Message

From: Mary Bernard [/O=IMO/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=MARY BERNARD42A]
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Subject: Today's News - Monday, March 6, 2017

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Today's News

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Date: Monday, March 6, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

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IESO Mentions

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Big bucks to sit idle; Power generator receives full contracted amount from Ontario

Toronto Sun - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Terry Davidson
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Ontario is paying another power generator big bucks to sit idle instead of producing electricity in the latest example of "complete mismanagement" on the part of the Ontario Liberals, says one New Democrat. In January, Ontario's ...

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Breaking the electricity burden

The Telegram (St. John's) - Fri Mar 3 2017
Byline: Allison Jones
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Soaring electricity bills in Ontario will see an average 17 per cent cut this summer, a year before the provincial Liberals' bid for re-election, but those savings will ultimately cost ratepayers billions in extra interest payments. ...

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Power, policy, pols

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It is indeed precious of Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to dress up what amounts to her bid to win the next election as the "single-largest reduction in electricity rates in Ontario's history" (Excluded From Ontario's Hydro Cuts, Firms ...

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City not selling Toronto Hydro: Mayor

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Tory denies report of Toronto Hydro sale; News story cites sources alleging Hydro One in talks to buy municipal distributor

Toronto Star - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: David Rider and Patty Winsa Toronto Star
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Toronto Mayor John Tory is discounting a news report Saturday that said Hydro One is in talks to buy Toronto Hydro. "I can confirm that no discussions are taking place with respect to the sale of Toronto Hydro to ...

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Local input crucial to adoption of wind farms; Study finds when residents don't help plan or benefit from technology, they resist it

Toronto Star - Mon Mar 6 2017
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Involving community members in wind-farm planning and ensuring nearby residents benefit from turbines would go a long way toward winning local buy-in for such projects, a new Canadian study concludes. The study, published in the Journal of ...

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Rip up green-energy deals; It would save ratepayers billions

Toronto Sun - Sat Mar 4 2017
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We can save Ontario ratepayers billions of dollars by tearing up the green-energy contracts that are playing a part in harming our economy, costing us manufacturing jobs and pushing people into poverty. The ...

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Wynne not first to rein in rates to retain power > Read more

Toronto Star - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Martin Regg Cohn
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As big bangs go, it's big. And it goes like this: get a bigger bang for the buck by borrowing money from future ratepayers - lowering the price for today's voters. The latest Liberal plan to blow up Ontario's electricity system will slash hydro ...

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We are not 'One Ontario'

The Timmins Daily Press - Mon Mar 6 2017
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The Liberals again are stripping more jobs from Northern Ontario. Approximately 44 jobs are being sent to Cornwall from the North Bay office of the Crown Corporation Ontario Power Generation. That being ...

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Horwath hails NDP energy plan; Argues Liberals will make next generation 'pay through nose,' blasts PCs for no public policy

The Sault Star - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Brian Kelly
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Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath touts her electricity plan as the one with staying power. She vows her party's strategy, released Feb. 27, will prompt real long-term change to Ontario's electricity system and savings of up to 30 per ...

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Generations will pay for Liberal hydro blunders

North Bay Nugget - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Lorrie Goldstein
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Trusting Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals to fix the hydro mess they've created is like trusting rabbits to guard the lettuce patch. It requires an unshakeable belief, in the face of all evidence to the contrary, that the same people who ...

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PC Hydro plan coming soon; Liberal plan 'doesn't go far enough' : Brown

North Bay Nugget - Mon Mar 6 2017
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Patrick Brown says the Tories' soon-to-be released plan to cut Ontario hydro rates will be for more than homeowners, farmers and small businesses. "It will be across the board, it will affect everyone," the Progressive ...

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Political bailout with public money

National Post - Sat Mar 4 2017 **Page:** A14

If we may paraphrase King Pyrrhus, a few more acts of "fairness" like the one Premier Kathleen Wynne offered the people of Ontario this week and the province will be undone. Responding to widespread public anger - and, dare we suggest, ...

268278678

Alberta repeats Ontario's blunders

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Lorne Gunter
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It's one thing to be the first naïve child to follow the white rabbit into his hidey hole. But it's another order of stupidity to be the second. That makes it doubly staggering to watch the Alberta NDP government (which has been in office nearly ...

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Labour group calls for independent agency to oversee Alberta coal phase-out

CBC.CA News - Fri Mar 3 2017, 1:19pm ET
Byline:CBC News

A group representing more than 3,000 workers in Alberta's coal industry is calling on the province to establish an independent agency to manage the phase-out of coal-fired electricity. The "made-in-Alberta" plan is part of a report ...

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Fedeli seeks OPG answers; 'OPG's failure to respond to the municipality has rightfully caused great concern in North Bay'

North Bay Nugget - Sat Mar 4 2017 Page: A2

Ontario Power Generation's silence on the future of its North Bay operations is a "betrayal by OPG to behave as good citizens and earn the social licence they need to operate in Ontario," Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli says. Fedeli ...

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OPG, minister silent City's; Senior official in town Monday to speak with employees

North Bay Nugget - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Jennifer Hamilton-Mccharles
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Ontario Power Generation employees will have their questions answered Monday morning when OPG's president of renewable generation and power management comes to North Bay. It's believed to be the first time employees ...

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Minister on the defensive; Thibeault says Northerners have been 'bearing the brunt'of high energy costs

The Timmins Daily Press - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Ron Grech
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Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault acknowledged that "Northern Ontarians having been bearing the brunt of some of the higher energy costs" in the province. He believes the 25% reduction presented as the Fair Hydro Plan announced by ...

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If premier leaves, who takes her place?; Liberals consider alternatives if hydro cut can't save leader

Toronto Star - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Robert Benzie Toronto Star
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The job is not open and no one is plotting regicide to trigger a vacancy. But there are whispers at Queen's Park about who might replace Premier Kathleen Wynne as Liberal leader if her dramatic 25-per-cent hydro rate cut gambit fails to ...

268278663

Hydro cut all about Wynne's thirst for power; But with an election just 15 months away, it's too little, too late

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Andre Marin
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How rich of Premier Kathleen Wynne lecturing us about Ontario's exorbitant electricity prices while shielded by a big, red sign saying 'Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan 25% off your bill.' Not the least was that the sign was ...

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Hydro bill has him seeing red

Toronto Sun - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Joanne Laucius
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A $5,000 hydro bill is pretty much par for the course for golf club owner Leonard Gendron. But he was flabbergasted by a December bill for $7,763, even though he was not running the biggest energy drains at the Hammond Golf Club over the winter. ...

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Electricity system was in 'tatters'; 'We had to invest in generation, transmission and distribution,' minister says

North Bay Nugget - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Harold Carmichael
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"It's never too late to do the right thing," Glenn Thibeault says. Thibeault, Ontario's energy minister, made the comment Friday in Sudbury when asked if the 17-percent hydro rate cut to start in June was announced because of the approach of the ...

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Short-term gain, long-term pain

North Bay Nugget - Fri Mar 3 2017 **Page:** A1 / Front

Soaring electricity bills in Ontario will see an average 17-per-cent cut this summer, a year before the provincial Liberals bid for re-election, but those savings will ultimately cost ratepayers billions in extra interest payments. ...

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PC hydro plan coming; Soon-to-be-released plan helps people 'across the board': Brown

The Barrie Examiner - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Bob Bruton
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Patrick Brown says the Tories' soon-to-be-released plan to cut Ontario hydro rates will be for more than homeowners, farmers and small businesses. "It will be across the board, it will affect everyone," the Progressive ...

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Grits' hydro-bill plan uses worn-out tactic

The Barrie Examiner - Sat Mar 4 2017 **Page:** A4

The Ontario Liberals are using little imagination in their plan to lower electricity bills. To achieve a 17% cut this summer, the government will simply do what it has done for the better part of the past decade - push the expense down ...

268223561

Will Cornwall Electric see rate drop?

Cornwall Standard Freeholder - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Todd Hambleton
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Cornwall Electric customers are still in the dark as to whether they will see a significant drop in their bills later this year. Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne announced a plan on Thursday that would see residential and smallbusiness ...

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The myths and realities of carbon pricing in Canada and beyond

The Globe and Mail - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline:JASON CLEMENS, KENNETH GREEN
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There's a general, indeed a strong, consensus within the economic community that a properly designed carbon tax can both reduce emissions and improve the economy. We broadly agree with this academic analysis. The problem is that carbon taxes in the ...

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Cap and trade's crash and burn

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Lorrie Goldstein
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The California/Quebec cap and trade market Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne is counting on to fund her $8.3-billion climate action plan just crashed, again. This is the highly speculative carbon trading stock market Ontario will join next year that ...

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Sturgeon Falls woman grills premier; 'See that you get good advisers,' she tells Kathleen Wynne

Sudbury Star - Sat Mar 4 2017 **Page:** A4

Premier Kathleen Wynne was put on the hot seat Friday over her new hydro plan, not by reporters or opposition politicians, but by a ratepayer from Sturgeon Falls, just east of Sudbury. Wynne was making calls to people across the province who had ...

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Hydro relief a 'shell game' - Fedeli; Plan will add $25 billion in interest payments over the next 30 years, says PC finance critic

Sudbury Star - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Jennifer Hamilton-Mccharles
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The provincial Liberals' hydro relief plan is nothing more than a 'shell game,' PC finance critic Vic Fedeli charges. "The Liberals have done nothing to fix this broken system. This plan mirrors the desperation of what Ontario families ...

268227402

Mixed reviews for hydro plan

The Chronicle Journal - Sat Mar 4 2017

One could argue that Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan is anything but. It will continue to suck money out of Ontario taxpayers' bank accounts over the next 30 years to pay for failed energy policy over the previous 40 years (i.e., the ...

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Hydro ratepayer puts Wynne on the hot seat

Mykawartha.com - Fri Mar 3 2017

TORONTO – Premier Kathleen Wynne was put on the hot seat Friday over her new hydro plan, not by reporters or opposition politicians, but by a ratepayer from Sturgeon Falls, Ont. Wynne was making calls to people across the province who had written ...

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Provinces across the country face electricity challenges

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Jim Warren
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The history of electricity in Canada is a political nightmare that has faced governments of all political stripes. Electricity and its related infrastructure are expensive - financially and politically - because it's not an optional expense. It's ...

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Other provinces lead way on fairer hydro

Toronto Star - Sun Mar 5 2017 **Page:** A16

Politicians can't make electricity cheap again, Feb. 23 Bruce Lourie raises some interesting points about why hydro prices in Ontario have gotten so out of hand. Mismanaged contracts and reckless privatization by Liberal and Conservative ...

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Big bucks to sit idle; Power generator receives full contracted amount from Ontario

Toronto Sun - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Terry Davidson
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Ontario is paying another power generator big bucks to sit idle instead of producing electricity in the latest example of "complete mismanagement" on the part of the Ontario Liberals, says one New Democrat.

In January, Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) asked the Iroquois Falls power plant to curtail its production of electricity for four months - but continues to pay the company the full amount stipulated in their contract.

"The government has created such a mess that everything they are trying to do now to fix it is ... essentially not making things better," said Timmins-James Bay NDP MPP Gilles Bisson. "We're paying for stuff we're not using," he told the Toronto Sun. "We're going to build brand new generation - they're going out with contracts now to build more private power - when the system is completely over-supplied."

Northland Power runs the small Iroquois Falls cogeneration station. Located about 80 km northeast of Timmins, the plant has a contract until 2021 and is capable of producing 120 MW of power.

Bisson accused the Grits of waste in its opening of new power plants while diminishing the use of these smaller ones.

"Why are we building brand new generation when we've already got it and we're shutting down existing generation? It doesn't make any sense."

Several other small power producers across the province are also being paid not to produce electricity for up to a year because Ontario's dysfunctional utility system is both struggling with excess electricity supply and pouring billions into costly wind and solar power generation.

Atlantic Power Corp. is idling plants in North Bay, Kapuskasing and Nipigon but will be paid until the end of its contract on Dec. 31, 2017. And TransAlta Corp. says its new contract provides a fixed monthly payment until Dec. 31, 2018, with "no delivery obligations."

At the moment, Ontario's large energy producers supply all the power that's needed in this province, and in fact excess supply is routinely sold off at a loss to the U.S. and Quebec.

Chuck Farmer, the IESO's director of stakeholder and public affairs, says they are trying to make the electricity production system in Ontario more efficient by having small energy producers generate power when there's heavy demand, such as during the summer, rather than generating all the time.

"We have a need to be able to ramp energy up and meet peaking requirements," said Farmer.

"We want them to run when the system needs them to, and not run when it doesn't."

Northland's contract is up for renewal in 2021 and Farmer said "ultimately, it's up to Northland Power on whether to run or not, based on market conditions."

"We're transitioning them to an arrangement that will provide more value for ratepayers," he said.

The idea that paying a power plant to produce littleto-no electricity would save ratepayers money might raise a few eyebrows, but Farmer argues it is the case.

While labour costs of a facility will stay the same, a plant like the one in Iroquois Falls will not have to burn through as much natural gas and will save on maintenance costs. - Files from Postmedia Network

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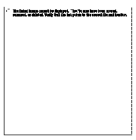

268154410

Breaking the electricity burden

The Telegram (St. John's) - Fri Mar 3 2017
Byline: Allison Jones
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Soaring electricity bills in Ontario will see an average 17 per cent cut this summer, a year before the provincial Liberals' bid for re-election, but those savings will ultimately cost ratepayers billions in extra interest payments.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne acknowledged Thursday that the bill for the across-the-board-relief will eventually come due for ratepayers.

"Over time it will cost a bit more. That's true," she said when detailing the plan. "And it will take longer to pay off. That's also true. But it is fairer because it doesn't ask this generation of hydro customers alone to pay the freight for everyone before and after."

Electricity bills have approximately doubled in the last decade, rising faster than inflation since 2010, and have sparked increasing anger among Ontarians, leading to plummeting approval ratings for Wynne.

She said the increasing costs were due to investments in the grid, nuclear refurbishments and getting rid of coal. She also acknowledged that long-term contracts for green energy producers at above-market rates were "too generous."

Ontario now has a clean and reliable system, Wynne said, but the entire burden of those investments was being shouldered by current ratepayers, when the benefits will be seen over many years.

But Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown said the new plan just shifts the burden between the same group of people - "robbing Peter to pay Paul, but in this case, both Peter and Paul are taxpayers."

Most of the electricity generation contracts in Ontario are for 20 years, so refinancing them is like re-amortizing a mortgage over 30 years instead. But that will come with up to $1.4 billion a year in extra interest payments over 10 years.

In the near term, rates will also be held to the rate of inflation, and the plan is for the 17 per cent cut to be reflected in the Ontario Energy Board's May 1 rates so customers see it reflected on their June bills.

But those extra interest costs will be added back onto bills in the future.

Legislation will be introduced to enable the Independent Electricity System Operator and Ontario Power Generation to refinance a portion of the global adjustment charge.

That's the charge consumers pay for above-market rates for power producers. The auditor general has estimated the global adjustment charge cost $50 billion between 2006 and 2015 and increased by 1,200 per cent between 2006 and 2013 - meanwhile, the average electricity market price dropped by 46 per cent.

The across-the-board relief of 17 per cent comes in addition to an eight per cent rebate that took effect Jan. 1. That cut is estimated to cost taxpayers about $1 billion per year.

Several other measures were announced Thursday to help low-income and rural residents at a cost of $2.5 billion over three years to taxpayers.

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268329031

Power, policy, pols

The Globe and Mail - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Kope Inokai
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It is indeed precious of Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to dress up what amounts to her bid to win the next election as the "single-largest reduction in electricity rates in Ontario's history" (Excluded From Ontario's Hydro Cuts, Firms Say They Can't

Compete, March 3).

The manoeuvre is set to increase the province's already astronomical debt costs by $25-billion, and that's on the expectation that interest rates won't climb over the 30-year repayment period.

This is wishful crystal-ball gazing at best and deceptive electioneering at worst.

The rate reduction may be the largest, but there was a lot of room to work with - and it's nowhere near the savings that might have been possible if the costs around the Green Energy initiative had been competently managed and the scandals kept to a minimum.

Still, it's not the $25-billion we should worry about. It's the doubling or tripling of it that is virtually assured, given the Liberals' track record on the energy and debt files. Worst of all is the dismal performance of Patrick Brown and the Progressive Conservatives in failing to articulate a viable, coherent alternative.

If the PCs have a plan to deal with hydro, I suspect they will probably phrase it in the form of a complaint after they lose the election. Complaining about the Liberals is not a plan. Time is ticking and barring a miracle, Ms. Wynne will end up with yet another mandate. Time to erect a sign at Ontario's borders: Abandon hope all ye who enter here.

- Kope Inokai, Toronto

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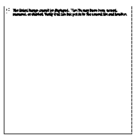

268329724

City not selling Toronto Hydro: Mayor

Toronto Sun - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Sue-Ann Levy
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Mayor John Tory denies he's involved in talks that would see Hydro One buy the 100% city-owned Toronto Hydro.

"There aren't any and there weren't any (discussions)," he said Sunday.

Tory was responding to a media report that claimed Hydro One has been secretly negotiating the possible purchase of Toronto Hydro for $3-billion during the past few months.

Citing unnamed sources, Reuters reported Saturday that Tory and Premier Kathleen Wynne have been involved in the talks. Various ideas have been floating around in the last few months which are designed to help the equity-starved utility find money to invest in $2.5-billion in capital improvements (without impacting on its credit rating).

However, Tory noted the decision was made recently at council to pump more money into Toronto Hydro so it can remain in public hands.

A city report - which was approved at December's council meeting - proposed that the city make a direct contribution from its investment portfolio of around $250-

million rather than pursuing any sort of public share offering or another type of privatization bid.

Tory said this extra $250-million will come as a result of new provincial rules that allow the city some additional latitude to invest its reserve accounts in securities with a slightly higher risk and a higher rate of return.

That investment will also ensure hydro continues to pay dividends of more than the $25-million minimum per year - dividends which are plunked into the city's operating budget and which were cut to the bare minimum for 2017.

"That's why the story was so out-of-the-blue because we made it very clear at city council that we'd be exploring this investment of city funds," Tory said.

He added that city staff are expected to come back to council in the next few months with more details on exactly how much money will be invested in Toronto Hydro.

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Tory denies report of Toronto Hydro sale; News story cites sources alleging Hydro One in talks to buy municipal distributor

Toronto Star - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: David Rider and Patty Winsa Toronto Star
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Toronto Mayor John Tory is discounting a news report Saturday that said Hydro One is in talks to buy Toronto Hydro.

"I can confirm that no discussions are taking place with respect to the sale of Toronto Hydro to anyone," Tory said in a statement to the Star.

The story by Reuters cited two unnamed sources with information that Tory and Premier Kathleen Wynne were part of discussions that included Toronto Hydro CEO Anthony Haines and Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt to sell the utility for $3 billion.

Tory said he would not support any proposal to sell the electricity distributor and that he was looking for additional investment to ensure it remains in public hands.

"We are presently exploring how we can make that investment happen on that basis, so that we have a reliable, up-to-date electricity provider for the people of Toronto," Tory said.

A Toronto Hydro spokesperson, Brian Buchan, reiterated the mayor's words and said, "There is no truth to this rumour, and I am not aware of any talks … This is out of the blue."

Talk of a sale has raised the hackles of the public, as well as city councillors. Toronto Hydro will contribute $25 million to the city's budget this year.

Daniel Levitan, a spokesperson for Hydro One, said the company "will not speculate on rumours."

The province has already sold 30 per cent of Hydro One and will likely sell another 30 per cent in the next year. But the company has already been restructured and is privately run with a new executive team.

The Star revealed early last year that officials in Tory's office and Toronto Hydro had been preparing groundwork for a possible sale of a minority stake in the municipal utility, but that the mayor was not part of those discussions.

But Tory did say in a speech in September that Toronto needed a hard look at selling a minority stake - "unlocking the value that already exists in Toronto Hydro, while keeping it in public hands."

Councillor Cesar Palacio, a member of the mayor's executive committee, told the Star in November that he had intervened to stop the privatization and said he would never support a sale of the utility.

About 1,000 constituents had signed petitions demanding the electricity distributor remain wholly owned by the City of Toronto.

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Local input crucial to adoption of wind farms; Study finds when residents don't help plan or benefit from technology, they resist it

Toronto Star - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Colin Perkel The Canadian Press
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Involving community members in wind-farm planning and ensuring nearby residents benefit from turbines would go a long way toward winning local buy-in for such projects, a new Canadian study concludes.

The study, published in the Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning, notes that fast-paced development and limits on local decision-making has resulted in strong opposition to wind projects.

"This comparative case study of policy programs in Canada highlights stark differences in various aspects of perceived economic benefits and support for local wind-energy development," the authors write.

Chad Walker and Jamie Baxter with Western University's department of geography compare approaches to wind-energy development in southwestern Ontario and Nova Scotia.

In Ontario, for example, the study notes that the 2009 Green Energy Act limits community involvement during planning stages, resulting in criticism of a top-down, corporate-led pattern of development in which almost all of the province's more than 6,000 turbines are corporately owned outside their host communities.

Nova Scotia, on the other hand, has made a concerted effort to support community-owned development and keep the economic benefits in the province, the study says.

"In Nova Scotia, support for local wind projects was three times higher and perceptions of health effects were three times lower."

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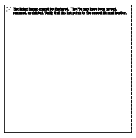

268223676

Rip up green-energy deals; It would save ratepayers billions

Toronto Sun - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Anthony Furey
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We can save Ontario ratepayers billions of dollars by tearing up the green-energy contracts that are playing a part in harming our economy, costing us manufacturing jobs and pushing people into poverty.

The political establishment and energy industry will say it can't be done. Don't listen to them. None of them have even tried and they don't have your best interests in mind. Here's how to get it done though: Call up the companies the Liberals signed sweetheart deals with and tell them it's not working anymore. Ontario has many contracts with companies large and small to pay them more than the going market rate for the renewable energy they produce. In some cases, we pay a staggering 40 times the rate. They won't be surprised to get our call. They're probably expecting it and think we're suckers for not trying to renegotiate sooner. Some will go along with it right away.

The deals many companies have with us right now are so generous that we can cut their rates by a lot and they'll still walk away happy. The Liberals actually did just this back in 2012, cutting some contracts in half.

Others will say no though. And this is where the hardball begins: We tell them we're tearing the contracts up.

If this brings them on board, then great. For the rest that call our bluff, turn the tables on them.

Hold a press conference to name and shame them. Physically tear up their contracts on television. Explain to the public that we gave these companies an out, that the ball was in their court, but instead they made the choice to become an enemy of the people.

After they see we aren't joking, more will slink back and hammer out a deal. Others will posture that they want to go to court.

Good luck with that. While some of these companies have deep pockets - like Samsung, which has a multibillion-dollar deal with the province - and are up for a lengthy legal battle, many aren't. They'll settle. And maybe the big ones will too, as it's the path of least resistance.

But it doesn't even have to get to that point. This is because we can actually pass bills voiding contracts. Provinces have the power to do this, as Bruce Pardy, law professor at Queen's University, wrote in 2014. "If the Ontario Power Authority simply declared contracts under its Feed-In-Tariff to be terminated, the robust compensation clauses contained in those contracts would apply," writes Pardy. "However, if instead the Ontario legislature passed a statue that explicitly denied the right to compensation, then no compensation would be payable."

Now the biggest argument against going down this route is that it undermines the trust companies have in us as a contract partner. But this perspective will be isolated to the renewable energy sector, as our decision to tear up the deals will be based on factors specific to that industry.

So let me get this straight: If we tear up green energy contracts, the fallout will be that green energy companies will never want to enter into those sorts of contracts with us again? I fail to see the downside. Where's the shredder? Let's get started.

The opposition has been sheepish about playing hardball because they haven't seen what's in the contracts. But what they'll likely find is there are indeed outs for us, they're just ones the Liberals aren't using.

It wouldn't be the first time this has happened. This was the case with the billion-dollar gas plants scandal, as the 2013 auditor general's report explains: "The premier's office committed to compensating (TransCanada Energy) for the financial value of its contract for the Oakville plant, even though events occurred that we believe could have enabled termination of the contract at a much lower cost."

Ontario's famous billiondollar boondoggle was a choice. If we'd gone to court, passed legislation or even just negotiated more aggressively, we likely would have come out hundreds of millions of dollars ahead. But they never even tried.

It's time to stop treating deals that were problematic in the first place as more important than the livelihood of the people of Ontario.

I've heard from people in this province who, due to energy costs, are now using food banks, maxing out their credit cards and not heating their homes.

This is a scandal. It needs to be solved. And tearing up lousy contracts is a part of the solution. afurey@postmedia.com @AnthonyFurey

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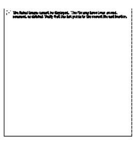

268225168

Wynne not first to rein in rates to retain power > Read more

Toronto Star - Sat Mar 4 2017
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As big bangs go, it's big.

And it goes like this: get a bigger bang for the buck by borrowing money from future ratepayers - lowering the price for today's voters.

The latest Liberal plan to blow up Ontario's electricity system will slash hydro bills by roughly 25 per cent, year over year. But it's not the first time politicians have tried to retain the reins of power by reining in the price of power.

With the 2003 election looming, then-Tory premier Ernie Eves froze hydro rates in a panic - piling on billions of dollars in debt. It didn't work out so well.

Eves paid a price on the campaign trail, going down to defeat. And ratepayers spent the next decade paying down the accumulated debt from his gambits (including a failed Progressive Conservative attempt to privatize electrical utilities), courtesy of the inherited and much-hated debt retirement charge on their bills.

All these years later, Kathleen Wynne faced a similar power crisis - electrical and political - but chose a bolder strategy:

On the eve of the 2018 election, with hydro prices boiling over, she went all in - not just freezing prices but cutting them back. Her Liberals are promising even bigger savings for ratepayers in remote areas, on reserves, or in financial need.

But like her predecessors, Wynne isn't cutting the cost of hydro much. She is mostly fiddling with the price.

That's not semantics but economics. The Liberal plan essentially refinances and rebalances fixed costs that remain unchanged within the system.

First, the refinancing: it's akin to extending the amortization period on your home mortgage from 20 to 30 years, easing the burden of high monthly payments today on the premise that you will still be enjoying that asset decades later. The trade-off, of course, is that you pay more in financing costs, adding $25 billion in additional interest payments spread over 30 years.

You get what you pay for - short-term relief. And you pay for what you get - via long-term debt.

Second, the rebalancing: it's about expanded financial relief - for the poor, rural residents and people living on reserves - transferred from the electricity system to the provincial treasury, on the grounds that social programs are more properly paid through a progressive tax system.

We won't know if it all adds up until voters pass judgment on the plan in the months ahead. But given the rising hostility over hydro rates, the Liberals knew they couldn't afford to wait any longer.

History, however, suggests hydro therapy rarely calms voters.

Former premier Dalton McGuinty brought in a 10-per-cent "Clean Energy Benefit" ahead of the 2011 election to trump opposition demands for an HST holiday. Yet subsequent polling showed most voters were oblivious to the giveaway, giving the government no credit for the cut - which is why Wynne ultimately phased out the $1 billion-a-year program.

But under renewed pressure, the premier revived that benefit in January, this time dressed up as straight 8-per-cent rebate on the provincial portion of the HST. Yet once again voters seemed unmoved by a fleeting tax break, forcing Wynne to go back to the drawing board this week to come up with a further 17-per-cent reduction on hydro rates.

Taken together, the financial engineering pushes her over the psychological hurdle of a 25-per-cent cut - not quite a Boxing Day or Black Friday discount, but it won't go unnoticed. How will the government pay for it?

The remortgaging - essentially a second mortgage - will be hived off to Ontario

Power Generation, the government-owned business enterprise that is one of the successor organizations to the old Ontario Hydro. For better or for worse, OPG boasts decades of debt experience. Conveniently, the borrowings won't show up in the government's annual budget, which is no small thing given the provincial debt now exceeds $300 billion.

Another chunk of the rate relief will be absorbed by the treasury. But the government still intends to meet its pre-election goal of eliminating its annual budget deficit this spring, thanks to robust revenues in a recovering economy.

Paradoxically, the government will be bolstered in its goal of a balanced budget by fresh revenues from partially selling off - cannibalizing - the transmission assets of Hydro One, another piece of the old Ontario Hydro (split up by the Tories in their own abortive privatization plan). Wynne went further than the Tories ever dared with her Hydro One sell-off and is paying a political price - but also cashing in on the financial windfall when she needs it most.

Despite the dubious economics, will the latest rate relief prove to be smart politics? We live in a world - and a province - of increasingly transactional pocketbook politics.

The government isn't counting on the public to bow down in gratitude, or banking on the latest discount to serve as a magic channel changer. But if it dials down the volume or cuts down the static, the plan may at least give them the space to talk about something beyond Ontario's perennial plague of high hydro rates.

And it will throw into sharp relief what really ails the party, amid the wave of public hostility over hydro that has driven down its support: are people angry at Wynne because of high rates, or are they apoplectic about electricity costs because it serves as a convenient proxy for their antipathy to the premier?

Martin Regg Cohn's political column appears Tuesday, Thursday

and Saturday. mcohn@thestar.ca,

Twitter: @reggcohn

Getting 'in touch' Premier hit the phone to push her hydro plan, A16

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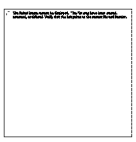

268322405

We are not 'One Ontario'

The Timmins Daily Press - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Trevor Holliday
Page: A4

The Liberals again are stripping more jobs from Northern Ontario. Approximately 44 jobs are being sent to Cornwall from the North Bay office of the Crown Corporation Ontario Power Generation. That being said, Kathleen Wynne has gone on record several times stating we are "One Ontario".

With the constant robbing of good careers, jobs and industries from Northern Ontario, it is showing what we have been saying. "We are not one Ontario."

We are but two Ontarios made up of a Northern Ontario and a Southern Ontario. We are already treated as a Legislature of Southern Ontario's provider. Whenever the good career jobs or resources are needed in Southern Ontario the government or party in power quickly robs them from Northern Ontario to give it to Southern Ontario.

This is not the only time this has occurred and not only that they are trying to sneak them out without announcement, discussion or even a consultation.

As leader of the Northern Ontario Party, I am demanding that instead of robbing Northern Ontario and making it more of a barren wasteland and continuous overpopulation of Toronto that the Legislature builds Northern Ontario.

You want to claim we are "One Ontario," then it should be so. If you cannot provide to the north or even invest where the money came from to build downtown Toronto, then let us have our referendum vote of the Northern Ontarians once and for all and do not fight the results but support them.

Think of it: If we are such a loss or burden to the south then why keep us let us free. Who better to run Northern Ontario than the honest, not corrupt, Northern people who are not forced to back a Toronto based political party? To date the jobs that have and are being lost in the North due to cuts or Southern Ontario relocation are in the thousands to tens of thousands over the last 20 years. We look at sale of Ontera, closure of Natural Gas plants, OPG, news jobs, hospital and health care cuts and the relocation of the laundry jobs from Sudbury to Toronto.

In closing, how can we be One Ontario when the only "Ontario" is Toronto. Northern Ontario should be invested in and not pillaged from to benefit Toronto only. We are sick of Toronto and the legislature treating all Northern Ontario at their own disposal.

Trevor Holliday,

Leader of Northern Ontario Party

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268331998

Horwath hails NDP energy plan; Argues Liberals will make next generation 'pay through nose,' blasts PCs for no public policy

The Sault Star - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Brian Kelly
Page: A1 / Front

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath touts her electricity plan as the one with staying power.

She vows her party's strategy, released Feb. 27, will prompt real long-term change to Ontario's electricity system and savings of up to 30 per cent for the province's residents.

Proposals include pulling the plug on time of use pricing, lowering delivery charges so rural residents pay the same amount as urban dwellers and returning public ownership to Hydro One. Horwath also wants to evaluate power contracts with companies and see if they should be renewed or nixed.

"We're certainly going to be looking at the opportunity to reduce the pressure," she said.

Horwath zaps Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne's pledge to slash power costs an average of 17 per cent this summer as a costly move to woo voters that will saddle an additional $40 billion on taxpayers by refinancing contracts with electricity generators and makes no effort to fix a system that "is in a mess." "It looks like she's trying to refinance her popularity, refinance her ability to get elected, than it is about changing our electricity system so that it's operating in the best interests of people again," she told The Sault Star in an interview Saturday. "All that Kathleen Wynne has done is make sure that next generation is going to pay through the nose as well."

Horwath is also critical of the Progressive Conservatives not yet releasing a hydro plan of their own.

"That's very worrisome," she said. "Nobody really knows what Patrick Brown's plans are."

On Friday, PC finance critic Vic Fedeli said the Liberal government must stop signing hydro contracts for power the province doesn't need, end the sale of Hydro One and "rein in" the pay of power executives.

NDP from A1 Horwath met with several Algoma mayors, including Echo Bay Reeve Lynn Watson, Desbarats Mayor Ted Hicks and Hilton Beach Mayor Robert Hope on Saturday morning. Horwath said they shared their experiences with "soaring hydro bills" and their concern "about their ability to keep some of their facilities going because their communities are very small." The arena in Desbarats was cited as an example. Increased electricity cost is putting "stress and strains" on their budgets, said Horwath.

She helped officially open NDP candidate Joe Krmpotich's campaign office on Queen Street East, near Gore Street, on Saturday afternoon.

About 30 turned out, including former NDP MPPs Tony Martin and Bud Wildman.

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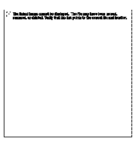

268333169

Generations will pay for Liberal hydro blunders

North Bay Nugget - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Lorrie Goldstein
Page: A4

Trusting Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals to fix the hydro mess they've created is like trusting rabbits to guard the lettuce patch.

It requires an unshakeable belief, in the face of all evidence to the contrary, that the same people who caused today's runaway electricity prices know how to fix them.

And that the Liberals will keep their promise to lower hydro rates if they win next year's election, this being the same party that came to power under Dalton McGuinty in 2003 solemnly promising not to raise our taxes.

McGuinty even signed a pledge during that election not to do so. And we all know what happened next.

Based on their record, I wouldn't trust the Liberals as far as I could throw them to keep any promise they've made, or will make, on hydro rates prior to the June 2018 election, if they win it with a majority government.

To be fair to Wynne and McGuinty, they didn't start the financial mess we see in today's electricity sector, where hydro prices have doubled in a decade, despite a surplus of electricity - the exact opposite of how the market should work.

They inherited an expensive and aging power and transmission grid from the previous Progressive Conservative government, which inherited it from the previous NDP government, which inherited it from the Liberal government before that.

Electricity prices were going to go up substantially no matter who won the election that brought the Liberals to power in 2003.

But where the Liberals were responsible for putting the problems they inherited on steroids was in their mad, reckless and irresponsible dash into green energy, without any understanding of what they were doing or its consequences.

What Ontarians got in return was unreliable and inefficient power that wasn't needed, given the province's energy surplus - energy which had to be backed up by new natural gas plants anyway, two of which the Liberals then infamously cancelled at a public cost of up to $1.1 billion over 20 years. Because of the Liberals' 20-year contracts with wind and solar developers, many of them major contributors to the Liberal party, Ontario hydro consumers and taxpayers were forced into buying their expensive and unreliable power first.

Even when it wasn't needed and even if doing so made the entire electricity system operate less efficiently and thus more expensively.

In 2015, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk concluded the Liberals overpaid $9.2 billion for green energy that was never needed to replace coal-fired electricity.

McGuinty promised to eliminate coal in the 2003 election for health and environmental reasons, saying it would be completed by 2007. It fact it took the Liberals until 2014.

But the Liberals didn't replace coal, which provided 25 per cent of Ontario's electricity, with wind and solar power, which provided just four per cent and which, unlike coal, couldn't supply base load power to the grid on demand.

Instead, the Liberals replaced coal with nuclear power, which emits neither pollution nor greenhouse gases and natural gas, which burns at half the carbon intensity of coal.

Therein lies the ultimate Liberal blunder. They could have replaced coal power without spending a nickel on wind and solar, instead of creating the green energy mess they have.

Ontarians will be paying for that mistake for generations to come.
lgoldstein@postmedia.com

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268333171

PC Hydro plan coming soon; Liberal plan 'doesn't go far enough' : Brown

North Bay Nugget - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Bob Brunton
Page: A5

Patrick Brown says the Tories' soon-to-be released plan to cut Ontario hydro rates will be for more than homeowners, farmers and small businesses.

"It will be across the board, it will affect everyone," the Progressive Conservative Party leader said Friday morning - almost 24 hours after the governing Liberals announced they're lowering electricity rates.

Premier Kathleen Wynne's government said Thursday it will cut hydro costs by 17 per cent this summer, following an eight per cent reduction Jan. 1.

The new cuts will not only affect Ontario households, but many small businesses and farms. People with low incomes and those living in eligible rural communities would receive even greater reductions to their electricity bills.

Rate increases during the next four years would be held to the rate of inflation for everyone.

"Very shortly we will be having our own hydro announcement and we're going to detail some of the fixes we see in the system," Brown said. "It will be soon ... in the near future."

The Ontario Tory boss said his party's plan will include details on how it would be implemented and how it would be financed.

The Liberal plan, however, does not directly affect some large hydro users.

"The focus of our announcement is on reducing the electricity bills of families, farms and small-to medium-sized businesses across Ontario by an average of 25 per cent," said Natasha Demetriades of the Energy Ministry.

"However, hospitals, post-secondary institutions and municipalities will still see a modest reduction in their electricity bills with the removal of social programs from the rate base (charges in the electricity bill) to the tax base (government revenues). Taking social programs off of the rate base is part of our plan to make the electricity system more fair."

She said some broader public institutions have already taken advantage of energy saving programs.

Because eligibility is based on electricity consumption, most municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals would not be eligible for the Liberal hydro rate break because their electricity use is too large, Demetriades said.

But a 25 per cent hydro cut would be substantial for these institutions.

Ontario's New Democratic Party announced an extensive plan Monday to save all provincial households as much as 30 per cent on their hydro bills -including immediate measures like eliminating time-of-use premiums and unfair, higher delivery charges, to repair the hydro system permanently - including a return of Hydro One to public hands.

"I think the NDP and Liberals were in damage control on this file," Brown said Friday. "That's why they came up with these schemes, because it's about their own political survival and we're looking at pretty ugly polling numbers.

"But ultimately this is a mess they own."

The Liberals' plan to find hydro savings is to finance the costs of electricity generation contracts during longer periods of time.

But NDP leader Andrea Horwath has said this plan will cost Ontario taxpayers $40 billion in interest costs during the next 30 years.

"I really believe the Liberal hydro plan fell short" said Brown, Simcoe North MPP. "At $1.4-billion in interest (annually) we're paying to make up for mistakes that continue to be committed. We're borrowing money to make up for bad contracts."

He said the PC hydro plan will deal with such issues as generation, bad contracts and even ongoing contracts.

"It (the Liberal plan) doesn't go far enough right now," Brown said. "Right now the Liberals have now raised our hydro rates since coming into office (in 2003) 400 per cent -400 per cent, and they're offering a 17 per cent rebate simply by borrowing money and paying for contracts over a longer time."

Ontario Energy Board data says the off-peak or cheapest electricity prices in this province have nearly doubled between Nov. 1, 2009 and Nov. 1, 2016.

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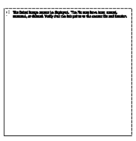

268222518

Political bailout with public money

National Post - Sat Mar 4 2017 **Page:** A14

If we may paraphrase King Pyrrhus, a few more acts of "fairness" like the one Premier Kathleen Wynne offered the people of Ontario this week and the province will be undone.

Responding to widespread public anger - and, dare we suggest, plummeting poll numbers? - the premier announced that hydro bills would soon be down by 25 per cent. This includes eight per cent from the previously announced removal of the provincial share of the HST from bills, at an annual cost of $1 billion to the provincial coffers. The remaining 17 per cent, Wynne explained, would largely come from Ontario pushing existing costs out to the future. Long-term contracts for power generation from nuclear and "green" energy providers will now be paid out over 30 years, not 20.

This comes at the price, literally, of paying considerably more for hydro over longer. The added interest costs will ultimately amount, it is estimated, to a whopping $25 billion, a figure that's large even by the formidable standard set by previous Ontario Liberal catastrophes. A further $2.5 billion will simply be paid out, over three years, from the province's general revenues - a robbing of the proverbial Peter to pay the provincial Paul.

The premier described these steps, as well as some further tweaks and offsets for

vulnerable ratepayers, as fair. Indeed, "fair" was very much her word of the day - it was even written on the little placard that adorned her podium when she made the announcement. "Over time, it will cost a bit more. And it will take longer to pay off. But it is fairer - because it doesn't ask this generation of hydro customers alone to pay the freight for everyone before and after."

It feels almost redundant, at this point, to note that the premier and her Ontario Liberal party have an increasingly casual relationship with the truth, particularly when it comes to energy policy. Still, there is nothing "fair" in Thursday's announcement. It is, in fact, objectively the opposite. Future generations of Ontarians will now be tasked not only with paying off the tab of the Liberals' spendingorgy of the last 14 years, which has seen the province pile on an astonishing $173 billion in debt. Children today and those not yet born will now be made to assume responsibility for energy infrastructure and generation capacity that, as they pay for it, will likely require major refurbishment or outright replacement a decade before it's paid off. Future Ontarians will be forced to finance new, needed infrastructure projects while still paying off old ones thanks to Wynne's latest scheme. And that's before we even tally up the money diverted from other urgent priorities to cover the increased interest costs, the loss of HST revenue and the outright subsidies from general revenues that also make up this "fair" plan.

If only we could beam the premier 30 years into the future, so she can explain to the burdened Ontarians of the 2040s how "fair" her plan is for them.

This ruse is, at least, transparent in its motives. As ever, the provincial Liberals have decided that their own sagging political fortunes need boosting, and the best way to do that is through the liberal (can that even be called a pun anymore?) spending of public money. Lowering monthly utility bills is smart retail politics. As is their microscopic loosening of provincial alcohol sales: a born-free Ontarian is now able to buy some brands of beer at a few grocery stores, between certain hours and using specific checkout aisles. Ditto the premier's recent decision to quash Toronto Mayor John Tory's request for road tolls to finance new transit projects, and the just-announced public consultation towards cracking down on the practice of people selling a concert ticket they lawfully possess for whatever markup the market will bear. The Liberals are clearly aware of their grim electoral prospects and are trying to make nice again with infuriated voters in time for the 2018 election.

It might work. It has before. But let's at least be clear in our language. Nothing about this hydro remortgaging is fair. This is tantamount to an abuse of power. A government that has veered from one fiscal disaster to another is essentially bailing itself out, a year before an election, using public money. Its very premise is bribing away the anger of today's voters with money stolen from future taxpayers. It might be shrewd politics, but it's not fair.

Here's what it most certainly is: An admission of failure, and a gesture of helplessness. It is offensive to the taxpayers and overtly harmful to the current and future interests of the province of Ontario. It is, in other words, an entirely accurate reflection of this Liberal government's record.

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268278678

Alberta repeats Ontario's blunders

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Lorne Gunter
Page: A18

It's one thing to be the first naïve child to follow the white rabbit into his hidey hole. But it's another order of stupidity to be the second.

That makes it doubly staggering to watch the Alberta NDP government (which has been in office nearly two years), willingly, deliberately, cheerfully repeating the same budgeting and "green" energy mistakes committed over the past decade by the Ontario Liberal government - mistakes that have had devastating effects on Ontario's economy and on Ontarians' taxes, electricity bills and lifestyles.

Since 2003, when Ontario's then-premier Dalton McGuinty took his province's first step into green-energy Wonderland, that province's annual deficits have, for many years, been greater than the deficits of all the other provinces combined.

As a result, since the Liberals came into office Ontario's provincial debt has nearly doubled and is currently just under half as big as the national debt.

The Ontario government, now led by Premier Kathleen Wynne, must have been so relieved when Rachel Notley became premier of Alberta because, at long last, there was a government even more fiscally inept than the Ontario Liberals'.

The key problem in Ontario and Alberta (and nationally for that matter) is that "green" energy is not competitive without MASSIVE subsidies.

This is true wherever politicians and activists have tried to replace fossil fuels with "renewable". The only way to get utility companies interested in wind, solar and other "clean" energy is to give them billions in tax dollars or in higher, regulated electricity prices, or both.

This is glaringly obvious in Ontario where electricity prices have more than doubled since 2009 when the Liberals began subsidizing wind, solar, biomass and other sources.

Ontario consumers now pay for the cost of the power they consume, plus a premium on their power bills every month to pay for foolish long-term contracts the Liberal government signed with green energy providers to encourage (bribe?) them to build wind turbines, solar farms and wood-chip incinerators.

Last year, the average Ontario power bill was 15 per cent electricity and 85 per cent "global adjustment," the fancy name the Liberals have given to various costs including their failed green-energy contracts.

No wonder Ontario now has the highest electricity bills on the continent and Ontario consumers often find their power bills are almost as high as their mortgage payments or rent.

No wonder, too, so many Ontario businesses have pulled up stakes and moved their plants (and jobs) to cheaper-energy states.

The same is beginning to happen in Alberta.

Last week Alberta Finance Minister Joe Ceci had to admit provincial spending is already 10 per cent above where it was last year - and that was with three months left in the fiscal year.

The biggest single cause of these out-of-control expenditures? The New Democrats' climate plan is costing five times what was budgeted last spring.

At its largest, Ontario's provincial deficit was $1,500 per capita in 2010. Alberta's this year will be $2,600.

Now on top of that, Alberta announced last month they would be handing out free energy-efficient lightbulbs to every resident who wants them and even sending contractors door-to-door to install "green" thermostats and showerheads free of charge - potentially millions of them.

And Albertans will get 30 per cent subsidies for any solar panels they have installed.

The Notley government estimates its bulb-thermostatshowerhead give away will cost just $648 million over five years.

But that is the kind of lowball, politically sellable promise that has landed Ontario in so much fiscal trouble: Make the "green" conversion look cheap and simple so voters will eat it up.

Except going green is anything but cheap and simple. lgunter@postmedia.com

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268188691

Labour group calls for independent agency to oversee Alberta coal phase-out

CBC.CA News - Fri Mar 3 2017, 1:19pm ET
Byline:CBC News

A group representing more than 3,000 workers in Alberta's coal industry is calling on the province to establish an independent agency to manage the phase-out of coal-fired electricity.

The "made-in-Alberta" plan is part of a report issued Friday by the Alberta Federation of Labour and the Coal Transition Coalition, which represents coal miners and power generation workers in the province.

"The workers who have dedicated their careers to keeping the lights on need to be supported as they face the closure of coal-fired electrical plants and associated mines," said coalition chair and AFL president Gil McGowan.

"This government is a global leader and innovator in climate-change policies. They can also be leaders in creating a path forward for workers in industries affected by these policies."

The report, titled Getting It Right: A Just Transition For Alberta's Coal Workers, studied similar energy transitions around the world. It recommends the Alberta government establish what it calls the Alberta Economic Adjustment Agency to manage the transition for workers.

The report emphasizes that more job training should be provided to coal workers to enter so-called "sunrise" industries, such as renewable power generation.

"When addressing a societal issue that will impose costs, it is unfair to download those costs on a single segment of society or individuals," the report states. "After all, these workers are not responsible for the emissions and air quality problems associated with their workplaces."

The Alberta government plans to phase out all emissions from coal-fired power plants by 2030 and replace the lost power generation with a mix of natural gas and renewable electricity.

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268225906

Fedeli seeks OPG answers; 'OPG's failure to respond to the municipality has rightfully caused great concern in North Bay'

North Bay Nugget - Sat Mar 4 2017 **Page:** A2

Ontario Power Generation's silence on the future of its North Bay operations is a "betrayal by OPG to behave as good citizens and earn the social licence they need to operate in Ontario," Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli says.

Fedeli made the statement in a letter to Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault in which he requests a briefing on the current and future status of Ontario Power Generation's operations in North Bay.

"As you are aware, rumours have surfaced regarding the employment status of the 70 men and women at their North Bay facility," Fedeli writes. "And while I'm certain we both generally don't comment on rumours, OPG's failure to respond to the municipality has rightfully caused great concern in North Bay.

"Minister; seeing how OPG has refused to answer the community, I now look to you to inform us of OPG's plans, and for you to set the record straight.

"OPG and North Bay have had a 100-year plus relationship. It is owned by the people of Ontario. Its responsibility is to the people of Ontario and to the communities where it has had partnerships for more than a century.

"If OPG is willing to turn its back on the responsibilities it has under this relationship, what else will it ignore? "If they won't be open about what it plans to do in North Bay, how can they be trusted to be accountable for the $13 billion OPG will spend to refurbish the Darlington facility?"

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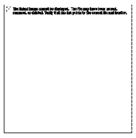

268225900

OPG, minister silent City's; Senior official in town Monday to speak with employees

North Bay Nugget - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Jennifer Hamilton-Mccharles
Page: A1 / Front

Ontario Power Generation employees will have their questions answered Monday morning when OPG's president of renewable generation and power management comes to North Bay.

It's believed to be the first time employees will have a chance to ask senior management questions pertaining to rumours that the majority of OPG's employees in North Bay are being transferred to other operations in the province.

The Nugget obtained an internal email which was recently sent to employees.

According to the email, the faceto-face meeting with Mike Martelli was initially scheduled for Feb. 22.

"Due to circumstances outside of our control, this meeting has had to be rescheduled," it states.

The meeting with employees was rescheduled for Monday at 8 a.m.

It's expected to take an hour and is being organized by Peter Murray, manager of operations.

Emails sent to Neal Kelly, OPG's director of media and communications, and Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault were not returned.

North Bay Mayor Al McDonald has expressed his frustration to Thibeault and Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli has written the energy minister.

"I will see him (Thibeault) Monday in the legislature and discuss this face to face," Fedeli said.

Trevor Holliday, leader of the Northern Ontario Party, issued a media release Friday afternoon claiming the Liberals are once again stripping jobs from Northern Ontario.

"Approximately 44 jobs are being sent to Cornwall from the North Bay office of the Crown corporation Ontario Power Generation. That being said, Kathleen Wynne has gone on record several times stating we are 'one Ontario,'" he stated.

"With the constant robbing of good careers/jobs and industries from Northern Ontario, it is showing what we have been saying: We are not one Ontario."

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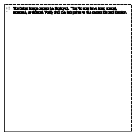

268221057

Minister on the defensive; Thibeault says Northerners have been 'bearing the brunt'of high energy costs

The Timmins Daily Press - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Ron Grech
Page: A3

Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault acknowledged that "Northern Ontarians having been bearing the brunt of some of the higher energy costs" in the province.

He believes the 25% reduction presented as the Fair Hydro Plan announced by the Kathleen Wynne Liberal Government on Thursday will go a long way towards providing relief for Northerners.

"We're holding all rate increases to the cost of inflation; we have made the largest single-rate reduction in electricity rates in Ontario's history," said Thibeault.

The Timmins Chamber of Commerce, in its respond to the government's announcement, welcomed the reduction but expressed some concern about the projected $1.4 billion a year in new interest payments resulting from this announcement.

Not surprisingly, local MPP Gilles Bisson (NDP - Timmins-James Bay) was bluntly dismissive of the plan, calling it a "very short-term fix" that will leave a "real mess" for the next government to clean up after the next provincial election.

Thibeault disagreed, in an interview with The Daily Press, likening the plan to a long-term mortgage that was used to invest in a necessary upgrade of Ontario's power generation infrastructure 10 to 15 years ago.

"What the Opposition is not talking about is that every party had a responsibility to play in this because every party froze rates, didn't invest in the system and when you don't look after assets for decades and as the Premier said, for some 50 years in many cases, the system starts to deteriorate and that came to a head in 2003. So we had to start rebuilding the system in 2003."

Thibeault said some of those generating assets including hydro electric dams and windmills will last 20, 30 or in some cases even 100 years.

"So why would we make everyone in this generation pay for something that we are all going to utilize" for years to come, said Thibeault, in defence of spreading the costs for this plan over 30 years.

The cut to electricity bills would include the 8% rebate that has already been implemented by the Liberal government, making the actual decrease 17%. The government is also promising that rates will not increase any more than the annual rate of inflation (about 2%) for the next four years.

The government announced the 17% reduction will come into effect this summer.

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268225170

If premier leaves, who takes her place?; Liberals consider alternatives if hydro cut can't save leader

Toronto Star - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Robert Benzie Toronto Star
Page: A12

The job is not open and no one is plotting regicide to trigger a vacancy.

But there are whispers at Queen's Park about who might replace Premier Kathleen Wynne as Liberal leader if her dramatic 25-per-cent hydro rate cut gambit fails to improve the governing party's popularity.

Asked on Thursday if she will stick around to fight next year's election, Wynne was firm.

"Yes I am," the premier told a huge media throng moments after unveiling the largest electricity rate reduction scheme in Ontario history.

Wynne - who succeeded Dalton McGuinty in 2013 and brought the Liberals back from the dead with a majority victory the next year - is resolute about leading her party into another campaign.

"My job is not finished … I'm going to run in the election in 2018," she said Friday in an interview with Matt Galloway on CBC Radio's Metro Morning.

There is, however, mounting pressure on her from within her own party because little-known rookie Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown stubbornly enjoys a double-digit lead in most public opinion polls.

That's why she stopped Toronto Mayor John Tory's proposal to toll the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway, which was fashionable downtown but hated in the 905.

And it's why she is slashing the hydro rates that are particularly crippling in rural Ontario.

"The connection between those issues is that there is an affordability quotient in each one of them," the premier, who has been criticized for ignoring pocketbook matters, told Metro Morning.

Last fall, Wynne fought back tears both behind closed doors at a caucus retreat and later in front of delegates at the party's annual general meeting in Ottawa as she took responsibility for the Liberals' political woes.

While she is well-regarded by her ministers and MPPs - unlike the introverted McGuinty, the sociable premier genuinely enjoys their company - they are mindful that her personal unpopularity could cost them all.

The jangled nerves of many elected members are shared by party insiders who pray the hydro fix is a political panacea.

"I hope this works. If it doesn't, then I think she will have to do some serious soul-searching after the House rises," said one senior Liberal, referring to the legislature's summer break that begins June 1.

If Wynne opts to take one for the team this summer, the Liberals - who choose their leaders at delegated conventions - could hold a leadership election in the fall.

That would give a new leader/premier just enough time for a throne speech to outline a fresh Liberal agenda before Christmas and craft an election-friendly budget by the June 7, 2018, campaign.

But who could succeed the battle-tested and formidable Wynne?

Many names are mentioned - quietly - in the corridors of power.

They include:

Attorney General Yasir Naqvi, a former Liberal party president who represents the riding of Ottawa Centre. Naqvi is especially popular with the Liberals' youth wing.

Health Minister Eric Hoskins, the St. Paul's MPP who backed Wynne after finishing last in the 2013 Liberal leadership contest.

A Rhodes scholar, Hoskins is also an Order of Canada recipient for his aid work in overseas war zones.

Finance Minister Charles Sousa, another 2013 leadership candidate.

Sousa will balance the books this spring and the affable Mississauga South MPP's seat is crucial in the Grit roadmap to electoral victory next year.

Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca, the Vaughan MPP who was instrumental in derailing the Gardiner/DVP toll proposal.

Del Duca is presiding over a massive expansion of public transit, including a subway extension to his 905 riding, which will open this year.

Children and Youth Services Minister Michael Coteau, the Don Valley East MPP, who won praise from the parents of autistic children for a plan to improve therapy.

Coteau was also a key player in the successful 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto.

Education Minister Mitzie Hunter, the Scarborough-Guildwood MPP. Hunter has quietly and effectively inked union contract extensions with teachers through 2019, eliminating a potential electoral headache for the government next year.

Former minister Sandra Pupatello, the runner-up to Wynne in the 2013 Liberal race. Pupatello, now a successful businesswoman, is a populist firebrand who carries little of the baggage from McGuinty's scandal-plagued final years and none from the Wynne era.

So there would be no shortage of candidates if the premier's job is vacated.

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Hydro cut all about Wynne's thirst for power; But with an election just 15 months away, it's too little, too late

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Andre Marin
Page: A10

How rich of Premier Kathleen Wynne lecturing us about Ontario's exorbitant electricity prices while shielded by a big, red sign saying 'Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan 25% off your bill.' Not the least was that the sign was misleading as the carbon tax, which kicked in January 2017, negated the break from the provincial tax on our hydro bill, so it's still just 17% off. There was a definite Trumpian flavour to her ear-cringing performance reminiscent of U.S. President Donald Trump wailing last week that he inherited a "mess" from ex-president Barack Obama. The difference being that Wynne has been part of a government which took 14 years to dig us into a hole that will still take us decades to get out of.

Wynne said she gradually became aware of a problem and started "to ask tougher questions about how we got to this point ... for decades bad choices have been made."

She didn't say who she quizzed.

Did she call former Premier Dalton McGuinty to chastise him? I sure hope she did. And while she had him on the phone, I hope she asked him why he added more than $1.1 billion to our hydro debt by moving gas plants to save a handful of Liberal seats in the middle of an election in what has to rank as one of the sleaziest political moves ever.

She also said the "elephant in the room" is the question of why it took her so long and why she is only acting now. There is no elephant in the room. Unless you've been under a rock, everyone, everywhere, has been talking about Wynne's outrageous hydro screw-ups and why she was so oblivious to people's suffering, to businesses having to pull the plug and to sky-high bills.

People aren't fooled by the premier's Jesus moment. The next election is a mere 15 months away. Wynne's personal support ratings at the polls sit at exactly the number she's now reducing our bills: 17%. Her thirst for power is what's getting her to act now. It's all too little, too late.

Re-amortizing our hydro debt over 30 years instead of 20 years will add a cool $1.83 billion a year to our debt. But to Wynne, it's just pocket change. She glosses over her version of the "mistakes that were made," such as pushing off the price of reinvesting in the system and a few other hydro faux pas.

But the real reason we were screwed by this government is that they were negligent, and mismanaged the hydro sector. Sure, they moved on a file that probably needed attention. But what got us into this mess is building far too much green energy, way over our needs and at uncompetitive prices in contracts that are locked in. And now, we're doomed to live by those mistakes.

"Think of it in terms of a mortgage. We needed to rebuild the system and so we went to the bank for that money, but the terms that were set weren't fair - particularly the amortization," Wynne said.

Not really. It's more like the Liberals took a government credit card and recklessly spent like drunken sailors when we had no money in the bank. And now we're on the hook for another $18 billion spread over a further decade.

Wynne even has the temerity to go begging hat in hand for a handout from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the form of cutting the five per cent federal share of the HST on hydro bills. Why would the feds ever want to get close to Wynne's hydro stink bomb? André Marin is the former ombudsman of Ontario (2005-2015) and currently an international anti-corruption expert. He may be reached through www.theanticorruptionexperts.com

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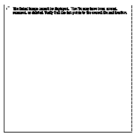

268223677

Hydro bill has him seeing red

Toronto Sun - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Joanne Laucius
Page: A6

A $5,000 hydro bill is pretty much par for the course for golf club owner Leonard Gendron.

But he was flabbergasted by a December bill for $7,763, even though he was not running the biggest energy drains at the Hammond Golf Club over the winter. The pumphouse to water the course was shut down, as was the air conditioning. In fact, two-thirds of the 16,000-square-foot clubhouse had been closed, and the remainder is heated with propane.

"About $5,000 made sense to me. But when I got my December bill, I was floored," says Gendron, who has been running the course just east of Ottawa for about a dozen years. His family has owned the business for almost 40 years.

"You try to make sense of it and try to figure out why. But there's no big factor. Do I have to save up during the summer and hibernate in the winter?" Gendron has kept the restaurant in the clubhouse open for the past three winters. Most of the kitchen equipment runs with propane, except for two walk-in fridges and a walk-in freezer.

What followed the whopping December bill was even more surprising.

Gendron had held off paying the bill because he had questions for Hydro One. Soon after, the utility sent him a bill for over $10,000 for a "security deposit." (According to Hydro One, Ontario Energy Board guidelines state that security deposits are collected to guarantee payment of future charges. "Security deposits will be collected when a customer initially applies for service, or if a customer has failed to maintain a good payment history.") Both the December bill and the security deposit are due Saturday. Gendron will be paying the December bill on Friday. He's looking to get the security deposit waived.

Do I have to save up during the summer and hibernate in the winter? As a business owner, Gendron has been doing his best to reduce electricity consumption and make sense of why electricity is costing so much. He recently changed the air conditioning units, unplugged everything possible and keeps the heat at a minimum in areas that are rarely used. He hired a firm that found Hydro One owed him $10,000 for a credit, but ended up paying the firm half the money. Refurbishing all the indoor and outdoor lighting at the course would reduce his costs, but it would also cost between $12,000 and $36,000, so he is implementing the changes in stages.

Trying to anticipate hydro bills is a challenge to a business, says Gendron. There have been inconsistencies he can't explain. His January bill was back to normal at about $5,000. His "normal" July bill had a delivery charge of about $1,900, while the unusually high December bill had a delivery charge of $1,457.

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Electricity system was in 'tatters'; 'We had to invest in generation, transmission and distribution,' minister says

North Bay Nugget - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Harold Carmichael
Page: A1 / Front

"It's never too late to do the right thing," Glenn Thibeault says.

Thibeault, Ontario's energy minister, made the comment Friday in Sudbury when asked if the 17-percent hydro rate cut to start in June was announced because of the approach of the 2018 provincial election.

"This is a long-term solution," said the Sudbury MPP. "We had to rebuild a (electricity) system that was in tatters. It didn't have capacity for its own generation. It took time to rebuild and a lot of money."

Thibeault said the cut has been made possible by refinancing contracts with electricity generators over 30 years, rather than 20 years.

That renegotiation, while adding some $700 million to $1.4 billion a year in interest, said Thibeault, spreads the pain over a longer period.

Thibeault, who was accompanied by Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca, also said annual hydro increases over the next four years would be held to the rate of inflation - about two per cent.

Back in 2003, Thibeault claims, the Liberals found the province's electricity system in poor shape due to decades of neglect and decided to clean it up and also modernize it for about $50 billion.

"That challenge became an opportunity for us to clean our energy supply mix and address the reliability for our businesses and families all over the province," he said. "We had to invest in generation, transmission and distribution.

"I think people understand the system was bad, but they don't understand why their bills went up."

Thibeault said the province also will enhance the Rural or Remote Rate Protection Program. An estimated 800,000 electricity customers will benefit.

As well, an expanded Ontario Electricity Support Program will now be funded by the government, instead of ratepayers, resulting in additional savings of $180-276/year for households of eligible size and combined income.

As part of the plan, Del Duca said, the province is setting up a $200-million fund to assist lowincome families to reduce their energy costs. He said the fund will be utilized by local hydro utilities which know their customers and can help them to apply in order to make changes such as switch to light-emitting diode (LED) lights.

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Short-term gain, long-term pain

North Bay Nugget - Fri Mar 3 2017 **Page:** A1 / Front

Soaring electricity bills in Ontario will see an average 17-per-cent cut this summer, a year before the provincial Liberals bid for re-election, but those savings will ultimately cost ratepayers billions in extra interest payments. Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the savings Thursday, as well as further measures for rural and low-income customers, but acknowledged that the bill for the across-the-board relief of 17 per cent comes in addition to an eight-per-cent rebate that took effect Jan. 1. That cut is estimated to cost taxpayers about $1 billion per year.

Several other measures were announced Thursday to help lowincome and rural residents at a cost of $2.5 billion over three years to taxpayers.

Customers under a program that gives a rate subsidy to those in rural and remote areas will be expanded so that ratepayers covered by local distribution companies with the highest delivery charges will see those rates cut between $12 and $75.

The Ontario Electricity Support Program for low-income ratepayers will be funded through government revenues instead of other taxpayers. The benefits are also being increased, so that someone who qualifies for the smallest credit - a single person earning less than $28,000 - would save $45 a month instead of $30.

Customers who qualify for both the OESP and the expanded rural subsidy would see their bills reduced by up to 50 per cent, the government said.

Additionally, the delivery charge for on-reserve First Nations residential customers is being removed. The province is also establishing an affordability fund for electricity customers who don't qualify for low-income conservation programs to make energy efficiency improvements.

The government will still meet its goal of balancing the next budget, Wynne said, though she admitted the new measures puts the government "a lot closer to the line."

The New Democrats wondered how there is room in the budget now for billions in hydro relief when the Liberals said they needed to partially sell Hydro One in order to find $4 billion for infrastructure.

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PC hydro plan coming; Soon-to-be-released plan helps people 'across the board': Brown

The Barrie Examiner - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Bob Bruton
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Patrick Brown says the Tories' soon-to-be-released plan to cut Ontario hydro rates will be for more than homeowners, farmers and small businesses.

"It will be across the board, it will affect everyone," the Progressive Conservative Party leader said Friday morning, almost 24 hours after the governing Liberals announced they're lowering electricity rates.

Premier Kathleen Wynne's government said Thursday it will cut hydro costs by 17% this summer, following an 8% reduction Jan. 1.

The new cuts will not only affect Ontario households, but many small businesses and farms. People with low incomes and those living in eligible rural communities would receive even greater reductions to their electricity bills.

Rate increases during the next four years would be held to the rate of inflation for everyone.

"Very shortly we will be having our own hydro announcement and we're going to detail some of the fixes we see in the system," Brown said. "It will be soon ... in the near future."

The Ontario Tory boss said his party's plan will include details on how it would be implemented and how it would be financed.

The Liberal plan, however, does not directly affect some large hydro users.

"The focus of our announcement is on reducing the electricity bills of families, farms and small to medium-sized businesses across Ontario by an average of 25%," said Natasha Demetriades of the Energy Ministry.

"However, hospitals, post-secondary institutions and municipalities will still see a modest reduction in their electricity bills with the removal of social programs from the rate base (charges in the electricity bill) to the tax base (government revenues).

"Taking social programs off of the rate base is part of our plan to make the electricity system more fair," she added.

Demetriades said some broader public institutions have already taken advantage of energy saving programs.

Because eligibility is based on electricity consumption, most municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals would not be eligible for the Liberal hydro rate break because their electricity use is too large, Demetriades said.

But a 25% hydro cut would be substantial for these institutions.

The City of Barrie spent nearly $7.8 million on electricity in 2016. Its top five users were the Wastewater Treatment Plant at almost $1.1 million, the Surface Water

Treatment Plant at nearly $620,000, East Bayfield Community Centre at $560,000, Holly Community Centre at $531,600 and Barrie Molson Centre at $403,400.

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre spends approximately $3.4 million annually on electricity. It's largest users are the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, diagnostic imaging for MRIs, CTs and nuclear medicine, linear accelerators for cancer treatment and for general uses, such as lighting.

Sharon Burkhart of Georgian College said its overall 2015-2016 hydro budget was $2.32 million, and is expected to increase to $2.64 million in 2016-2017, a fiscal year which ends March 31.

"A reduction would mean several hundred thousand additional dollars could be spent on student learning, services or facilities instead of paying hydro bills," she said.

Ontario's New Democratic Party announced an extensive plan Monday to save all provincial households as much as 30% on their hydro bills - including immediate measures like eliminating time-of-use premiums and unfair, higher delivery charges, to repair the hydro system permanently - including a return of Hydro One to public hands.

"I think the NDP and Liberals were in damage control on this file," Brown said Friday. "That's why they came up with these schemes, because it's about their own political survival and we're looking at pretty ugly polling numbers.

"But ultimately this is a mess they own."

The Liberals' plan to find hydro savings is to finance the costs of electricity generation contracts during longer periods of time.

But NDP leader Andrea Horwath has said this plan will cost Ontario taxpayers $40 billion in interest costs during the next 30 years.

"I really believe the Liberal hydro plan fell short" said Brown, Simcoe North MPP. "At $1.4-billion in interest (annually) we're paying to make up for mistakes that continue to be committed. We're borrowing money to make up for bad contracts."

He said the PC hydro plan will deal with such issues as generation, bad contracts and even ongoing contracts.

"(The Liberal plan) doesn't go far enough right now," Brown said. "Right now the Liberals have now raised our hydro rates since coming into office (in 2003) 400% - 400%, and they're offering a 17% rebate simply by borrowing money and paying for contracts over a longer time."

Ontario Energy Board data says the off-peak or cheapest electricity prices in this province have nearly doubled between Nov. 1, 2009, and Nov. 1, 2016.
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268221082

Grits' hydro-bill plan uses worn-out tactic

The Barrie Examiner - Sat Mar 4 2017 Page: A4

The Ontario Liberals are using little imagination in their plan to lower electricity bills. To achieve a 17% cut this summer, the government will simply do what it has done for the better part of the past decade - push the expense down the road while creating additional debt.

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the details Thursday. Electricity bills will be cut by 17%, probably in time for June billings.

But to allow for those savings, the cost of operating Ontario's massive electricity program will be allowed to pile up as new debt, ultimately costing ratepayers billions of dollars in additional interest payments.

Indeed, it's been calculated the Liberal plan will cost an additional $1.4 billion a year in interest payments over the next decade. The cost of electricity won't be cut this spring; it will be subsidized. Or more accurately, the Liberals' political fortunes will be subsidized.

That's what Thursday's announcement is all about. With just 15 months before Ontario goes to the polls, it's becoming clear the path to victory will belong to the leader and party best able to convince voters they can solve the province's electricity woes.

Andrea Horwath threw down the gauntlet earlier this week. In a series of roundtable discussions and announcements, the NDP leader set forth her party's plan to solve the energy puzzle.

New Democrats would buy back Ontario Hydro shares recently sold by the Wynne Liberals, would review and push for new terms on contracts signed with private energy users, and would give consumers the option to opt out of time-of-use pricing.

Horwath said those measures, plus others, would save consumers as much as 20 to 30% on hydro bills.

Until the NDP leader announced her plan the Liberals had no substantial answer to the crisis of rising electricity costs.

The Progressive Conservatives, meanwhile, have offered no solution of their own yet, perhaps content to remain silent while the Liberals strangle on an issue commonly understood to be their creation.

Yet there's a good chance voters will accept the Liberal plan for what it appears on the surface - a 17% cut in electricity bills.

Wynne and her predecessor Dalton McGuinty have collectively doubled Ontario's debt over the last 13 years, and Wynne's own government has yet to table a balanced budget. They have governed Ontario through a blizzard of debt creation, with tacit approval from voters who handed Wynne a majority government in 2014.

Her response to the electricity crisis shouldn't be surprising.

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Will Cornwall Electric see rate drop?

Cornwall Standard Freeholder - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Todd Hambleton
Page: A3

Cornwall Electric customers are still in the dark as to whether they will see a significant drop in their bills later this year.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne announced a plan on Thursday that would see residential and smallbusiness hydro bills in the province drop by and average of 17 per cent this summer. Whether and how that applies to Cornwall Electric - which purchases its power from Hydro Quebec and is independent of Ontario's power grid - remains to be seen.

"We're not (yet) sure how it's going to work," Cornwall Electric supervisor of customer service Andrea Celone said on Friday. "As soon as (the government) establishes how they will implement these credits, we'll be able to confirm whether we qualify or not."

The Liberal government touted a 25 per cent reduction, but that figure includes an eight per cent reduction that kicked in Jan. 1 when the government exempted residential electricity costs from the provincial portion of the HST.

"Cornwall Electric is part of the first portion of the initiative (the 8% reduction)," Celone noted, adding that the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) credits for lowerincome families that can be applied for, will now be available to more Cornwall Electric customers due to an adjustment increase in family income level.

Electrical rates in Cornwall are lower than in most of the rest of the province because of a long-term deal brokered with Hydro Quebec by Cornwall Electric in 2008. And the big question is, will they go lower in the coming months? Time will tell. "It's hard to determine how (the government will) do that 17 per cent (reduction)," Celone said. "Once we have direction (from the government) we'll be able to confirm how it would apply (for Cornwall Electric customers), how the Ontario government requires us to do that."

The Liberal government plan involves stretching the financial costs of building and refurbishing power plants over a longer period of time than was previously planned. It means about $28 billion in costs projected to be paid over the next decade will be refinanced, and officials say the maximum amount of interest per year would be $1.4 billion, with those interest costs to be paid by hydro customers in future years.

Of note is these costs are for agreements and financing of projects that generate power, in Ontario, for the Ontario electricity grid. As Cornwall Electric does not get its power from Ontario-based generation, the announced discounts may not apply to its customers. They would, however, benefit all the Hydro One ratepayers in SDG.

If Cornwall Electric clients aren't eligible for the decreases, a related concern is whether the province's moves would remove the competitive advantage Cornwall can offer industries on the cost of power.

The plan will keep electricity rates at or below the rate of inflation over the next four years, but government officials are acknowledging they can't predict the size of the rate increase after that time period.

In announcing the plan, Wynne acknowledged the bill for the across-the-board relief will eventually come due for taxpayers.

"Over time, it will cost a bit more - that's true," she said when detailing the plan at a press conference. "And it will take longer to pay off. That is also true. But it is fairer, because it doesn't ask this generation of hydro customers alone to pay the freight for everyone before and after."

The big hikes in electricity costs since the Liberals came to power 14 years ago are mainly due to longterm contracts that pay private power producers guaranteed prices for electricity. And, about $50 billion is being spent on the building of refurbishing old plants and building new ones, including hydro, natural gas, nuclear, wind and solar plants.

Cornwall Electric distributes electricity to about 24,000 customers in Cornwall, South Glengarry, South Stormont, and the Ontario portion of Akwesasne.
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The myths and realities of carbon pricing in Canada and beyond

The Globe and Mail - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline:JASON CLEMENS, KENNETH GREEN
Page: B4

There's a general, indeed a strong, consensus within the economic community that a properly designed carbon tax can both reduce emissions and improve the economy. We broadly agree with this academic analysis. The problem is that carbon taxes in the real world have to be implemented through a political system that deviates substantially from the academic ideal.

Economists tend to agree that the most efficient way to manage emissions is by placing a price on them that reflects the social costs of the emissions. By placing a price on carbon, emitting firms are incentivized to introduce emission-reducing technologies or change their production. In other words, the introduction of a price on carbon creates incentives for firms (and individuals) to respond to the social costs of emissions.

Critically, however, there are several key assumptions necessary for this approach to be efficient. First, the introduction of a carbon price must replace, not be in addition to, existing regulations.

Second, revenues from carbon pricing (i.e., tax) must be used in their totality to reduce other more costly taxes such as marginal personal or business income taxes. The idea is that revenues from carbon pricing are used to reduce other more damaging taxes so there's a net improvement in incentives for investment and entrepreneurship, which yield stronger economic growth.

Third, and related to the second, revenues from the carbon tax should not be used to subsidize substitutes (wind, solar or other alternative energies) for carbon-emitting activities since the whole point of introducing the price on carbon is to allow the market to determine the optimal substitutes.

No jurisdiction in or outside of Canada, including much-heralded British Columbia, meets these assumptions. No province or country has introduced an "ideal" carbon-pricing system and thus the benefits from it will necessarily be less than theory suggests.

No jurisdiction that introduced carbon pricing has eliminated the corresponding commandand-control regulations. Europe, California and all of the Canadian provinces have retained most, if not all of their existing regulations after introducing carbon pricing.

Moreover, no province or country has maintained revenue neutrality for carbon pricing. Perhaps the closest and certainly most talked about is B.C., which maintained revenue neutrality for the first five years of its carbon tax. However, beginning in 2013-14, B.C.'s carbon tax began generating revenues in excess of the legitimate tax offsets. Indeed, the government's own projections indicate that the carbon tax will generate almost $900-million in net revenues over a sixyear period.

Finally, many jurisdictions - including Ontario - specifically use carbon-pricing revenues to subsidize alternative energy sources such as wind and solar. Subsidizing carbon-intense energy substitutes such as wind and solar short-circuits the market process envisioned by carbon pricing advocates by having governments choose the "right" solution.

Further complicating the economics of carbon pricing are considerations regarding competitiveness and potential leakage. Specifically, adding a carbon tax means that the costs for firms in carbon-intensive industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and resources are higher relative to their competitors with no such taxes. This creates incentives for firms to switch production from jurisdictions with carbon taxes to those without, which would damage the Canadian economy without providing any environmental benefit. This is made all the more poignant now that it's clear the United States will not introduce a national carbon tax.

Our own federal government has mandated carbon pricing for all provinces by 2018. It's imperative, therefore, that we understand the realities of carbon pricing as opposed to the theoretical possibilities. The politically altered carbon pricing observed in and outside of Canada, including B.C.'s carbon tax, will inevitably deliver lower benefits than the theoretical models predict or advocates suggest - and do real harm to the Canadian economy.

Jason Clemens and Kenneth Green are analysts with the Fraser Institute.

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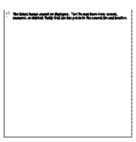

268278664

Cap and trade's crash and burn

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Lorrie Goldstein
Page: A10

The California/Quebec cap and trade market Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne is counting on to fund her $8.3-billion climate action plan just crashed, again.

This is the highly speculative carbon trading stock market Ontario will join next year that Wynne is relying on to fatten her government's coffers by $1.9 billion annually.

This so it can fund its various and sundry green energy initiatives, such as subsidizing Ontario's electricity rates by up to $1.3 billion - which isn't actually a green energy initiative.

The problem now confronting Wynne is that in three of the last four quarterly auctions under the California/Quebec cap and trade carbon pricing scheme, only a fraction of the available carbon permits have been bought by industrial greenhouse gas emitters.

Since the sale of these permits is how governments make money from cap and trade, it means their anticipated revenues from carbon pricing have been repeatedly slashed by hundreds of millions of dollars, throwing the future of their green energy programs into doubt.

Ontario will hold its first internal carbon permit auction later this month, although it's hard to see how even the Liberals could screw that up since they set all the rules.

But once Ontario joins the California/Quebec cap and trade market next year, all bets are off.

In its just-completed February auction, only 18% of the available carbon permits sold.

That's particularly alarming because this round of permit sales was expected to be strong, since 88% of available permits sold in the last auction in November, 2016.

That followed two weak auctions where only 35% of the available permits were sold in August, 2016 and 11% in May, 2016.

When the California /Quebec market first crashed last May, Wynne initially took an alarmingly cavalier attitude toward it, suggesting to me she didn't understand the potential financial implications for Ontario.

Wynne dismissed the crash with a non-answer, saying: "California is ahead of us, and we've got some catching up to do. We're pushing ahead, and there's a lot of innovation that I know can happen in Ontario, and that's what our cap-and-trade program is going to be about."

A week later, perhaps after being briefed by someone who understood what had happened, Wynne acknowledged her government might have to lower its anticipated revenues of $1.9 billion annually from cap and trade in light of the crash of the California/Quebec market.

At that point Wynne told CBC Radio: "It's a market. We know that there will be highs and lows … It was this round that it was not as good. We just don't know what the market will be. That ($1.9 billion) is our projection. If we have to revise the projection then we will."

Of course, if Ontario has to slash its anticipated $1.9 billion in annual revenues from cap and trade, how is it going to pay for Wynne's $8.3 billion (over five years) climate action plan, without raising taxes or plunging the province even further into debt? Even if Ontario realizes $1.9 billion a year from cap and trade, that will be paid for by Ontarians in the form of higher retail prices for almost all goods and services. Meaning either way, we lose. lgoldstein@postmedia.com @sunlorrie

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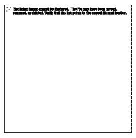

268226282

Sturgeon Falls woman grills premier; 'See that you get good advisers,' she tells Kathleen Wynne

Sudbury Star - Sat Mar 4 2017 Page: A4

Premier Kathleen Wynne was put on the hot seat Friday over her new hydro plan, not by reporters or opposition politicians, but by a ratepayer from Sturgeon Falls, just east of Sudbury.

Wynne was making calls to people across the province who had written to her to complain about soaring electricity bills, a day after she announced an average 17-per-cent cut is coming this summer.

She made three of the calls with journalists in the room for a photo opportunity and while two of the people she called mostly thanked her for the announcement, a woman named Anita had some things to say.

Anita, who agreed to have reporters listen in on her call if her last name wasn't used, wanted to know why the 17-per-cent reduction is being achieved by spreading some costs over a longer period of time, akin to amortizing a mortgage over 30 years instead of 20, a move that will ultimately cost ratepayers billions of dollars in extra interest.

"That's like a mortgage on a house," she said. "With that extension I'll be paying my house five times."

Wynne said current ratepayers were footing the whole bill for investments that needed to be made to upgrade the electricity system, and since people in 15 or 20 years will still be making use of those assets, it's more fair to share the costs.

"It does mean it takes a bit longer to pay it off, it does mean it costs a bit more, but that's how mortgages work and there will be a benefit to those kids tomorrow, but you're ending up paying for too much of it today," Wynne said.

"OK," Anita said. But she wasn't done.

"What about those peak periods?" she said, saying time-of-use pricing wasn't helping people to lower their bills. "That's really a farce ... People have done all they can, like washing at night and cleaning, whatever, turning down thermostats."

While time-of-use wasn't addressed in Thursday's announcement, Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault has said he is looking at changes to it as part of the province's new Long-Term Energy Plan, that he'll introduce this spring. He has said it doesn't make sense that a retired couple in Sudbury is on the same plan as a worker living in a Toronto condominium.

Anita's local utility is Greater Sudbury Hydro, but she wondered why the CEO of Hydro One is making $4 million at a time when people are struggling to pay their bills.

Wynne spoke about caps that her government is putting on executive compensation at broader public sector organizations - only, since Hydro One was partially privatized, it is not subject to those rules. The premier's office later said Wynne thought Anita was talking about Ontario Power Generation - which proposed a $3.8-million earnings cap for its CEO - and the premier would call her back to clarify.

Hydro One's corporate affairs executive vice-president said in an interview that they "understand and respect the question" about the CEO's salary.

"What's important to understand with executive compensation is this has now become a publicly traded company and the scale of this operation is $24 billion in assets, it's a $15-billion market cap company with $6 billion in revenue and growing," said Ferio Pugliese.

"What's important to know about executive compensation as well is that it's also anchored very much to performance, so I think what people are missing is that the CEO's compensation, 80 per cent of his compensation is tied to performance-based incentives, it's not just pure, base salary

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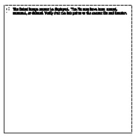

268226283

Hydro relief a 'shell game' - Fedeli; Plan will add $25 billion in interest payments over the next 30 years, says PC finance critic

Sudbury Star - Sat Mar 4 2017
Byline: Jennifer Hamilton-Mccharles
Page: A4

The provincial Liberals' hydro relief plan is nothing more than a 'shell game,' PC finance critic Vic Fedeli charges.

"The Liberals have done nothing to fix this broken system. This plan mirrors the desperation of what Ontario families are feeling today," Fedeli, the MPP for Nipissing, said during a teleconference call with Northern Ontario media Friday.

"You know it will hurt in the end, but you need instant relief. It's like you've tapped out your MasterCard and are paying it off with your Visa."

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced Thursday that electricity bills in Ontario will see an average 17-per-cent cut this summer, in addition to further measures for rural and low-income customers.

The cuts will start to show on hydro bills in June. A household that pays $135 a month should see the cost drop to $101.

To provide the rate relief, Wynne said her government will "refinance" contracts with electricity generators.

Instead of the costs being borne by hydro customers, under this new arrangement, the province will pay for the contracts over a 30-year term. It also will cap any further hydro rate increases over the next four years to the rate of inflation.

Fedeli said Wynne's plan will add $25 billion in interest payments over the next 30 years.

"All this is, is financial engineering. It does nothing to fix the problem the Liberals created," he said.

"They're getting relief out of their left pocket. But at the same time, receiving higher bills in the right."

Fedeli said the premier must stop signing hydro contracts for power the province doesn't require.

"This government continues to tinker with the electricity system, but what needs to happen is simple - stop signing contracts for electricity this province doesn't need, stop the sale of Hydro One and reign in corporate CEO pay."

Citing numerous headlines in newspapers, such as Hydro Gate and Wynne's $25B boondoggle, Fedeli called the hydro relief plan a desperate attempt to gain votes ahead of the provincial election in 2018.

Electricity bills in the province have roughly doubled in the past decade, rising faster than inflation since 2010, and have sparked increasing anger among Ontarians, leading to plummeting approval ratings for Wynne. -With files from The Canadian Press sud.editorial@sunmedia.ca

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268227402

Mixed reviews for hydro plan

The Chronicle Journal - Sat Mar 4 2017

One could argue that Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan is anything but. It will continue to suck money out of Ontario taxpayers' bank accounts over the next 30 years to pay for failed energy policy over the previous 40 years (i.e., the responsibility of all three major political parties) that has led to skyrocketing electricity prices.

It's basically short-term relief, a 25-per-cent price break on electricity bills beginning this summer, in exchange for long-term pain for ratepayers.

Some are calling it a cynical shell game, a slapdash plan that fails to fix the root causes of high hydro bills, and a $14-billion mistake.

Others, mainly those homeowners with high electricity bills are thanking the Liberals for the price break.

They maintain that the government has addressed an urgent issue, especially for rural and northern customers who deal directly Hydro One and pay the highest delivery charges, with the resources available to do it - tax revenue - for the public good. It's what government does, uniquely.

However, Ontarians already pay too much in taxes. Depending on what party you listen to, the cost of this extended borrowing is between $14 billion and $42 billion over 30 years. So hang on to your wallet, we'll be paying for Liberal government energy policy mistakes until 2047.

While it makes for good public relations, and addresses perhaps Ontario's most urgent issue, is it sound energy policy?

The plan does nothing to reduce the cost of still overly-generous green energy projects nor protect consumers from future hydro increases (although it does call for rate increases over the next four years to be held to the rate of inflation).

It also discriminates by eliminating the delivery charge entirely for First Nations customers who live on-reserve, while their rural neighbours, who face those same high costs, won't see nearly that much of a break.

Premier Kathleen Wynne says she's "heard from people around the province who are worried about the price they are asked to pay for electricity and the impact it has on their household budget.

"Electricity is a necessity. By fixing problems in the system, we will be able to provide every residential customer in Ontario with an average 25 per cent off their bills now and make rates fairer in the future," she said.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath counters that the "slapdash" plan fails to fix the root causes of high hydro bills while PC Leader Patrick Brown notes that "whether you pay today or pay tomorrow this Liberal plan will burden Ontario ratepayers for years to come."

Robbing from future taxpayers to pay for today's high electricity prices and yesterday's mistakes is essentially poor policy, even though those with ballooning hydro bills - especially rural and northern customers - will get some relief.

What is ultimately needed is a firm long-term energy plan that lowers all electricity rates, builds a clean, reliable transmission system and keeps power generation in line with current and future demands.

For now it's interest payments and taxpayers that have become the providers of cheap power for the masses. It's timely for the Liberals' next election chances but it may well come to haunt future governments trying to pay for it.

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268241411

Hydro ratepayer puts Wynne on the hot seat

Mykawartha.com - Fri Mar 3 2017

TORONTO — Premier Kathleen Wynne was put on the hot seat Friday over her new hydro plan, not by reporters or opposition politicians, but by a ratepayer from Sturgeon Falls, Ont.

Wynne was making calls to people across the province who had written to her to complain about soaring electricity bills, a day after she announced an average 17-per-cent cut is coming this summer.

She made three of the calls with journalists in the room for a photo opportunity and while two of the people she called mostly thanked her for the announcement, a woman named Anita had some things to say.

Anita, who agreed to have reporters listen in on her call if her last name wasn't used, wanted to know why the 17-per-cent reduction is being achieved by spreading some costs over a longer period of time, akin to amortizing a mortgage over 30 years instead of 20, a move that will ultimately cost ratepayers billions of dollars in extra interest.

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"OK," Anita said. But she wasn't done.

"What about those peak periods?" she said, saying time-of-use pricing wasn't helping people to lower their bills. "That's really a farce…People have done all they can, like washing at night and cleaning, whatever, turning down thermostats."

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"What's important to know about executive compensation as well is that it's also anchored very much to performance, so I think what people are missing is that the CEO's compensation, 80 per cent of his compensation is tied to performance-based incentives, it's not just pure, base salary cash, he has to perform and deliver."

Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt earns a $850,000 base salary that could rise to a maximum of $4 million with bonuses.

Anita, who had Wynne on the phone for about 10 minutes, had some parting words of advice for the premier.

"One last thing: see that you get good advisers," she said. "Like, you say '(high hydro bills are) my mistake.' It's not only your mistake. You've got a team there working and some of those are really bad advisers."

By Allison Jones, The Canadian Press

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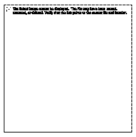

268278684

Provinces across the country face electricity challenges

Ottawa Sun - Sun Mar 5 2017
Byline: Jim Warren
Page: A19

The history of electricity in Canada is a political nightmare that has faced governments of all political stripes.

Electricity and its related infrastructure are expensive - financially and politically - because it's not an optional expense. It's essential to life.

Setting the appropriate cost at which to buy it is more of an art than a science or a math problem.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne announced last week a significant cut to electricity rates and provided cost certainty to ratepayers for the next several years.

It was a principled and fair decision - the right decision made for the right reasons. Yes, she was a part of the problem. Her government has made some mistakes and she has acknowledged them.

Her detractors accuse her of playing politics a year before the next election. But the reality is she took the time to listen to Ontario families and put in place a plan to fix the mistakes of several governments, including her own.

Ontarians will still pay a price for a modern infrastructure and electricity grid and clean energy. But it's a fair price spread over 30 years, like a mortgage.

Controversy over the increasing cost of electricity is not unique to Ontario. Premiers across Canada are facing the same problem.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley announced a plan to cap electricity prices in Alberta, which is being phased in by June, 2017. Alberta is phasing out coal fired power plants by 2030.

Manitoba Hydro has a burgeoning $13 billion debt. Manitoba Hydro CEO Kelvin Shephard said last month that Manitobans are facing a rate increase.

Canadians are faced with costs to maintain our electric grid to fuel our economy and light and heat our homes. I am sure other premiers are going to take note of Wynne's announcement.

What is interesting is that electricity prices in Ontario seem to be a bigger deal than anywhere else in the country.

They have been a political football for generations with NDP, Conservative and Liberal premiers all punting the problem down the field.

It has had a constant role in provincial elections. In 1905 James Pliny Whitney won an election on the promise of hydro-electricity and the establishment of the Hydro-Electric Commission of Ontario.

The Bill Davis government was challenged by Ontario Hydro issues in the 1970s and the grossly over budget Darlington nuclear generation plant, which went from $3.9 billion to almost $15 billion by the time it opened during the David Peterson era.

Then came the Mike Harris government, which froze rates and split Ontario Hydro into three parts, with a view to selling off most of them - a political issue that Ernie Eves inherited as premier.

And, of course, during the Harris-Eves era, we witnessed days of no electricity because of the deteriorating system and lack of capital upgrades, due in large measure to the rate freeze put in place by Harris.

What is essential for Canadians is a consistent and reliable supply of electricity.

A reliable electricity system comes with a price tag, which, notwithstanding the political rhetoric, is still amongst the lowest in North America.

Reliability also means balancing other public policy issues and concerns, such as the pollution and health problems caused by coal and, of course, one of the key political and environmental challenges of the 21st century, climate change.

Wynne will not win or lose the next election on electricity. Like Davis, Harris and Eves before her she will be judged on a greater body of work than the hydro file alone.

In this case, Wynne listened to Ontarians and acted. Whatever you may think of her politics, she has the right motives in making the 25% electricity rate reduction.

It was a fair decision for today and the future.

Warren is a Liberal political strategist and media commentator. He worked for former Toronto mayor Mel Lastman and former Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty

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268279624

Other provinces lead way on fairer hydro

Toronto Star - Sun Mar 5 2017 Page: A16

Politicians can't make electricity cheap again, Feb. 23

Bruce Lourie raises some interesting points about why hydro prices in Ontario have gotten so out of hand. Mismanaged contracts and reckless privatization by Liberal and Conservative governments laid the groundwork for today's crisis.

The past 40 years have proven time and again that depending on the private sector and market forces to manage Ontario's hydro system means the needs of everyday Ontarians will come last.

It doesn't have to be this way.

While Mr. Lourie concludes that essentially there is nothing to be done to reduce overall rates and the best the province can offer is relief to the most vulnerable residents, other provinces make clear there is a better option.

When you look at average bills for 750 kilowatt hours, which the Ontario Energy Board considers an average bill, the difference is stark. An Ontario family could expect to pay over $127, while a Montreal family would pay less than half that amount - just $55. In many cities across the country the bill remains under $100.

While there is no overnight remedy to some of the larger issues, there are real, substantive changes we can make today that will begin reducing bills right away, especially for the hydro users Mr. Lourie identified, like rural Ontarians who have limited options for heat and power.

In the longer term, we can steer the Ontario hydro system back toward a publicly owned system that prioritizes the needs and rights of Ontarians over private profits, beginning by halting the sale of Hydro One.

Peter Tabuns, NDP energy critic, Toronto-Danforth

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