

# Ministry of Energy Top Issues - March 7, 2017

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**Date:** Tue, 07 Mar 2017 07:16:41 -0500

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Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

- Wind project opposers fear water, soil contamination- Kingston Whig Standard

Turbine turmoil avoidable, study says- London Free Press

High hydro prices hurt Ontario factories, industry group says-CBC

- Outrage not justified on Ontario electricity prices- TVO
- The dump Wynne to win strategy- National Post
- Wynne doesn't fear being usurped; Premier, hoping for bounce from cutting hydro bills, will lead 'loyal team' into election- Toronto Star
- Wynne confident Liberals back her- North Bay Nugget
- Hydro delivery rates will still decrease in Innisfil despite increase request: province- CTV
- Huron-Bruce Tory MPP Critical Of Hydro Reduction | Lisa Thompson says lower hydro costs will mean more paid over long-term.- Bay Shore Broadcasting
- Liberals announce hydro rate cut, Conservatives call it 'Band-Aid on a bullet wound'- Southwestern Ontario
- Cavan Monaghan mayor calls on province to install some fairness into the electricity price discussion- Peterborough Times
- OPG to move 40 Jobs Out of North Bay Operation- CTV
- North Bay to lose 20 OPG jobs, Timmins to gain | Ontario Power Generation announced March 6 it would close its North Bay location and redistribute the jobs around the province, including 20 to Timmins.- Northern Ontario Business

- The community should feel insulted by OPG move says MPP- Bay Today
- OPG North Bay plant slated to close within a year- North Bay Nugget
- Mayor says Premier's Office interfered in OPG announcement | Mayor Al McDonald says the announcement was delayed to allow Premier Wynne to announce cuts to hydro bills- Bay Today
- NYPA, Ontario Power Generation test capabilities of drone for future Power Authority use- Waterdown Daily News

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## **Wind project opposers fear water, soil contamination**

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**Kingston Whig-Standard**

**Tue Mar 7 2017**

Page: **A1 / Front**

**Section: News**

**Byline: Elliot Ferguson**

**Source: Kingston Whig-Standard**

Fears of water and soil contamination are driving opposition to a request to use a property along Lake Ontario for part of the Amherst Island wind energy project.

Invista is seeking permission to change the certificate of property use for land on the south side of Bath Road for the laying of underground cable to transmit electricity to a switch station, and the use of an existing access road to transport materials to and from a temporary mainland dock.

The opportunity for the public to comment on the change of use for the park ended on Thursday and the Association to Protect Amherst Island (APAI) has submitted that the work proposed for the property could disturb contaminants already present in the area.

The Invsta property on the north side of Bath Road is a former industrial site with known areas of contamination.

The concern is that burying an underground cable will provide a route for contaminants to move to the south side of the road.

In a report from XCG Consulting Ltd., an environmental engineering company, APAI argues that it is not known yet if the trench that needs to be dug for the underground cable will affect existing Areas of Potential Environmental Concern (APECs) or Areas of Environmental Concern (AECs).

The report also outlines concerns about how contaminated ground water, erosion and sediment will be controlled.

APAI's lawyers, Paul Le Vay and Justin Safayeni, described the application "woefully incomplete" and called on the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to deny the change-of-use application until the company provides more information.

"Given the deficiencies in the material provided by Invista, the only reasonable decision in these circumstances is for the director to deny approval of the application - at the very least until further information is provided by Invista in order to remedy the major gaps identified above and in the XCG report," Le Vay and Safayeni wrote.

"It must be recognized that the stakes of allowing the work outlined in the application to proceed are significant. Even on the incomplete state of the record, it is clear that the risks of soil and groundwater contamination are real. The consequences of such contamination are potentially disastrous, including discharge into Lake Ontario."

Loyalist Township, which owns land adjacent to the Invista site, also requested additional information about the potential of the proposed construction to spread contaminants between the properties.  
elferguson@postmedia.com

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## **Turbine turmoil avoidable, study says**

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London Free Press

Tue Mar 7 2017

**Page:** A3

Section: News

Byline: Hank Daniszewski

Source: London Free Press

Wind farms don't have to be a flashpoint for community resentment, if the benefits are spread around.

That's the conclusion of a study by two Western University geography researchers who compared the relatively smooth rollout of wind farms in Nova scotia with the often hostile reception in rural Ontario. chad Walker and Jamie Baxter surveyed residents in ten communities as part of the study. They found support for wind farms in Nova scotia was three times higher than Ontario because provincial rules require more community control.

In Ontario, there's a perception the corporate owners of wind farms and the owners of the property where they're located are the only winners, Walker said.

"People in the area don't feel like they are benefiting. ... It's not the technology, it's the way it is introduced." Nova scotia's community Feedin-Tariff program required community involvement.

"They would not be approved unless the local community owned 51 per cent," Walker said.

By contrast, almost all Ontario wind projects are owned by large corporations, he said.

The pushback against wind farms in Ontario has been unusual, especially compared to continental Europe that had a big head start in wind energy, Walker said.

"Most places in the world do not see this high level of opposition." In Ontario, local municipalities were left almost powerless to control the projects. Politicians and residents of Dutton-Dunwich in Elgin county were stunned last year when the province awarded a contract to a chicago-based firm to build dozens of industrial turbines there. The municipality had declared itself an unwilling host to wind farms after 84 per cent of residents who voted in a referendum opposed them.

The Western study included surveys of residents in three communities in Ontario - Adelaide-Metcalf west of London, Norwich Township in Oxford county and Wainfleet in Niagara region - and seven in Nova scotia.

Walker said they only studied public acceptance of wind farms, not their economics.

The Nova scotia government cancelled its program, not because of opposition, but because of concerns it would drive up electricity rates.

Jane Wilson, president of Wind concerns Ontario, a coalition of groups opposed to wind farm development, said the Western study shows local support of a wind farm should be required.

“Municipalities should be able to say no, which is not allowed by the province. The Green Energy Act was written for the wind power industry and not the people of Ontario,” she said. Robert Hornung, president of the Canadian Wind Energy Association, said Ontario wind farms have met more opposition because of the rapid development and greater population density.

“requirements for community engagement and participation are getting more stringent. It’s hard for a project to be successful if it does not have broad community support.” Wind energy companies are trying to broaden community benefits of wind farms by compensating owners of neighbouring properties and creating community funds. [hdaniszewski@postmedia.com](mailto:hdaniszewski@postmedia.com) [twitter.com/HankatLFP](https://twitter.com/HankatLFP)

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## High hydro prices hurt Ontario factories, industry group says

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CBC.CA News

Mon Mar 6 2017, 12:35pm ET

Section: Kitchener-Waterloo

Byline: CBC News

A group that represents hundreds of small to medium sized manufacturers across the province is urging the Ontario government to lower hydro fees for industrial users, or face the prospect of some factories packing up and moving to other jurisdictions where electricity is cheaper.

The manufacturers banded together last October under the banner the Concerned Manufacturers of Ontario, a lobby group dedicated to standing up for smaller factories against a Liberal government that they claim doesn’t care about them.

“We have to compete globally and we have to compete with companies in the United States,” the group’s founder Jocelyn Bamford told The Morning Edition host Craig Norris Monday. “The majority of those companies have a very competitive electricity rates.”

She noted in Mississippi, the rate is 5.56 cents a kilowatt hour.

“In Toronto, I’m paying 19 cents a kilowatt hour and with electricity being our third largest expense,” Bamford said. “When you look at the bottom line, it’s very difficult to compete.”

Cheaper power in the U.S.

Bamford’s day job is vice president of marketing at Toronto-based Automatic Coating Limited. She said her factory could save a lot of money if it moved to the U.S., where it competes against American companies for many of its clients, which includes the U.S. Navy.

“A lot of family businesses have grown here and want to remain here, but with a very uncompetitive electricity price, it makes it very difficult to remain here,” she said.

“I could move my business to the United States and save half a million dollars on energy costs.”

Difference between profit and loss

Bamford said last month’s power bill at her Scarborough factory was \$45,000, but only \$5,600 went towards paying for the amount of electricity the plant used.

Most of the bill, about \$25,000 she said, is eaten up by the global adjustment charge, a levy added to all power bills in the province to pay for above-market rates paid to power providers in 20-year contracts meant to ensure a steady supply.

The other \$14,400 on her power bill, Bamford said, is made up of a number of other fees.

Bamford said while she’s happy for homeowners across Ontario, who recently learned they’d be getting a break this summer in the form of a 17 per cent reduction on their hydro bills, factories also need a break on what’s quickly become one of their biggest expenses.

“That electricity pricing and energy pricing makes a difference for them from operating at a profit or a loss,” she said.

Bamford said the Liberal government at Queen’s Park would do well to take the concerns of Ontario’s small and medium sized manufacturers seriously, who provide about 800,000 jobs for the province and another six spin-off jobs for every worker on the factory floor.

Manufacturers not missed entirely

Still, while the government's recent efforts to deflate the ballooning costs of electricity was largely geared to homeowners, it didn't miss manufacturers entirely.

The province announced it would expand the Industrial Conservation Initiative, which allows mid-sized manufacturers to save up to a third of their electricity costs on the global adjustment line of their power bill.

Eligible companies can pay based on how much power they use during the five hours each year that the Ontario power grid requires the most electricity.

The problem though, according to Bamford, is it requires factories to guess when the province's overall power demand will peak and then lower their power consumption accordingly.

"It's very difficult to power down and tell your customers, 'You have to wait,' or tell your employees that they have to come in and work on the nightshift because a lot employees have childcare commitments," she said.

Bamford also notes the program still excludes 85 per cent of Ontario factories, whose staff make up 50 people or less and use less than one megawatt of power.

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## **Outrage not justified on Ontario electricity prices**

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**TVO.org**

**2017-03-06**

**Byline: Jatin Nathwani**

**[Original Web Location](#)**

**The red-hot outrage over electricity prices in Ontario is a noisy attempt to shape a political narrative of discontent. It is misleading because the hype has a tenuous link to the facts.**

**Although actual electricity price increases over the past decade have been higher than the consumer price index, they are directly tied to a massive investment, on the order of \$50 billion, for the renewal of Ontario's aging electricity infrastructure.**

If the debt obligation of such an investment were to come at zero cost, then pigs could fly as well. The relevant questions are: What did we get for this investment? And, given the costs are real, is there a way to give relief to customers most affected by the price increases?

We now have a cleaner electricity system. Removing coal, a cheap but dirty source of power from Ontario's supply mix, brings a positive environmental dividend, better air quality (no smog days), and a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generation — now 80 per cent lower than in 2006. Reducing the health care costs of poor air quality is a separate but important part of the benefit calculus that is entirely ignored in this discussion.

We do not have any imminent threat of electricity supply shortages — recall the crisis in the sector around 2005. With a surplus supply capacity, the low-carbon electricity system can now help relieve the cost of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in other sectors of the Ontario economy such as transport.

The effects of the price increases in electricity is a tale of two cities: for rural customers, who lack access to cheaper resources, and small to medium enterprises, the economic burden is high compared to the average increase in the cost of electricity overall. There is a need for targeted adjustments to the prices the most vulnerable pay and the government's targeted response for a subsidy to the rural and remote customers is reasonable.

The total electricity bill for Ontario consumers has increased at 3.2 per cent per year on average from \$15.5 billion in 2006 to \$20.5 billion in 2015 (adjusted for inflation), and the unit cost of electricity has increased from 10.1 cents to 14.3 cents per kilowatt hour. For a typical residential customer (single detached home consuming 750 kWh), the monthly electricity bill in Toronto is \$142. Rather than an across-the-board price freeze for all customers — which would have been an extremely poor policy option — the government has chosen to stretch out the time for payment of the debt to reduce prices for all customers today. This shift of carrying the interest costs over a longer period puts a small burden on future beneficiaries of the current investment in the system. This slight price increase in the years ahead is not a sufficient basis for a call to arms given the government's plan will not undermine existing contractual obligations or create poor signals for future investment in the sector.

And are the electricity prices in Ontario really all that high? Compare the monthly cost of \$140 for a typical residential customer in Toronto to \$233 in San Francisco, \$226 in New York City, or \$210 in Boston. The Ontario median cost at \$130 is somewhat higher but not outrageous in comparison to other Canadian cities such as Charlottetown (\$126), Halifax (\$122), and Regina

(\$114). The cost of electricity in B.C., Quebec, and Manitoba is much lower — between \$55 and \$75 — but this not entirely relevant given the large amount of cheap hydroelectric production from generating stations built and paid for several decades ago in those provinces. There is no way for Ontario to produce enough inexpensive hydroelectric power to fulfill its needs.

What about prices in the future? Ontario's long-term energy plan projects an increase below 2 per cent every year over the next 10 years. For a typical household, this translates into a monthly electricity bill rising from \$167 today to \$198 in 2026: an increase of \$30 over 10 years.

Reliable electricity is an absolutely critical service for the entire household and underpins the basis of our prosperity. Without a robust and reliable supply of this essential service, you are practically back to the Stone Age. If public discourse is to be served well, sticking to the facts is crucial. Even more crucial is context.

Electricity costs have increased because a massive investment in the long-term reliability and stability of the power grid has been completed after a prolonged period of underinvestment and 'rate freezes' in the electricity sector through the 1990s, which culminated in a major supply crisis in 2005. One key lesson from the Ontario experience, relevant for other provinces, is this: decarbonization of the economy *will* come at some cost. Ontario's electricity sector is Exhibit A for the path to a lower-carbon economy.

*Jatin Nathwani is a professor and Ontario Research Chair on Public Policy for Sustainable Energy at the University of Waterloo.*

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*The dump Wynne to win strategy*

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*National Post*

*Tue Mar 7 2017*

*Page: A9*

*Section: Issues & Ideas*

*Byline: Kelly Mcparland*

*Source: National Post*

*There's trouble in the headlines for Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne.*

*With her Liberals bumping along a solid third among voters, 20 points behind the little-known*

***Patrick Brown's Tories, Wynne threw her Hail Mary pass last week after suddenly concluding that power rates were too high. She announced a plan to slash them 17 per cent by the simple act of adding billions of dollars in extra interest - up to \$1.4 billion a year - to the bill to be paid by future generations, on top of a debt that has spiralled to \$300 billion via previous Liberal spending.***

***Rather than the hoped for hosannas, however, Wynne awoke Saturday to news that disgruntled colleagues may be plotting against her. The Toronto Star, the newspaper of choice for generations of Liberal faithful, suggested that if the power ploy doesn't work, Wynne could find herself facing a rebellion.***

***Robert Benzie, the Star's veteran Queen's Park watcher, reported that "there are whispers at Queen's Park about who might replace Premier Kathleen Wynne as Liberal leader" if her gambit fails to reverse the deep antipathy toward her and her government. One "grim-faced top Grit" told him: "Look, we can't let the premier take the party down with her."***

***This is serious stuff, coming from a newspaper that lives to promote eternal Liberal rule. No one should underestimate Liberal skills at backroom plotting. This is the party that ousted a prime minister after he had delivered them three successive majorities, because they thought his finance minister had a better chance of securing a fourth. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's federal Liberals follow a well-established practice of ignoring local preferences while parachuting in preferred candidates. Wynne's Liberals have been just as ruthless in backroom manoeuvring, resulting in bribery charges under the Elections Act against two high-ranking party members over a 2015 Sudbury byelection.***

***Wynne owes her position to the departure of former premier Dalton McGuinty, who saw a similar collapse in Liberal support over his decision to cancel two power plants before an election, and spirited efforts by opposition parties to discover the true cost. After winning the contest to replace Mc-Guinty, Wynne conceded that the party had blundered and pledged to repair the damage. Yet her latest energy minister - who just recently told utilities to stop cutting off people's power in the middle of winter - acknowledged that Ontarians are still struggling with "suboptimal" conditions. Wynne and her officials hadn't appreciated the unfairness of asking Ontarians to pay the full cost of Liberal programs, but now see that "intergenerational fairness" demands some of the bill be piled on future taxpayers.***

***The good thing about future generations, of course, is that they're not around to defend***

*themselves. But even current generations may not be thrilled with the government's habit of ratcheting up the debt load any time it gets into a jam. In a made-for-media moment, Wynne telephoned several Ontarians to personally explain her plan, only to run into a woman from Sturgeon Falls who questioned the added billions it will cost and suggested Wynne get some better aides because "you've got a team there working and some of those are really bad advisers."*

*Benzie went so far as to speculate on seven possible replacements should the party conclude Wynne has to go. They included Attorney General Yasir Naqvi, despite a troubled performance as Ontario's correctional services minister; Health Minister Eric Hoskins, best known for trenchant relations with Ontario's disgruntled doctors; dulcet-toned Finance Minister Charles Sousa, whose Mulroney-like oratory can resemble a radio pitchman flogging laxatives; and even Sandra Pupatello, who has the advantage of having quit politics after losing the leadership to Wynne in 2013 and thus can't be blamed for anything that's followed.*

*There's already a bump in the road to new leadership, however. Wynne only sought the job after McGuinty stepped down of his own volition, and managed to win the next election thanks to an epically bungled Progressive Conservative campaign. Liberals who hope to repeat that feat have to contend with the fact the premier has no intention of giving them their wish. "I'm going to run in the election in 2018," she told the CBC after unveiling her power plan. "My job is not finished."*

*Fear of her finishing her "job" may be just what frightens Ontarians, as three years of her leadership has seen the party sink to even lower levels than those that persuaded McGuinty to throw in the towel. Replacing an unpopular leader is one thing; forcing out a second premier in desperate hope of appeasing an angry electorate may be too much even for Ontario's passive population. In the end, Wynne could be saved by her refusal to go quietly.*

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*Wynne doesn't fear being usurped; Premier, hoping for bounce from cutting hydro bills, will lead 'loyal team' into election*

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*Toronto Star*

*Tue Mar 7 2017*

*Page: A4*

*Section: News*

*Byline: Robert Benzie Toronto Star*

***Premier Kathleen Wynne insists she is not threatened by the political ambitions of those in her cabinet who may want to succeed her.***

***In the wake of a 25-per-cent reduction in hydro bills designed to turn down the heat on the governing Liberals, Wynne suggested her would-be replacements could cool their heels awhile longer.***

***“It is extremely important in any organization, including a political party, that there are people who have the capacity to be the next leader,” the premier said Monday.***

***“Succession planning is often not done well ... in political parties,” said Wynne, who took over from former premier Dalton McGuinty four years ago and plans to lead the Liberals into the June 2018 election.***

***“I have a strong, loyal team. We’re a cohesive, cohesive group. And I look forward to working with them every day and if some of them are thinking one day they might want to be the leader, excellent,” she said.***

***But Wynne emphasized that she does not feel like there are usurpers in her midst. “I honestly do not. We’re a very strong team and . . . it’s only right that there would be people at some point who would think: ‘You know what? Maybe this is a job that I want to do.’”***

***The Star disclosed Friday that at least six current ministers and one former leadership rival could be in the running if the hydro rebate plan is a flop, hastening Wynne’s departure as Liberal chief.***

***They include: Children and Youth Services Minister Michael Coteau, Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca, Health Minister Eric Hoskins, Education Minister Mitzie Hunter, Attorney General Yasir Naqvi, Finance Minister Charles Sousa and former minister Sandra Pupatello, the runner-up to Wynne in the 2013 leadership race.***

***At Queen’s Park, the ministers played down reports of their ambitions, swearing allegiance to the premier and stressing their focus is on helping her remain in office.***

***Sources say the Liberals will be polling Ontarians over the coming weeks to determine the reception to last Thursday’s hydro rebate plan that will mean an additional \$25 billion in interest***

**costs over the next 30 years.**

**But insiders say the initial response has been positive and they hope that reducing electricity rates will allow them to talk about the economy, health, education and infrastructure improvements.**

**Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown, who is ahead of Wynne in public opinion polls, though he has yet to release his own hydro platform, said he doesn't care if the Liberals change leaders.**

**"Our focus is going to be on running a campaign that speaks to how we can get Ontario back on track regardless of who carries the flag for this government that's been in power for 14 years," said Brown, predicting the Grits would field "the same tired team."**

**NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, who last week unveiled her party's proposal for lower electricity rates, said Wynne's rebate is "all about the Liberals and holding onto power."**

**She added, "It makes no difference to me" if Wynne is her rival 15 months from now.**

## **Opinion**

**Reducing hydro bills the fairer way forward. Wynne, A11**

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**Wynne confident Liberals back her**

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**North Bay Nugget**

**Tue Mar 7 2017**

**Page: A5**

**Section: News**

**Byline: Shawn Jeffords**

**Source: Postmedia Network**

**Premier Kathleen Wynne says she doesn't believe the knives are out for her.**

**Wynne said Monday morning she isn't worried that if her plan to slash hydro rates doesn't address her plummeting approval ratings, her own ministers and party will be brandishing knives.**

***Ontario's Liberals are one "cohesive" unit, she said.***

***"I think that succession planning is often not done well ... in political parties," she said. "I have a strong, loyal team. We're a cohesive group and I look forward to working with them every day."***

***Wynne said if there are people thinking about running for the Liberal leadership one day, that's a good thing.***

***"If some of them are thinking one day they may want to be the leaders, excellent," she said. "That will make them better MPPs, better ministers and better constituency workers because they take it to heart and they take it very seriously."***

***Wynne has repeatedly said that she plans to run in 2018. Asked again last week after launching her plan to cut hydro rates by another 17%, while taking on billions in new debt, the premier said she had no intention to quit politics.***

***"The pressure on me around electricity prices in Ontario is about people who are struggling to pay their electricity bills," Wynne said.***

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***Hydro delivery rates will still decrease in Innisfil despite increase request: province***

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**CTV News**

**2017-03-06**

**Byline: Mike Arsalides and Adam Ward, CTV Barrie**

**[Original Web Location](#)**

***Despite a request by InnPower Corporation to raise its rates, the province says delivery charges for Innisfil residents will decrease under their new plan.***

***Ontario’s Ministry of Energy says it doesn’t matter whether the Ontario Energy Board approves the utility’s request because the province’s plan will still reduce them in the end.***

***“It is important to be absolutely clear – regardless of the outcome of the OEB’s rate hearing, the customers of InnPower will benefit from Ontario’s Fair Hydro Plan. In fact, they will see their distribution charges decrease as a result of our programs,” a spokesperson said in a statement to CTV News.***

***InnPower is asking the OEB to approve its application to increase electricity distribution rates to about \$10.96 for the average resident. Commercial class customers would see an increase of \$238.73.***

***The utility wants the OEB to approve rate increases to help them recover costs they incurred from last year's ice storm. Ice covered powerlines and downed trees, which caused widespread power outages.***

***"I'm waiting to hear back from the ministry in regards to what will transpire for Innpower customers," says CEO Wally Malcolm. "When you have different announcements, yes it does cause up rise and customers to respond to that."***

***Malcolm says as Innisfil grows, customers will save.***

***"Right now, we have a large service territory so we have the size of Mississauga, but we don't have the customers of Mississauga. If we get more customers online with our distribution system, that will help reduce costs as well."***

***The Ontario Energy Board will host two meetings on Thursday to hear comments from the public.***

***The first meeting happens at Innisfil Town Hall at 1:30 p.m. and the other happens at Innisfil ideaLab and Library at 6:30 p.m.***

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## ***Budget watchdog to examine Ontario hydro relief***

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***Windsor Star***

***Tue Mar 7 2017***

***Page: A6***

***Section: City & Region***

***Byline: Allison Jones***

***Source: The Windsor Star***

***Ontario's budget watchdog will examine the Liberal government's plan to lower hydro bills, with the opposition parties questioning its estimated \$25 billion in interest costs.***

***Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown wrote to the financial accountability office, asking them to investigate the plan with a full costing analysis, but a spokeswoman for the office said Monday they had already been planning a report on it.***

*A recently announced 17-percent reduction in hydro bills comes this summer thanks to a move the Liberals say is like refinancing a mortgage over a longer period of time.*

*Premier Kathleen Wynne has acknowledged it will cost ratepayers more in the long run, but she said savings are needed now because people are struggling.*

*She has said the extra interest costs related to the plan would amount to \$25 billion over 30 years, but the Tories say they're not clear on how the Liberals arrived at that number.*

*Wynne's \$25-billion figure does not appear in the hydro relief announcement's background documents, which say the plan will involve "annual interest costs not exceeding \$1.4 billion."*

*The premier said Monday that the financial accountability officer has already been briefed on the hydro plan, but the government can bring more technical information forward, if need be.*

*"We have used assumptions about interest over the next number of years, the next decade, and those are fairly conservative projections, so we've been very careful as we've laid out the plan," she said.*

*A spokesman for the energy minister said that based on a "conservative" estimate of a five-percent interest rate, they "see that number amounting to approximately \$25 billion over 30 years."*

*PC Leader Patrick Brown said in the letter to the financial accountability officer that Ontarians may ultimately have to accept those added costs to get savings now "given the extent to which people are struggling," but the impact should at least be clear. "To be candid, this government has a habit of deliberately using false numbers to cover up their worst policy failures," Brown wrote.*

*NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said Monday that several figures have been bandied about, so the FAO will help sort that out.*

*"(The Liberals are) rolling things out on the back of the napkin," she said. "When you do the math stretching it over 30 years they're saying it's \$25 billion, when you do straight-line math it's over \$40 billion."*

*A spokesman for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said Ontario has a track record of managing*

**debt “responsibly.” The province’s net debt is more than \$300 billion. Colin Nikolaichuk also noted that credit rating agency DBRS has said it views the hydro relief plan as “credit neutral.”**

**The 17-per-cent cut in bills - in addition to an eight-per-cent rebate that took effect Jan. 1 - means ratepayers will pay about \$2.5-billion less per year of the global adjustment charge for the next 10 years, the government has said.**

**The global adjustment is the charge consumers pay for abovemarket rates for power producers, which the government said ensures a reliable supply.**

**The auditor-general has estimated the global adjustment charge cost \$50 billion between 2006 and 2015 and increased by 1,200 per cent between 2006 and 2013 - meanwhile, the average electricity market price dropped by 46 per cent.**

**Eventually the costs of refinancing will be added back onto the global adjustment charge, which the energy minister has said won’t happen for at least 10 years.**

**In the meantime, producers will continue being paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation has been tapped to oversee the debt that creates.**

**Brown also questions why that is being handled by OPG, and not the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., which manages hydro debt.**

**Several other measures to reduce hydro bills were announced Thursday, including expanding a low-income support program, cutting delivery charges for some rural residents and eliminating them for on-reserve First Nations customers, and establishing a new fund to help people make energy efficiency improvements.**

**While the 17-per-cent cut will be paid for by future ratepayers, it’s taxpayers who are footing the bill for the aforementioned social programs along with the previously announced eight-per-cent cut - to the tune of \$5.5 billion over the next three years.**

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**Huron-Bruce Tory MPP Critical Of Hydro Reduction | Lisa Thompson says lower hydro costs will mean more paid over long-term.**

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**Bayshore Broadcasting News Centre**

**2017-03-07**

**Byline: Peter Jackson**

[Original Web Location](#)

**Huron-Bruce Tory MPP Lisa Thompson is the latest Opposition politician to criticize the Liberal plan to reduce Hydro rates.**

**Thompson believes that while decreasing rates might be good in the short term, Ontarians will wind up paying much more down the road.**

**In a news release issued Monday, Thompson says the Wynne government is fooling no-one by moving some money and borrowing more, to make it look like we'll save on electricity rates.**

**She says the Grits also continue to advocate alternative energy projects to produce electricity we don't need, while wind turbine challenges remain before the Environmental Review Tribunal.**

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**Liberals announce hydro rate cut, Conservatives call it 'Band-Aid on a bullet wound'**

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**Southwesternontario.ca**

**2017-03-06**

**Byline: Mike Wilson Mount Forest Confederate**

[Original Web Location](#)

**PERTH-WELLINGTON-GREY — If there is one thing that the Ontario Conservatives and Liberals can agree on, it's that they disagree on the benefit of last week's announcement by Premier Kathleen Wynne of Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan.**

**On March 2, Wynne announced that electricity bills would be lowered by 25 per cent on average for families in the province. This reduction includes the already announced eight per cent reduction of the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax that took effect on Jan. 1.**

**Ratepayers will see the reduction on their bills starting this summer.**

**"For too long governments — my own included — have made mistakes in the way we've**

*structured Ontario's electricity system," said Wynne during her announcement. "That has resulted in rates that are unfairly high. It's time to fix those mistakes."*

*Wynne also emphasized that the cut will go to all households that pay for electricity.*

*"There will be no asterisk, no loops holes, and no exceptions," she said. "And for those living in rural communities or with low incomes, the break will be even greater."*

*The premier also went on to say that rates will only rise with the rate of inflation over the next four years.*

*While this is good news to many ratepayers, Conservatives were quick to criticize the Liberals' announcement.*

*"I want to see a drop in hydro rates. I think that everyone that pays a hydro bill wants to see a drop," Progressive Conservative Party leader Patrick Brown told the Toronto Star on March 2. "But ... the majority of people are going to be disappointed that this is just for show."*

*"This is a Band-Aid on a bullet wound."*

*Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MPP Bill Walker stated that while the rate cut was needed to help Ontario families, he is troubled by how Wynne and the Liberal government is using taxpayers' money to provide the discount.*

*"So yes, you will on average pay 25 per cent less in hydro every month — for some time — but in return, you will pay the Liberal government more taxes, and thus receive fewer services to balance it off," said Walker. "To this end, the premier's promise from March 2 that she had fixed skyrocketing hydro bills in Ontario 'for today and into the future' is pure myth."*

*In a media release sent to Metroland Media (which is available on our website at [www.southwesternontario.ca](http://www.southwesternontario.ca)), Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece agreed that hydro rates needed to come down, but stated that Wynne's announcement "doesn't get to the root of the problem."*

*"(The problem) is years of failed Liberal energy policies and the terrible contracts they continue to sign," he said.*

*"Premier Wynne compared her plan to 'refinancing the mortgage and setting a new term that stretches over a longer period,'" added Pettapiece. "But it comes at a cost: roughly*

***\$25 billion in interest costs over 30 years. No one should be fooled. Over the long term, this will cost us more — much more. Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be paying for this government’s mistakes.”***

***On March 5, Colin Nekolaichuk, press secretary for Ontario Minister of Energy Glenn Thibeault, sent a statement to Metroland Media on behalf of Thibeault’s office in response to Pettapiece’s remarks.***

***“Recognizing that ratepayers across the province are struggling, we are lowering electricity bills by 25 per cent on average for families,” said Nekolaichuk. “Many small businesses and farms would also benefit from the initiative. For those living in rural communities or with low incomes, the break will be even greater.”***

***“While our plan provides fast, substantial, widespread and long-lasting relief, Patrick Brown and the Conservatives have yet to bring forward anything credible. Their main idea — halting the broadening of Hydro One — won’t take one cent off of electricity bills. It’s both wrong and irresponsible for them to continue to repeat that incorrect information,” he said. “As they well know, energy rates will continue to be set by the independent Ontario Energy Board, which has a mandate to protect ratepayers, and Brown’s push to rip up energy contracts would lead to increased rates, lawsuits, and penalties.”***

***Nekolaichuk went on to say that under the Liberals’ plan, rates will come down, and stay down, to benefit families and businesses across the province.***

***“By providing real, long-lasting relief, our Fair Hydro Plan makes sense for Ontarians,” he said.***

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***Cavan Monaghan mayor calls on province to install some fairness into the electricity price discussion***

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***Peterborough This Week***

***Mon Mar 6 2017***

***Section: Letters***

***Permalink***

***To whom it may concern at Queen’s Park,***

***A 25 per cent reduction in electricity rates ... great idea to refinance over a longer period, increase the amount of interest paid, and continue to saddle our children's future with billions of dollars of debt before they even earn their first paycheck.***

***And the problem still isn't being fixed. Wind turbine projects and solar panel projects continue to be built. Too late to cancel? The \$1 billion gas plant in a Liberal riding wasn't too late to cancel.***

***I just received correspondence from the Energy Ministry that part of the reason for the increase in electricity rates was due to an increase in demand.***

***Does anyone in the Ministry read the IESO reports to realize that demand has been decreasing for a decade, while the supply has continued to increase under these overpriced Green Energy contracts, generating huge surpluses that are sold to the states at less than it cost to generate? Enter the Global Adjustment Charge, to make up the difference, and stick it to the citizens and businesses of Ontario.***

***Massive delivery charges are still being added to rural Ontario customers' bills because, in the Province's own words, it costs more to deliver electricity to rural Ontario, so they should pay because it wouldn't be fair to make urban Ontario pay the same.***

***Since when has the principles of the Liberal Party been about being fair?***

***Seniors in rural Ontario on fixed incomes can't afford their electricity and the large delivery charges, but they pay educational taxes because that's fair.***

***Rural Ontario pays two cents per litre on their gasoline to go toward public transit projects in Urban Ontario because that's fair.***

***And to add salt to the wounds the 2 cents per litre of all gasoline sold in the province will increase to 4 cents per litre to go toward public transit in urban Ontario in the coming years because that's fair.***

***Province, wake up and start solving the problems, instead of saddling our children with more and more debt.***

***Deal with skyrocketing salaries in Hydro One and OPG. Regardless of whether you believe the CEOs are worth \$4 million per year, we can't afford them, show them the door.***

***As for the thousands of others on those high six-figure salaries sitting at desks, get rid of the desks.***

***Hydro One is profitable on the backs of Ontario rate payers that can't afford their bills. How can rate increases be approved by the OEB when they're turning a profit?***

***Step in and force rate reductions. Worse case the stock values of Hydro One will drop and you can buy it back at a rock bottom price. I'm not seeing the downside.***

***Scott McFadden***

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***OPG to move 40 Jobs Out of North Bay Operation***

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***Source: MCTV***

***Mar 6, 2017 6: 03 PM (2)***

***Anchor: It's a blow to North Bay's economy today, the provincially owned Ontario Power Generation announced it's moving 40 jobs out of its North Bay operation. While many of those positions will stay in the north and will move to Timmins, local leaders in North Bay feel a bit blindsided by the news. Here's CTV's Joey Slattery.***

***Reporter: By the end of the year, Ontario Power Generation will have a much smaller presence in North Bay, announcing that 40 of its employees being moved to other offices around the province.***

***Allan Reid, Ontario Power Generation: The North Bay facility here, the administration office in the background administers approximately 126 megawatts of generation and the economy of scale and simply not there. So we'll amalgamate the facilities and the administration of those facilities into larger groups across the province.***

***Reporter: Reid says North Bay facility employees 66 people, 20 of whom will be relocated to Timmins, while 20 others will be sent to other facilities around the province.***

*He says 22 technical staff will stay here in North Bay for maintenance purposes. While no jobs are being terminated, Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli addressed his concern at Queen's Park today over OPG's lack of communication with the city.*

*Vic Fedeli, Nipissing MPP: They have a responsibility to be open and transparent with the communities they've had partnerships with, especially those for more than a century. If OPG is indeed transferring dozens of employees out of North Bay, why are they doing it by stealth?*

*Reporter: North Bay Mayor Al McDonald was in Toronto when the announcement was made.*

*Al McDonald, Mayor of North Bay: Very disappointed. We were hearing those rumours for a while and we couldn't get confirmation from the Minister nor OPG, and they're a publicly owned company, and we just thought it was disgraceful how we were treated.*

*Reporter: OPG's Alan Reid says the transition is expected to be complete by the end of the year. Joey Slattery, CTV News, North Bay.*

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*North Bay to lose 20 OPG jobs, Timmins to gain | Ontario Power Generation announced March 6 it would close its North Bay location and redistribute the jobs around the province, including 20 to Timmins.*

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**Northern Ontario Business**

**2017-03-06**

**Byline: Jeff Turl**

**[Original Web Location](#)**

*North Bay's loss will be Timmins' gain when 40 [Ontario Power Generation](#) (OPG) jobs are redistributed later this year.*

*The OPG announced on March 6 it would be closing its North Bay location and redistributing the 40 employees that work there. Rumours about the move had been swirling in the community for the last few weeks.*

*OPG's chief operating officer Al Reid confirmed to Village Media that the company would be redistributing the jobs around the province, including sending 20 trades and maintenance employees to its Timmins location.*

*The 40 transferred employees represent support staff, engineering, and the*

*environmental operations group. The control group, consisting of 20 workers, will be moving to Timmins.*

*"This is about the ongoing commitment by OPG to find the most cost-effective way of generating electricity and this was a financial efficiency," Reid said in a phone interview this morning.*

*"We have a very small bit of generation in this part of the province and we have a very large administrative overhead to manage that, so we're merging parts of the operations here in North Bay to some larger existing parts of the operation such as Eastern Operations in Timmins so we can gain economies of scale."*

*The move will be effective over the next few weeks and take a year to get everything done.*

*Reid said there is no going back.*

*"We are committed to making these cost savings for the business."*

*And he defended the decision not to keep local politicians in the loop.*

*"We are committed to treating our employees fairly and part of that is that they heard this news first and, as you can imagine, it's not a straightforward process to making sure that all our ducks are in a row, that we've talked with the right people like our people and unions before we talk to elected officials," Reid said.*

*"We made the announcement this morning and we've already started reaching out to the mayor and (North Bay MPP Vic) Fedeli."*

*Reid says he got a "very professional" reaction from the affected employees this morning.*

*"We're very proud of our employees and they acted in a very professional manner," he said.*

*"They have a lot of concerns. This is affecting their livelihood and the lives of their families. Under the circumstances, we had a very professional response this morning."*

*Reid said the company will now look at selling the OPG's North Bay facilities.*

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*The community should feel insulted by OPG move says MPP*

[Original Web Location](#)

*Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli says he's disappointed at the announcement by OPG this morning to close its North Bay operation and is angered by how they did it.*

*"I'm disappointed, especially in how they treated the community," Fedeli told BayToday. "They did it by stealth."*

*Fedeli says he stood in the Legislature this morning to ask the Minister of Energy, Glenn Thibeault about it, but Thibeault left early even though Fedeli had the first question. The MPP wrote to him last week but didn't get a reply.*

*"I feel insulted, and the community should feel insulted that OPG did this by stealth. They never consulted with the union, with the employees, or city leaders. This is a betrayal by OPG to a community that they have been into for more than 100 years."*

*Northern Ontario Party leader Trevor Holliday calls the move "political."*

*Holliday cites a source high up in OPG ranks.*

*"It's never about the budget. They're using economics as an excuse. It's just more high-paying jobs leaving this community. The annual salaries of the 60 people working there would be in the eight million dollar range, and OPG spends over 20 million in the community every year."*

*Holliday blames the Ontario government and Premier Wynne.*

*"It's the government making cuts. It's not that they can make it more efficient. They're looking at doing it from a political mind frame. Wynne just made a political announcement of a 25 per cent cut in hydro. You look at it, they're going to have some cost savings by closing down the operation here in North Bay. That takes away from the economy of North Bay."*

*North Bay Mayor Al McDonald is in meetings in Toronto today, but in a text, promised a reaction later this afternoon.*

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**OPG North Bay plant slated to close within a year**

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*The North Bay Nugget*

*2017-03-06*

*Byline: JENNIFER HAMILTON-MCCHARLES*

[\*Original Web Location\*](#)

*The Ontario Power Generation operation in North Bay will close its doors within a year.*

*The news was delivered by Allan Reid, chief operating officer with Renewal Generation and Power Marketing with OPG Monday morning.*

*President, Renewable Generation and Power Marketing Mike Martelli was expected to be in North Bay this morning to deliver the news to the plant's 66 employees, however according to Reid "he was no able to attend."*

*Reid said in a telephone interview this morning that the company's five regional operations will be consolidated into four.*

*"We're moving the control room from North Bay to Timmins, which will impact 20 employees," Reid said.*

*Another 20 employees in support, engineering and finance will have a chance to be transferred to another OPG operation throughout the province and the remaining 20 will remain in North Bay to maintain and operate the water control equipment.*

*The exact landing spot of affected employees who will be transferred throughout the province isn't known at this time.*

*Reid said the main reason for the amalgamation is to lower costs.*

*"We've been studying this change for years. We're finding more ways to run operations in a cost-effective manner and closing the plant in North Bay was that answer."*

*Reid acknowledged today's news affects a lot of people.*

*"We're impacting people's lives," he said. "Staff are concerned with what the next steps are."*

*The Nugget asked Reid why it took the company so long to communicate its plans with its employees.*

*Employees have been wondering for weeks what their future at OPG was following speculation the plant was slated for closure.*

*Reid said OPG wanted to get it right, have all the facts and details before making a quick announcement.*

*Nipissing MP Vic Fedeli pressed Premier Kathleen Wynne about OPG's lack of transparency during today's Question Period.*

*"Rumours have surfaced regarding the employment status of the 70 men and women at the OPG facility in North Bay. In fact, these now appear to be more than rumours," Fedeli said.*

*"OPG has refused to answer any questions from the municipality, regarding their future in North Bay. OPG and North Bay have had more than a 100-year relationship. They have a responsibility to be open and transparent with the communities they've had partnerships with, for more than a century. If OPG is indeed transferring dozens of employees out of North Bay, why are they doing it by stealth?"*

*Fedeli put the onus on Wynne asking her if she agrees that this is an outrageous failure by a publically-owned corporation to live up to the standards of accountability that is expected in Ontario?*

*"If OPG is willing to turn its back on the city it's been in for 100 years, and ignore the pleas of the municipality, what else will they ignore?" he said.*

*"Speaker, I ask the Premier if OPG won't be open about their plans in North Bay, how can they be trusted to be accountable for what they say about any of their projects?"*

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*Mayor says Premier's Office interfered in OPG announcement | Mayor Al McDonald says the announcement was delayed to allow Premier Wynne to announce cuts to hydro bills*

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*Baytoday.ca*

*2017-03-06*

*Byline: Jeff Turl*

*[Original Web Location](#)*

*Mayor Al dropped a political bombshell this afternoon.*

*He says the Office of Premier Wynne applied political pressure to OPG not to announce the closing of the North Bay operation until after her [announcement of cuts to provincial hydro bills](#).*

*"They moved the date to March 6th because the Ontario government asked them not to make their announcement until they (government) came out with their announcement last Thursday (March 2nd) about reducing hydro rates."*

*McDonald says when he contacted Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault 10 days ago, he told the Mayor that he was unaware of anything.*

*"I believe him that he didn't know anything," explained McDonald. "If it wasn't his office, the only other office it could have come out of that would have the power to tell OPG not to tell their employees would be the Premier's office."*

*"So OPG was going to notify their employees February 22nd. They were told by the Ontario government not to make their announcement until after they made their political announcement. They were told not to inform their employees until after the announcement. Now you have political interference at OPG and they put more importance on their political announcement than they did on telling their employees...the women and men who work there."*

*"Especially with all the rumours were going on because you (BayToday) broke the story. The employees were asking a thousand questions wondering if they have to move, if they could sell their house or buy a car or take their kids out of school, and the Ontario government asked OPG not to tell their employees till after they made their political announcement."*

*McDonald says he was "shocked" when he found out but vows to fight to keep the jobs in North Bay.*

*See: [OPG confirms it...40 jobs gone!](#)*

*Meanwhile, Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli says Premier Wynne knew all along about the political interference but wouldn't face the music in the legislature.*

*"When I asked my question in the legislative this morning to the Premier she shuffled it off to the Minister of Economic Development who had a prepared statement so I would say this was staged. The Premier wouldn't want to comment on job losses in Ontario so she leaves it to her minister. They were definitely well prepared with a printed answer ready to go. This was no surprise to them."*

*He says he was told by OPG it was "scheduling difficulties", that caused the announcement to be delayed.*

*"I told OPG that they have completely bungled their announcement and absolutely*

*betrayed the community. They told me 'we wanted to tell our employees first' back on February 22nd but some 'scheduling issue' came up'.*

*Fedeli says he responded that they were not fair to their employees and the municipality for their failure to consult. Had they given some notice there would have been an opportunity to start analyzing operational issues and safety issues of having one less office, so at least it would have been an opportunity to talk. They took that opportunity away from the community because they're reducing their staff by stealth.*

*"It left the community in a terrible situation wondering what was happening and that's the worst possible scenario when you've got questions and no answers. These are people's families, people's lives they are affecting."*

*BayToday has reached out to OPG COO Al Reid, and the Premier's office for comment, but have yet to receive a reply.*

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***NYPA, Ontario Power Generation test capabilities of drone for future Power Authority use***

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***WatertownDailyTimes.com***

***2017-03-07***

***Byline: BOB BECKSTEAD***

***[Original Web Location](#)***

***MASSENA — Look, up in the sky. It's a bird. It's a plane.***

***Nope, it's not Superman, but rather drones being tested by the New York Power Authority for possible use in the future.***

***Last week, a team from the New York Power Authority joined some Ontario Power Generation representatives to fly a drone around the Robert Moses Dam and St. Lawrence spillway as part of NYPA's research into launching its own drone inspection program.***

***"We currently do not own any drones," said Alan Ettlinger, NYPA's research, technology development and innovation director.***

***But, if drones are capable of performing the types of work NYPA would like, the flying objects could become part of the organization's inventory. NYPA is currently putting specifications together to purchase drones.***

***"I would say we've been looking at it for about a year-and-a-half or so. We've been doing various tests. We're making sure we're dotting all the I's and crossing the T's before we***

*fully implement it. We want to make sure we are safe and sound before we do anything,” Mr. Ettlinger said.*

*There would be several advantages, he said.*

*“Using drones to inspect power lines would keep inspectors from having to climb the lines and potentially put themselves in danger. The aircraft could also inspect dams, do post-storm assessments, view vegetation under power lines, and perhaps even be used to secure safety cables for workers climbing towers,” Mr. Ettlinger said.*

*NYPA is interested in seeing how well the drones perform around transmission lines — if there’s the potential for the drones to be impacted by the line’s electromagnetic forces, he said. The authority is working with the Electric Power Research Institute to conduct those tests.*

*So far, so good, Ettlinger said, noting they haven’t found any issues yet because plastics and carbon fiber make up most of the components in the drones.*

*Last week’s testing between NYPA and Ontario Power Generation, which owned the drone, was designed to show how unmanned aircraft systems can help utilities more effectively monitor and maintain their assets. For that test, officials were shown how a SkyRanger drone equipped with both a 30X optical zoom lens and an infrared camera could be used to locate ice fishermen or boats along the spillway or river, day or night. The craft also demonstrated how it could be used to survey and map the Moses-Saunders Power Dam. The drone pilot viewed the aircraft’s video on a hand-held control station, panning the cameras in both directions and zooming in on points of interest. The aircraft was able to follow a moving target, fly for up to 50 minutes and give a warning in strong winds.*

*Launching from the Barnhart Island Bridge, officials saw the drone’s video capabilities by scanning Long Sault Dam. In a final test, the drone was sent from the parking lot of the Moses plant and alongside the full length of the dam to show its survey and mapping capabilities.*

*The two organizations had also used a drone in January to inspect the ice boom between Lake Erie and the Niagara River. NYPA had also participated earlier in a drone demonstration along its transmission lines near the Bleinheim-Gilboa power project, which Mr. Ettlinger said was “very successful.”*

*“We are looking at different applications, primarily inspections,” he said.*

*It would come in particularly handy for events like post-storm investigations or to see if there’s an issue with a transmission line. If a drone is readily available, it can do a spot inspection of the line. The transmission line inspection is currently done using a helicopter fly-by, which he said couldn’t get as close to a line as the drone. The drone could also get into areas where the helicopter could not maneuver.*

*“I think the biggest advantage is that it’s a tool that’s immediately available to us to do an inspection,” Mr. Ettlinger said.*

