

Hansard: Brown to Premier (Thibeault) -- Energy Management

From: Energy In The News (ENERGY) <energynews@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY-COMM-Issues_and_MediaRelations" <mei-comm-issues_and_mediarelations@msgov.gov.on.ca>, "Adi, Sana (ENERGY)" <sana.adi@ontario.ca>, Alexandra Campbell (IESO) <alexandra.campbell@ieso.ca>, "Armstrong, Hillary (ENERGY)" <hillary.armstrong@ontario.ca>, "Berg, Denna (ENERGY)" <denna.berg@ontario.ca>, "Campbell, David (ENERGY)" <david.campbell2@ontario.ca>, "Carson, Cheryl (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <cheryl.carson@ontario.ca>, "Cayley, Daniel (ENERGY)" <daniel.cayley@ontario.ca>, "Montgomery, Kaitlin (ENERGY)" <kaitlin.montgomery@ontario.ca>, "Cindric, Christina (ENERGY)" <christina.cindric@ontario.ca>, "Coker, Meaghan (ENERGY)" <meaghan.coker@ontario.ca>, "Dade, Christine (ENERGY)" <christine.dade@ontario.ca>, Darren Matsugu (IESO) <darren.matsugu@ieso.ca>, "Diamond, Alyssa (ENERGY)" <alyssa.diamond@ontario.ca>, "Dier, Kirby (ENERGY)" <kirby.dier@ontario.ca>, Donna Kinapen (OEB) <donna.kinapen@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Esdaile, Trevor (ENERGY)" <trevor.esdaile@ontario.ca>, "Feather, Adam (ENERGY)" <adam.feather@ontario.ca>, "Flannery, Catherine (ENERGY)" <catherine.flannery@ontario.ca>, "Gibbs, Diana (ENERGY)" <diana.gibbs@ontario.ca>, "Hill, Allyson (ENERGY)" <allyson.hill@ontario.ca>, "Ho, Larissa (ENERGY)" <larissa.ho@ontario.ca>, "Hume, Steen (ENERGY)" <steen.hume@ontario.ca>, "Imbrogno, Serge (ENERGY)" <serge.imbrogno@ontario.ca>, "Imlay, Patrick (ENERGY)" <patrick.imlay@ontario.ca>, John Bozzo (OEB) <john.bozzo@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, John Cannella (IESO) <john.cannella@ieso.ca>, "Johnson, Paul (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <paul.johnson3@ontario.ca>, Jordan Penic (IESO) <jordan.penic@ieso.ca>, "Kacaba, Jennifer (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <jennifer.kacaba@ontario.ca>, Karen Evans (OEB) <karen.evans@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Katona, Keley (ENERGY)" <keley.katona@ontario.ca>, "Kitchen, Matthew (ENERGY)" <matthew.kitchen@ontario.ca>, "Landmann, Peter (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <peter.landmann@ontario.ca>, "Latto-Hall, Arla (ENERGY)" <arla.latto-hall@ontario.ca>, "Lazakis, Chloe (ENERGY)" <chloe.lazakis@ontario.ca>, "Leung, Thomas (ENERGY)" <thomas.leung@ontario.ca>, "Lina Buccilli (Lina.Buccilli@ontarioenergyboard.ca)" <lina.buccilli@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Lindsay, Ken (ENERGY)" <ken.lindsay@ontario.ca>, "Linnington, Brenda (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <brenda.linnington@ontario.ca>, "Lyon, Sam (ENERGY)" <sam.lyon@ontario.ca>, "Major, Candace (ENERGY)" <candace.major@ontario.ca>, Mary Bernard (IESO) <mary.bernard@ieso.ca>, "Moulton, Dan (ENERGY)" <dan.moulton@ontario.ca>, "Naveed, Fatima (ENERGY)" <som.fatima.naveed@ontario.ca>, Neal Kelly (OPG) <neal.kelly@opg.com>, "Nelms, Scott (ENERGY)" <scott.nelms@ontario.ca>, "Nutter, George (ENERGY)" <george.nutter@ontario.ca>, "O'Donnell, Cheryl (ENERGY)" <som.cheryl.o'donnell@ontario.ca>, "O'Riordan, Eamon (ENERGY)" <eamon.o'riordan@ontario.ca>, Paul Crawford (OEB) <paul.crawford@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Pelkey, Bryan (ENERGY)" <bryan.pelkey@ontario.ca>, "Pitkeathly, Doreen (ENERGY)" <doreen.pitkeathly@ontario.ca>, "Poirier, Linda (ENERGY)" <linda.poirier@ontario.ca>, "Ramcharran, Shanice (ENERGY)" <som.shanice.ramcharran@ontario.ca>, "Rehob, James (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <james.rehob@ontario.ca>, "Reid, Michael (ENERGY)" <michael.reid@ontario.ca>, Richard Mackie (OPG) <richard.mackie@opg.com>, "Ruttan, Craig (ENERGY)" <craig.ruttan@ontario.ca>, sandra.dykxhoorn@opg.com, "Sermat-Harding, Kaili (ENERGY)"

<kaili.sermat-harding@ontario.ca>, "Shear, Dan (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)"
<dan.shear@ontario.ca>, "Simmons, Valerie (ENERGY)" <valerie.simmons@ontario.ca>,
"Spence Lair, Marlo (ENERGY)" <marlo.spencelair@ontario.ca>, "Spence, Marcia (ENERGY)"
<marcia.spence@ontario.ca>, "Stoiko, Andrea (ENERGY)" <andrea.stoiko@ontario.ca>, "Sweet,
Edward (ENERGY)" <edward.sweet@ontario.ca>, "Syed, Usman (ENERGY)"
<usman.syed@ontario.ca>, Sylvia Kovesfalvi <sylvia.kovesfalvi@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, Ted
Gruetzner (OPG) <ted.gruetzner@opg.com>, "Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY)"
<andrew.teliszewsky@ontario.ca>, "Thompson, Erin (ENERGY)" <erin.thompson@ontario.ca>,
"Todd, Brian (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <brian.todd@ontario.ca>, Tom Bergen (OPG)
<tom.bergen@opg.com>, Vanda Wall (OEB) <vanda.wall@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Visheau,
Vanessa (ENERGY)" <vanessa.visheau@ontario.ca>, "Waddell, Colleen (ENERGY)"
<colleen.waddell@ontario.ca>, "Whittington, Matt (ENERGY)" <matt.whittington@ontario.ca>,
"Whytock, John (ENERGY)" <john.whytock@ontario.ca>, "Wright, Lindsay (ENERGY)"
<lindsay.wright@ontario.ca>, "Xavier, Katrina (ENERGY)" <katrina.xavier@ontario.ca>, "Yadav,
Saurabh (ENERGY)" <saurabh.yadav@ontario.ca>

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. On September 22nd, the **Premier** of Ontario told Evan Solomon that skyrocketing hydro costs where, and I quote -- were, and I quote, worth it. Is it worth it this government forces people to choose between heating and eating? Is it worth it that there's 567,000 House holds that are behind in their hydro bill?, Mr. Speaker, can the **Premier** tell the families who can't put food on the table that these prices, using her words, are worth it? Can she say it is worth it for the people to have to sell their homes? Can she really tell the people of Ontario that this mess she has created is worth it?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, well what I can say to the leader of the opposition is that it is absolutely imperative that we make sure that people have the supports that they need so that they can pay their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. The changes that we are making it make sure that there is for example the Ontario energy support program in place, Mr. Speaker, the removal of the debt retirement charge from the bills, Mr. Speaker, and the changes we've made most recently that we announced in the throne speech so the removal of the provincial portion of the H.S.T., the additional 12%, Mr. Speaker, that means that rural and northern communities have access to 20% reduction, Mr. Speaker. All of those were an acknowledgement of the fact that the improvements that we've made in the system, the fact that we have invested in the system has a cost associated with it, Mr. Speaker. And we understand that we need to help people to deal with those costs every day.

>> **Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the **Premier**. I'm bewildered when the **Premier** talks about improvements because no one in the province of Ontario has seen improvements. I was recently in ... in northwestern Ontario and I stopped by edina foods. I chatted with the owner there and he had a question for the Liberal government that he asked if I could ask the **Premier** directly. As a small business owner in northern Ontario, he wanted to to how he's expected to pay his hydro bill and staff with \$13,000 as his monthly bill. Mr. Speaker, are those hydro bills worth it if a business is struggling to meet their payroll? This is a question of whether he can continue to actually keep his staff for a local business that is previously successful. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the **Premier**, is her hydro mess worth it if it means that businesses are going to have to close?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, you know, it's exactly why we are expanding the I.C.I. Program, Mr. Speaker, so that smaller businesses can take advantage of the opportunity to reduce their

electricity bills by up to 34%, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister of energy is going to want to give them -- the member opposite some examples of businesses in the next supplementary but, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely why we're expanding that conservation initiative, the industrial conservation initiative. Expanding that program. Mr. Speaker, is it worth it to kids who have asthma to have clean air because we shut the coal-fired plants? Is it worth it to communities that have unreliable energy -- Because we invested under more than 10,000 kilometres of line that they have reliable power? Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's worth it to have no smog days and to have a system that is 90% clean and has been rebuilt, Mr. Speaker. It's worth it.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. What we hear in the government's talking points is reliable power. That's their defence for having this extraordinary disaster of an energy policy so let's talk about their defence. Let's talk about reliable power. All you have to do is look next-door to Québec. In 2015 Québec had three power outages that result -- Mr. Speaker, Québec had three power outages that were a result of either faulty equipment or human error. Ontario had 32. Total outages in Ontario equaled 11.5s. In Québec it was only 6.5 hours. Ontario has had as many outages as B.C., Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Alberta combined. We don't have reliable power in the province of Ontario. We have the opposite. Our hydro system is both unaffordable and unreliable. So direct question to the **Premier**. How dare you say we have reliable power in the province of Ontario? You have created a mess. Why won't you apologize to people of Ontario?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise. And answer the leader of the opposition's question because perhaps the leader of the opposition should not be so quick to choose who he compares our province to. He claims Québec hardly experienced an outage. Two nights ago 150,000 residents of Gatineau lost their power during rush hour. It was triggered by a substation transmission failure, Mr. Speaker. It seems that Ontario and Québec are not immune to occasional unforeseen events and luckily we have the hardworking power workers union that work in both of our provinces to quickly remedy these outages, Mr. Speaker. But I know the opposition has begun to make these truly bizarre claims about dump trucks hitting holes and weather knocking down wires, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to hear the plan from the leader of the opposition how he can control car accidents and the weather, Mr. Speaker. He has no plan for anything else. He must have a plan for that.

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