

Ministry of Energy

Office of the Minister

4th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 2E1
Tel.: 416-327-6758
Fax: 416-327-6754

Ministère de l'Énergie

Bureau du ministre

4^e étage, édifice Hearst
900, rue Bay
Toronto ON M7A 2E1
Tél. : 416 327-6758
Téléc. : 416 327-6754



MC-2017-306

Mr. Todd Smith, MPP
Energy Critic
Progressive Conservative Party
Room 416, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A8

Mr. Peter Tabuns, MPP
Energy Critic
New Democratic Party
Room 165, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A5

Dear Mr. Smith and Mr. Tabuns:

As you know, Premier Kathleen Wynne has made making everyday life more affordable for Ontarians a top priority for our government. While Ontario's economy is doing well, not every family is seeing the benefit in their personal budget. Nowhere is that challenge more pressing than on the issue of electricity prices. The Premier has been clear that we need to do more.

Of particular concern for our government is the practice of some Local Distribution Companies (LDCs) of disconnecting or threatening disconnection of customers during the winter months. While the provision to disconnect customers for non-payment is presently a statutory right that all LDCs have, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) seeks to restrict this practice based on a number of criteria designed to provide maximum protection to vulnerable customers.

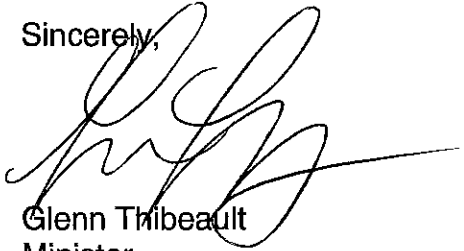
In legislation first introduced last spring, our government has proposed expanding the authority of the OEB to provide oversight over disconnections and ensure fairness for electricity consumers. Bill 27, the *Burden Reduction Act*, is currently before the Standing Committee on General Government. While the Bill continues through the legislative process, I have sent a letter to all distributors asking them to voluntarily adopt a policy banning winter disconnections. Many utilities, including Hydro One, have already enacted such a policy, and it is my hope that the few remaining distributors will follow their lead.

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In the meantime, I am writing you today to request your assistance in achieving a speedy passage to Bill 27. When the Legislature returns on February 21, the support of you and your caucus in getting this Bill passed as quickly as possible will ensure that we can end the practice for good. Based on your comments in the media, I hope that I can count on your support in this regard.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Thibeault', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Glenn Thibeault
Minister