

RE: Saturday Media Scan: Hyd cro Rate Reduction Plan - April 28, 2018

From: "Scott, Adrienne (CAB)" <adrienne.scott@ontario.ca>
To: "Farrow, Alicia (CAB)" <alicia.farrow@ontario.ca>, "Bromm, William (CAB)" <william.bromm2@ontario.ca>, "Kwamena, Boafoa (CAB)" <boafoa.kwamena@ontario.ca>
Date: Sun, 29 Apr 2018 13:21:00 -0400

They've totally lost it!

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: Farrow, Alicia (CAB) <Alicia.Farrow@ontario.ca>
Date: Sunday, Apr 29, 2018, 1:12 PM
To: Bromm, William (CAB) <William.Bromm2@ontario.ca>, Kwamena, Boafoa (CAB) <Boafoa.Kwamena@ontario.ca>, Scott, Adrienne (CAB) <Adrienne.Scott@ontario.ca>
Subject: RE: Saturday Media Scan: Hyd cro Rate Reduction Plan - April 28, 2018

Haha

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: Bromm, William (CAB) <William.Bromm2@ontario.ca>
Date: Sunday, Apr 29, 2018, 12:58 PM
To: Kwamena, Boafoa (CAB) <Boafoa.Kwamena@ontario.ca>, Farrow, Alicia (CAB) <Alicia.Farrow@ontario.ca>, Scott, Adrienne (CAB) <Adrienne.Scott@ontario.ca>
Subject: FW: Saturday Media Scan: Hyd cro Rate Reduction Plan - April 28, 2018

See below - energy has started yodelling it's weekend clips. I wonder if they wear leiderhosen?

Sent with BlackBerry Work (www.blackberry.com)

From: "Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY)" <Kevin.DenHeijer@ontario.ca>
Sent: Apr 29, 2018 12:47 PM
To: Electronic Media <cab.amedia@ontario.ca>; "@OPO-Media Relations and Issues Management" <OPO-MediaRelationsandIssuesMgmt@msgov.gov.on.ca>; "Bevan, Andrew (OPO)" <Andrew.Bevan@ontario.ca>; "McEachern, Gillian (OPO)" <Gillian.McEachern@ontario.ca>; "Donelson, Philip (OPO)" <Philip.Donelson@ontario.ca>; "Bossin, Bryan (OPO)" <Bryan.Bossin@ontario.ca>; "Tomney, Genevieve (OPO)" <Genevieve.Tomney@ontario.ca>; "Jancik, Mike (OPO)" <Mike.Jancik@ontario.ca>; "Basha, Cindy (CAB)" <Cindy.Basha@ontario.ca>; "Bateman, April (CAB)" <April.Bateman@ontario.ca>; "Betzner, Lynn (CAB)" <Lynn.Betzner@ontario.ca>; "Bourdeau, Annette (CAB)" <Annette.Bourdeau2@ontario.ca>; "Bromm, William (CAB)" <William.Bromm2@ontario.ca>; "Brown, Kyle (CAB)" <Kyle.R.Brown2@ontario.ca>; "Carrington, Sharlyn (CAB)" <Sharlyn.Carrington2@ontario.ca>; "Colford, Jonathan (CAB)" <Jonathan.Colford@ontario.ca>; "Covert, Leah (CAB)" <Leah.Covert@ontario.ca>; "Curtin, Marybeth (CAB)" <Marybeth.Curtin3@ontario.ca>; "Davidson, Steven (CAB)" <Steven.Davidson@ontario.ca>; "Deschamps, Angèle (CAB)" <Angele.Deschamps@ontario.ca>; "Di Giovanni, Robert (CAB)" <Robert.DiGiovanni@ontario.ca>; "Dicks, Steve (CAB)" <Steve.Dicks2@ontario.ca>; "Doose, Ann (CAB)" <Ann.Doose2@ontario.ca>; "Evans, Kirsten (CAB)" <Kirsten.Evans2@ontario.ca>; "Farrow, Alicia (CAB)" <Alicia.Farrow@ontario.ca>; "Forrest, Jamie (CAB)" <Jamie.Forrest@ontario.ca>; "Foster, Robert (CAB)" <Robert.Foster@ontario.ca>; "Fournier, Pierre (CAB)" <Pierre.Fournier@ontario.ca>; "Gibbs, Sarah (MTCS)" <Sarah.Gibbs@ontario.ca>; "Green, Patrice (CAB)" <Patrice.Green2@ontario.ca>; "Greson, Sean (CAB)" <Sean.Greson2@ontario.ca>; "Hall, Caspar (CAB)" <Caspar.Hall@ontario.ca>; "Hartley, Hillary (CAB)"

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Subject: Re: Saturday Media Scan: Hyd cro Rate Reduction Plan - April 28; 2018

[OEdeeeoc oeeoevo evoceocEoeoce oe ecveEceoeooooeveroerEvEvvee](#)

Kevin Den Heijer

From: Electronic Media

Sent: Saturday, April 28, 2018 11:30 AM

To: @OPO-Media Relations and Issues Management; Bevan, Andrew (OPO); McEachern, Gillian (OPO); Donelson, Philip (OPO); Bossin, Bryan (OPO); Tomney, Genevieve (OPO); Jancik, Mike (OPO); Basha, Cindy (CAB); Bateman, April (CAB); Betzner, Lynn (CAB); Bourdeau, Annette (CAB); Bromm, William (CAB); Brown, Kyle (CAB); Carrington, Sharlyn (CAB); Colford, Jonathan (CAB); Covert, Leah (CAB); Curtin, Marybeth (CAB); Davidson, Steven (CAB); Deschamps, Angèle (CAB); Di Giovanni, Robert (CAB); Dicks, Steve (CAB); Doose, Ann (CAB); Evans, Kirsten (CAB); Farrow, Alicia (CAB); Forrest, Jamie (CAB); Foster, Robert (CAB); Fournier, Pierre (CAB); Gibbs, Sarah (MTCS); Green, Patrice (CAB); Greson, Sean (CAB); Hall, Caspar (CAB); Hartley, Hillary (CAB); Heitshu, Tania (CAB); Hwang, Wendy (CAB); Jonsson, Rachel (CAB); Kwamena, Boafoa (CAB); Lepage, Guy (CAB); Lewis, Allison (CAB); Ma, Cesue (CAB); Maddock, Michael (CAB); McElgunn, Jim (CAB); McMichael, Rhonda (CAB); Paech, Arielle (CAB); Peyer, Murielle (CAB); Pollett, Rene (CAB); Pontikis, Maria (CAB); Roach, Jackie (CAB); Scott, Adrienne (CAB); Skene, Katherine (CAB); Tomescu, Alexandra (CAB); van der Valk, Jennifer (CAB); Wheeler, Stewart (CAB); Wolgelerenter, Debbie (CAB); Yoo, Sarah (CAB); Baker, Carys (ENERGY); Berry, James (ENERGY); Bodrug, Andrew (ENERGY); Campbell, David (ENERGY); Coker, Meaghan (ENERGY); Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY); Esdaile, Trevor (ENERGY); Festeryga, Katherine (ENERGY);

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Cc: Sumi, Craig (CAB); Di Giovanni, Robert (CAB); Law, Sally (CAB); Stinson, Jeffrey (CAB); Nutter, George (ENERGY); Electronic Media

Subject: Saturday Media Scan: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan - April 28, 2018

Saturday Media Scan: April 28, 2018

MEDIA SCAN: HYDRO RATE REDUCTION PLAN

April 28, 2018

Click links below to view article:

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[Toronto Sun: Ford unrolls 12% cut to hydro bills; Builds upon Liberal plan derided by Tory leader; A6; 2018.04.28 . 2](#)

[National Post: Ford vows deeper cuts to hydro rates; 'Good Start'; A5; 2018.04.28 . 4](#)

[Toronto Star: Ford vows to cut 12% more from hydro bills; A10; 2018.04.28 . 6](#)

[London Free Press: I'll chop hydro bills 12% more, Ford says; A7; 2018.04.28 . 7](#)

[The Chronicle Journal: \[Ford promises cut to hydro rates if elected HL: Doug Ford promises 12 per cent cut to hydro rates if\]; 2018.04.28 . 9](#)

[Peterborough Examiner: Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected; B1; 2018.04.28 . 11](#)

[Niagara Falls Review: Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected; B1; 2018.04.28 . 13](#)

[Waterloo Region Record: Doug Ford says he 'hated' making appointments like Mike Harris Jr.'s; PC leader says his hydro plan would save families \\$174 a year on their bills; A1; 2018.04.28 . 15](#)

[The Hamilton Spectator: Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected; A13; 2018.04.28 . 18](#)

[The Hamilton Spectator: Politicians make their case to businesspeople; Wynne, Fedeli and Horwath pitch business policy to Ontario chamber AGM in Hamilton; A20; 2018.04.28 . 20](#)

Print Coverage

Toronto Sun: Ford unrolls 12% cut to hydro bills; Builds upon Liberal plan derided by Tory leader; A6; 2018.04.28

PUBLICATION: Toronto Sun

PAGE: A6

DATE: 2018.04.28

SECTION: News

EDITION: Final

BYLINE: Shawn Jeffords

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

KEYWORDS: promising,hydro,bills,spring,election,saying

ILLUSTRATION: Ernest Doroszuk, Toronto Sun / Doug Ford says the Tories would slash hydro bills by 12% - on top of the Liberals' rate breaks.;

DATELINE: KITCHENER

WORD COUNT: 491

Ford unrolls 12% cut to hydro bills; Builds upon Liberal plan derided by Tory leader

Doug Ford is promising to cut hydro bills by 12 per cent if he wins Ontario's spring election, saying it would be on top of a rate reduction from the governing Liberals, whose plan he has repeatedly criticized.

The Progressive Conservative leader said Thursday he would cut rates through a variety of measures that would save the average ratepayer \$173 a year.

"I think that's a pretty good start," he said. "Putting \$173 back in the taxpayer pocket."

The Tory plan would see the government give ratepayers the dividends it gets from its share of the partly privatized Hydro One.

It would also shift the cost of energy conservation programs from hydro customers to the tax base. Ford added that he would place a moratorium on new contracts and renegotiate existing deals where possible. The plan comes as Ford continues to bemoan the fact the governing Liberals will borrow billions to lower hydro rates by 25 per cent in the short term. But he said their plan will remain in place, at least initially, if he wins this spring.

"We're going to be reviewing that," Ford said of the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan. "That was, as far as I'm concerned, the wrong thing to do, borrowing down the future and the only people who are going to pay for it is our children, our great-grandchildren."

The Liberals' hydro plan came after bills in the province roughly doubled in the last decade, and widespread anger helped send Premier Kathleen Wynne's approval ratings to record lows.

The plan lowers time-of-use rates by removing from bills a portion of the global adjustment - a charge consumers pay for above-market rates to power producers - for the next 10 years.

In the meantime, producers will be paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation has been tapped to oversee the debt used to pay that difference through a new entity called OPG Trust.

That financing structure will cost an extra \$4 billion, according to both the province's auditor and the financial accountability officer. The Liberals have said the financing will cost closer to \$2 billion.

Ford said that Wynne "hoodwinked" taxpayers by creating the Fair Hydro Plan, but said he'd maintain it, with his proposed 12 per cent rate cut being over and above the Liberal reduction.

Tory energy critic Todd Smith said the party may have a difficult task ahead if it wants to alter the Fair Hydro Plan because of the complexity of the borrowing vehicle.

"This was a very convoluted, confusing plan that the Liberals put in place," he said. "They concocted this for one reason and that was to hide it from the province's books, to make it seem like they had more money than they actually have."

Earlier this week, auditor general Bonnie Lysyk said the government's deficit projections over the next three years were understated by billions, in part because of the Fair Hydro Plan.

Ontario heads to the polls June 7.

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National Post: Ford vows deeper cuts to hydro rates; 'Good Start'; A5; 2018.04.28

PUBLICATION: National Post

PAGE: A5

DATE: 2018.04.28

SECTION: Canada

EDITION: Ottawa

BYLINE: Shawn Jeffords

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

KEYWORDS: promising,hydro,rates,spring,election,saying
DATELINE: KITCHENER, ONT.
WORD COUNT: 452

Ford vows deeper cuts to hydro rates; 'Good Start'

Doug Ford is promising to cut hydro rates by 12 per cent if he wins Ontario's spring election, saying the reduction would be on top of the Liberal government's electricity rate cut plan, which he has repeatedly criticized.

The Progressive Conservative leader said Thursday that he would cut rates through a variety of measures that would save the average ratepayer \$173 a year.

"I think that's a pretty good start," he said. "Putting \$173 back in the taxpayer pocket."

The Tory plan would see the government give ratepayers the dividends it gets from its share of the partially privatized Hydro One.

It would also shift the cost of energy conservation programs from hydro customers to the tax base. And Ford said he would place a moratorium on new energy contracts and renegotiate existing deals where possible.

The plan comes as Ford continues to bemoan the fact that the governing Liberals will borrow billions to lower hydro rates by 25 per cent in the short-term. But he said their plan will remain in place, at least initially, if he's elected in June.

"We're going to be reviewing that," Ford said of the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan. "That was, as far as I'm concerned, the wrong thing to do, borrowing down the future and the only people who are going to pay for it is our children, our greatgrandchildren."

The Liberals' hydro plan came after bills in the province roughly doubled in the last decade, and widespread anger helped send Premier Kathleen Wynne's approval ratings to record lows.

The plan lowers time-of-use rates by removing from bills a portion of the global adjustment - a charge consumers pay for above-market rates to power producers - for the next 10 years.

In the meantime, producers will continue being paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation has been tapped to oversee the debt used to pay that difference through a new entity called OPG Trust.

That financing structure will cost an extra \$4 billion, according to both the auditor and the financial accountability officer.

Ford said Wynne "hoodwinked" taxpayers by creating the plan, but said he'd maintain it, with his own proposed 12 per cent rate cut being over and above the Liberal 25 per cent rate reduction.

Tory energy critic Todd Smith said the party may have a difficult task ahead if it wants to alter the Fair Hydro Plan because of the complexity of the borrowing vehicle created to finance the reduction.

"This was a very convoluted, confusing plan that the Liberals put in place," he said.

"They concocted this for one reason and that was to hide it from the province's books, to make it seem like they had more money than they actually have."

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Toronto Star: Ford vows to cut 12% more from hydro bills; A10; 2018.04.28

PUBLICATION: Toronto Star
PAGE: A10
DATE: 2018.04.28
SECTION: News
EDITION: ONT
BYLINE: Robert Benzie Queen's Park Bureau Chief
KEYWORDS: progressive,conservative,leader,promising,additional,electricity
WORD COUNT: 205

Ford vows to cut 12% more from hydro bills

Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford is promising to cut an additional 12 per cent from electricity bills, despite criticizing a 25-per-cent rate reduction put in place by the governing Liberals. Recycling a pledge from former PC leader Patrick Brown's People's Guarantee platform, Ford said a Tory government would fund the subsidy by returning to ratepayers the province's annual \$350-million dividend from its 49-per-cent share in Hydro One.

"We all know we are paying billions more for Kathleen Wynne's desperate attempt to cling to power," the rookie leader told reporters Friday in Kitchener.

Ford's campaign promise for the June 7 election builds on Wynne's controversial Fair Hydro Plan, which uses borrowed money to bankroll the 25-per-cent rate cut.

While Ford blasted the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan for its "shady accounting tricks," his own rate-reduction proposal would bring 12-per-cent relief over and above the current 25-per-cent cut.

"We're going to be reviewing that," he said of the Liberal plan he would retain. "That was, as far as I'm concerned, the wrong thing to do - borrowing down the future."

But Ford conceded that he would not immediately scrap the Fair Hydro Plan even though he has promised a "commission of inquiry" to look into the government's accounting.

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London Free Press: I'll chop hydro bills 12% more, Ford says; A7; 2018.04.28

PUBLICATION: London Free Press
PAGE: A7
DATE: 2018.04.28
SECTION: News
EDITION: Final
BYLINE: Shawn Jeffords
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
KEYWORDS: hydro,bills,spring,election,saying,governing
DATELINE: KITCHENER
WORD COUNT: 357

I'll chop hydro bills 12% more, Ford says

Doug Ford vows to cut hydro bills by 12 per cent if he wins Ontario's spring election, saying it would be on top of a rate cut by the governing Liberals, whose plan he has repeatedly criticized.

The Progressive Conservative leader said Thursday that he'd cut rates by a variety of means to save the average ratepayer \$173 a year.

"I think that's a pretty good start," he said. "Putting \$173 back in the taxpayer pocket." The Tory plan would see the government give ratepayers the dividends it gets from its share of the partly privatized Hydro One. It also would shift the cost of energy conservation programs from hydro users to the tax base. And Ford said he'd put a moratorium on new energy contracts and renegotiate existing deals where possible.

The plan comes as Ford continues to bemoan the governing Liberals' borrowing of billions to lower hydro rates by 25 per cent in the short term. But he said their plan will remain in place, at least initially, if he's elected.

"We're going to be reviewing that," Ford said of the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan. "That was... the wrong thing to do, borrowing down the future and the only people who are going to pay for it is our children, our great-grandchildren." The Grits' hydro plan came after Ontario bills roughly doubled in the last decade, and widespread anger helped tank Premier Kathleen Wynne's approval ratings.

The plan lowers time-of-use rates by removing from bills part of the global adjustment - a charge consumers pay for above-market rates to power producers - for the next 10 years.

In the meantime, producers will be paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation will oversee the debt used to pay that difference through a new entity called OPG Trust.

That financing structure will cost an extra \$4 billion, Ontario's auditor and financial accountability officer say. The Grits have said the cost will be closer to \$2 billion.

Ford said Wynne "hoodwinked" taxpayers by creating the Fair Hydro Plan, but said he'd maintain it, with his own proposed 12 per cent rate cut on top of the Liberal reduction.

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The Chronicle Journal: [Ford promises cut to hydro rates if elected HL:Doug Ford promises 12 per cent cut to hydro rates if]; 2018.04.28

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle Journal
DATE: 2018.04.28
SECTION: Quebec- Ontario general news
KEYWORDS: promises,hydro,rates,elected,premier,shawn
WORD COUNT: 808

[Ford promises cut to hydro rates if elected HL:Doug Ford promises 12 per cent cut to hydro rates if]

Ford promises cut to hydro rates if elected

HL:Doug Ford promises 12 per cent cut to hydro rates if elected premier

By Shawn Jeffords

THE CANADIAN PRESS

KITCHENER, Ont. - Doug Ford is promising to cut hydro bills by 12 per cent if he wins Ontario's spring election, saying it would be on top of a rate reduction from the governing Liberals, whose plan he has repeatedly criticized.

The Progressive Conservative leader said Thursday that he would cut rates through a variety of measures that would save the average ratepayer \$173 a year.

"I think that's a pretty good start," he said. "Putting \$173 back in the taxpayer pocket."

The Tory plan would see the government give ratepayers the dividends it gets from its share of the partially privatized Hydro One.

It would also shift the cost of energy conservation programs from hydro customers to the tax base. And Ford said he would place a moratorium on new energy contracts and renegotiate existing deals where possible.

The plan comes as Ford continues to bemoan the fact that the governing Liberals will borrow billions to lower hydro rates by 25 per cent in the short-term. But he said their plan will remain in place, at least initially, if he's elected this spring.

"We're going to be reviewing that," Ford said of the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan. "That was, as far as I'm concerned, the wrong thing to do, borrowing down the future and the only people who are going to pay for it is our children, our great-grandchildren."

The Liberals' hydro plan came after bills in the province roughly doubled in the last decade, and widespread anger helped send Premier Kathleen Wynne's approval ratings to record lows.

The plan lowers time-of-use rates by removing from bills a portion of the global adjustment - a charge consumers pay for above-market rates to power producers - for the next 10 years.

In the meantime, producers will continue being paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation has been tapped to oversee the debt used to pay that difference through a new entity called OPG Trust.

That financing structure will cost an extra \$4 billion, according to both the province's auditor and the financial accountability officer. The Liberals have said the financing will cost closer to \$2 billion.

Ford said Wynne "hoodwinked" taxpayers by creating the Fair Hydro Plan, but said he'd maintain it, with his own proposed 12 per cent rate cut being over and above the Liberal reduction.

Tory energy critic Todd Smith said the party may have a difficult task ahead if it wants to alter the Fair Hydro Plan because of the complexity of the borrowing vehicle created to finance the reduction.

"This was a very convoluted, confusing plan that the Liberals put in place," he said. "They concocted this for one reason and that was to hid it from the province's books, to make it seem like they had more money than they actually have."

Earlier this week Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said the government's deficit projections over the next three years were understated by billions, in part, because of the Fair Hydro Plan and financing that is not included on the province's financial statements.

"This was done to hid the actual cost of their program for a very, very short period of time," Smith said. "It hasn't done anything to reduce the generation costs of electricity. What we're proposing here today will do that."

Colin Nekolaichuk, spokesman for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault, said that after months of denouncing the government's efforts, Ford has admitted he will "embrace" the Liberal hydro plan as the foundation of the Tory proposal.

"Ford will retain all aspects of the Fair Hydro Plan," he said in a statement. "Unfortunately, it's everything else that Doug Ford has proposed that fails to pass the smell test."

Nekolaichuk said Ford's promise to stop new electricity procurement has already been done by the government, which means the forecasted savings in the Tory plan from that pledge aren't real. And Ford's rhetoric about existing deals sends a bad signal, he added.

"By bragging loud and large that he'll tear up committed capacity contracts, he is inviting massive law suits that will surely be won, costing the provinces hundreds of millions of dollars that, in turn, will drive electricity bills back up," Nekolaichuk said.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, who has said she would scrap the Fair Hydro Plan, said Ford's plan won't reduce electricity rates.

"Mr. Ford has endorsed the Liberals' disastrous hydro borrowing scheme, which will cause bills to skyrocket by 70 per cent right after the election and add \$40 billion of debt for future generations to pay off," she said. "This after repeatedly criticizing the Liberal scheme and the high executive salaries that come along with it."

Ontario heads to the polls June 7.

Peterborough Examiner: Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected; B1;
2018.04.28

PUBLICATION: Peterborough Examiner
PAGE: B1
DATE: 2018.04.28
SECTION: Canada/World
EDITION: First
BYLINE: Shawn Jeffords The Canadian Press
KEYWORDS: promising,hydro,rates,spring,election,saying
WORD COUNT: 409

Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected

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Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said the government's deficit projections over the next three years were understated by billions, in part, because of the Fair Hydro Plan and financing that is not included on the province's financial statements.

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Niagara Falls Review: Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected; B1; 2018.04.28

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Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected

Doug Ford is promising to cut hydro rates by 12 per cent if he wins Ontario's spring election, saying the reduction would be on top of the Liberal government's electricity rate cut plan, which he has repeatedly criticized.

The Progressive Conservative leader said Thursday that he would cut rates through a variety of measures that would save the average ratepayer \$173 a year.

"I think that's a pretty good start," he said. "Putting \$173 back in the taxpayer pocket."

The Tory plan would see the government give ratepayers the dividends it gets from its share of the partially privatized Hydro One.

It would also shift the cost of energy conservation programs from hydro customers to the tax base. And Ford said he would place a moratorium on new energy contracts and renegotiate existing deals where possible.

The plan comes as Ford continues to bemoan the fact that the governing Liberals will borrow billions to lower hydro rates by 25 per cent in the short-term. But he said their plan will remain in place, at least initially, if he's elected this spring.

"We're going to be reviewing that," Ford said of the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan. "That was, as far as I'm concerned, the wrong thing to do, borrowing down the future and the only people who are going to pay for it is our children, our great-grandchildren."

The Liberals' hydro plan came after bills in the province roughly doubled in the last decade, and widespread anger helped send Premier Kathleen Wynne's approval ratings to record lows.

The plan lowers time-of-use rates by removing from bills a portion of the global adjustment - a charge consumers pay for above-market rates to power producers - for 10 years.

In the meantime, producers will continue being paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation has been tapped to oversee the debt used to pay that difference through a new entity called OPG Trust.

That financing structure will cost an extra \$4 billion, according to both the auditor and the financial accountability officer.

Ford said Wynne "hoodwinked" taxpayers by creating the plan, but said he'd maintain it, with his own proposed 12 per cent rate cut being over and above the Liberal 25 per cent rate reduction.

Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said the government's deficit projections over the next three years were understated by billions, in part, because of the Fair Hydro Plan and financing that is not included on the province's financial statements.

Waterloo Region Record: Doug Ford says he 'hated' making appointments like Mike Harris Jr.'s; PC leader says his hydro plan would save families \$174 a year on their bills; A1; 2018.04.28

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ILLUSTRATION: Doug Ford, leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, spoke to the media at the Holiday Inn in Kitchener on Friday.

WORD COUNT: 768

Doug Ford says he 'hated' making appointments like Mike Harris Jr.'s; PC leader says his hydro plan would save families \$174 a year on their bills

Ontario PC Party Leader Doug Ford was in Kitchener Friday to promote his plan to cut hydro rates - and said if elected premier he'd fund two-way, all-day GO Train service for Waterloo Region.

But the Tory leader also spent time trying to distance himself from his controversial appointment of former premier's son Mike Harris Jr. in Kitchener-Conestoga, one of 11 appointments around the province.

Ford says he "hated" making those appointments, which contradicted his vow in February that all PC candidates would have to earn their place through a democratic nomination.

Harris, who replaced MPP Michael Harris after he was booted from caucus over a 2012 sexting allegation (a complaint was made in 2013), is a well-connected political newcomer who previously lost his bid for the Waterloo nomination.

Ford said Harris was recommended by the party's provincial nomination committee (PNC), and he had to trust their suggestion.

"I can't stand appointing people," he said.

"I never got involved in the PNC decisions whatsoever. I don't call them up and say, 'Do this, do that.' They put forward candidates based on their qualifications, and from there they made their decisions and I said yea or nay."

While some have accused Ford of appointing Harris as a favour to his father, he said the appointments were necessary because the party was running out of time with the election looming June 7.

"If we continued on with the 11 nominations, we'd be going right into June," he said. "It wouldn't be fair to the candidates, it wouldn't be fair to the ridings ... There just wouldn't be time."

Asked about his support for two-way, all-day GO Trains connecting Waterloo Region to Toronto, Ford said a Progressive Conservative government would green-light improved commuter rail service.

"Yeah, we're going to fund that," he said.

"We're going to do it as quickly as possible ... we're going to put the pedal to the metal and remove all the red tape and bureaucracy that gets in the way of these projects."

But he was noncommittal about whether he supports a high-speed rail network from Toronto to London, which the Liberals have pledged \$11 billion to build by 2025.

"We're going to do the environmental assessment," he said, but didn't elaborate.

Ontario's transportation minister Kathryn McGarry, the MPP for Cambridge, said Ford can't promise to cut billions in spending and still deliver on major transit projects for Ontario.

Saying he's going to cut the "red tape" might make a good sound bite, she said, but it's disconnected from reality.

It's taken years to buy the rail corridor for the GO Trains, electrify the track and go through the necessary

public consultation process, McGarry said.

"I'm not sure Mr. Ford understands the complexities of these big transit options," she said.

"Simplistic slogans are not the way to build transit projects in Ontario ... He'll have to make drastic cuts to many programs in Ontario in order to move ahead with what he's saying."

The bulk of Ford's visit to Kitchener was spent promoting his party's plan to cut 12 per cent off Ontarians' hydro bills.

Ford said his proposal would save the average family about \$174 a year on their hydro bills, or about \$14 a month.

"As I criss-cross this province, people come up to me in tears, absolutely devastated because they can't afford to pay their hydro bills," he said.

He said hydro rates had tripled under 15 years of Liberal rule.

The Wynne government only began giving ratepayers a break once the election approached - by subsidizing hydro rates and hiding the costs in their growing deficits, Ford said.

"They're cooking the books on the backs of the taxpayers of Ontario," he said.

The Liberals, meanwhile, say the Tories' hydro plan "fails to pass the smell test."

The party said its own the Fair Hydro Plan reduces electricity rates by 25 per cent on average for Ontario families and businesses, and as much as 40 per cent to 50 per cent in remote and rural areas.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said Ford's plan is effectively an endorsement of the Liberals' "disastrous hydro borrowing scheme" that she said would add billions of debt for future generations.

Under an NDP government, Hydro One would return to public hands and hydro bills for families and businesses would be reduced by about 30 per cent.

"Doug Ford confirmed once again this morning that he stands proudly for a privatized hydro system in Ontario, one that places profits for wealthy shareholders ahead of lowering hydro bills for every day families," Horwath said, in a statement.

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The Hamilton Spectator: Ford pledges 12% cut to hydro rates if elected; A13;
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In the meantime, producers will continue being paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation has been tapped to oversee the debt used to pay that difference through a new entity called OPG Trust. That financing structure will cost an extra \$4 billion, according to the auditor and the financial accountability officer.

Ford said Wynne "hoodwinked" taxpayers by creating the plan, but said he'd maintain it, with his own proposed 12 per cent rate cut being over and above the Liberal 25 per cent rate reduction.

Tory energy critic Todd Smith said the party may have a difficult task ahead if it wants to alter the Fair Hydro Plan because of the complexity of the borrowing vehicle created to finance the reduction.

Earlier this week, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said the government's deficit projections over the next three years were understated by billions, in part, because of the Fair Hydro Plan and financing that is not included in financial statements

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The Hamilton Spectator: Politicians make their case to businesspeople; Wynne, Fedeli and Horwath pitch business policy to Ontario chamber AGM in Hamilton; A20; 2018.04.28

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ILLUSTRATION: Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, left, and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, right, were in Hamilton Friday morning to outline some of their platforms for the provincial election during the Ontario Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting at the Sheraton Hamilton. MPP Vic Fedeli was also there to pitch for the Progressive Conservatives.Scott Gardner The Hamilton Spectator Scott Gardner The Hamilton Spectator

WORD COUNT: 539

Politicians make their case to businesspeople; Wynne, Fedeli and Horwath pitch business policy to Ontario chamber AGM in Hamilton

Premier Kathleen Wynne promised a room full of business leaders that her government plans to take action on an "unintended consequence" of Bill 148 - the holiday pay provisions.

The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act - which is best known for hiking the minimum wage - is also responsible for changes to how employees are paid for statutory holidays.

"I want you to know we are looking at that," Wynne told the Ontario Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting in Hamilton Friday. "I believe that we have to do something about that."

Business owners - especially those with several part-time staff - have reported the statutory holiday pay

change makes it difficult for them to keep those employees and sees them paying more in additional holiday pay than the minimum wage increase.

Prior to Jan. 1, the public holiday pay for part-time staff was calculated based on an employee's earnings four weeks before the holiday, divided by 20. Now, the calculation is based on a worker's earnings in the pay period before the holiday, divided by the number of days worked in that time.

Friday marked the first full day of the provincial chamber's annual general meeting, which runs through the weekend.

Business community members from across the province who are part of the Ontario Chamber Network gathered at the Sheraton Hamilton Hotel to debate policy and plan their advocacy strategies for the next year.

Wynne, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath and Progressive Conservative MPP Vic Fedeli made their cases to the chamber network Friday morning about their parties' priorities heading into the provincial election.

Ontario Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Rocco Rossi told the room that while they have issues with the Liberals and the NDP, "they've at least given us stuff to talk about," pointing to the fact that the PCs have not yet released the price of their policy announcements.

When Fedeli addressed the group, he pointed to Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford's five priorities, which include repealing the carbon tax, putting an end to provincial income taxes for minimum wage earners, and cutting the corporate income tax rate from 11.5 per cent to 10.5 per cent.

Asked by a chamber member about when the party would make known its position on other issues, including transportation, broadband access for rural communities and climate change, Fedeli said they would be revealed over the "coming days."

Horwath, who is MPP for Hamilton Centre, positioned herself as offering something "completely different" to Ford.

She also stressed how her party would offer a change from the Liberal government, under which "Ontario families and businesses have been told to settle."

Horwath said her plan includes buying back Hydro One, investing in broadband access and natural gas expansion in rural and northern communities, and creating 27,000 jobs for students to equip them with necessary skills and on-the-job experience.

According to a recent public opinion poll of just over 1,100 Ontario voters, 46 per cent said they would vote PC if an election were held today.

The Forum poll released last week revealed 27 per cent said they would support the New Democratic Party and 21 per cent said they would vote for the Liberals.

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