

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

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Singh: My question is to the **Premier**. Let's be honest here. Ontario families will not be fooled by this desperate -- We all know the government is re-elected, we'll be right back here in the same mess with hydro bills so high that small businesses are shuttering their doors and families are forced to choose between heating their homes and putting food on the table. The **Premier** has had 14 years in the government to fix the problem and 4 years as a **Premier** to fix the systemic problems with the hydro system. When will the **Premier** stop kicking the problem down the road and actually address the systemic problems of the system and help Ontario families and businesses.

>> **Premier** Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know when families see their bills in the summer, Mr. Speaker, they are going to see a reduction of on average 25%, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that is going to make a huge difference to families across the province. In addition to that, families who are living in more rural and remote areas, Mr. Speaker, who have been paying exorbitant distribution charges will see a further reduction, Mr. Speaker. That is a structural change. As well, Mr. Speaker, what we said is there were some costs that were being borne by ratepayers that need to be borne by the whole group of Ontarians. That's a structural change that we have made. In addition, financing the payoff of those assets over 30 years, that's a structural change, Mr. Speaker. Those were the structural issues that were driving costs. Structural change is exactly what we're delivering to Ontario.

>> MPP Singh: Mr. Speaker, this is a plan that doubles down on a bad plan and extends it for a long period of time. That's all it is. The people who will be the happiest with the plan are the **Premier's** small group of well-connected friends. They're the ones who will be happy. The **Premier** is hoping this plan will help her Liberal party but she knows certainly this is going to help her banker friends. It doesn't actually address the systemic problems of the hydro system and it doesn't permanently lower the bills. It just makes people cynical. That's absolutely the wrong thing. A short-term fix is not enough. A plan that doesn't make concrete changes to address the systemic problems with our hydro system is nothing more than a desperate attempt from an unpopular government to cling on to power. That's all it is. Will the **Premier** show Ontarians the respect they deserve and actually come up with a real plan that addresses the real problem to permanently lower the cost of hydro.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Honourable member mentioned our small group of friends. That small group of friends is every single ratepayer in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's a 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker. They're going to see in the very near futures. It's not a bumper sticker plan like they brought forward that talks about a number that they could maybe work with if they can get a group put together. We have substantial structural changes that we have brought forward, Mr. Speaker. We are bringing forward significant changes to the triple rp. We are upgrading the oesp program. Their plan, low income individuals were on the last page and were told to sit and wait. We're not waiting to help. We're creating a fund that low income individuals can access. It's going to help many, many people get out of the perpetual cycle of not being able to pay their bills.

>> MPP Singh: Mr. Speaker, the problem with this Liberal hydro system is one, they continue to sell off our public asset. They continue with an unfair time of use fee. They're doubling down on bad contracts. They're paying private foreign companies. They're paying them for the energy we overproduce. These are the problems. Guess what, none of these problems are being solved by this plan. Ontarians can't trust this **Premier** with their hydro bills. They don't believe that stretching out the payments is in any way addressing the root cause of the problems. Will the **Premier** show she's serious about tackling the mess that her government and her leadership have created and implement a plan that will develop a real solution to this problem and permanently lower the cost of hydro in this province. The people deserve that.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we've done exactly that. We made sure that rates are coming down by 25% for every single ratepayer in this province. When it comes to, Mr. Speaker, to those that are living in our rural or smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, that's 800,000 House holds, 800,000 House holds will see even more than that. They'll see more than that. Those who have a hard time, Mr. Speaker, even paying their bills when it's 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker, we have now programs in place that will actually help them and help more of them. The one thing that we are also very proud of is making sure that we have a new on reserve first nations rate, Mr. Speaker. Helping 21,500 first nations people across our province. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to listen and work with the people of Ontario. That's why we have this 25% reduction plan, Mr. Speaker.

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