Ministry of Energy Top Issues - November 20, 2017

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Date: Mon, 20 Nov 2017 07:01:01 -0500

Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

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It costs more, but Ontario stays with renewable energy

Waterloo Region Record

Mon Nov 20 2017

Page: A6

Section: EDITORIAL

Byline: Elmira Aliakbari and Ashley Stedman

The Ontario government's rigorous pursuit of renewables has increased electricity costs far more than necessary.

The government recently released an update to its long-term energy plan, projecting that the cost of electricity for homes and businesses will keep rising over the next 20 years.

For example, the average monthly electricity bills for residents and large industrial customers in northern Ontario will jump 52 per cent.

Ontario's electricity prices are already the highest in Canada and among the highest in North America.

But despite the high prices, the government of Premier Kathleen Wynne recently reaffirmed its commitment to costly solar and wind power, which is distorting market prices at the expense of Ontario's current and future ratepayers.

Ontario's electricity market is a stark example of what happens when government picks technology “winners” and “losers.”

The government chose wind and solar power over cheaper alternatives such as nuclear, hydroelectric or clean coal power. In fact, as documented in our recent study, a report from the Ontario Energy Board in 2016 found that nuclear and hydroelectric generators, despite providing the majority of electricity output in Ontario, received much lower rates than wind, solar and biofuel generators. Ontarians, then, paid less for nuclear and hydroelectric power than the renewable sources.

Between November 2016 and October 2017, the rate paid to wind generators ($140 per megawatt hour or MWh, a common unit for measuring power) was more than double that of hydro and nuclear generators. In addition, the rate paid to solar generators ($480 per MWh) was more than seven times the rate paid to nuclear generators ($66 per MWh) and more

than eight times the rate paid

to hydroelectric generators ($58 per MWh).

Clearly, there's a substantial price difference between the rates paid to wind, solar and biofuel generators, and the rates paid to other generators. The high cost for renewable sources is even more glaring when you consider that, in 2016, combined solar, wind and biomass generated less than seven per cent of electricity in Ontario.

And yet, between 2005 and 2015, the province increased its renewable capacity - solar, wind and bioenergy - by 18 per cent.

But because the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow, the government also had to secure more natural gas capacity as a backup to renewable sources, increasing Ontario's gas capacity by nine per cent.

As a result, the province realized a 26 per cent increase in capacity from 2005 to 2015. Meanwhile, the demand for electricity declined, partly due to rising electricity costs. The increase in capacity coupled with lower electricity demand has resulted in significant oversupply, which must often be exported at prices below cost.

From 2008 to 2016, residential electricity prices in Ontario increased by 71 per cent - more than double the national average. To make matters worse, a recent study shows Ontario's skyrocketing electricity prices cost the province more than 74,000 manufacturing jobs between 2008 and 2015.

The government seems uninterested in meaningful policy reforms that would reduce electricity prices. Instead, with its so-called Fair Hydro Plan, the government hides the true costs of Ontario's energy policies by shifting some of the cost from electric bills onto current (and future) tax bills.

The unfortunate reality is Ontario residents and businesses will continue to see their electricity bills rise due to the government's poor policy decisions.

Kenneth P. Green is a senior director; Elmira Aliakbari and Ashley Stedman are analysts, at the Fraser Institute.

Hospital coping with surging hydro rates; Bluewater Health projecting a $175,000 surplus

Sarnia Observer
Mon Nov 20 2017
Page: A2
Section: News
Byline: Tyler Kula

The rising cost of electricity in Ontario is having a substantial effect on hospital budgets.

Documents obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation show electricity bills have been on the rise at hospitals across Ontario over the last five years, most increasing 20-50 per cent in that time.

In Sarnia-Lambton, Bluewater Health's bill is up just over 40 per cent between 2012 and 2016, jumping $850,000 over that span to just under $3 million per year.

"How is Bluewater Health expected to manage their budget when electricity bills are rising by hundreds of thousands of dollars," said Christine Van Geyn, the federation's Ontario director in a press release.

"The more the hospital has to spend keeping their lights on, the fewer resources they have for patients."

The outliers include one hospital that saw its expense rise 125 per cent, and another that saw a 3.7-per-cent reduction, Van Geyn said in an email, noting she's not sure the reasons why.

The federation is pushing for structural changes to the electricity sector in Ontario, including an end to pricey solar and wind contracts, and improved oversight for nuclear projects, Meanwhile, Bluewater Health has been making energy efficiency upgrades - including automated heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment; and investing in new boilers, light-emitting diode (LED) lighting and heat wheels to recirculate air, said Samer Abou-Sweid, vice-president of operations with the hospital group.

Some of those projects have been ongoing for years, he said.

"We continue to look at more and more opportunities … you never stop," he said.

"I think once you stop you start falling behind."

Bluewater Health is projecting a $175,000 surplus by its yearend in March, which is essentially balanced considering its about $180-million total budget, Abou-Sweid said.

A $4.1-million provincial cash injection in March helped boost the amount of some procedures available, and offset some inflation.

"We knew about the increase in hydro rates so we budgeted for that and identified different ways across the hospital to try to still manage the budget despite the increase," Abou-Sweid said.

Other pressures on it and other Ontario hospitals include aging populations and more people seeking help for mental health, he said.

“I think all hospitals are feeling the pressure and they’re working with the Ministry of Health on getting some support.”

Earlier this year, Premier Kathleen Wynne rolled back the cost of electricity temporarily for residential ratepayers, ultimately increasing the long-term cost for short-term relief.

Rates for hospitals and other institutions were unaffected.

On Hydro, Horgan borrows a trick from the Liberal repertoire

The Globe and Mail
Mon Nov 20 2017
Page: S1
Section: News

When he sat on the opposition benches, John Horgan blasted the Liberal government of the day for using an accounting sleight of hand to mask the deteriorating state of BC Hydro’s balance sheet.

Now he is Premier, however, and his government has promised a BC Hydro rate freeze next year that will be funded through the very same technique he criticized: loading up the so-called “deferral accounts” to spend money now, and leave the bills to be paid by ratepayers some other day.

In a legislature debate in May, 2016, Mr. Horgan explained what was wrong with that tactic: “Under the BC Liberal watch, it’s now heading towards $6-billion of deferring debt, not for this generation and not for the people incurring the cost, but for future generations.”

Future generations of Hydro ratepayers already face a tremendous burden.

The Crown-owned utility that provides electricity to 95 per cent of the province is on weak financial footing, with an aging infrastructure that requires costly upgrades, plus $5.6-billion (at last count) in deferral accounts.

The NDP's promised rate freeze will add another $140-million to the rate-smoothing account (one of the many deferral accounts) that continues to grow because rates haven't kept up with the Crown corporation's real revenue requirements.

The accounting shuffle isn't unique to BC Hydro. In October, Ontario's Auditor-General found that the Liberal government is using inappropriate accounting to keep billions of dollars in red ink off the public books to conceal the financial impact of cutting electricity bills by 25 per cent.

But the problem with BC Hydro's practices have been charted for years - B.C.'s Auditor-General first called out the deferral accounts in 2011, describing them as a smokescreen that creates the illusion of profit when there is none.

The NDP, while in opposition, piled on to denounce the practice.

Adrian Dix (now the minister of health) wrote to the Auditor-General last year, calling the use of rate-smoothing accounts "an audacious attempt" to fool the public. "They are essentially taking unapproved revenue from [future years] and applying [them] to the present fiscal year, providing a misleading impression of BC Hydro's and the government's finances."

Mr. Horgan and his cabinet are weeks away from a decision that will have a significant impact on Hydro's finances: whether to continue with construction of the $10billion Site C dam. The Premier has said that his decision to kill or continue with the megaproject will be decided by the net effect on Hydro rates. If the rates and the book-keeping continue to be manipulated by his government, however, the decision-making process becomes opaque.

The NDP came into office knowing that BC Hydro's balance sheet contains a massive challenge to the government's finances as a whole.

In January, the bond-rating agency Moody's flagged Hydro's rapidly growing debt - in part because of the

Site C project - as a concern to the province's triple-A credit rating.

"The anticipated increase in debt continues to pressure the province's rating since it raises the contingent liability of British Columbia," the Moody's report stated.

BC Hydro can increase utility rates to ensure that its own revenues will continue to support its operations and debt payments, it noted, but when those deferral accounts are considered, "BC Hydro posts some metrics that are among the weakest of Canadian provincial utilities."

Economist Jock Finlayson of the Business Council of B.C. grudgingly supports the continued construction of Site C, and he blames the former Liberal government for allowing Hydro's finances to decline. But he said the current government is going to have to face up to the need for rate hikes.

"The reality is, the cost of power is going to be going up in British Columbia, Site C or no Site C. All you have to do is look at Hydro's balance sheet to understand why," he said in an interview. "It's a huge dilemma for our elected officials, because they know the public doesn't want to hear that - a lot of my members don't want to hear that, to be candid."

Mr. Horgan's government made a rate freeze part of its election platform, and the freeze was incorporated into its September budget - even though it has yet to be approved by the independent utilities regulator.

The B.C. Utilities Commission has said it will begin to look at the request for a freeze on Nov. 23. Its task is to ensure the cost of service is adequately funded, and if it concludes that Hydro needs a rate hike, that will put the NDP government in a bind. Energy Minister Michelle Mungall was not available for comment, and her officials would not say if cabinet intends to overrule its independent regulator.

The cabinet is still puzzling over what impact Site C will have on Hydro rates. Cancel or build, the pressure on rates will rise, and a rate freeze next year isn't going to do anything to help restore BC Hydro's finances.

$5K back in Town of Bracebridge coffers thanks to lighting initiative

Bracebridge Examiner

Sat Nov 18 2017

Page: 1

Section: News

BRACEBRIDGE - The Town of Bracebridge picked up a hefty rebate thanks to a lighting initiative at the Bracebridge Sportsplex.

The Town of Bracebridge recently completed the first phase of their energy efficient lighting upgrade project at the Bracebridge Sportsplex. The second phase will see the replacement of the remaining non-energy efficient lighting throughout the building by the end of 2018.

Swantech Energy Solutions and Low’s Power and Light supplied and installed the LED fixtures. The estimated reduction in energy consumption is 63 per cent on an annual basis. According to a Town of Bracebridge press release, when these energy savings are applied to the capital cost of the LED lights the estimated project payback is 2.44 years. Swantech Energy Solutions were also responsible for applying for, on behalf of the Town of Bracebridge, a Save on Energy Retrofit Program Rebate for this project.

Lakeland Power Distribution Ltd. confirmed that the Town of Bracebridge would receive a Save on Energy Retrofit Program Rebate in the amount of $5,280 plus HST and, to celebrate this partnership, a cheque was presented by Vince Kulchycki, Chief Operating Officer of Lakeland Holding Ltd. to Deputy Mayor Rick Maloney and Councillor Steve Clement of the Town of Bracebridge at the Bracebridge Sportsplex on Friday, Nov. 10.

“The Town of Bracebridge is continuing with these types of energy saving projects. We have switched our street lighting to LED and now this project at the Sportsplex,” said Maloney. “We look forward to the savings and are excited about passing these savings onto taxpayers.”

“Lakeland Power has aggressive energy targets ahead of them,” said Chris Litschko, chief executive officer for Lakeland Power Distribution Limited. “In 2016, we entered the Independent Electricity System Operator’s new Conservation First Framework where we are set to reduce over 15 Gigawatts of energy. This is a huge undertaking but we are confident that it is reachable target. We are proud to work with local businesses in assisting them to reduce costs.”

Thibeault ready for 'tough fight'

Sudbury Star

Mon Nov 20 2017

Page: A1 / Front

Section: News

Byline: Keith Dempsey

Glenn Thibeault isn't too concerned about a recent phone survey conducted for The Star by Oraclepoll that shows Sudburians are split almost evenly between the NDP, Liberals and Progressive Conservatives.

The NDP's Jamie West is out in front, but only by three percentage points. PC candidate Troy Crowder is at 31 per cent, according to the poll, while Liberal incumbent Thibeault is in third at 30 per cent.

"I've been in this now 10 years, and polls are always different," said Thibeault, the current MPP for Sudbury. "The one that is most important, obviously, is election day. I'll continue to work as hard as I can to earn people's trust, to make sure that when they go into the voting booth they're going to continue to choose me to be their representative."

The incumbent is not taking anything for granted, however.

"Is this going to be a tough fight? Of course it is," he said. "I'm not going into this with the blinders on. I recognize that every election is going to be a challenge."

Surrounded by local supporters at the Copper Cliff Curling Club on Sunday, Thibeault was nominated to run for re-election as the Ontario Liberal Party candidate in Sudbury.

Election day in Ontario is June 7, 2018.

When asked what his priorities are for the upcoming election, Thibeault didn't specify but said "there's lots of things that are left.”

Asked if he was concerned the byelection scandal and lingering bitterness over high hydro rates might hurt him in the upcoming election, Thibeault said he’s paying attention to all issues, while stressing the Liberals did take action to lower electricity bills.

“If you look at what we’ve done as a government, making sure that we rebuild the system, making sure the system is reliable and affordable, bringing forward the 25 per cent reduction, that’s been helping a lot of families,” Thibeault said. “That’s one of the things we’ve been doing in the last little bit, knocking on doors, and I am hearing from many that the changes that we’ve made have been helping them, and that’s important.”

Thibeault, who previously represented Sudbury federally with the NDP, was elected to the Ontario legislature as a Liberal in the 2015 byelection.

He was appointed Ontario’s energy minister in June, 2016.

The riding has gone NDP orange in the past, most recently with the election of Joe Cimino in 2014. The Green Party, which has yet to nominate a candidate, was preferred by just five per cent of Sudburians sampled by Oraclepoll.

Twenty per cent of those polled said they were undecided.

'Power framework' pitched by Ontario Chambers of Commerce

CTV Windsor
2017-11-17
Ontario politicians are being asked to commit to a power framework, drafted by the Windsor and Essex Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Electricity Stakeholders Alliance.

“The rising cost of electricity, up to 400 per cent in the past number of years, has made it the number one issue for businesses across Ontario,” said WERCC President & CEO Matt

Marchand.

Marchand says the Power Framework, which consists of eight recommendations, provides the roadmap Ontario needs for smart electricity decisions that achieve the best outcomes for electricity consumers through the principles of transparency, competition, objectivity and independence.

The hope is the political parties will adopt these ideas to help ensure power is cost effective.

The Ontario Electricity Stakeholders Alliance is a group of 19 energy consumers, businesses, producers and distributors from across Ontario.

The group is asking each political party to commit to its Power Framework, which focuses on:

- **Transparency** : A plan to build confidence in an open, accountable system with an engaged Legislature and rules that respect the public's right to be informed;

- **Competition** : A commitment to competitive processes, wherever feasible, that help support lower costs for both government and electricity consumers;

- **Objectivity** : A commitment to smart electricity decisions informed by rigorous cost-benefit analysis and objective procurement criteria that ensure Ontario ratepayers are getting the best value; and

- **Independence** : A process where independent agencies like the IESO, OEB and Ontario Electricity Safety Authority are appropriately resourced to make independent decisions and be held accountable by the provincial Legislature.

The report says Ontario's electricity sector governance and planning framework should be revised to reflect these fundamental principles.

Hydro comes begging; A sure sign that rates are going to go up, energy critic warns

Toronto Sun

Sat Nov 18 2017

Page: A7

Section: News

Byline: Antonella Artuso

One for a nearly 5% rate increase next year is a sure sign to hydro customers that their bills are headed skyward, Progressive Conservative Energy Critic Todd Smith says.

“Rates are going to up - you can guarantee it,” Smith said Friday. “We all know that rates are going to skyrocket after the next election once the Liberals’unfair hydro plan ends.”

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is currently mulling over a distribution rate increase requested by Hydro One that would increase bills by just over $140 a year by 2022.

Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt said in a speech this week that the utility needs an increase in its transmission rates to “keep the system stable and functioning” by replacing aging equipment.

Colin Nekolaichuk, a spokesperson for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault, said the OEB has a mandate to protect the interest of hydro ratepayers, and in 2010 actually reduced Hydro One’s distribution rates by 9%.

“Regardless of the outcome of any rate application before the OEB, electricity bills would not be impacted beyond the rate of inflation as per the Fair Hydro Plan,” Nekolaichuk said in an email Friday.

The Kathleen Wynne government’s Fair Hydro Plan reduced the average electricity bill by 25% this year, and promised four years of inflation rate increases which would likely hover around 2%.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said the Wynne government’s selling off of the majority of previously publiclyowned Hydro One has hurt customers.

“They only did this to cook the books here in Ontario - it’s not about people, it’s not about hydro bills,” Horwath said. “And we are paying it already and we’re going to continue to pay for it.”

Hydr One’s attempts to improve its bottom line will benefit its shareholders, not its customers, she said.

The Ontario government has blamed soaring hydro bills over the last decade on the need to fix the electricity system’s aging infrastructure, so why is Hydro One asking for rate increases to do the same thing, Smith said.

“They haven’t modernized the system,” Smith said.

“They’ve spent money rigging up these renewable energy projects and natural gas plants. They actually haven’t improved the quality of the lines, the transmission lines, the distribution lines and the system infrastructure.”

Hydro One CEO applies to raise power rates 4.8% in 2018

The South Bayview Bulldog

2017-11-17

Canadian Press says the president Hydro One has announced his intention to raise rates if approved. Mayo Schmidt did this at the Empire Club where he was speaking Thursday.

Schmidt said the application to the Ontario Energy Board seeks to increase rates by 0.5 per cent this year and 4.8 per cent next year. “What we apply for is to keep the system stable and functioning,” Schmidt told CP.. “If in fact we don’t apply for capital that’s required to replace aged equipment and that equipment fails, the system fails, so Ontario — in whatever region that would be — would be without power.”

Heat from steam captured to warm up greenhouse; Discharge from grain driers in Chatham being used to lower grower's energy costs

Windsor Star

Sat Nov 18 2017

Page: A8

Section: City & Region

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

The waste heat that will be captured from Greenfield Global's production facility will not only save money for Truly Green Farms, it will create less odour and steam coming from the stack at the Chatham ethanol plant.

Greenfield has invested $10 million in a heat and carbon dioxide (CO2) recovery system at its Bloomfield Road plant so it can be piped across the road to Truly Green Farms'18-hectare greenhouse, which will cut its energy costs in half.

Truly Green has been receiving excess CO2 from Greenfield since 2013, which has helped boost tomato yields by five per cent. Greenfield is in the final stages to start selling its waste heat for use in the greenhouse.

"It's been going fine, now we can supply them with some heat," said Veselin Nikolov, manager of Greenfield's Chatham plant.

He said the commissioning of the waste heat transfer system began on Monday to complete the preliminary health and safety review.

"Everything went well and we are ready to start collecting the steam coming out of the stack," he said.

Nikolov said the condenser that will capture the heat from the stack is "proprietary technology" developed by Greenfield's engineering and technology team.

"It's a very, very interesting piece of equipment," he said. "We actually combined different pieces of equipment from different manufacturers, but the process flow, the engineering, is our design."

He described the condenser as a giant kettle that captures the steam.

The visible white plume coming from the plant's stack is excess heat in the form of approximately 2,270 litres of steam per minute that comes from the driers used to dry the distiller's grains, a byproduct of making alcohol and biofuel from corn. Drying the distiller's grains is also the source of the odour.

As the process of transferring waste heat from Greenfield’s plant to the greenhouse is gradually ramped up over the next few weeks, the condensed steam plume will slowly reduce in size and the corn odour is expected to decrease as well.

The design has passed rigorous internal technical reviews as well as third-party emission modelling submitted to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

Nikolov said Greenfield’s heat transfer system needs to be ready by the first week of December when Truly Green plans to commission the new Dutch technology it has purchased to utilize the waste heat.

Q AND A ABOUT PROJECT

Q: Will the big stack be taken down? A:

No, the big stack will remain to exhaust the left over hot gases that come from the gas-fired driers.

Q: Will there be a visible plume from the stack? A:

Yes, but it will be significantly smaller.

Q: What is the variability of the plume? A: The plume will be more visible in the cold winter months and less visible in the hot summer months.

Q: Will the odour really go away?

A: Yes, to a great extent. Individual sensory responses vary from person to person. The true test will come after a few months of operation.

Q: If there is residual odour, what will the company do?

A: After the new system steadies out, we are required by MOE regulations to carry out a new set of emission tests. These results will be evaluated for possible future resolution.

Q: Will we see the larger plume ever again?

A: Yes. The larger plume will be visible when we have an outage of the new hot water delivery system to the greenhouse.

Q: How often will we see the larger plume?

A: We expect we could have 15 to 20 days per year of down time, resulting in a more visible plume, the same as it is today.

Q: What happens to the water that is condensed from the plume?

A: The water that is condensed has some fine grain that will be removed and treated at our anaerobic digestion plant. The residual waste water is then sent to the Chatham-Kent water treatment plant.

Ontario Energy Association Releases Report on Energy Governance in Ontario

Canadian Press
Fri Nov 17 2017
Section: Press Release

FOR: ONTARIO ENERGY ASSOCIATION

TORONTO, Nov. 17, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — The Ontario Energy Association (OEA) and Association of Power Producers of Ontario (APPrO) are pleased to release “Report on Energy Governance in Ontario.” The report is written by George Vegh, head of McCarthy Tétrault’s Toronto energy regulation practice. George is also Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto Law School and the School of Public Policy and Governance. Prior to joining McCarthy Tétrault, he was General Counsel of the Ontario Energy Board.

The report addresses how energy decisions are governed in Ontario and proposes solutions to improve it. The main conclusion in this report is that energy agencies have not provided the check and balance function that regulators perform in other jurisdictions and recommends that energy governance should be improved to better reflect the principles of transparency, accountability and integration.

”Ontario needs to update its energy planning governance framework to ensure consumers achieve maximum benefit from an energy sector that is going through an accelerating transformation,” said Vince Brescia, President &CEO of the OEA. “This report sets a number of important issues with the existing regulatory framework and offers strong and practical recommendations to improve the framework to ensure Ontario can deliver a system that is meeting the consumer’s evolving needs.”

David Butters, President &CEO of APPrO, stated that, “Our hope is that this paper will stimulate further discussion among policy makers, regulators and sector participants about governance improvements. The recently released LTEP provides a good foundation for those kinds of discussions to unfold.”

A digital copy of the Report can be viewed .

About the OEAThe Ontario Energy Association (OEA) is the credible and trusted voice of the energy sector. We earn our reputation by being an integral and influential part of energy policy development and decision making in Ontario. We represent Ontario‘s energy leaders that span the full diversity of the energy industry.

GRCA unveils updated plans for Park Hill Dam power station

Cambridge Times
2017-11-18
Byline: Ray Martin

Cambridge residents had their say about Grand River Conservation Authority’s proposed hydroelectric generating station to be added to the Park Hill Road dam in downtown Galt.

More than 35 people turned out to the second public information centre, held Wednesday (Nov. 15), as part of the project’s required environmental assessment study.

In a nutshell the $5.2 million project involves building a 500 kilowatt generating station into the existing Park Hill Road dam, which would produce enough electricity to supply 560 homes. While the conservation authority has wanted to tap the Park Hill Road dam for electricity for many years, it was only able to finalize an agreement with Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator under its Feed-in-Tariff program last year.

After securing its contract, the authority has lost little time in pushing forward with its plans. Last February the authority hired WSP Consultants to undertake the environmental assessment.

With the completion of seasonal environmental studies, it's anticipated this first stage of the project will occur during the course of the next 12 months. The full project will take about five years to complete and will be commissioned and begin hydro production between 2021 and 2022.

During Wednesday's public information session, the authority provided an update on its plans along with the latest rendering on what the new power plant might look like.

Dwight Boyd, director of engineering explained there have been a number of challenges in designing the new power plant.

“Most of the plant will be buried underground and won't be seen, but we are also faced with a number of constraints in developing the design. It has to be flood proof, but we also didn't want it to rise above the existing floodwall and block the neighbour's view of the river. We also decided to build it in stone to fit in with the surrounding architecture.”

Local architect Pat Simmons believes the project is a great idea, but more could be done with the esthetics of the structure.

“You can tell an engineer designed this,” he said. “It's good that they've gone with stone, but paying a little more consideration to the design, like sloping the roof and doing something with the windows, wouldn't hurt.”

A number of people attending the session also commented on the design of the structure. Boyd said the rendering is only the latest concept and further adjustments to the design can still be made.

Mention was also made that the lights on the new power station might be used to illuminate the dam at night.

“I think it's going to be wonderful. It blends in quite nicely with what's already there, and its great that they will be produce ‘green’ energy,” said Andrea Hoba, an avid kayaker who drives 90 minutes to paddle the river.

Peter Rowe, came to learn more about the project, but he also questioned its need.

“With so much electricity being generated, why do we need this?” he asked.

Rowe contends that instead of building new power generating stations, the money might be better spent on the research and development of better batteries to store the electricity currently being produced.

The GRCA will use revenue from the new power station to pay back the money taken from its land use reserve fund to pay for the project. After that, revenue generated will be pumped into its various conservation programs.

Grits headed for a fall; Small business not fooled by Liberals

Ottawa Sun

Sun Nov 19 2017

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Section: News

Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa must feel like Rodney Dangerfield’s “I don’t get no respect” line.

And rightfully so. Sousa delivered a shameful, electioneering fall economic statement last week in which he threw half a billion dollars to buy the votes of small-business owners by reducing their corporate tax rate one percentage point.

They didn’t buy it. Small-business owners gave him a big thumbs down.

An owner of a downtown Toronto restaurant smacked down Sousa, saying: “I think it shows a total lack of understanding and ignorance about small business.

“Don’t reduce my taxes,” but improve the “business environment.” Bingo. Other small-business owners also weighed-in, complaining of endless red tape programs of questionable value, skyhigh hydro rates and a weak provincial rental protection system.

Small-business owners hit the nail on the head and won't be fooled by Premier Kathleen Wynne's vote-buying schemes, basically telling her to take her money, or rather, our money, and shove it.

You have to wonder what else Wynne can dole out to salvage her damaged reputation between now and the June 7 election.

Already we have free education, discounted hydro, free drugs, a huge increase in the minimum wage and all kinds of other costly gimmicks to get your mind off 14 years of Liberal government incompetence and maladministration.

I wouldn't underestimate Wynne's ability to squander our money even more.

While Wynne tells us we're out of the red and let the good times roll, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk doesn't mince words.

She accuses the government of playing with the numbers to camouflage the provincial deficit, denouncing the government of "improperly" accounting for $26 billion to make it vanish from the province's books.

"The government created a needlessly complex accounting/financing structure for the electricity rate reduction in order to avoid showing a deficit or an increase in net debt," she says.

Because Wynne stubbornly disagrees with the person we count on to keep the government's finances in check, last year she simply ignored the auditor general's review and for the first time in Ontario history simply released the province's financial statements without the audit opinion - just like a tin-pot dictator.

Who needs that pesky thing called accountability after all? Wynne's popularity has hovered for many months between 12% and 17%, a feat never achieved by any provincial premier.

According to the latest Forum Poll, the Progressive Conservatives are riding high at 45%, while the Liberals and the New Democratic Party are statistically tied at 24% and 22% respectively.

It's fair to say that bribing of the electorate is not working.

It's no wonder we've seen a massive exodus from Liberal MPPs.

From cabinet ministers to backbenchers, the ever-growing list of departures past and future continues to swell. Deb Matthews, Liz Sandals, Brad Duguid, Dave Levac, Monte Kwinter, Madeleine Meilleur and Glen Murray. They'll all have you believe it's to "spend more time with loved ones," or some other corny line.

They may not have been the brightest of lights at the best of times, but they're smart enough to read the tea leaves. Watch for more to flee the sinking ship as the Liberals feel the pressure of a looming election catastrophe.