

Queen's Park Today – Daily Report September 26, 2017

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Quotation of the day

“Let's take it outside! Let's go!”

Liberal MPP Lou Rinaldi threatens PC MPP Ross Romano during a question period [exchange](#) where Romano accused Rinaldi of uttering a [“northern slur”](#) during debate last Thursday

Today at Queen's Park

On the schedule

The House will convene at 9:00 a.m. to continue second reading debate on **Bill 152**, Representation Statute Law Amendment Act, which adds two new northern ridings.

In the afternoon, the House is scheduled to continue second reading on **Bill 139**, Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act. This will be the fourth day of debate on the Ontario Municipal Board-reform legislation.

Debates and proceedings

The House convened at 10:30 a.m. for question period.

In the afternoon, MPPs began second reading debate on **Bill 154**, Cutting Unnecessary Red Tape Act. Economic Development and Growth Minister **Brad Duguid** delivered the government's lead-off on the bill.

In the park

The Assemblée de la Francophonie de l'Ontario is scheduled to host an MPP networking breakfast in the Legislative Dining Room.

Ontario Racing, the province's horseracing industry association, will host a noon-hour reception for MPPs.

In the evening, Wilfrid Laurier University and the Ontario Pharmacists Association both have lobbying receptions scheduled.

Topics of conversation

- In a recent [blog post](#), TVO's **Steve Paikin** wonders if **Patrick Brown** is the PC leader the Red Tories have been waiting for.
 - Asked about Brown's embrace of socially progressive values, a senior PC source told Paikin, "We may lose dinosaurs over Patrick's embrace of climate change as real and LGBTQ rights. But we have opened ourselves up for so many more ... After the next election, other conservative parties in Canada will want to emulate our success in Ontario. Conservatives will copy the Ontario PCs on the environment, gay rights, condemning Trump-like Islamophobia, not playing footsie with it."
- A report from the Federation of Rental Housing Providers (FRPO) found that 1,000 planned rental units in the GTA have been converted to condos since the Liberal government introduced its Fair Housing Plan last spring. According to the report, the government's rent hike restrictions will force more developers to abandon purpose-built rental projects in favour of condos, exacerbating the current rental stock shortage and leading 62,500 fewer rental units built over the next decade.
 - Housing Minister **Peter Milczyn** told reporters he is "somewhat skeptical" about what FRPO is saying about the impact of new rent control rules on supply. Milczyn said the province is working to create new rental supply by unlocking surplus provincial land and that new rent control rules are "here to stay."
- The defence in the gas plants trial continued its attempt to have former OPP officer **Robert Gagnon** removed as a Crown witness, citing that he lacked impartiality because of his involvement with the original police case.
- Elementary school teachers are renewing their call for the government to address extreme temperatures in schools. "Schools found themselves in the same situation one year ago. Our changing climate is sending a strong message that the Ministry of Education needs to take action," ETFO president **Sam Hammond** said in a statement.
- NAFTA talks continued in Ottawa on Monday. Top issues continue to be uncertainty over the United States' overarching trade goals, the threat to Canada's supply management system, changes to automotive rules of origin regulations and whether the U.S. will agree to uphold the Chapter 19 dispute system.
- A CBC [report](#) on new Statistics Canada data reveals 30 homeless shelters have closed in Ontario since 2011 despite a 10 per cent increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness over the same period.

Today's events



September 26 at 8:00 a.m. — Toronto

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will chair the fall summit of GTHA mayors and chairs alongside Ministers **Bill Mauro**, **Chris Ballard**, **Peter Milczyn** and **Yasir Naqvi** in McDonald Block.



September 26 at 9:15 a.m. — Toronto

Liberal MPP **Han Dong** will hold a press conference in the Queen's Park media studio on 401 Richmond — a cultural space in Toronto that is facing a large property tax increase.



September 26 at 10:00 a.m. — Toronto

The Ontario Human Rights Commission will hold a press conference to announce new legal action against inmate segregation policies at Ontario's corrections facilities.



September 26 at 10:30 a.m. — Toronto

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will attend question period.



September 26 at 11:45 a.m. — Toronto

The Canadian Club will host a luncheon event with Canada's Ambassador to the U.S. **David McNaughton** at the Fairmont Royal York. The event will feature a discussion on Canada-U.S. relations.



September 26 at 12:00 p.m. — Toronto

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will hold a caucus meeting at Queen's Park.



September 26 at 1:30 p.m. — Toronto

Liberal MPP **Soo Wong** will hold a news conference on **Bill 79**, Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act. Wong's private members' bill, which commemorates a historic act of violence by the Japanese against the Chinese during the Second World War, is currently before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.



September 26 at 4:00 p.m. — Toronto

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will host a joint meeting with Virginia Governor **Terry McAuliffe**, Maryland Mayor **Larry Hogan** and Washington DC Mayor **Muriel Bowser** at Queen's Park.



September 26 at 6:00 p.m. — Toronto

The Ontario Liberal Party will hold its Beaches—East York candidate nomination meeting at Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 11.



September 26 at 7:00 p.m. — Toronto

The Ontario Liberal Party will hold its Willowdale nomination meeting at North York Memorial Hall.

Funding announcements

- The **Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport** is putting \$1 million towards a new cycling tourism plan called Tour by Bike. The program will build new bike racks and storage rooms at popular tourist destinations.
 - The funding will come from proceeds from the province's cap and trade program.

News briefs – Non-governmental

New Democratic Party of Ontario

The New Democrats released 30 pages of documents obtained through an FOI that reveal the Ministry of Energy budgeted \$5.5 million for a multimedia ad campaign promoting the government's Fair Hydro Plan. Of that, \$2.5 million will be spent in the 2016-17 fiscal year and \$3 million is allocated for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

The documents include a project management outline delivered to prospective advertising agencies and its contract with the selected firm, Rain43. The prospectus requested a "nimble" creative agency to execute a media campaign that "connects Ontario's energy policies, programs and rebates to a benefit for consumers" in order to counter "negative media coverage of rising electricity bills" including affordability issues for homeowners "with some people having to choose between paying for food and heating."

The documents also show the government intends to continue advertising the perks of the Fair Hydro Plan leading up next June's fixed election date.

Horwath said this is another case of the Liberals using their changes to government advertising laws to run partisan advertisements using public money. She said the \$5.5 million should be used to help get people's hydro bills down, not on partisan advertising.

Treasury Board President **Liz Sandals** said, "citizens are entitled to know what's going on with the government and that is exactly why we advertise, regardless of the program."

Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** said there are still a lot of people who do not know about the Ontario Electricity Support Program and that is what he is trying to fix via advertising. He said his team is working with local distribution companies, Ontario Works and the Canada Revenue Agency to get more people signed up for the assistance program. Currently 232,115 customers have been signed up, out of about 500,000 spots.

Thibeault said it was important to advertise the Fair Hydro Plan's 25 per cent reduction to hydro bills widely so people can plan their household budgets moving into the winter months.

Question period

PC lead-off

Francophone education

- To mark Franco-Ontarian Day, PC leader **Patrick Brown** began question period by asking whether the government's promise to create a francophone university is just a re-election ploy.
 - Brown said the legislation establishing the university should be passed this fall, not after the election, because nothing will stop the Liberals from calling it a "stretch goal" if they are re-elected.
- Francophone Affairs Minister **Marie-France Lalonde** said the government has committed to introduce a bill that will create a committee with a \$20 million start-up budget to set up the university.

Hydro supply

- Brown asked about a recent round of FIT contracts that were [awarded](#) by the IESO last week. Brown said these expensive new contracts are for 150 MW of power Ontario does not need. "The definition of insanity is committing the same mistakes over and over again," he said.
 - He asked the government to "unequivocally" answer whether any negotiations are going on to buy more hydroelectric power from Québec.
- Thibeault said, "The premier and myself have been crystal clear. There's no new contract with Quebec."

Northern Ontario slur

- PC MPP **Ross Romano** said Liberal MPP **Lou Rinaldi** yelled a “northern slur” about a northern Ontario riding during debate last week, calling it a “no man’s land.”
 - Romano called on Rinaldi to apologize for this attack on the north.
- Rinaldi heckled that he and Romano should “take it outside.”
- In a statement issued on Monday afternoon, Rinaldi said his “no man’s land” comment was referring to PC MPP **Vic Fedeli** being “completely alone in his opinion about legislative changes to the Election Finances Act.”
- Rinaldi said PC MPP **Sam Oosterhoff** [misconstrued his words](#) during that debate: “I’m hoping that Sam was merely participating in youthful exuberance in a misguided attempt to protect his caucus colleague,” not a “malicious and purposeful partisan attempt to score cheap political points.”

Gas plants trial

- PC MPP **Lisa MacLeod** asked about the gas plants trial. Her questions were withdrawn because they accused the government of lying, which the Speaker deemed unparliamentary.
- Attorney General **Yasir Naqvi** said he will not discuss matters that are before the courts.

NDP lead-off

Fair Hydro Plan

- NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** asked about the recently obtained FOI documents showing the government plans to spend \$5.5 million in taxpayer dollars to advertise its Fair Hydro Plan using ads that would not pass the auditor general’s “smell test.”
- Horwath said the province spent less than half of that amount to advertise the Ontario Electricity Support Program.
 - She said the government should “just use that \$5.5 million advertising budget to actually help the people of Ontario deal with the cost of electricity.”

Other NDP questions

- NDP MPP **Wayne Gates** also asked the government to address the ongoing strike at the Cami automotive plant in Ingersoll and the resulting temporary lay-offs at the GM plant in Niagara.
- NDP MPP **Teresa Armstrong** continued to pressure the Liberals to expand the inquiry into seniors’ care.