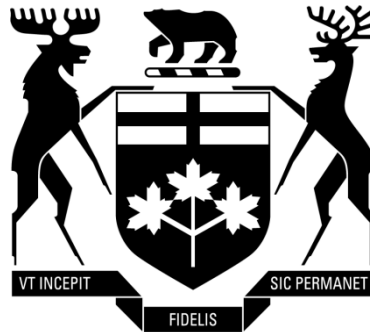




Ontario

INTRODUCING THE ONTARIO REBATE FOR ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS ACT, 2016

Minister of Energy
Glenn Thibeault
Statement to the Legislative Assembly

DAY, DATE, 2016

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to introduce the proposed *Ontario Rebate for Electricity Consumers Act*, 2016.

If passed, this Act would provide electricity rate relief to eligible residential consumers, small businesses and farms across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, when our government came to power in 2003, we committed to providing a safe, clean and reliable energy supply to Ontario homes and families.

And, indeed, over the last 13 years, we have been transforming and modernizing our system.

We replaced coal with a cleaner supply. In 2015, Ontario's electricity generation was over 90% emissions-free.

Also, Mr. Speaker, Hydro One has enhanced and renewed its transmission and distribution systems, giving us a grid that is "future-ready".

We are proud of that record.

But, Mr. Speaker, along with our commitments to safe, clean and reliable electricity, we also committed to an affordable supply.

And I want to assure this House that we have not lost sight of that commitment.

Now, I think it's important to note that according to the Financial Accountability Officer, families in Ontario spend less money on electricity on average than in every province except BC, and that total home energy costs are in the middle of the pack when compared to other Canadian provinces.

Our government recognizes that the changes we have made have come at a cost to Ontario's residential and business customers.

That's why our government has added price mitigation measures to the programs already in place that help consumers manage their electricity costs.

For example, at the start of this year, we removed the Debt Retirement Charge from residential bills.

And in January, we launched the Ontario Electricity Support Program, which provides ongoing monthly bill payment support to low-income households.

Mr. Speaker, some consumers continue to face challenges.

And our government recognizes we need to do more to ensure an affordable energy system for all Ontarians.

That's why, today, I am proud to introduce legislation that would benefit ratepayers in a lasting, meaningful way.

The proposed *Ontario Rebate for Electricity Consumers Act, 2016* would provide an eight per cent (8%) rebate for about five million residences, small businesses and farms.

If passed, the legislation would take effect on January 1, 2017. That's less than four months from now.

What's more, Mr. Speaker, the proposed legislation is one part of a comprehensive package of reforms.

For rural customers, who have been especially affected by increasing costs, we are updating the Rural or Remote Rate Protection. This represents a significant rate relief for Ontario's approximately 330,000 eligible rural electricity consumers. The benefit for eligible rural customers, including the 8% rebate, is about \$45 per month.

For businesses, we will be lowering the threshold for participating in the Industrial Conservation Initiative from 3 megawatts (MW) to 1 MW. This would give more businesses the incentive to significantly reduce their electricity costs by reducing their consumption during peak hours. This would lower electricity system costs by deferring the need for peaking generation.

And as outlined in the 2016 Budget and the Climate Change Action Plan, the government intends to recycle a portion of the cap and trade auction proceeds to offset the impact of cap and trade on industrial and commercial electricity consumers to keep rates affordable.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's investments are securing a clean supply of electricity, a grid that's ready for the future, and a healthier environment for ourselves and our children.

The legislation we are introducing today, along with our other reforms, would ensure electricity is affordable for families, farms and businesses across Ontario.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.