

# For Review: Bill Murdoch interview note

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## **Media Prep Sheet: Interview with Bill Murdoch, 560 CFOS**

**Location:** Telephone interview, call Gurvinder's cell – 647-402-7218

**Time: Briefing: 9:00-9:05 // Interview: 9:05–9:30 A.M, Friday November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Prepared by: Gurvinder Singh

Reviewed by:

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Premier,

Tomorrow you will do a 20 minute live, call-in interview with Bill Murdoch. His show, Rock n' Talk Fridays, is an hour long live show which broadcasts on 560 CFOS. You last met Mr. Murdoch at the International Plowing Match where you agreed to be on the show.

The show is a news and information talk show where Mr. Murdoch discusses topics of the day and takes calls from the listeners. I want to flag that he had requested that you participate in the full hour of the show and take calls from the listeners, as the show has an open line. Due to scheduling, we are only able to accommodate 20 minutes for the interview and recommended that Mr. Murdoch take that time to interview you directly and refrain from taking calls from the listeners.

Mr. Murdoch was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from 1990 until 2011, representing the riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound as a Progressive Conservative. He was educated at the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute, and worked as a farmer, electrical draftsman, and salesman. He is also a member of the Royal Canadian Legion. He served as chair of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority for five years.

This interview will focus on hydro, minimum wage and the upcoming election. This will be an important opportunity to highlight the fairness and opportunity initiatives, the steps we've taken to address concerns with hydro and minimum wage, and the positive impact these actions will have for all Ontarians.

I have included the fairness and opportunity messaging as well as messaging that will help you address questions about the impact of hydro on rural parts of Ontario, the impact of the minimum wage increase on small businesses and the agriculture industry, and the upcoming election.

I will brief you over the phone before connecting the call to Mr. Murdoch. As always, please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at 647-402-7218.

Gurvinder

### **Fairness & Opportunity Messaging**

You've heard a lot from us over the past several months. I've been talking about different elements of our

plan to build a better Ontario and the thread that connects all of these pieces is fairness.

What I hear – no matter where I am in the province is that people are feeling uncertain about the future. They are anxious about their own jobs and about what the future holds for their kids.

Ontario's economy is in a good place – outperforming every other province in Canada. Our unemployment rate is at its lowest point in 16 years.

But there is also a lot of change and uncertainty – about the nature of work, about what's happening in the U.S. with Trump and trade, about the cost of living rising faster than people's paycheques.

It is tough for people to feel like they're getting ahead right now – and even those who do feel like they're doing OK still worry about staying ahead.

With this uncertainty, we have to protect our people as best we can.

We need to make sure that people across the province feel like they are benefitting from the strength in our economy.

We need to address the concerns of those who worry about falling behind, even as they work so hard to get ahead. To make life in Ontario fairer and create more opportunity for everyone.

You've heard me say it before. I believe government must be a force for good.

That's not a slogan – it's what drives me every single day.

We worked very hard to bring the budget to balance this year – people across the public service, across the province worked hard together to do that.

And what that balance has allowed us to do is invest in the areas that will have the biggest impact for people across the province

Free tuition for more than 200,000 students

Getting 100,000 more kids into childcare so their parents can work

Free prescription drugs for everyone under the age of 25

A pilot project to test whether a Basic Income is a fairer, more effective way of helping people get ahead

A Fair Hydro Plan that takes 25 per cent off people's bills

A Fair Housing Plan to make buying or renting a home in Ontario more affordable

And a plan for Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs that includes raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour

All of these things are connected. The motivation behind each of them is the same.

We can do better in Ontario. We can build a province where people do feel optimistic about the future because there is security and there is opportunity.

### **Fair Hydro Plan**

- Over the last decade the government has rebuilt our transmission and distribution grid, invested in clean generation, and closed the last coal-fired power plant. Smog days in Ontario are now a thing of the past.

- The government has been making important investments in a cleaner and more reliable energy system, but these investments have led to higher electricity bills.
- Prices have increased because our electricity system is being transformed – nearly \$70 billion has been invested to modernize the system.
- We have heard from Ontarians across the province that the price of electricity has risen too quickly, which is why we put forward a plan to ensure the costs are shared more evenly over the years ahead. It was the fair thing to do.
- Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan has lowered electricity bills by 25 per cent on average for residential consumers, and will hold increases to the rate of inflation for four years.
- As many as half a million small businesses and farms are also benefitting.
- Lower-income Ontarians and those living in eligible rural communities are receiving even greater reductions, as much as 40 to 50 per cent.
- Taken together, these changes have delivered the single largest reduction to electricity rates in Ontario's history

### **2017 Long-Term Energy Plan**

- The 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP), *Delivering Fairness and Choice*, focuses on energy affordability, innovation and customer choice.
- The 2017 LTEP is a road map that sets out the direction for Ontario's energy future. The Province engaged with thousands of Ontarians to develop the plan. During engagement, Ontarians said that affordability is a top priority and that consumers wanted more control and choice over how they use and pay for electricity.
- Nearly \$70 billion has been invested in Ontario's electricity system since 2003 to ensure it is clean and reliable.
- The government phased out coal-fired generating stations.
- In 2016, Ontario's electricity generation was more than 90 per cent free of greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.
- As of July 1, 2017, Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan reduced electricity bills by 25 per cent on average for residential consumers and as many as half a million small businesses and farms across the province. As part of the plan, any increases to bills will be held to the rate of inflation for four years.
- Following this, the 2017 LTEP confirms that electricity prices are forecast to remain below the level projected in the 2013 LTEP.
- While rates will rise gradually over time, the government remains committed to avoiding sharp increases through initiatives outlined in the Long-Term Energy Plan.

## **Rural or Remote Rate Protection Plan**

- Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan enhances support for vulnerable electricity consumers, including Ontarians who have the highest delivery rates in the province.
- Rural or Remote Rate Protection (RRRP) mitigates some of the high costs of electricity distribution in rural or remote areas of the province by providing customers with a credit to offset this high cost. .
- As part of the Fair Hydro Plan, the Province has broadened this rate protection to provide distribution charge relief to additional customers served by Local Distribution Companies (LDCs) with some of the highest distribution rates.
- About 800,000 customers will benefit from the enhanced rate protection.
- Residential customers from the following LDCs will benefit from the broadened rate protection: Hydro One low density (R2) and medium density (R1) customers, Northern Ontario Wires, Lakeland Power (Parry Sound), Chapleau Public Utilities Corporation, Sioux Lookout Hydro, InnPower, Atikokan Hydro and Algoma Power.

## **Minimum Wage**

- Millions of workers in Ontario are finding it almost impossible to support their families on a minimum wage that just doesn't go far enough. It's time this rate reflected the reality of people's lives.
- Raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr gives more than a quarter of Ontarians a pay increase, ensuring that more workers are benefitting from Ontario's economic growth.
- A \$15 minimum wage phased in over 18 months is good for workers but can be good for businesses too. When businesses pay fairly, living standards rise and reliance on benefits falls. Higher wages also lead to greater job satisfaction and productivity, less turnover and more spending power for lower income earners.
- Beyond the positive impact, the minimum wage increase speaks to our values. It's about equal opportunity- ensuring those who work hard and play by the rules are rewarded. It's our job as government to make sure our society reflects those values.
- Whether it's child care or health care, rent control or workplace fairness, the motivation behind them is the same. They all help build an Ontario where greater opportunity is available for everyone and greater security is achievable for everyone.

## **If Pressed: What is the good news for agriculture coming out of the CWR?**

- Ontarians and the province's economy depend on access to fresh food and a strong food system that are subject to limited growing seasons and vulnerable to severe weather.
- Our government also cares about the rights of agricultural workers in the province.
- They will continue to be covered under the *Agricultural Employees Protection Act*.

- The Ministry of Labour will work with affected Ministries to consult with stakeholders to review the Special Advisors' recommendation to remove the exclusions under the LRA taking into account ongoing litigation.
- I will ensure that my ministry is involved in that review so that the unique circumstances of the agriculture sector are taken into consideration.

### **If Pressed: Supports for agriculture for implementing minimum wage**

- Our government introduced the Risk Management Program to help Ontario farmers weather impacts on their revenue outside of their control.
- Farmers will continue to receive support from the Risk Management Program, and the range of Business Risk Management programs that the province supports.
- Our supply management system will also help farmers in those sectors weather additional labour costs, which will be factored in the cost of production.

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### **Upcoming Election**

- We remain focused on our plan to create a fairer Ontario.
- This includes implementing:
  - o OHIP+
  - o Free tuition
  - o Fair Housing Plan
  - o Fair Hydro Plan
  - o Safer Ontario Act
  - o \$15 Minimum wage and Changing Workplaces Review
- I'm also looking forward to Minister Sousa releasing our Fall Economic Statement on November 14th which will outline additional measures.
- We have a lot of work to do in the lead up to the election and that's what I'm focused on.