

Friendly Question (Sept 12, 2017):

Update on the Fair Hydro Plan

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy.

Last year, the Premier set an essential goal for this government - making everyday life more affordable for the people of Ontario.

While our economy is doing well, not every family is seeing that impact on their personal budgets.

This spring the government took a big step forward in ensuring that our clean and reliable electricity is affordable to everyone in Ontario.

The cost of electricity had become a concern for many in my community, and I know the people of Ontario were eager to see the government take action.

The Fair Hydro Plan, passed last session, is a 25% reduction on average for all households in the province. No loopholes, no exceptions – just significant relief for this important household cost.

Would the Minister please update the House on when the Fair Hydro Plan began to lower bills, and how it will help households across the province?

Word Count: 157

Suggested Response:

Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Member for that question.

Our government inherited an electricity system that was in disrepair. We invested \$50B in rebuilding the system and eliminating dirty coal from our generation mix.

However we asked one generation alone to pay the freight of these investments for everyone before and after.

That's why, this spring, we took action.

We passed legislation which has — since July 1st — lowered electricity bills by the full 25% on average for every household in the province. This includes the 8% reduction that came into effect on January 1 earlier this year.

And under our plan, rates will increase no more than inflation for the next 4 years.

At the same time, we have introduced additional support for the most rural and remote parts of our province, and expanded programs for the most vulnerable electricity customers. These customers will see reductions as much as 40-50% on their bills.

Speaker, we're proud of the work we've done to make life more affordable.

Word Count: 146

Supplementary Question:

Thank you to the Minister for that response. I know that this has been a positive initiative for the families and small businesses in my riding, and across the province.

The 25% reduction on average will help to curb electricity costs for the people of Ontario across the board, while the other programs will provide the type of support that keeps our province fair and competitive.

However, there are also other elements of the government's plan that provide additional support to particular communities who need it most.

Many low-income Ontarians take advantage of the Ontario Electricity Support Program, or OESP, which provides an on-bill subsidy for those who qualify for the program.

I understand that under the Fair Hydro Plan, the government has expanded this program.

Could the Minister provide more details on the programs that are being expanded for the benefit of those who need it the most in our province?

Word Count: 148

Supplementary Answer

Thank you to the Member for that follow-up.

When it comes to vulnerable communities, our government is the only party with an actual plan. The Member from Simcoe—North and the Official Opposition have no plan. And the Member from Hamilton Centre and the third party didn't mention vulnerable Ontarians in their energy pamphlet.

But with our government, over the summer the OESP program for vulnerable consumers was expanded by 50%, with the maximum credit now \$900 a year. And a special credit for those with unique electricity needs offers a maximum of over \$1,300 a year.

Another program that was expanded over the summer under our Fair Hydro Plan is one designed to lower delivery rates, called the *triple-R P*.

This program provides a substantial subsidy that lowers distribution costs for those in the most expensive-to-serve areas of our province.

While the Opposition chose to vote against expanding these programs to help people, I am pleased to say that our Fair Hydro Plan is providing real and substantial relieve to families across the province.

Word Count: 176