

Hansard: Campbell to Premier (Duguid) Campbell to Duguid on electricity rates in rural Ontario

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. According to statistics Canada, there are about 1.8 million people who live in rural Ontario. The Premier has told Ontarians in rural -- and rural Ontarians that they will see an additional 12% in average savings off their hydro bills from an enhanced rural rate relief program. But as it turns out, only 330,000 rural customers will see the extra savings, including nonresidential customers. When will the government tell the people in Kenora- Rainy River how many of them will be getting 20% off their hydro bills and how many won't?

>> Minister Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the changes that we made are going to provide \$110 million of support and relief to rural and global customers. Mr. Speaker, that information was put forward when the Minister made the announcement so it was very clear to those residents, Mr. Speaker, as to where it applies and where it doesn't. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister's worked very, very closely with communities to identify where this applies and where it doesn't but at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, every resident in Ontario gets an 8% discount off their bill. That's where it starts. 8% off their bill. Significant, Mr. Speaker. [Unclear] From residents and they responded. We know that there are challenges in rural Ontario. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that we've responded to that because depending on where they're at, whether they're remote communities or not they'll be getting up to 20% off their bill.

>> Campbell: Thank you, Speaker. New regulations will force local utilities to start adding special government messaging about the rural rate relief on their hydro bills but you can get that those bills won't mention that most northern and rural Ontarians are not getting the full 12% savings in the rural rate relief. And they need relief. One woman in my riding recently wrote to me about the out-of-control hydro rates. She said, quote, my husband is on disability. My goal now is to work until 70 and then drop dead, end quote, because she simply can't afford to pay her hydro bills and too many others in Kenora Rainy River are literally being driven out of the province because of the high hydro rates. When will the Premier tell us how many people in Kenora- Rainy River will actually get the full 12% in rural rate relief and how many people will just another high bill with government spin?

>> Minister Duguid: Mr. Speaker, -- the new regulation includes an additional \$110 million in support for rural and remote residents. Speaker, it's very important that we do that. It does depend on whether they're in an urban area

Those roles have been outlined and they'll have to work to determine where in fact those residents live. We've been very clear about our residents right across this province get about -- an 8% discount. We've rose. We've responded. Mr. Speaker, we're ensuring those residents get a break on their energy bills. Mr. Speaker, I think that's what the people of this province expect and I think they'll be very pleased to get that. It would be nice if the NDP Were positive about it. Thank you.

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.