

Statement needed for Hoggarth by 1:30pm

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Hey all,

MPP Hoggarth has received the following media questions from the Barrie Advance (Chris Simon), and her office has requested help drafting a response. Draft response is below. Deadline is 1:30pm.

I think the fourth paragraph is probably excessive, and am tempted to remove it. Open to whatever feedback you have.

Thanks,
David

Questions:

- 1) Why is it important to lower hydro rates now, even though doing so will cost significantly more in interest payments going forward? Will there be an impact on the Liberals' ability to balance the budget in this and future years? If not, what budget items/areas needs to be cut or altered to pay for the added interest going forward?
- 2) Patrick Brown said the following during a media conference call:
 - Details of a specific PC plan to lower rates would be coming shortly. But he was unwilling to offer a solution today.
 - He declined to say exactly when the PCs will announce specific changes to the hydro system.
 - He backed away from previous statements indicating Ontarians pay the highest hydro rates in North America. Now he says they're 'among the highest'.Do you have a rebuttal to any of this?

Statement:

"Over the last decade we have invested more than 50 billion dollars in electricity infrastructure, and today we have a system that is second-to-none. But the way we financed those investments was a mistake. We asked one generation – today's generation – to unfairly shoulder the burden of nearly all of those costs. Much like refinancing a mortgage, we are now refinancing our investments and setting a new term that stretches over a longer period. Over time, it will cost a bit more. And it will take longer to pay off. But it is fairer – because it doesn't ask this generation of hydro customers alone to pay the freight for everyone before and after. The burden will now be shared more evenly and more appropriately. In total, the average household is going to save 25% on their hydro bill.

The measures out of our announcement which are paid for with provincial revenues are being fully funded through our strong fiscal strength. We remain on track to balance the budget this year, and over the next few years. But there's no doubt that these announcements will bring us closer to the line. We believe that it's worth it.

Meanwhile, Patrick Brown and the PC Party continue to put forward no plan on hydro. The few scattered suggestion they have made will have no impact on rates, or will even actually drive them up. Frankly, they seem more concerned with coming up with soundbites than with showing leadership for Ontario.

This is perfectly demonstrated by his frequently changing portrayal of the facts on electricity in Ontario.

He's changed his tune on Ontario having the highest rates in North America. He has said our government is signing new energy contracts today, even though today is actually a deadline for proponents to withdraw from energy contracts. Patrick Brown has shown time and again his tendency to flip-flop on issues, and that's no different for the energy sector."

David Campbell

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