

Media Scan for Estimates

Question Period

The main issues raised during Question Period by the opposition parties focused on the following:

- The issue of increasing electricity prices for residential and industrial customers was the dominating theme during Question Period.
- High electricity prices were referenced in most questions related to the Ministry of Energy.
- There was a spike in questions following the announcement of the Fair Hydro Plan, and the 8 per cent rebate; questions included recent advertising on the Fair Hydro Plan.
- There were a few questions following the announcement of Hydro One's final share offering.

Nuclear:

- After the release of the Sunshine List, the opposition and unofficial opposition continuously questioned the high salaries paid out to employees of Ontario's nuclear facilities.
- They raised the issue of high salaries paid out to nuclear employees, while the people of Ontario struggle to pay high Hydro bills.
- Opposition questioned why other provincial energy executives make less than a third of what those in Ontario make.
- The opposition Energy critic claimed large bonuses were paid out for nuclear refurbishment projects, claiming they are over budget and delayed.

Fit Program:

- There were only two mentions of the FIT program during the scanned time period
- Both mentions came from Liberal Party Members who talked about FIT Prices being reduced through annual reviews, saving ratepayers \$1.9 billion.

Climate Change:

- The government was pressed to address the costs and benefits of the cap and trade program, including the impact on electricity, natural gas, gasoline prices, employment, investment and the environment.
- The Minister was asked to explain what our government is doing to ensure that our (First Nations) communities have access to safe and clean drinking water
- Minister was question if we are doing enough to plant more trees, and how citizens and communities can get involve in planting more trees to meet the government's 50 million tree program in 2017.
- The Minister of Transportation handled questions related to electric vehicles, but some of the questions did come up regarding Tesla electric vehicles in the Minister's Chief of Staff's email

- Acting Premier questioned to reveal what promises the Premier made to Chief Simon Fobister in a meeting pertaining to mercury poisoning, testing, etc...
- Minister was questioned on details to implement a new fee on water extraction, and how this will further support the government's efforts in groundwater protection
- The premier was asked on February 27 to commit to winding up Ontario Tire Stewardship immediately? And to clarify where the money has been going?
- The minister was asked to speak about the aims of the Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario and how this is going to benefit everyone in Ontario?

Cyber Security:

Cyber security has not been discussed in the legislation during the requested time period.

Natural Gas:

- The opposition repeatedly brought up the example of the \$1-billion gas scandal as a reason to not trust the current government.
- Questions were asked on how the gas plant project has become so over budget, with the government stating previously it would cost the equivalent of a cup of coffee.
- There were claims from the opposition that the people of Ontario will continue to pay the cost of the \$1-billion gas plant scandal in the latest budget and future budgets to come.

Media Calls

The majority of media calls handled by the Ministry spokesperson related to electricity prices, specifically questions on the recently announced Fair Hydro Plan, and the 8 per cent rebate.

Recently, the Ministry has seen an increase in the number of media calls related to cap and trade (specifically, questions on C&T fees), and natural gas.

Earlier this year and late last year, the Ministry handled several calls related to the sale of Hydro One, but we have seen a decrease in those calls as of late – even following the announcement of Hydro One's final share offering.

Press Conferences

There haven't many press conferences related to the Ministry of Energy's files. Some recent pressers include:

- NDP Leader Andrea Horwath held a press conference to announce the NDP's plan to cut hydro prices.