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Today's News

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Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

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An NDP government would make hydro public again, end off-peak pricing, Horwath says in Sudbury

thestar.com - Sat May 12 2018
Byline: Kristin Rushowy

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'Hydro isn't a luxury'; NDP would make utility public again, reduce costs: Horwath

Sudbury Star - Mon May 14 2018 Page: A3

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Ford Will Flick Switch; Time to bring an end to Hydro One gravy train

Ottawa Sun - Sun May 13 2018
Byline: Andre Marin
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Targeted News Service - Thu May 10 2018 Page: n/a

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An NDP government would make hydro public again, end off-peak pricing, Horwath says in Sudbury

thestar.com - Sat May 12 2018
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SUDBURY-NDP leader Andrea Horwath says her party's hydro plan will reduce families' electricity bills and the NDP is the only choice to get Hydro One back in public hands.

Horwath outlined the plan Saturday morning outside the home of a young family who say they struggle with their electricity bills - in particular over the extra laundry they now have after the birth of their twin boys.

An NDP government would end time-of-use pricing, which charges higher rates during peak times and lower rates after hours, "so that people aren't punished for cooking dinner at dinner time," Horwath said at a later campaign stop in Orillia, "so people can live normal lives and still afford their hydro bill."

Read more:

Ford spars over immigration with Wynne and Horwath at northern debate
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The pricing scheme was supposed to reduce prices and help smooth out demand for electricity, but has failed, she said.

In order to lower hydro bills, Horwath said an NDP government would buy back shares of Hydro One sold off under the Wynne government, which she said has led to higher prices and exorbitant salaries among executives.

The NDP plan would also make sure rural families do not pay more in delivery fees than city dwellers, and curb the oversupply of energy to bring prices down. The NDP pledges to trim bills by 30 per cent.

Critics have said the NDP plan is too costly and will take a long time to implement.

"The NDP's plan to buy back Hydro One and continue moving forward with a carbon tax will cost taxpayers billions," said Melissa Lantsman, spokesperson for PC Leader Doug Ford.

"Only Doug Ford has a plan to reduce hydro rates and put money back in people's

pockets. We'll reduce your hydro bill by 12 per cent."

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"Only Doug Ford has a plan to reduce hydro rates and put money back in people's pockets. We'll reduce your hydro bill by 12 per cent."

Ford has also said he will fire Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt www.thestar.com , dubbing him the \$6-million-dollar man.

The Liberal government sold off a chunk of public shares of the utility to raise \$9 billion but has been hammered during question period by opposition parties asking about families forced to "heat or eat."

The Liberals banned utilities from cutting off customers in the winter months over unpaid bills, and also introduced a scheme to lower rates by 25 per cent - a controversial deal that will cost taxpayers \$21 billion in the long run.

If elected premier, Horwath also said she would look at recent news that Hydro One plans to acquire U.S. utility Avista.

"We'd be very responsible in terms of how we go forward," she said, doing "our best to make sure that any deals the Liberals have allowed the private company to make that aren't in the public interest, get dealt with."

To buy back the shares would cost about \$6.4 billion, and could take two decades, critics have said.

Horwath also criticized Ford's language on immigration during Friday's leadership debate in Parry Sound www.thestar.com .

Responding to a question regarding a pilot project that would bring new immigrants to Northern communities, Ford told the audience of municipal officials that he preferred "taking care of our own" first.

"I was a little bit shocked," Howarth said at the Saturday-morning campaign stop. "I've heard that language used by people who are suggesting that newcomers are not welcome in our province or in our country and that's not an opinion I share."

Northern municipal leaders are looking to immigration to help boost their populations and economies, she said, so "while the municipal leaders were basically saying, 'let's find the way to roll out the red carpet and welcome newcomers in,' Mr. Ford's comments seemed to be completely opposite of what they were asking for.

"It was a worrisome comment not only for me, but also for those municipal leaders who saw a leader in this election who is completely out of touch with what it is that they want," she said.

Shortly after the debate, the PCs issued a statement saying the Liberals "gravely misconstrued" what Ford said.

"Doug Ford is completely supportive of new Canadians and immigration policies that

welcome immigrants ... he is open to a Northern Ontario immigration program but believes the people of the North have felt left behind for so many years."

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'Hydro isn't a luxury'; NDP would make utility public again, reduce costs: Horwath

Sudbury Star - Mon May 14 2018 Page: A3

Emily Heath of Sudbury is a busy mother of three. The last thing she or her fiancée, Max Lafontaine, need are soaring hydro rates. Or time-of-use premiums, for that matter.

"I'm finding the bills are getting more expensive and it's putting quite a strain on the family," Heath said Saturday, during a campaign event with NDP leader Andrea Horwath.

Heath said she supports the NDP plan to cut hydro rates by 30 per cent, scrap time-of-use rates and to return the partially privatized Hydro One to public ownership.

"My issue is hydro rates are getting more and more expensive," said Heath, the mother of Logan, Xavier and Genevieve. "And with me on maternity leave, I'm home more during the day and we're paying even more. The lights are on during the day, the TV's on for the kids and like I said earlier, I've got two, 10-month old boys, plus a three year old."

Heath said she has a particular problem with time-of-use premiums, where users pay about twice as much for hydro during the day than at night, starting at 7 p.m.

"We do a lot of laundry and for time-of-use and it's more expensive ... I'm tired after watching the kids all day and at 7 p.m. (when hydro rates are cheaper), I just want to relax ... "The time-of-use really speaks to me since it would allow me to do the jobs around the house, whenever I have the time, when they are napping, and not at 7 p.m."

Horwath used her stop to Heath-Lafontaine household to repeat a promise to cut hydro bills by 30 per cent.

"Hydro isn't a luxury, and it shouldn't be priced like one," Horwath said in a release. "We can do better for every hard-working family in Sudbury, and across the province. Our plan will get hydro bills down by 30 per cent, and keep them down."

Horwath also claimed that if elected, Kathleen Wynne's Liberals and Doug Ford's PCs would hike hydro rates by 70 per cent.

"Across this great province, families are working harder and harder to keep up with the bills," the NDP leader said. "Seniors are worried about whether they can afford to stay in their homes. And some are struggling with heat-or-eat decisions."

"Doug Ford and Kathleen Wynne share the same hydro scheme, and it's one that will cause hydro bills to soar by another 70 per cent after the election."

Ford, in fact, has promised to cut hydro rates by 12 per cent, along with a tax cut, eliminating cap-and-trade and a child care rebate of up to 75 per cent.

As for the Liberals, dogged by resentment over rising electricity costs, Wynne brought in the Fair Hydro Plan, which saw the government borrow money over the longterm to cut rates immediately.

Horwath, however, said Wynne "lied about her plans, selling off Hydro One despite public opposition to the privatization.

"And instead of standing up for Northerners who are suffering because of his boss'wrongheaded hydro scheme, (Sudbury MPP) Glenn Thibeault has defended it - betraying Northern families. Privatization of hydro, started by the Conservatives, caused hydro rates to rise 300 per cent under the Liberals - and Hydro One continues to propose price hikes."

Thibeault, who is running for re-election in Sudbury, was Wynne's energy minister in the last government.

Horwath said Wynne is "plowing ahead with a plan to borrow billions to temporarily, artificially keep hydro bills from skyrocketing again before the election. But, the multi-billiondollar borrowing scheme will soon need to be paid off, putting \$40 billion in new charges onto hydro bills for households and businesses.

"People can't afford the Wynne/Ford hydro scheme," said Horwath. "It's time for Ontarians to own more of our hydro system, and pay less for hydro every month. Now that will be change for the better."

The NDP released a comprehensive plan to change the hydro system in early 2017. It includes:

Returning hydro to public hands.

Ending mandatory time-of-use premiums.

Ending the practice of charging rural and northern families more than everyone else for delivery.

Ending the oversupply of power.

Commits to aggressively renegotiating or cancelling overpriced contracts that lines the pockets of rich corporations.

The NDP hydro plan is available at ontariondp.ca/hydro. sud.editorial@sunmedia.ca

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Ford Will Flick Switch; Time to bring an end to Hydro One gravy train

Ottawa Sun - Sun May 13 2018
Byline:Andre Marin
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Hydro is top of mind during this provincial election, and for good reason.

Green energy, overcharging consumers and high salaries to hydro executives dominate headlines. It's a combination that makes for an explosive issue.

One of the excuses given for paying skyrocketing salaries to a hydro official is that it's a complicated job where special and exacting skills are required to run the business.

Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford has even dubbed Hydro One "the six-million-dollar man," for drawing a paycheck of \$6.2 million.

In my last report as Ontario's Ombudsman called *In the Dark*, released almost three years to this date, I found wildly egregious errors in Hydro One's billing practices, as well as a culture of complacency when it came to customer service.

Hydro One is the most complained about government body since the creation of the ombudsman's office.

An unprecedented 10,565 people came forward with all types of issues, including overbilling.

One corporate customer, for example, was billed \$15 million instead of \$4,034.47.

In one of the most extreme examples, Garrison Petawawa received a whoppingly incorrect bill to the tune of \$50,751,518.05.

The report was a wake-up call not only to Hydro One but to all hydro companies in Ontario: Stop milking the unsuspecting customers! But we'll never see such damning reports again because the Wynne government removed Hydro One from the oversight of all officers of parliament.

Shoot the messengers of bad news and bad news goes away.

Did the high-priced hydro people listen to the message in the report to clean up their act? Not according to Jeremy Poteck, once described as the hydro bill whisperer by former Sun columnist Christina Blizzard.

Poteck founded Poteck Power to hunt down errors in hydro bills once he read my report.

Poteck offers a free audit and charges on contingency. According to him, he has since recovered over \$22 million in refunds from auditing businesses, hotels, not-forprofit organizations and the broader public service, such as universities and hospitals.

That's no chump change. Who knows how much more money may lurk out there that belongs in these institutions' pockets? On Friday, Poteck issued a press release in which he stated: "The time is now for companies and organizations to take back the money that is owed to them as a result of hydro billing errors. A refund that's available today under the current government may no longer be available after June 7."

Poteck says he recently recovered \$276,000 in refunds for a single Toronto hotel.

Ford is likely to be the next Ontario premier after the June election.

He has not minced words about making heads roll at Hydro One.

Ford's next step will no doubt be to take measures to put in top staff concerned with improving customer service at Hydro One and in improving billing practices.

Potock's message could pretty well be summed up as "get it while" you can.

The hydro gravy train is about to end.

And that's a good thing.

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House Approves Reps. Upton-Dingell Amendment to Protect Great Lakes From Nuclear Waste

Targeted News Service - Thu May 10 2018 Page: n/a

Rep. Fred Upton, R-Michigan, issued the following news release:

Today, the House of Representatives approved a bipartisan amendment introduced by U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph, and U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Dearborn, expressing the sense of the Congress that the governments of the United States and Canada should not allow permanent or long-term storage of spent nuclear fuel or other radioactive waste near the Great Lakes. The amendment comes as Ontario Power Generation (OPG) continues to seek approval to construct a deep geologic repository for nuclear waste less than one mile from Lake Huron in Kincardine, Ontario. The amendment now moves to the U.S. Senate as part of the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2018.

"The Great Lakes are the lifeblood of our great state," said Upton. "Right now we have four spent nuclear fuel sites, including two in Southwest Michigan right on the shores of Lake Michigan. Keeping spent fuel there in perpetuity is not an option, especially when a permanent, responsible solution has long been available. This amendment sends a bipartisan message that we will continue working to protect our Great Lakes for future generations."

"The Great Lakes account for 20 percent of the world's freshwater supply and are absolutely critical for millions of Americans who rely on them for clean drinking water, jobs and their way of life," said Dingell. "This amendment sends a strong, bipartisan message to our friends and neighbors in Canada that the U.S. Congress is united against storing nuclear waste near the Great Lakes. Rep. Upton and I were proud to get this amendment included on behalf of everyone from the Great Lakes region, and we will continue working with our colleagues to protect these precious waters for future generations."

The Great Lakes delegation has been consistent in their strong opposition to OPG's proposed nuclear waste site near the Great Lakes. Last year, 32 Members sent a letter to the State Department urging leadership to do everything in their power to protect the Great Lakes and convince the Canadian government to select an alternative site. A copy of the letter is available here debbiedingell.house.gov.

Contact: Tom Wilbur, 202/225-3761

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Tom Wilbur, 202/225-3761

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