



Low-Income Energy Network

March 29, 2017

Honourable Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier,

Re: Electricity arrears forgiveness for low-income consumers and the Fair Hydro Plan

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and other representatives of the Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN). We appreciated receiving a personal follow-up telephone voicemail message from you after our February 3, 2017 meeting.

Your recognition of the importance of energy affordability, and your response with the announcement of the Fair Hydro Plan, will lead to important improvements that will positively impact all low-income Ontarians.

We would like to take this opportunity to strongly reiterate our recommendation of an arrearage forgiveness component to the current low-income customer service rules. Arrearage forgiveness is a carefully structured program of debt forgiveness that requires customers to maintain a good payment history (both for the current monthly bill and for the monthly arrears repayment plan) for a set period of time, typically one or two years. Arrears still owing at the end of that set period of time would be written off. Under such an arrangement, the utility will typically receive more in increased net revenue toward current bills than it gives in forgiven debt. An arrearage forgiveness program helps provide a low-income payment-troubled customer with a clean slate. At the end of the day, however, the arrearage forgiveness and the affordability programs must be designed to work closely together.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on further energy affordability improvements for the most vulnerable consumers in the province. Please feel free to contact us regarding this recommendation.

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Sincerely,
Low-Income Energy Network
Per:



Zee Bhanji
LIEN Coordinator

cc: Hon. Glenn Thibeault, Minister of Energy
Phil Donelson, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Premier
Matt Whittington, Director of Policy, Office of the Minister of Energy