

# Hansard: Tabuns to Thibeault -- Hydro-Rate Reduction Plan

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**Date:** Thu, 19 Oct 2017 11:12:39 -0400

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## INSTANT HANSARD

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>>MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Sneaker. My question to the Premier. This week we learned that the Premier and her Liberal government are forcing Ontarians to pay an extra \$4 billion to hide the devastating effects of their \$40 billion hydro borrowing scheme from the public. But that's not the only thing that they're hiding. The auditor general's report says that based on the email correspondence her office looked at, the Liberals knew what the costs would be. They had other options. They were advised to take those other options, and still they stuck Ontario families with \$4 billion bill anyway. Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario, did she personally green-light this accounting trick, knowing it would cost families \$4 billion on their hydro bills?

>>Minister Thiibeault: Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. Very pleased once again to rise and answer questions on this and of course talk about the fair hydro plan as well. But let's first talk about the accounting. The government's financial statements are prepared in accordance with the public sector accounting standards and will continue to follow these standards for the transactions resulting from the fair hydro plan in the 2017 and 18 years and of course, Mr. Sneaker, in future years. In regards to the rate regulation --Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. So Does not prohibit the use of rate regular accounting. Mr. Sneaker. So many entities in Canada, including O.P.G., Toronto hydro, fortis, Hydro One, Use rate accounting as well. In fact six of eight independent system operators across North America use rate regulating accounting and I'll get more to supplementary.

>>MPP Tabun: Sneaker. I kind of hope the Premier will get to the supplementary. The auditor's report says that emails show senior government officials were warned of the cost of this plan and were told there were other options. Since the Premier refuses to release the emails of the A.G. Examiner in her investigation, can she tell us who were the senior government officials that were warned?

>> Minister Thiibeault: Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. Once again I get to rise and sneak about our fair hydro plan. You know, Mr. Sneaker, families in the province asked for real and immediate relief on their electricity bills and that's what we delivered. The fair hydro plan is providing an average of 25% to residential ratepayers. That's a cut, Mr. Sneaker. And guarantees that electricity rates will not rise beyond the rate of inflation for four years and as many as half a million small businesses and farms are also benefitting. But we all knew, Mr. Sneaker, that electricity rates risen too much too fast as a result of the investments that we made \$70 billion. And so that meant that we were paying off those investments too quickly. So the fair hydro plan smooths out the costs of those

investments but over a longer period of time. And that means the system improvements are paid for by the people that use now the system now and of course use the system later. Mr. Speaker. And that's fair, because this plan makes sure that we also keep all of these assets on the electricity side with the ratepayer where they should be, Mr. Speaker .

>>MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again to the Premier. The people of Ontario deserve to know who authorized this extra \$4 billion on their hydro bills. Yesterday I moved a motion to require these emails to be released publicly. The Liberals used their majority to shut down debate on that motion. The Premier has already set aside \$500,000 for a lawyer to organize these emails for the A.G.. It should be easy to release them now to the public. Will she?

>>Minister Thiabeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've provided 13,212 emails to the auditor general and will make sure all of the emails that apply to this file we'll provide it to the auditor general by November 1st. We're constantly working, Mr. Speaker, with the auditor general's office and in constant contact with the office, Mr. Speaker. But let's take one step back and be very clear, Mr. Speaker. This decision with the fair hydro plan was a policy choice, a choice to ensure that we continue to have a clean, safe, reliable and affordable electricity system for the ratepayers of today and the ratepayers of tomorrow and the fair hydro plan keeps the cost of borrowing within the rate base, Mr. Speaker, not the tax base, because that's the logical and right thing to do. Electricity financing should remain within the electricity system. While the auditor general is welcome to her opinion, Mr. Speaker. Our plan has been approved by her peers at KPMG, Ian White and Deloitte. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker .

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