Afternoon Media Summary - September 8, 2017

From: "Garand, Joseph (ENERGY)" <joseph.garand@ontario.ca>
Date: Fri, 08 Sep 2017 15:21:39 -0400

G ood afternoon,

Here's what's in the news this afternoon:

- Ontario Energy Board to review proposed sale of Midland Power Utility Corporation – *Midland Mirror*
- Unconquered Sun Welcomes Green Ontario Fund – *Windsor Square*
- Shocking lack of security at Etobicoke hydro corridor: The Fixer – *Etobicoke Guardian*
- Goldstein's assumptions are wrong – *Sarnia Observer (Letter to the Editor: Chris Ballard)*
- Auditor General Says Ontario Debt Not Reported Accurately – *Net News Ledger*
- Toronto Hydro to host environment meeting in Rockcliffe-Smythe – *York Guardian*
- Canadian Nuclear Association urges IPCC to recognize role of nuclear energy in climate mitigation – *Machinery and Equipment Magazine*
- As Energy East pipeline stalls, Tories accuse Liberals of failing energy industry – *National Post*

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

Sept. 8, 2017
Today in Twitter

@JonSThompson - Writing on Ontario energy is like unwinding Christmas lights from a mangled ball. It's hard to know where to draw the line around one story.

@MarkBourrie - Everything to do with power generation in ON is screwed. Look at Terrace Bay. Mill next to 70-year-old generator can't afford power.

@etopia1 - Replying to @chevymo @chicago_canada @cathmckenna
Oh my, economics written in crayon. Ontario was bleeding edge in green energy and look what's happened.

@bowker_john - ON govt also engineered an equity deal before Hydro One IPO to hide a $2.6B tax break, so shareholders would get the benefit, not ratepayers.

@bowker_john - eg: it has claimed $2.4B in accounting gains as proceeds from the Hydro One sale. But these "assets" exist only on paper & can't be spent

@GasBuddyDan - "Wicked Renewables"? Ontario Hydro ratepayers would agree

@CERISE_info - Have opinions on customer service rules for #Ontario #energy utilities? @OntEnergyBoard wants to hear from you: bit.ly/2xU2beA

@360_energy - The planned East-West Tie Line could have major effect on biomass power in Northwest

Ontario ow.ly/fUbK30f0BEP

@MidlandMirror - Ontario Energy Board to hold public hearing to consider pending sale of @MidlandPUC. simcoe.com/news-story/754…

@HayeseLaw - Wow. Stunning stats show the huge cost to Ontario taxpayers of the moronic energy policies of Liberal govt #onpoli …tenergyperspectivesblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/08/lab…

@6esm - Why aren't NW Ontario's state-of-the-art energy facilities producing any energy? tvo.org/article/curren… - #bioenergy #biofuels #bioeconomy

@EnergyPlusInc - No-cost smart thermostat, in-home energy review from Green Ontario Fund. See how: ow.ly/hk5i30eQV99 Register online NOW #limitedtime

@RyersonCUE - Selected Ontario utilities to test new electricity pricing options: bit.ly/2jcLfNp

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Ontario Energy Board to review proposed sale of Midland Power Utility Corporation
Andrew Mendler
Midland Mirror
September 8, 2017

The Midland Power Utility Corporation (MPUC) hasn't been sold just yet.

The Newmarket-Tay Power Distribution Ltd. (NTPDL) has applied to the Ontario Energy Board to approve the purchase of all MPUC shares for $27.6 million plus $200,000 for transaction costs and expenses.

"It's just a formality the Ontario Energy Board goes through every time there is a sale of a utility," said Midland CEO John Skorobohacz, who doesn't expect there to be a snag in the process.

"I'm not aware of any instances where the OEB has actually rejected a sale."

In the application, the NTPDL says the rates for customers of the NTPDL and MPUC will remain separate until 2027.

As with any utility sale, the Ontario Energy Board will hold a public hearing to consider the application file and pending sale. In this instance, the applicants have applied for a written hearing. Anyone wanting to offer their thoughts and opinions on the proposed sale must provide a written statement to the OEB by Sept. 18.

To learn more about how to file a letter or comment on the matter visit www.oeb.ca/notice or call 1-877-623-2727.

A decision and reasoning will be listed on the OEB website when the hearing is complete.

Unconquered Sun Welcomes Green Ontario Fund
Windsor Square
September 8, 2017

(TECUMSEH, ON) – Ontario's Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has announced the launch of the Green Ontario Fund. Local solar company Unconquered Sun is applauding the new program as a potential windfall for the future of the company and other green-tech firms in the province.

The Green Ontario Fund, or GreenON, will provide rebates and other incentives to help businesses and residential energy consumers slash their energy costs. It is expected to launch several solar-focused initiatives this autumn.

"The Green Ontario Fund is a great harbinger of growth for Unconquered Sun Solar Technologies and a great step toward increased solar deployment within the Province of Ontario," said Sean Moore, the founder of Unconquered Sun.

The fund will be administered under Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan and backed by proceeds from the province's new cap-and-trade program, which places limits on the amount of pollutants that companies can emit.

The province held its second cap-and-trade auction in June and raised $504 million. Total revenues from the program are expected to reach C$1.8 Billion in 2017. The provincial government will initially invest $377 million in GreenON with total investment expected to reach $2.4 Billion by end of the decade.

The Tecumseh-based Unconquered Sun, founded in 2008, is responsible for 20 per cent of all of the province's installed residential solar generation in 2017.

Shocking lack of security at Etobicoke hydro corridor: The Fixer

Jack Lakey
Etobicoke Guardian
September 8, 2017

The hydro corridor that cuts across Toronto doubles as parkland, but it shouldn't be open to riders of dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles.

The corridor used for transmission towers and high-voltage power lines amounts to secondary green space for people who live in the area. It's a great space to go for a hike or walk a dog; if you can look past the hulking towers, it's almost like a slice of country in the city. Some parts even have bike paths that run on for long distances.

Just about everyone is welcome, except those who would try to steer a car into it, or other types of motorized vehicles.

That's why Hydro One, which is in charge of Ontario electrical transmission lines and responsible for the corridor, uses cable suspended by wooden posts to seal off entrances at points where it crosses city streets.

But when the wire barricade is breached, it means that the wrong crowd can get in and makes it more likely that a kid on a dirt bike will go zooming past hikers and dog walkers.

Mara Glebov sent us a note including photos of posts used to suspend the cables across the corridor at Chartwell Rd., near Islington Ave. and The Queensway, showing several that are broken.

"Many of the wood posts on both the east and west side of the hydro field have rotted at the base and have fallen over, thus making the fence ineffective," she said.

"With the posts being down, non-authorized vehicles such as ATVs, etc. could get into the hydro fields and cause destruction."

We went there to take a look and found five toppled posts on the east side of Chartwell, and two on the west side. With nothing to suspend the cable for long stretches, the corridor is wide open to vehicles.

While some of the posts are, indeed, rotted, we think Glebov has given too much credit to decomposition. Some look like they've been knocked over on purpose, to lower the cable.

STATUS: Nancy Clark, who deals with media for Hydro One, emailed to say the posts and cable should already be fixed by now.

Goldstein's assumptions are wrong

Chris Ballard
Sarnia Observer
September 8, 2017

Lorrie Goldstein's latest column (Sarnia Observer, Cap and trade gives government a slush fund) betrays his skewed view of Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan. Like the skeptics before him, his sweeping assumptions are wrong and need to be corrected.

Ontario residents I talk with don't dispute that climate change is real and that it's happening. They want a provincial government that supports their desire to reduce the amount of pollution we are releasing into the air. With the federal government mandating a carbon price by 2018, we're taking a lead with our plan to guarantee reductions at the most economical price possible.

In this fight, it's not good enough to sit idly by. That's why every dollar collected from our cap on pollution and carbon market must be reinvested into projects that fight climate change. Our plan will invest up to $1.9 billion per year to cut pollution, create good clean local jobs and reduce our dependency on imported fossil fuels. Whether it's for home improvements to lower energy bills or new furnaces in public schools to improve energy efficiency and the comfort of our kids, Ontarians are seeing these investments in action. Other initiatives, like social housing upgrades, increased cycling paths, and smart thermostats will also help lower bills and emissions. By law, we are required to report back on these investments every year. Citizens can track our progress.

We know our plan is different from the expensive carbon tax some prefer. But we also know it's better. As Ontario's independent Environmental Commissioner said in her annual report, "putting a price on carbon by itself would not be enough to achieve Ontario's reduction targets… Ontario needs complementary emission reduction measures." It's these additional investments which separate our plan from the rest.

Compare our plan to the provincial Conservatives' carbon tax scheme. Expert third-party analysis from EnviroEconomics shows it would cost families four times more without guaranteeing any reductions. Worse, the Conservatives would put an end to the important investments we're making right across the province – ones that consumers and business are keen to adopt. Inefficient, ineffective and unaffordable – that's how you would define the Conservative scheme that costs more but does less.

We've consulted with Ontarians and we know that fighting climate change responsibly is something they want. I would encourage you to read our Climate Change Action Plan and make up your own mind about our plan to cap pollution and invest in low-carbon choices for residents and businesses.

Chris Ballard

Minister of the Environment and Climate Change

[Auditor General Says Ontario Debt Not Reported Accurately]
NetNewsLedger
September 8, 2017

TORONTO – POLITICS – The Auditor General of Ontario issued a qualified audit opinion on the Consolidated Financial Statements of the Province of Ontario, saying the statements significantly understated the 2016/17 deficit, as well as the Province's net debt.

The deficit is understated by $1.444 billion for 2016/17 ($1.831 billion in 2015/16) and the net debt is understated by $12.429 billion for 2016/17 ($10.985 billion in 2015/16).

"I have issued a qualified audit opinion because the statements were not prepared following Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards," Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said today after the Government issued the Public Accounts of Ontario.

"The legislature and all Ontarians must be able to rely on the Province's consolidated financial statements to fairly report the fiscal results for the year. This year they cannot do so," she added.

Lysyk also warned that the accounting design the Government created for the electricity bill reduction under the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 may lead to a larger understated deficit and net debt next year. A Special Report on this subject will be tabled in the fall.

Under the Auditor General Act, Lysyk must review the Province's financial statements and give an opinion as to whether they fairly and accurately reflect the state of the Province's finances. The Auditor General issues a qualified opinion when she believes, based on the audit evidence obtained, the statements are significantly misstated.

Lysyk said two issues in the Province's consolidated financial statements failed to conform to Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS), which led her to issue a qualified opinion. The first relates to the Government's accounting for its calculated surplus of $12.429 billion for two pension funds it co-sponsors, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union Pension

Plan.

Although the Government recorded $12.429 billion this year as a net pension asset related to these pension plans, it does not have the unilateral legal right to access this amount without first receiving the formal written consent of plan members. It has no such consent at present. As well, the Government's half of the actual funded surpluses within these two pension funds is only $5.7 billion, which is considerably lower than the Government's calculated surplus on its consolidated financial statements.

Lysyk said her Office did considerable work, including extensive consultations with external experts, in reaching its position on the net pension asset last year. She added that her Office's position is consistent with how the provinces of British Columbia and New Brunswick, and the Toronto Transit Commission apply Canadian PSAS. The Ontario Government based its accounting treatment this year not on Canadian PSAS, but on the recommendations of a panel of individuals the Government appointed after the Auditor General's qualified opinion last year, the first in 23 years. The Auditor General also took the panel's report into account in reaching her audit opinion this year.

Lysyk's qualified opinion this year states that the panel's recommendations "are not an authoritative source on the application of Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards."

The second issue relates to the Government inappropriately recording the market account assets and liabilities of the Independent Electricity System Operator on its financial statements (market accounts track transactions between power generators and power distributors).

Lysyk said the market accounts as recorded in the Province's financial statements do not meet the definition of assets and liabilities under Canadian PSAS because the Province has no access or discretion to use these assets for its own benefit. As a result, other assets and other liabilities in the consolidated financial statements are both overstated by $1.652 billion in 2016/17 ($1.443 billion in 2015/16).

The Auditor General's qualified opinion can be read here.

The Office of the Auditor General is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly serving all Members of the Assembly and the citizens of Ontario. Under the Auditor General Act, the Office audits the Government's accounting for and use of public money.

[Toronto Hydro to host environment meeting in Rockcliffe-Smythe]
York Guardian
September 8, 2017

Toronto Hydro will host a meeting Sept. 20 on ways to improve green space and parkland in the city's Rockcliffe-Smythe neighbourhood.

In August, construction was started to double the size of the Runnymede Transformer Station in Woolner Park, located at Jane Street and Woolner Avenue.

Officials said at a meeting in May that the upgrade to the transformer station and the hydro wires along the west-end corridor are needed in anticipation of the city's population and economic growth and to electrify the Eglinton Crosstown LRT.

The work on "Power West Toronto" began in June and will go through to December 2018.

Toronto Hydro is investing roughly $60 million to improve Hydro One's electricity infrastructure in the west end.

The meeting will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. at Rockcliffe-Smythe Middle School at 400 Rockcliffe Blvd.

[Canadian Nuclear Association urges IPCC to recognize role of nuclear energy in climate mitigation]
MRO Magazine
September 8, 2017

Ottawa – The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) meets this week in Montreal. If mitigation pathways are to be on target, keeping a global temperature rise limited to 1.5 degrees while simultaneously staying on course to meet the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community must continue to promote and invest in low-carbon technologies, including nuclear.

Nuclear science and technology meets nine of the 17 SDGs, providing affordable and clean energy, good health, clean water and action on climate.

The Canadian Nuclear Association (CNA) urges the IPCC to examine and include the proven contributions of nuclear energy in the fight against climate change; to recognize the solutions that nuclear technologies provide today to the avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs); to support the role nuclear plays in enabling intermittent renewable options; and to highlight the potential role it offers to the world in generating large quantities of clean energy to meet the COP21 climate targets.

As for Canada's nuclear industry, it has made significant contributions to achieving both climate goals and sustainable development. Thanks to Canadian CANDU technology, our nuclear reactor fleet provides clean, affordable and low-carbon energy, powering approximately 60% of Ontario's electricity needs and one-third of New Brunswick's.

Partnering with other counties, our nuclear industry can help contribute to affordable and clean energy around the world, including countries such as Argentina, China, South Korea, Romania and India. Our global contributions include clean reactor fuel through our uranium mining operations. Cameco Corporation, is a leading socially and environmentally responsible mining company, supplying clean energy for nuclear reactors around the world for decades.

The industry's investments in innovative nuclear technology include Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) which will have the capacity to provide a clean source of energy to remote communities, resource extraction sites and provincial electricity grids.

Over 60 years of safe and successful nuclear technology application has given Canada an advantage on the world stage: Canada's Nuclear Advantage.

For more information, visit www.cna.ca.

As Energy East pipeline stalls, Tories accuse Liberals of failing energy industry

Marie-Danielle Smith
National Post
September 8, 2017

WINNIPEG — Conservatives are accusing the Liberal government of crippling the energy industry with regulatory roadblocks after TransCanada put its plans for the Energy East pipeline on hold Thursday.

"This is just the latest example of energy proponents and investors in Canada not being able to do business because of the changes that the Liberals have brought in," the Tories' shadow minister of natural resources, Alberta MP Shannon Stubbs, said in Winnipeg Friday.

The $15.7-billion Energy East pipeline project is supported by the oil and gas industry in western Canada and by Atlantic Canadians who see major economic potential in getting western crude oil to Canadian-owned refineries out east.

But after the National Energy Board brought in a stricter regulatory policy a few weeks ago, the company spearheading the project has asked for a 30-day pause in the board's assessment to revisit the project's "costs, schedules and viability," according to a statement. That's provoking fears the project could be cancelled outright.

Quebec MP Gerard Deltell, who said two refineries in Quebec were also hoping to benefit from the pipeline, argued Liberal policies and a fear campaign about pipelines had effectively killed the project. "Now, it's over," he told reporters in the hallway outside a Conservative caucus meeting. He argued Liberals have missed a major opportunity to prioritize Canadian resources over foreign oil.

"What the Liberals are doing is adding standards to pipelines that, first of all, certainly don't apply to foreign oil and don't apply to any other major infrastructure projects in the world," Stubbs said of tighter environmental rules. She argued Canada's existing regulatory framework and track record of socially-responsible resource development are already seen as "world-leading."

Stubbs said the drop in investment in the energy sector over the last two years would be comparable to losing 75 per cent of manufacturing in Ontario or the entirety of the aerospace industry in Quebec.

“Rightfully, that would be a national crisis,” she said. “And we think that the federal government should make the energy sector, the long-term viability and sustainability of the sector, and oil and gas workers, a priority.”

Stubbs said Canadians from every community should be concerned by the decision.

The Liberals have not been anti-pipeline, although they have promised more stringent environmental impact assessments. For example, Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline project in British Columbia is full-steam ahead.

Still, Tories focused on the “nation-building” aspects of Energy East, which would run all the way from Alberta to the east Coast.

“This is such an important project for all of Canada but particularly in Atlantic Canada where jobs are so badly needed,” said former New Brunswick MP Rob Moore, who is the party’s critic for eastern Canadian issues.

“What we haven’t seen is the 32 Liberal MPs from Atlantic Canada stand up for this project. And in the last campaign many of them talked about how important this project was to the region and now we’ve seen complete silence as this project has had roadblock after roadblock thrown up in front of it.”

This would’ve been a “win” for west and east both, said Ontario MP Erin O’Toole. Fellow ex-leadership candidate Michael Chong also chimed in to compare the transportation of oil to the transportation of people — which should be “unimpeded across provincial boundaries.”