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Subject: Hansard: Walker to Thibeault --Small Business Hydro Fee

INSTANT HANSARD

>>MPP Walker: Mr. Speaker, my question's to the Deputy **Premier**. Peter dipple and Gail and rob Fullerton run independent grocery stores in Bruce- Grey Owen Sound. They and other small businesses are urt hurting under this Liberal government's failed energy plan. Electricity costs skyrocket waste and incompetence. On February 23 your **Premier** ensured the House and I quote small business grocers would receive the 8% rebate as part of your fair hydro act announcement. Sadly it turns out this was a pure Liberal electioneering. I want to know through you, Mr. Speaker, is it fair to break a promise Deputy **Premier**? Is it fair to exclude small-town family grocers the **Premier**'s supposed fair relief scheme?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to be able to stand here and talk about the fair hydro plan, which is going to be reducing bills by 25% for small businesses and farms and every residence right across this province, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to grocery stores, Mr. Speaker, we have the save on energy program and the save on energy program specifically targets and works with grocery stores. We have loblaws come to Sudbury, Mr. Speaker, to make an announcement that their large stores and their small stores, Mr. Speaker, are actually saving up to 22% on their bills if they participate in the save on energy program. And so what loblaws is doing is working with all of their local retailers, their franchisees to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that they take part in this program. Because it's this program that this government has brought forward on top of the fair hydro plan that is going to continue to help small businesses right across the province.

>>MPP Walker: Thank you, Speaker. Back to the -- maybe, Minister you should come to Bruce- Grey Owen Sound and talk to independent growers -- grocers and get a real taste of life. Integral part of small communities across Ontario. We want and need them to stay in rural Ontario. Like 60% of rural Ontario they're independent small businesses and finding it hardered and harder to stay in business. Unlike your ideology they can't turn freezers and fridges off overnight to qualify for the 8% rebate your government promised them. Is it fair thaw arbitrarily exclude small-town family grocers from relief caused boy your mismanagement and your ideology?

>>Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was in Bruce and Owen Sound area, Mr. Speaker, and I did talk to small business owners, they all recognized that this fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, is going to help them. And also Francesca Dobbyn the executive director of the United Way is applauding this plan. Maybe he should talk to his own people and see what they think about this plan. Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about plans, I find it very interesting that a question comes from a party that doesn't have an approach to energy. Doesn't have an approach on how to lower energy bills for families. Doesn't have an approach on how it's going to lower bills for small business. Nothing for farms. Nothing for long-term care homes. Nothing for greenhouses, Mr. Speaker. We've acted. We've heard. We've listened. We've helped greenhouses now remote customers, conservation programs that will continue to help others, Mr. Speaker. The list is endless. That's what happens when you have a plan. We have a plan, Mr. Speaker. They don't. We're --

