

DRAFT – letter to the editor

Every government is faced with a set of unique challenges that they must confront. In our case, we inherited an energy system that required significant upgrades just to keep the lights on for families and businesses in [insert community] and for communities across the province.

For decades, successive governments of all stripes have neglected to fix the underlying structural issues in Ontario's electricity system. A chronic and complete lack of investment under the Harris Conservatives led to brownouts and blackouts and a critical shortage of supply in the early 1990's, ultimately leading to the province-wide blackout of 2003. This was a problem that needed to be fixed, and fixed quickly, and our government took action, investing \$30 billion in new generation infrastructure. We also made a choice to close down the coal plants that were polluting our air and endangering the health of our children and the elderly. We know that taking action to make our electricity clean and reliable was the right choice, but we also know that the costs of the choices have had an impact on families across the province.

The good news is that our government has created an electricity system that is clean and reliable. Since 2003, we have invested \$50 billion dollars in electricity infrastructure. These investments have been made across the province in various types of electricity generation such as wind, solar and hydro power, the refurbishing of our nuclear power facilities and in transmission and delivery infrastructure. These infrastructure projects created and are sustaining thousands of jobs, ensuring our businesses and economy continue to grow, and keeping the lights on for families and businesses across the province.

To help families with the costs of making those investments, our government introduced an 8% rebate in the Fall of 2016 and expanded the assistance program for families who pay the highest delivery costs. But we know we need to do more. That's why our government is taking a number of significant steps through our Fair Hydro Plan. Starting this summer, residential consumers as well as small businesses [and farms, depending on community] in [insert community] will receive a 25 per cent on average cut to their hydro bill. People with low-incomes will also benefit from even greater reductions to their hydro bills through the creation of the Affordability Fund and broadening eligibility requirements for the Ontario Electricity Support Program. We are also expanding the Rural or Remote Electricity Rate Protection to provide additional relief to approximately 800,000 Ontarians. At the same time, we are making a commitment that any rate increases over the next four years will be held to the rate of inflation, or 2% per year

These meaningful measures build on our government's previously announced initiatives to deliver relief on your hydro bill, including the eight per cent rebate on all electricity bills that was implemented January 1, 2017.

The benefits of our Fair Hydro Plan will have a significant impact on your monthly bill and will ensure energy is affordable for our neighbours across [insert community]. For more information, check out FairHydroPlan.ca.