

Sudbury Chamber Fireside Chat with Premier Wynne
Holiday Inn | Tuesday, May 23, 2017

- I want to thank the Premier for coming to Sudbury today
- After hearing the concerns about high electricity bills from families and businesses across the province, Premier Wynne announced our plan a couple of months ago
- And as part of this plan, we've introduced legislation that would, if passed, deliver a 25 per cent on average reduction for Sudbury families' electricity bills
- With the proposed expansion of the Ontario Electricity Support Program and the broadening of the RRRP, low-income families and those in eligible rural or remote communities could see savings of up to 40 to 50 per cent

- We're also targeting those who need the help most:
- Small and medium sized businesses – the backbone of our economy
- Starting this summer, as many as half a million businesses and farms across the province would be eligible for the 25 per cent on average cut
- If our legislation is passed, it would be the single largest rate reduction in the province's history, with rates held to inflation for four years
- We can all agree that help is needed for some families that are impacted most by high electricity bills and that's why we have assistance like the Ontario Electricity Support Program and the Rural or Remote Rate Protection plan

- But ratepayers have been carrying the cost of these programs, not taxpayers
- And that simply is not fair
- As part of our plan, we'll be offloading the payment for social programs from electricity ratepayers onto the tax base, which will help cut electricity prices for every business – large and small – in the province by approximately two to four per cent
- We also expanded the Industrial Conservation Initiative last month to allow for hundreds more small manufacturing and industrial facilities to qualify

- Those now eligible to participate in this program, include:
 - The food and beverage industry;
 - Apparel;
 - Plastics and rubber;
 - Computers and electronics;
 - Transportation equipment;
 - Fabricated metal products (e.g., Automatic Coating);
 - Chemicals; and
 - Wood products.
- Since 2011 the Industrial Conservation has been helping well over 300 industrial facilities save up to a third on their electricity bills
- The expansion of the program last Fall made it accessible to over a thousand new businesses

- By expanding this program again through Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan, we are building on one of the smartest and most successful measures we've ever put in place to bring down the electricity bills of medium and large businesses
- It's smart because it helps the electricity system lower costs through conservation, and successful because eligible industrial customers can see significant savings by participating in this program
- Last year, independent studies showed that ICI participants helped lower peak electricity demand in Ontario by about 800 MW
- That's the equivalent of one nuclear unit

- By expanding this program to more eligible participants, we are going to put business in the drivers' seat – giving them more control over the cost of their electricity usage
- With the launch of Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan, we're not expecting a pat on the back
- But there's no question in our mind that these changes are the right thing to do
- Bringing down rates by 25 per cent for families and small businesses in Northern Ontario starting this summer; and enacting the kinds of structural reforms that we intend to – that's the approach that Kathleen Wynne and Ontario's Liberal Government believes in
- I think it's better for Ontario
- And I know it's fairer for Sudbury families and businesses

- I now invite the Premier to provide remarks