

Evening Media Scan: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan - March 15, 2017

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Evening Media Scan: March 15, 2017

MEDIA SCAN: HYDRO RATE REDUCTION PLAN

March 15, 2017

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Online Coverage

Toronto Sun: No relief for hospitals being zapped by hydro costs

By: Vic Fedeli, Special To The Toronto Sun
First Posted: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 03:46 PM EDT

<http://www.ottawasun.com/2017/03/15/no-relief-for-hospitals-being-zapped-by-hydro-costs>

It's hard not to shake your head as the premier parades around the province playing hero on hydro relief.

Kathleen Wynne is, after all, responsible for forcing people in Ontario to choose between heating or eating. It was her government that created this hydro crisis.

But now she wants Ontarians to believe she is coming to your rescue. Well put away your cape, premier, because you aren't being honest.

What's missing on her self-congratulatory tour is honesty about who exactly will get help. Every single time, Wynne conveniently fails to mention who isn't eligible to get much relief at all: Ontario's hospitals.

Hospitals run 24/7. Lighting and equipment run around the clock. There is no such thing as operating a hospital at off-peak hours. Across Ontario, hospitals have seen rates soar and they're being sucked up.

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre in Barrie has seen rates increase by \$200,000. The Timmins and District Hospital has seen rates increase by \$375,000. The Collingwood General & Marine Hospital has seen an alarming 35% rate hike, and at the Sault Area Hospital we've seen them explode by 45%. This represents massive chunks of a hospital's operating budget, but they won't see a single cent of relief come under this expensive new hydro scheme.

And, we're starting to see the effects of these soaring rates where it hurts the most: The front-line care our most vulnerable patients receive. Hospitals are being forced to lay off staff in order to afford these ever-increasing fixed costs.

Think about that for just one minute. Our nurses, our front-line staff, the ones we count on to care for our friends and family in times of need, are being let go to pay for Wynne's hydro mistakes.

In my riding of Nipissing, the North Bay Regional Health Centre announced this week it is cutting 40 positions. That's on top of another 350 cut in the last three years. The president and CEO of the hospital specifically referenced hydro costs as one of the underlying reasons.

Barrie, Timmins, Collingwood, and the Sault have all also seen health-care cuts.

When is this all going to stop? For hospitals across Ontario, evidently, it doesn't. Whether it's cut or frozen budgets, cuts to doctors and nurses, and now soaring hydro rates, for years, the Wynne Liberals have forced our hospitals to do more with less.

Not only that, but the problems are only going to get worse. The Wynne Liberals' hydro scheme is nothing but a Band-Aid that's only going to lead to even higher taxes and rates down the road, and the

government continues to sign even more costly green energy contracts.

Patient care is only going to continue to slide, as hospitals are left with even bigger bills.

Premier, as you tour this province touting your relief plan, I'd suggest you put away your cape. You are no hero to those paying the enormous price of your mistakes.

— Fedeli is the Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP from Nipissing

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CityNews NDP calls on Ontario government to table hydro legisla

By: The Canadian Press

Last Updated Mar 15, 2017 At 3:31 PM EDT

<http://www.citynews.ca/2017/03/15/ndp-calls-ontario-government-table-hydro-legislation-monday/>

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table legislation for its hydro bill reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation."

The legislature is not sitting this week for March Break, but Horwath said Ontarians need to see the planned legislation as soon as possible.

"People deserve to see it in black and white so they can debate it and so the legislature can debate it too," she said.

"Don't hide the details, don't delay, don't come to the legislature just before it rises this summer with a last-minute bill, ultimatums and no time for committees, experts and the people of Ontario to take the time they need to examine the bill. Put this \$40-billion phantom plan on paper and let's have a real debate about what's best for Ontario's future."

Andrea Horwath @AndreaHorwath

Time for Premier Wynne to show us her phantom hydro plan—and explain how ppl will pay for her \$40B borrowing scheme. <http://act.ontariondp.ca/comparetheplans>

10:44 AM - 15 Mar 2017

27 RETWEETS 31 LIKES

The government indicated the legislation won't come as quickly as Monday.

"We will introduce legislation this session, with time for debate and public hearings at committee, ensuring real relief for Ontarians and a way to ensure greater fairness in our electricity system this summer," Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said in a statement.

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced earlier this month that people will receive an average 25-per-cent cut to their electricity bills starting this summer — 17 per cent in new reductions plus an eight-per-cent rebate that came into effect Jan. 1. Rates will also increase no higher than inflation for the next four years.

But the plan will ultimately cost ratepayers about \$25 billion more in interest, the government has said. The plan will take part of the global adjustment charge off bills for the next 10 years, but the cost isn't being eliminated, it's being deferred to future ratepayers, racking up interest on that debt in the meantime.

The fact that billions of dollars will ultimately go to bankers and not be spent on schools or roads "warrants one heck of an explanation," Horwath said.

Both opposition parties doubt the Liberal government's math and say the extra interest costs could be as high as \$40 billion.

"Let's just say I have a healthy amount of skepticism when it comes to any numbers that Liberals provide," said Horwath.

Horwath said it's not clear when the hydro plan's interest payments will come due, but the Liberals have said it won't be for at least 10 years.

Horwath also said it's not clear if it will apply to medium-sized businesses, but the Liberals have said the 25-per-cent reduction won't. Half a million small businesses and farms will qualify, but all other businesses except the largest manufacturers and industrial customers will only see a reduction of between two and four per cent, government officials have said.

On one thing, however, the NDP and Liberals can agree: "The Conservatives have no plan at all," Horwath said.

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown has said he will announce a plan "soon."

The NDP has proposed an alternative plan to lower hydro bills by 30 per cent, but the Liberals say while their relief will kick in within a few months, the NDP's proposed savings wouldn't take effect for a long time.

The New Democrats' plan calls for ending mandatory time-of-use pricing, reducing the delivery charge for rural customers, renegotiating power contracts, and returning Hydro One to public ownership. The Liberal government has sold 30 per cent of Hydro One and plans to sell up to 60 per cent in total.

The Liberal plan also contains a delivery charge reduction for some rural customers, removing the charge entirely for on-reserve First Nations customers, and expanding a low-income support program.

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Hamilton Spectator calls on Ontario government to table hydro
thespec.com

Wed Mar 15 2017

Section: News

TORONTO - NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table legislation for its hydro bill reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation."

The legislature is not sitting this week for March break, but Horwath said Ontarians need to see the planned legislation as soon as possible.

"People deserve to see it in black and white so they can debate it and so the legislature can debate it too," she said.

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Horwath also said it's not clear if it will apply to medium-sized businesses, but the Liberals have said the 25 per cent reduction won't. Half a million small businesses and farms will qualify, but all other businesses except the largest manufacturers and industrial customers will only see a reduction of between two and four per cent, government officials have said.

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TV Transcripts (6 PM)

CFTO Ontario NDP Leader Calls on Premier to Provide More De

Source: CFTO

Mar 15, 2017 6:07 PM (6)

Anchor: The NDP at Queen's Park want to hear and see more detail about the government as plan to cut the hydro bills.

Anchor 2: Two of three parties at the legislature now have plans to reduce electricity prices. The conservatives are still drafting their proposal. CTV's Paul Bliss is at Queen's Park. How much of an election issue is this going to be now that the bills are going to be slashed?

Reporter: Million dollar question. Electricity prices have doubled in the last decade, but it's hard to say how that's going to play out in the 2018 election. I don't think any of the parties has figured that out yet. The NDP are trying to score points by taking shots at the blockbuster Liberal plan to cut hydro bills by 25 per cent this calendar year.

Andrea Howath, Ontario NDP Leader: We will end mandatory time-of-use-pricing. Wynne won't.

Reporter: The NDP say they can cut bills 30 per cent. So we have dueling electricity discount proposals. But the premier has, in some ways, short circuited the opposition's hopes of surfing rising hydro rates into the campaign. While the cuts won't kick in until June, new government polling indicates the premier's plan is a relatively popular one. Internal government polling reveals 49 per cent strong support the hydro reductions. 43 per cent somewhat support. That's a majority 82 per cent in favour of the plan, but the NDP say the devil may be in the details, and the billions in interest payments will cost Ontarians in the long run. Horwath took aim at the PCs.

Horwath: Wynne's phantom plan is an attempt to help herself and her party while making a lot of bankers happy. The Conservatives have no plan at all.

Reporter: According to the poll, nearly a quarter of Ontarians hadn't even heard of the news. Government sources say you can expect radio and TV ads in the coming months explaining the plan to cut hydro bills. One more very interesting finding. 74 per cent of the people polled say that they're worried the premier's plan to cut our hydro bills is going to end up costing them more in taxes down the road.

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CHCH NDP Leader Calls On Government To Release Hydro Plan

Source: CHCH
Mar 15, 2017 6:13 PM (10)

Anchor: NDP Leader Andrea Horwath says Ontarians need to see the details of the Liberal government's hydro rate reduction plan as soon as possible. Horwath is calling for legislation implementing the cut to be introduced when legislature resumes on Monday. Earlier this month, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that residential consumers will receive an average 25 per cent cut to their electricity bills starting this summer. Including an eight per cent reduction already implemented in January. But Horwath, who has proposed her own plan to cut soaring hydro rates 30 per cent, said the details are not clear.

Andrea Horwath, Ontario NDP Leader: It is absolutely unacceptable that the Premier of this province and the Liberal Party of Ontario put forward some phantom plan that changes every day when any serious question is asked about it and why can it change every day? Because they have not tabled anything. They haven't given us any real information. There is no bill. There is no real plan. It needs to stop.

Anchor: Horwath said the legislation should be tabled immediately so there's plenty of time for debate before the legislature breaks for the summer break June 1st.

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CHCH Energy Minister's Office Says Hydro Rate Legislation Will Be Tabled
Source: CHCH
Mar 15, 2017 6:14 PM (11)

Anchor: Now Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault's office released a statement saying the Liberals will introduce legislation this session with time for debate and public hearings at committee. The statement takes aim at NDP's plan saying, "Many of her proposals rely on a vague and yet-to-be-determined "expert panel" that will be convened in the future, as well as pie-in-the-sky negotiations with the federal government. These offer little to Ontarians in the short-term, compared to the real and meaningful relief our government's Fair Hydro Plan will provide to everyone."

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CFPL NDP Calling For Hydro Rate Reduction Plan To Be Tabled
Source: CFPL
Mar 15, 2017 6:11 PM (8)

Anchor: Provincial NDP leader Andrea Horwath says Ontario residents need to see the details of the Liberal government's hydro rate reduction plan as soon as possible. Horwath is calling for legislation implementing the cut to be introduced when the legislature resumes on Monday. Premier Wynne announced earlier this month that residential consumers will receive an average 25 per cent cut to their electricity bills beginning this summer. But Horwath, who was proposed her own plan to cut hydro rates by 30 per cent, says the details aren't clear.

Andrea Horwath, Ontario NDP Leader: We will end mandatory time-of-use pricing; Wynne won't. We will help all Ontario businesses; Wynne won't. We will not only stop the sell-off of Hydro One, We'll reverse the sell-off and bring Hydro One back to public ownership.

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CBC: NDP Calling On Premier To Table New Hydro Plan On Monday
Source: CBC
Mar 15, 2017 6:32 PM (17)

Anchor: The provincial NDP issued a challenge to the Premier today. It's calling on Kathleen Wynne to table her new hydro plan on Monday, saying Ontarians deserve to be able to study it.

Andrea Horwath, Ontario NDP Leader: Don't hide the details. Don't delay. Don't come to the legislation just before it rises this summer with a last-minute bill, ultimatums, and no time for committees, experts, and the people of Ontario to take the time they need to examine the bill.

Anchor: Monday is the next the legislature sits. It's off right now for March break. Wynne announced a cut of 25 per cent this summer over last year. The Liberals it will apply to homeowners and half a million small business and farms, but NDP says more details are needed.

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MCTV NDP Demands More Details About Government's Hydro R

Source: MCTV

Mar 15, 2017 6:17 PM (11)

Anchor: It could be dueling electricity plans heading into the 2018 election. Premier Wynne is cutting hydro bills by 25 per cent. Andrea Horwath says her party would cut your electricity bill by 30 per cent. Paul Bliss reports.

Reporter: The NDP are trying score points by taking shots at the blockbuster Liberal plan to cut hydro bills 25 per cent this calendar year.

Andrea Horwath, NDP Leader: We will end mandatory time of use pricing. Wynne won't.

Reporter: The NDP say they can cut bills 30 per cent. So we have dueling electricity discount proposals, but the Premier has, in some ways, short-circuited the opposition hopes of surfing rising hydro rates into the election campaign. While many Ontarians are still fuming over their hydro bills and the cuts won't kick in until June, new government poll indicates the Premier's plan is a relatively popular one. Internal government polling reveals 49 per cent strongly support the hydro reductions, 43 per cent somewhat support. That's a majority 82 per cent in favour of the plan, but the NDP say the devil may be in the details, and the billions in interest payments will cost Ontarians in the long run. Horwath also took aim at the PCs.

Andrea Horwath: Wynne's phantom plan is an attempt to help herself and her party while making a lot of bankers happy. The Conservatives have no plan at all.

Reporter: According the poll, nearly a quarter of Ontarians hadn't even heard of the news. Government sources say you can expect radio and TV ads in the coming months explaining the plan to cut hydro bills. Paul Bliss, CTV News.

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CKCO NDP Demands Details About Government's Hydro Rate R

Source: CKCO

Mar 15, 2017 6:21 PM (14)

Anchor: The NDP at Queen's Park wants to see more details about the government's plan to cut hydro bills. Two of three parties at the legislature now have plans to reduce electricity prices. The Conservatives are still drafting their proposal. CTV's Paul Bliss has more.

Reporter: The NDP are trying score points by taking shots at the blockbuster Liberal plan to cut hydro bills 25 per cent this calendar year.

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CKVR NDP Demands Details About Government's Hydro Rate R

Source: CKVR
Mar 15, 2017 6:10 PM (8)

Anchor: To Queen's Park and another call for more details about Premier Wynne's plan to cut hydro bills. Horwath says it is not clear what Ontarians will really be saving and what they will really be paying in the long-run. She wants Premier Wynne to table the bill outlining everything soon. Here is Paul Bliss.

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CKPR NDP Demands Liberals Table Hydro Bill Reduction Legislation
Source: CKPR
Mar 15, 2017 6:06 PM (6)

Anchor: Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is demanding the Wynne government table its hydro bill reduction legislation by Monday. Horwath says a plan from Premier Wynne has raised a lot of questions and she says Ontario residents deserve to know the details. Paul Bliss reports.

Reporter: The NDP are trying score points by taking shots at the blockbuster Liberal plan to cut hydro bills 25 per cent this calendar year.

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