

Hansard: Qaadri to Thibeault -- Energy Affordability

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Qaadri: On one of the essential goals for this government. That is making everyday life more affordable for ontarians. And while Ontario's economy, speaker, is doing well, as we appreciate, not every family is seeing that impact on their personal day-to-day budgets. And perhaps nowhere is that challenge more pressing than on the issue of hydro rates. And as the premier indicated, helping ontarians with the cost of everyday living is a top priority for our government. In the speech from the throne from this fall, speaker, as you'll appreciate the government announced new measures to curb the cost of electricity for Ontario homes as well as businesses and these measures will take effect on January 1st, 2017. Speaker -- Would the minister please inform this house more detail about the measures from the throne speech to lower electricity costs for ontarians?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to thank the member from etobicoke north for that question and for his hard work in this house as well, Mr. Speaker. Over the past decade, Mr. Speaker, our electricity system has been transformed from a dirty, aging system to one that is clean and reliable, Mr. Speaker, and that transformation was for the better, but the cost of this transition, Mr. Speaker, have presented a challenge for some ontarians and that's why this fall, we took action, Mr. Speaker. We passed legislation which, beginning January 1st, which is only a couple of weeks away, will provide an 8% rebate for every family, farm and small business in this province, Mr. Speaker. At the same time, we will also introduce additional support for the most rural parts of our province and expand the programs for businesses. Speaker, we're proud of the work that we've done to turn our province into a leader when it comes to clean, reliable electricity, and that's why we're now acting, Mr. Speaker, to make this as affordable as possible for as many people as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Qaadri: Thank you for your answer, minister. Will be a significant step and very well received for the families and businesses, and of course across the province. The 8% rebate will help to curb electricity costs for ontarians across the board, while other programs will provide the type of support that keeps our province fair as well as competitive. Speaker, I understand the measures from the speech from the throne are just a few of the many actions the minister has taken and will take to further reduce the costs of electricity. As he's been in office for just a short time, I believe that the minister has been ... and diligent in executing this government's commitments. Speaker,

would the minister please share with this house some of the other initiatives our government is taking to lower the cost of electricity in the province of Ontario?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for that question. So, speaker, on top of the direct support to ratepayers provided through the speech from the throne, our government has been hard at working to find ways to remove costs from the electricity system. So back in September, Mr. Speaker, we announced that we would suspend further procurement of large renewable generation. This announcement will avoid almost \$4 billion, Mr. Speaker, in costs to the system. In October we finalized a deal with Quebec to increase and improve our electricity trade, making better use of our system and saving ratepayers \$70 million in the process, Mr. Speaker. I've been in constant conversation with our partners in the sector, from our agencies to stakeholders to poverty and business advocates, discussing ways to save yet more money for the ratepayers, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am committed to lowering costs for Ontario ratepayers, whether it's 50 cents, \$50. I will continue to do everything I can to find reductions that ensure electricity is affordable across the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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