Ministry of Energy Top Issues - October 26, 2016

From: "Kourakos, Georgina (ENERGY)" <georgina.kourakos@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY-All" <energy.all@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Date: Wed, 26 Oct 2016 07:10:55 -0400

Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

- Ontarians zapped by hydro costs, again - Toronto Sun
- Mayor fed up with hydro charges – Oshawa Express
- Getting beyond 'wear a sweater': Seven ideas for how to fix Ontario's hydro system - Financial Post
- Who pays the most — and the least — for power in Ontario? Hydro One, Toronto Hydro among priciest - Financial Post
- Cochrane utility aims to hike rates - The Timmins Daily Press
- Province urged to cut Northerners' electricity costs - Northern Daily News (Kirkland Lake)
- Energy Minister Reveals Additional Details About Ontario-Quebec Electricity Deal – CHCH
- Cancel Amherst Island wind energy project - Kingston Whig-Standard
- Drennans bring Notice of Constitutional Question before Superior Court – Ontario Wind Resistance
- Ontario government seeking input on next Long-Term Energy Plan - Norwich Gazette
- Public deserves to have its say on PDI - Peterborough Examiner
- Green energy cuts serious mistake - Waterloo Region Record
- Hold government to account for hydro - Owen Sound Sun Times

Ontarians zapped by hydro costs, again
Toronto Sun
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A16
Section: Comment
Source: Toronto Sun

First the good news.

Last week, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne boasted that a new deal to purchase hydroelectric power from Quebec would save Ontarians $70 million over seven years in power costs.

Now, the bad news. This week, the opposition Tories discovered that in the government's public accounts for 2015-16, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) reported a "previously unrecognized actuarial loss and past service costs" of just over $80 million.

The IESO balances Ontario's electricity supply and directs it across the province's transmission lines, connecting electricity generators, transmitters, retailers, businesses and industries that use power, and local distribution companies that deliver it to people's homes.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said the loss was due to a change in the way the IESO calculates its pension liabilities.

PC Energy Critic John Yakubuski noted the $80 million loss more than wipes out the savings of buying Quebec electricity while Thibeault argued it will not result in any "additional increases" on residential electricity rates.

Whatever that means, the reality - as the Liberal government knows from a 2014 report examining the sustainability of all its public pension plans in the electricity sector - is that all electricity consumers will end up paying for the added cost in some way.

As that report noted: “Pension costs are reflected in the price IESO (and other provincial electricity agencies) charge for their services … all transmission grid connected ratepayers in Ontario pay for … IESO operations …”

The greater concern when it comes to public pensions in the electricity sector, of which the IESO is only a small part, is that they’re financially unsustainable.

This is just one more example of the mess the Liberals have made of Ontario‘s electricity sector, particularly with their reckless rush into expensive and unreliable green energy.

Ontario now has a huge electricity surplus and yet prices are skyrocketing, throwing more and more families into energy poverty, where they spend more than10% of their income to power their homes.

Tokenism like rebating the 8% provincial sales tax offof hydro bills as of Jan. 1 - which the Liberals themselves imposed on July 1, 2010 when they brought in the HST - doesn’t cut it.

It’s time to make them pay for these blunders, in the next provincial election.

Mayor fed up with hydro charges
Posted on October 26, 2016 in News
By Joel Wittnebel/The Oshawa Express

When looking at hydro bills for the City of Oshawa over the past year, something just doesn’t add up.

As the city continues to reduce its power consumption by employing green technologies and initiatives, the bill continues to sky rocket. The culprit? The global adjustment (GA) charge.

For Mayor John Henry, enough is enough.

“The cost of energy is destroying the economy of Ontario,” he says.

Specifically, it’s not the power costs, but the additional fees that push in to fill the gap. As the bill goes down thanks to energy-saving initiatives, the GA fee increases in order to fill in the gap. It’s exactly how the Province of Ontario set it up when it was implemented in 2007 to cover the cost of ailing power infrastructure.

Determined by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), the charge changes from month to month and is based on series of factors. First, the difference between what IESO pays energy suppliers for the power and what the fair market value of that power actually is is built into the fee. It also includes the loss in global adjustment from surplus power sold to the United States without the GA attached.

It also covers other costs such as electricity system renewal in the province, and less popular things like the costs associated with the scandal-plagued gas plants cancelled by the province in 2013.

In 2015, the province collected $1.3 billion in GA fees. Henry quotes sources who claim that number is expected to increase to $2 billion this year.

“That’s what’s hurting us and making us uncompetitive,” he says.

In the upcoming budget year, the city estimates the GA will cost them $3 million and for Henry, the more he looks at the numbers, the more it frustrates him.

Through examining Oshawa municipal hydro bills shared with The Oshawa Express by the mayor, the disconnect is clear.

Between June 15 and July 6, 2015, it cost the city approximately $3,600 to operate its streetlighting system. The GA charge on top of that was $62,325 and combined with other charges and fees brought the city’s final bill to $151,287.

Over the last year, the city has increased the amount of streetlights in the city, but through various green initiatives has been able to cut down its power costs by a fifth.

Between May 17 and June 6, 2016, the city paid $2,996 for its streetlights to operate. The GA charge on top of that was $91,097, and totalled with other charges resulted in a final bill of $221,728.

“You should be really proud as a resident of this community that we’ve gone out and done all the right things and we’ve paid the bill for all the right things,” Mayor Henry says. “What shocks me is we’ve lowered our (energy) bill by one fifth, and our (final) bill has gone up.”

The energy consumption issue also creates particular problems for municipalities operating city facilities that cannot simply be shut down.

“We can’t turn the ice plants off in the summer time, we can’t turn our pool pumps off because it’s not the right thing or the healthy thing to do,” Henry says.

At the Legends Centre, the city paid $8,625 for power between June 15 and Aug. 4, 2015. The final bill was $83,815, with $48,701 of that being GA charges.

Now, the mayor is calling on the province to change the way it does business by halting the flow of grants and subsidies to municipalities and use those funds to cover its costs and let the cities keep their money.

“Stimulate the economy by allowing municipalities to keep what they’ve got in their baseline budget. Don’t give us more money, just let us use what we have,” he says. “Let me use the $3 million that we have to meet the needs of our residents and because it’s a baseline amount, it’s in the budget, we can use that to help offset tax increases.”

The mayor has been pushing his case to all levels of government and policy makers, meeting with the provincial parties, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and other mayors across the province.

“I’ve been meeting with anybody that will listen to me,” he says.

The mayor says it would be a “bold move” for a political party to stand up in 2018 and make a pledge toward taking such action.

For Henry, it doesn’t make sense of Ontarians to suffer with such inflated hydro bills.

“With what we have here, we should have everything,” he says.

Getting beyond 'wear a sweater': Seven ideas for how to fix Ontario's hydro system
Financial Post
Tue Oct 25 2016
Section: News
Byline: Ashley Csanady

The politics of power in Ontario have been simmering ever since Conservative “Power Minister” Adam Beck first switched on the street lights in Berlin, Ont. (now Kitchener) in 1910. But in the past three decades, energy has gone from being a public good that win a government support in all the right places, to an Achilles heel.

In modern Ontario, successive premiers from Mike Harris, Ernie Eves, Dalton McGuinty and now Kathleen Wynne have had to grapple with an aging, dysfunctional electricity system, attempts at revitalization mired in scandal, and a furious electorate unhappy over skyrocketing prices.

Rates have more than doubled since the Liberals took power from the Conservatives in 2003, an election the Tories lost in part due to controversies surrounding the energy file. Then, consumers paid 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour of electricity; today it’s between 8.7 and 18 cents, depending on the time of day.

“If you think about how bad it was in September and November 2002, it is worse now by ten points,” Greg Lyle, a pollster and president of Innovative Research Group, told the Ontario Energy Association conference in Toronto last month. He said people are “as angry as they’ve ever been” and it’s Wynne who’s bearing the brunt of the fury.

The government loves to blame its Tory predecessors, saying the decision to break up Ontario Hydro and years of neglect are what consumers are paying for now.

Donald Dewees, an economics professor at the University of Toronto, said much of what customers are paying for is the result of necessary upgrades - but that the Liberals made enough mistakes along the way to share a good chunk of the blame. “You can’t just blame the current government, but you can ask them what's your plan in the future," he said. In some ways, he added, people also have to "just accept that Ontario is not and will never be a low-cost jurisdiction again."

The government's short-term moves are more symbolic than transformative: a new energy minister, Glenn Thibeault, removing HST from home hydro bills, offering rebates first to rural customers and eventually to all users, and just recently announcing a deal to buy electricity from Hydro Quebec.

But when it comes to permanent fixes, solutions are harder to come by. Energy ministers past and present, bureaucrats, utility owners, academics and activists all agree the system is bloated and costly. They just can't agree how to fix it.

If you think about how bad it was in September and November 2002, it is worse now by ten points

Talk to solar and green energy advocates, and they say stop refurbishing nuclear plants. The nuclear and gas folks, on the other hand, say it was the right move when Thibeault announced earlier this month the province is pausing its procurement of green energy contracts. But it was a move that strikes the man who birthed the equally lauded and reviled Green Energy Act as short-sighted.

"I think the Liberals joining this price reduction narrative, frankly, runs the risk of looking unauthentic to me," said former energy minister George Smitherman. "This announcement is more significant in what it doesn't say than what it does say."

"What it does say is we're not going to go ahead with some procurement we don't need and scapegoating green energy as they do it," he added.

So how does the government move beyond short-term fixes to focus on the longer term problems that plague the system? Here are a handful of ideas experts say are worth exploring.

Reinvest dividends

The province's energy businesses - a combination of Hydro One dividends, Ontario Power Generation revenues and Hydro One Brampton is expected to generate $1 billion in revenue next year.

Hydro One is being partially sold off and Brampton will soon be merged with three other municipally-owned distributors, however OPG's revenues - about $500 million - could be funnelled back into the electricity system, rather than into the treasury, said former energy minister Smitherman. Those funds could then be used to lower generation rates and ultimately lower costs for consumers.

Current minister Thibeault, who has only been in the job since June, didn't rule the idea out and said he's open to any and all suggestions to lower rates.

Any move to shuffle revenues would require discussions with the ministry of finance as it works to balance Ontario's budget by the self-imposed March 2018 deadline.

Close Pickering's nuclear plant

Bruce and Darlington nuclear plants are necessary to Ontario's long-term energy needs, Smitherman says, but it's pure politics that keeps Pickering open.

Closing it would save billions in unnecessary costs and curb safety concerns about the aging plant, he said - especially given how well-paid its power workers are. But other experts say buying out rather than phasing out those workers would cost more than it would save.

Officials argue that Pickering is safe and provides the kind of leeway that allowed the minister to put a moratorium on new feed-in-tariff contracts, for example. They also argue it will provide buffer generation during the upgrades at Bruce Power on the shores of Lake Huron and Darlington Nuclear on Lake Ontario.

Stop selling power abroad

The opposition parties love to hammer the government for selling off excess power to other jurisdictions, but it is a necessary part of the system. Because some power generated, such as nuclear, can't be ramped up and down to meet demand, sometimes Ontario makes too much and sells it to New York or Quebec or other places. Supply and demand sets the price, so sometimes Ontario gets back less than it costs to generate the power.

“From 2009 to 2014, Ontario exported a total of 95.1 MWh of power to other jurisdictions. The total cost of producing this power is $3.1 billion more than the revenue Ontario received for exporting it,” Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk wrote in her 2015 annual report. Over those fives years, she said Ontario, “paid exporters a net total of $32.6 million to take our power.”

Carmine Marinelli/Vancouver 24hours/QMI AgencyEnergy ministers past and present, bureaucrats, utility owners, academics and activists all agree the system is bloated and costly. They just can’t agree how to fix it.

Yes, the province can’t always just stop making that power and sometimes it’s better to sell it at a loss then just let it dissipate, the auditor acknowledged.

Minister Thibeault said selling something at a loss isn’t the same thing as paying someone to take it. In 2015, the province actually made $228 million from power exports, and in 2014, it made $320 million, according to officials.

In fact, those exports allow for the kind of wiggle room that could, one day, allow the province to lower costs in the long run by negotiating or phasing out costly contracts. Making too much power, then, is better than too little, because if you have to buy power you might end up paying too much on the free market. Having excess also allows officials to negotiate better contracts because they may not need to sign with any one provide.

Merge LDCs

California, which has a population roughly equivalent to Canada’s, has four local distribution companies (LDCs) that sell consumers power. Ontario, about a third its size, has around 80. If more were merged, some believe administrative costs would be saved and the consumer would reap the benefits.

That’s why several utilities in Peel Region west of Toronto are buying Hydro One Brampton from the province and merging it with three other companies. Brian Bentz, CEO of Merge Co. - the name the new company has been given while the approvals process makes its way through the courts - says once the merger is done, it will save $50 million a year.

Over 25 years, he said, “consumers are going to pay about $1 billion less in distribution costs than they otherwise would have by having these utilities come together.”

It would take decades to provide consumer relief, but it’s a solution that’s popular with the Ontario Chamber and university experts.

Buy power from Quebec

Electricity is so cheap in la belle province, most people use it to heat their homes. For years, armchair observers and experts have suggested a long-term power deal with the province could save Ontario billions in generation costs.

Last Friday, the provinces moved to do just that: inking a two-terawatt deal for Ontario to buy two terawatts of power through 2023. It’s enough to power a city of about 200,000 people and boosts Ontario’s green energy cred. What it won’t do, however, is save consumers much.

At most, the province, which spends billions a year to generate power, will save $70 million a year. Critics say that’s just pennies for consumers. If we want true savings from a Quebec power deal, it would need to be enough to shutter a costly gas plant or two or cancel an expensive nuclear upgrade - neither of which this deal will accomplish.

Accept that rates are rising everywhere

The great irony of the current anger over electricity costs in Ontario is that the worst may be over.

“We’ve invested in that aging system… and we are now starting to see the effects on the consumer of those decisions,” said Jatin Nathwani, a professor with the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy.

Craig Glover/London Free Press / QMI AGENCYRates have more than doubled since the Liberals took power from the Conservatives in 2003, an election the Tories lost in part due to controversies surrounding the energy file.

Nathwani said the move to a greener energy system was a laudable, if somewhat poorly executed policy. Ontario consumers are now paying the price many nearby jurisdictions will still start incurring as their own green energy policies kick in.

If you believe eliminating coal was a good thing - as a large majority of Ontarians say they do in poll after poll - then the province is simply paying its dues.

“Part of the problem with electricity rates in this province is that previous leaders, politicians, etc. have not paid the fiddler. And we’re paying the fiddler now,” Ontario Chamber of Commerce president Allan O’Dette said.

…and emphasize conservation

Transmission is a big line item on customer’s bills, but it’s generation that really drives the cost. That’s why having surplus power could actually save money in the long run - and why conservation, both by consumers and industry is so important: Less demand means less power is needed and the most expensive generation contracts can be phased out.

One of the biggest burdens is the many costly contracts with small, gas-powered plants dotted across the province. As many of those deals (and the wind and solar contracts) come up in the early 2020s, the government can negotiate those costs down or eliminate them.

NDP energy critic Peter Tabuns said the presence of private, profit-oriented interests that have taken over since Ontario Hydro was broken up are part of what is really driving costs. “As you privatize, your ability to reduce prices is very limited… because you get locked into tight contracts,” he said. “You’ve made it physically or legally impossible to correct your mistakes.”

If Ontario really wants to get rid of some of its costly private deals, people simply needs to use less power. “I’ve been telling people to put a sweater on since the 1970s,” energy consultant Todd Arnold joked at that energy conference last month. He later explained what he meant was power companies need to do a better job of selling that idea, without making consumers feel like they’re being asked to fix a problem they didn’t create.

Who pays the most — and the least — for power in Ontario? Hydro One, Toronto Hydro among priciest
Financial Post
October 25, 2016 4:35 PM
Ashley Csanady, Monika Warzecha

Ontario electricity bills are the new weather.

Everyone loves to talk about how high theirs is, how their respective utility must be the worst, most expensive in the province. But not everyone can have the highest bills in Ontario.

So who really pays the most?

It’s likely no surprise that Hydro One’s customers pay the most, thanks in large part to the cost of transmission to remote areas. Low-density customers pay $258.82 with HST for 1,000 kWh of power, medium-density consumers pay $226.58 for the same, according to data pulled from the Ontario Energy Board’s bill calculator on Oct. 25. (Hydro One consumers are categorized by the utility depending on their area to account for the cost of transmitting power long distances.)

People in Algoma and Atikokan have the next highest rates, paying $222.68 and $209.62 respectively with HST for 1,000 kWh of power. Innpower customers in the Innisfil area north of Toronto have the fifth most expensive bills. They would cough up $205.76 for the same amount of electricity after tax.

And residents of the country’s largest city might be surprised to learn they pay just pennies less than those in Innisfil for a bill of 1,000 kilowatt hours (kWH). That means Toronto Hydro is the sixth-most expensive power company in the province despite enjoying mass density. And given the recent discussion of its aging infrastructure, there’s a good chance those rates will climb even further.

Customers of Hawkesbury Hydro east of Ottawa enjoy the cheapest rates in the province, paying $173.74 with HST for 1,000kWh of power. E.L.K. Energy Inc. in Essex charges the second leastL: $174.24 with HST for 1,000kWh of power. Thunder Bay Hydro Electricity Distribution Inc. comes third, with a 1,000 kWH bill costing $174.24 with tax.

There are over 80 local distribution companies in Ontario, and over half charge between $180 and $195 for 1,000kWh of power, so most consumers are paying around the same amount. But the outliers are what cause tensions, with people going to the media saying their neighbours down the street in a different utility enjoy much cheaper rates. The difference between a rural Hydro One customer and one in Hawkesbury, both of who used 1,000 kWh, is $85.05, or $1020.96 a year, respectively. (Three communities, in Woodstock and Norfolk and Haldimand Counties, have seen their LDC absorbed by Hydro One, and are currently paying a slightly lower rate that will be phased out over time).

The above map lets you explore each local distribution company (LDC) and what it charges for a 1,000 kWh of monthly usage before and after HST are added. (The eight per cent provincial portion of that tax will be rebated starting next year).

The large swaths of the province not covered by an LDC are either Hydro One customers, Crown land or remote First Nations communities that aren't connected to the grid (or use a power company too small to map). Rates fluctuate in Ontario with time-of-day pricing. All figures in this map are based on average usage throughout the day.

While 1,000 kWh is fairly heavy power usage, likely representing a larger single-family home, the figure was selected because it's the number Hydro Quebec uses to compare that province's rates to the rest of the country.
It's also not out of bounds. For customers angry about their summer hydro bills, they should note Toronto Hydro says a normal 2.5 tonne central conditioning unit — a pretty average size — gobbles 1,050 kilowatts hours in just one month. A fridge, by comparison, uses just 75 kWh in a month, a ceiling fan 12 kWh.

But Ontario consumers are right to be riled about their bills. They pay some of the highest rates in Canada; however, in a North American context, they're doing OK. The below map shows how major cities across the continent compare and is based on numbers from Hydro Quebec's annual report comparing electricity rates across the continent. (The numbers in the below map are based on Hydro Quebec's annual comparison of electricity prices. The document uses figures from April 2016, so the numbers for Ottawa and Toronto may vary slightly.)

Most expensive power bills in Ontario for 1,000 kWh

These are the ten most expensive local distribution bills in Ontario, including HST,according to data pulled from the Ontario Energy Board's bill calculator.

Hydro One (low density): $258.82

Hydro One (medium density): $226.58

Algoma Power Inc.: $222.68

Atikokan Hydro Inc.: $209.62

Innpower Corporation: $205.76

Toronto Hydro: $205.61

Wellington North Power Inc.: $204.50

Erie Thames Powerlines Corporation: $202.74

Hydro 2000 Inc. (Alfred, Ontario): $202.25

Sioux Lookout Hydro Inc.: $202.10

Least expensive power bills in Ontario for 1,000 kWh

These are the ten least expensive local distribution bills in Ontario, including HST, according to data pulled from the Ontario Energy Board's bill calculator.

Hydro Hawkesbury Inc.: $173.74

E.L.K Energy Inc. (Essex) : $174.24

Thunder Bay Hydro Electricity Distribution Inc.: $177.81

PUC Distribution Inc. (Sault Ste. Marie): $178.26

Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc.: $178.38

Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro Inc.: $179.35

Kingston Hydro Corporation: $180.53

Energy Plus Inc. (Cambridge and North Dumfries): $180.53

PowerStream Inc. (Barrie): $182.17

Ottawa River Power Corporation: $182.29

Cochrane utility aims to hike rates
The Timmins Daily Press
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A2
Section: News
Byline: Alan S. Hale
Source: The Daily Press

Northern Ontario Wires, an electricity distributor owned by the Town of Cochrane, has made an application to the Ontario Energy Board to raise its energy rates on customers in Kapuskasing, Cochrane and Iroquois Falls.

If approved, the rate increases would take effect on May 1 and would, by the energy board's estimation, cause an average residential bill to increase by $5.62 per month.

Before any decision is made on the company's application, the energy board is hosting a pair of public meetings in Cochrane and Kapuskasing on Nov. 2. "We're putting on community meetings in response to the application to provide people with an opportunity to respond to the application, to provide them with information on how they can get involved in the rate application process, and to ask any questions they might have for the Ontario Energy Board," explained Andrew Bodrug, energy board spokesman.

According to documents filed by Northern Ontario Wires as part of its application, the application for increasing their distribution rate is motivated by the falling populations in all three communities it serves.

As a result, the municipally-owned energy producer has been underearning for the past three years, and the rate increase is necessary for returning it to profitability.

"Challenges have arisen, and management has managed costs and undertaken initiatives that are temporary and short-term in nature in order to get by until rates can be reset through this cost of service application. Northern Ontario Wires requires rates to be re-set to enable key work programs and restore the utility to a profitable level," wrote the company in its application.

The meeting in Kapuskasing will take place at the Civic Centre from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 2. The meeting in Cochrane will be held later that some day from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Tim Hortons Event Centre.

'Pushing with every opportunity'; Province urged to cut Northerners' electricity costs
Northern Daily News (Kirkland Lake)
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A1 / Front
Section: News
Byline: Gord Young
Source: Postmedia Network

Northern politicians are calling on the province to reduce overall energy costs for Northern Ontario residents.

North Bay city council adopted a motion this week tabled by councillors Mike Anthony and Jeff Serran that highlights the latest

report by the province's Financial Accountability Officer showing that Northerners pay 25 per cent more for overall home energy costs, and up to 45 per cent more for electricity.

The motion calls on the province to review and suggest ways to reduce overall energy costs in the North.

"I believe one of the single biggest challenges we are facing in Ontario today is energy costs," said Anthony, who zeroed in on the price of electricity.

He suggested that North Bay Hydro only has control over a small portion of bills and that much of the expense for electricity is the result of provincially mandated charges such as the the Global Adjustment fee, which covers costs such as conservation programs and the differences between the market price of electricity and the regulated or contract prices that are paid to generators.

So far this year at the city's water treatment plant, Anthony said the total electricity bill has been $513,0000. He said $308,000 of that has gone to the Global Adjustment fee. At the wastewater treatment plant, he said, the city has paid $384,000 for electricity, including $245,000 in Global Adjustment fees. And at city hall, he said, the fee accounted for $117,000 of the total bill of $197,000.

"Now is the time to keep the pressure up," said Serran, pointing the province's changing position regarding hydro costs and it's green energy initiatives.

"If that's the case, we need to really keep reinforcing the need for changes to the high cost of energy."

Anthony pointed to recent efforts by the province to address hydro costs, including the scraping of $3.8 billion in planned renewable energy contracts. But, he said, such efforts will result in only minimum savings, suggesting more needs to be done.

Energy Minister Reveals Additional Details About Ontario-Quebec Electricity Deal
Source: CHCH
Oct 25, 2016 6:38 PM (33)

Anchor: More details are being revealed about our province's electricity trade deal with Quebec, with Ontario's Energy Minister saying today that power will be generated at night and used during the day.

Glenn Thibeault, Minister of Energy: Part of our electricity trade agreement, Quebec offered to store up to 500 GigaWatts of electricity for Ontario at night, and this power will then be returned to Ontario during the day, Mr. Speaker. For context, this is a 500 GigaWatt Hours of power could power about 56,000 homes for an entire year, Mr. Speaker. The reason this is so beneficial that electricity is often much cheaper at night, Mr. Speaker. A lower demand for electricity drives down the price and many generation sources including nuclear, wind and hydro can't produce energy at night that can be used at later hours, Mr. Speaker. So Ontario is able to produce the electricity cheaply at night, store it in Quebec and bring it back to Ontario during the day when it is most needed. Our government Mr. Speaker will continue to ....

Anchor: So far the two provinces have not revealed how much Ontario will pay for power under the seven year agreement, but the Liberal government says the deal is expected to save Ontario about $70 million in costs.
Transcript captured directly from source. Some typographical errors or omissions are to be expected.

Cancel Amherst Island wind energy project; Why ruin one of the province's most precious places to produce energy we don't need, asks Sen. Bob Runciman
Kingston Whig-Standard
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A5
Section: Forum
Byline: Bob Runciman
Source: Kingston Whig-Standard

Amherst Island is an idyllic place: rolling meadows dotted with heritage buildings, narrow carriage roads lined by the largest concentration of historic dry stone walls in Canada. The population of 400 year-round residents expands to 1,000 in the summer, but the island located west of Kingston in Lake Ontario, because it is a 20-minute ferry ride from the mainland, has largely resisted the encroachment of developers.

It is an internationally designated Important Bird Area, lies directly on the migration path of dozens of bird varieties, is home to several endangered species, and is known as the owl capital of North America.

In short, Amherst Island is a special place.

But that could all change if an industrial wind energy project goes ahead. The Ontario government has approved the construction of 27 giant turbines, a transformer station and collector lines. These are no ordinary windmills: the industrial turbines are more than 500 feet tall. That's the height of a 55-storey skyscraper.

Without question, this massive construction project will disrupt life on the island like never before. The historic stone fences will be damaged or destroyed. Wildlife habitat will be damaged or destroyed.

And when these massive turbines are in operation, many of the things that make Amherst Island such a special place will be destroyed.

This development, combined with other projects, either in operation to the east or awaiting construction to the west, will mean the migratory flight path along the eastern end of Lake Ontario will be blanketed with bird-killing wind turbines.

These are among the reasons that Nature Canada, Ontario Nature, the Kingston Field Naturalists and the American Bird Conservancy - along with such eminent Canadians as Margaret Atwood and Roberta Bondar - have all said the Amherst Island project is a terrible idea.

But the green energy movement - and I count Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and her government as among the biggest advocates for this immensely profitable business - tell us that destroying places like Amherst Island is a worthwhile trade-offfor a green future free of fossil fuels.

I reject that argument, categorically.

First, there are other places to build such developments: places where the threat to the cultural and natural heritage is not so acute.

Second, we don't need the electricity this project will generate. Ontario is producing far more energy than it needs, even at peak times. It has some 35,000 megawatts of installed generating capacity, with 28,000 or more available at any given time, to meet peak demand of 21,000 megawatts.

With such a huge surplus, the market price of electricity has declined substantially. Yet most producers have contracts with Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator that guarantee provinces to the tune of $6.3 billion over the past decade. The subsidy was $1.4 billion last year and the institute estimates it will be $1.8 billion this year.

Our competitors get that power for only 12 per cent of the cost, with the other 88 per cent picked up by Ontarians. The problem is getting worse because Ontario continues to add to the surplus by approving projects to produce more power that it doesn't need.

It is crazy, to put it mildly, and it's getting crazier, thanks to an outof-control system put in place by a government that has been richly rewarded by its friends in the green energy industry.

That brings us back to Amherst Island. Why ruin one of the province's most precious places to produce energy we don't need? Energy that will, in fact, benefit our economic rivals.

The Amherst Island project should be cancelled immediately, before construction begins. If cancellation fees must be paid, so be it. As former premier Dalton McGuinty famously said after his cancellation of two gas plants in southern Ontario: "It's never too late to do the right thing."

In this case, it's the right thing to do for Amherst Island and it's the right thing to do for the people of Ontario.

Bob Runciman is the Conservative senator for Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Drennans bring Notice of Constitutional Question before Superior Court
ONWindResistance
2016-10-25

Support Shawn and Tricia Drennan Tomorrow!

On Wednesday, October 26, 2016Shawn and Tricia Drennan will bring a Notice of Constitutional Question before the Superior Court at 1 Courthouse Square, Goderich Ontario. Start time is 10:00 a.m. This motion is in regards to the current commercial operation of the K2 Wind Ontario Inc. project and the harm it is inflicting.

Shawn and Tricia will be utilizing the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, along with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Covenants, described above are expressed in Canada under Section 26 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which states:

26. " The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms
shall not be construed as denying the existence of any other
rights or freedoms that exist in Canada. "

We are requesting your attendance at the hearing as a show of support. Any and all support will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,
Shawn & Trish Drennan

Ontario government seeking input on next Long-Term Energy Plan
Norwich Gazette
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A4
Section: View Points
Byline: Pat Jilesen , Director
Source: Norwich Gazette

Energy is a hot topic these days.

What options we have, how much we pay for it and where it is available. As the Ontario government launches its consultation process to develop the next Long-Term Energy Plan, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is submitting an official submission with our priorities.

Anyone can contribute through in-person or online consultations, or provide a written submission - until Dec. 17, 2016. Details are provided at Ontario. ca /energytalks The Ministry of Energy is seeking public input to develop the next Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP) that will outline the path for maintaining a reliable supply of clean, affordable energy. For agriculture, and OFA's 36,000 farm business members, energy represents a vital farm input. We depend on affordable energy to grow our farms, businesses, communities and the Ontario economy.

The Premier's challenge for growth in the agri-food sector also relies on a readily accessible, consistent supply of affordable energy. Rural needs are critical to achieving a successful long-term plan for all our energy needs.

OFA's official submission to the province's Long-Term Energy Plan will focus on three key priorities, although there is a lengthy list of opportunities, possibilities and considerations that would be valuable to review.

Rural Ontario needs access to natural gas and renewable natural gas systems to reduce energy costs and help stimulate the rural economy.

Rural Ontario needs a combination of fuel solutions to meet rural needs and address climate change.

Rural Ontario needs effective smart metering and smart grid technology to manage energy generation, distribution and load use.

A responsive, reliable energy grid with access to safe, affordable energy will help sustain and expand Ontario's agri-food sector, and help us meet the Premier's challenge for growth. OFA is asking the Ontario government for a strong rural focus in the next Long-Term Energy Plan, balanced with reliability, conservation and community considerations that will benefit all Ontarians.

Read OFA's full submission to the Long-Term Energy Plan at ofa. on. Ca

Public deserves to have its say on PDI
Peterborough Examiner
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A4
Section: Opinion
Source: Peterborough Examiner

Once Hydro One has made a formal offer to buy the local electricity distribution network, a public meeting where people can comment on the offer is a must.

So far, city council has agreed only that there will be a public information meeting in each of the five city wards.

City staff, and presumably Peterborough Utilities Inc. staff, will be at those meetings to present details of the offer, answer questions and accept written comments from anyone shows up.

The ward meetings will be important. People will be able to get the facts and ask all the questions they want.

Equally important will the opportunity to tell city council members what they think of the deal after they get all that information. Not by way of written comments that are distilled into a staffreport, but directly and in their own voices.

Most of those voices will oppose the sale. That has been the case so far and won't change.

It is easy to make that prediction because the core opposition is not based on the technical facts of a sale: how much cash will the city end up with (an estimated $50 million), how much annual revenue will it lose (about $1 million), what job guarantees will Hydro One give, how distribution rates for customers will be affected.

Rather, many opponents simply don't agree that there is any good reason to sell part of a city-owned utility to Hydro One. They are doubly opposed because Hydro One is on the way to becoming a privately controlled company, but would still say "no" if it remained in public hands as an arm of the provincial government.

That is a commonly held feeling and one council has to consider. Those voices deserve a public forum.

That doesn't mean council members have to agree with them. Their responsibility is to make the best decision for all of the people of Peterborough.

Council does have to make sure it is acting on the fullest and best information and advice.

In this situation a lot of weight should be given to the advice of managers who run PUI on behalf of the city. They have no personal interest in selling of the poles and wires side of the company they have been managing quite successfully.

They do have insight into the effects of selling, or holding onto, the distribution network.

Council should insist that they get that advice.

It should also be asking staff to report on the experience of other municipalities that have sold their distribution networks to Hydro One in the past few years.

The philosophical public-versus-private ownership issue is relevant and needs to be heard, but should not be a deciding factor.

Green energy cuts serious mistake
Waterloo Region Record
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A7
Section: EDITORIAL
Byline: Doug Wagner

The cancellation of the next round of tenders for more green energy in Ontario comes as no surprise - but it's still a serious mistake.

From a political perspective, the decision is understandable, if wrong-headed.

A provincial election is approaching and voters are upset with electricity prices. They have the false impression that the increase in prices over the past few years has been caused by green energy being introduced to the generation mix.

In politics, the top priority is always getting re-elected, and a move that is perceived to put the brakes on electricity price increases is sure to gain popularity.

However, we need to consider the facts.

Studies show that only five per cent of the price increases have been caused by the introduction of green energy. This makes sense since wind and solar make up such a small percentage of the total electricity produced.

But perception always trumps facts.

To cancel the tender for more renewables because of mistakes made in the past on pricing is like driving your car using only the rear view mirror.

The first round of tenders, in 2015, saw wind energy contracted at an average price of 8.59 cents per kWh, and solar at 15.67 cents per kWh, fixed for the next 20 years.

With the cost of equipment continuing to come down as technology is improved, it was expected that the next tender would see purchases contracted for even less.

Compare this to the recent request from Ontario Power Generation (OPG), the owner of the Pickering and Darlington nuclear plants. To cover the estimated $12.8 billion cost of rebuilding the Darlington plant, the OPG has applied for an 11 per cent per year increase, for the next 10 years, in the price they receive for the power they produce. This would take their price to 16.8 cents per kWh by 2026. Of course, nuclear plants as a rule go over budget, so this price may prove to be low. The recent rebuild of just two units at the Bruce nuclear plant ran more than $2 billion over budget.

Consider also that solar only produces power during the day, when demand for electricity is at its highest, and the large wind farms have a curtailment clause in their contracts that allows the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) to shut them down when power isn't needed by giving five minutes notice to the wind farm operator.

Nuclear, on the other hand, runs around the clock, whether or not the power is needed, even producing surplus power that the IESO has to pay to get rid of.

Ontario's electricity prices are often compared to Quebec and Manitoba. But both provinces have large hydro resources as their main source of generation. If Ontario had two more Niagara Falls, we would all be happy, but it doesn't.

Ontario's industrial prices, compared to the other 59 provinces and states, rank slightly below the median at 8.35 cents (the median is 8.41 cents). Manitoba is lowest at 4.67 cents, Quebec second at 5.17 cents (both derive over 85 per cent of their power from hydro, compared to Ontario's 24 per cent), and Hawaii is highest at 31.1 cents per kWh.

Ontario is not alone in moving to green energy. Alberta, the fossil-fuel capital of Canada, recently announced several programs to increase the use of renewable energy. Saskatchewan has committed to using 50 per cent renewables by 2030. In fact, much of the industrial world is heading in that direction, led by China, the U.S. and Brazil.

Green energy is the only form of generation that has a known fuel cost going forward, independent of what happens to natural gas or uranium prices.

You don't have to be a mathematician to see that halting green energy while planning to rebuild nuclear plants will lead to higher electricity prices.

Cancelling the tenders for more renewables was purely political, intended to gain electoral support based on the public's notion that green energy is mainly responsible for increased electricity prices.

The decision ignores the fact that future contracts would be signed at prices a fraction of those just five years ago due to the drastic drop in the cost of equipment.

It all amounts to a serious mistake that will have long-lasting consequences.

Douglas Wagner is the president of Saturn Power Inc., a Canadian-owned renewable energy developer and power producer doing business internationally. Distributed by Troy Media

Hold government to account for hydro

Owen Sound Sun Times
Wed Oct 26 2016
Page: A4
Section: Opinion
Source: Postmedia

We believe skyrocketing electricity prices under Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals are the most important issue facing Ontarians.

Ontarians are being held hostage by rising energy bills, many forced to freeze in their homes in winter and swelter inside them in summer, for fear of ever rising hydro costs.

Of all the wasteful blunders the Liberals have committed in their 13 years in power -eHealth, Ornge, cancelled gas plants -the worst have been in the energy field, including their mad dash into unreliable and expensive wind and solar power, which wasn't needed to close Ontario's coal-fired electricity plants.

Out-of-control electricity prices are an assault on the middle class.

They have cost hundreds of thousands of Ontarians their jobs, as businesses close or flee for lower-priced jurisdictions.

They endanger home ownership for seniors on fixed incomes.

They are driving many Ontarians into energy poverty, where they spend more than 10 per cent of their income to power their homes.

Energy poverty forces people to decide whether to eat, or light and heat their homes.

It's a disgrace in a province where a thriving manufacturing sector was built on the slogan of Sir Adam Beck, the founder of Ontario's hydro system, to deliver "Power at Cost."

Today, under the Liberals, we have an electricity system where prices are skyrocketing while we have a huge electricity surplus -an indication of how completely they have distorted the market.

The Liberals have been repeatedly criticized by the auditor general for making wrong-headed energy decisions costing billions of dollars.

But when Ontarians ask the Liberals for help, or complain about ill treatment from Hydro One, which the Liberals have put beyond public scrutiny by selling 60 per cent of it to the private sector, they're ignored.

Or sent form letters dismissing their concerns.

Enough is enough. It's time to hold the Liberals accountable, to make them explain how they will get us out of the mess they've created.

And if there is no plan, to make them suffer the electoral consequences.