

SPEECH COVER SHEET

FAIR HYDRO CALL ECHO — MARKHAM CALL CENTRE

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2017

Premier —

On Tuesday, you will visit a hydro call centre in Markham. There is no formal speaking opportunity/media availability. You will be speaking with staff as they take customer calls and speaking one-on-one with media present. These BPs are to aid you in your conversations with media.

- It is great to be here today to talk to people who make our electricity system work for customers, and hear from callers about their experiences
- The calls they handle here from ratepayers throughout this region make it clear: families are having trouble getting ahead
- Rising hydro bills have hit household budgets particularly hard
- Hydro rates have gone up too much and too quickly

What's happened to people's bills is unfair — so we're fixing it

- Last week I announced the province's plan to lower the cost of electricity for every residential consumer in Ontario by an average of 25 per cent, starting this summer
- And because this break in rates is built on real change, we're going to hold rates down, allowing them to rise only by inflation — roughly 2 per cent — for at least four years
- It is the largest cut to electricity rates in Ontario's history

As many will remember, 15 years ago Ontario was in a tough spot — decades of underinvestment and neglect by governments of all stripes had undermined our electricity system

- We made a decision to rebuild — \$50 billion worth of new energy infrastructure
- Today the grid is clean and reliable. No more blackouts. No more smog days
- But the terms we used to finance those necessary renovations were unfair
- We asked today's generation of ratepayers — the people calling in here today — to absorb all of these costs, paying for past neglect and subsidizing future ratepayers

That wasn't fair — we heard that from families across Ontario — and this call centre heard the same thing

- That, yes, we took actions to keep bills down over the last few years — but they were just too narrow in scope to make a big enough dent
- So now, when people call to ask why their bill is so high, we'll be able to tell them that significant and lasting relief is on the way
- We're fundamentally restructuring the system — spreading out the costs of building a clean, reliable system over a time frame that is fairer
- Households should see a drop of about 25 percent starting this summer
- And we're enhancing the rebate programs for rural and remote ratepayers and for those living on low-incomes so that those customers will receive even greater relief
- [Nous prenons davantage de moyens pour restructurer et refinancer le système. Le résultat sera des tarifs d'électricité en Ontario grandement réduits. Les tarifs vont demeurer bas et tout le monde en profitera.]

We're able to absorb the costs of this plan for fairer hydro because Ontario's economy is strong — our budget is coming into balance

- Our plan is about creating growth that benefits everyone, so it is essential that we use the province's newfound fiscal strength to give everyone the break they need on their hydro bills
- It's the smart thing to do for Ontario and the fairer way forward for families

Please let us know if you have any questions,

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