

Hansard: Horwath to Thibeault -- Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's also for the acting Premier. Hydro bills in Ontario have gone up 300% under this Liberal government. They've gone up 50% just under the Premier's reign alone. But instead of reversing her wrong-headed decision to sell off Hydro One, the Premier paid consultants \$2 million to design a \$4 billion financial scheme designed to hide the fact that she's costing Ontario families \$40 billion more than necessary. Instead of remortgaging the cost of hydro on the backs of Ontarians, why didn't this Liberal government come up with a real solution to address the skyrocketing hydro prices in this province?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The solution that we brought forward is a 25% reduction for all homes in this province, for all families and for 500,000 small businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker. Their plan doesn't do anything to even address taking 1 cent off anyone's bills, Mr. Speaker. They didn't even include first nations or even contemplate what we can do for low-income individuals where we did, Mr. Speaker. We brought forward the Ontario electricity support program. We have an on-reserve first nation delivery credit removal and we've also created the rrrrp. We've made sure, Mr. Speaker, that we've looked after the individuals in our province and we know we've got more work to do. We'll continue to have consultations to talk about small businesses, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work with our large industries, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the opposition party. That has no plan and one that has a plan that won't work. This plan on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is saving all families in this province money.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, sadly, sadly, sadly -- this is my second, Speaker. Second from -- sadly, sadly, sadly, the people of Ontario have seen all too closely the Liberal plan. That's why the hydro rates are going up in this province, because of Liberal plans, because of what the Liberals have done to our electricity system over 14 years. Look, the Premier has taken responsibility already for the high cost of hydro in Ontario. She actually said it was her own fault. When will the Liberal government take responsibility for using billions of public dollars to try to deceive Ontario families into believing she actually fixed the problem that she caused?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to helping families in this province, 25% reduction means that rates are going down, Mr. Speaker. They're going down for every single House hold. They're going down for 500,000 small businesses and farms, and we're continuing to work to reduce our rates even more. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? We did have to make sure that we invested in a system. \$70 billion in a system to make sure that we can have a clean system

and a reliable system. I know today, Mr. Speaker, that system that we have is over 90% g.h.g.-free. We're making sure there is no coal in our electricity supply mix. We are the tip of the spear when it comes to north America, Mr. Speaker. I know the other opposition parties will talk about it. But this is action that we've done. We're lowered our emissions. We've made sure we're helping on the health care system because these are saving dollars to our health care side, Mr. Speaker. These were the right things to do at the end of the day. We'll continue to help families –

>> Andrea Horwath: The running tab for the cost of the Premier's hydro borrowing scheme is this. \$40 billion for the plan itself. \$4 billion to hide the long-term cost of the plan. 2 million on consultants to design the \$4 billion financial scheme and \$500,000 for a lawyer to screen emails going to the auditor general as she attempts to tell the people of Ontario just how bad this hydro scheme is for them. Does the government plan to spend any more public money on that desperate attempt to convince voters that their hydro bills haven't gone up over 300% on their government's watch?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again 25% reduction. All House holds in this province. That means rates are going down in this province, Mr. Speaker. But let's talk about the savings that this government has made by investing in a clean, green reliable electricity system. When it comes to the health care system, Mr. Speaker, \$4.3 billion in health care cost savings thanks to this government closing coal plants. That's \$70 billion that we're going to see, Mr. Speaker, by 2055. That is something we need to ensure that we keep doing, Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition parties that have no plan or no idea on actually how to do this, Mr. Speaker. 43% -- sorry 41% reduction in health care costs. 23% in health care debt thanks to the investments we have made in this system. We're going to continue to be leaders in this country, in North America when it comes to our electricity grid and making sure that it's clean -- Reliable and affordable, Mr. Speaker .

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.