

Hansard: Horwath to Premier (Thibeault)--Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Hydro rates have gone up 300%. Since this Premier took office, they have gone up by 50% alone, Mr. Speaker. It's a startling fact. More startling is what this actually means to Ontario families. It means more people than ever are being forced to choose whether to pay their hydro bills or to put food on the table. When will the Premier do more than buy radio ads and issue press releases as a response to this crisis that her government has created?

>> Premier Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, we recognize that electricity prices, that hydro prices, have been a burden for people in all corners of the province. Mr. Speaker, which is exactly why on top of the 8% that we already have cut people's bills by, another 17%, so a total of 25%. People will see that reduction, Mr. Speaker, on their summer bills. But, Mr. Speaker, we started in 2013 recognizing that we needed to take costs out of the system. We have taken a number of actions, Mr. Speaker. But we realize, we realize that even with the accumulation of actions that we have taken in 2013 and 2014 and 2015 that more needed to be done. Our plan will take 25% off the bills of everyone who in their home pays their electricity bills, Mr. Speaker. On top of that, people who live in more remote and rural areas will see another reductions, Mr. Speaker, that could take them up to 40 or 50% reduction.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker does the **Premier** realize that time of use billing is a big problem for many Ontarians. For a parent who's raising kids means you can't cook dinner at dinnertime. You have to stay up really late at night to do the laundry. That's just not right, Speaker. Can the **Premier** tell us since she refuses to release the details of her band-aid hydro fix, will it include opportune if I have time of use pricing, Mr. Speaker ?

>> Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, pleased to rise and talk about Ontario's fair hydro plan. Mr. Speaker, today I have in front of me the technical briefing that was provided to all of the critics of all of the opposition parties in the media, Mr. Speaker. It talks specifically about many of the actions we're taking as a government to reduce the bills of all families, small businesses and farms across the province, Mr. Speaker. Up to 25% for all families, Mr. Speaker. They're going to see that reduction come summer. Also, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to time of use, we're also having pilot projects looked at right now, Mr. Speaker, by our system operator, by the oeb ensuring to find ways to help families and businesses, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is a substantial plan that is bringing relief to families, Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition party, Mr. Speaker, that has a bumper sticker plan that does absolutely nothing to help families and low income individuals right away, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, people need information from this government. Not a slide that's provided to media and opposition critics. Shame on you. Ontarians need to know what this plan will actually do. Ontarians need to know that, Mr. Speaker, so they have some certainty around the future. The member needs to release publicly the details of her plan in this legislature so that it's available for open and transparent debate instead of playing a game of political smoke in mirrors and spending public money on partisan ads. Enough with the pr, Speaker. When will Ontarians see the **Premier's** actual plan?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I think it's been well said, the details of our plan, 25% reduction for all families in the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. And for those families, Mr. Speaker, for those families that are in northern Ontario and rural parts of our province, Mr. Speaker, they're going to see more than just 25%, Mr. Speaker. We have actually a reduced the distribution rate, Mr. Speaker, for Hydro One customers in seven other lbc's. They will see reductions Mr. Speaker between 40 and 50%, Mr. Speaker. And that's thanks to the action of this government, Mr. Speaker. We have made sure. We have made sure, Mr. Speaker, as well we are looking after low income individuals, our most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, and our first nations, something that they didn't even include in their plan, Mr. Speaker. We make sure that we have enhanced the Ontario electricity support program. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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