
FRESH FM INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER WYNNE

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FRESH FM: We have Kathleen Wynne on the line. The Premier of Ontario had a bit of a busy afternoon yesterday with a big announcement regarding hydro and electricity rates. Good morning, Kathleen. Thanks for joining us this morning.

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Good morning. Just fine. It's a beautiful sunny day.

FRESH FM: It is. And the sun has come out here in Peterborough, as well. Yesterday was a big day. You announced this, on average, 25 per cent cut to electric bills. You know, this was a little time coming. Why yesterday, I guess, is the big question?

PREMIER WYNNE: Well, we were working to get, to get a solution in place, as quickly as we could. And we had we had done some things, for example, the 8 per cent reduction that people saw on their electricity bills, as of January. But what we, what we got from hearing from people from around the province was that it wasn't enough. You know, the things that we had done weren't enough and that people needed relief that was substantial. They needed that relief to go to everyone. And they needed it to be lasting relief and more fundamental than some of the changes that we've made.

FRESH FM: Okay, fair enough. I know you've been asked this, I'm sure, already in the last 12 hours or so, but a lot of people are saying it's a band-aid solution that generations to come are going to have to pay for this. You're comparing it to a mortgage.

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah. Yeah, I mean the fact is that we have, we've had to make a lot of investments in the electricity system and this isn't a partisan comment, but, you know, previous Liberal, NDP and Conservative governments over the last 30, 40 years have not...did not keep the system in good shape. When we came in in 2003, we were having rolling brownouts and blackouts. We needed to make an investment. We've made that investment. But it's, you know, it's about a 50 billion dollar investment that we've made over the last few years. We now have a clean reliable electricity grid. But there's a cost associated with that. And what we're saying is, it shouldn't be this generation that pays both for the neglect of the past and the benefit of the future. So we're going to spread the cost of those payments over 30 years, rather than over 20 years. It means, like a mortgage, that it will take longer to pay off and it will cost a bit more, but it is worth it because it means that people today will get that relief that they need, so they can look after their families and pay their electricity bills.

FRESH FM: Speaking with Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne. And when does this take effect and what do you say to the people in the meantime? There's like small businesses that are just kind of hanging on because electricity is like 50 per cent of their operating cost. There's like

local curling clubs in the Peterborough area that, you know, are really struggling, as well. How do they hang on in the meantime?

PREMIER WYNNE: So people well...every resident who pays electricity for their home will see relief by summer. We're going to get this average 25 per cent reduction in place by summer. There are other programs that will come into play for our businesses. Those mom and pop shops on, you know, main street in towns and Ontario will benefit from the same 25 per cent reduction. In addition to that, we're going to, we're going to see people who have very high delivery charges. So people who live in more remote and rural communities, they'll see more than a 25 per cent reduction because we're going to take a chunk of those distribution charges off their bill. So they may see another 10 or 15 per cent reduction on their bills. So that all will come into play by the summer.

FRESH FM: That was my next question. Of course, you know we're in the middle of cottage country. I think maybe you even have a cottage somewhere in this Peterborough area. We've got a few emails from cottagers and tweets showing us their bill about getting hit over the winter time, and they've shut off their hydro.

PREMIER WYNNE: Yeah. And those distribution costs are really hard for people to bear, whether it's a cottage or whether it's their primary residence. And so those distribution charges, we're going to take those down to about the same level that an urban, an urban resident would pay. And so, that's going to mean a substantial reduction. You know, it could be 40 50 per cent in terms of distribution charges for people in more rural and remote communities.

FRESH FM: All right, before we let you go, we'll end a little bit on a lighter note. Has Peterborough MP Jeff Leal ever taken you to Jeff Purvey's Fish and Chips, while here in Peterborough?

PREMIER WYNNE: I have not been to that fish and chips...I, you know what, I'm going to take him up on that.

FRESH FM: Well, he brought Dalton McGuinty there. I think Peter Adams brought, I think, Jean Chretien, there. A lot of Liberals go there, it seems, so.

PREMIER WYNNE: So Jeff owes me.

FRESH FM: Yeah, it's just, it's just getting the money out of his pocket to pay. That's the tough part. But anyhow, shout out to Jeff. Another quick one. Trivia question for you. Some of the top musicians in the world right now are: Justin Bieber, the Weeknd, Drake, Alessia Cara and Shawn Mendes. They are all from where?

PREMIER WYNNE: Ontario.

FRESH FM: Ontario. And if you had to go see one of them in concert, who would it be?

PREMIER WYNNE: Oh my goodness. You know what, I think, I think the Weeknd is awesome.

FRESH FM: Okay. Good pick.

PREMIER WYNNE: That's where I'd go.

FRESH FM: Alright, Kathleen, thanks very much for joining us. Have a great weekend.

PREMIER WYNNE: Okay, thanks. Take care.