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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Date: Tuesday, April 18, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

Industry News

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Province pays $28M penalty to turbine firm; Award shows 'everyone else in Ontario' paying for Liberals' mistakes, says PC party leader

London Free Press - Sat Apr 15 2017
Byline: Allison Jones
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Toronto Star - Sat Apr 15 2017
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In Alberta, a rush to renewables amid bet on new energy

The Globe and Mail - Mon Apr 17 2017
Byline:KELLY CRYDERMAN, SHAWN MCCARTHY
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Arenewables rush is in high gear in Alberta as the province better known for oil and natural-gas resources formally pushes to up its wind, solar and hydro power capacity. By the end of the year, the province will have completed the first ...

Industry News

Full Articles

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The Ontario government says it has paid a $28-million award that a NAFTA tribunal ruled was owed to a wind power company over a provincial offshore wind moratorium.

Windstream Energy had a 300-megawatt project planned in eastern Ontario when the provincial government abruptly enacted the moratorium in February 2011.

The company took its complaint to a NAFTA tribunal that partly ruled in Windstream's favour, awarding it about $25 million in damages for unfair and inequitable treatment as well as about $3 million in legal fees.

Payment was due within 30 days of the Sept. 30 ruling and Windstream went to court in February to ask it to enforce the award.

Windstream also was seeking the interest it was awarded - 2.7 per cent, compounded annually, from Nov. 1, 2016 until the date of payment.

The total paid was $28,095,332, which includes about $240,000 in interest, according to a spokesperson for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault.

Thibeault defended the moratorium despite that cost.

"Part of that is making sure that we get things right and that's why we're asking the (Ministry of the Environment) to further study some implications that are relating to offshore wind," he said. "We don't want to have (offshore wind turbines) up and then realize that there's something that we would have to do to take these down that has even bigger complications." Five government-commissioned studies have been completed since 2011 on impacts on fish, other environmental impacts, sound and decommissioning requirements. The Liberal government is now looking to an Ohio-based offshore wind project in the Great Lakes for more data.

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown said he's concerned taxpayers are footing the bill for government errors.

"If you look at all the staff time, legal costs that went into this, the bill could be much larger, so it's just another example of a government that has their mistakes, their miscalculations - everyone else in Ontario is paying for it," he said.

NDP deputy leader Jagmeet Singh said provinces should, in general, have the autonomy to make policy decisions, but this one could have been handled better.

"With this government we've seen opportunities where the government could have saved taxpayers from spending enormous amounts of money like the gas plant scandals," he said.

The government's decision to cancel two gas plants prior to the 2011 election came at a cost of as much as $1.1 billion.

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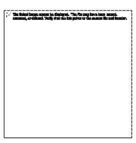

Can unit owners get hydro rebate, or will it go to corporations?

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We've seen an announcement that condominiums will be eligible for a proposed hydro rebate. Will our corporation be obligated to pass the rebate to the unit owners or can they place it in the operating fund?

You are correct that condominium corporations are eligible to receive the rebate.

The Electricity Consumers Act 2016 states that the rebate is available to consumers who have an "eligible account," which is defined to include properties within the meaning of the Condominium Act. The rebate relates to hydro fees paid by the corporation, which will not transfer it to the individual unit owners.

The board of our condominium intends to carry out $400,000 underground garage repairs, as well as repairs to our rooftop terrace and continue with repairs to the women's change room.

This seems to be too much expense for a seven-year-old building. I have unsuccessfully written to the manager requesting engineering reports about the need for such repairs. What can I do?

If the repairs are necessary, the corporation is obligated to do them and you can do nothing. But you are entitled to examine the engineering reports you have requested.

Should those reports not contain engineering opinions that the repairs are necessary, you could take the position that they constitute common element alterations, additions or improvements and that - under Section 97 of the Condominium Act - the work requires approval by an affirmative vote of the owners.

If the board does not relent, a court application could be made by an owner, pursuant to Section 134 of the act, requesting a judge's order that the corporation comply with Section 97.

Is an owner entitled to require an examination of emails between the property manager and the board about a common-element door to the owner's unit?

The owner is entitled to examine the emails which constitute a record of the corporation, provided that the emails refer only to the owner's unit and not to any other unit.

One of our owners, who applied for a city permit for renovations to his unit, was advised an existing window needed enlarging.

The board advised it would consent if the owner agreed to enter into an agreement, under Section 98 of the Condominium Act, rendering the owner responsible for future maintenance and repairs of the alteration.

The board also required an engineer's report confirming no negative future structural effects or water seepage. The owner objected. Are we, as a board, being unreasonable?

The board is not obligated to consent to an owner carrying out common-element alterations. The directors are required to act honestly and in good faith.

The requirement for an agreement between the owner and the corporation is set out in Section 98 of the act, and the corporation may require the agreement to make the owner responsible for future maintenance and repairs to the common-element alteration.

If the owner is unable to provide a reasonable engineer's opinion or is unwilling to sign the Section 98 agreement, the board could refuse to approve the common-element alteration.

Lawyer Gerry Hyman is a former president of the Canadian Condominium Institute and author of Condominium Handbook. Send questions to

gerry@gerryhyman.com or fax

to his attention at 416-925-8492.

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'Fair'Plan Not So Fair; PC critic slams Wynne scheme to slash hydro

Toronto Sun - Mon Apr 17 2017
Byline: Antonella Artuso
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Some businesses win under the new Ontario Fair Hydro Plan announced by Premier Kathleen Wynne to reduce electricity costs.

But Progressive Conservative MPP Todd Smith brought forward examples this week of businesses that don't qualify for Wynne's plan, and are calling for an across-theboard industrial hydro rate that helps all companies.

"There are far too many small and medium-sized manufacturers that fall between the cracks in the current government's energy scheme they put out there," Smith said. "It's not very fair for small and medium-sized, manufacturers, in particular, that don't qualify so they continue to get hammered as a result."

Kisko Freezies, which manufacturers the childhood summer treat, saw its hydro bill go up $100,000 last year but told Smith it does not meet the usage threshold under the Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI).

The government's plan is designed to reduce the electricity bills imposed on large users by one-third.

More than 200 employees work at that Toronto business, Smith said.

Colin Nekolaichuk, a spokesman for Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault, said Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan will provide an average of 25% relief on electricity bills to as many as 500,000 small businesses and farms.

He called it the "single largest rate reduction in the province's history," adding that rates will also be held to inflation for the next four years.

"The minister has recently visited a number of Ontario businesses, including Dynaplas in Scarborough, Plascoat in Brampton, and BWXT in Cambridge, all of which will now or already qualify," Nekolaichuk said. "We are also partnering with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters

Association to raise awareness of energy conservation and costsavings programs available to businesses in the province.

" THE TORONTO SUN ASKED SMITH WHY HE'S RECOM-MENDING A "COMPETITIVE" INDUSTRIAL HYDRO RATE:

"There needs to be some sympathy expressed and some plan for these employers (that don't qualify) because they are being lured away by other jurisdictions. There are other U.S. states and other provinces that are calling them on a weekly basis asking them if they would be interested in setting up in their low-cost jurisdiction for energy. And a number of them are seriously considering that. And, of course, a lot of them have already gone."

KISKO'S HYDRO BILL WENT UP $100,000 IN ONE YEAR?

"And that's in spite of the owners, the company, spending about $100,000 in conservation efforts, so LED lighting and those types of things to try to reduce their energy usage. They actually did use less energy but their electricity bill went up by that much. So that's not an unfamiliar refrain that I'm hearing from manufacturers across the province. They're doing what the government wants them to do, and conserving energy, but it seems as if they're being penalized for it in excess global adjustment increases."

IS THIS COMPANY CON-SIDERING RELOCATING?

"It's not something that (the owner) wants to consider. This is a company that's been in business here I believe for over 40 years ... and their home is in Ontario. They don't want to go. And Jocelyn Bamford was with me as well. She's from the Coalition of Concerned Manufacturers and she operates Automatic Coating which is in Scarborough. And they actually were being lured away by the United States as well. She doesn't want to do that."

BUT THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN DOES PROVIDE SOME RELIEF TO MANU-FACTURERS, DOESN'T IT?

"It could provide a 2% to 4% reduction for these companies that don't qualify for the ICI. And basically what (company owners) said ... was that works out to be essentially a rounding error on their electricity bills, considering the fact that all signs point to the fact that electricity prices are going to continue to rise, as well."

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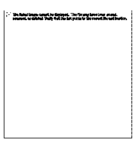

Liberals love their alternative facts; Nothing but lies on Hydro One

Toronto Sun - Mon Apr 17 2017
Byline: Lorrie Goldstein
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Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and her cabinet ministers excel at alternative facts and fake news.

The latest example was Finance Minister Charles Sousa's speech Thursday to The Empire Club, part of which boasted about how the Liberals saved Ontario's electricity system by doing the heavy lifting needed to improve it.

As a result, Sousa said, Ontario's electricity grid is now "the envy of North America" because the Liberals restored "integrity and reliability" to it, unlike neighbouring Canadian provinces and the rust belt states.

Simply put, what on Earth is Sousa talking about? Hydro One controls the transmission of electricity through 29,000 kilometres of hydro lines in Ontario and provides electricity to 1.3 million customers.

In her December, 2015 annual report, Ontario Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said between 2010 and 2014, Hydro One customers experienced 24% more power outages, lasting 30% longer, while costs to run the system increased by 31%.

She described Hydro One as "consistently one of the least reliable among large Canadian electricity distributors."

She said its maintenance backlog increased by 47% and power outages by 7%, between 2012 and 2014.

Lysyk reported the risk of power failures was increasing because Hydro One hadn't replaced $4.5 billion in transmission assets, "that have exceeded their planned useful service life."

In 2014, former Ontario ombudsman Andre Marin reported that trying to get straight answers out of Hydro One on its horrendous customer billing practices, following complaints by 10,000 customers, was like, "wrestling with a slippery pig".

He said Hydro One had issued more than 100,000 incorrect bills, covering everything from unexplained billings, to "catch-up" bills, "estimated" bills, multiple bills and over-billing.

Wynne is now selling 60% of Hydro One to the private sector, putting it beyond the scrutiny of the auditor general and ombudsman.

Sousa said the government now realizes electricity rates are too high, which is why its cutting them by a total of 25% in June (and increasing the province's debt to subsidize them).

While Sousa didn't mention it, prior to this announcement, the Liberals claimed electricity pricing in Ontario was in the middle of the pack compared to Canada and the U.S.

Hydro Quebec does an annual comparison of electricity rates in major cities, standardized for a monthly consumption of 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh), with all prices in Canadian currency.

Its 2016 survey found electricity prices for residential customers in Toronto of 17.81 cents per kilowatt/hour and in Ottawa of 16.15 cents per kilowatt/hour.

That was higher than in Vancouver (10.70); Calgary (10.40); Edmonton (10.37); Regina (14.65); Winnipeg (8.43); Montreal (7.23); Halifax (15.88); Moncton (12.50); Charlottetown (16.02); St. John's (11.96); Seattle (13.62); Portland (13.94); Chicago (15.19); Nashville (14.28); Houston (11.25) and Miami (11.67).

The Toronto and Ottawa rates were lower than in San Francisco (31.05); Detroit (20.24); Boston (27.69) and New York (29.52).

Thus, according to Hydro Quebec's major cities'survey, Ontario's residential electricity rates are the highest in Canada and only in the mid-range when you add in American cities.

An accurate statement in Sousa's Empire Club speech regarding hydro was that the system needed upgrading when the Liberals came into power in 2003 because of past neglect by governments of all stripes, including Liberals.

But much of it was firmly in the realm of alternative facts and fake news. lgoldstein@postmedia.com @sunlorrie

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The other side of turbines; Amherst Island farmer says that, along with vocal protesters, there is 'a group that is highly in favour'of wind project

Kingston Whig-Standard - Sat Apr 15 2017
Byline: Elliot Ferguson
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If anyone can speak with authority about the future of Amherst Island, it would be Wayne and Karen Fleming.

The fifth-generation beef farmers, whose house on their home farm sits atop one of the island's modest high points along the Stella 40 Foot Road, were among landowners who first sat down 13 years ago at a kitchen table meeting to hear about an idea to build wind turbines on the island.

The couple's decision to lease some of the 400 acres of property on the island to the company building the 27-turbine has put them on one side of a fight that has split much of the island's population into two camps.

"We're accused of ruining the landscape," Wayne Fleming said. "But we've been working on the landscape for five or six generations to keep the farms going."

It wasn't a decision rushed into.

The couple talked to landowners on Wolfe Island while its wind farm was being developed. They also travelled to the Tug Hill in Lewis County in upstate New York to talk to people about their experiences with the 195-turbine Maple Ridge Wind Farm.

"We've done a fair amount of homework on it and we're comfortable with it," Wayne Fleming said.

"I don't think any farmer or landowner is going to get rich from the turbines," Karen Fleming added.

But what the small amount of money the couple expects to get for hosting a wind turbine could do is create enough of a financial incentive for the next generation to take over the farm and keep it going.

Opposing the company building the project, Algonquin Power's subsidiary

Windlectric Inc., is the Association to Protect Amherst Island (APAI), which has fought the project every step of the way.

The project, and the fight against it, has turned the pastoral island into a battleground.

"There's no doubt about it, there's a lot of upheaval with it," Wayne Fleming said. "It's two camps. The group that is against it, APAI, it's them against the landowners.

"There is a vocal group that opposes it, but there is also a group that is highly in favour of it."

The Flemings estimate between 120 and 150 islanders support the project.

"Toxic" is how the Flemings describe the atmosphere on Amherst Island now, and they blame APAI for much of it.

When the Wolfe Island project was built, businesses there thrived as they served the workers. The Flemings said the same may not happen on Amherst Island.

"APAI have made it such a toxic atmosphere. So much hostility. So much verbal abuse directed toward the workers," Karen Fleming said.

"The turbine company has tried its best to work with the people over here," she added. "Everything they do, they think, 'OK this will help, this will show our good faith.'It's never enough."

In May 2015, the company announced it would scale back the project from 36 to 27 turbines. Among the turbines cut from the project were two of the three the Flemings had agreed to host.

APAI continued to criticize the company and the move to reduce the size of the project.

"I guess when you want death, wounding is not enough," Karen Fleming said.

But with the initial building phase underway, the construction of the wind energy project is going to happen, and while they do stand to benefit financially from the project, the Flemings said in the long run it will be good for the whole island.

Or, at least, it will be better than the status quo.

"Do we want this island to grow?" Karen Fleming added. "You are either growing or you are dying. What are we doing? "There was a time when there were restaurants, there were gas stations, there were stores, there were barbers, there were hair dressers," she said. "There was a lot of activity over here. Today, we don't even have a post office."

Revenue from the Wolfe Island project has helped Frontenac Islands Township improve the services and amenities on the island. Since Amherst Island is part of a larger mainland municipality, the Flemings both said they are skeptical of whether Loyalist Township will invest much of the revenue it receives from the wind energy project back on the island.

"There is nothing here to keep the young people here," Wayne Fleming said.

"Everything comes with a leap of faith," he added, noting that the average age on the island is 56.

"Because the island is becoming more and more a retirement community, you get people who have made their carbon footprint somewhere else," Karen Fleming said. "They have come to the island, bought their waterfront property, put up their nice home and to them it is a mini Muskoka now.

"For the landowners, this is our home. This is where we grew up. This is our roots."

Karen Fleming also said she sees a certain hypocrisy when members of APAI, as many opponents of specific renewable energy projects do, argue that they support green energy but oppose the Amherst project.

"How do we feel about the tarsands?" she asked. "We despise those. We don't want pipelines. We don't want coal. We have not yet figured out how to deal with nuclear waste.

"We hate green energy but yet we love our electricity; we love our warm homes and our modes of transportation.

"Eventually, it has to start somewhere."

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OPG preparing answers

Owen Sound Sun Times - Tue Apr 18 2017
Byline: Scott Dunn
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Ontario Power Generation says it will respond by May 26 to requests for additional information posed by the Canadian Environment Assessment Agency about OPG plans to build a deep vault in sedimentary rock beside Lake Huron in which to store low-and intermediate-level nuclear waste.

The CEAA issued its latest requests on April 5 for more information about the plan and asked for a timeline of when OPG would respond.

Last week, OPG informed the CEAA of the May 26 date and issued a news release to publicly announce it. "OPG is confident we can address the additional information requests thoroughly in this timeframe," wrote Fred Kuntz, manager of corporate relations and communications in Bruce County for OPG.

The CEAA wants more information about two alternate locations for the Deep Geologic Repository besides the current proposed location at the Bruce nuclear site.

It wants more information on cumulative environmental effects if two waste facilities were to be located in the same region; both OPG's repository for low-and intermediate-level waste only, and a separate repository being explored for used nuclear fuel.

It also wants a consolidation of all of OPG's environmental commitments made to date on the DGR project, OPG's news release said.

OPG said it expected the requests for more information as a normal part of the regulatory process. "They will help ensure that every aspect of this project has been examined."

In 2015, a joint review panel concluded that the proposed location at the Bruce nuclear site near Tiverton was ideal for the DGR.

In February 2016, the federal government asked OPG to examine at least two other areas for their potential geological, environmental and economic suitability.

OPG found alternate sites in the Canadian Shield or southwest Ontario were technically feasible but would result in greater environmental effects, costs of up to $3.5 billion more and a delay in implementation of 15 years or more, with no additional benefits in safety for the public or environment.

The Bruce DGR would be located 1.2 kilometres from Lake Huron, and 680 metres below the surface in sedimentary rock that hasn't moved in millions of years.

If built, the DGR is to hold everything from mop heads, rags, and clothing to used reactor components from the Bruce, Darlington and Pickering generating stations.

There are still several steps left in the approvals process, including ministry approval, a construction licence and engineering work. OPG says it would not be in service before 2026. The Saugeen Ojibway Nation also has authority to veto the plan and talks with SON continue, OPG said.

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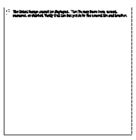

Power costs stressing museum finances

Windsor Star - Tue Apr 18 2017
Byline: Julie Kotsis
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Soaring electricity costs are straining finances at a local historic tourist attraction and putting its future in jeopardy, according to its director.

Harry Bergman, chairman of the board of directors of the Canadian Transportation Museum & Heritage Village in Essex, said hydro bills averaging $5,400 per month have forced staff to get creative with fundraising and required tough decisions on spending priorities.

"That's a lot of money out of your allowance to carry on," Bergman said. "When you charge $5 or $6 for a museum trip for people, that's a lot of people just to cover that."

The museum - which houses 19th and 20th century vehicles, a collection of 20 heritage buildings, an emergency medical services collection, a 1950s-style diner and a motorcycle exhibit - welcomes about 40,000 visitors a year, including many schoolchildren.

A recent $33,000 provincial grant is covering three-quarters of the costs of replacing the roof, some siding and fixing windows on the village's one-room schoolhouse but Bergman called it an "ongoing battle" to keep up with repairs and maintenance at the 100-acre site along the Arner Townline (County Road 23).

"We're trying to put in every extra fundraiser that we possibly can," Bergman said. "But we're getting tired. It's a tough battle. I would hate to see it close because of it."

He said the museum's Hydro One woes began four years ago when new smart meters were installed and it took 18 months to get them to "operate properly" - resulting in a $40,000 bill that is being paid off in monthly instalments.

During that time, all the museum's lights were replaced with energy-efficient LED fixtures at a cost of $50,000.

Bergman said staff members are doing everything they can to conserve energy but monthly bills that once ran between $1,200 and $1,800 are now thousands more.

So they've turned to Essex town council and MPP Taras Natyshak (NDP-Essex) for some help.

Essex agreed to provide $5,000 a year in funding for three years, Bergman said.

Natyshak raised the case during question period at Queen's Park last week.

"Staff at the Canadian Transportation Museum & Heritage Village reached out to the NDP to tell us that they are receiving hydro bills so high that they don't know if they can keep the museum doors open," Natyshak said.

"By privatizing Hydro One and hiking the cost of hydro bills, the (Premier Kathleen) Wynne government has squeezed an important piece of heritage in my community."

Bergman said he's unsure what will happen by next fall. If the weather co-operates and special events are successful, the museum will stay afloat.

"We take care of our responsibilities and there's no way I want to leave anybody hanging with a bill," he said. jkotsis@postmedia.com

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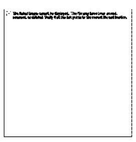

Nuclear shipments could be going through Durham

Oshawa This Week - Thu Apr 13 2017
Byline: Keith Gilligan

DURHAM - It's initials are HEUNL, although that can be shortened to HEU.

That stands for highly enriched uranium nitrate liquid and trucks carrying some of the material may be passing through Durham Region on the way to the United States.

Following a recent ruling by U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan dismissing a request by American environmental groups opposed to the shipments, the trucks could be rolling.

The material, about 6,000 gallons (23,000 litres) of HEU in a liquid form, is being transported from the Chalk River nuclear facility north of Ottawa to the Savannah River Site nuclear facility in South Carolina.

The material was brought into Canada and used in research activities and to make medical isotopes used in nuclear medicine and in medical imaging.

Under an agreement between Canada and the U.S., once the HEU wasn't needed in Canada, it had to be returned to the states. Once in South Carolina, the material will be converted for use in U.S. reactors.

Between 100 and 150 shipments over four years are needed to transport the material.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) and the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL), the operator of the Chalk Lake facility, are responsible for the shipments before they reach the U.S.

Aurele Gervais, of the CNSC, said, "The route that the proposed shipments will be taking is classified information and cannot be made public."

The CNSC and Transport Canada are responsible for regulating the transportation of nuclear waste and both had to approve the casks the NEU will travel in.

According to the CNL website, the casks can withstand a nine-metre drop onto a hard surface, 30 minutes in a fire under temperatures of 800 C and immersed in 15 metres of water for one hour without a breach of containment.

The CNSC and CNL both say transporting the material is safe and poses minimal risk to the public, but anti-nuclear groups aren't so sanguine.

Janet McNeil of Durham Nuclear Awareness is skeptical of the idea, saying, "The plan needs to be examined fully, and openly - transparently - by the public and public agencies, such as the ones involved in emergency management.

"Carrying this project out behind closed doors and not allowing proper scrutiny under a careful microscope erodes public trust in regulators whose credibility has been seriously damaged in the past year," she said, pointing to the CNSC staff whistleblower letter.

"Politicians in the Niagara Region have the right idea, and we need to follow their lead, namely, take the time to examine all the relevant facts very carefully. Put the plan under a microscope that involves investigating alternatives in an open process, involving the public so we can trust that the risks involved are being fully examined and properly investigated before any final decision is reached and before sending 100 to 150 truckloads full of wildly dangerous liquid radioactive material out on the roads," she said.

Angela Bischoff, outreach director for the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, said, "This has never been done before - anywhere in the world - transporting deadly liquid nuclear waste. And it's unnecessary, because we can down blend and store it on site.

"So why take the risk of transporting it through communities and over waterways? Accidents happen. And when nuclear accidents happen, they're catastrophic. We would have no way to retrieve the deadly liquid radioactive waste if it contaminated a waterway. Even driving next to the trucks you could get irradiated. It does not belong in our neighbourhoods or on our bridges. This is some of the most dangerous waste known to humankind and transporting 23,000 litres across the continent in trucks is reckless beyond belief," Bischoff added.

In her ruling, Chutkan noted shipping nuclear waste has been going on for years without any issues.

"This program is part of a larger effort, dating back to 1950s, in which the United States has provided highly enriched uranium to foreign nuclear research reactors conditioned on the promise to not develop nuclear weapons, then later accepted the spent nuclear fuel and target material back from those foreign reactors to avoid the stockpiling of nuclear material in foreign countries and to ensure the safe processing and maintenance of the material in the United States," she wrote.

Several U.S.-based environmental groups opposed the shipment, fearing the environmental consequences if there were an accident while the material was en route.

Gordon Edwards, a mathematician with the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, said the toxicity of a few ounces of the Chalk River liquid would ruin an entire city's water supply.

"This liquid is among the most radiotoxic materials on earth," Edwards said.

On its website, the CNSC said transporting the material is safe.

"Used fuel has been transported safely nationally and internationally for over 45 years by road, rail, water and air without a single radiological incident. It is a highly regulated activity that needs to meet the stringent requirements of both Transport Canada and the CNSC regulatory requirements before being approved," the CNSC site noted.

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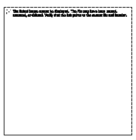

In Alberta, a rush to renewables amid bet on new energy

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Arenewables rush is in high gear in Alberta as the province better known for oil and natural-gas resources formally pushes to up its wind, solar and hydro power capacity.

By the end of the year, the province will have completed the first in a series of annual competitions that sees companies bidding to provide renewable electricity into the power market.

The agency overseeing the contest says it has already had formal expressions of interests for dozens of projects to supply the first 400 megawatts - enough to power about 170,000 homes.

More than 200 people are signed up for the Alberta Electric System Operator's information session on Tuesday, some travelling from as far afield as Scotland and Spain.

"The biggest opportunity in Canada is what's going on in Alberta, for renewables," said Gordon Potts, director of business development at Torontobased Northland Power Inc. - a firm developing wind and solar projects in Alberta with the hope of winning a part of this year's action.

It won't mean the end of the province's economic focus on the wealth and jobs created by the production of hydrocarbons, and the success of the strategy will be assessed on how many additional costs power consumers, industry and citizens face in the years ahead.

But Premier Rachel Notley's government hopes the push to phase out coal-fired power in the next 13 years - and the resulting decrease in carbon emissions - will help Alberta's environmental image across Canada and abroad, and diversify the province's energy-focused economy.

The plan is to double Alberta's renewable-energy capacity by 2030, to an eventual 5,000 megawatts of renewable electricity capacity.

Powerful gusts are a frequent feature of the foothills and prairie and turbines have figured as part of Alberta's windswept landscape for more than two decades. Canada's first commercial wind-power facility was built near Pincher Creek, Alta., in 1993. The province already gets almost 10 per cent of its power from wind.

However, coal still makes up about 50 per cent of electricity generation. Developers tout wind as a competitive source of clean power that can make a reliable contribution to a grid - especially when complemented by natural gas and other renewable sources.

The New Democrat government estimates that construction of the new renewable projects will create at least 7,200 new jobs. Any business activity, however small, is welcomed in a province where low global oil prices have hammered employment and investment. There are hopes Canadian or global renewable-energy firms will establish roots in the province - by setting up offices in one of Calgary's partially vacant office towers, giving the province's struggling industrial manufacturing sector around Edmonton a boost, or hiring employees and consultants.

Alberta has abundant wind and solar resources, and will also benefit from a sharp decline in the cost of wind-turbine manufacturing in the past five years.

"We have some of the best onshore wind resources in the world. We have the best solar resources in Canada," said Calgary-based Greengate Power Corp. chief executive Dan Balaban, whose company has a 10-year history of developing renewable projects in the province.

"This is not something that is that well-known. But Alberta truly is an energy-rich province.

It's energy-rich in terms of our fossil fuels. But it's also energyrich in terms of our renewable energy."

The proponents bidding in this year's first power competition have their act together - successful projects in this 400-megawatt contest must be operational by the end of 2019, and have to come in with lower costs. The agreements with winning bidders will be supported with fixed, market-insulated prices for two decades.

The cost of that certainty will be subsidized using carbon revenues from large industrial emitters. Duane Reid-Carlson, president of energy consultancy EDC Associates Ltd., estimates those payments could equal $4-billion to $8-billion over the next 13 years - and that doesn't include other billions that the government is spending in Alberta's massive electricity redesign. He cautions the system put in place today will have an impact, and costs, for decades to come.

"There are many unintended consequences," Mr. Reid-Carlson said, advising, "go slow and don't jam this down people's throats."

There are already worries about the costs of renewables, and the phase-out of cheap and abundant coal. Jason Kenney - the frontrunner to lead the province's yet-to-be-united conservative parties, and a vocal opponent of the province's new carbon tax - has described Ontario's power system as a "disaster, now being inflicted on Alberta by the NDP."

Both Alberta and Saskatchewan - which has a goal of 20 per cent of electricity generated from wind energy by 2030 - have learned from costly errors made in Ontario, which paid large feed-in-tariffs (FIT) to establish a renewables industry and attract manufacturing. Consumers and critics often blame the FIT program for steep increases in electricity costs, though there were many factors that contributed to power price increases.

Robert Hornung, president of the Canadian Wind Energy Association, insists it was not the renewable program that was primarily responsible for higher prices - citing instead expensive nuclear refurbishments, investments in transmission and new natural-gas plants.

"Ontario's experience is not being replicated in either province," Mr. Hornung said. "We're very confident that when you look at Alberta and Saskatchewan, which have stronger wind resources than Ontario or Quebec, we're anticipating a very high level of competition in these processes."

Alberta's program will also be judged on whether it creates significant supply chain and maintenance jobs.

Helmut Herold, of Germany's Senvion SA, a top global windturbine supplier, said manufacturers tend to look for local suppliers for key components, including the steel towers - which are large and bulky to transport but relatively uncomplicated to manufacture. He said it's important that provinces have a steady, multiyear procurement program so local companies can gear up to provide content to the projects.

"We need to see consistency, not just one year of this current tender for megawatts," said Mr. Herold, the chief executive for Senvion's North American subsidiary. "If you are able to create a three- to five-year program with consistency, then you will see people settle down and use this advantage."

He noted Senvion began sourcing a sensor for particulate matter from a small Ontario company that now supplies the component for its project worldwide. He said the energy industry in Alberta is well-suited to turn its skills to production and maintenance of wind turbines.

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