FW: Afternoon Energy Media Summary - March 6, 2017

From: "Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY)" <"/o=govon/ou=exchange administrative group (fydibohf23spdlt)/cn=recipients/cn=teliszewsky, andrew (energy)4fe">
To: "Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY)" <colin.nekolaichuk@ontario.ca>
Date: Mon, 06 Mar 2017 17:51:17 -0500

Need to fix the cottage owners thing. CBC story from Ottawa – did you resolve?

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Hendy, Adam (ENERGY)" <Adam.Hendy@ontario.ca>
Date: March 6, 2017 at 3:00:22 PM EST
To: "@ENERGY All" <ENERGY-All2@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Subject: Afternoon Energy Media Summary - March 6, 2017

Good Afternoon,

Here is a roundup of the day's news:

? Ontario budget watchdog to examine Liberals' hydro relief plan – *Canadian Press*
? Ontario Progressive Conservatives ask watchdog to do full costing of Liberal government hydro relief plan- *Canadian Press*
? Ottawa cottage owners cut off from Kathleen Wynne's hydro bill slash- *CBC*
? Hydro rate cut the right thing to do, Thibeault says - *Sudbury.com*
? Ontario Reducing Electricity Prices - *Lexology*
? High hydro prices hurt Ontario factories, industry group says- *CBC*
? Wynne confident Liberals aren't out to get her- *Toronto Sun*
? Wynne's Legacy of Energy Poverty – *marxist.ca*
? Unsure Talks Brewing about the deal between Hydro One Ltd. and Toronto's Hydro Corp.- *Hi Business*
? Study: More Local Benefits Equal More Support for Canadian Wind Projects- *North American Wind power*
? Community involvement means more support for new wind developments, finds Canadian study – *Windpower Engineering and Development*

Please see below ***Today in Twitter*** for news articles.

March 6, 2017

Today in Twitter

? @ Tara_Tridel - Energy, water consumption reporting regulation now in effect for

Ontario condos, business es http:// bit.ly/2lOGDcl via @condoca

? @ MikeSchreiner - Question #onpoli must answer: Will nuclear power bankrupt Ontario Hydro/OPG once again? | Ontario Clean Air Alliance http://www. cleanairalliance.org/will-nuclear-p ower-bankrupt-ontario-hydroopg-once-again/#.WL15CJ2Yfls.twitter …

? @ SmallbonesShop - Will nuclear power bankrupt Ontario Hydro/OPG once again? | Ontario Clean Air Alliance http://www.cleanairalliance.org/will-nuclear-power-bankrupt-ontario-hydroopg-once-again/#.WLyiVcd4muY.twitter …

? @ Nature_Fresh - #NEWSFLASH - @PeterQuiring talks with @CTVWindsor & @MMaluskeCTV about #Ontario hydro relief plan http:// ow.ly/m3gM309BB29

? @ jerryagar1010 - Now don't get alarmed, but turns out @Kathleen_Wynne doesn't know what she's doing. Her carbon scheme for instance.

- o @ freecanadian55 - The energy disaster in Ontario continues with Liberal incompetence leading the "charge"

? @ OntarioPCParty - . @brownbarrie asks if the Premier Wynne's hydro plan is about anything more than just her own political survival? #onpoli

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Ontario budget watchdog to examine Liberals' hydro relief plan

Allison Jones
Canadian Press
March 6, 2017

Ontario's budget watchdog is planning a report examining the Liberal government's plan to lower hydro bills.

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown has written to the financial accountability office, asking them to investigate the plan with a full costing analysis.

A spokeswoman for the office says they'll take Brown's letter under consideration, but they had already been planning to examine the hydro plan.

The recently announced 17-per-cent reduction in hydro bills comes this summer thanks to a move the Liberals say is like refinancing a mortgage over a longer period of time.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has acknowledged it will cost ratepayers more in the long run, but she says savings are needed now because people are struggling.

She has said the extra interest costs related to the plan would amount to $25 billion over 30 years, but the Tories say they're not clear on how the Liberals arrived at that number.

Ontario Progressive Conservatives ask watchdog to do full costing of Liberal government hydro relief plan
By: Allison Jones
For: Canadian Press
On: March 6, 2017

TORONTO — The Progressive Conservatives are asking Ontario's budget watchdog to conduct a full costing of the Liberal government's plan to lower hydro bills.

The recently announced 17-per-cent reduction in hydro bills comes this summer thanks to a move akin to refinancing a mortgage over a longer period of time.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has acknowledged it will cost ratepayers more in the long run, but she says savings are needed now because people are struggling.

She said in question period on Thursday that the extra interest costs related to the plan would amount to $25 billion over 30 years.

But the Tories say they're not clear on how the Liberals arrived at that number and have sent a letter to the financial accountability officer, asking him to investigate.

Wynne's $25 billion figure does not appear in the hydro relief announcement's background documents, which say the plan will involve "annual interest costs not exceeding $1.4 billion."

A spokesman for the energy minister said Sunday evening that based on a "conservative" estimate of a five-per-cent interest rate, they "see that number amounting to approximately $25 billion over 30 years."

"The final amount will depend on annual interest rates and expenditures, which will be disclosed yearly, but given the province's strong borrowing ability we're confident it will be in this range," Colin Nekolaichuk said in a statement.

PC Leader Patrick Brown said in the letter to the financial accountability officer that Ontarians may ultimately have to accept those added costs to get savings now "given the extent to which people are struggling," but the impact should at least be clear.

"To be candid, this government has a habit of deliberately using false numbers to cover up their worst policy failures," Brown wrote.

Nekolaichuk said Ontario has a track record of managing debt "responsibly." The province's net debt is more than $300 billion.

Nekolaichuk also noted that credit rating agency DBRS has said it views the hydro relief plan as "credit neutral."

The 17-per-cent cut in bills — in addition to an eight-per-cent rebate that took effect Jan. 1 — means ratepayers will pay about $2.5 billion less per year for the next 10 years, the government has said.

The reduction is coming from refinancing a portion of the global adjustment charge.

That's the charge consumers pay for above-market rates for power producers, which the government says ensures a reliable supply.

That's the charge consumers pay for above-market rates for power producers, which the government says ensures a reliable supply
The auditor general has estimated the global adjustment charge cost $50 billion between 2006 and 2015 and increased by 1,200 per cent between 2006 and 2013 — meanwhile, the average electricity market price dropped by 46 per cent.

Eventually the costs of refinancing will be added back onto the global adjustment charge, which the energy minister has said won't happen for at least 10 years.

Brown also questions why Ontario Power Generation is going to be responsible for the refinancing and not the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation, which manages hydro debt.

Several other measures to reduce hydro bills were announced Thursday, including expanding a low-income support program, cutting delivery charges for some rural residents and eliminating them for on-reserve First Nations customers, and establishing a new fund to help people make energy efficiency improvements.

Ottawa cottage owners cut off from Kathleen Wynne's hydro bill slash

By: Staff Post
For: CBC
On: March 6, 2017

Ottawa residents who own cottages say they're frustrated they won't fully benefit from hydro rate cuts announced by Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne late last week.

Hydro rates to drop 17%, but Ontarians will pay for it later
Rural electricity customers wary of Ontario's rate cuts
At Sunday's Ottawa Cottage and Backyard Show at the EY Centre, owners said they're fed up with the delivery charges they pay during the months they don't use their second dwellings.

Residential and small business hydro bills will drop by 17 per cent on average this summer under the new Liberal plan, but it won't affect the fixed portion of the delivery charge.

Kevin Lawlor, who owns a cottage at Bob's Lake southwest of Perth, said his delivery rates are more than the hydro itself.

"We maybe use $50 a month in hydro but we're paying a $100 delivery charge ... It's all smoke and mirrors. They're trying to appease the public to get votes so that they don't get kicked out in the next election," he said.

'It should apply to everyone'

Claude Wistaff, who owns a cottage near Calabogie, is relying on generators and candles instead of connecting to hydro to avoid the rates.

"I'm off the grid. I'm actually delaying my connection until there's some changes to the hydro situation," he said.

Claude Wistaff
Claude Wistaff hasn't hooked up his cottage to Hydro One for about three years because of the cost. (CBC)

Seasonal dwellers are also cut off from the rural or remote rate protection program, which offers an extra $60 off the delivery line for some rural residents.

Tracy Card said he loves his cottage in Ardoch too much to think about selling, but he was hoping for some relief.

"It should apply to everyone. Or at least, if it doesn't apply to everyone it should affect everybody in a positive way," he said.

"Give me something."

[Hydro rate cut the right thing to do, Thibeault says]
By: Darren MacDonald
For: [Sudbury.com]
On: March 6, 2017

With the provincial Liberals struggling mightily at the polls and an election a year and a half away, it would be easy to dismiss the hydro rate cut announced last week as a cynical move designed to improve the party's fortunes rather than help consumers.

Prices will drop another 17 per cent this summer, Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault announced, added to the eight per cent drop that took effect Jan. 1. When asked at a news conference Friday at Greater Sudbury utilities whether this was a ploy to win back voters, Thibeault responded that “it's never too late to do the right thing.

"For us, recognizing that the relief that we've been bringing to the people of Ontario in the past, while it was helpful, it was very targeted," he said. "Really what people were looking for was substantial relief with structural changes to make sure that these rates wouldn't all of a sudden just spike back up again."

To accomplish that, Thibeault said they have remortgaged the debt they have built up reforming the system over a longer period. While that will cost $25 billion to $40 billion, depending on interest rates, he said it's a fairer way to proceed.

"We had to rebuild a system that was in tatters, that didn't have the capacity for its own generation," Thibeault said. "That's why we had the system breakdown in 2003 -- the rolling brownouts, the blackout. It takes decades to rebuild a system and it takes a lot of money. That cost us $50 billion over a decade and a bit.

"When we finance these contracts for new generating assets, and putting lines in, we finance that over 20 years. That means we pay it off quicker, but also that our rates go up a lot quicker."

Refinancing that debt over a longer period means the next generation of users will help pay for it, he argued, which is fair because they will also benefit.

"What we're saying is, let's actually extend our mortgage, make it 30 years, which is what we've done. Now we've made sure that the assets that will be used by future generations of Ontarians, we all now can make sure that we've lowered our rates and at the time time, make sure everyone has paid for the useful life of these assets."

This is a long-term solution, he said, and future increases have been frozen at two per cent for the next few years. Meanwhile, Thibeault said he'll work to improve the system and find more savings, as much as $200 million.

"So yes, this does come with a cost, but we do recognize that this is worth it to provide relief now, relief in the future and change the way the energy sector has been structured."

But Nickel Belt MPP France Gélinas said the move is a classic example of the provincial Liberals using public funds for their own benefit, with long-term pain for the rest of us.

"It's like trying to pay your mortgage with your credit card – that's not good financial planning," Gélinas, a member of the NDP, said. "Anyone who has ever had to remortgage their home knows that you end up way paying more in interest. This is what's going to happen to us.

"We're in the realm of $40 billion of interest that we, our children and grandchildren will have to pay. Yet the system will continue to need upgrades if we don't change the path that we're on."

What the Liberals haven't done is deal with the structural problems of the electricity system, she said. For example, they keep signing contracts for more power generation that we don't need. Last Thursday, for example, Gélinas said Ontario needed 18,000 megawatts of power. But we generated 32,000 megawatts, meaning we had to sell the excess at a loss.

"We have generating capacity way beyond peak demand, but they keep signing contract after contract," she said. "Some of them are coming up for review.

Let's look at each and every one of them. Let's tailor our generation of electricity to our needs and stop selling it at a loss."

"Instead they are throwing a $40 billion pricetag on the back of each and every one of us, our kids and our grandkids."

She's also disappointed the rate cut won't take effect until the summer, long after

Northerners have had to pay their winter hydro bills, the highest of the year.

“If they were serious that they wanted to help the North, it would be now,” Gélinas said. “Our high hydro bills in the North are happening now, in the middle of the winter. We're paying for January and February hydro.

"But no, they're waiting for the summer when Toronto pays their highest bill. I find this really sad to see. They see their base is in Toronto, they will make sure Toronto remembers what they have done."

Ontario Reducing Electricity Prices
By: McCarthy Tetault LLP
For: Lexology
On: March 6, 2017

The Ontario Government announced today that it will reduce electricity rates for residential consumers by 25% starting in summer, 2017. While the immediate steps for doing this are fairly straight forward, the consequences of this over the long term are unclear.

The plan is to reduce prices in two ways:

1. 1. it will transfer some costs (rural distribution costs and low income support) from rate payers to tax payers. The cost of doing this will be $2.5 billion over the next three years; and

2. 2. it will refinance a portion of the cost of global adjustment by extending the time for its recovery to 30 years (to 2047). A portion of the global adjustment costs will be held in a fund operated by Ontario Power Generation and presumably overseen by the Ontario Energy Board. The cost of this refinancing is dependent upon a number of factors which will be addressed below. The government says that the maximum annual interest costs for doing this is $1.4 billion.

The government stated that generators will be unaffected by this proposal. The market will continue to operate as it has in the past and generators will receive contractual revenues.

While it is true that the proposal does not have a direct effect on generator contracts, the longer impact of this proposal on energy policy and therefore potentially all market participants is unclear.

The first potential impact is that there is a flaw in the government’s rationale for the proposal. The Premier repeatedly analogized the refinancing proposal to refinancing a mortgage: the current mortgage term is too short and extending it by 30 years makes both economic sense and policy sense because these assets will continue to be available for future rate payers. In other words, the solution is presented as positive from an inter-generational equity perspective.

However, this analogy is flawed and the inter-generational equity argument is limited. Contractual payments to generators are not mortgages; they pay for electricity capacity for the term of the contract, typically twenty years and typically tied to the expected life of the generation asset. Once that term is complete, rate payers do not own the assets or have any entitlement to the generation produced from those assets. If electricity is required after the generator’s contractual term, future rate payers will have to pay for it. As a result, future ratepayers will be paying for *both* a share of the current contracts *and* the costs of future generation contracts, which might include the capital cost of extending the assets’ lives. Critics will be likely to observe that payments for generation that has since stopped generating is improvident. This could create a very uncertain political scenario.

The second area of uncertainty is that the cost of the refinancing is highly dependent on interest rates and electricity prices. Because global adjustment reflects the difference between market electricity prices and contract costs, if electricity prices go lower, then the cost of global adjustment increases. As a result, the cost of the refinancing will also increase. If this were to happen, the government may find a need to respond to this problem. The potential concern here is that, up until now, the government was indifferent to the market price of electricity commodity and the cost of global adjustment. It has now taken a large position on global adjustment costs. Having already intervened to lower electricity prices, a future government may seek to protect its stake by seeking to influence electricity prices the other way.

The third area of policy implications is the most positive. By differentiating between costs that should be paid for by tax payers and rate payers, this policy invites an important discussion about the role of electricity resources to pay for social and environmental policy goals. While today's announcements looks at this issue from the perspective of money already spent, it is more useful to address this prospectively – before the money is committed. One of the reasons why it is so easy to spend electricity rate payer money on social and environmental policies in the first instance is the lack of an effective regulatory governance system in the electricity sector. Perhaps the lesson learned from this experience is the need for effective oversight on electricity spending so that we can address proposed expenditures before they occur, not after.

[High hydro prices hurt Ontario factories, industry group says]
By: Staff Post
For: CBC
On: March 6, 2017

A group that represents hundreds of small to medium sized manufacturers across the province is urging the Ontario government to lower hydro fees for industrial users, or face the prospect of some factories packing up and moving to other jurisdictions where electricity is cheaper.

Hydro rates to drop 17%, but Ontarians will pay for it later
Rural electricity customers wary of Ontario's rate cuts
Ottawa cottage owners cut off from Kathleen Wynne's hydro bill slash
The manufacturers banded together last October under the banner the Concerned Manufacturers of Ontario, a lobby group dedicated to standing up for smaller factories against a Liberal government that they claim doesn't care about them.

Jocelyn Bamford
Jocelyn Bamford is the Vice-President of Automatic Coating Limited, a Toronto-based maker of industrial coatings, whose clients include Energy East pipeline maker TransCanada Corporation and the United States Navy. (TransCanada Corporation/YouTube)

"We have to compete globally and we have to compete with companies in the United States," the group's founder Jocelyn Bamford told The Morning Edition host Craig Norris Monday. "The majority of those companies have a very competitive electricity rates."

She noted in Mississippi, the rate is 5.56 cents a kilowatt hour.

"In Toronto, I'm paying 19 cents a kilowatt hour and with electricity being our third largest expense," Bamford said. "When you look at the bottom line, it's very difficult to compete."

Cheaper power in the U.S.

Bamford's day job is vice president of marketing at Toronto-based Automatic Coating Limited. She said her factory could save a lot of money if it moved to the U.S., where it competes against American companies for many of its clients, which includes the U.S. Navy.

"A lot of family businesses have grown here and want to remain here, but with a very uncompetitive electricity price, it makes it very difficult to remain here," she said.

Hydro tower
A group of small and medium sized manufacturers in Ontario is urging the Ontario government to lower hydro rates for industrial users, or face the prospect of factories expanding elsewhere, or even packing up and leaving the province. (Chris Seto/CBC)

"I could move my business to the United States and save half a million dollars on energy costs."

Difference between profit and loss

Bamford said last month's power bill at her Scarborough factory was $45,000, but only $5,600 went towards paying for the amount of electricity the plant used.

Most of the bill, about $25,000 she said, is eaten up by the global adjustment charge, a levy added to all power bills in the province to pay for above-market rates paid to power providers in 20-year contracts meant to ensure a steady supply.

The other $14,400 on her power bill, Bamford said, is made up of a number of other fees.

Bamford said while she's happy for homeowners across Ontario, who recently learned they'd be getting a break this summer in the form of a 17 per cent reduction on their hydro bills, factories also need a break on what's quickly become one of their biggest expenses.

Ont Hyrdo 20170302
The Concerned Manufacturers of Ontario represent hundreds of small and mid-sized factories who are standing up for themselves because, they claim, Premier Kathleen Wynne doesn't care about them. (Frank Gunn/Canadian Press)

"That electricity pricing and energy pricing makes a difference for them from operating at a profit or a loss," she said.

Bamford said the Liberal government at Queen's Park would do well to take the concerns of Ontario's small and medium sized manufacturers seriously, who provide about 800,000 jobs for the province and another six spin-off jobs for every worker on the factory floor.

Manufacturers not missed entirely

Still, while the government's recent efforts to deflate the ballooning costs of electricity was largely geared to homeowners, it didn't miss manufacturers entirely.

The province announced it would expand the Industrial Conservation Initiative, which allows mid-sized manufacturers to save up to a third of their electricity costs on the global adjustment line of their power bill.

Eligible companies can pay based on how much power they use during the five hours each year that the Ontario power grid requires the most electricity.

The problem though, according to Bamford, is it requires factories to guess when the province's overall power demand will peak and then lower their power consumption accordingly.

"It's very difficult to power down and tell your customers, 'You have to wait,' or tell your employees that they have to come in and work on the nightshift because a lot employees have childcare commitments," she said.

Bamford also notes the program still excludes 85 per cent of Ontario factories, whose staff make up 50 people or less and use less than one megawatt of power.

[Wynne confident Liberals aren't out to get her]()
By: Shawn Jeffords
For: Toronto Sun
On: March 6, 2017

TORONTO - Premier Kathleen Wynne says she doesn’t think the knives are out for her.

Wynne said Monday morning she isn’t worried that if her plan to slash hydro rates doesn’t address her plummeting approval ratings, her own ministers and party will be brandishing knives.

Ontario’s Liberals are one “cohesive” unit, she said.

“I think that succession planning is often not done well ... in political parties,” she said. “I have a strong, loyal team. We’re a cohesive group and I look forward to working with them every day.”

Wynne said if there are people thinking about running for the Liberal leadership one day, that’s a good thing.

“If some of them are thinking one day they may want to be the leaders, excellent,” she said. “That will make them better MPPs, better ministers and better constituency workers because they take it to heart and they take it very seriously.”

Wynne has repeatedly said that she plans to run in 2018. Asked again last week after launching her plan to cut hydro rates by another 17%, while taking on billions in new debt, the premier said she had no intention to quit politics.

“The pressure on me around electricity prices in Ontario is about people who are struggling to pay their electricity bills,” Wynne said.

Wynne’s Legacy of Energy Poverty

Sinthuiha Kumarasamy
Marxist.ca
March 6, 2017

Public outrage against soaring hydro rates continues to rise throughout Ontario. The shock of energy bills doubling or tripling from last summer hasn't worn off; hardworking families and individuals are still buried in anxiety and debt. Just this January, newspapers across Ontario covered Kathy Katula’s $1200 monthly hydro bill -- significantly larger than even her mortgage payment. The hardworking but overwhelmed rural Ontario mother lives in poverty induced by high energy costs despite making $50,000 a year, and hundreds of thousands of Ontarians share Kathy’s daily pains. Every hydro bill we get cuts into rent, groceries, and household essentials; Wynne and her Liberals have once again proved clueless to the needs of the working class. Hydro One was privatized against the mandate of provincial voters, and while the Liberals and their banking buddies on Bay Street are lining their pockets with profits, many Canadians endure harsh winters without heating because they can’t afford their astronomical energy bills. Wynne’s corrupt shenanigans have made her the least popular premier in Canada with over 80% of Ontarians thinking she should resign. Her government’s legacy will be the phenomenon of energy poverty, where working and poor families across the province struggle to make ends meet because of skyrocketing energy bills.

Out-Of-Touch Liberals

Ontarians can’t be blamed for rising hydro costs; they’ve actually lowered their overall energy consumption in the last ten years. Blame corrupt politicians -- they’ve been selling Hydro One piecemeal to rich shareholders and investors, who cynically churn a profit off everyone’s huge bills. By handing out Hydro One stocks at an 8% return on investment, Wynne has enriched bankers and caused energy rates to surge. This rise has been a particular shock to rural Ontarian families and businesses, who typically pay more for hydro. Despite the promise that a privatized Hydro One will be well-managed and innovative, generating government investment in infrastructure, the only real changes after the sell-off involve outrageous executive payouts subsidized by criminally high hydro rates. Wynne’s new pet CEO is earning a base pay of $1.36 million plus incentives and pensions! That comes directly from jacking up electricity bills. After Conservative premier Mike Harris left Ontarians with a highly bureaucratized and inefficient system that regularly overcharges consumers at double the intended rate of their hydro, Wynne greatly exacerbated the problem with her scorched-earth attitude to common resources. Last year alone 60,000 homes were denied heat and light due to inability to make payments, with a total of $172.5 million in outstanding bills across the province. Amidst a public-opinion backlash against rising hydro rates, the premier stood in front of 850 Liberal delegates (not working-class Ontarians) to admit her “government made a mistake.” These crocodile tears won't save her from the ignominy of being Canada’s least popular premier; more importantly, it won’t change the reality that thousands of Ontarians are drowning in unaffordable energy bills. The province is riddled with nightmares of the working poor having to work two or three jobs and relying on food banks to get by in the face of skyrocketing hydro costs.

Shamelessly gunning for popularity ratings, Wynne and her ministers promised to increase funding for subsidy programs like the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) and Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP). Eligibility for these programs is means-tested; it only includes those at and below the poverty line, ignoring tens of thousands of families and individuals that still need extra support. The Liberals made their incompetence clear by injecting $12 million into funding the OESP, but spending $9 million of it on media consultants and advertising just to get the word out about the program. Despite all this costly PR, the OESP has seen no significant increase in applications. They also flirted with writing off the 8% HST to help alleviate the costs of hydro -- a tax the Liberals introduced themselves! Eliminating HST will save average families about $11 a month, truly meager compared to the outrageous increases in hydro rates. The supposed savings don’t add up when you consider that on January 1st, the Liberals introduced a carbon tax scheme costing families an additional $13 a month. Wynne also aims to reduce rates by shouldering the cost of electricity with $1.3 billion in cap-and-trade revenues, but as always, the costs of solely market-based reforms will be passed down to the consumers, disproportionately hurting the most vulnerable in society. It’s all about protecting the profits of the big energy companies. In a system based on private ownership and profit, it’s always the workers and youth who foot the bill -- at the end of the day you can’t control what you don't own!

Ontario's Political Polarization

A recent polling puts the Liberals at third party status provincially, with a predicted majority for the Conservatives and a quarter of the ballot for the NDP. Hydro rates and lack of government trust were top concerns for half the voters. Conservative leader Patrick Brown has taken a crowd-pleasing tone, railing against the Hydro One sell-off and Wynne's cap and trade deal. He's turned some heads by calling out her austerity policies, but the conservatives are no friends of the working class and they must not be permitted to make Wynne's incompetence a wedge issue. The Conservatives and the Liberals are both defenders of capitalism; of the interests of the bankers and bosses. Wynne and Trudeau have taken their thrones during Canada's worst capitalist crisis since the 1930s. Compelled by the blind logic of the capitalist system, they can do nothing but wage austerity and promote cutbacks.
Recently, the NDP released a proposal for the re-nationalization of Hydro One under the *Pay Less Own More* slogan. They aim to cut hydro bills by 30 percent and put Hydro One back into public ownership. This is to be welcomed after a long period of the NDP offering no clear solutions on this issue. Hopefully the NDP's demand of re-nationalization and rate cuts will be taken up by the unions and help to build a mass movement around this issue. However, we have to point out that the devil is in the detail. The NDP plan to reimburse the corporate profiteers at market rates for their Hydro One shares. We do not believe that these parasites deserve to make an extra dime off the backs of Ontarians suffering from energy poverty. They shouldn't be given a penny more than their original investment, after any tax breaks, profiteering, and unearned benefits, have been deducted. The long-term contracts gifted to these corporations by the Liberals and Conservatives are in effect a criminal form of corporate welfare and they deserve no extra compensation.
Which Way Forward?

The Canadian Union of Public Employees has sued Kathleen Wynne, aiming to halt the sell-off. This has drawn public attention to the illegal attempt at privatization and galvanized opposition. The NDP's solution of re nationalizing Hydro One should be supported, but it must go further. Place Hydro One under the democratic ownership and workers' control. Workers and community members would have democratic oversight, ensuring efficient and environmentally-safe generation and distribution of energy. We can only ensure an enterprise is being run in the working class' interest if we own and control it.

The wealth generated would benefit everyone who produces it, instead of accumulating with a handful of executives and shareholders who don't contribute productively and driving cost increases for the rest of us. We say, why stop there? By nationalizing the other major corporations and banks through a socialist plan of production, we can do more than just lower energy costs: we can provide universal and fully publicly funded post-secondary education, childcare, public transit, pharmacare, dental and eyecare, and more! A planned economy with the vital organ of workers democratic control also stands as the only way to genuinely address the environmental crisis. As long as private profit motivates production, future generations and the natural world will come in last. In a province of vast wealth and natural resources there is simply no reason for anyone to have a poor standard of living.

Toronto Mayor Tory denies Hydro One is in talks to buy Toronto Hydro
By: John Tilak
For: BNN
On: March 6, 2017

Toronto Mayor John Tory denied Hydro One Ltd is in talks to buy municipal electricity distributor Toronto Hydro Corp for about $3 billion.

"I can confirm that no discussions are taking place with respect to the sale of Toronto Hydro to anyone," Tory said in an emailed statement.

Reports of the sale surfaced Friday. Reuters sources report the city of Toronto is exploring options to finance various infrastructure projects.

The two companies have been in discussions about the deal for the past few months but the talks have not entered final stages, one of the people said. They cautioned the talks could fall apart. The combined company could generate potential synergies of about $1 billion, the people added.

The city of Toronto, which owns 100 per cent of Toronto Hydro, is also exploring other ways to monetize its assets, including by publicly listing Toronto Hydro, as well as by selling its Green P parking business or other real estate assets, one of the people added. The Green P parking asset, which includes a popular app, is likely worth more than $1 billion, that person said.

Canada's most populous city needs a massive infrastructure upgrade to meet the growing demands of residents. But the city has struggled to raise sufficient funds to finance its rail and road networks.

Toronto Hydro has also been under financial pressure as it attempts to make infrastructure investments surrounding its electricity grid. Last November, it cut its dividend to the city of Toronto.

A deal would also help Hydro One's growth ambitions as a public company after it raised $1.8 billion in one of Canada's biggest IPOs in 2015. Hydro One, backed by the province of Ontario, has a market value of $14 billion.

Under one proposal, Hydro One would pay about half the deal value in cash and the rest in stock, one of the people said. A cash-and-stock transaction with Hydro One would allow the city to benefit from Hydro One's dividend as well, the people said.

Spokesmen for Hydro One and Toronto Hydro declined to comment. The people declined to be identified as the talks are confidential.

The discussions involve Toronto Hydro Chief Executive Anthony Haines, Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and Mayor Tory, one of the people said.

While the talks are making progress, a successful deal faces significant hurdles as it requires approval of the city council. It would also have to overcome potential opposition from unions.

Unsure Talks Brewing about the deal between Hydro One Ltd. and Toronto's Hydro Corp.
By: Moduou Sarr
For: Hi Business
By: March 6, 2017

For a while now, the city of Toronto has been in talks on ways they can finance all their projects, one of the positive loop holes they discovered is the Canada's Hydro One Ltd.

Canada's Hydro one Ltd. recently, has been making efforts to buy municipal distributor Toronto Hydro Corp for an amount of C$3 billion, yet even with such a price tag, both companies haven't reached a conclusive agreement. However, even though Hydro One has shown interest in the city of Toronto's Hydro Corp, the city on its own has decided to still keep the Hydro plant on listing in market and also some of its assets, especially its Green P parking asset, which contains a top notch app that could sell far more than C$1 billion.

Apparently, even with the impending deal at hand , Hydro One backed up by the province of Ontario with a market value of about C$14 billion, would definitely benefit from the deal as it would aid their growth ambitions as a public company, after all it raised about C$1.8 billion in 2015, making it one of Canada's largest IPOs.

On the other hand, Toronto's Hydro is really in need of a suitable deal, reasons being that they've been faced with a lot of financial hurdles, all thanks to its plans for a better electricity supply.

For now, Hydro One has decided to go into the deal with both cash and stocks, as they stated that they would pay close to half of the deal in cash and the rest in stock. Toronto's Hydro would also benefit from this as they would be able to share in Hydro one's dividend. Basically, when confronted, Toronto's Mayor John Tory denied any talks on the deal at hand, yet, unidentified sources still claimed that there's a deal brewing in house. They further went ahead to list Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, Toronto Hydro Chief Executive Anthony Haines, and even Mayor Tory as people involved in the talks on the deal.

Truth is, even if they make it past this deal, it would only be one amongst all the hurdles they have to face to successfully become a branded Hydro company in that region.

Study: More Local Benefits Equal More Support for Canadian Wind Projects
By: Betsy Lillian
For: North American Wind power
On: March 6, 2017

The more a community is involved in wind energy planning, including getting direct benefits from nearby turbines, the more likely the development will gain local support, according to a new study from London, Ontario-based Western University.

The study, conducted by Chad Walker and Jamie Baxter of the university's Department of Geography, examines communities living near wind turbines in southwestern Ontario and Nova Scotia, explains a press release from Western University. Their paper, "It's easy to throw rocks at a corporation: Wind energy development and distributive justice in Canada," is published in the Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning.

Through interviews and surveys, local residents criticized the "top-down, corporate-led" pattern of development in Ontario – in stark contrast to the more "positive reflections" about similar projects in Nova Scotia, where there are more "profit-sharing, community-based initiatives," the university says.

"The general lack of financial benefits and opportunities to invest in local wind projects in Ontario may be added to the long list of things responsible for intense pushback to development in the province over the past decade," says Walker. "In Nova Scotia, support for local wind projects was three times higher, and perceptions of health effects were three times lower."

Those living closest to wind turbines in both provinces believe that the number of local benefits is too low, but they have even stronger feelings about the fair local distribution of those benefits, the university says.

According to both Walker and Baxter, who suggested the provinces should consider "novel compensation measures," government efforts to site new projects should focus on local fairness. For example, 75% of all survey respondents (and 83% of those opposed to their local project) supported the idea of electricity rebates for turbines' nearby neighbors. In Ontario, in particular, reducing hydro bills in wind-rich, rural areas may make wind energy a bit more palatable, according to the university, which notes that Ontario is home to more than 6,000 turbines, with the vast majority of them owned by corporations outside of the communities in which they are located.

The study also sheds light on community-based ownership.

"Past research has painted community-based development with an idyllic brush, but those living near wind turbines often were not aware of opportunities to invest in their projects," says Walker.

Although Nova Scotia's approach has been relatively successful in generating local support, the researchers say, most residents still had concerns, including fears that the majority of local investors may live hundreds of kilometers away and be far removed from the realities of rural wind development.

Community involvement means more support for new wind developments, finds Canadian study
Michelle Froese
Windpower Engineering and Development
March 6, 2017

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The study also sheds light on community-based ownership, a development strategy meant to keep benefits and control in the hands of locals.

“Past research has painted community-based development with an idyllic brush, but those living near wind turbines often were not aware of opportunities to invest in their projects,” says Walker. Although Nova Scotia’s approach has been relatively successful in generating local support, most residents still had concerns, including fears that the majority of “local” investors may live hundreds of kilometers away and be far removed from the realities of rural wind development.

Walker and Baxter’s research is also outlined in a “ Toolkit for Turbines ” document, on the Communities Around Renewable Energy Projects website, which contains recommendations for policy changes and was shaped by discussion during a workshop held in December, 2016.

Walker and Baxter focus attention on more equitable and sustainable planning processes, but they emphasize that “financial benefits are not a replacement for proper mitigation” of issues such as noise and sleep .

Along with researchers from Dalhousie University in Halifax and Queen’s University Belfast (UK), Baxter has recently received federal funding to continue studying community-based renewable energy development and new ways to improve siting processes.