

Hansard: Horwath to Premier (Thibeault) -- Hydro 25% Reduction Plan

From: Energy In The News (ENERGY) <energynews@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY-COMM-Issues_and_MediaRelations" <energy-comm-issues_and_mediarelations@msgov.gov.on.ca>, "Anderson, Alexandria (OPG)" <alexandria.anderson@opg.com>, "Armstrong, Hillary (ENERGY)" <hillary.armstrong@ontario.ca>, "Barbaro, Rachel (ENERGY)" <rachel.barbaro@ontario.ca>, "Berg, Denna (ENERGY)" <denna.berg@ontario.ca>, "Bergen, Tom (OPG)" <tom.bergen@opg.com>, "Bernard, Mary (IESO)" <mary.bernard@ieso.ca>, "Biggs, Megan (ENERGY)" <megan.biggs@ontario.ca>, "Bozzo, John (OEB)" <john.bozzo@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Buccilli, Lina (OEB)" <lina.buccilli@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Butters, Tim (IESO)" <tim.butters@ieso.ca>, "Campbell, Alexandra (IESO)" <alexandra.campbell@ieso.ca>, "Campbell, David (ENERGY)" <david.campbell2@ontario.ca>, "Cannella, John (IESO)" <john.cannella@ieso.ca>, "Carson, Cheryl (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <cheryl.carson@ontario.ca>, "Cayley, Daniel (ENERGY)" <daniel.cayley@ontario.ca>, "Chatterjee, Jeet (ENERGY)" <jeet.chatterjee@ontario.ca>, "Coker, Meaghan (ENERGY)" <meaghan.coker@ontario.ca>, "Crawford, Paul (OEB)" <paul.crawford@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Dade, Christine (ENERGY)" <christine.dade@ontario.ca>, "Dow, Andrew (IESO)" <andrew.dow@ieso.ca>, "Dykxhoorn, Sandra (OPG)" <sandra.dykxhoorn@opg.com>, "Esdaile, Trevor (ENERGY)" <trevor.esdaile@ontario.ca>, "Evans, Karen (OEB)" <karen.evans@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Farmer, Chuck (IESO)" <chuck.farmer@ieso.ca>, "Feather, Adam (ENERGY)" <adam.feather@ontario.ca>, "Gibbs, Diana (ENERGY)" <diana.gibbs@ontario.ca>, "Gruetzner, Ted (OPG)" <ted.gruetzner@opg.com>, "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>, "Johnson, Paul (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI)" <paul.johnson3@ontario.ca>, "Kacaba, Jennifer (ENERGY)" <jennifer.kacaba@ontario.ca>, "Katona, Keley (ENERGY)" <keley.katona@ontario.ca>, "Kelly, Neal (OPG)" <neal.kelly@opg.com>, "Kinapen, Donna (OEB)" <donna.kinapen@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Kitchen, Matthew (ENERGY)" <matthew.kitchen@ontario.ca>, "Kovesfalvi, Sylvia (OEB)" <sylvia.kovesfalvi@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Landmann, Peter (ENERGY)" <peter.landmann@ontario.ca>, "Latto-Hall, Arla (ENERGY)" <arla.latto-hall@ontario.ca>, "Lazakis, Chloe (ENERGY)" <chloe.lazakis@ontario.ca>, "Leckey, Jane (IESO)" <jane.leckey@ieso.ca>, "Leung, Thomas (MOF)" <thomas.leung@ontario.ca>, "Lindsay, Ken (ENERGY)" <ken.lindsay@ontario.ca>, "Linington, Brenda (MOI)" <brenda.linington@ontario.ca>, "Mackie, Richard (OPG)" <richard.mackie@opg.com>, "Maguire, Lauren (ENERGY)" <lauren.maguire@ontario.ca>, "McGoey, Eric (ENERGY)" <eric.mcgoey@ontario.ca>, "McGrath, Jessica (ENERGY)" <jessica.mcgrath@ontario.ca>, "Montgomery, Kaitlin (MOF)" <kaitlin.montgomery@ontario.ca>, "Moulton, Dan (ENERGY)" <dan.moulton@ontario.ca>, "Naveed, Fatima (ENERGY)" <som.fatima.naveed@ontario.ca>, "Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY)" <colin.nekolaichuk@ontario.ca>, "Nelms, Scott (MOF)" <scott.nelms@ontario.ca>, "O'Donnell, Cheryl (ENERGY)" <som.cheryl.o'donnell@ontario.ca>, "O'Riordan, Eamon (ENERGY)" <eamon.o'riordan@ontario.ca>, "Pagel, Alexa (ENERGY)" <alexa.pagel@ontario.ca>, "Pelkey, Bryan (ENERGY)" <bryan.pelkey@ontario.ca>, "Penic, Jordan (IESO)" <jordan.penic@ieso.ca>, "Pitkeathly, Doreen (ENERGY)"

<doreen.pitkeathly@ontario.ca>, "Poirier, Linda (ENERGY)" <linda.poirier@ontario.ca>, "Rehob, James (ENERGY)" <james.rehob@ontario.ca>, "Reid, Michael (ENERGY)" <michael.reid@ontario.ca>, "Ruttan, Craig (ENERGY)" <craig.ruttan@ontario.ca>, "Sermat-Harding, Kaili (ENERGY)" <kaili.sermat-harding@ontario.ca>, "Shear, Dan (ENERGY)" <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>, "Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY)" <andrew.teliszewsky@ontario.ca>, "Thompson, Erin (ENERGY)" <erin.thompson@ontario.ca>, "Todd, Brian (MOI)" <brian.todd@ontario.ca>, "Tretiakov, Ilia (ENERGY)" <ilia.tretiakov@ontario.ca>, "Visheau, Vanessa (ENERGY)" <vanessa.visheau@ontario.ca>, "Waddell, Colleen (MOF)" <colleen.waddell@ontario.ca>, "Wall, Vanda (OEB)" <vanda.wall@ontarioenergyboard.ca>, "Whittington, Matt (ENERGY)" <matt.whittington@ontario.ca>, "Wright, Lindsay (ENERGY)" <lindsay.wright@ontario.ca>, "Yadav, Saurabh (ENERGY)" <saurabh.yadav@ontario.ca>, "Young, Terry (IESO)" <terry.young@ieso.ca>

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you very much. Speaker. My next question's also for the **Premier**. Last week, I also visited with Cheryl and Scott Rickman at their farm in Chatham. They told me that they pay \$75,000 in hydro bills last year alone. For a small business that's a lot to take, Speaker. The **Premier** says she's concerned about hydro bills like Scott and Cheryl's, but her plan doesn't give them any long-term protection. Why is the **Premier** bringing in a short-term band-aid when what she needs is a long-term fix. What they need, what Ontario needs is a long-term fix to the energy system that this Liberal government messed up in the first place.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're very pleased to be able to stand and talk about the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, and how this is going to benefit farms right across the province, Mr. Speaker, farms that will see a 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker, in their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. This does much, much more for small businesses right across this province, Mr. Speaker. And at the same time those businesses that are larger, Mr. Speaker, those businesses like our small manufacturing sector, they can now qualify for, Mr. Speaker, the enhanced I.C.I. Program. That's, Mr. Speaker, helping them save up to a third, a third of their energy bill, Mr. Speaker. That's, Mr. Speaker, because we've taken action to ensure that we're helping not only residences, not only small businesses, not only farms but our manufacturing sector, Mr. Speaker, and our large businesses as well.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Scott and Cheryl have reduced their hydro consumption by 40% over the past year, but none of that, none of that translated into lower electricity bills. The **Premier's** plan doesn't address time-of-use pricing. It doesn't address bad contracts that she signed. It doesn't address the oversupply of energy that we are paying private and foreign companies to generate that we don't even use, Speaker. It doesn't stop the wrong-headed sell-off of Hydro One. Can the **Premier** explain to small business owners, like the richmans, why her plan doesn't address any of the underlying problems in our hydro system and why any relief that comes under her plan will only be temporary?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I think the leader of the third party needs to do is put down her plan that doesn't address anything, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't save one cent

for families or businesses in this province, Mr. Speaker. And actually look at ours, Mr. Speaker, and see what the fair hydro plan does. 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker, for small businesses, farms and residences right across the province, Mr. Speaker. I.C.I. Programs enhanced, Mr. Speaker. Helping our manufacturing sector and all our businesses, Mr. Speaker. We're actually helping low-income individuals, Mr. Speaker, which their plan didn't even address, Mr. Speaker, until the last page. We're making sure those who are most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, actually get the help that they need. When it comes to our first nations, Mr. Speaker, those living on reserve, we are also making sure, Mr. Speaker, that there is a new rate for them. They're actually getting actually help, Mr. Speaker. We're actually helping in the province, unlike the opposition over on that side, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, nobody believes for a minute anything that came out of the mouth of that Minister a moment ago. Certainly nowhere near the reality of -- look. Here is the reality though, Speaker. The Liberal plan does nothing more than make a last-ditch effort on behalf of this government and this **Premier** and her political party that's trying to hold on to power here in this province for just a little bit later. Maru Malik knows it, Speaker. The rickmans know it, and in fact everybody in Ontario saw it for exactly what it was last week. When will this **Premier** stop putting the interests of her banker friends and her political party ahead of the interests of small businesses, families, industries and mining in the province of Ontario?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's talk about who else is talking about the fair hydro plan and all of its benefits, Mr. Speaker. Francesca Dobin executive director of the United Way Bruce- Grey, Kathleen Wynne's government is listening to people. With these positively changes our rural community will now truly benefit from the low cost power it produces. Isidor day the Ontario regional chief. The elimination of the delivery charge will assist our citizens by reducing energy poverty in our communities and also represents recognition for the use of the land and the development and expansion of provincial energy grids. Today's commitment by the Ontario government is commendable and allows a path forward for greater quality of life for our first nations in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I can keep going on the number of quotes that we have here. I'll do so, Mr. Speaker. I know I won't have time but I look forward to talking about more, Mr. Speaker, in some of my supplementaries.

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