Ministry of Energy Top Issues - December 30, 2016

From: "Kourakos, Georgina (ENERGY)" <georgina.kourakos@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY All" <energy-all2@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Date: Fri, 30 Dec 2016 07:12:28 -0500

Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

- Business group seeks cap-and-trade delay - Toronto Star
- Brace for a hangover at pumps - Sarnia Observer
- Cap-and-trade plan kicks off Jan. 1; Price of gasoline, home heating to go up - Owen Sound Sun Times
- How It Affects Consumers - Toronto Sun
- Hydro bills to drop 8 per cent in Ontario on Jan. 1 - CBC.CA News
- Cap-And-Trade System Kicks Begins In January - CKWS
- Toronto Hydro customers to see lower electricity bills in 2017 - Canada Newswire
- Nicholls will continue calling out Liberals - The Chatham Daily News
- The importance of nuclear power - Toronto Sun
- Elementa assets sold to Florida company - The Sault Star

Business group seeks cap-and-trade delay
Toronto Star
Fri Dec 30 2016
Page: A6
Section: News
Byline: Kristin Rushowy Toronto Star

Ontario's cap-and-trade program begins Jan. 1, but businesses are already asking the government to delay it for a year.

Twenty chambers of commerce around the province - including those in Ajax-Pickering, Burlington, Hamilton and Newmarket - have banded together, issuing a last-minute warning that the climate change-fighting plan will cost homeowners more and put stress on businesses already reeling from higher hydro costs.

They are also worried about the impact on future investment here.

"Ontario businesses are already losing jobs to neighbouring jurisdictions, and we've seen a lot of capital and job flight to jurisdictions in neighbouring areas," said Nathan MacDonald, policy and communications manager for the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade.

And given U.S. president-elect Donald Trump's comments that he wants to back of out the Paris climate change agreement, "it doesn't look like a good time to add a tax on most production in the province" when other areas will be cheaper, MacDonald added.

Environment Minister Glen Murray said the province's Climate Change Action Plan has broad support from businesses and "will reduce greenhouse gas pollution at the lowest possible cost to families and businesses.

"Third-party economic experts have confirmed that our plan is both the most cost-effective and best at reducing emissions compared directly to a carbon tax."

Murray pointed out that the Ontario Energy Board recently announced "natural gas prices will remain lower in 2017 than they have been during recent peak periods - even when factoring in the cost of cap and trade."

The cap-and-trade system provides large greenhouse gas polluters, such as natural gas company Enbridge, with permits or allowances, based on past usage, that decrease over time with a target of shrinking emissions.

Companies that don't use all of their allowances can sell off leftovers and, if they need more, extras can be purchased at quarterly auctions.

The plan is for Ontario to link its cap-and-trade system with one already operating between Quebec and California by 2018, which Murray has said is the most affordable option for businesses and one that guarantees reductions.

It is expected to reduce emissions by 3.8 megatonnes out of a total target of 18.7 megatonnes by 2020 - an amount that was recently criticized by the province's auditor general. However, the government said 9.8 megatonnes of reductions will happen as a result of other initiatives.

Homeowners will see heating bills rise by about $5 to $7 a month and gasoline costs about $8 a month.

For businesses, the chambers of commerce say members are already "feeling the squeeze" of higher electricity prices and argue the government has no idea what the impact the cap-and-trade costs will have on individual sectors.

Denise Jones, president of the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, said she worries of the "unintended impact" of cap and trade may be the "removal of jobs and investment from clean grids in Ontario to much dirtier grids in the U.S. and elsewhere."

Ontario's auditor general has already suggested cap and trade will cost Ontario businesses and consumers $8 billion more by 2020, although the government has said it's too soon to say.

Ontario will pay higher gas prices after cap-and-trade plan comes into effect Sunday, B1

Brace for a hangover at pumps; London gas prices have had a long run among Ontario's lowest, but will shoot up Sunday

Sarnia Observer
Fri Dec 30 2016
Page: B2
Section: News
Byline: Hank Daniszewski
Source: Hank Daniszewski The London Free Press

For London drivers, the party will really be over on New Year's Day.

For more than a year now, London drivers have lapped up the spoils of a gas war that was sparked by the opening of a Costco gas bar and benefited from some of the lowest pump prices in Ontario.

But in the last few weeks, the war appears to have run its course and prices have crept up to the Ontario average of about $1.07 a litre, says GasBuddy.com, an industry pricetracking website.

That's up from only 88 cents a litre in the middle of November. It will only get worse. Brace yourself for anything from $1.12 to $1.17 a litre for gas at the pump starting next week, says

Dan McTeague, an analyst with GasBuddy. com .

On Jan. 1, Ontario‘s cap-and-trade system to combat climate change will kick in, along with some new environmental standards, boosting prices by at least four cents a litre in one day.

McTeague said while refiners and wholesalers are doing fine, gas retailers in London have been squeezed for a long time. Retailers such as Costco and Loblaws have cut prices to draw customers and other retailers have seen their profit margins cut to the bone.

“Some are throwing in the towel, saying ‘we can’t afford to sell gas at a loss,’” said McTeague.

He said the other big factor is a production-limit deal by OPEC oil-producing nations that has pushed crude oil prices up to $54 a barrel. With gas priced in American dollars, the drop in the Canadian loonie to under 74 cents US hasn’t helped.

McTeague said the break-even price for London retailers is about 99 cents a litre, which was the price that Costco members were paying on Wednesday.

But some outlets were selling gas for as high as $1.11 a litre.

But starting Sunday, Ontario will move to a cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

McTeague said that alone will add about 4.3 cents to the gas prices.

On Jan. 1 Canada also moves to a lower level of sulphur in gasoline, which will add to refining expenses. Another jump in wholesale gas prices is also expected.

“When you wake up with a hangover on Sunday, you will be paying an average of $1.12 a gallon,” said McTeague.

What stings is that gas prices usually fall as we head into mid-winter.

Early in February this year the average price fell to about 78 cents a litre in London.

“Party like it’s 2016. Next year, prices will be significantly higher,” said McTeague.

Cap-and-trade plan kicks off Jan. 1; Price of gasoline, home heating to go up
Owen Sound Sun Times
Fri Dec 30 2016
Page: A2
Section: News
Byline: Keith Leslie
Source: The Canadian Press

Ontarians will start paying for the Liberal government’s ambitious cap-andtrade program almost immediately after it comes into effect Jan. 1 with higher prices for gasoline and natural gas.

The plan, which is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 15 per cent below 1990 levels within four years, will drive the price of gasoline up 4.3 cents per litre and increase the cost of home heating by up to $6.70 a month.

In her 2016 annual report, auditor general Bonnie Lysyk said households will pay an average of $156 next year in added costs because of cap and trade, rising to $210 in 2019 plus another $75 that year in indirect costs on goods and services.

Under the plan, businesses will have limits - or caps - on the amount of pollution they can emit. Companies that exceed those limits - which will be reduced each year - can buy permits or allowances through government-run auctions or from other companies that come in under their limits.

However, there will be major exemptions in the first four years, with some of Ontario's largest companies - such as Essar Steel Algoma Inc. in Sault Ste. Marie, Vale Canada's nickel refinery in Sudbury, Petro-Canada Lubricants in Mississauga and Imperial Oil's chemical plant in Sarnia - given free allocations.

The New Democrats said giving big industry "a four-year holiday" creates the perception of unfairness, but Environment and Climate Change Minister Glen Murray defended the exemptions.

"The free allocations are to protect Ontario jobs in industries that are competing with jurisdictions without a carbon pricing system, and to recognize industries that have made significant emission reductions already and need time to invest in new technology," said Murray.

Ontario hopes to raise $1.9 billion a year from cap-and-trade - $8 billion by the end of 2020 - and promises to spend all of it on programs that reduce emissions and help businesses and consumers adapt to a low-carbon economy.

There will be subsidies to make homes and industries more energy efficient with solar electric systems, insulation, heat pumps and new windows, plus an existing $277-million program that provides generous rebates for electric vehicles.

"That $8 billion will be going back into the lives and pockets of Ontarians," said Murray.

The Progressive Conservatives want a "revenue-neutral" carbon tax, but leader Patrick Brown says they're still developing the policy and will have it released as part of their campaign platform for the 2018 election.

"If it's really about the environment, it shouldn't be a revenue grab for government," said Brown.

Murray said a carbon tax would cost consumers a lot more than an extra $13 a month for gasoline and home heating.

"That would see gasoline spike by dollars," he warned.

Murray said a carbon tax would also leave homeowners and businesses paying the entire cost of fighting climate change without financial help from the cap-andtrade revenues.

The government insists "there will be no net increase to electricity prices because of cap and trade," but plans to use $1.32 billion of the revenues it generates to offset its impact on electricity bills, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions in the process.

The auditor general, however, said residential electricity bills will still rise by 23 per cent and industrial bills by 14 per cent by 2020, just slightly less than they would have risen without the $1.32 billion from cap and trade.

"The plan claims that the pricing subsidy will result in a three mega tonne estimated GHG (greenhouse gas emissions) reductions in 2020, but without specifying any credible mechanism to achieve these results," wrote Lysyk. "The proposed subsidy will not meet any of the key policy objectives for effective emission reductions."

In 2017, only companies operating in Ontario will be able to participate in the quarterly capand-trade auctions - the first one is expected in March. Starting in 2018, Ontario will join the existing Quebec and California capand-trade market.

Lysyk predicted Ontario would reduce its emissions by only 20 per cent of its 2020 target, with the other 80 per cent being reduced in California and Quebec, which have been holding joint cap-and-trade auctions since 2014.

She said businesses in the province would be more likely to buy allowances rather than pay for the more expensive equipment needed to actually reduce their emissions.

”Ontario businesses will pay approximately $466 million for Quebec and California allowances by the end of 2020, money that will leave the Ontario economy,” she said. “This could rise to $2.2 billion in 2030.”

However, Murray said the plan includes other ways to reduce greenhouse gases, such as increasing the number of electric vehicles on the road and giving financial help to the home-building, forestry and cement sectors to adopt more energy-efficient practices and materials.

“If you didn’t spend the $8 billion and you didn’t do it along the kind of program lines we’re doing, most of those emissions (reductions) would be outside of Ontario,” he said.

The Canadian Taxpayers’ Federation, which calls the plan a “cap-and-trade tax,” said the auditor’s report was proof the program is a failure before it even starts.

“Kathleen Wynne is claiming political credit for emission reductions in California and Quebec and counting those reductions towards her goal because she linked the province into a carbon market,” said CTF Ontario director Christine Van Geyn. “Cap and trade will achieve nothing, at enormous cost.”

How It Affects Consumers
Toronto Sun
Fri Dec 30 2016
Page: A14
Section: News
Source: The Canadian Press

- The system directly involves industry and business, but increased costs for those emitters means that some will get passed onto the consumer. n Gasoline is expected to rise 4.3 cents a litre, which would cost the average driver about $8 more per month. n Monthly natural gas bills will go up by $6.70 for Enbridge customers, $6.17 for Union Gas customers, and $5.68 for NRG customers. Ratepayers won’t see the added cost on their natural gas bills; the Ontario Energy Board has decided it will be included in the “delivery” charge.
- The average household is expected to pay $156 more in 2017 for gasoline and natural gas, which will rise to about $210 in 2019, plus an additional $75 in indirect costs on goods and services that year.
- The environmental commissioner says the increased costs to consumers are likely too small to lead to major shifts toward lower-carbon lifestyles, but they are big enough to hurt low-income people, who generally contribute the least greenhouse gas emissions.
- The government promises to use the expected $1.9 billion a year from cap and trade on green programs to help business and consumers, such as subsidies for home retrofits and rebates for electric vehicles.

Hydro bills to drop 8 per cent in Ontario on Jan. 1
CBC.CA News
Fri Dec 30 2016, 5:00am ET
Section: Toronto
Byline: CBC News

Hydro bills for residential and small business customers in Ontario will drop by eight per cent on New Year’s Day, as the government begins a rebate of the provincial portion of the HST on electricity.

The rebate comes after a year in which hydro bills rose to the top of the political agenda in the province, with polls suggesting the cost of electricity ranks higher than any other issue among voters' concerns.

But Premier Kathleen Wynne admits the discount may not be enough for people struggling the most with their hydro bills, and she's hinting at more relief to come.

- $1,400 hydro bills cripple small business

"For some people it will make enough of a difference, but there are people in the province who are paying a disproportionate amount," Wynne said in a year-end interview with CBC News.

"There's more that we have to do and the minister of energy and I are looking at what that may be."

Wynne indicated the hydro relief will not be across the board, but instead aims to help "the people that are carrying the heaviest burden."

She did not commit to a time frame when it came to future help, but said, "I would certainly like to see something before the budget or by the budget." The budget date is yet to be set, but it is typically tabled in March.

Before taxes, the typical residential customer in Toronto is now paying $142 a month for electricity, while a Hydro One customer in a medium-density rural area is paying $158 a month, according to the Ontario Energy Board's electricity bill calculator.

On Jan. 1, 2016, hydro bills spiked by about $12 a month on average, when the previous Clean Energy Rebate of 10 per cent expired.

Then in April, the Ontario Energy Board approved a rate hike of 2.5 per cent, and said the increase was needed because people consumed less electricity than expected during the previous winter.

Liberals feel political heat over hydro

As bills rose through the hot summer, the Liberals began to feel the political heat over hydro. The party even attributed its byelection loss in Scarborough-Rouge River to anger over electricity prices.

That prompted the Wynne government to promise the HST rebate during the Speech from the Throne in September.

Yet that promise failed to stem the frustration over the cost of electricity, with reports of small businesses and poor families struggling to pay their hydro bills. The anger resonated across the province, with protests and complaints about hydro rates in Hamilton, Sudbury, Windsor and at Queen's Park.

Wynne took the blame in a speech to Ontario Liberal Party members in November.

"People have told me that they've had to choose between paying the electricity bill and buying food or paying rent. That's unacceptable to me," Wynne said.

"Our government made a mistake. It was my mistake. And I'm going to do my best to fix it."

Cap-And-Trade System Kicks Begins In January
Source: CKWS
Dec 29, 2016 6:08 PM (5)

Anchor: Our wallets are about to take another hit .Beginning on January 1st, the Government of

Ontario's new Cap-and-Trade system kicks in and it will mean gasoline and home heating costs will rise.Callie Warren has more.

Sophie Kiwala/ MPP, Kingston & The Islands: It's for our future. It's for our children's future. You know, it' absolutely necessary that we do this.

Reporter: Beginning January 1st, Ontarians will be paying even more to fill up their vehicles and to heat their homes.

MPP Sophie Kiwala: We're going to be looking at an increase of about 4.3 cents per litre for gas and about 5 dollars per month on natural gas.

Reporter: The increases all part of the province's new Cap-and-Trade Plan to combat climate change.

MPP Sophie Kiwala: It's going to cost a little bit right now but if we don't make those necessary change the cost for the future is just not possible to tolerate. We need to be forward thinking, we need to make sure that we do absolutely everything that we can in order to mitigate the damage to the climate.

Unidentified: Generally, I'd say gas and natural gas prices are far too low. I think our use of gas, our use of fossil fuels in general, is unsustainable.. the sooner we stop the better. So, I'm not too upset about price increases.

Reporter: Even though you'll be paying more for gas, the government says they are offering more cash incentives and rebates to those who make green choices — whether it be retrofitting your home, purchasing electric vehicles, or just replacing old energy units with efficient ones.

MPP Sophie Kiwala: We're also going to be looking at the 8% reduction in the provincial part of the tax on energy bills.

Reporter: But not everyone is convinced that this is the right decision or that they will see a return.

Unidentified: It sounds like one of those things where they put it out there temporarily and then they claw it back or discontinue the program — they make it just too difficult to claim money. It ends up not going back to the consumer very much.

Unidentified: It's a bit ridiculous. Ours is one of the highest, I think, out of all the provinces. It's not any warmer here than it is anywhere else, so, it doesn't seem very fair at all.

Reporter: According to the government the initiative will cost the average household an extra 156 dollars a year. But it will generate 1.9 billion dollars per year that will be spent solely on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Transcript captured directly from source. Some typographical errors or omissions are to be expected.

Toronto Hydro customers to see lower electricity bills in 2017
Canada Newswire
2016-12-29

Rate changes, combined with 8% Provincial Rebate will result in decrease on residential hydro bills

TORONTO, Dec. 29, 2016 /CNW/ - On January 1, 2017, the average Toronto Hydro residential customer (consuming 750 kilowatt-hours per month) can expect to see their bills drop by approximately 8.5%, or $13.66 per month. The reduction in electricity charges reflects several changes on the bill, including a decrease in the Delivery Charge, an increase in the Regulatory Charge and the introduction of an 8% Provincial Rebate from the Ontario government.

The Delivery Charge is going down by 5.2% for the average residential customer. Although Toronto Hydro's base distribution rates are increasing, they are being offset by decreases in other components of the Delivery Charge, such as the clearance of a number of variance accounts and decreasing transmission rates.

Average residential customers will also see an increase of 12.7% on the Regulatory Charge. This change reflects an increase in Rural or Remote Electricity Rate Protection, a program to assist rural and remote electricity consumers, and is administered by the Ontario Energy Board.

The Ontario government's 8% Provincial Rebate on before-tax total electricity charges represents the HST portion of the bill. This is expected to save customers an average of $130 each year.

QUICK FACTS

- The Delivery Charge represents the cost of getting power from electricity generators to residential and business customers. The charge includes costs from Toronto Hydro and Hydro One
- The Regulatory Charge represents the costs associated with administering the wholesale electricity system and maintaining the provincial grid. These charges are collected by Toronto Hydro and passed on to the Independent Electricity System Operator
- Changes to the Delivery Charge typically occur annually on January 1
- Toronto Hydro's distribution rates account for approximately 80% of the Delivery Charge and approximately 25% of the total bill
- The Ontario Energy Board approved Toronto Hydro's 2015-2019 rates application to invest approximately $2.5 billion in capital funding to help improve reliability, safeguard against extreme weather events and meet growing demand

QUOTES

"We're pleased that customers will be getting some relief on their bills, thanks to the decrease for the Delivery Charge and the Ontario Government's 8% Provincial Rebate. Toronto Hydro continues to invest in our distribution grid and implement our long-term plan to improve reliability for all Torontonians while balancing rate impacts."

- Anthony Haines, President and CEO, Toronto Hydro

ABOUT TORONTO HYDRO

Toronto Hydro owns and operates an electricity distribution system, which delivers electricity to approximately 759,000 customers located in the city of Toronto. It is the largest municipal electricity distribution company in Canada and distributes approximately 19% of the electricity consumed in the province of Ontario.

Twitter - twitter.com/torontohydro
Facebook - facebook.com/torontohydro
YouTube - youtube.com/torontohydro
Flickr - flickr.com/torontohydro
LinkedIn - Linkedin.com/company/toronto-hydro

FORWARD LOOKING INFORMATION

The Corporation includes forward-looking information in its news release within the meaning of applicable securities laws in Canada ("forward-looking information"). The purpose of the forward-looking information is to provide management's expectations regarding the Corporation's future results of operations, performance, business prospects and opportunities and may not be appropriate for other purposes. All forward-looking information is given pursuant to the "safe harbour" provisions of applicable Canadian securities legislation. The words "will" and similar expressions are often intended to identify forward-looking information, although not all forward-looking information contains these identifying words. The forward-looking information reflects management's current beliefs and is based on information currently available to the Corporation's management.

The forward-looking information in this news release includes, but is not limited to, statements regarding the 2017 Delivery Charge. The statements that make up the forward-looking information are based on assumptions that include, but are not limited to a stable regulatory and legislative environment.

All forward-looking information in the news release is qualified in its entirety by the above cautionary statements and, except as required by law, the Corporation undertakes no obligation to revise or update any forward-looking information as a result of new information, future events or otherwise after the date hereof.

SOURCE Toronto Hydro Corporation

For further information: Tori Gass, Communications and Public Relations, 416-903-4037, media@torontohydro.com; 24-hour media line: 416-903-6845, media@torontohydro.com

RELATED LINKS
http://www.torontohydro.com

Nicholls will continue calling out Liberals; MPP says Tories intend to keep up pressure on cap and trade, soaring hydro prices
The Chatham Daily News
Fri Dec 30 2016
Page: A3
Section: News
Byline: Ellwood Shreve
Source: The Chatham Daily News

Looking toward the start of 2017, Chatham-Kent-Essex MPP Rick Nicholls says Progressive Conservatives intend to keep the pressure on the governing Ontario Liberals over such issues as cap and trade and soaring electricity prices.

In an interview this week, Nicholls said he is particularly critical of the impact that cap and trade will have on natural gas bills, launching a petition that calls on Premier Kathleen Wynne to be transparent about the impact the tax will have on the cost of natural gas by including it as a separate line item on customers' bills.

"Let's call it what it is, it's a tax," he said, citing the fact natural gas prices will increase on Jan. 1.

The MPP has challenged the Liberals to prove him wrong that "this Liberal government lobbied the Ontario Energy Board to make a decision that will force natural gas providers to include the carbon tax in the delivery charges on gas bills, instead of having it as separate line item.

"It's unfair, unjust and unethical," he added.

Nicholls said his staff will also continue to field several calls about the impact of soaring electricity bills, which was "dominate issue" at Queen's Park during 2016.

He said the cost of electricity has got so out of hand many people are asking: "Do I heat or do I eat?" The local MPP said many customers are afraid of the cost to turn a light on.

Similar to the incoming carbon tax, Nicholls said customers, especially those with Hydro One, are being hit with the line on their bills called “global adjustment,” which is part of the delivery charge.

“Now you practise conservation and suddenly the delivery charges or your global adjustment is higher than it was before,” he said.

It’s not just residential customers, Nicholls said, noting businesses, particularly large electricity consumption customers such as manufacturers, are also having a tough time coping with the cost of energy, especially since most operate during peak hours.

“Sarcastically I say, ‘The last business to leave the province turn out the lights,’ if they haven’t already shut off the hydro.”

He said the Liberal government has created this facade of giving people the provincial portion of the HST on hydro bills back, which is an eight per cent reduction on bills.

“That didn’t help businesses at all.”

With provincial election coming in the fall of 2018, Nicholls was asked how the PCs plan to deal with high electricity costs.

“The first thing we need to do is to take a look and just see, exactly, where has this government taken us thus far,” he said.

Nicholls said it is difficult to find out what’s in the renewable energy contracts that the Liberals signed with the industrial wind turbine companies.

He said the Tories will also sit down with Hydro One to work on a plan, “because we’ve got to get those rates lower.”

Nicholls said he is particularly concerned for seniors whose fixed incomes aren’t as quickly as energy prices.

Another top issue is the economy.

Nicholls acknowledges there have been some new jobs created under the Liberals, but added, “compared to what we’ve lost, what we’re gaining is a drop in the bucket.”

He estimates 12,000 to 15,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the region since 2003.

“We want to see manufacturing come back to life,” Nicholls said. “We want to see good-paying jobs as well.”

He noted as the PCs gear up for the 2018 election, the party is holding round-table discussions in various areas such as energy, the economy and economic development, finance, community safety and correctional services - which is his critical portfolio - as well as the environment.

“We want to hear from the people, we want to ensure we have proper consultation, because with proper consultation we can put together a platform that will make Ontario, once again, attractive for investment,” Nicholls said. Another area of focus is healthcare. Nicholls said the untimely death of a local doctor earlier this year, unexpectedly left approximately 2,200 Chatham-Kent residents with a family physician.

The MPP said he personally approached Dr. Eric Hoskins, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, about the situation. He credited the health ministry for determining the area was on the edge of what is deemed a high needs area for family doctors, and for providing that designation.

Noting this comes with added funding to attract physicians, Nicholls said, “so, you’re going to start seeing more family doctors, especially on the family health teams, coming into Chatham.”

Some personal goals Nicholls has when the business of government returns to Queen’s Park for the next session is working to have his two private member’s bills approved.

Before the premier prorogued the Ontario legislature last September, the MPP said he had school bus safety bill on the table to reduce the number of “blow bys” by motorists who pass school buses stopped with their lights flashing.

Nicholls said his bill calls for allowing video evidence, ideally captured from camera mounted on the stop sign arms on school buses, be allowed as evidence in court.

He also wants to see Bill 161 Ground Current Pollution Act passed, noting he has been working with experts from Hydro One, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture as well as farmers that have had stray voltage negatively impact their livestock.

The importance of nuclear power

Toronto Sun
Fri Dec 30 2016
Page: A16
Section: Comment
Source: Toronto Sun

As we write this editorial on Thursday afternoon, nuclear power is providing 61.2% of Ontario‘s electricity needs.

Go to the website of Ontario‘s Independent Electricity System Operator (ieso.ca) any time of any day of any week, and you’ll see the same thing.

Nuclear power is the backbone and the workhorse of Ontario‘s energy system, providing more than half of the province’s electricity needs.

Without nuclear power, Ontario‘s Liberal government would not have been able to eliminate coal-fired electricity from the province’s energy grid two years ago.

Solar, biomass and wind power simply aren’t reliable enough, nor could they provide enough power, to replace coal, which previously supplied 25% of Ontario‘s electricity.

For all their boasting about making Ontario a global leader in so-called green energy, Premier Kathleen Wynne and her predecessor, Dalton McGuinty, in fact replaced coal power with two conventional energy sources - nuclear power and natural gas.

Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, burning at half the carbon dioxide intensity of coal, while nuclear power emits neither greenhouse gases nor pollution. Of course, no form of energy generation is perfect. Nuclear plants are expensive and have chronically gone massively over budget in the construction phase.

The byproduct of nuclear power is radioactive waste, which has to be stored, given that we have no reliable way at present to get rid of it. But the reality is this. Without nuclear power, there would have been no practical way to eliminate the use of coal-fired electricity in Ontario.

While some (not all) environmentalists campaign against nuclear power, as Robert Bryce puts it in his book, Power Hungry, which argues nuclear power and natural gas are the real green energy sources of the future: “If you are anti-carbon dioxide and anti-nuclear, then you are pro-blackout.”

That’s why the most important energy projects in Ontario in the coming years will be the $26 billion refurbishments of the Bruce and Darlington Nuclear stations and a $307 million project to extend the life of the Pickering nuclear plant until 2024.

Keeping a close eye on those projects will be one of the most important jobs of the Ontario government, no matter what its political stripe is, in the coming years.

Elementa assets sold to Florida company

The Sault Star
Fri Dec 30 2016
Page: A1 / Front
Section: News
Byline: Mike Verdone
Source: The Sault Star

The assets of a waste-to-energy company the City of Sault Ste. Marie once pinned its waste management hopes to, have been sold.

Bradam Group LLC announced Thursday it had completed the acquisition of assets that belonged to Elementa Group Inc., including its environmentally friendly Steam Reforming Process (SRP).

Bradam also announced it had secured patents for the SRP in 24 countries and that it was launching plans to develop a global network, the company said in a prepared statement from its headquarters in Fort Myers Fla.

Elementa, a Niagara-on-the-Lake company, went into receivership last December and subsequently the court-appointed receiver took possession of the company’s property and put it on the selling block.

Elementa president Jayson Zwierschke had told The Sault Star earlier this year that the company was in debt between $8 million-$10 million, some of which was considered investment based debts.

Elementa’s gasification process is combustion-free, featuring waterbased chemistry and no incineration. It’s a radical departure from existing incineration and combustion processes.

The gas reformation waste-toenergy company swept into Sault Ste. Marie nearly 10 years ago with plans to build its first commercial facility here and entered into a 10-year agreement to turn the city’s household waste into energy.

The company set up a pilot testing project at the local landfill.

The agreement between the city and Elementa included provisions for termination in various situations, including bankruptcy.

In late 2014 the city sold 15 acres of property on Base Line to an Ontario numbered company for $232,000, which was to be the site of Elementa’s plant. It received full payment for the property.

That land is now considered owned by a third-party company, a separate entity from Elementa Group, and includes a local investor.

Plans also called for the plant to use about 50,000 tonnes of waste annually to create energy and plug into the provincial grid.

The Ontario Power Authority inked a 20-year agreement with Elementa to purchase energy at 10 cents per kW hour.

Bradam Group said Friday it is proceeding with the commercialization of the SRP in North America and internationally.

Joanne Robinson, a spokesperson in Bradam's corporate office, said the company has spoken with city representatives a few times.

"Unfortunately they say they are not in a position at the moment to make a decision," Robinson said Thursday in an email to The Sault Star.

"We are definitely interested and would like to work with the city as it would be a tremendous benefit for both parties, not only recycling the garbage but we have the ability to produce electricity and eliminate/reduce landfills with our technology," she said.

Bradam CTO Robert Willes called the SRP process "an environmental and economic gamechanger."

"The Steam Reforming Process changes the way we dispose of everyday non-recyclable waste by reforming the carbonaceous and organic materials, present in municipal solid waste, industrial waste and bio-solids, into synthesis gas (Syngas). The Syngas provides fuel for production of electricity and can be easily further refined to produce hydrogen and Generation II 'drop in' diesel and jet fuel," Willes said in a prepared statement.

The technology is a combustionfree chemical reduction process with no oxidation yielding a high quality Btu value syngas, making it a radical departure from competing incineration and combustion processes currently on the market.

The process was rigorously tested and vetted by third party experts at Elementa's pilot plant project at the Sault landfill, Bradam noted.

Using the innovative SRP process, 80 per cent of residential and commercial waste that traditionally ends up in landfills can be converted to energy, virtually eliminating CO_2 and CH_4 (methane) emissions, the company said.

A 200,000 ton-per-year clean energy plant will produce enough electricity to supply power to over 20,000 homes as well as extend the life of existing landfills.