

2017 Long-Term Energy Plan Minister's Message

Ontario's 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan is principally focused on the consumer while ensuring a reliable and innovative energy system. *Delivering Fairness and Choice* makes an important commitment: we will strive to make energy more affordable, and give customers more choices in their energy use.

Ontarians are benefitting from the years of investment we have made in Ontario's electricity system. We can be proud of what we all have accomplished. . By eliminating coal-fired generation, we now have an electricity system that is over 90 per cent free of emissions that cause climate change. The phase out of coal-fired generation and our investments in clean generation have contributed to dramatically improved air quality in Ontario – smog advisories have dropped from 53 as recently as 2005, to zero in 2016. This means that our children can play outside without their health being threatened by smog and air pollution. Our investments are delivering a robust supply of electricity, one that is expected to meet Ontario's electricity demand into the middle of the next decade, and makes us well positioned to plan for and meet future challenges. Our success in building a clean and reliable electricity system means we can maintain our focus on helping Ontarians and their families.

Commented [AH(1)]: There were smog advisories in 2017.

We have already taken steps through Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan to make the electricity system as affordable as possible. Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan reduced electricity bills for residential consumers by an average of 25 per cent and will hold increases to the rate of inflation for four years. These benefits aren't limited to residential consumers; as many as half a million small businesses and farms are also benefitting from the reduction. Lower-income Ontarians and those living in eligible rural and northern communities are receiving even greater reductions, as much as 40 to 50 per cent. These measures were the right thing to do. They're better for Ontario, and fairer for families.

Commented [AH(2)]: Not sure what this means.

Delivering Fairness and Choice would not have been possible without your suggestions and advice. This report is the product of one of the most extensive consultation and engagement processes my Ministry has ever undertaken. Thousands of organizations, communities, businesses, and citizens wrote to us. Hundreds came to the 17 open houses that were held across the province. We also had engagement sessions with representatives of over 100 different First Nation and Métis organizations and communities.

In written submissions and at meetings, you told us that affordability is a top priority and that you wanted more control and choice over how you use and pay for electricity. Our government has listened to what you had to say. *Delivering Fairness and Choice* recognizes that a retired couple in London use energy differently than a condo-dweller living in Vaughan. Pricing pilots

are underway to help inform new electricity pricing plans that could give consumers increased choice, and the ability to reduce their monthly electricity bills.

Delivering Fairness and Choice ensures consumer protection remains a top priority for this government. We have already given the Ontario Energy Board the authority to prohibit disconnections during times of the year when customers are more vulnerable. We will now give added protection to consumers living in condominiums and other multi-unit residential buildings who are billed for electricity by private companies who provide metering services to their unit. These consumers will benefit from increased oversight of fees charged by those providers. Consumers will also benefit from the Board's new *Consumer Charter*, which ensures all energy consumers have the right to a fair, reasonable and timely process for resolving their complaints.

On another front, the Ministry of Energy is working with local distribution companies to redesign electricity bills to give consumers easily accessible information they find valuable and can use. The electricity bill is, after all, the most common way for consumers to receive information about their electricity system.

Ontario is helping consumers keep pace with a rapidly changing technology landscape. The costs of new wind and solar energy installations are coming down, and new smart grid and storage technologies are becoming more readily available. Updates to the Province's net metering framework will increase the ability of consumers to generate their own renewable electricity and receive a credit on electricity bills for any extra power they send to their local distribution company.

All of this is possible because Ontario has a stable electricity system that produces a steady supply of electricity. *Delivering Fairness and Choice* is using this opportunity to move ahead with innovative ideas for managing the system and reducing costs. Initiatives such as Market Renewal will ensure the province has appropriate sources of electricity at the lowest possible price. Market Renewal could save Ontarians up to \$5.2 billion over a 10-year period.

Energy is key to the well-being and prosperity of the people of Ontario. Our plan will ensure we can all depend on a clean and reliable supply of affordable energy to power our households and businesses for many years to come. From this position of strength, we are able to make an important commitment to Ontario's energy consumer: that we will strive to give consumers more choices in their energy use and ensure that Ontarians and their families will continue to be at the heart of everything we do.