Ministry of Energy Top Issues - June 28, 2016

From: "Garand, Joseph (ENERGY)" <joseph.garand@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY All" <energy-all2@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Date: Wed, 28 Jun 2017 07:09:07 -0400

Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

- Natural gas rates set to rise for most customers in Ontario on July 1; Natural gas rates set to rise in Ontario – Canadian Press
- Enbridge Gas Distribution Rates Change July 1 – Marketwired
- Feds Accept New Info; Proposal for planned nuclear-waste bunker near Lake Huron moves a step forward – Canadian Press
- Scientists decry plan for Ontario nuclear-waste site – The Globe and Mail
- First Nations in Ontario Are Grappling With Nuclear Waste on Their Lands | The plan to build a nuclear waste dump on the Great Lakes is inching forward. It still needs consent from the Saugeen Ojibway Nation – Motherboard / Vice
- Nuclear bunker gets CEAA pass; Environment Assessment Agency Satisfied With Plans To Dig Waste Repository – London Free Press / Sarnia Observer / Chatham Daily News
- No nuclear dumping in Great Lakes basin – St. Catharines Standard
- Ontario Energy Board urged to reject Hydro One rate increase application – Ancaster News
- Hydro One's distribution rate application, explained – The Review Newspaper
- Fixing hydro costs in Ontario starts with uncovering the details of government deals: PC Party – North York Mirror
- Timing of Hydro One's rate hike request suspect – Tilsonburg News (OP/ED)
- Ontario needs to stop the Hydro One sale and reduce our surplus power: NDP – City Centre News (OP/ED)
- Reducing hydro bills is the right thing to do: Energy minister – Peterborough Examiner (OP/ED)
- Goderich Hydro Future To Be Decided Next Month – Blackburn News
- Water Wells First Finally Meeting MOE Officials – Blackburn News
- Fedeli will speak at OEB hearing – Rock 1019
- Power line fault blamed for outage that plunged Scugog into darkness – Port Perry Star

Natural gas rates set to rise for most customers in Ontario on July 1; Natural gas rates set to rise in Ontario
Canadian Press
Tue Jun 27 2017
Section: Ontario

TORONTO - Natural gas rates are going up July 1 for most customers in Ontario.

The Ontario Energy Board approved new rates for Enbridge, Natural Resource Gas Ltd. and Union Gas.

The typical residential customer of Enbridge will see their bills rise by about $36 per year.

The average Natural Resource Gas customer will pay about $25 more per year.

Average Union Gas customers in the South and North East regions will pay about $40 more a year.

Meanwhile, the typical Union Gas customer in the North West region will see their bill decrease slightly, by about $1.71 per year.

Enbridge Gas Distribution Rates Change July 1
Marketwired
Tue Jun 27 2017

TORONTO, ONTARIO—(Marketwired - June 27, 2017) - Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. (Enbridge) has received approval from the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) for new rates, effective July 1, 2017. Typical residential customers* who buy their gas supply from Enbridge will see a total bill increase of about four per cent, or $36 a year. As a result, their total annual bill will be about $944.

The increase is due to higher natural gas prices in North America and an increase to the Cost Adjustment. The Cost Adjustment reflects the difference between forecast costs and actual costs from the past twelve months.

"Natural gas continues to provide great value to our customers, with the typical customer's total annual bill still less than it was 10 years ago," says Kerry Lakatos-Hayward, Director of Energy Supply and Gas Storage at Enbridge.

"Natural gas remains the most affordable and reliable choice for home and water heating in Ontario," added Lakatos-Hayward. "Outages rarely happen, and over the past five years, natural gas has been on average over 65 per cent less expensive than electricity and oil."**

Quarterly Rate Review

Enbridge submits rate adjustment applications every three months to reflect changes in the market price of natural gas and transportation services. The applications are reviewed and approved by the OEB.

Enbridge does not earn a profit on the price of natural gas. Gas supply costs are passed through to customers without any mark-up. Any difference between forecast costs and actual prices is either collected from or returned to customers through a Cost Adjustment.

For more information on how natural gas rates are set, a video is available at enbridgegas.com/rates.

Options to help manage energy bills:

Customers can find tips to manage their energy use and current rebate and incentive programs at enbridgegas.com/energyefficiency. For qualifying customers: The OEB's Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) (enbridgegas.com/LEAP) provides emergency financial assistance towards past due energy bills. The Home Winterproofing Program helps residential customers in financial need with free home energy efficiency improvements. Qualifying customers may have free energy efficiency improvements, such as insulation, installed to reduce their energy

costs. Learn more at enbridgegas.com/winterproofing. Customers who are having trouble paying their bills should call Enbridge as soon as possible to set up payment arrangements.

The OEB‘s Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) (enbridgegas.com/LEAP) provides emergency financial assistance towards past due energy bills. The Home Winterproofing Program helps residential customers in financial need with free home energy efficiency improvements. Qualifying customers may have free energy efficiency improvements, such as insulation, installed to reduce their energy costs. Learn more at enbridgegas.com/winterproofing.

About Enbridge Gas Distribution

Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. has a more than 165-year history and is Canada's largest natural gas distribution company. It is owned by Enbridge Inc., a Canadian-based leader in energy transportation and distribution, and has ranked as one of the Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations for the past eight years. Enbridge Gas Distribution distributes natural gas to over two million customers in Ontario.

For more information, visit www.enbridgegas.com or follow us on Twitter @EnbridgeGas.

*Calculations are based on the assumption that typical residential customers, who buy their gas supply and transportation from Enbridge, use about 2,400 cubic metres of natural gas a year for home and water heating.

**Natural gas rates are based on Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc.‘s residential rates effective July 1, 2017. Electricity rates are based on Toronto Hydro's Ontario Energy Board approved rates up to and including those effective July 1, 2017. Oil prices are based on publicly posted Statistics Canada historical prices up to and including rates available as of May 2017. Costs have been calculated for the equivalent energy consumed by a typical residential customer and include all service, delivery and energy charges. HST is not included.

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Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc.

Feds Accept New Info; Proposal for planned nuclear-waste bunker near Lake Huron moves a step forward

Simcoe Reformer
Wed Jun 28 2017
Page: B2
Section: Ontario News
Byline: Colin Perkel
Source: The Canadian Press

A proposal to bury tonnes of radioactive waste in a bunker near Lake Huron has moved a step toward a decision on whether the multibillion-dollar project can proceed. federal authorities say they are satisfied ontario Power Generation has provided additional information they had asked for about the project. in a notice to interested parties this week, the canadian environmental assessment agency said it would now begin drafting a report to environment minister catherine mcKenna, who will have final say over the deep geologic repository. the agency will also update any conditions it thinks should be imposed if the plan gets the go-ahead. the agency said the public will get a chance to comment on both the draft and any conditions before mcKenna makes her decision, now expected by the end of the year. it also said it plans to have its draft report available sometime this summer. the contentious proposal, years in development, has drawn the ire of scores of communities that argue it is irresponsible to bury the low-and mid-level nuclear waste at the Bruce nuclear power plant near Kincardine, ont. they worry about the danger the material - hazardous for thousands of years - could pose to Great Lakes drinking water. in 2015, an independent joint review panel concluded the Bruce site was appropriate, putting the ball in the federal government's court. However, ottawa has repeatedly delayed making any decisions.

Last year, the agency requested information on other possible sites to bury the waste but was dissatisfied with oPG's initial response and requested further information. the utility provided the additional data last month. oPG, which insists the proposal is safe and the best longterm storage option, said tuesday the new information shows that building a storage facility elsewhere in ontario would be more damaging to the environment, drive costs significantly higher, and cause years of delay - without offering any safety benefits. critics, however, are far from persuaded the utility has provided meaningful information to the government. in a letter to the agency, the group sos Great Lakes says the oPG report contains information that is wrong, vague and dismissive of the risks. the group also repeats its opposition to what it calls a "dangerous and deeply flawed" project, and criticizes the "political process" involved in getting Kincardine in midwestern ontario to act as a "willing host."

"We find that oPG has in no way strengthened their case," the letter states. "the fundamental flaws are still there in the additional information." currently projected to cost about $2.4 billion, the proposal calls for burying hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of radioactive waste 680 metres below ground in a rock bunker located about 1.2 kilometres from Lake Huron. oPG argues the rock is geologically stable and would provide a hermetic seal to prevent any radioactivity reaching the lake for tens of thousands of years.

However, communities and environmental groups on both sides of the canada-u.s. border argue such a facility could threaten drinking water for millions of people. several american politicians have called on both the canadian and american governments to intervene to stop the project.

Edition: Final
Length: 514 words
Illustration: The Associated Press Files / This Nov. 1, 2013 photo shows rows of chambers holding intermediate-level radioactive waste in shallow pits at the Bruce Power nuclear complex near Kincardine, Ont. A proposal to bury tonnes of radioactive waste in a bunker near Lake Huron has moved a step toward a decision on whether the multibilliondollar project can proceed.;
Idnumber: 276494649
Tone: Negative
Reach: 8278
Ad Value: $670

Scientists decry plan for Ontario nuclear-waste site
The Globe and Mail
2017-06-28
Byline: SHAWN MCCARTHY - GLOBAL ENERGY REPORTER
Original Web Location
Former AECL scientists are condemning a plan to build a nuclear waste facility at the Chalk River site on the Ottawa River, saying it would be ill-equipped to handle the level of radioactive material planned for it.
The government-owned, private sector-operated Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) is proposing to build a $325-million facility to dispose of a large quantity of low- and intermediate-level waste generated from the demolition of aging buildings and other contaminated material generated over the past 65 years.
But several former senior scientists who worked there say the CNL proposal is seriously flawed and represents a threat to human health and the environment.
In 2015, the Canadian National Energy Alliance consortium won a contract to manage the Chalk River laboratories. The group includes SNC-Lavalin Group Inc. and U.S. engineering giants, CH2M Hill Inc. and Fluor Corp.
The former Conservative government split up the country's nuclear flagship, Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., selling its commercial business to SNC-Lavalin and retaining its research operations, including Chalk River, in CNL.
Ottawa is financing a $1.2-billion, 10-year effort to transform the aging Chalk River site, where the Candu reactor was developed. CNL is constructing some new facilities and demolishing older buildings. The company is also managing the site's longer-term decommissioning.
The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) is currently reviewing CNL's plan for the nuclear waste disposal facility that would be a five-storey-high, dome-like structure and would hold one million cubic metres of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste. The material is generated and stored on site, and the new facility is meant to provide permanent disposal.
David Winfield, a former senior scientist in safety management at AECL, said international

standards suggest permanent disposal of intermediate-level radioactive waste should be done in vaults built deep underground in impermeable rock.
“The proposed design seems not to be appropriate to handle that level of waste,” Mr. Winfield said in an interview Tuesday. In addition to his role at AECL, Mr. Winfield has done consulting work on safety issues for the International Atomic Energy Agency.
He also worries CNL is locating the disposal facility in a swampy area of the sprawling Chalk River site, which could cause material to leach from it.
Another former AECL senior scientist, William Turner, said the new management appears to be rushing the plan in order to have it operational by 2020, and worries they are driven by financial considerations, including performance bonuses. “If this isn’t done right, they will walk away with pockets full of money and Canadians will be left with an enormous bill,” Mr. Turner said in an interview.
In a submission to the regulator last month, a former AECL director of safety engineering and licensing said CNL’s proposal “employs inadequate technology and is problematically located.”
“The proposal does not meet regulatory requirements with respect to the health and safety of persons and the protection of the environment,” Dr. Robert Walker said in a lengthy critique of the plan.
CNL president Mark Lesinski defended the company’s proposal, saying the near-surface facility will provide “safe and permanent disposal” of radioactive materials.
In a statement provided to The Globe and Mail, Mr. Lesinski said the company carried out extensive geotechnical and hydro-geological tests to ensure the location was the best place to put it.
The site will primarily contain low-level radioactive waste – which requires no shielding for exposure – while more dangerous intermediate-level waste will represent no more than 1 per cent of the total material, he said.
“As proponent/licensee, CNL must demonstrate to the regulator (CNSC) that inclusion of these limited quantities of [intermediate level waste] is safe,” Mr. Lesinski said.

First Nations in Ontario Are Grappling With Nuclear Waste on Their Lands | The plan to build a nuclear waste dump on the Great Lakes is inching forward. It still needs consent from the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.
Motherboard
2017-06-27
Byline: KATE LUNAU

Original Web Location
The traditional territories of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) encompass some of the most picturesque places in Ontario—the Bruce Peninsula, which stretches out into the waters of Lake Huron, and the green lands surrounding it, dotted by farms and cottages.
These lands also include one of the major nuclear hubs in Canada: Bruce Power, which sits on the SON's traditional territories. First Nations here haven't always had a good relationship with Ontario Power Generation (OPG), the Crown corporation that owns the Bruce. Now the two are working together, partly out of necessity—OPG wants to bury radioactive waste on SON lands, in an underground bunker where it could stay for up to a million years. But OPG has also agreed not to proceed with the plan without the Nations' support.
he proposed nuclear bunker, which would be near the town of Kincardine, Ontario (population 11,000), has spurred controversy among environmentalists who worry about its proximity to the water: It would be about one kilometrefrom Lake Huron. Even so, OPG scientists say this would be the safest way to store radioactive waste in the long-term, and the plan is slowly working its way toward federal approval.
On Monday, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) said it's satisfied with OPG's most recent submissions. It will now prepare a draft report that, after a period of public consultation, will make its way the federal Environment Minister. According to OPG, a final decision on the dump—first proposed more than a decade ago—could come later this year.
But it doesn't just hinge on them. In a process described to me as unique in Canada, maybe the world, the SON—which includes Saugeen First Nation and the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, and has about 5,000 members—is weighing whether to give their own consent to OPG's plan, and say there's no specific timeline for how long that will take.
"We have a waste problem in our territory," Randall Kahgee, a lawyer and former Chief of the Saugeen First Nation, told me over the phone. "We didn't ask for it, we didn't create it, but we must be part of shaping the solution. That doesn't mean turning your back on it and kicking it down the road for the next generation to tackle."
Ontario gets about 60 percent of its electricity from nuclear power, and that creates a lot of radioactive waste. Right now, all of it is stashed at or near the surface of the Earth, where it's

potentially vulnerable to weather and other hazards. According to OPG, which owns Ontario's four nuclear reactors, the safest place for nuclear waste is deep underground, where it can ideally remain undisturbed for hundreds of thousands of years. The Deep Geological Repository, as OPG calls it, would put the waste 680 meters (2,230 feet) underground.
The SON have lived on these lands "for as long as our history remembers," notes a welcome message posted to their website. In my conversations with Kahgee, he emphasized that members are taking the issue extremely seriously, as it will impact their lands and waters over such an incredibly long timescale. "It's a forever project," he said.
Read More: The Plan to Build a Million-Year Nuclear Waste Dump on the Great Lakes
The proposed nuclear vault near Kincardine would hold OPG's low- and intermediate-level nuclear waste, stuff like irradiated mop heads and tools. (There's a separate plan in the works for Canada's high-level waste—irradiated fuel.) "If the community doesn't support it, then we would not proceed with the project," Lise Morton, OPG's vice president of nuclear waste management, told me. As for what form this support will take, "it's up to [SON] to determine what community support means," she said. "It's part of the discussion."
For Kahgee, OPG's promise not to proceed without the SON's consent—which was made explicit in a letter in 2013—followed 50 years of the nuclear industry excluding Indigenous peoples from decision-making, dating back to when the sites were first built. "In terms of our relationship [with OPG], it hasn't always been good," he said. "That exclusion has seen very little benefit to the communities, and has left us with a long list of concerns and fears," including about the impacts of nuclear power on health and the environment, he said.
The community is holding information sessions with names like "Nuclear 101," working toward a consensus around the proposed repository. As for whether OPG might grant certain concessions or benefits to the SON, Morton said that is part of the discussion. A spokesperson for CEAA, meanwhile, noted that the views of the SON are included in the public registry and will be factored into the government's final decision on whether to green-light it. Canada is consulting with the SON and other affected Indigenous groups around the repository, the CEAA said.
I asked Kahgee what he's heard from other members of the SON so far. "The first reactions to this are very strong," he said. "There's a lot of concern in terms of proximity to the water. The second biggest issue that's consistently coming up is alternatives. And not only alternative sites," he continued, but alternative energy sources, including wind and solar.
"Beyond science and technology aspects, we have to consider what it fundamentally means for the territory and our relationship with it," Kahgee explained. If the SON decides to go ahead with the project, the waste will be part of their lands and legacy. "Waste stays in the ground forever," he said. "It will become part of the cosmology of our people."

Nuclear bunker gets CEAA pass; Environment Assessment Agency Satisfied With Plans To Dig Waste Repository
London Free Press
Wed Jun 28 2017
Page: A5
Section: Region
Byline: Dan Brown And Randy Richmond
Source: With files from The Canadian Press

Ontario's electricity distributor has moved another step closer to storing low-and intermediatelevel nuclear waste near the giant Bruce Power plant in southwestern Ontario.

The Canadian environment assessment agency announced it is satisfied Ontario Power Generation answered remaining questions about the proposal, the OPG said Tuesday.

The agency will now present a draft report with recommendations for public comment, to be followed eventually by a final recommendation to federal environment Minister Catherine McKenna, OPG spokesperson Kevin Powers said.

"We expect the minister's decision before the end of 2017," he said.

neither environment Minister Catherine McKenna nor her ministry would provide comment Tuesday, referring questions to the environmental assessment agency.

OPG has proposed burying the hazardous waste in a deep geologic repository 1.2 kilometres from Lake Huron near Kincardine at the Bruce Power site in a bunker that would be as deep as the Cn Tower is tall.

The proposal has drawn considerable opposition from community leaders on both sides of the border and environmentalists. sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley is a longtime opponent of the project.

He said the approval agencies are going through are what he calls the “bureacratic shuffle,” which he describes as a “well-known dance where the die is cast for approval, but by putting conditions on an approval” what actually is being sought is political cover.

“at the end, the (Justin) Trudeau government will have to make the decision. If it is for approval for the (repository), then they will have to live with the consequences of the decision,” he said.

Bradley believes the bunker will be a major issue, along with the Great Lakes, in the next federal election, as well as in the provincial election slated for next June.

“When a government puts at risk the drinking water of 40 million Canadians and americans with widespread political opposition on both sides of the border, the political risk is high and, more importantly, so is the environmental risk,” he said.

“If approved, future generations will curse this decision,” he added. “There are alternatives, but the nuclear industry likes to make money, not spend it.”

In april, the Canadian environmental assessment agency sent the OPG a series of questions to answer, including about emissions, construction, gas pressure, greenhouse gases and seismic factors. an independent joint review panel concluded in 2015 that the Bruce site is appropriate and the environment and lake will be protected, the OPG noted.

Other critics are far from persuaded the utility has provided meaningful information to the government.

In a letter to the agency, the group sOs Great Lakes says the OPG report contains information that is wrong, vague and dismissive of the risks. The group also repeats its opposition to what it calls a “dangerous and deeply flawed” project, and criticizes the “political process” involved in getting Kincardine, in midwestern Ontario, to act as a “willing host.”

“We find that OPG has in no way strengthened their case,” the letter states. “The fundamental flaws are still there in the additional information.”

Currently projected to cost about $2.4 billion, the proposal calls for burying hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of radioactive waste 680 metres below ground in a rock bunker located about 1.2 kilometres from Lake Huron.

OPG argues the rock is geologically stable and would provide a hermetic seal to prevent any radioactivity reaching the lake for tens of thousands of years.

However, communities and environmental groups on both sides of the Canada-u.s. border argue such a facility could threaten drinking water for millions of people. several american politicians have called on both the Canadian and american governments to intervene to stop the project.

The geologic repository Would take in mid-and low-level nuclear waste from ontario’s nuclear power stations.

Would be in a vault 680 metres underground, in dense limestone stable for 450 million years.

Would be located at Bruce nuclear complex near Kincardine, 1.2 kilometres from Lake huron.

No nuclear dumping in Great Lakes basin
St. Catharines Standard
2017-06-27
Byline:
[Original Web Location]()
St. Catharines city council is urging upper-tier governments to find solutions to plans to bury nuclear waste in the Great Lakes basin.
Councillors unanimously supported a motion, Monday, by St. Patrick’s Coun. Mat Siscoe, asking

the federal and provincial governments to reject an Ontario Power Generation proposal to build a repository for radioactive nuclear waste near the Great Lakes.
"Obviously this has been a concern for sometime," Siscoe said. "I know I've been contacted by several residents about this specific issue."
He said his motion "also indicates a recognition that there is a responsibility to seek alternatives to this."
"Ontario is a nuclear power user and I think this is a good balance between recognizing the importance of the ecosystem around the Great Lakes basin, while also recognizing there is a need to take responsibility for the decisions we make as a province," his motion said.

Ontario Energy Board urged to reject Hydro One rate increase application
Ancaster News
Tue Jun 27 2017
Page: 1
Section: News

Ontario Hydro officials felt the shock and anger of local residents venting against potentially higher electricity bills next year.

The Ontario Energy Board hosted one of a number of community meetings around the province at the Ancaster Rotary Centre June 22. Hydro One's proposed five-year rate application to the board, if approved, will increase distribution charges from $51.02 in 2017 to $62.77 in 2022. About 20 people attended the meeting, along with nearly an equal number of Hydro One officials and board representatives.

"When is it going to stop?" said Sarah Warry-Polijanski, organizer of the Hamiltonians Against High Hydro Rate rallies, who is also seeking to become the Hamilton Mountain provincial Tory candidate. "I'm only asking that these rate increases don't go through. It is unfair to residents, to taxpayers."

Ben Levitt, Progressive Conservative provincial candidate for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, also urged the Ontario Energy Board to reject Hydro One's rate application.

He said people are already "struggling" with hydro bills, with some residents faced with the choice of putting food on the table or paying their hydro bill.

"Enough is enough," said Levitt. "Plain and simple, our community can't afford this and the people in Ontario can't afford this."

Warry-Polijanski and Levitt both attacked Hydro One's executives for earning about $11 million in salaries and bonuses, including Hydro One's chief executive Officer Mayo Schmidt, who received $859,000 in salary, plus bonuses that totalled $4.5 million in 2016. They said utility officials in other provinces earn considerably less.

Hydro officials defended the salaries, saying the proposed rate increases are for replacing and upgrading aging hydro infrastructure. They said about 80 per cent of the compensation is linked to the company improving its customer service, operational efficiency and reliability.

Oded Hubert, vice-president of regulatory affairs for Hydro One, said the priorities for Hydro One is to "keep costs down" and provide reliable service at current service levels.

The application includes a rate increase in 2018 of $2.79 per month, $2.49 per month in 2019, $2.31 per month in 2020, $1.95 per month in 2021 and $2.23 per month in 2022.

Hubert said in the first year, the $2.79 rate increase would be offset by the Ontario government's Fair Hydro Plan, which is proposing to cut on average homeowners' bills by 25 per cent, while Hydro One customers, who are predominately in rural areas, would see an average cut of about 31 per cent.

But there would still be a $1.95 increase in 2018 to a homeowner's bill because of what he said was the "flow through transmission costs." So in 2018, the average homeowner's bill would be $124 per month from $177 because of the Liberals' hydro plan.

Hubert said Hydro One, which serves 1.3 million customers, including in the rural parts of Ancaster, Glanbrook, parts of upper Stoney Creek and Flamborough, said the company plans to invest about $1.2 million to expand and upgrade the distribution system in 2018. Some of those capital investments include improving Sydenham distribution lines, constructing new lines from Nebo and Dundas transmission stations, upgrading the Ancaster West distribution station, refurbishing lines in Dundas and improving stations in Duff and Troy.

Community meetings have also been held in Sudbury, Owen Sound, Rockland and Dryden.

No hearing date has been scheduled for Hydro One's application, filed March 31, 2017. But there has already been over 150 letters of comment or intervention submitted, including from the City of Hamilton, on the application.

Fixing hydro costs in Ontario starts with uncovering the details of government deals: PC Party
North York Mirror | Section: Opinion | Page: 1
2017-06-28
Byline:

"How do we make Ontario electricity more affordable for residents and business owners?"

When Sir Adam Beck lit up that first street sign that read 'For the People' he made it pretty clear who he thought the electricity system was supposed to serve.

You wouldn't believe the stories that I get in my office. Just this month, I had one couple contact me to let me know that they had to take out another mortgage on their house.
Another resorted to technology that Sir Adam would have recognized. They turned off their electric heat and put in a wood stove.

Such is the state of the electricity crisis in Ontario. Earlier this week a senior official in Ontario's Liberal government told the CBC "We created a bit of a monster" when they described the surging electricity costs in Ontario. That might qualify as the understatement of the year.

Somewhere along the line, we stopped viewing the consumer as the person flipping a light switch and started seeing it as the government agency signing the power contract.

And now neither can afford the system.

When we talk about where we go from here, it's important to understand that your answer is only as good as your information. And this Liberal government hasn't been all that forthcoming with information. We don't know the terms of the deals that were signed. We don't know what clauses may be available to future governments or what companies were allowed to proceed with their projects even though they had violated the terms of their deal.

So, the first thing we have to do is commit to picking through each of these contracts to see if the terms were violated, if the deadlines were adhered to or, to put it simply, if there's a way out.
In my own riding of Prince Edward-Hastings, I've watched power companies ask for and get extensions from the government that drag the project out years beyond what was envisioned by the original deal. That's not something you do if you're on the side of the people paying hydro bills. It's something you do if you're on the side of the people sending them.

We also have to stop the Hydro One sale. According to the Auditor General, the company has a $4.4 billion transmission infrastructure deficit. The Auditor also pointed out that the result of this infrastructure deficit has been blackouts that are 24 per cent more frequent. Hydro One stockholders aren't paying to improve transmission. Guess who will end up paying?

That's where we have to start. But the reality is, the Liberals have such a hold on the information, we don't know how bad the monster they admit they've created actually is.

Todd Smith is the PC Energy Critic and MPP for Prince Edward-Hastings.

READ MORE: Cutting hydro bills by 25 per cent is a fair and lasting plan, says premier Wynne

READ MORE: Ontario needs to stop the Hydro One sale and reduce our surplus power: NDP

- *** Edition : Final**

Hydro One’s distribution rate application, explained
The Review Newspaper
2017-06-27
Byline: Francis Tessier-Burns
Original Web Location
The Ontario Energy Board held a public consultation session last week in Rockland, regarding Hydro One’s application to up its delivery rates over the next five years.
At the meeting, Oded Hubert, the vice president of Regulatory Affairs for Hydro One, *presented* why the utility’s Distribution Plan.
The plan highlights necessary infrastructure upgrades and future investments for increased productivity.
For example, after identifying about 400,000 poles—of the 1.6 million owned by Hydro One—that will reach the end of their service life within the next five years, the plan indicates only about 72,000 will be replaced within the time frame relevant to the application, so between 2018 and 2022, for a total cost of $579 million.
That’s nearly $8,050 per pole.
According to Hubert, a large part of the infrastructure was installed in the 1950s and 1960s and now “requires attention,” since the average life of a power pole is 62 years.
Hélène Dutrisac asked why this wasn’t taken into account before now.
“Yes, we did know there would be a bulge, but until now the work program did not require massive investment, now is the time we need to step up the investment,” said Hubert.
Also over the next five years, Hydro One wants refurbish an average of 15 stations per year, for a total of $148 million, about $1.97 million per station.
When it comes to maintenance, the presentation showed it will cost about $150 million to maintain 12,750 kilometres of “rights-of-way,” and $78 million for an estimated 42,645 trouble calls in 2018 alone.
To fund these projects, the utility application would increase the base distribution charge from $51.02 per month in 2017 to $62.77 per month in 2022. This is according to the *OEB’s presentation* at the public meeting.
Fair Hydro Plan
Earlier this year, the province approved the Fair Hydro Act, which will drop hydro prices next month.
On average the Act is said to drop overall hydro bills by about 25 per cent for an average consumer, using about 750 kWh per month.
But that cut will *likely lead* to increased costs down the line.
Both Hubert and Kristi Sebalj, the registrar and senior legal counsel for the OEB, said they received many messages asking why Hydro One was upping its prices
The Fair Hydro Act introduces distribution rate protection. In the case of Hydro One, that protection applies to R2 and R1 customers.
Under the protection, the OEB sets a maximum monthly base distribution charge, which is says is a decrease for most eligible customers.
On June 22, the OEB set the maximum monthly base charge at $36.43, which will kick in on July 1 and will remain until changed by the OEB.
When it comes to Hydro One’s application, Sebalj said the OEB is still currently collecting customer input.

Timing of Hydro One's rate hike request suspect
Tillsonburg News
Wed Jun 28 2017
Page: A4
Section: Opinion
Byline: Jim Merriam
Source: Tillsonburg News

If Hydro One weren’t Hydro One, it would be beyond belief that the utility would have the audacity to seek a hike in distribution rates in 2017.

In the recent past, the utility and the provincial government have endured withering attacks over the costs of electricity in Ontario.

The protests have covered power poverty in the province, indefensible prices for delivery even when no power is used, huge salaries for the top dogs at Hydro One, the unconscionable sell-off

of portions of the utility by Premier Kathleen Wynne's government to private interests.

In the face of all that, Hydro One is seeking a hike in distribution rates.

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB)is holding hearings on the rate request and it's here that things get weird.

In a June 6 new release from Hydro One, in response to notices to customers sent by the OEB, the utility says it's "committed to reducing costs and increasing the company's productivity and efficiency. The rate application reflects this commitment and is based on a plan that includes making only the necessary improvements to ensure the reliable supply of electricity."

Translation: We want you to pay more so we can deliver cheaper power sometime in the future. We're from Hydro One and we're here to help. Trust us.

In reality, the utility is working on improving profits by increasing costs to its customers. Once again, we're off down the rabbit hole.

However, an Ontario Energy Board (OEB) spokesperson is quoted as saying: "Any amounts approved by the OEB will not impact the distribution line of the bill of most Hydro One customers, after the Fair Hydro Act credits and changes are applied."

Translation: The government has a plan to borrow from your grandchildren to make sure you pay less for electricity today. So, we are free to approve a higher rate, because you won't notice it. Overall, you'll still pay less. Trust us.

Where is the entrance to that rabbit hole again? The comments from the OEB came in answer to questions about whether the public consultations really meant anything or if they were just window dressing, with decisions already made.

The spokesperson said customer input, intervenors and OEB staff members each have great weight when considering if a requested rate increase is reasonable.

Part of the exercise is to assure customers "there's a regulator that's watching out for them as well."

In the real world, any regulator worth the name would just say no to a rate hike request in 2017. I'm just saying.

We all know that the government's so-called Fair Hydro Act should be renamed the Hydro Credit Card Act, because the piper will have to be paid. And the bill will come due some years down the road.

Both Hydro One and the OEB seem to hope we ignore the non-partisan provincial financial accountability officer. That report says the net result of the Fair Hydro Act will mean future ratepayers will have to come up with an additional $21 billion to play catch up.

So here we have two entities supported by the public purse claiming consumers won't feel jacked up prices, because the government is already pretending to bring prices down.

Can anyone say, collusion?

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Ontario needs to stop the Hydro One sale and reduce our surplus power: NDP
City Centre Mirror
Tue Jun 27 2017
Page: 1
Section: Opinion

How do we make Ontario electricity more affordable for residents and business owners?

Hydro bills have gone up 100 per cent since 2006. This question now comes up constantly: what

can we do about these huge charges?

When we ask how we can make electricity more affordable, we first have to ask how it became unaffordable in the first place.

Some blame green power for the high bills. Not true. Green power is about 12 per cent of our power bills, which have gone up 100 per cent in a decade.

In reality, the sell-off to private companies of the electricity system, piece by piece, is the fundamental problem. It started with the Conservatives in the late 1990s, and the Liberals are continuing the process. That adding of profit into our hydro bills has increased the cost of power without giving us any benefit. At the same time, because of the way these new private power contracts are written, we are stuck paying guaranteed profit for power plants whether we need them or not. Right now, Ontario generates more power than we can use, about $2 billion a year worth of surplus power that we sell to Quebec and New York at a deep - 75 per cent - discount. In fact, many times we have to pay them to take our power.

So, the answer to how we deal with the problem encompasses three actions. We need to stop selling off the system. We need to reduce all this surplus power. And, when we do need more power we need to invest in low-cost options like conservation for peoples' homes and businesses to cut their power use, and new renewable power which has been dropping sharply in price.

That means stopping the sell-off of Hydro One, which has been in public hands for over a century. Hydro One provides the web of high-voltage power lines that holds the whole system together. A drive to higher profits for the investors will mean higher bills for all of us. It also means that when private contracts for power plants run out we need to end the contracts if we don't need the power. Right now quite a few gas power plant contracts are coming to the end of their term. Generally speaking, we don't need them and should pull the plug.

Recently the NDP put out a plan to reduce power costs by ending the privatization of the system. We also called for an end to time-of-use pricing that drives bills up. For many people time-of-use pricing increases their costs by about 10 per cent of their bill without actually making the electricity system work better. For young parents or seniors at home through the day, or for small businesses, this could make a real difference in their expenses.

The Liberal government has proposed to cut bills by borrowing tens of billions of dollars to buy down hydro bills with all of us paying for this later. It is a very pricey solution.

Peter Tabuns is the NDP energy critic and MPP for Toronto-Danforth.

READ MORE: Cutting hydro bills by 25 per cent is a fair and lasting plan, says premier Wynne

READ MORE: Fixing hydro costs in Ontario starts with uncovering the details of government deals: PC Party

Reducing hydro bills is the right thing to do: Energy minister
Peterborough Examiner
2017-06-27
Byline: GLENN THIBEAULT/Minister of Energy

[Original Web Location]
Hydro bills are coming down in Ontario, and here's why it's the right thing to do

When we introduced Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan in March, our government committed to fundamentally restructuring the system to deliver the biggest cut to electricity rates in Ontario's history.

I'm happy to say that the Fair Hydro Plan is now a reality. And I believe this is the fairer way forward.

This past week the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) announced it had taken the final steps to lower electricity prices by an average of 25 per cent for all residential consumers in the province. As

many as half a million small businesses and farms will also benefit.

The OEB, the province's independent body that sets rates, lowered bills in response to the Fair Hydro Act, 2017, which passed in the Ontario Legislature on May 31. All Progressive Conservative and NDP MPPs in attendance that day opposed our plan to bring down electricity rates and voted against the Fair Hydro Plan.

Relief through the Fair Hydro Plan is immediate. We also designed these reductions to last, by holding electricity rates to inflation for four years. In addition, we're updating our Long-term Energy Plan, which will continue our trend of taking costs out of the electricity system and making it more affordable for ratepayers.

Fifteen years ago, our electricity system had become unreliable, the victim of years of neglect by governments of all stripes, which culminated in the unforgettable blackout of 2003. We had to reinvest in our system, and that came at a cost to ratepayers. But the fact is electricity bills were becoming unaffordable for too many people. Premier Wynne and I spoke to people across the province about their electricity bills, hearing how they were struggling with rising payments.

In September, 2016 we announced an eight per cent rate reduction, equivalent to the provincial portion of the HST. But that wasn't enough. People's bills were still increasing too much, too fast. As we continued to listen to peoples' concerns it became clear that we needed to bring even more relief, and it had to apply to everyone in the province, which led to our Fair Hydro Plan. We heard that the most vulnerable among us needed even more support. That's why we expanded the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP), providing 50 per cent more support in the form of monthly credits for people with low incomes. Today, more households are eligible for the program than ever before.

People in rural and Northern communities also pay more for electricity, because it takes more infrastructure to deliver electricity to where they live. Today, the Rural or Remote Rate Protection program has been expanded to help about 800,000 households - cutting electricity bills by 40 to 50 per cent for eligible customers, effective July 1.

These changes to the way we pay for electricity are fairer, and they are lasting. We can afford them because of Ontario's strengthening economy, which is the fastest growing in Canada, and we need them to ensure the growth in our economy translates to more opportunity and security for people right across Ontario. There is no better way to use the province's recently balanced budget than by giving everyone the break they need on their hydro bills. It's the right thing to do for Ontario and the fair thing to do for your family.

Sudbury MPP Glenn Thibeault is Ontario's minister of energy.

Goderich Hydro Future To Be Decided Next Month
Blackburnnews.com
2017-06-28
Byline: BOB MONTGOMERY
[Original Web Location]
A decision on a merger of Goderich Hydro with Erie-Thames Hydro has been deferred by Goderich council until it’s July 17th meeting.
Mayor Kevin Morrison says there was a lot of information packed into an hour-long presentation at Monday night’s meeting, and council wants more time to digest that information.
Morrison says there’s no appetite for selling Goderich Hydro, and standing alone isn’t reasonable either since the Province has already shrunk the number of stand-alone distribution companies from over 300 to about 65.
They could continue to partner with Erie-Thames or they could merge, and at this point a merger appears to be the most advantageous to Goderich residents.
Morrison says it would help to be part of a bigger organization like Erie-Thames and would also keep the control of rates out of the hands of the Province.
The Mayor adds Goderich Hydro is a huge asset to the town so this decision is one of the biggest this council will make and they want to make sure it’s the right one.

Water Wells First Finally Meeting MOE Officials
Blackburnnews.com
2017-06-28
Byline: PAUL PEDRO

Original Web Location
After months of trying to meet with the Ministry of Environment to discuss pile driving of wind towers contaminating local well water, they finally get a chance to ask face to face questions in Windsor Wednesday afternoon.
Kevin Jakubec, group spokesperson, says his experts have found that micro particles of Kettle Point Black Shale are contaminating the drinking water.
Jakubec wants the ministry to test the water and once and for all say if it's safe to drink or not.
"Minister Murray has yet to answer that question. What is the safe level of particles, parts per million or micro grams per litre, what is the safe level of these black shale particles that we can have in our water?" says Jakubec.
Jakubec says the ministry isn't doing its job because it hasn't told the group what the safe level of particles is.
"What are you going to do when wells start reporting in as being damaged? What's the MOE plan when a couple of wells are damaged? So, here we have the Ministry of Environment that allows pile driving but they don't know what they're going to do if the wells are reporting in damaged," Jakubec says.
Jakubec is also asking for a public inquiry if he doesn't get straight answers on Wednesday.
"It's complete stupidity, I've warned the Ministry of Environment for over two years now not to go ahead with pile driving. How many times do we have to keep losing wells, one after the other, and we still don't seem to have the ministry understanding that this area is too sensitive," says Jakubec.

Fedeli will speak at OEB hearing
1019rock
2017-06-28
Byline:

Original Web Location
Hydro One is requesting a rate increase for each of the next five years and public hearings are being held Wednesday in Sudbury.
MPP Vic Fedeli says he'll be bringing the message from Nipissing residents to the session.

He wants to know who actually sets the rates.
"Everytime there's bad news the government tells us it's not them, it's the Ontario Energy Board and everytime there's good news, like this supposed fair hydro price, then the government tells us it's them that sets the rates," he says.

Fedeli says he wants to tell the board that because of skyrocketing hydro rates Ontarians are being forced to decide whether to heat or eat.
"I want to ask them why you think it's fair to burden Ontario families with a rate increase and then pay your CEO of Hydro One $4.5-million a year," he
added.
By comparison, Fedeli says the CEO's of Quebec and BC Hydro earn about $400,000.
If approved, a typical Hydro One residential customer would see monthly increases* of:
+$2.79 (2018)
+$2.47 (2019)
+$2.31 (2020)
+$1.95 (2021)
+$2.23 (2022)
*These amounts do not include any credits resulting from the Fair Hydro Act, 2017

Power line fault blamed for outage that plunged Scugog into darkness
Port Perry Star
2017-06-28
Byline: Chris Hall
Original Web Location
SCUGOG — A faulty section of an underground power line has been blamed for a massive power outage that left most of Scugog residents without power for almost 12 hours.
The lights went out around 3 p.m. on Monday, June 26 and power was restored to most areas affected just after midnight on Tuesday, June 27, say power officials.
"The cause of the outage was a faulted section of power line," said Nancy Clark, a communications officer with Hydro One.
The outage left about 6,000 Hydro One customers without power and also cut electricity supply to Veridian Connections, which provides power to the urban Port Perry area. Veridian officials

estimate about 2,400 customers were impacted.
The faulty power line is located underground, so specialists had to be brought in to fix the problem, said Clark.
Hydro One rerouted power to the Scugog area, carrying out staged restorations throughout the night, she explained.
No cause has been determined for the faulty power line, added Clark.
"There was a fault in the line, it could have been a lightning strike or the weather," said Clark.
At the time the power went out, heavy rains were soaking Port Perry and lightning strikes were spotted.
Chris Mace, a spokesperson for Veridian Connections, confirmed the urban Port Perry outage was due to a loss of Hydro One supply.
"When we get a loss of Hydro One supply, (Hydro One has) to dispatch their crews because it's their distribution equipment," said Mace. "We're at their mercy, essentially, so it's unfortunate the community was without power for an extended period of time."
Mace said the power went out around 3:15 p.m. on Monday and about half of Port Perry came back online around 12:30 a.m. The remaining customers had their power restored around 2:10 a.m., he said.
According to the Hydro One website on Monday afternoon, the outage stretched from Highway 12 in Manchester to Highway 35 in the east and dipped down as far south as Courtice and north to Janetville.
With the power out, nearly all businesses in Port Perry shut their doors on Monday afternoon.
The odd pedestrian could be seen strolling down a vacant Queen Street, staring into dark windows.
Both Durham and OPP officers were dispatched to intersections along Highway 7A to direct vehicles where traffic lights were out.

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