

Hansard: Horvath to thibeault--Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **Andrea Horvath:** My next question's also for the Premier. Hospitals are having a tough time, whether the Minister of health tends to agree or not. But so are families. Speaker, and so are businesses. Families like the campbells in Sault Ste. Marie. A senior couple on a fixed income with a hydro bill so high that they're actually scared to open their hydro bill each and every month. Or Jamie. Jamie lives in the Sault with her 3-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son. Both have special needs. Jamie's hydro bill was \$1,200 a month. It got so expensive that she had to turn off the baseboard heaters and now she uses propane instead, Speaker, because it's all she can afford to heat the House for her and her two kids. When will the Premier finally offer some -- To people who are suffering and release the details of her phantom plan?

>> Premier Wynne: Minister of energy.

>> **Minister Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In relation to our plan, I would suggest that the leader of the third party talk to her Colleague, who is the critic for energy in. Because he was at the technical briefing and he would know that this plan, the Ontario fair hydro plan and all of the information that was in there, is going to be reducing rates for families like the family mentioned by 25%, and not knowing the specifics of the individual family in the individual case, Mr. Speaker, but if they're actually in Sault Ste. Marie and part of the outlying areas, if they're a Hydro One customer, if they're an Algoma power customer. Even if they're out chapeau way, their distribution rate is going to be going down as well significantly. Mr. Speaker. And that means that seniors and families of low-income individuals, Mr. Speaker, they can save between 40 and 50%, Mr. Speaker. That's significant. On top of the Ontario electricity support program. We actually heard, listened and acted.

>> **Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Liberals have not released publicly one scrap of paper that details their plan, and we deserve to have that plan tabled, whether it be here in the legislature or publicly through the media. A few weeks ago I met with a guy named **Jerry in Thunder Bay. Jerry owns a j.'s trading post, a great restaurant and a store just outside of the city of Thunder Bay.** It was also Jerry's dream to use a j.'s as a stepping stone to his next business venture, Mr. Speaker, **but his hydro bills now account for almost 60% of his overhead,** making it impossible for him to realize that dream of expansion. Will this Premier offer business owners like Jerry some certainty right now and tell us which businesses will qualify for relief under her \$40 billion phantom plan?

>> **Minister Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again we've provided a deck to her critic so she may want to speak to that because, again, all of the details were outlined in that -- all of those pieces of paper, Mr. Speaker. But also let's talk about where the Premier visited recently when we're talking about businesses. So we have here the Guelph hydro bill of the book shelf, the bookstore that the Premier visited. Mr. Speaker, again this business, they're going to be saving \$500 a month, Mr. Speaker. \$500 a month when it comes to the fair hydro plan. The Premier also visited Matilda, a restaurant in Guelph, Mr. Speaker. This place, this facility, Mr. Speaker, they're going to save \$700 a month on average when it comes to their bill, Mr. Speaker. Those are significant savings for small businesses, Mr. Speaker. 500,000, Mr. Speaker. **Small businesses and farms will qualify for the 25% reduction,** Mr. Speaker. We've heard small businesses, Mr. Speaker, and we acted.

>> Andrea Horwath: Unbelievable that the very top issue of the day is not being given the decency by this government to provide a public plan that's open and transparent and the people can read and look at. I find it unbelievable that this government is being so irresponsible to the people of Ontario. Hospitals are integral to -- integral to communities. Businesses are integral to communities. Families are the heart of communities, and this Premier doesn't seem to get that this phantom plan that's propped up by press releases and P.R. is not enough to ensure the long-term prosperity of communities in Ontario. When is this Premier going to stop putting her interests and her political party's interests first? When is she going to stop benefitting her friends and -- On Bay Street and instead put forward a plan that really sticks with her hydro system and addresses the concerns of families, businesses, hospitals, industries?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll make sure the leader of the third party gets a copy of the deck, Mr. Speaker, so she can see for herself. But also, Mr. Speaker, when talking about who actually is in support of this fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, let me quote Francesca Dobben the executive director of United Way Bruce-Grey, Mr. Speaker. This shows that Kathleen Wynne's government is listening to people. With these positive changes our rural community will now truly benefit from the low-cost power it produces. What about Ontario regional chief Isidor Day, Mr. Speaker? The elimination of the delivery charge will assist our citizens by reducing energy poverty in our communities. It also represents recognition for the use of the land and development and expansion of the provincial energy grid. Today's commitment by the Ontario government is commendable and allows a path forward for greater quality of life. First Nations in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We listened -- like Chief Day. We listened to people like Francesca Dobben and we acted, Mr. Speaker.

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.