

Hansard: Gretzky to Thibeault -- Hydro Rates

From: Energy In The News (ENERGY) <energynews@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY-COMM-Issues_and_MediaRelations" <mei-comm-issues_and_mediarelations@msgov.gov.on.ca>, Alexandra Campbell (IESO) <alexandra.campbell@ieso.ca>, Alexandria Anderson (OPG) <alexandria.anderson@opg.com>, Andrew Dow (IESO) <andrew.dow@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>, Chuck Farmer <chuck.farmer@ieso.ca>, "Coker, Meaghan (ENERGY)" <meaghan.coker@ontario.ca>, "Dade, Christine (ENERGY)" <christine.dade@ontario.ca>, Donna Kinapen (OEB) <donna.kinapen@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Esdaile, Trevor (ENERGY)" <trevor.esdaile@ontario.ca>, "Feather, Adam (ENERGY)" <adam.feather@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>, Jane Leckey (IESO) <jane.leckey@ieso.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>, "Major, Candace (ENERGY)" <candace.major@ontario.ca>, Mary Bernard (IESO) <mary.bernard@ieso.ca>, "Montgomery, Kaitlin (ENERGY)" <kaitlin.montgomery@ontario.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>, "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 <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>, Terry Young (IESO) <terry.young@ieso.ca>, "Thompson, Erin (ENERGY)" <erin.thompson@ontario.ca>, Tim Butters <tim.butters@ieso.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>, "Wright, Lindsay (ENERGY)" <lindsay.wright@ontario.ca>, "Xavier, Katrina (ENERGY)" <katrina.xavier@ontario.ca>, "Yadav, Saurabh (ENERGY)" <saurabh.yadav@ontario.ca>, "McGoey, Eric (ENERGY)" <eric.mcgoey@ontario.ca>, "McGrath, Jessica (ENERGY)" <jessica.mcgrath@ontario.ca>, "Chatterjee, Jeet (ENERGY)" <jeet.chatterjee@ontario.ca>, "Pagel, Alexa (ENERGY)" <alexa.pagel@ontario.ca>, "Maguire, Lauren (ENERGY)" <lauren.maguire@ontario.ca>, "Biggs, Megan (ENERGY)" <megan.biggs@ontario.ca>, "Tretiakov, Ilia (ENERGY)" <ilia.tretiakov@ontario.ca>, "Barbaro, Rachel (ENERGY)" <rachel.barbaro@ontario.ca>

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the **Premier**. For months my constituents have written letters, signed petitions and even sent their hydro bills to the **Premier** and Minister of energy calling for relief. Businesses in my community are struggling to keep the lights on. For kabobbling and curry, the lights may be off permanently if relief from skyrocketing hydro bills doesn't come soon. Other areas businesses say the cost of hydro is their number one Barrier to expansion. The knew ber one Barrier to bringing more jobs into my community. Speaker, will the **Premier** take immediate action to reduce the costs of hydro so that businesses in Windsor can continue to operate and expand?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we already did. Mr. Speaker, we've brought forth the speech from the throne. They're going to see an 8% reduction, Mr. Speaker, on all of their bills and that's for small businesses. For those businesses that are actually a little bit bigger, Mr. Speaker, that actually use 1 megawatt of power, they will now qualify for the I.C.I. Program, Mr. Speaker, expanding and lowering their businesses, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they can do it by up to one third. And it's not just us saying this, Mr. Speaker, . It's the Ontario chamber of commerce, who is applauding this decision that we brought forward, Mr. Speaker, because they are going to see more businesses now expanding their businesses, growing their -- the jobs in our province, Mr. Speaker, and this is good news for many of them. There's many programs that we have also out there, Mr. Speaker, to help small businesses. I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to talkings about those programs when we get into the supplementary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. Again to the **Premier**. Every time someone in my riding opens a hydro bill, they're reminded how this Liberal government is failing them. They're making them choose between heating and eating, between paying their hydro bill and taking their medication, and come Christmas time they'll be reminded when they open your bill, the one you send to them because you're not providing support to them and they have to explain to their children why they don't have gifts under the tree. Life is only going to get more difficult for the hundreds of families in Windsor, who are already struggling to keep the lights and heat on in their homes. Community programs like keep the heat do all they can to help people pay their hydro bills, but with with a 12% increase in applicants from last year, there simply isn't enough money to go around. Speaker, will the government act today. Get energy costs under control, stop the sell-off of Hydro One and ensure that hundreds of people in Windsor can heat their homes tomorrow?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we do recognize and emphasize that

families that are having difficulty with paying their hydro bills, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we acted very quickly, you know, when I took over as Minister to make sure in the speech from the throne that we have an 8% reduction coming for all families millimetre. That's very important. On top of the debt retirement charge we already eliminated plus the programs we've put in place, Mr. Speaker, like the Ontario electricity support program that helps families. We have 145,000 families sign up by the end of October. We're looking forward to getting numbers for November. But is did -- there is room for more. I urge them to contact their local utility to find out if they qualify for this program, Mr. Speaker. Because you know what? As a government, we're continuing to invest to make sure that we can help all families and all businesses right across the province. I know in the first question we were talking about Windsor, Mr. Speaker. Windsor, up to 11,000 net new jobs year over year, Mr. Speaker, and that is due to the great work we've been doing as this government. We continue to do that, continue to invest and find --

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