

QP Newsletter: QP Briefing, Queens Park Today and Inside Queens Park

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Good Morning,

Please find attached the March 2, 2017 issues of QP Briefing, Queens Park Today and Inside Queens Park.

QP Briefing

Headlines

- o (P.2) Speaking of relief plans, er, or lack thereof, PC Leader **Patrick Brown** [penned an](#)

[op-ed for *The Sun*](#) blasting the governing Liberals so-called past transgressions on the hydro file, and warning higher taxes will offset the cost of their relief plan. Brown gives about as much detail of the PCs own plan as he has been — not much.

In the opinion pages:

- o (P.3) Adam Radwanski says [timing is everything](#) for the Liberals when it comes to hydro rate relief.
- o (P.3) Lorrie Goldstein [won't get fooled again](#) by Liberal promises of hydro relief.
- o (P.3) Robyn Urback says the plan to lower hydro bills is [a temporary Christmas gift to the electorate](#).
- o (P.3) David Reevely says it will take [tomorrow's money to solve hydro woes](#) of today.
- o (P.3) Ask for [lower hydro costs and ye shall receive](#) says Martin Regg Cohn who suggests the Liberals are buying votes at whatever price.
- o (P.3) *The Toronto Star* says the plan to cut hydro rates is a "[reasonable response to real pain](#)"

Articles

- o (P.5) Ontario's future cap-and-trade partners see weak carbon sales ahead of province's first auction
- o (P.5) How the heck do you 'smooth' electricity costs? A QP Briefing explainer

Queens Park Today

· In the park

- o (P.2) The Canadian Wind Energy Association held an MPP breakfast at Queen's Park, as did the Dieticians of Canada.
- o (P.2) Cabinet plans 25 per cent hydro rate cut A *Toronto Star* report reveals the Liberals plan to [cut hydro bills](#) by 25 per cent this year by "smoothing out" how current electricity contracts are financed. (The previously rolledout eight per cent HST reduction is included in the 25 per cent).

- o (P.2) The *Star* describes the plan as “essentially refinancing the global adjustment” so that consumers see an immediate cost reduction on their hydro bills. The leaked plan also

proposes shifting the costs of the Ontario Electricity Support Program from ratepayers to taxpayers.
- o (P.2) Ending mandatory time-of-use billing and lowering rural delivery costs were both ideas hinted at by the government in recent months, but neither was mentioned in the plan obtained by the *Star*. The government will release complete details of the plan on Thursday morning.
- o (P.2) The leaked plan echoes a formula detailed by the director of Ivey Business School in a Monday *Globe and Mail* op-ed. The op-ed recommends a “smoothing policy” that extends the amortization of energy contracts over a longer period of time, “reducing consumer bills in the short to medium term in return for slightly higher bills in the long term.”
- o (P.2) According to the op-ed this could be done by either letting generators void existing contracts in order to bid on longer-term contracts with lower rates, or through a short term government subsidy on current high-contract prices.

Topics of conversation

- o (P.3) Only 18 per cent of available carbon credits were sold at the most recent California-

Quebec joint carbon auction. Of 65 million available credits, only 11 million were sold. The proceeds earned by each jurisdiction will be released later this month.
- o (P.3) At Darlington nuclear station, Ontario Power Generation will begin producing special

plutonium isotopes to be used for power in deep space exploration.
- o (P.3) After its win at the NAFTA tribunal, Windstream Energy continues to push the government to lift its offshore wind moratorium. The company submitted 47

environmental and technical studies to the Ministry of the Environment that it says

contradict comments the government has made rationalizing the moratorium.

- o (P.3) A potential merger between Veridian Corporation and Whitby Hydro Energy Corporation will not include Oshawa Power, the utilities confirmed today. Veridian (which serves the communities of Ajax, Pickering, Clarington and Belleville) and Whitby Hydro will move ahead with the next steps of the proposed merger as a duo.

Question period

PC questions

Hydro rates

- o (P.5) PC leader Patrick Brown accused Finance Minister Charles Sousa of playing a “shell game” with hydro bills by shifting costs from ratepayers to taxpayers.
 - o Brown told Sousa to admit that under his leaked plan taxes will go up.
 - o Sousa responded that the government is on track to balance the budget while the
 - o PCs still have no plan whatsoever for managing hydro. Sousa made a pun about rolling “Brown-outs” under Conservative leadership.

Forestry sector

- o (P.5) Brown said high hydro rates are hurting the forestry sector and have cost the industry more than 50 per cent of its jobs.
 - o Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said companies in Ontario’s forestry sector are actually saving 25 per cent on their energy bills through the northern industrial rebate program.

Energy policies

- o (P.5) PC MPP Todd Smith said Ontarians are tired of shell games and “vague cabinet leaks” on the electricity file. Smith said if it is so easy to reduce rates by 25 per cent, why didn’t they do it years ago?
 - o Smith also asked whether the Liberals will be extending the contracts with renewable energy companies that donated over \$1.3 million to their party.

NDP questions

Hydro rates

- o (P.6) Citing the lower cost of hydro in Manitoba and Quebec, which both have public systems, NDP deputy leader Jagmeet Singh asked whether the premier can really deny a link between the high cost of energy and private ownership.
- o (P.6) Thibeault said Ontario doesn’t have the benefit of legacy hydro that Quebec and Manitoba have: “In Ontario we actually need to generate our power.”
- o (P.6) NDP MPP Teresa Armstrong called on the government to take the NDP’s suggestion and scrap mandatory time-of-use pricing.
- o (P.6) Thibeault said the government is working on providing “immediate relief for families,” while the NDP plan is just talking about things that may add up over a long-period of time.

Inside Queens Park

(P.1) Inside Queens Park