

MEDIA SCAN: HYDRO RATE REDUCTION PLAN

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TORONTO SUN: GIVING AWAY THE KITCHEN SINK; EVERYTHING MUST GO IN WYNNE'S BID TO RETAIN POWER

Free drugs if you're under 25, free university, discounted hydro, rent control and the cherry on the sundae is a 30% increase in the minimum wage in one fell swoop.

Premier Kathleen Wynne is running government like a Giant Tiger - everything is priced to sell. It's like Christmas in July, except we're still just in May - and a little over a year from the provincial election.

But what do you do when only 11% of the population trusts you? Wynne's giving away the kitchen sink, desperate to cling to power.

What's particularly pernicious is what's unfolding with your hydro bill. In January, the province cut the provincial portion of the GST out of your bill, saving you 8%, then plans to cut a further 17% on June 1.

Wynne would have you believe it's all magical. She waved her wand and, zap, your hydro bill was cut by a quarter. That's supposed to make you forget that you paid for massive green energy spending that we didn't need, leaving us on the hook for years, even decades, to come - and adding billions to our debt.

All Wynne did was to re-amortize our debt, shuffling it around so you get the illusion that it simply vanished.

But a cabinet document leaked to the Progressive Conservatives tells the real story. Between 2022 and '27 we can expect 6.5% increases each year followed by a 10.5% increase in '28.

Given that we have set elections every four years, Wynne is likely thinking she'll win in 2018 and pack it in before the '22 election, leaving the whole mess to be sorted out by whoever gets power after her.

Liberal Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault, in an explanation that strains credulity, said he couldn't confirm the document or verify its numbers. Poor fella explained how he has been swamped with "thousands of documents" and "hundreds of briefings."

"I've been in this position for 11 months," Thibeault pleaded.

He then pivoted, à la U.S.

President Donald Trump, contradicting himself to say the numbers were off, as the document was just a "draft." But he refused to give us the supposedly updated numbers.

Thibeault said he'd disclose the numbers when he updates his long-term energy plan. Expect that to land in the lazy days of summer once the Legislature has recessed, when most are at their cottage and likely around 4 p.m. on a Friday.

If Thibeault doesn't have the financial projections available now, as the bill is set to pass, we have a serious problem. We're sailing blindly into the abyss. Isn't that what first got us into this hydro mess - a lack of planning and sheer negligence? Both New Democratic Party leader Andrea Horwath and PC leader Patrick Brown's parties will rightfully vote against the hydro bill. Horwath called it a "\$40-billion attempt to buy an election," while Brown said: "In no world can I support a plan that's going to cause vast new amounts of debt."

Of great concern is that the poll finding that 89% of people distrust Wynne was conducted after all the goodies were announced. The same poll also found PCs still lead in popular support with 41%, the Liberals have 28% support and the NDP trail with 23%.

That's only going to spur Wynne to continue spending your money like a drunken sailor. You've been warned.

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