets for years to come. By stretching those costs out over a timeframe that better reflects the lifespan of the assets we're paying for, we can lower everyone's bills today and keep them from jumping back up. That's the fairer way forward.

We have also been asking ratepayers to pay for things that should really be part of the province's budget. Our program to help low-income families afford hydro is one example.

But I want to highlight the Rural or Remote Rate Protection program. The RRRP helps subsidize the high cost of delivering electricity to 350,000 rural residential customers. We're taking the cost of the program off bills and enhancing it so that now about 800,000 homes will qualify for lower delivery charges.

Hydro is a necessity. But for many of us living in the North, high delivery charges were leading to impossible choices between groceries, rent or electricity. That's not right. With this change, everyone in Ontario is going to be paying roughly the same in delivery charges. Again, it comes down to fairness.

As you can imagine, these huge and lasting structural fixes do come with a cost. We can afford it because of Ontario's strengthening economy, which is the fastest growing in Canada. After a decade of deficits, the provincial budget will be balanced this year. Our recovery is on track, but it hasn't been evenly shared. Many families I speak to, whether in Sudbury or Timmins or Sault Ste Marie tell me they aren't any better off than they were before the recession. It is why our team is determined to make sure growth in our economy means more opportunity and security for people in our community and all across Ontario. Using the province's newfound fiscal strength to give everyone the break they need on their hydro bills is the right thing to do for the province and the fair thing to do for your family.

Glenn Thibeault, Minister of Energy

Canada: Report Finds That Ontario's Time-Of-Use Pricing Shifts Electricity Consumption

By: David Stevens
For: Mondaq
On: March 9, 2017

A February 2017 report titled "The Impact of Time-Of-Use Rates in Ontario," authored by the Brattle Group (with contributions from Mountain Economic Consulting and eMeter), looks at the impacts of the implementation of time-of-use (TOU) pricing in Ontario. The report (which can be found here) is summarized in a February 2017 article in *Public Utilities Fortnightly* titled "The Impact of Time-Of-Use Rates in Ontario." The article, also written by the Brattle Group (along with Dean Mountain of Mountain Economic Consulting), explains that the implementation of TOU pricing has led to "tangible reductions in peak demand" of electricity consumption by residential consumers.

The Brattle Group examined the consumption patterns of residential customers before and after they transitioned to TOU pricing. As explained in the Public Utilities Fortnightly article, the analysis looked at customer consumption (primarily during the summer period) from as early as 2009 to 2014, to evaluate how a customer's usage changed with TOU pricing. On the whole, the Brattle Group found evidence of "load shifting" away from the peak pricing period of 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (weekdays). The magnitude of this change was between 1.2% and 3.5%, with the observed impacts being smaller in more recent years. Interestingly, no evidence of electricity conservation (lower consumption, all things being equal) was observed.

One of the conclusions noted in the *Public Utilities Fortnightly* article is that the reductions in peak consumption "have been realized even with a TOU rate that had modest differentials between peak and off-peak periods." The Brattle Group believes that "[i]f the peak to off-peak price differentials were higher, there is every reason to expect that the reductions in peak demand would have been higher." This is an interesting comment in light of the Ontario Energy Board's (OEB) current review of TOU pricing. As we described in an earlier post, the OEB's December 2015 Report on the Regulated Price Plan (RPP) Roadmap concluded that current TOU pricing is not providing sufficient incentives for consumers to shift and/or reduce their electricity consumption. In response, the OEB is taking steps to consider alternative RPP approaches, starting with pilot projects that will test a variety of strategies. The OEB's July 2016 [Regulated Price Plan Roadmap: Guideline for Pilot Projects on RPP Pricing] (the Guideline) sets out the OEB's objectives, identifies priority treatments for price (and non-price) pilot projects, and lays out a framework for electricity distributors to design, implement and evaluate these pilot projects. As seen from a recent [OEB proposal to update the Standard System Supply Code], the implementation of these pilot projects is now moving ahead. The OEB has previously indicated that the pilot projects will be operating in the field no later than May 1, 2017, and will be completed by December 1, 2018. The OEB will evaluate the overall results of the pilot projects, and may make successful options available to all RPP consumers.

Given the Brattle Group's findings and the OEB's observations, it is perhaps surprising to see that the Minister of Energy appears to be considering allowing consumers the option to avoid TOU pricing. According to *The Globe and Mail*, in a speech delivered on February 24, 2017, Minister Glenn Thibeault indicated that the Government is looking at a new pricing approach that would give ratepayers options, such as whether to choose a flat rate or a TOU plan. Details of the Province's plan to address high consumer costs for electricity are promised in the coming weeks.

EnWin hints at delivery fee hikes for customers
By: Staff Post
For: Yahoo News
On: March 9, 2017

EnWin Customers should prepare themselves for an increase on their power bills.

The utility is distributing a survey to determine whether customers could stomach an increase in delivery charges to help ensure a more reliable power grid. EnWin CEO Helga Reidel told Windsor Morning delivery charges must go up if the company is to maintain its infrastructure.

"What EnWin manages is the cost of the lines you see around the city, the transmission lines along the city and we have to keep those in good repair," said Reidel. "Ultimately, yes, this is a survey to see what our customers will tolerate and what our customers expect in terms of that reliability and what they are willing to pay for it."

Reidel says businesses like Chrysler's Windsor Assembly Plant rely on "perfect power" and outages cost them money. She said EnWin was able to restore power relatively quickly to most customers during the mass outages on Wednesday but the infrastructure won't be so reliable in years to come without additional investment.

"In the longterm, eventually the system would decay and we could not be able to restore power as quickly as we did in this most recent storm," said Reidel. "Over time the system would breakdown ... people would eventually see it and business, unfortunately, would eventually feel that pain."

Reidel says the increase in delivery fees is still a few years away, 2019 at the earliest. Any hike would also need approval of the Ontario Energy Board.

Hydro rate cuts in Ontario
By: Olivia Rutt
For: The Wellington Advertiser
On: March 9, 2017

If there was ever an appeal for votes, then Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne’s cut to residents’ hydro bills is definitely one.

She announced last week the government would be implementing further reductions to hydro bills, totalling 25 per cent.

The reduction is being compared to remortgaging, where the government would make smaller payments to energy contracts over longer periods of time. This puts debt pressure on future generations because Wynne’s future after the next four years is a little hazy.

Wynne estimated the move would save about $1.5 billion a year by keeping increases at the rate of inflation, but only for the next four years.

At least Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault admitted that eliminating coal and rebuilding the grid cost “billions of dollars” which “came at the expense of many families.”

Wynne’s “cuts” are a smoke screen and don’t address the real issues with hydro bills: global adjustment fees and delivery charges.

As prices increased, people started to use less and less electricity, so the fees and charges increased. This is what Wynne should focus on; instead, she wants to get back into the “good books” of voters.

In the next election, this issue will put Liberals in hot water (hopefully heated by electricity they paid for). But Conservatives aren’t any better … they don’t even have a plan.

Thibeault: This is why we’re able to cut hydro rates by 25%
By: Staff Post
For: Sudbury.com
On: March 9, 2017

On March 2, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced a plan that will lower residential hydro bills by an average of 25 per cent, starting this summer. This significant reduction in rates will go to every household in Ontario with no asterisks, loop holes or exceptions. And your bill won’t increase beyond inflation for at least four years.

I don’t have to tell you why this is needed. I have heard from people across our province struggling to deal with bills that have gone up too much and too quickly. Household budgets are stretched. Something needed to be done.

What I want to share is how we got to this point, how we’re fundamentally restructuring the system to give you the biggest rate cut in Ontario history, and why you can be certain that this change is going to be lasting.

For a long time, Ontario enjoyed one of the best electricity systems around. But for decades, governments of all stripes stopped investing. About 15 years ago, those quick-fixes caught up with us. Brownouts, blackouts and dirty coal plants were a danger to our health, our environment and our economy.

So, we closed all of Ontario’s coal plants, built new transmission lines and invested in renewable energy. We now have a clean, reliable system that is going to benefit us for decades. But that came at a price. And the terms we set to finance these necessary renovations weren’t fair.

In effect, we put the $50 billion cost of the rebuild onto the hydro bills of just one generation. That was a mistake. It meant high bills because you were paying for past neglect and subsidizing ratepayers who will benefit from these energy assets for years to come. By stretching those costs out over a timeframe that better reflects the lifespan of the assets we’re paying for, we can lower everyone’s bills today and keep them from jumping back up. That’s the fairer way forward.

We have also been asking ratepayers to pay for things that should really be part of the province’s budget. Our program to help low-income families afford hydro is one example.

But I want to highlight the Rural or Remote Rate Protection program. The RRRP helps subsidize the high cost of delivering electricity to 350,000 rural residential customers. We’re taking the cost of the program off bills and enhancing it so that now about 800,000 homes will qualify for lower delivery charges.

Hydro is a necessity. But for many of us living in the North, high delivery charges were leading to impossible choices between groceries, rent or electricity. That’s not right. With this change, everyone in Ontario is going to be paying roughly the same in delivery charges. Again, it comes down to fairness.

As you can imagine, these huge and lasting structural fixes do come with a cost. We can afford it because of Ontario’s strengthening economy, which is the fastest growing in Canada. After a decade of deficits, the provincial budget will be balanced this year. Our recovery is on track, but it hasn’t been evenly shared.

Many families I speak to, whether in Sudbury or Timmins or Sault Ste Marie, tell me they aren’t any better off than they were before the recession. It is why our team is determined to make sure growth in our economy means more opportunity and security for people in our community and all across Ontario.

Using the province's newfound fiscal strength to give everyone the break they need on their hydro bills is the right thing to do for the province and the fair thing to do for your family.

[Pettapiece pans Liveral hydro move]

By: Staff Post

For: The Wellington Advertiser

On: March 9, 2017

QUEEN'S PARK - Opposition Conservatives are calling Premier Kathleen Wynne's promise to cut soaring hydro rates by 17 per cent "a desperate shell game."

"Of course hydro rates need to come down," said Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece in a March 6 press release.

However, he said the Liberals' latest announcement "doesn't get to the root of the problem, which is years of failed Liberal energy policies and the terrible contracts they continue to sign."

Pettapiece said Wynne compared her plan to "refinancing the mortgage and setting a new term that stretches over a longer period." However, he stated, it comes at a cost of roughly $25 billion in interest costs over 30 years.

"Over the long term, this will cost us more - much more. Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be paying for this government's mistakes."

Pettapiece also slammed the government over what he calls yet another mistake. The MPP stated reports indicate the government last week planned to sign more new green energy contracts.

"This is more high-cost power we do not need and cannot afford," Pettapiece said.

"It's as if the Liberals have learned nothing. People need to ask why this government would continue signing such bad contracts."

Opposition Leader Patrick Brown stated many of the contracts signed to date were handed out to Liberal donors; 30 of the companies donated $1.3 million to the governing party. The government "should admit its Green Energy Act has been a failure and repeal it," Pettapiece stated. "That would start to solve the problem. Pushing the costs onto future generations is not right."

In 2015, Ontario's auditor general concluded ratepayers overpaid $37 billion for hydro from 2006 to 2014. The report also showed ratepayers will spend an extra $133 billion by 2032 because of global adjustment fees on hydro bills.

[Wynne drops in to talk about dropping electricity rates]

By: Rob O'Flanagan

For: Guelph Today

On: March 9, 2017

On a junket to drum up press for the province's Fair Hydro Plan, which involves recent cuts to electricity rates, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne visited two small businesses on Quebec Street in Guelph Thursday morning.

She sat down with business owners who were appreciative of a recent move to cut electricity rates across the province by a substantial 25 per cent by this summer. Small businesses that receive a time-of-use bill similar to residential customers will be eligible. Other new measures will eliminate distribution costs for First Nations, provide additional relief for low income families and those living in eligible rural areas.

Any rate increases over the next four years will be held to the rate of inflation for everyone.

Wearing a designer jacket that shared some characteristics of an bold abstract painting, Wynne was low-key in the early hour.

With a heavy security detail around her, accompanied by a public relations entourage, and with Guelph MPP and President of the Treasuring Board, Liz Sandals, at her said, Wynne arrived at The Bloom Room Floral Company at 27 Quebec Street just before 8:30 a.m.

There, she toured the relatively new business with owners Jason Dendekker and Fran Saliba, and then sat down with them for a chat about power.

Dendekker and Saliba, business and life partners, said it was refreshing to see a government measure that would trim a significant amount of money from their expenses. Their hydro bill was up to $600 last summer, and like other business owners they were struggling with "unmanageable" electricity rates, Dendekker told the premier.

Wynne said her government had grown increasingly concerned about the impact high rates were having on businesses and families, and made the decision to cut them. The government essentially refinanced debt on new electricity infrastructure, stretching it out for 30, as opposed to 20 years.

"It was humbling to be asked to have her here," Dendekker told reporters, calling the hydro cut a "great start" to helping small business and getting rates under control.

As Wynne prepared to leave The Bloom Room, security personnel appeared concerned about a man who was lingering on the sidewalk.

With two Guelph Police officers out on Quebec Street, and plain-clothes officers escorting her, the premier then moved a few doors down to The Bookshelf, where she was greeted by booksellers Ben and Barb Minett.

Wynne was impressed with the store, and she and Sandals spent some time browsing the shelves. Wynne later made several purchases.

"It's not a good idea to bring me into a bookstore," she said.

Ben Minett, president of The Bookshelf – the business also includes a bar, restaurant, gallery space and cinema – said in dialogue with Wynne and Sandals that he had watched with concern as hydro rates rose.

"The idea of a 25 per cent drop in our expense line is unheard of in business," he said. Barb Minett added that the savings could possibly be used to invest in solar panels for the business.

While the Minetts are happy to see hydro rates coming down, given their $3,000 to $4,000 monthly bill, it is a more complete transition to renewable energy they are most in favour of it. Sandals said the government has been strong in green energy policy and investment.

Wynne said investments in renewable energy have been the right thing to do. She acknowledged that investments in the electricity system in recent years should have been spread over a longer timeline in the first place, but added it was "better late then never" in making changes now.

"We are making this change so you can have a bit of relief," she said. "And if you can reinvest, that's fantastic."

The 25 per cent rate cut is a combination of an eight per cent rebate introduced in January, and a just announced 17 per cent additional reduction.

Liberals' Hydro Shell Game Is An Expensive Band-Aid

By: Mike Schrenier

For: Huffington Post

On: March 9, 2017

The hydro plan Premier Wynne announced last week is the most expensive band aid in Ontario's history.

To stop the Liberal's bleeding poll numbers, the Premier is going to borrow $14 billion dollars over the next decade. She says her baind aid will reduce electricity prices by 17%. This is on top of the $1 billion per year her HST cut on hydro bills will cost.

That's a $24,000,000,000 dollar band aid, costing each household about $5,000.

The Premier has said nothing about what programs will be cut to pay for her band aid.

$14 billion in interest payments may be good for bankers, but not for you and me.

When I think about where I want my tax dollars to go, big banks aren't on my list.

$1.4 billion per year would pay for 20,000 nurses in Ontario. It could save some of the 11 schools slated to close in Ottawa and dozens more around the province. It would go a long way to improving regional transit links. It could build hospitals, protect our water; the list goes on.

"These shell games have cost billions. None of them have worked."

This is what happens when politicians mess up the hydro file and become desperate to buy votes. You end up paying big time.

Don't get me wrong. We have a real affordability crisis on our hands. No one should have to choose between food and heat.

But I think you deserve more than a band aid. You deserve permanent, long term solutions so we can put that $14 billion into public services, instead of banks.

Here's the thing -- we do have better options! But first the government needs to stop repeating the mistakes of the past.

In 2002, Ernie Eves froze electricity rates. Debt went up and cost us billions.
In 2011, Dalton McGuinty moved two gas plants and we paid $1.1 billion. Then he added another subsidy that had us borrowing $1.1 billion a year.
Now Wynne's 25% rebate is just the latest in a long line of shell games on hydro.

These shell games have cost billions. None of them have worked.
"Right now our provincial electricity surplus means Ontario has to sell excess power at a loss. If we need

additional power, Quebec water power is much less expensive."

We should be looking at how we can provide relief to those who desperately need it now, and also save in the long run. Here's a plan on how we can get there:

First stop: target programs to provide rate reductions for people who need it the most. Electricity rate increases are unaffordable for people with low/fixed incomes. The increases are punishing anyone on electric baseboard heating .

Across the board cuts like those supported by the NDP and Liberals are tax cuts for the rich. Wealthy homes use more energy and benefit the most by these programs. Instead, it is more financially responsible and effective to target price cuts for those in need. This can best be achieved by putting more money into programs like the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

2. Next, tackle the expensive elephant in the room: nuclear.

The Premier must say no to the nuclear lobby. No nuclear project has delivered on time or budget.

Increases in the Global Adjustment (GA) are driving up electricity prices. 46% of the increase in the GA is due to nuclear power. Two companies operate nuclear plants in our province: privately owned Bruce Power and publicly owned Ontario Power Generation (OPG). Between 2002 and 2016, their rates rose by 54% and 60% .
And now OPG is asking for a massive price increase over the next decade to finance the Darlington Nuclear plant rebuild.

Instead of pouring billions more into nuclear power, let's close Pickering Nuclear on time in 2018. This will save us money by reducing Ontario's electricity surplus. Right now our provincial electricity surplus means Ontario has to sell excess power at a loss. If we need additional power, Quebec water power is much less expensive.

3. Help people and businesses save money by saving energy. Energy efficiency and conservation are the lowest cost energy solutions.

We will all save money now and forever by figuring out how to use less energy to power our businesses and homes.

A Green Building fund will help us do this and create thousands of jobs. We can finance this fund with the billions in savings from cancelling the planned nuclear rebuilds.

4. Stop the privatization of Hydro One.

This will prevent financial losses to Ontario's treasury and prevent future electricity price increases. Selling off Hydro One puts the Liberal's short-term desperate economic and political needs ahead of good public policy.

The Liberal's expensive hydro band aid won't build an efficient electricity system. It won't reduce costs in the system. And it will cost all of us billions.

We deserve better in Ontario. We need honest solutions based on good public policy to get out of this hydro mess.

[Hydro cuts to make 'real difference' to small businesses, premier says]

By: Kate Bueckert

For: CBC

On: March 9, 2017

Premier Kathleen Wynne says her government's plan to slash hydro rates by up to 25 per cent this summer will help small businesses.

Wynne was in Guelph Thursday morning speaking to the owners of an independently-owned flower shop and bookstore.

Budget watchdog to examine Ontario hydro relief plan; PCs question Liberal math

Hydro rates to drop 17%, but Ontarians will pay for it later

Why hydro bills are so high in Ontario

"This will make a real difference to businesses that are on main street, that are family businesses, that are serving communities," Wynne told CBC News during her stop in The Bookshelf.

The reduction will be "substantial" for small businesses and will "make a huge difference to their bottom line," she said.

"When I've talked about the reductions, I've talked about mom-and-pop shops, so they're family, community businesses that we want to thrive," Wynne said.

Reduced costs means more chance to invest

Barb Minett of The Bookshelf said the reduced rates will help them with green energy projects, like adding solar panels to the roof of the building, which also houses Miijidaa restaurant, a cinema and the eBar.

High hydro prices hurt Ontario factories, industry group says

Kathleen Wynne defends plan to spread out hydro costs

"We can invest in more things," she told the premier during a conversation in front of the media.

Premier Kathleen Wynne Guelph Barb Minett

Premier Kathleen Wynne listens to Barb Minett of The Bookshelf in Guelph. Wynne made a stop in Guelph Thursday morning to talk to business owners about hydro costs. (Kate Bueckert/CBC)

Ben Minett said the cost of electricity can reach $4,000 a month for the entire building.

Wynne said the cost reduction will come from spreading the cost of paying for green energy projects out over a longer period of time.

"If we had it to do again, we'd probably spread those costs over a longer time to start out with. That would have been the fairer thing to do," she said.

'A good start'

Jason Dendekker and Francine Saliba are a young couple who opened The Bloom Room Floral Company on Queen Street in May 2016.

"Being a florist, we have two coolers that are running 24 hours a day. The space also has to be temperature controlled, so definitely within the summer months, we are running air conditioner. And this is about 2,500 square feet so that does substantially add up," Dendekker said.

"It goes, it averages anywhere from $500 to $700 a month."

When asked if the reductions go far enough to help them, Saliba said the province "had to start somewhere" and Dendekker called it "a great start."

"I think it's going to work well for small business owners and rural property," he said. "Everybody within Ontario is definitely going to see a difference in their hydro bills, and I think that's a good step and a good start."

Visuals

Ontario Power Gen @opg

Following

#TBT All the way back in February when @ONEnergy Minister @GlennThibeault and OPG President & CEO, Jeff Lyash talked energy at #CNA2017.

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