

Ministry of Energy Top Issues - August 30, 2017

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Date: Wed, 30 Aug 2017 07:01:00 -0400

Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

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Hydro pilot project in place for city

The Barrie Examiner

Wed Aug 30 2017

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Section: News

Barrie homeowners could have another hydro rate break headed their way.

Alectra Utilities is offering a set of three trial price plans to provide residential customers with choice when it comes to how they are charged for electricity.

The trial provides the opportunity to better manage household electricity costs, while also helping Ontario's power system run more efficiently, the province says.

“When we launched Ontario’s Fair Hydro Plan, our government delivered significant and immediate relief on electricity bills for all residential electricity customers and as many as half a million small businesses and farms across the province,” said provincial Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault Tuesday morning in Barrie.

“With affordability as a top priority ... the Ontario Energy Board and Alectra are taking the next step in offering more flexibility and choice to families, while helping to reduce their electricity bills even further,” Thibeault added.

Originally launched in 2015, the advantage power pricing program has been extended to run until Dec. 31, 2018 with new options and features as part of the Ontario Energy Board’s regulated price plan initiative.

Participants are expected to benefit by shifting some consumption from on-peak to off-peak periods.

For an average customer who doesn’t shift consumption, the expected change in costs is expected to be minimal.

“The expansion of Alectra’s pilot project means that more families in Barrie have the opportunity to save on their monthly electricity bills,” said Barrie MPP Ann Hoggarth.

“Through this innovative project, customers are given more options to take control of their electricity usage and reduce household energy costs,” she added.

The enhanced plan is similar to the time-of-use plan available to Ontarians since 2007, but it has one key change: a bigger difference between on-peak and offpeak prices.

This wider rate gap lets participants cut electricity costs if they shift their usage to off-peak hours, the province says.

The dynamic plan features a peak period from 3-9 p.m. on weekdays (holidays excluded) where the rate is either low, medium or high. At all other times on this plan an offpeak rate applies.

This rate is lower than standard time-of-use rates.

Customers are alerted a day in advance as to what rate they will have for those peak periods, giving them

the opportunity to adjust their usage accordingly.

Additionally, the dynamic plan includes six critical peak pricing periods which will last for four hours each.

These critical periods will be planned to occur during times the system is under the most demand in the winter and summer seasons.

The overnight plan features a similar schedule to standard time-of-use, but with the addition of a 'super' off-peak rate from 12-6 a.m.

This is designed for customers with large flexible loads, like electric vehicles, or who work shifts, to use electricity when system costs are low.

Alectra operates within an 1,800-square-kilometre service territory comprising 15 communities including Barrie, Alliston, Aurora, Beeton, Brampton, Bradford, Hamilton, Markham, Mississauga, Penetanguishene, Richmond Hill, St. Catharines, Thornton, Tottenham and Vaughan.

Minister of Energy highlights benefits of hydro plan for North Bay college

North Bay Nipissing News

Tue Aug 29 2017

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NORTH BAY - Canadore College is one of the businesses that will see reduced electricity costs from recent expansions to the Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI) under Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan, according to Minister of Energy and MPP for Sudbury Glenn Thibeault, who made the announcement Monday, Aug. 28 at the college.

"With the recent expansions to the Industrial Conservation Initiative included in Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan, eligible organizations that reduce their peak energy consumption will see their electricity bills lowered," explained Thibeault. "These savings will help ensure Canadore College can continue to offer a high-

quality education for local students in North Bay.”

The ICI allows large electricity users to lower their electricity costs by up to one-third by reducing their electricity use during peak hours.

Starting July 1, Ontario expanded this program to provide electricity bill reductions to more organizations and businesses across the province, including:

All electricity consumers with average monthly peak demand greater than 1 megawatt (MW); and

Electricity consumers with an average monthly peak demand greater than 500 kilowatts (kW) and less than 1 MW in the manufacturing and greenhouse sectors.

“We all stand to win by embracing preservation and conservation strategies, especially when we do so as a collective,” said George Burton, president of Canadore College. “The ICI is even further incentive for northern industries and academia to work together to find new and innovative solutions to moderate our global impact and reduce expenses.”

Chained protesters try to stop turbine build

London Free Press

Wed Aug 30 2017

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Section: News

Byline: Trevor Terfloth

In a bid to halt construction of a wind turbine project in north Kent, three protesters chained themselves together in a show of solidarity on tuesday. sheltered from the rain, Rick Ball, Lee Montgomery and yvonne Laevens were at the entrance to the construction site on Bush Line, near Highway 40 in the former Chatham township.

“It should have never have gone this far,” Laevens said. “We have to (do this). We’ve tried just about everything else.” several water wells in the area of the north Kent Wind project, being built by samsung Renewable energy and Pattern energy, became clogged with sediment shortly after pile-driving took place for construction of the turbines. tuesday’s protest was peaceful, with Laevens adding Chatham-Kent police had been “congenial” with the group.

Ball said he appreciated the members of the public who were on hand and hopes the government takes notice. “start paying attention to what we’ve been saying for a year and a half,” he said.

Last week, Chatham-Kent council passed a motion asking the Ministry of the environment and Climate Change to halt the project until water well concerns were dealt with.

Ball said a halt would allow everyone involved to work together on a solution.

Council also called for independent water testing for the wells.

In a news release, the municipality said residents near the north Kent One wind farm project whose wells have water-quality issues will be contacted by Chatham-Kent officials this week to allow them to select a firm from a list to test their well water at no cost.

Municipal chief administrator don shropshire said the municipality, working with public health officials, has identified 17 labs in Ontario that are licensed and accredited by the Canadian association for Laboratory accreditation to test drinking water for microbiological agents, organic chemicals, inorganic chemicals and other particulates.

“We want to ensure there are no concerns about who does the testing,” he said. “We’ve provided the list, but the choice will be up to the residents.” at a meeting last week between municipal officials and ministry representatives, the province also committed to contact owners of wells that have experienced issues and review those concerns with samsung and Pattern. as for the request to halt the project, the municipality’s release said “that request is still before the premier’s office.” the company said in a statement tuesday it is aware of the water well concerns. “Having access to clean water is essential, and this is an issue the north Kent Wind team understands can be unsettling and we take (it) very seriously.”

It said science firm golder associates had concluded construction and operation of the turbines would not harm groundwater, and environmental consultant aeCOM concluded the groundwater quality and supply

were not a result of construction or pile-driving.

But the company stated it will continue to work with the ministry, municipality and landowners on the issue.

Some Ontarians choose between heating and eating

The Whitehorse Daily Star

Tue Aug 29 2017

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Section: Opinion

Byline: Ken Green

After years of governments mismanaging energy markets in Ontario, new research shows that Ontarians now pay some of the highest electricity bills in Canada.

The average residential monthly bill for Torontonians last year was \$201 (including tax). In Ottawa, it was \$183.

Compare that with Montreal (\$83) or Calgary (\$109) - and it's not hard to see that Ontarians are taking it on the chin for electricity.

In Ontario, from 2008 to 2015, electricity prices grew 2 1/2 times faster than disposable income, nearly four times faster than inflation and 4 1/2 times faster than the rate of economic growth.

It also outpaced growth rates in British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta.

What's behind the rise? Some of it is past mismanagement of the power system's infrastructure and poor decisions regarding conventional power production.

But as we show in the recent Fraser Institute study, payments for wind, solar and biomass power constitute almost 30 per cent of the "Global Adjustment," the part of an Ontarian's monthly hydro bill that covers the costs of electricity production beyond the revenue generated by the wholesale market price.

In fact, the renewable component of the Global Adjustment fee is also expected to grow in 2017 and 2018 - Ontario's energy board forecasts it will rise to 42 per cent in that time.

And what does that buy Ontarians? In 2016, only 6.8 per cent of electricity generation came from wind, solar and biomass power generation.

In response to the study, Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault suggested we didn't recognize the "value of the investments (the current government) made to eliminate coal and clean up the dirty, unreliable system (they) inherited from the previous Conservative government."

Let's talk about that. A recent analysis of government air quality data by Fraser Institute senior fellow Ross McKittrick and Elmira Aliakbari shows that shuttering the province's coal plants produced a small reduction in particulate matter in Ontario - but not to a statistically significant level in the two biggest population centres of Toronto and nearby Hamilton.

It produced a statistically insignificant reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions. And while it produced a reduction in peak ozone levels, much of that was offset by increased natural gas generation needed to replace the coal power output.

But what about greenhouse gases? According to Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions were down by 24 megatonnes from 1990, most of that attributed to Ontario's coal phase-outs (both pre-and post-Green Energy Act), and that's arguably a good thing.

But it came at a terrific cost. Ontario's auditor general concluded that ratepayers shelled out \$37 billion for the Global Adjustment component of energy prices from 2006 to 2014.

The office predicts that Ontarians will pay another \$133 billion in the Global Adjustment between 2015 and 2032.

It's a travesty that people living in the largest city in Canada, in a wealthy country with some of the world's largest reserves of energy of all sorts, face such high power prices that some families must choose between heating and eating.

Ontario's government has pulled the plug on the next planned round of renewable energy project

expansions. But that's not enough to fix the problem it largely created.

The government of Ontario should admit it has a high-cost energy problem thanks to years of mismanagement of the power sector.

And it should produce a plan that would actually drive down prices (rather than shifting them into the future) and give the people of Ontario affordable, reliable power that won't break the bank.

HydroOne wires up IPM

Huron Expositor

Wed Aug 30 2017

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Section: News

Byline: Kathleen Smith

Expected to draw more than 100, 000 visitors to Walton and Huron County, the 2017 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo will be illuminated by HydroOne.

Each year, HydroOne completes the electrical work for the entire site of the IPM, which runs from September 19 to 23.

HydroOne apprentices built the grid, which will illuminate the 2017 IPM and the 100 acre tented city; the entire site, including tented city, RV Park, plowing competition and parking fields, is 1, 200 acres.

The grid includes digging holes for and installing over 325 poles, installing 70 transformers and approximately 20 kilometres of power lines, which will make up for the tented city and the RV park for the event.

Last week members of the media were invited to the fast developing fields at the site of the IPM to see the

work that HydroOne is doing. With over 325 poles and 20 kilometres of power lines, the apprentices essentially built a miniature city for the event.

“We are here today at the IPM site with our apprentice crews, who are building the temporary electrical grid that will support the tented city and the RV Park for the 100th International Plowing Match,” explained Tiziana Baccega Rosa, Senior Media Relations Advisor for HydroOne.

“We feel that the skills we are able to provide to make this event happen, are far more valuable than a monetary donation that we could give the association.”

Contentious West Road Project Issue | Public meeting on road project that some fear will lead to 300 turbine wind farm.

Bayshore Broadcasting News Centre

2017-08-29

Byline: Claire McCormack

Two public meetings will be held on the future of the West Road in South Bruce Peninsula.

The first is scheduled for Tuesday, August 29th, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Lion's Head and District Community Centre.

The second meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 30th from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Wiarton arena on Taylor Street.

Bruce County is doing an Environmental Assessment for the West Road to decide what needs to be done to either rehabilitate, reconstruct, do spot work, or do nothing with the 29km stretch of road.

West Road runs between Oliphant (Bruce Road 13) and the Ferndale Road (Bruce Road 9) in South

Bruce Peninsula and Northern Bruce Peninsula.

Mayor Janice Jackson says it includes Howdenvale Road, Huron Road and Daddy Weir Road and travels north of Oliphant through Red Bay and Howdenvale and up to Ferndale.

Jackson says the County will present to the public what it's found so far and what its potential plans might be, and the public will be able to comment.

Jackson says the question of what to do with the West Road has become a contentious issue because Bruce County is thinking of widening it to 100 feet, but Jackson says while that is a standard width for a county road, it also happens to be the width required to truck turbines up the peninsula. She says there's a proposal for a 300 turbine wind farm.

For Jackson, who notes South Bruce Peninsula has declared itself an 'unwilling host' in a resolution to the county and the province, widening the road is too risky.

She notes the road winds around cottage areas now, and to reconstruct it would also mean straightening it out, which she believes carries with it the possible expropriation of land on about 13 properties.

Jackson says the West Road needs about \$5 million in rehabilitation work, but feels reconstruction brings with it the risk of it becoming a highway for a wind farm, "We just don't want to open up a can of worms," says Jackson.

Northeast Town joins Billings, Tehkummah in Garlon ban

Manitoulin Expositor

2017-08-30

Byline: Robin BurrIDGE

LITTLE CURRENT—The Northeast Town council voted 'no' to Hydro One Forestry spraying the herbicide Garlon in the municipality this fall.

Council received a letter from Steven Dey, Hydro One forestry technician for Manitoulin/Algoma, asking permission to apply the herbicide Garlon to the bush and cut stumps while conducting vegetation maintenance in the municipality this fall. (This on top of the spraying already conducted by Hydro One this summer.)

Councillor Bruce Wood moved a motion, seconded by Councillor Paul Skippen, to give Hydro One permission to spray the herbicide in the municipality.

"I've stated this before—I'm opposed to the spraying of Garlon—I'm not happy with the spreading of poison," said Councillor Michael Erskine. "I have concern with this, and I want that to be on the record."

If Hydro says there is a need for it, and they have said it is safe, I don't see the problem," said Councillor Skippen.

"I won't be supporting this," said Councillor Laurie Cook. "The map shows it being sprayed very close to water sources and it is toxic to aquatic life. We have had lots of rain this summer as well, so I don't doubt that there would be run off.

"Chainsaw oil is worse," Councillor Wood said. "You can't spray Garlon near water. You need to take a course to to use it—it is pretty rigorous training."

Councillor Cook said that Hydro One "can't guarantee it is safe. Remember Hydro One also used Agent Orange."

In a recorded vote, Councillors Marcel Gauthier, Paul Skippen and Bruce Woods voted in favour of the motion to give Hydro One permission to spray Garlon in the Northeast Town this fall, while Councillors Cook, Erskine, Bill Koehler, Dawn Orr, Melissa Peters and Mayor Al MacNevin voted against it. The motion was defeated and staff was directed to contact Hydro One and inform them of council's decision.

The Northeast Town is not the first municipality to say 'no' to the use of the herbicide. Billings Township denied Hydro One permission this spring to spray in the municipality and Tehkummah Council carried a motion recently deeming the township a 'no spray zone' for herbicides.

There are two petitions currently circulating asking area municipalities to not allow Hydro One to use Garlon in their community and calling on the province to change the Cosmetic Pesticide Act of 2009

Norfolk asks province to act on natural gas leak

Simcoe Reformer

2017-08-29

Byline: Monte Sonnenberg

SIMCOE - Norfolk County is bracing for the possibility that hydrogen sulphide emissions in Silver Hill could be a long-term problem.

At a special meeting Tuesday, Norfolk council hired the international company GHD to perform ongoing monitoring of emissions on North Walsingham Road 10.

Council waived its tendering process to hire the company, which specializes in air and noise monitoring.

Council has given Marlene Miranda, Norfolk and Haldimand's general manager of health and social services, an initial budget of \$50,000.

Also at Tuesday's meeting, council directed Mayor Charlie Luke to write letters to the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry, Premier Kathleen Wynne and local MPP Toby Barrett demanding immediate action on the problem.

Norfolk council is seeking clarity on the situation, which came to the fore Aug. 18. There are fears jurisdictional conflicts might prolong the issue.

As a municipality, Norfolk County is responsible for public safety. In that capacity, Norfolk has ordered the evacuation of six households in the affected area.

Complicating matters is the fact that natural gas is the cause of the problem. As such, this involves the jurisdiction of MNRF.

The Ministry of the Environment and the Ontario Fire Marshals Office have set up monitoring equipment in an exclusion zone measuring about 800 metres in diameter.

However, in a report Tuesday, council heard that neither agency will commit to the situation long-term.

Council also heard that four households are obeying the evacuation order while two households continue to come and go across the barricades.

Dr. Malcolm Lock, Norfolk's acting Medical Officer of Health, has told the parties they are subject to \$5,000 per day fines for defying the order. Lock has also told them he has no intention

at this point of following through on the threat.

Lock says fluctuations in gas levels coupled with changes in wind direction make it impossible to come up with hard numbers proving a persistent threat. Lock told council he won't waste county time and money pressing the issue in court.

"I made it quite clear when I issued this order that I had no intention of going there," Lock said. "But I did make it quite clear that they had to evacuate for their own safety."

Hydrogen sulphide is a toxic, combustible gas. It smells like rotten eggs and is also corrosive.

Sources include natural gas wells, hot springs and the decomposition of organic matter in oxygen-poor environments. Examples of the latter include swamps and bogs and enclosed reservoirs on farms containing animal waste.

The health unit took an interest in the situation after Silver Hill residents Ian and Kim Grant asked for information about the risks associated with natural gas.

The Grants told the health unit they have noticed the smell of natural gas on their property for nearly two years. However, with metal objects on their property discolouring in the presence of the fumes, the Grants began to wonder if there was a health risk.

Authorities have since flagged two gas wells as the source. One is an abandoned well on the Grant property while a second nearby is a producing well managed by Union Gas.

MNRF has hired a contractor to plug and cap the offending well on the Grant property. The ministry is seeking a remedy for the second well in partnership with Union Gas. Miranda told council the plugging operation on the Grant property should be underway by the end of the week.

There have been no reports of injury. North Walsingham Road 10 is limited to local traffic outside the exclusion zone. Heavy concrete barriers prevent vehicular traffic of any kind in an area nearly a kilometre long between Forestry Farm Road and the North Walsingham East Quarter Line Road.

National Energy Board Hears from Métis Nations Regarding Pipeline Abandonment

Provost News

Wed Aug 30 2017

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The National Energy Board (NEB) was to hear oral traditional evidence from two Métis Nations on how NOVA Gas Transmission Ltd. plans to abandon a 266 kilometre section of the Peace River Mainline could impact their communities. The public hearing was scheduled for August 22 at the Radisson Hotel Edmonton South.

The NEB says they will consider oral traditional evidence from Gunn Métis Local 55 (Lac Ste. Anne Métis) and the Mountain Métis Nation Association. The NEB said they recognize “that Indigenous peoples have an oral tradition for sharing stories, lessons and knowledge from generation to generation. This information cannot always be shared adequately in writing yet it will make up an important component of the evidence the hearing panel will consider as it decides whether or not to approve the project.”

National Energy Board Continues to Study Energy East

Provost News

Wed Aug 30 2017

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The National Energy Board (NEB) announced on August 23 topics that will be part of its assessment of the Energy East and Eastern mainline projects. The decision followed a comment period where 820 submissions were received.

Energy East is a 4,500-kilometre pipeline proposed to carry 1.1 million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries in Eastern Canada and a marine terminal in New Brunswick. The Eastern Mainline Pipeline is a proposal to build approximately 279 kilometres of new gas pipeline and

related components, beginning near Markham, Ontario and finishing near Brouseville, Ontario.

The hearing panel noted the public's interest in understanding risks associated with potential accidents and system malfunctions that may lead to an oil spill. The assessment will provide more evaluation of such scenarios, their potential consequences, the proposed mitigation and response measures as well as preventative programs aimed at reducing or eliminating risk factors.

In addition, the NEB will consider upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in determining whether these projects are in the public interest. The NEB also wants to examine the potential market impacts of GHGs reduction targets embedded in laws and policies on the economic viability of the projects.

A range of topics will be covered by the NEB's assessment including Indigenous participation in the projects throughout their lifecycles, landowner and municipal considerations, environmental effects, as well as socio-economic elements. The list of topics to be considered by the NEB is contained in each project's final list of issues and factors for the environmental assessment. The NEB says the decision establishes the foundations for a thorough assessment based on science, traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples and other relevant evidence.

The next step leading to the hearing order which will contain more details about the hearing calendar, is a comment period on the completeness of TransCanada's applications, allowing people to provide input in the assessment of the two major projects.

The National Energy Board is an independent federal regulator of several parts of Canada's energy industry. It regulates pipelines, energy development and trade in the public interest with safety as its primary concern.

Under the National Energy Board Act, the NEB reviews applications to build and operate new pipelines and makes its recommendation based on the Canadian public interest.

The NEB is responsible for carrying out for each project an environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012. An EA is a planning tool and serves to review the effects likely to be associated with a project. It also considers possible ways to reduce environmental effects and an assessment of how those effects may act with similar effects of other projects and activities in a region.