Message

From: John Cannella [/O=IMO/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=JOHN CANNELLA5E4]
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Today's News

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

Contact Editor

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Byline: Shelby J. Lawrence
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theglobeandmail.com - Mon Feb 6 2017, 11:05am ET
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NRStor Inc. has tapped a union-backed pension fund for equity and project financing as it looks to commercialize energy-storage technology that would support a growing reliance on renewable energy. Led by ...

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NYISO getting ready for an interactive electric grid

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo is reshaping how New York state's electrical grid operates, encouraging consumers and local communities who buy electricity to also sell renewable energy into the system, sending power in both directions.The New York Independent ...

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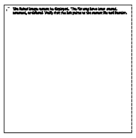

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Rural Ontario not a priority for Wynne

The Belleville Intelligencer - Tue Feb 7 2017
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For Ontarians that received a January Hydro One bill, you're probably wondering how to spend that big amount of eight per cent provincial rebate.

On residential hydro bills, there are charges not listed that dramatically increase the cost of hydro in Ontario.

One is The Global Adjustment Charge. It is hidden in the per kilowatt hours charged and somewhere in the bill is the cap and trade tax.

According to IESO, customers pay an average of 7.9 per cent per kilowatt for the Global Adjustment charge.

So for every $100 charged in kilowatt usage this works out to $23 in actual electricity used.

The Global Adjustment charge is a product of the Liberal's 2009 Green Energy Act. You know, the one that pays solar producers; many of which the Liberal government gave 20 to 30 year contracts are being paid as much as 80 cents per kilowatt, despite the fact that fair market value for energy was 2.36 cents per kilowatt at the time.

Then there is the delivery charge for rural customers. That is the next highest cost on my hydro bill. Who knows what's hidden in that charge.

On January 27, Wynne announced she would be increasing the gas tax rebate to cities in Ontario that have public transportation. This was in part a peace offering to John Tory, mayor of Toronto, after she denied the Toronto council the right to impose road tolls in their own jurisdiction. Her caucus and 905 MPPs had concern that votes would be lost if she allowed tolls on the DVP.

The Liberals throw their own under the bus to get votes. It's all about winning and power. Remember Sudbury? The increase in gas tax will enrich about 100 cities in Ontario, but not a penny comes to small municipalities in rural Ontario. But she takes our gas tax.

Rural Ontario is not part of this Liberal government's base and she has continuously let us know that we don't matter, we have no value.

Her latest line is "she's listening." She needs a new hearing aid.

Kathleen's mantra is "open and accountable if necessary, but not necessarily accountable and open".

In the private sector, if a CEO had such poor performance and support, they would be fired or forced out.

Kathleen Wynne has no shame.

Shelby J. Lawrence

Stirling

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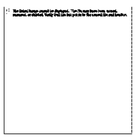

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Rural Ontario hydro users hoping for deliverance from high bills

thespec.com - Mon Feb 6 2017

Toronto resident Nick Pemberton used $1.30 worth of electricity at his Muskoka cottage in the fall - and paid Hydro One $82.53 to deliver it.

"It's not a particularly overwhelming bill. It's just silly," says Pemberton, a computer programmer who stressed he is not looking for sympathy.

But like many Ontarians putting their hydro bills under the microscope - particularly rural homeowners clobbered by the punishing costs of electric heating in areas without natural gas service - he is looking for some answers.

"I posted it on Facebook as a joke. And then I heard from people who were paying $120 or $130 on delivery further away," adds Pemberton, whose century-old family cottage is on Lake Joseph. "It's crazy."

Nick Pemberton's hydro bill for his Muskoka cottage shows that he used $1.30 worth of electricity. And it cost him $82.53 for Hydro One to deliver it. (Supplied)

As preposterous as a bill like that sounds, Premier Kathleen Wynne agrees it's no laughing matter.

"Every month, people in our communities are struggling to cover the total cost on their bills," she says.

Wynne acknowledges that distribution fees need a closer look as her government scrambles to defuse consumer anger and frustration.

"There are people in the province paying disproportionately high delivery charges," Wynne told reporters in Kitchener.

Typically, delivery fees are 30 to 40 per cent of a bill.

Based on the cost of building, maintaining and keeping transmission lines in good repair - Hydro One alone has 123,000 kilometres of wires carried on 88,000 towers over a service area twice the size of Texas - the fees can vary widely depending on where you live and how much electricity is used.

"One of the things I hear a lot about ... delivery charges. And so we're looking at what we can possibly do to lower delivery charges," the premier said.

"We just have not landed on exactly what it is we're going to do."

Industry insiders say there is no "magic bullet" but possible solutions for easing bills include subsidizing the delivery fees through tax revenue, putting a share of expensive new sources of renewable power on the tax base instead of hitting hydro ratepayers, or equalizing delivery charges by raising them in cheaper-to-serve urban areas to offset costs for hard-hit customers in remote ones.

"We're one of the few systems that does this," Ferio Pugliese, hired from consumer-friendly WestJet last fall as Hydro One's executive vice-president of customer and corporate affairs, said of Ontario's patchwork of different regional delivery fees.

Green party Leader Mike Schreiner favours equalizing delivery charges, meaning the overwhelming number of urban Ontarians who enjoy much cheaper natural gas heating would pay a little more to help ease the burden on rural residents with electric heat.

"City folks are not feeling the same pain."

The government offered hope to rural residents last week by approving a $100 million fund to help natural gas companies extend their pipelines to areas not now served.

That would allow people with electric or oil heat to convert, saving thousands in the long run because natural gas is one-quarter the cost of electricity and one-third the cost of fuel oil.

Some help on high bills arrived Jan. 1 when the province began waiving the 8-per-cent provincial portion of the HST on electric bills. Customers in remote rural areas are getting extra aid, lowering their costs by a combined total of about $45 monthly.

"Many of them are older dwellings, not the most contemporary by way of insulation," said Pugliese, who was raised in Kerns, population 360, near Kirkland Lake, Ont.

Delivery costs are higher in northern and rural Ontario because there are fewer customers served by the lines in a situation he describes as "more hydro poles than people." In Toronto, there are almost 1,200 customers per square kilometre to share the costs.

Figures from the Ministry of Energy show the average monthly charge for delivery of electricity is $32 for typical household consumption of 750 kilowatt hours. That includes meter reading, general utility operations and a variable charge based on the amount of power used.

The fees range from a low of $15.55 at tiny ELK Energy Inc. in Essex, near Windsor, to a high of $90.84 for seasonal customers in remote areas served by Hydro One.

Costs of service for municipally owned ELK for its approximately 11,000 customers from Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie are kept low and "we're just very customer focused," says Mark Danelon, director of finance and regulatory affairs.

"We still get issues like 'Why is my bill so high?' We still hear from disgruntled customers. It all depends on the home, the age of the home, whether people are on a fixed income."

Toronto Hydro, one of the largest local utilities in the province, is above average at $37.57. London, Kitchener, Sudbury and Windsor are all in the $24 to $27 range.

While the skyrocketing cost of electricity has been widely publicized by critics - up 101 per cent since 2006, according to Hydro One - delivery charges, up less than 50 per cent in the same period, are getting more attention from ratepayers now for good reason, opposition parties say.

Complaints peaked after a hot summer with air conditioners running constantly and picked up again when the cold weather hit, particularly in the north where mild spells are rare. Air conditioning, for example, can account for 50 per cent of an electricity bill during a long hot spell.

"It's coalescing because people, particularly in rural Ontario, see bills for delivery that are higher than the cost of the electricity they've consumed. It's crazy," says New Democrat MPP and energy critic Peter Tabuns.

"Their anger is the result of being ignored by this government for almost a decade and now all of a sudden the government says they're going to fix everything," adds Progressive Conservative MPP John Yakabuski.

"They don't have any credibility."

Energy Minister Glen Thibeault says prices for electricity and delivery have risen because of massive improvements to the hydro system, from closing heavily polluting coal-fired power plans to fixing transmission lines to improve reliability.

Typically, delivery fees are 30 to 40 per cent of an electricity bill, he notes.

"We recognize that the investments required to upgrade an antiquated system prone to brownouts and blackouts has come at a cost to electricity consumers, and we're trying to fix that."

Energy-saving tips

Aside from buying energy-efficient LED light bulbs, improving insulation and cutting down on drafts, there are small ways to cut down on electricity bills that many people don't think of, says an efficiency expert.

"I still know people who are setting back their electric baseboard heaters at night," says Ben Polley of Evolve Builders in Guelph, which specializes in green homes and renovations. "They're hurting themselves."

Ratepayers with electric heat should be taking advantage of cheaper hydro rates between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. and on weekends to crank up the heat, says Polley, who recommends a programmable thermostat for the job.

Time-of-use rates overnight and on weekends are less than half the peak daytime prices from 7 to 11 a.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.

Cutting down on drafts, by targeting cans of spray-foam insulation in open areas behind the walls surrounding windows and doors, or using weather stripping and caulking in those areas and where walls meet foundations or roof lines, can also make a big difference.

"It's really simple, low-tech stuff and low skill for the average person. The payback can be good," adds Polley, who says such measures can allow homeowners to lower their thermostats by a couple of degrees because rooms feel warmer when drafts are eliminated.

Insulation should never be left out of any major renovation because it doesn't add much to the construction cost but makes a huge difference in energy bills.

Other potential measures - without tearing a house apart - can include adding solar water heaters and, for small families, on-demand water heaters with small tanks that use half the electricity compared with traditional models with large tanks.

They can account for as much as one-third of a household hydro bill, so it's worth replacing the old-style tanks when they wear out after 10 to 15 years, says Polley, a former Green party candidate.

"The cost is double a normal hot water heater but the payback is there after a few years," he said.

Polley himself lives in a fully renovated and thoroughly insulated Ontario cottage home first built in the 1800s and - in what seems counterintuitive - disconnected his natural gas line to the furnace and installed electric baseboards.

They were cheaper than a new furnace and can be augmented with his wood stove if necessary.

"Right now my house is set at 15 degrees," he says, wearing jeans and a polar fleece top over a T-shirt. "That's all our bodies need if there are no drafts."

New Democrat MPP Peter Tabuns, who spent about $3,000 a few years ago insulating the attic and some walls in his Toronto-Danforth home along with buying LED light bulbs, says he noticed a drop in his electricity and natural gas use.

"It was not a lot of money. We were surprised," says Tabuns, who spent the money on top of a government subsidy program for energy retrofits and called on the Wynne administration to offer more help to homeowners.

"We desperately need people to get the work done without having to lay out a lot of money up front."

The government has promised more programs soon under its new cap-and-trade plan to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

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Energy efficiency hits home

London Free Press - Tue Feb 7 2017
Byline: Hank Daniszewski
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Sifton Properties is launching Ontario's first energy self-sufficient community, starting with its corporate offices.

Over the next 10 years, West Five will have 2,000 multi-family housing units and office and retail space, powered by solar panels that will produce at least eight megawatts of electricity, enough to power the whole community, a concept dubbed Net Zero.

Sifton is using its new corporate offices, the first space to be occupied on the 28-hectare site, as a showplace for the new technology - from a roof bristling with solar panels to an interior with the most sophisticated windows, heating, ventilating and air conditioning to keep energy consumption to a minimum.

Chief executive Richard Sifton said West Five will become a model for the future. "As we make buildings better and better, this will change the way that subdivisions are built," he said Monday.

There will be no single-family homes in West Five, because multifamily homes are more practical to produce solar power, he said.

"In a row of singles, there's a whole bunch of empty space where we can't place solar cells." Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault toured the building on Monday. The provincial government made changes on Jan. 1, 2017, to promote the net metering system used in West Five, he said.

Net metering lets solar or wind power producers use the power on site instead of delivering it to the provincial grid in return for a credit, Thibeault said: "Sometimes it takes government a while to catch up to the technology." Waterloo-based S2E Technologies is Sifton's partner in the project at Oxford Street and Kains Road. Co-founder Milfred Hammerbacher noted the building was developed without government subsidies.

The technology is already available and affordable, but the housing industry and political system still cling to the status quo, he said. "We set up processes and rules and regulation to slow down innovation. We need to show there is a better way. We need more West Fives." The community will include townhouses, condos, retirement units, highrise apartments, retail and office space, and a recreation centre. It is designed to be compact and walkable with bike trails and a community park in the centre. West Five also will have charging stations for electric vehicles and collect rainwater for domestic plumbing and irrigation.

The first phase of the development will be rental townhouses that should be ready for occupancy late in the spring. hdaniszewski@postmedia.com twitter.com/HankatLFPress About the office sifton's Net Zero Corporate office: Powered by solar panels with a net metering system sending surplus power into the grid during the day and taking power from the grid at night.

Lower window panels have electronic tinting film that adjusts to light levels or can be controlled with a cellphone.

Upper frosted windows reflect light upward reducing need for interior lights.

HVAC system shifts hot and cold air to achieve a balance and reduce energy.

Adjustable LED lighting.

Rainwater is collected in cisterns to reduce water usage in toilets.

Photocopier uses erasable toner that allows paper to be reused.

Privacy film on offices features forest scenes from sifton Bog by London photographer Richard Bain.

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Stronger opposition to wind farms Positions at Canwest DHI

Today's Farmer - Tue Feb 7 2017 Page: A17

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne is facing a new organization of municipalities opposed to wind farms. Wynne's predecessor, Dalton McGuinty, rammed green energy down the throats of municipalities, denying them the right to place planning-act restrictions on wind farms and solar-energy. As a result, they have been placed wherever companies want them, regardless of municipal official plans.

"The implementation and expansion of renewable energy (industrial-scale wind turbines and large solar power projects) has developed to the point that it has caused hydro costs to increase, caused a division between rural and urban municipalities, and caused the citizens of Ontario to lose faith in democracy," says Ron Higgins, Mayor of North Frontenac.

The Ontario Multi-Municipal Group organization was formed at the last meeting of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) after 115 municipalities, or 25 percent of all municipalities in Ontario, passed resolutions demanding that municipalities get final say in the siting of renewable power projects. "We are now speaking out on behalf of all those communities," Higgins says.

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266332883

NRStor taps union-backed pension fund for $200-million in clean-tech financing; Company announces partnership with Labourers' Pension Fund of Central and Eastern Canada

theglobeandmail.com - Mon Feb 6 2017, 11:05am ET
Byline:SHAWN McCARTHY

NRStor Inc. has tapped a union-backed pension fund for equity and project financing as it looks to commercialize energy-storage technology that would support a growing reliance on renewable energy.

Led by former Home Depot Inc. chief executive Annette Verschuren, NRStor announced Monday a partnership with Labourers' Pension Fund of Central and Eastern Canada (LiUNA), a multi-employer fund with $5.7-billion in assets under management.

LiUNA led an equity financing that raised $11-million, including a contribution from Ms. Verschuren, and has committed to provide $200-million in project financing to support several NRStor projects. The privately held company is developing projects including large-scale compressed air storage and commercial and industrial battery applications that allow companies to reduce expensive peak-hour use.

In an interview, Ms. Verschuren said the partnership with LiUNA allows NRStor to overcome a key financing challenge faced by clean-technology companies, which often have trouble attracting pension-fund and other institutional capital.

"Pension funds are pretty conservative," she said. "But I am impressed with LiUNA - supporting clean tech, and the scaling up and commercializing of new energy-storage technologies. We have a pipeline of projects that has access to capital."

The pension-fund managers see "immense opportunity in financing energy-storage infrastructure," Joe Mancinelli, LiUNA international vice-president, said in a release Monday. "We believe energy storage is a key enabler of our future energy system, and welcome the opportunity to invest capital into low-carbon assets on behalf of our pension fund."

Companies around the world are working to commercialize electricity-storage technology - from batteries to compressed air applications to flywheel technology that helps regulate energy flow - in order to improve the efficiency of the power grid given the intermittent nature of wind and solar power. The emergence of low-cost storage would avoid the need to provide backup sources of electricity.

Ms. Verschuren said technology prices are falling and it is now financially advantageous for commercial and industrial power users to install battery storage to better manage their energy costs.

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NYISO getting ready for an interactive electric grid

Energy Monitor Worldwide - Tue Feb 7 2017, 9:20am ET
Byline: Energy Monitor Worldwide

Gov. Andrew Cuomo is reshaping how New York state's electrical grid operates, encouraging consumers and local communities who buy electricity to also sell renewable energy into the system, sending power in both directions.The New York Independent System Operator is now changing how it does business to adapt to these changes, the most sweeping since Thomas Edison created the first electrical grid in New York City in the late 1800s.The NYISO, the North Greenbush entity that oversees the state's high voltage electrical grid, last week released a new report called a "roadmap" outlining how it plans to move forward under Cuomo's changes to the electric utility market, which will encourage so-called "distributed energy resources" such as solar panels, fuel cells and large batteries."The Distributed Energy Resources Roadmap is a step toward building the grid of the future as we transition from the century-old, centralized power system to a diverse, distributed, bi-directional grid," NYISO CEO Brad Jones said. "The roadmap highlights opportunities for more emerging resources to participate in our markets. It will guide developers, communities and others as theyseek to invest in a more flexible and dynamic grid."Under the changes, part of a larger program called REV, or Reforming the Energy Vision, utilities will not only distribute power to customers but also manage renewable energy sources attached to the grid by consumers.The new dynamic, designed to encourage new a cheaper forms of electricity besides large power plants, requires changes to the state's wholesale electricity market, which the NYISO operates.The NYSIO has been adapting for years to incorporating wind farms and large solar farms onto the grid. However, under REV, thousands of smaller systems would be connected all over the grid that will need to be priced into the wholesale market, which traditionally is dominated by large power plants.The state believes that smaller scale renewable energy sources, connected to the grid by either consumers, neighborhoods, towns or businesses, can stabilize the grid since they will be distributed around it instead of in a hub-and-spoke pattern caused by power plants that leads to large outages when a power plant or a substation is disabled.However, the power must be sold at the wholesale market to create so-called "price signals" that provide higher prices for power where the electricity is needed most, encouraging investment.Currently, consumers use solar and wind systems at their homes to generate power for themselves , with the excess sold to the utility at retail prices.However, that relationship does not stimulate the markets. Under the changes, consumers can become full participants in the wholesale electric markets that the NYISO operates for large power plants - and be paid for it.The changes are also expected to provide an incentive for large industrial batteries to be attached to the grid to save power for when it is needed most. This is important to offset the variability of renewable energy sources. For instance, a homeowner with batteries they use to store power for the electric car could be paid a premium to send some of that saved up power to the grid when needed.The NYISO believes that these smaller sources of electricity will be bundled before being sold at wholesale electronic auctions, according to the roadmap.Pilot studies are expected to begin later this year to test the changes before they are fully installed years from now. The NYSIO operates a large control room at its headquarters in North Greenbush that shows a map of the electrical grid. The NYISO will have to find new ways to map these new resources being added to the grid, although the utilities will largely be responsible for that since they own and operate the distribution lines where people will connect solar, wind and industrial batteries to the electrical grid.

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