

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

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Singh: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the **Premier**. Yesterday was international women's day, and because of inequality we all know women are disproportionately affected by skyrocketing hydro bills. Women like Val Len Tina who lives in Brantford. She says what keeps her up at night is not knowing when hydro bills are going to increase again. The **Premier**'s plan is nothing more than a band-aid. It offers no comfort to women like Valentina who can't save for their kids' future because they don't know when hydro bills are going to go up again. When will this **Premier** understand that her plan is nothing more than a plan to help bankers instead of helping the everyday people of Ontario. People like Valentina W need a permanent solution that will actually keep hydro bills down.

>> **Premier** Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I know that the Minister of energy is just raring to answer the supplementary question. But I want to just say to the member opposite that it was international women's day yesterday. I hope that he had an opportunity to see the announcement that we made in the morning about levelling the playing field for women in sports. It is extremely important as we know. 94% of women executives say that they competed in sport and it made a difference to them in their career trajectory, Mr. Speaker. So the announcement we made will mean that provincial sport organizations will be required to have equity policies in place. We're putting money into training women coaches, Mr. Speaker. A very, very important initiative in terms of. Levelling the playing field for women in sport in Ontario.

>> MPP Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sharon Sinha who lives in Sault Ste. Marie. The **Premier** and this government have heard Sharon's story before. She lives in only one room of her apartment because she can't afford the peak time of use fees to keep the heat on during the day in her apartment. Since the **Premier** claims her plan is designed to help women like Sharon, why didn't she put an end to the unfair mandatory time-of-use fees that leave Sharon suffering at home in the cold?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our plan, Mr. Speaker, will reduce those bills, Mr. Speaker, by 25%, and specifically in Sault Ste. Marie and area, Mr. Speaker. If those folks live on the outskirts. If they're a Hydro One customer, Mr. Speaker. If they're and Algoma power customer,

Mr. Speaker, they're going to see their bills reduced between 40 and 50%, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause] But it's not only Mr. Speaker -- it's not only, Mr. Speaker, Sault Ste. Marie that's going to see the benefits. It's right across the province. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when I was in Hamilton, the mayor of Hamilton Fred Eynon was in the news yesterday talking about our hydro plan. You know what he said, Mr. Speaker? Our government's plan to reduce our bills by 25% is a very positive step for their city's hydro customers. He credited our Government, Mr. Speaker, with listening to Ontarians and implementing what he calls dramatic reductions, Mr. Speaker. While the party on that side, they put together a proposal -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know their proposal is nothing more Mr. Speaker -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nothing more than wishful thinking, Mr. Speaker, on that side. We're putting this place a plan that offers significant relief, Mr. Speaker, for all Ontarians.

>> MPP Singh: Mr. Speaker, women across this province are suffering under the weight of skyrocketing hydro bills. Women like Valentina, Sharon and Mary Mullic, a small business owner in Sarnia. Had to leave behind her family in Brampton, her husband and children, because of the cost of high hydro bills meant that she had to lay off many of her workers. Now she lives in Sarnia, and that means that she only gets to see her family on weekends if she's lucky. These women and their families expected more from this **Premier** and this government than the desperate band-aid Phoenix coyotes that they revealed last week. When will the **Premier** stop putting bankers and well-connected insiders ahead of everyday people and the women of this province and put forward a plan that actually puts them and their families first?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All people within this province, Mr. Speaker, are going to see that 25% reduction. Small businesses as well, Mr. Speaker, are going to see that savings. And that's how wise, Mr. Speaker, we acted because we heard, Mr. Speaker, we heard from Ontarians that they wanted more relief. We brought forward the 8% reduction, Mr. Speaker, but we heard that people needed more so we acted and we brought forward a 25% reduction, Mr. Speaker. Their plan, Mr. Speaker, does nothing, does absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, to help the women that he mentioned. Our plan, Mr. Speaker, will. It helps them in small businesses. It reduces their bills, Mr. Speaker, by 25%. It reduces their home bills, Mr. Speaker, by 25%. What they're talking about, Mr. Speaker, is not even saving a single cent. And their plan doesn't even mention low-income and vulnerable people until the last page, Mr. Speaker, and they're saying wait. We're saying we're going to act by summer, Mr. Speaker.

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