

Hansard: Horwath to Premier -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question's to the Premier. The sunshine list was released on Friday and there was one very notable company name that was not on it and that was Hydro One. We know that the Hydro One c.e.o.'s salary -- the Hydro One C.E.O., rather, raked in a salary of \$4.5 million in 500% increase from the last time the C.E.O. Salary appeared on the sunshine list. Can the Premier tell Ontarians why her priority seems to be protecting the salaries and anonymity of the people at the top instead of regular Ontario families and businesses that are struggling just to get by?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, my priority is to make sure that everyone in this province gets relief on their hydro bills, Mr. Speaker. 25% reduction for every family in this province, Mr. Speaker. Electricity bill it is their homes. Relief for those small mom and pop shops on main streets in communities, Mr. Speaker. Relief for farmers. We recognize --: We recognize there are people across the province who need that relief, Mr. Speaker, which is exactly why we're put ago plan in place that the actually will reduce people's electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. People will see those reductions come the summer and that is in direct response to people's concerns about their ability to pay their electricity bills.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, by privatizing Hydro One Premier Wynne ensured three things -- that those at the top can make massive salaries, that the rest of us will pay massive electricity bills, and that she could throw a blanket of secrecy over the whole mess, Speaker. What does the Premier have to say to Ontarians who are struggling to keep up with their hydro bills and are outraged by her continued insistence -- While hiding how much top executives are being paid?

>> Premier Wynne: So, Mr. Speaker, let me once again be very, very clear. And I know the leader of the third party loves to conflate these issues. But changing the direction on the broadening the ownership of Hydro One would not take one cent off one electricity bill anywhere in this province, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause] As much as the leader of the third party would like to pretend that that was the case, Mr. Speaker. Not one cent. Not off one electricity bill. So, Mr. Speaker, we have brought forward a strategy, a plan that is going to take people's bills down, Mr. Speaker. 25% reduction across the province, Mr. Speaker, because we recognize that people need that support. The investments that we have made in the electricity system to make it clean, to make it reliable, have a cost associated with them, Mr. Speaker. We are going to reduce people's bills on top of the 8% that people have already seen. Another 17%, Mr. Speaker, because we know that they need that support.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it is disgusting that when people are suffering and some can't pay their hydro bills that we have executives at public utilities raking in millions. The C.E.O. Of O.P.G. Was the highest paid public employee last year and the C.E.O. Of Hydro One made over \$4 million. In Montreal, bombardier, a private company, listed to public pressure and is holding off on massive pay increases for the company's top staff after hundreds of Québecers rallied outside the company's headquarters. Here in Ontario, people are equally outraged by the planned pay hikes for Hydro One C.E.O., especially amid soaring hydro bills. Why won't the Premier do the right thing and rein in the salaries of the executives at Hydro One?

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me just say again that I recognize that people across the province are struggling with their electricity bills, which is exactly why the fair hydro plan will reduce people's electricity bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker. That is the context within which we're having this conversation. We have a plan that we have brought forward that will reduce people's bills substantially. In more rural and remote communities, Mr. Speaker, people will see a reduction of 40 to 50%. So we know that people need that support. We know that they need those reductions, Mr. Speaker. At the same time the broadening the ownership of Hydro One is directly related to our ability to invest in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, transit and transportation infrastructure that the leader of the third party does not support but which is necessary to the well-being of this province, Mr. Speaker. We are going to continue on that path. Hydro One has found \$60 million in efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. They a better run company and people will see reductions on their electricity bill this is summer.

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