

FW: Media Scan: Throne Speech/Price Mitigation Measures

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Date: Wed, 14 Sep 2016 20:29:23 -0400
Attachments: Minister's Announcement - September 13-14, 2016.docx (200.91 kB)

[Should it be helpful, see attached and below.](#)

From: Kourakos, Georgina (ENERGY)
Sent: September-14-16 4:02 PM
To: Moulton, Dan (ENERGY); Campbell, David (ENERGY); Whytock, John (ENERGY); Nutter, George (ENERGY); Lindsay, Ken (ENERGY); Renwick, Meredith (ENERGY); Hill, Allyson (ENERGY); Martin, Eric (ENERGY); Berg, Denna (ENERGY)
Cc: @ENERGY-COMM-Issues_and_MediaRelations; Biggs, Megan (ENERGY)
Subject: Media Scan: Throne Speech/Price Mitigation Measures

Good afternoon,

Media coverage of Monday's Throne Speech has remained neutral to negative.

A number of news articles are questioning the government on whether the hydro rebate program will be permanent. Several news stories noted when asked how long the rebate would last, the Premier Kathleen said the change is a permanent one. Several local media outlets continued to run news stories focused on local MPP and public reaction, which continued to note that while welcome, new measures would not be enough to cover future rate increases.

Local print, television and radio news outlets covered the Minister's announcement in Sudbury yesterday. CTV News Sudbury reported that officials with Greater Sudbury Utilities said the rebate is welcome news for customers. Frank Kallonen, Greater Sudbury Utilities president, mentioned rate increases over the past number of years, and that generally there was some customer dissatisfaction. CTV News also aired reaction from MPP Vic Fedeli and public reaction in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Sudbury Star ran an positive article featuring comments by Premier Wynne on northern Ontario. In the article, the Premier noted she was pleased with the work of the Energy Minister.

Attached you will find a copy of a media scan including broadcast coverage from yesterday and today, as well as print coverage from this morning.

Coverage from Northern Ontario has been highlighted.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Georgina

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone on the Rogers network.

Original Message
From: Kourakos, Georgina (ENERGY)
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2016 12:53 PM
To: Moulton, Dan (ENERGY); Campbell, David (ENERGY); Whytock, John (ENERGY); Nutter, George (ENERGY); Lindsay, Ken (ENERGY); Renwick, Meredith (ENERGY); Hill, Allyson (ENERGY); Martin, Eric

(ENERGY); Berg, Denna (ENERGY)
Cc: @ENERGY-COMM-Issues_and_MediaRelations; Biggs, Megan (ENERGY)
Subject: Media Scan: Throne Speech/Price Mitigation Measures

Good afternoon,

Please see below for a brief summary of media coverage following yesterday's Throne Speech. Also see attached for the media scan of this morning's coverage, as well as some initial reaction from yesterday.

I've kept the distribution limited, but please share as you see fit on your end. If you would like us to add anyone else to the distribution list for future media scans, please let me know.

Please note we will be pulling together additional scans to capture any new items, including this morning's announcement in Sudbury.

As always, if you have any questions/concerns please let me know.

Thanks,
Georgina
2-3127

Media Scan Summary
Date Range of Scan: September 12-13, 2016

Issues Overview:

On September 12, 2016, a new Throne Speech was delivered in the Legislature. The speech included proposed measures to help Ontarians and businesses with their electricity bills.

Media Coverage:

Overall, coverage post-announcement has been neutral to negative. The majority of news coverage included criticism from opposition parties about the new electricity price mitigation measures and limited coverage of positive reactions from electricity consumers. Editorial and opinion pieces focused on political agendas, a failure to make changes to the electricity sector and future price increases. The proposed 8% rebate for residents, farms and small businesses, received the majority of coverage. Media also reported on the financial impacts that may arise in 2017 due to cap and trade.

Themes of Coverage:

"Too Little, Too Late" and "Band-Aid Solutions"

The vast majority of news coverage highlighted Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown's comments that the government price mitigation measures are "too little, too late" and that they represent a "band-aid solution". The Canadian Taxpayers Federation of Ontario was also critical stating that this is a short-term solution. Critics also noted that the rebate will be dwarfed by future hydro rate increases and that more needs to be done to fix the electricity system. Homeowners and businesses said that while they welcomed the announcement, they also feel more needs to be done.

Permanent removal of HST

The New Democrats criticized the government for not removing the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) from electricity bills permanently, questioning how long the proposed 8% rebate would stay in place.

Ontario Clean Energy Benefit

There were references to the similarities between the proposed 8% rebate and the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit – a program that ended in 2015. Reports noted that the close to \$1 billion cost of the proposed rebate is almost the same amount of money the government saved by ending the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit.

Sale of Hydro One

Opposition parties, as well as some critics like CUPE Ontario, were critical of the fact that the government did not reverse its plan to continue with the sale of Hydro One. They noted that by continuing with the sale the province is providing a short-term solution while disregarding the long-term consequences.

Balancing the Budget

Most of the news stories linked the commitments from the Throne Speech to the government's commitment to balance the Budget and questioned how the government would pay for the estimated \$1 billion cost of the proposed rebate program. Columnists noted that while the rebate will save eligible consumers 8% on their electricity bills, the government will need to make up the costs of that program and "it's still your pocket that is being picked".