

**Back Pocket Remarks — J'Adore Cheese and Chocolate — Media Avail
March 14, 2017**

- Good morning
- Thank you Jessi and Becki for that introduction, and for showing us around your shop today [Jessi Ra Fournier and Becki Martin, co-owners, J'Adore]
- It is great to be here with Ann, a strong voice for Barrie on our team at Queen's Park [MPP Hoggarth]
- And I want to thank Brian for joining us this morning — and working with us to deliver fairer hydro rates to homes and businesses across Barrie [Brian Bentz, President and CEO, Alectra]

Small businesses like J'Adore are so important to our communities and to the economy

- Seeing what Jessi and Becki have built here gives you a real appreciation for just how much courage, passion and hard work it take to make a small business successful
- It is vital that businesses like this are able to succeed and grow
- This is more than a place to get great cheese and chocolate
- It is a job creator...
- A place for people to get together and learn about their food...
- It supports businesses across Ontario by promoting the local food movement...
- And together with Barrie's other downtown small businesses, J'Adore gives back to the community, fundraising every month for local charities

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So it is a problem that lately, the rising cost of electricity has been making it harder and harder for small businesses to succeed

- Here at J'Adore, electricity is the second biggest expense after rent
- Rising hydro bills have hit small businesses particularly hard, just as they have hit households across the province
- The truth is hydro rates did go up too much — and too quickly
- These rate hikes have not been fair, so we are taking action

Two weeks ago, I announced the province's plan to lower the cost of electricity for households and small businesses throughout Ontario by an average of 25 per cent, starting this summer

- This significant rate cut will reach about 500,000 farms and small businesses like J'adore
- This is the largest cut to electricity rates in Ontario's history and it's built on real change, so we're able to hold rates down
- After the 25 per cent cut rates will only rise by inflation — roughly 2 per cent — for at least four years

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

- We made a decision to rebuild — investing \$50 billion in new energy infrastructure
- Today the grid is clean and reliable. No more smog days and asthma rates are down
- But the terms we used to finance those necessary renovations were unfair
- We asked today's generation of ratepayers to absorb all of these costs, paying for past neglect and subsidizing future ratepayers
- So now, we're fundamentally restructuring the system — spreading out the costs of building a clean, reliable system over a time frame that is fairer
- [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 also 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

- 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
- And our plan is about creating growth that benefits everyone...
- So it is essential that we use the province's newfound fiscal strength to give businesses and families the break they need on their hydro bills
- It's the smart thing to do for Ontario's economy and the fairer way forward for families
- Thank you again for having us today
- I'd like to turn it over to Ann now to say a few words [MPP Hoggarth]