

# FW: Morning Media Scan: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan - March 6, 2017

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Cc: Sumi, Craig (CAB); Di Giovanni, Robert (CAB); Law, Sally (CAB); Stinson, Jeffrey (CAB); Nutter, George (ENERGY); Halford, Gavin (ENERGY); Electronic Media  
Subject: Morning Media Scan: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan - March 6, 2017

Morning Media Scan: March 6, 2017

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# Media Scan Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

March 6, 2017

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## Print Coverage

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*Simcoe.com ASK WATCHDOG FOR FULL COSTING OF HYDRO PLAN*

TORONTO - The Progressive Conservatives are asking Ontario's budget watchdog to conduct a full costing of the Liberal government's plan to lower hydro bills.

The recently announced 17-per-cent reduction in hydro bills comes this summer thanks to a move akin to refinancing a mortgage over a longer period of time.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has acknowledged it will cost ratepayers more in the long run, but she says savings are needed now because people are struggling.

She said in question period on Thursday that the extra interest costs related to the plan would amount to \$25 billion over 30 years.

But the Tories say they're not clear on how the Liberals arrived at that number and have sent a letter to the financial accountability officer, asking him to investigate.

Wynne's \$25 billion figure does not appear in the hydro relief announcement's background documents, which say the plan will involve "annual interest costs not exceeding \$1.4 billion."

A spokesman for the energy minister said Sunday evening that based on a "conservative" estimate of a five-per-cent interest rate, they "see that number amounting to approximately \$25 billion over 30 years."

"The final amount will depend on annual interest rates and expenditures, which will be disclosed yearly, but given the province's strong borrowing ability we're confident it will be in this range," Colin Nekolaichuk said in a statement.

PC Leader Patrick Brown said in the letter to the financial accountability officer that Ontarians may ultimately have to accept those added costs to get savings now "given the extent to which people are struggling," but the impact should at least be clear.

"To be candid, this government has a habit of deliberately using false numbers to cover up their worst policy failures," Brown wrote.

Nekolaichuk said Ontario has a track record of managing debt "responsibly." The province's net debt is more than \$300 billion.

Nekolaichuk also noted that credit rating agency DBRS has said it views the hydro relief plan as "credit neutral."

The 17-per-cent cut in bills - in addition to an eight-per-cent rebate that took effect Jan. 1 - means ratepayers will pay about \$2.5 billion less per year for the next 10 years, the government has said.

The reduction is coming from refinancing a portion of the global adjustment charge.

That's the charge consumers pay for above-market rates for power producers, which the government says ensures a reliable supply.

The auditor general has estimated the global adjustment charge cost \$50 billion between 2006 and 2015 and increased by 1,200 per cent between 2006 and 2013 - meanwhile, the average electricity market price dropped by 46 per cent.

Eventually the costs of refinancing will be added back onto the global adjustment charge, which the energy minister has said won't happen for at least 10 years.

Brown also questions why Ontario Power Generation is going to be responsible for the refinancing and not the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation, which manages hydro debt.

Several other measures to reduce hydro bills were announced Thursday, including expanding a low-income support program, cutting delivery charges for some rural residents and eliminating them for on-reserve First Nations customers, and establishing a new fund to help people make energy efficiency improvements.

By Allison Jones, The Canadian Press  
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Wynne's \$25 billion figure does not appear in the hydro relief announcement's background documents, which say the plan will involve "annual interest costs not exceeding \$1.4 billion."

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By Allison Jones, The Canadian Press  
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By Allison Jones, The Canadian Press

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### *Inside Halton Post MASK WATCHDOG FOR FULL COSTING OF HYDRO PLAN*

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By Allison Jones, The Canadian Press

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**North Bay Nugget** HYDRO PLAN COMING SOON; LIBERAL PLAN 'DOESN'T GO FAR ENOUGH': BRC

Patrick Brown says the Tories' soon-to-be released plan to cut Ontario hydro rates will be for more than homeowners, farmers and small businesses.

"It will be across the board, it will affect everyone," the Progressive Conservative Party leader said Friday morning - almost 24 hours after the governing Liberals announced they're lowering electricity rates.

Premier Kathleen Wynne's government said Thursday it will cut hydro costs by 17 per cent this summer, following an eight per cent reduction Jan. 1.

The new cuts will not only affect Ontario households, but many small businesses and farms. People with low incomes and those living in eligible rural communities would receive even greater reductions to their

electricity bills.

Rate increases during the next four years would be held to the rate of inflation for everyone.

"Very shortly we will be having our own hydro announcement and we're going to detail some of the fixes we see in the system," Brown said. "It will be soon ... in the near future."

The Ontario Tory boss said his party's plan will include details on how it would be implemented and how it would be financed.

The Liberal plan, however, does not directly affect some large hydro users.

"The focus of our announcement is on reducing the electricity bills of families, farms and small-to medium-sized businesses across Ontario by an average of 25 per cent," said Natasha Demetriades of the Energy Ministry.

"However, hospitals, post-secondary institutions and municipalities will still see a modest reduction in their electricity bills with the removal of social programs from the rate base (charges in the electricity bill) to the tax base (government revenues). Taking social programs off of the rate base is part of our plan to make the electricity system more fair."

She said some broader public institutions have already taken advantage of energy saving programs.

Because eligibility is based on electricity consumption, most municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals would not be eligible for the Liberal hydro rate break because their electricity use is too large, Demetriades said.

But a 25 per cent hydro cut would be substantial for these institutions.

Ontario's New Democratic Party announced an extensive plan Monday to save all provincial households as much as 30 per cent on their hydro bills -including immediate measures like eliminating time-of-use premiums and unfair, higher delivery charges, to repair the hydro system permanently - including a return of Hydro One to public hands.

"I think the NDP and Liberals were in damage control on this file," Brown said Friday. "That's why they came up with these schemes, because it's about their own political survival and we're looking at pretty ugly polling numbers.

"But ultimately this is a mess they own."

The Liberals' plan to find hydro savings is to finance the costs of electricity generation contracts during longer periods of time.

But NDP leader Andrea Horwath has said this plan will cost Ontario taxpayers \$40 billion in interest costs during the next 30 years.

"I really believe the Liberal hydro plan fell short" said Brown, Simcoe North MPP. "At \$1.4-billion in interest (annually) we're paying to make up for mistakes that continue to be committed. We're borrowing money to make up for bad contracts."

He said the PC hydro plan will deal with such issues as generation, bad contracts and even ongoing contracts.

"It (the Liberal plan) doesn't go far enough right now," Brown said. "Right now the Liberals have now raised our hydro rates since coming into office (in 2003) 400 per cent -400 per cent, and they're offering a 17 per cent rebate simply by borrowing money and paying for contracts over a longer time."

Ontario Energy Board data says the off-peak or cheapest electricity prices in this province have nearly doubled between Nov. 1, 2009 and Nov. 1, 2016.

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### *North Bay Nugget OPERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS ( A 4 )*

Trusting Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals to fix the hydro mess they've created is like trusting rabbits to guard the lettuce patch.

It requires an unshakeable belief, in the face of all evidence to the contrary, that the same people who caused today's runaway electricity prices know how to fix them.

And that the Liberals will keep their promise to lower hydro rates if they win next year's election, this being the same party that came to power under Dalton McGuinty in 2003 solemnly promising not to raise our taxes.

McGuinty even signed a pledge during that election not to do so. And we all know what happened next.

Based on their record, I wouldn't trust the Liberals as far as I could throw them to keep any promise they've made, or will make, on hydro rates prior to the June 2018 election, if they win it with a majority government.

To be fair to Wynne and McGuinty, they didn't start the financial mess we see in today's electricity sector, where hydro prices have doubled in a decade, despite a surplus of electricity - the exact opposite of how the market should work.

They inherited an expensive and aging power and transmission grid from the previous Progressive Conservative government, which inherited it from the previous NDP government, which inherited it from the Liberal government before that.

Electricity prices were going to go up substantially no matter who won the election that brought the Liberals to power in 2003.

But where the Liberals were responsible for putting the problems they inherited on steroids was in their mad, reckless and irresponsible dash into green energy, without any understanding of what they were doing or its consequences.

What Ontarians got in return was unreliable and inefficient power that wasn't needed, given the province's energy surplus - energy which had to be backed up by new natural gas plants anyway, two of which the Liberals then infamously cancelled at a public cost of up to \$1.1 billion over 20 years. Because of the Liberals' 20-year contracts with wind and solar developers, many of them major contributors to the Liberal party, Ontario hydro consumers and taxpayers were forced into buying their expensive and unreliable power first.

Even when it wasn't needed and even if doing so made the entire electricity system operate less efficiently and thus more expensively.

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SECTION: Opinion  
EDITION: Final  
BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: The Sault Star  
KEYWORDS: trusting, premier, kathleen, wynne, liberals, hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

*The Sault Star GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 6)*

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PUBLICATION: The Sault Star  
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DATE: 2017.03.06  
SECTION: News  
EDITION: Final  
BYLINE: Brian Kelly  
SOURCE: The Sault Star, with files from Postmedia Network  
KEYWORDS: ontario,leader,andra,horwath,touts,electricity  
ILLUSTRATION: Brian Kelly, Sault Star / NDP candidate Joe Krmpotich, former NDP MPP Bud Wildman and Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, attend the opening of Krmpotich's campaign office on Saturday.;  
WORD COUNT: 408

*The Sault Star* HORWATH HAILS NDP ENERGY PLAN; ARGUES LIBERALS WILL MAKE NEXT GENERATION THROUGH NOSE, 'BLASTS PCS FOR NO PUBLIC POLICY (A1)

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath touts her electricity plan as the one with staying power.

She vows her party's strategy, released Feb. 27, will prompt real long-term change to Ontario's electricity system and savings of up to 30 per cent for the province's residents.

Proposals include pulling the plug on time of use pricing, lowering delivery charges so rural residents pay the same amount as urban dwellers and returning public ownership to Hydro One. Horwath also wants to evaluate power contracts with companies and see if they should be renewed or nixed.

"We're certainly going to be looking at the opportunity to reduce the pressure," she said.

Horwath zaps Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne's pledge to slash power costs an average of 17 per cent this summer as a costly move to woo voters that will saddle an additional \$40 billion on taxpayers by refinancing contracts with electricity generators and makes no effort to fix a system that "is in a mess." "It looks like she's trying to refinance her popularity, refinance her ability to get elected, than it is about changing our electricity system so that it's operating in the best interests of people again," she told The Sault Star in an interview Saturday. "All that Kathleen Wynne has done is make sure that next generation is going to pay through the nose as well."

Horwath is also critical of the Progressive Conservatives not yet releasing a hydro plan of their own.

"That's very worrisome," she said. "Nobody really knows what Patrick Brown's plans are."

On Friday, PC finance critic Vic Fedeli said the Liberal government must stop signing hydro contracts for power the province doesn't need, end the sale of Hydro One and "rein in" the pay of power executives.

NDP from A1 Horwath met with several Algoma mayors, including Echo Bay Reeve Lynn Watson, Desbarats Mayor Ted Hicks and Hilton Beach Mayor Robert Hope on Saturday morning. Horwath said they shared their experiences with "soaring hydro bills" and their concern "about their ability to keep some of their facilities going because their communities are very small." The arena in Desbarats was cited as an example. Increased electricity cost is putting "stress and strains" on their budgets, said Horwath.

She helped officially open NDP candidate Joe Krmpotich's campaign office on Queen Street East, near Gore Street, on Saturday afternoon.

About 30 turned out, including former NDP MPPs Tony Martin and Bud Wildman.

[btKelly@postmedia.com](mailto:btKelly@postmedia.com) On Twitter: @Saultreporter

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BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: St. Catharines Standard  
KEYWORDS: trusting, premier, kathleen, wynne, liberals, hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

***St. Catharines Standard: WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 4)***

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BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: Sarnia Observer  
KEYWORDS: trusting,premier,kathleen,wynne,liberals,hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

*Sarnia Observer* GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A4)

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BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: Niagara Falls Review

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WORD COUNT: 556

## *Niagara Falls RENEGATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 4)*

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KEYWORDS: trusting,premier,kathleen,wynne,liberals,hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

*Woodstock Sentinel-Review* ~~GENERATION~~ WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 4)

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BYLINE: David Reevely  
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COLUMN: David Reevely  
WORD COUNT: 936

*Windsor Star* WASTE OF ENERGY; POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN PLAYING GAMES WITH HYDRO RATES FOR MANY YEARS (A 6)

Urban Ontarians will subsidize electricity for 800,000 people who live in places where it's more expensive to deliver, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced last week, as part of the Liberals' plan to make people less angry about hydro prices.

The biggest piece of the plan we already knew about when Wynne announced it: Extending the payoff periods for generating stations to reduce prices now in exchange for paying more over time for their power.

The money will effectively be borrowed from Ontario Power Generation, the Crown corporation that runs hydro dams and nuclear stations, so the government won't have to renegotiate any of its contracts with private generating companies. We'll pay less as customers, OPG will cover the difference, and then we'll pay OPG back in a few decades.

This is more complicated and riskier than if we'd negotiated longer contracts in the first place. But it does have some logic behind it. We expect the wind farms and gas plants and whatnot to last longer than the 20-year payoff period we've been using, so 20-year contracts are artificially short. Extending them will definitely cost more - \$25 billion over 30 years - but it saves pain now.

A much smaller part of the plan is to move the Ontario Electricity Support Program, a straight-up subsidy for poor customers, out of hydro budgets and into the government's general accounts, so it'd be covered through taxes instead of electricity users' bills. That's a social program, an anti-poverty measure, that never should have been paid for with people's hydro bills in the first place, any more than we put a levy on grocery bills to pay for school lunch programs.

In the middle is this big expansion of Rural or Remote Rate Protection, which costs about \$175 million a year now. It'll go from covering about 350,000 customers to about 1.15 million and, like the program for poor customers, be covered by the provincial government's general revenues. However much rising electricity prices have hurt in urban Ontario, it's rural Ontario that's really taken it in the shorts. Hydro One is the provincial utility that delivers power to customers that local distribution companies like Hydro Ottawa didn't want when the power system was restructured 15 years ago. It's more expensive and its customer service is notoriously bad - former Ontario ombudsman André Marin delivered thundering report after thundering report on just what a horrible company Hydro One has been.

Rural Ontarians are also a lot more likely than urban Ontarians to use electric heat. That's where thousanddollar hydro bills, totally foreign to most urbanites, come in.

"When (rural Ontarians) feel they're being asked to pay for something they have no control over and that goes up and down, month by month, that is a challenge," she said. How is this fair? she asked. Electricity is a necessity.

By the time she's done, "Everyone in the province, in terms of distribution charge, will pay around the same amount as an urban user would pay," she added.

The thing is, Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault explained exactly how this is fair immediately.

"The way I explain this is: Downtown Toronto, downtown Sudbury, downtown London, you have 500 people on one pole," he said. "In the rural parts of our province, you have 500 poles to get to one person. They have been paying a higher proportion on their distribution rate."

That's a letter-perfect justification for the policy Thibeault and Wynne are doing away with. People have to pay for the extraordinary lengths companies have to go to get electricity to isolated villages and houses.

But no longer will it be the people in those isolated villages and individual houses, who've chosen to live there. Now it'll be the people who've chosen to live in places where electricity is cheap to deliver. Because that's fair.

(Water is also a necessity but cities are forbidden by provincial law from covering the costs of their water systems with taxes, because doing so would create perverse incentives to skimp on safety. Electricity, though? Totally different thing.)

There is at least an ideological consistency here. After promising an "adult conversation" about how we're going to pay for better transportation, Wynne and her government have fled from the idea of charging tolls for highways, so that the people who drive a long way on them would have to cover the cost. Doing adult things turns out to be hard. Insulating consumers from the consequences of their economic choices is much easier.

This province's stupid politics are a big reason why.

The New Democrats on Thursday assailed the Liberals because they didn't go socialist enough. They didn't also change the "unfair" policy of charging more for electricity at times of day when it's in high demand and more expensive.

Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown kept his attacks to the big part of the Liberal plan, the stretching out of generation contracts. He's in a bind: making people pay for goods they consume is supposed to be the conservative position, but lots of Tory voters will benefit from the new subsidy. Brown's also going to have a heck of a time explaining how a Tory government would lower hydro prices after blasting away at everything the Liberals put up.

Bob Rae looked down the barrel of political annihilation and froze hydro prices. Ernie Eves did some deregulating but lost his nerve, so his dying government started paying more for wholesale power and subsidized retail prices.

Now here we are again. Problems unsolved, halfmeasures unsustained. Each premier passes a bag of turds unto the next. [dreevely@postmedia.com](mailto:dreevely@postmedia.com) [twitter.com/davidreevely](https://twitter.com/davidreevely)

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*Welland Tribune* GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS ( A 4 )

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BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein

SOURCE: The Timmins Daily Press  
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### *The Timmins Daily Press: WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 4)*

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SECTION: Opinion  
EDITION: Final  
BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: Stratford Beacon-Herald  
KEYWORDS: trusting,premier,kathleen,wynne,liberals,hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

*Stratford Beacon-Herald: WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 5)*

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EDITION: Final  
BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: Peterborough Examiner  
KEYWORDS: trusting, premier, kathleen, wynne, liberals, hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

## *Peterborough Examiner GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A4)*

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PUBLICATION: Owen Sound Sun Times  
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DATE: 2017.03.06  
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BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: Owen Sound Sun Times  
KEYWORDS: trusting,premier,kathleen,wynne,liberals,hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

*Owen Sound Sun Times* GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A4)

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PUBLICATION: London Free Press  
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BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: London Free Press  
KEYWORDS: orustino,prrmirr,kataleen,wynne,liberals,hdaro  
WORD COUNT: 556

### *London Free Press QUESTIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 5)*

Orustino Prrmirr Kataleen Wynne ana the Liberals to fix the hdaro mess they've oreatea is likr trustino rabbits to ouara the lettuoee patch.

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What Ontarians oot in return was unreliable ana ineffioient power that wasn't neeaeaa, oiven the provinoo's eneroy surplus - -neroy which haa to be baookeaa up by new natural oas plants anyway, two of which the Liberals then infamously oanoellea at a publio oost of up to \$1.1 billion over 20 years. Beoause of the Liberals' 20-year oontraots with wina ana solar aevelopers, many of them major oontributors to the Liberal party, Ontario hyaro oonsumers ana taxpayers were foroea into buyino their expensive ana unreliable power first.

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SECTION: Opinion  
EDITION: Final  
BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: Northern Daily News (Kirkland Lake)  
KEYWORDS: trusting,premier,kathleen,wynne,liberals,hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

#### *Northern Daily News* GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 4)

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DATE: 2017.03.06  
SECTION: News  
EDITION: Final  
BYLINE: Jennifer Hamilton-  
SOURCE: With files from The Canadian Press sud  
KEYWORDS: provincial,hydro,relief,nothing,finance,critic  
ILLUSTRATION: Ernest Doroszuk, Postmedia Network / Ontario PC Finance Critic Vic Fedeli talks to media at Queen's Park in this file photo.;  
WORD COUNT: 368

***Northern Daily News (Kirkland Lake) A 'SHELL GAME' - VIC FEDELI; PLAN \$25 BILLION IN INTEREST PAYMENTS OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS, SAYS PC FINANCE CRITIC (A2)***

The provincial Liberals' hydro relief plan is nothing more than a 'shell game,' PC finance critic Vic Fedeli charges.

"The Liberals have done nothing to fix this broken system. This plan mirrors the desperation of what Ontario families are feeling today," Fedeli, the MPP for Nipissing, said during a teleconference call with Northern Ontario media Friday.

"You know it will hurt in the end, but you need instant relief. It's like you've tapped out your MasterCard and are paying it off with your Visa."

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced Thursday that electricity bills in Ontario will see an average 17-per-cent cut this summer, in addition to further measures for rural and low-income customers.

The cuts will start to show on hydro bills in June. A household that pays \$135 a month should see the cost drop to \$101.

To provide the rate relief, Wynne said her government will "refinance" contracts with electricity generators.

Instead of the costs being borne by hydro customers, under this new arrangement, the province will pay for the contracts over a 30-year term. It also will cap any further hydro rate increases over the next four years to the rate of inflation.

Fedeli said Wynne's plan will add \$25 billion in interest payments over the next 30 years.

"All this is, is financial engineering. It does nothing to fix the problem the Liberals created," he said.

"They're getting relief out of their left pocket. But at the same time, receiving higher bills in the right."

Fedeli said the premier must stop signing hydro contracts for power the province doesn't require.

"This government continues to tinker with the electricity system, but what needs to happen is simple - stop

signing contracts for electricity this province doesn't need, stop the sale of Hydro One and reign in corporate CEO pay."

Citing numerous headlines in newspapers, such as Hydro Gate and Wynne's \$25B boondoggle, Fedeli called the hydro relief plan a desperate attempt to gain votes ahead of the provincial election in 2018.

Electricity bills in the province have roughly doubled in the past decade, rising faster than inflation since 2010, and have sparked increasing anger among Ontarians, leading to plummeting approval ratings for Wynne..editorial@sunmedia.ca

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BYLINE: Alan S. Hale  
SOURCE: Postmedia Network  
KEYWORDS: provincial,government,announced,devised,residential,electricity  
WORD COUNT: 572

*Northern Daily News (Kirkland Lake) GREETED WITH A MIX OF PRAISE, SKEPTICIS.  
(A 1)*

The provincial government announced on Thursday that it has devised a plan that will see residential electricity bills in Ontario cut by 25%, which would be the largest price cut in the province's history.

Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault acknowledged that "Northern Ontarians having been bearing the brunt of some of the higher energy costs" in the province.

He believes the 25% reduction presented as the Fair Hydro Plan announced by the Kathleen Wynne Liberal Government on Thursday will go a long way towards providing relief for Northerners.

"We're holding all rate increases to the cost of inflation; we have made the largest single-rate reduction in electricity rates in Ontario's history," said Thibeault.

The cut to electricity bills would include the 8% rebate that has already been implemented by the Liberal government, making the actual decrease 17%. The government is also promising that rates will not increase any more than the annual rate of inflation (about 2%) for the next four years.

To accomplish that, however, the plan is also expected to cost the province and additional \$1.4 billion a year in new interest payments.

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the government's plan at a press conference on Thursday morning, where she acknowledged the government has "made mistakes" in structuring Ontario's electricity production system and that rates were "unfairly high." The measures being put in place are part of the government's efforts to fix those mistakes, she said, and that every Ontarian will benefit from the changes.

"Last September, I committed to reduce electricity bills by 8% across the board, equivalent to the provincial portion of HST. But it hasn't been enough. It's made too small a dent. For that reason, we are taking further action. We are tripling the size of the cut we're making to people's hydro bills from 8% to an average of 25%," the premier said.

"The cut will go to all households that pay for electricity. There will be no asterisks, no loopholes, and no exceptions. Our plan will lower electricity bills by 25% on average for all residential consumers in the province. And for those living in rural communities or with low incomes, the break will be even greater."

Timmins James Bay MPP Gilles Bisson argued what the Liberal government is really doing with their announcement is kicking the hydro problem a few years down the road. While the measures being put in place will provide some much-needed temporary relief for ratepayers, he said, but it will be just that - temporary.

The problem will be back worse than before, the MPP predicted, but not before the next election a year-and-a-half from now.

"This is a very short-term fix. The government has punted this issue past the next election, and they've done it for political reasons. They recognize that they are in trouble politically because people are hopping-mad about hydro, and what they are trying to do is lower people's hydro bills as low they can before they get to the next election," said Bisson.

By refinancing the Global Adjustment, the Liberals are essentially paying an unfordable mortgage by putting payments on a credit card, said Bisson, and it's a strategy that will inevitably come back to bite them.

"The big shocker will be when they use up all this borrowed money, and then the costs go back into the system. After the next election, whoever has formed government will have a real mess on their hands."

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EDITION: Final  
BYLINE: Lorrie Goldstein  
SOURCE: Kingston Whig-Standard  
KEYWORDS: trusting,premier,kathleen,wynne,liberals,hydro  
WORD COUNT: 556

*Kingston Whig-Standard* GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A4)

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SOURCE: Cornwall Standard Freeholder  
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WORD COUNT: 556

*Cornwall Standard Freeholder* WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 6)

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They inherited an expensive and aging power and transmission grid from the previous Progressive Conservative government, which inherited it from the previous NDP government, which inherited it from the Liberal government before that.

Electricity prices were going to go up substantially no matter who won the election that brought the Liberals to power in 2003.

But where the Liberals were responsible for putting the problems they inherited on steroids was in their mad, reckless and irresponsible dash into green energy, without any understanding of what they were doing or its consequences.

What Ontarians got in return was unreliable and inefficient power that wasn't needed, given the province's energy surplus - energy which had to be backed up by new natural gas plants anyway, two of which the Liberals then infamously cancelled at a public cost of up to \$1.1 billion over 20 years. Because of the Liberals' 20-year contracts with wind and solar developers, many of them major contributors to the Liberal party, Ontario hydro consumers and taxpayers were forced into buying their expensive and unreliable power first.

Even when it wasn't needed and even if doing so made the entire electricity system operate less efficiently and thus more expensively.

In 2015, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk concluded the Liberals overpaid \$9.2 billion for green energy that was never needed to replace coal-fired electricity.

McGuinty promised to eliminate coal in the 2003 election for health and environmental reasons, saying it would be completed by 2007. In fact it took the Liberals until 2014.

But the Liberals didn't replace coal, which provided 25 per cent of Ontario's electricity, with wind and solar power, which provided just four per cent and which, unlike coal, couldn't supply base load power to the grid on demand.

Instead, the Liberals replaced coal with nuclear power, which emits neither pollution nor greenhouse gases and natural gas, which burns at half the carbon intensity of coal.

Therein lies the ultimate Liberal blunder. They could have replaced coal power without spending a nickel on wind and solar, instead of creating the green energy mess they have.

Ontarians will be paying for that mistake for generations to come. [lgoldstein@postmedia.com](mailto:lgoldstein@postmedia.com)  
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*Brantford Expositor* GENERATIONS WILL PAY FOR LIBERAL HYDRO BLUNDERS (A 4)

Trusting Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals to fix the hydro mess they've created is like trusting rabbits to guard the lettuce patch.

It requires an unshakeable belief, in the face of all evidence to the contrary, that the same people who caused today's runaway electricity prices know how to fix them.

And that the Liberals will keep their promise to lower hydro rates if they win next year's election, this being the same party that came to power under Dalton McGuinty in 2003 solemnly promising not to raise our taxes.

McGuinty even signed a pledge during that election not to do so. And we all know what happened next.

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