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Hydro Ottawa — Energy Announcement Echo
Remarks
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Written by: Kevin
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Hello. Bonjour. Boohzoo. Ahnee.

Thank you, Bob. [Bob Chiarelli, Minister of Infrastructure]

And thank you Bryce for welcoming us today. [Bryce Conrad, Hydro Ottawa CEO]

It is great to be at Hydro Ottawa — a historic institution for the province and country.

Ottawa was home to Canada's first water-powered generating station.

And in 1885, Ottawa became the first city in the world to light all of its streets with electricity.

It kicked off a period of our history in which we literally invested in a brighter future.

But these investments did not continue through the 20th century.

By the start of this century, Ontario's electricity system was crumbling.

Infrastructure was failing.

We were still depending on dirty coal.

So we started to build a clean, reliable grid to power the future for Ontario.

And 2 years ago, we became the first place on the continent to completely eliminate heavily polluting coal-fired electricity.

That saves about \$4 billion a year in health and other pollution-related costs.

Today, more than 90 per cent Ontario's electricity is emissions-free.

It's something we can all be proud of.

We're leading in the fight against climate change and are well-positioned for the low-carbon economy of tomorrow.

At the same time, the cost of building clean and reliable power after decades of neglect has pushed hydro rates up.

This added to the pressures households and businesses have been under as Ontario's economy recovers from the recession.

So we began to take actions to keep the cost of electricity affordable.

We removed the Debt Retirement Charge from residential electricity bills...

Made electricity more affordable for low-income families through the Ontario Electricity Support Program...

We took action to help people with conservation...

And we renegotiated the Samsung agreement to save \$3.7 billion.

But even with the costs we've taken off your bills and out of the system, electricity prices have continued to rise here just as they have across Canada and around the world.

I've heard from people in the Ottawa region and in every region that it's become too much.

And we've listened.

Because it is not just an electricity issue.

People need more help with the cost of living.

And it's my job to find ways to give people that break they need wherever we can.

So our plan has helped Ontario's economy emerge as one of Canada's fastest growing.

But I know that for a family, 1 or 2 or 3 per cent growth doesn't necessarily help with next month's bills.

For the province though, every extra bit of growth allows us to find more ways of helping people in their everyday lives.

And right now, a stronger economy means we can help make everyday living more affordable.

It's why jobs and growth are my top priority.

And it's why yesterday we introduced legislation that would, if passed, permanently provide a rebate on people's electricity bills all across Ontario.

The Ontario Rebate for Electricity Consumers Act would rebate the provincial portion of the HST directly on electricity bills for millions of families, farms and small businesses — an 8 per cent savings every month.

Creating an average savings of \$130 a year.

Additional measures would decrease rural delivery charges, meaning consumers in rural Ontario would save a total of \$540 annually on average.

To ensure businesses are also benefitting from lower energy costs, we're also going to massively expand the Industrial Conservation Initiative.

This program already helps 300 businesses save up to 34 per cent by shifting their usage away from peak times and paying lower rates.

The ICI is great for business and for all of us, because it means we don't need to build as much peak generating capacity.

So the expanded ICI would be available to an additional 1,000 businesses of various sizes all across Ontario.

[French only: 1,000 large energy consumers will also benefit from the opportunity to reduce their electricity costs by up to one third.]

More help for people in their everyday lives and more help for businesses to compete and grow.

That's what a balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone does.

Thank you. Merci.

I'd now be happy to take your questions.