
2017 Long-Term Energy Plan

Strategic Communications Plan Update

August 4, 2017

Introduction

- Ontario released its First Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP) in 2010; the LTEP is reviewed and updated every three years.
- Its purpose and implementation are established in the Electricity Act.
- The 2013 and 2017 LTEP featured input from Ontarians; industry, stakeholders, Indigenous communities and the public.
- ENE presented its initial plans for the 2017 LTEP to Cabinet on July 28 and was asked to return to the next Cabinet Meeting with the communications strategy.
- The communications plan is a strategic framework; it's approach is flexible and scalable:
 - We can communicate broadly and in a sustained fashion or simply launch and reactively respond, or adjust course as needed.

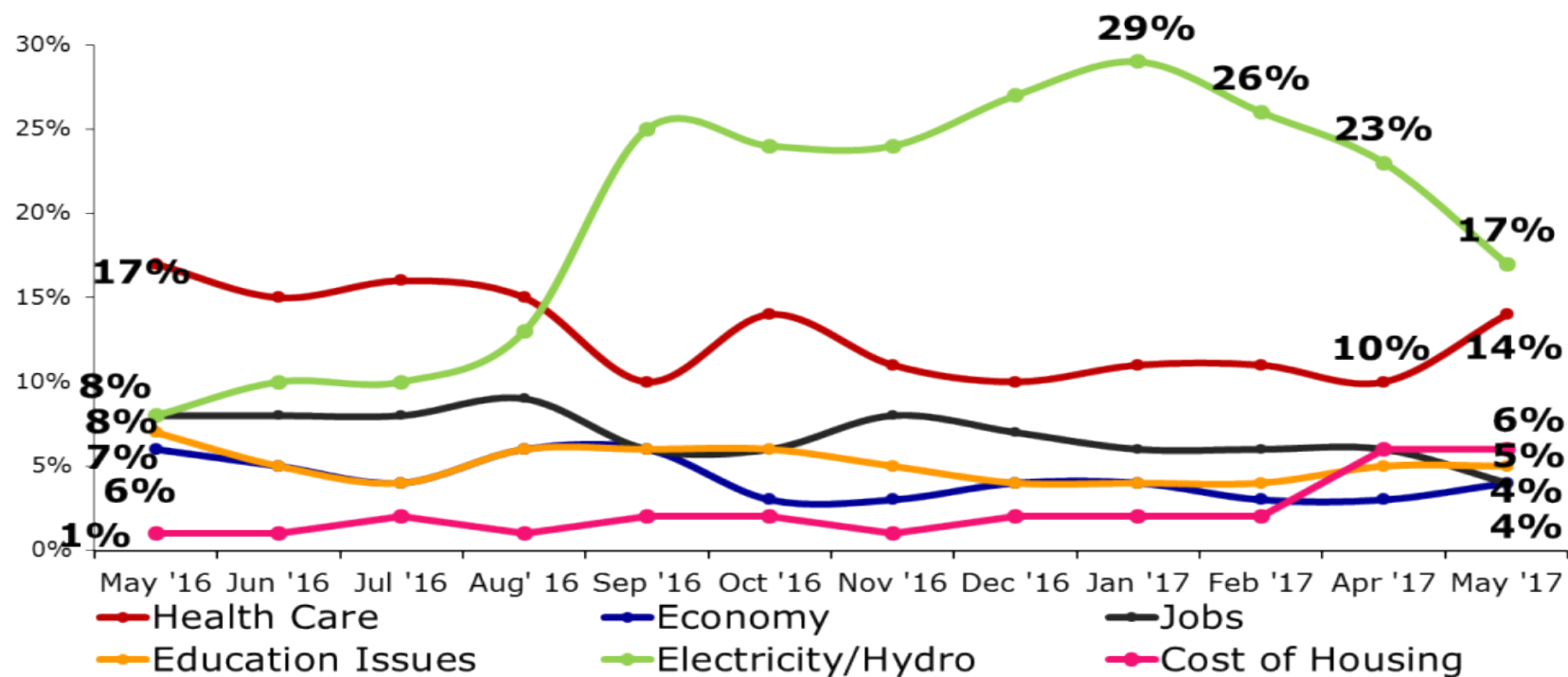
Context

- Since 2006, electricity prices in Ontario quadrupled compared to other Canadian jurisdictions. The sharp rise in costs has drawn criticism from ratepayers, industry, media and political critics.
- September 2016: Government introduced an 8% rate subsidy for residential and small business bill payers.
- March 2017: Government introduces the Fair Hydro Plan (FHP) to reduce electricity costs by 25% beginning July 1. Other elements include rate increases held to inflation for four years; new cost mitigation for some rural, on-reserve First Nations communities and low-income customers; social program costs moved to the tax base.
- The intention was to bring rate relief immediately, but costs would have to be recovered and could increase over time.
- In the media, the FHP rate mitigation strategy has drawn considerable criticism:
 - Analysis of 60 news articles following the FHP legislation announcement resulted in 9 positive, 21 neutral and 30 negative stories.

Context

Continued

- By contrast, polling shows concerns about electricity issues are considerably lower following the FHP introduction



Context

Continued

- The 2017 LTEP will publish:
 - A price curve, including FHP impacts, that is better than forecasted earlier this year.
 - Emissions forecasts that could create a vulnerability
 - Ontario's energy policy, which has been a prime target for political, media, and industry critics
- The 2017 LTEP ,may draw public criticism, despite the substantial amount of good news in its actual content, due to the timing of its release.

Communication Goals

- Publish the 2017 LTEP in formats targeted to stakeholders and ratepayers
- Leverage new and existing LTEP policy initiatives to build goodwill in local communities and with stakeholder groups as appropriate
- Recognize the contribution of consumers as well as First Nations and Métis leaders in the process
- Mitigate risks tied to cost and emissions projections
- Sustain positive relationship with electricity sector stakeholders

Considerations

- There are new programs resulting from the 2017 LTEP.
- We anticipate the FHP costs will be criticized and the focus of any media coverage.
- We can and should leverage our mandate to look for efficiencies and reform the energy marketplace in our messages and materials.
- As mentioned earlier, the ministry “consulted” widely in the development of this LTEP. Best practice in stakeholder engagement mandates us to re-establish contact with these audiences for the LTEP launch and show them how their feedback affected the plan’s development.
- We should not shy away from telling the good news stories within this LTEP including successful policy initiatives, innovations and the good work of the Indigenous Policy group.

Broad-Based Strategies

- Assure Ontarians the government has established a clean, reliable and affordable energy system that is ready for the future
- Create and execute a modest multi-platform strategic communications plan
- Engage in proactive media relations for the official launch day
- Deliver targeted messaging by telling stories locally, where they matter
- Return to first principles of the Fair Hydro Plan and its necessity in response to negative coverage on the cost curve
- “Loop back” with consultation participants
- Set and evaluate key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the public reception of our engagement

Key Messages

- The LTEP is a road map that sets out the direction for Ontario's energy future for the next 20 years.
 - The LTEP establishes the policy direction for our ministry and agencies.
 - We consulted with and listened to Ontarians in the development of our plan.
 - It's based on five principles the province's residents and businesses say are important to them: cost-effectiveness, reliability, clean energy, community and Indigenous engagement, and conservation and demand management.
 - Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan is an important part of our strategy.

Key Messages

Continued

- We have made necessary investments in the energy system and it is now a more reliable grid that will serve us for generations to come.
- Ontario's grid is ready for the technological innovations coming to the energy sector.
- This long term energy plan delivers fairness and flexibility to help all Ontarians adjust to a rapidly changing energy future.

Risk Management Strategies: Rate Mitigation

- Acknowledge that costs are going to rise but that we have a plan.
- Go back to earlier Fair Hydro Plan messaging to convey sensitivity to the cost pressures on Ontarians and the need for immediate action
- Present cost curve in LTEP document as a moment in time that is subject to change -- we remain focused on driving costs out of the system
- Develop an optimistic message track leaning on the immediate and medium term benefits that the FHP has brought for Ontario families, farms and small/medium businesses. Remind consumers of the immediate relief they are feeling now.
- Gather data to provide proof of FHP benefits.

Key Messages: Rate Mitigation

1. We heard you. We took action.

- Ontarians told us that their bills were too high. Relief was needed and something had to be done right away. We delivered with the Fair Hydro Plan to save Ontario families, farms and small businesses 25% on their bills.

2. We're already seeing the benefits of lower hydro bills (need data)

- The benefits to families and the economy are significant in the short and medium term
 - Fewer families are struggling to make bill payments:
 - Late payment stats are down by X%
 - Electricity Service Disconnections have decreased by X%
 - Data points from social agencies – perhaps Dobbyn at United Way
 - We've already seen a positive effect on the local economy:
 - Data point
 - Data point

Key Messages: Rate Mitigation (cont.)

3. Down the road, rates will have to rise. We have a plan.

- Ontario Families now have four years of rate stability and we have a responsible path forward.
- Over the next four years we will continue to drive costs out of the electricity system:
 - We have done X,Y,Z and have achieved A,B,C.
 - We have directed our agencies to reform the energy market and find efficiencies and cost savings
 - Future innovations will bring savings opportunities

Key Messages: Rate Mitigation (cont.)

4. We will continue to protect low-income, rural and remote families with programs like the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP), Distribution Rate Protection and the First Nations On-Reserve Delivery Credit.

- The OESP offers monthly on-bill credits (between \$45 and \$75) to the most vulnerable among us who need a helping hand
- We've ensured that Ontarians living in the most remote communities, where power is expensive, are supported through lowered delivery costs
- On-Reserve First Nations families are already saving almost \$1,000 per year thanks to the removal of the delivery charge from their electricity bills.

Tactics: Overview

Section	Required	Optional
LTEP Book Production	2017 LTEP document Summary brochure	Audience specific materials
Digital Communications	Web page development Organic social media networking	
Launch Events	Press conference Technical briefing Re-engage 'stakeholders'	
Media Relations	Media kit	
Sustained Promotion	Social media networking On-going and localized storytelling	Paid social advertising
Evaluation	Media coverage analysis Social media and digital engagement stats Tone of incoming correspondence	

Tactics: Details

	Pre-Launch	Launch	Post-Launch
Correspondence		- Stakeholder email distribution	- Responding and monitoring
Strat Comms	- Master key message document - Media list - Speaking notes - Presentation deck	- Media kit	- Evaluation
Events	- Logistics for launch events - Develop event plans - Coordinate event logistics for briefings and press conference	- On-site event logistics for press conference and technical briefing	- Evaluation

Tactics: Details (cont.)

	Pre-Launch	Launch	Post-Launch
Creative Services and Community Management	- LTEP book and brochure production - Template materials based on LTEP design - Web page development	- News release digital distribution - Social media postings - Publish web page	- Organic social media content (ongoing) - Social media monitoring and reporting - Web metrics and reporting
Issues Management	- Issues scan - Q&As	- Media relations	- Media monitoring and analysis - Regular reporting

Tactics: Evaluation

News media

- Use media measurement system to evaluate, track and record each news article and editorial (broadcast, print, web) including re-prints of wire services and broadcast syndication, record verified reach, apply a scale to evaluate key message pickup, photo and tone

Social media

- Reach and engagement for organic posts

Website

- Measure unique visitors and engagement to LTEP page

Correspondence

- Track the number of letters and emails referring to the LTEP and tone

Next Steps

- Agreement on scale of communications plan
- Agreement on risk management approach
- Commence implementation