

Message

From: John Cannella [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CD667C6D53774DD0A749783BB02AE89D-JOHN CANNEL]
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Today's News

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Contact Editor

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Soil samples a concern for citizens' group opposing solar project

Northumberland Today.com - Wed Apr 12 2017
Byline: Valerie Macdonald
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Hydro not taking advantage of Ontario's water power

Kanata Kourier-Standard - Thu Apr 13 2017
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Hydro consumes woman's income

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Oshawa This Week - Wed Apr 12 2017
Byline:Barbara Howe

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Montreal Gazette - Wed Apr 12 2017
Byline:pdtechintegration

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Canadian Press - Wed Apr 12 2017

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There remain outstanding issues, including the type of soil on which a solar farm is to be built on Ganaraska Road north of Port Hope, according to objectors who met with solar developer Rensola Canada during a recent public meeting.

Rensola, based in Mississauga, has a quasi-provincial contract through the Independent Electricity System Operator to construct at 500kW, groundmounted solar farm at 6330 Ganaraska Road.

Among the neighbouring property owners are John Kordas and Ryan Armstrong, who are now being supported in their opposition to the solar farm by the local citizens'group Rural Representation.

Its communication representative, Caroline Thornton, has outlined a series of concerns they have which include those addressing the soil samples since provincial policy prohibits solar installations on prime agricultural land.

"The (developer's) soil samples used," Thornton said in an interview, "were from the CLI - Canada Land Inventory. The work was done in this area in the late 1940s. Kathleen Wynne has promised that much of the CLI needs to be revised and work is scheduled to begin this summer. The solar projects fall under a program called FIT (Fee for Tariff) and there is a very precise methodology in analyzing soil samples which must be followed to the letter. This methodology was not adhered to in this case."

Thornton also explained that the group is working with a pair of pedologists who have reviewed the existing soil analysis and provided detailed documentation describing the flaws in the methodology and the inconsistencies in the soil analysis.

And which, the group states, do not fit the guidelines for the Oak Ridge Moraine legislation.

But Brad Davis, director of project development for Rensola Canada Ltd. says the soil samples meet requirements, and they were done by a Port Hope firm.

"The soil analysis for the project was completed by Clark Consulting Services, a local firm with over 30 years experience in Agricultural Land Assessments, Environmental Assessments, Land Use Planning and Renewable Energy Planning," he stated in an e-mail. "The firm meets all the requirements to perform a soil analysis as prescribed by the FIT Program rules and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) stipulations as well.

"Furthermore, a peer review process was undertaken as part of the FIT Application Process. The soil study was deemed to be completed as per the requirements of the FIT Program rules and the results of the study were found to be accurate."

Other issues beyond what the citizens' group believe to be inappropriate use of prime agricultural land, include anticipated depreciation of surrounding land values, an intrusion into the Oak Ridges Moraine, and the lack of need to create more green energy when there is a surplus at times.

This is not the only solar project in this part of Northumberland County.

A public meeting in Alnwick/Haldimand is upcoming April 18 at the Grafton council chambers, 7 p.m., for another Rensola Project of 100 kW on an acre of land at 58 Moore Road. vmacdonald@postmedia.com Twitter.com/NT_vmacdonald

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Hydro not taking advantage of Ontario's water power

Kanata Courier-Standard - Thu Apr 13 2017
Byline: Mpp Jack MacLaren
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To the editor, There's a lot about hydroelectric power that Kathleen Wynne's government doesn't want you to know.

The Liberals always insist that Ontario is tapped out when it comes to hydroelectric power. They insist that it's impossible to get any more power out of our lakes and rivers, and that it would be useless to try.

These lies are used to justify signing bloated contracts with Liberal cronies in the so-called green energy industry.

I think the Liberals would benefit from a dose of reality here.

Water power has been a reliable way to generate electricity for almost two hundred years. Hydroelectricity is clean, cheap, and environmentally sound. There is no good reason to think this won't be true in the future.

But unfortunately, Ontario does not fully use its hydroelectric potential. We are now operating significantly fewer hydroelectric installations than we did in the mid-twentieth century.

In 1951 we had 575 hydro facilities. Now we're down to 215. But hardly any of those facilities are operating at full capacity.

For example, the Adam Beck tunnels at Niagara Falls were expanded recently, but they are only operating at about 20% of their capacity.

Similarly, throughout Ontario, in 2016 about 3,000 gigawatt hours (GWh) of power was spilled, rather than used to generate electricity. Existing facilities could be upgraded to avoid such waste in the future.

New projects and upgrades at New Post Creek and Elora prove that there is still more potential to be extracted from water power.

Upgrading the facility at Elora is expected to produce 3,800 megawatt hours of power annually. And, when finished, the New Post Creek project along the Abitibi River will generate enough annual power for 25,000 homes.

These facts make you wonder how many defunct generating stations across Ontario could be revived and brought back online. In 1905 the old Alfred Watts Lock and Hydro Generating Station in Brantford generated about 895 kilowatt hours (KWh) annually.

That station isn't used any more, but it only exploited about 1/50th of the power of the Grand River.

Updating old or under-used generating stations would be a good idea to increase capacity. It would also be a great way to boost local economies and create jobs.

We might not be able to get all our power from hydroelectricity, but there is much, much more untapped potential.

MPP Jack MacLaren

Carleton-Mississippi Mills

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Hydro consumes woman's income

North Bay Nugget - Wed Apr 12 2017 Page: A2

NDP Energy critic Peter Tabuns grilled Premier Kathleen Wynne in Question Period Tuesday over the rising cost of hydro, raising the case of Krysta Meecham-Robertson, a Nipissing resident who spends more than half of her \$800-per-month income on a \$450 hydro bill.

"Premier Wynne hasn't taken a dime off people's hydro bills," said Tabuns, MPP for Toronto-Danforth. "Advertisements paid for with public money don't put food on the table for people like Krysta."

Meecham-Robertson already takes advantage of the Ontario Energy Support Program, the Rural Rate Protection Program and is exempt from being charged for debt retirement, Tabuns said, but she still has to choose between paying her hydro bills and buying food.

"Clearly, the premier and her Liberal government aren't doing enough for people like Krysta," Tabuns said. "When will the premier stop with the partisan posturing and actually present a detailed plan in this legislature to fix the mess she has helped create in our hydro system?" The NDP recently released a plan to lower hydro bills up to 30 per cent. The plan reverses the Liberal government's privatization of hydro assets and offers a number of immediate steps and long-term fixes to the hydro system to keep rates down.

Wynne's Liberal government has announced its own plan to reduce residential hydro bills, the Fair Hydro Plan, which proposes to give residential consumers an average of a 25 per cent cut on their energy bills - when factoring in the eight per cent reduction implemented Jan. 1 - by refinancing over a longer period a portion of the global adjustment charge.

The plan also includes additional reductions for low-income and rural consumers, as well as savings for many small businesses and farms.

"Our plan will cut bills immediately, and bring an additional \$7 billion in dividends to the province by stopping Premier Wynne's wrongheaded sell-off of Hydro One," Tabuns said. "That's money that can be used in schools and hospitals. Last week, the Wynne Liberals and Conservatives blocked the opportunity to make that bill cut happen quickly. The time for action to help Krysta, and all those paying huge hydro bills, is now."

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Durham households and small businesses should expect lower hydro bills

Oshawa This Week - Wed Apr 12 2017
Byline: Barbara Howe

OSHAWA - Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault dropped by Oshawa Power and Utilities Corporation April 10 to reiterate Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan (OFHP), which he said will lower electricity bills by an average of 25 per cent for all residential consumers in the province.

Many small businesses and farms will also benefit from the initiative with additional relief for people with low incomes and those living in eligible rural communities. Thibeault said the expanded Ontario Electricity Support Program will provide an additional \$180 to \$276 per year in savings for low-income families.

The minister explained the OFHP, which was announced by the government last month, takes effect this summer and will be "the single-largest electricity rate cut in the province's history."

The initiative comes after customers and ratepayers complained about the high electricity rates which the minister said were caused by the \$50-million cost of investments made since 2003 to the generation, transmission and distribution assets needed to ensure the hydro system is clean and reliable.

Thibeault said: "Premier Wynn has been listening to the customers' concerns and frustrations and made a strong commitment."

The key points of the OFHP are:

? Starting this summer, electricity bills will be reduced by 25 per cent on average for households across Ontario. Many small businesses and farms will also benefit from this cut.

? The new rates are guaranteed not to increase more than the rate of inflation for the next four years.

? There will be more help for people who live in rural communities and those with low incomes will see even more reductions to their electricity bills.

The minister said more businesses will be eligible for discounted rates through the Industrial Conservation Initiative program, and his ministry is working with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) to get the word out about the new programs, some of which have been available for some time.

"Many of the businesses in communities like Oshawa would qualify for these programs, but they didn't know that these programs existed," said Thibeault. "So, we are working with the OCC to ensure they will roll out to all of their members to know about these programs, to help them qualify."

Thibeault suggested businesses and residents, especially those on low incomes, contact their local utility or ontario.ca/fairhydroplan to find out about the programs.

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Ontario's coal phase-out was all for nothing

The Whitehorse Daily Star - Wed Apr 12 2017

Byline: Ross Mckittrick

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The federal Liberal government plans to impose a national coal phase-out is based on the same faulty arguments used in Ontario.

Namely: such a move will yield significant environmental benefits and reduce health care costs.

Those arguments never made sense, and now, with the Ontario phase-out complete, we can verify not only that they were invalid but that the Ontario government knew it.

Three months ago, together with Fraser Institute economist Elmira Aliakbari, I published a study on the coal phase-out in Ontario and its effects on air pollution over the 2002-2014 interval.

Our expectation was that we would find very little evidence for pollution reductions associated with eliminating coal.

This expectation arose from two considerations.

First, ample data at the time showed that coal use had little effect on Ontario air quality.

Environment Canada's emissions inventories showed that the Ontario power generation sector was responsible for only a tiny fraction (about one per cent) of provincial particulate emissions, a common measure of air pollution.

Further, a study by the province in 2005 showed that a majority of local particulates originated from U.S. sources.

Another study done for the province predicted that eliminating coal would have extremely small effects on urban particulate levels.

Taken together, these reports provided a credible basis for predicting that a coal phase-out would only have a small effect on our air quality.

They also showed, based on the results of retrofits then underway at the power plants, that the same air quality improvements could be obtained at a fraction of the cost by installing scrubbers on the smokestacks, rather than shutting the coal-fired plants down.

Second, the government's claims about the health effects of phasing out coal were highly implausible.

It stated (and continues to assert) that coal plant emissions cost the province more than \$3 billion annually in health-care costs.

But this was at a time when the total provincial health care budget was only about \$35 billion annually.

In other words, they claimed that nearly one-tenth of all health care spending was due to illnesses and mortality arising from power plants that, again, were responsible for only about one per cent of annual particulate emissions.

That would imply that all emissions sources together caused an annual health-care burden many times larger than the entire healthcare budget. It should have been obvious at the time that this was not remotely true. Dr. Aliakbari and I analyzed data for the cities of Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa over the 2002-2014 interval.

Our statistical model allowed us to isolate the effects of declining Ontario coal use compared to changing emissions from other Canadian and U.S. sources and effects due to weather.

In line with our expectations and the prior evidence, we found that phasing out coal was responsible for only very small changes in Ontario air pollution levels.

In fact, the reduction in fine particulates associated with declining coal use was likely a bit larger than the 2005 studies had forecast, but were still very small and, in Hamilton and Toronto, statistically insignificant.

The coal phase-out had no apparent effect on nitrogen oxide (NOx) levels, which instead were significantly improved by declining NOx emissions in the U.S.

We found the elimination of coal was associated with a significant reduction on Ontario ozone levels.

However, this was offset by increased emissions from natural gas power plants, such that perterawatt (a unit of energy), trading gas for coal yields slightly higher net ozone levels.

We did not look at greenhouse gases because they are not local air pollutants, only matter on a global level, and emissions could be offset by purchasing credits anywhere in the world.

The climate issue was, and remains, a red herring in the discussion about the costs and benefits of eliminating coal.

Ontario is suffering a crisis of high and rising electricity costs that's causing real, long-lasting damage to households and businesses.

The province insists the pain is worth it because of the environmental improvements.

The numbers show otherwise. Phasing out coal had almost no effect on Ontario's air pollution levels - and the government at Queen's Park knew this was likely to be the case.

It has all been for nothing. Ross McKittrick is a professor of economics at the University of Guelph and senior fellow at the Fraser Institute.

His study Did the Coal Phase-Out Reduce Ontario Air Pollution is available at fraserinstitute.ca.

This column was provided by Troy Media, whose website is www.troymedia.com

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Hydro-Québec considers two more U.S. projects, linking New England, Vermont

Montreal Gazette - Wed Apr 12 2017
Byline:pdtechintegration

Although its future Northern Pass transmission line to New England is not yet complete, Hydro-Québec plans to launch preliminary studies that could ultimately result in additional interconnections with Maine and Vermont.

The Crown corporation, which hopes to grow its export revenues and double its sales by 2030, is waiting for a firm supply contract, but says it wants to move on "positive signals" from New York and the states that make up New England.

"The message is very clear," Hydro-Québec vice-president of business development Steve Demers said in an interview. "There is a need for clean, renewable energy. The needs are significant. "

An independent agency responsible for managing electricity trade for New England says it needs about 15,000 megawatts, partially because of the shutdown of nuclear power and coal plants.

Hydro plans to order a feasibility study to determine the route of a line from Quebec to the Vermont border that would then meet the New England Clean Power Link project.

In a second project, the Crown corporation wants to get closer to the state of Maine, Demers said.

"We want to know what all this implies on the Quebec side," he said.

Preliminary studies are expected to be completed within six months.

The potential costs of the projects have not been announced. The Quebec portion of the Northern Pass project is valued at close to \$620 million, rising to \$2.1 billion south of the border.

About 22.5 of the 30 terawatt hours exported annually by Hydro-Québec are destined for the U.S. market. Hydro is already investing in the Northern Pass to respond to Massachusetts's call for tenders for a long-term supply contract for 9.45 terawatt hours.

Last year, exports represented \$803 million of the Crown corporation's net income of \$2.86 billion. New England accounts for half of its export market, compared with 25 per cent for New York.

Pierre-Olivier Pineau, HEC Montréal chair of energy management, said it is normal to have doubts about the relevance exporting energy when market prices are just 2 to 4 cents per kilowatt-hour. However, he says New York wants half its electricity to be renewable by 2030. Now, it is at 24 per cent. "There's tremendous relevance."

Solar and wind energy are becoming more important competitors for Hydro-Québec because they have lower production costs, but according to Pineau, it will be difficult for large projects to set up in New York and New England.

"The challenge is not only to be able to offer a competitive price, but to be able to guarantee deliveries, which wind and solar cannot do," he said.

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Atlantic premiers pledge co-operation to grow region's clean energy sector; Atlantic region to co-operate on clean energy

Canadian Press - Wed Apr 12 2017

SAINT JOHN, N.B. - Atlantic Canadian premiers pledged co-operation to grow the region's clean energy sector, following a meeting today in Saint John, N.B.

The premiers say an action plan for the new Atlantic Clean Energy Partnership will be developed by this summer.

New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant says they want to ensure the region has

reliable energy that is as green as possible, and that there are also stable and competitive rates for electricity.

Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil says another goal is to export energy, to generate much needed revenue for the region as a whole.

McNeil says he also told his counterparts that his province is willing to discuss whether there can be co-operation around carbon pricing.

However, he says one of the challenges would be to find common ground, because provinces have been working in different ways to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

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