

Hansard: Horwath to Premier (Thibeault) -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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Date: Thu, 18 May 2017 11:05:04 -0400

INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. Hydro rates have gone up 300% under the Liberals and 50% just under this **Premier**. People have good reason to be suspicious about any action that the **Premier** takes on the hydro file. And now leaked documents of course show that hydro rates will be going up even further as a result of the **Premier's** scheme, causing even more scepticism about the Liberals' handling of our electricity system in this province. Will the **Premier** come clean with Ontarians on the future costs of hydro before they are hydro scheme, her borrowing scheme is voted on in this legislature?

>> **Premier** Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of energy's going to want to comment in the supplementary. But let me just say that we have been very clear. I have been very clear. The Minister of energy's been very clear with the people of this province that we have made investments in the electricity system in Ontario. \$50 billion to make a reliable, clean, renewable electricity grid in -- Clear that there was a cost associated with that, Mr. Speaker, and that that cost needs to be shared over the generations that are actually going to use that asset, Mr. Speaker, and so we are bringing forward a reduction of 25% on people's electricity bills to be in place by the summer, Mr. Speaker, and, to do that, we are spreading the costs over a longer period of time and that means that not just this generation today will pay for those costs. But that will be spread over a longer period of time. We've been very clear with the people of Ontario that that's what we're doing.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the **Premier's** borrowing scheme will cause hydro rates to soar by over 50%. She denies this but she hasn't shown the people of Ontario any evidence to back up that denial. Will the public get any additional information on how much the **Premier** proposes to increase hydro costs after the next election so they can provide educated, informed feedback at the committee hearings next week, Speaker ?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As stated, we're bringing forward legislation that will actually reduce everyone's bills by up to 25% on average, Mr. Speaker. It's important that people know about this so they can understand that this government is acting to ensure that we're making our system as affordable as can be, Mr. Speaker, for many of these families. 800,000 families that live in the rural and northern parts of our province, Mr. Speaker, they'll see a 40 to 50% reduction. And that's what we're doing right now, Mr. Speaker, in the short term. In the medium term, Mr. Speaker, we're ensuring that we're holding the rates to the cost of inflation. And then for the long term, Mr. Speaker, the 2017 long-term energy plan will project where costs are going to be so people can see the transparent process that we have. Because we rebuilt the system, one that is coal-free, that is clean. That is reliable.

>> Andrea Horwath: The **Premier** and her Liberal government have made a mess of our hydro

system, and it has cost Ontario families and businesses far too much. And they think it's funny, but it isn't funny when people have to make choices about paying their hydro bill or putting food on the table, or choices about keeping people employed or paying their business's electricity bill. From the gas plant scandal to the broken promises not to sell off Hydro One, to the four years, four years of denying that there was any problem at all with people's rising hydro bills, why has this **Premier** had so much trouble reconciling what she says with what she does?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of reconciliation, when it comes to talking, Mr. Speaker, and acting, it's this **Premier** that actually committed this government to bringing forward the fair hide rode plan and that's reducing everybody's bills across this province, Mr. Speaker, by 25%. If you look, Mr. Speaker, at a plan that has no reconciliation and no idea on how it ever achieve a number, it's the pamphlet that the NDP Put together, Mr. Speaker. There is absolutely no way that they're going to take off one cent, not a single cent off of anyone's bills. And let alone, Mr. Speaker, they don't even talk about helping low-income individuals until the last page in one line. Mr. Speaker, part of our -- a large part of our plan is helping our low-income individuals. Our seniors. Our on-reserve first nations people that they don't even mention in their plan, Mr. Speaker. This is a plan that will work for every Ontarian.

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.