

RE: Thibeault scrum transcript

From: "Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY)" <colin.nekolaichuk@ontario.ca>
To: "@OPO-Media Relations and Issues Management" <opo-mediarelationsandissuesmgmt@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Cc: "Berry, James (ENERGY)" <james.berry5@ontario.ca>, "Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY)" <kevin.denheijer@ontario.ca>
Date: Tue, 12 Dec 2017 16:18:30 -0500

Hi all,

We're just doing a final check with legal on this, but here's what we would like to send to CP regarding the Order In Council question. Essentially they are wondering about the rationale for the OIC, why it was used, and whether its primary purpose was to add advertising to hydro bills.

Our government has a responsibility to communicate information about programs that affect Ontarians' daily lives, which includes important changes to electricity bills.

Utilities regularly inform their customers about important developments such as when the Ontario Energy Board updates time-of-use rates, or updates to programs like the Ontario Electricity Support Program. It has also been standard practice for the Province to require utilities to include additional on-bill messaging that's important to electricity consumers through regulation – including the Debt Retirement Charge, the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit, or the 8 per cent Provincial Rebate. An Order In Council is part of the process when passing regulations. We are simply following standard practice.

We continue to hear from people in Ontario who want to understand the Fair Hydro Plan, and how it affects their monthly hydro bill. This is important information for both households and businesses, and we will continue to provide clear, helpful answers whenever possible.

If you're comfortable with this, we'll send to CP (with legal sign-off).

Thanks,
C.

Colin Nekolaichuk | Press Secretary
Office of the Hon. Glenn Thibeault | Minister of Energy
T: 416-325-2690 C: 647-504-4928
colin.nekolaichuk@ontario.ca

From: Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY)
Sent: December-12-17 1:35 PM
To: @OPO-Media Relations and Issues Management
Cc: Berry, James (ENERGY); Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY)
Subject: Thibeault scrum transcript

Hi guys,

Below is a scrum of Minister Thibeault's scrum earlier. I'll be following up with Allison Jones regarding the OIC request she had – we're just getting some confirmations from officials. Will run that by you. I've also been following up with reporters to clarify the highlighted bit, as discussed with Forge.

CP: The NDP has pointed out an OIC that they say directs LDCs to advertise the FHP discounts on bills, is that the case?

I'd have the see that, but what she's talking about is stuff from way back when. What I was talking about was hydro bill redesign. I'm not sure what they're talking about. But obviously regulation is something we would always look at and part of the requirements we have when we're putting out information and as I said in QP it's about trying to make people understand clearly what their bills are all about.

Star: Isn't it heavy-handed though? Directing them with an OIC?

From my understanding that's the way it's always been done. Even with the debt retirement charge. Keeping the debt retirement charge on the bill, it said 0 for residential customers, went through that whole process, we thought it was important to keep the DR on the bills to let people know it's been eliminated. And what we heard from Hydro One when they did their focus groups was that people were angry when they saw that because they thought it was coming back. As I said, hindsight 20-20, what we're trying to do is make things as clear as possible, but what we've done sometimes is make them as clear as mud.

Sun: So you usually deal with an OIC if you want something added or taken away from the bill?

So when it comes to the regulation piece on the bills – and there's a lot of regulation on the bills – that's part of the complexity right now, sometimes we treat people like energy experts. So some of the regulations require that we talk about the delivery charge and all those explanation which again makes it clear as mud. And so we've worked with Hydro One to see how we can make bills clearer, we've got the redesign committee, so working on making things as clear as possible.

CP: Aside from just Hydro One, this isn't an OIC that was signed by you and Minister Matthews, are you saying you don't recall that specific one?

So if she's talking about the FHP I'm assuming from way back in March I'd have to take a look again. But in terms of anything we're putting in place to let people know about the bill reductions, would have to come from an OIC, that's common practice.

CP: Was putting the discounts on bills a political move? Certainly it would help your government advertise the 25 per cent cut.

Also the 8 per cent reduction is on there right now, and that was started in January of last year to let people know about that, but you don't see the 17 per cent on some bills, because we didn't put that into place. So I assume what she's talking about is the flyers that we asked some LDCs to put into place. Again, it's making sure people can understand their bills and what's coming off.

QPB: For the 32M overcharging, you said you'd make all efforts to try recoup the 32M, but those settlements have been made. how will you do that?

That 32M. many of those are still in discussion between IESO and the companies. So they're working to recoup those dollars.

Star: When I spoke to IESO they were just leaving it because any further recoupment would involve litigation, have they changed their tune on this, has your office directed them to do something?

From my understanding there are some that are still under discussion and others are not and not all.

QPB: How many are still under discussion?

That would be a question for the IESO. My understanding from the IESO is that they're still working with some of the nine to recoup as much as they can.

QPB: What's the timeline of the discussion?

Some of them have been ongoing for some time, others have just started. I use the OPG scenario from 2015. They didn't realize they had ineligible expenses. Once they did, they repaid everything.