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: Thursday, April 27, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park has cut its electricity bill by 44 per cent, and it's not done yet.

Efforts over the last two years to lower electricity use at the 27,000 square metres of office, pilot plant and lab space in five connected buildings on Modeland Road in Sarnia have generated $380,000 in annual savings for its owner, the County of Lambton Community Development Corp.

That accomplishment was celebrated by representatives of Bluewater Power, the local electricity utility, and Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) at an event this week.

Bluewater Power provided $194,000 through Ontario's Save on Energy program to help the research park with heating and cooling equipment upgrades and new LED exterior and interior lighting.

Alex Palimaka, a Bluewater Power vice-president, called the research park's results "a phenomenal, I would say, world-class achievement."

The event included tours of the research park and a luncheon with speaker Terry Young, the IESO's vice-president of conservation and corporate relations.

"It's a fairly significant result, when you look at what they've done and the way that they've done it," Young said of the research park's energy savings.

"You walk through the facility and you see they are not just saving money, but it's a brighter place."

Tom Strifler, executive director of the research park, said they began with an energy assessment, then upgraded heating, cooling and lighting equipment.

Previously, energy accounted for 30 per cent of the park's operating costs.

"We're always looking at our cost structure so we can remain competitive on our lease rates," Strifler said. "We think this has given us a little bit of a step up."

Approximately 90 per cent of the research park is occupied by its more than 30 tenants.

Along with reducing costs, the recent work improved lighting at the facility, particularly in its parking lots, Strifler said.

"We did remove some of the ancient fixtures and put in LED, which are much brighter, but use a lot less energy."

Response from tenants to the changes has been positive, Strifler said.

Next up are plans for a $1.5-million to $2-million co-generation heat and power project for the facility, he said.

"You see a number of those being used across the province... usually large complexes like hospitals and schools," Strifler said.

"We've got almost everything in place for that."

Using natural gas to generate hot water and electricity, it is expected to save an additional $200,000, Strifler said.

"We're just waiting for final engineering and approvals."

If all goes well, that equipment could be installed and operating next year, Strifler said.

It's expected to halve the amount of electricity the site will have to purchase.

Palimaka said Bluewater Power officials hope the research park's success will encourage "other customers to seize the same kind of opportunity to reduce their energy consumption and, frankly, become more competitive."

As well as benefiting individual customers, such conservation efforts have a broader impact, Young said.

"It's a win for us as the system operator, because we're not dealing with those peaks in electricity that we used to, because customers are much more energy efficient."
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Ontario announcing new spending in first balanced budget in a decade; Ontario to balance budget, announce new spending

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TORONTO - Ontario's Liberal government will release its first balanced budget in a decade on Thursday, with a host of new spending measures focused on pocketbook issues it hopes will resonate with voters heading into an election year.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has in the past few years focused on big-picture plans for the province, such as tackling climate change, massive infrastructure spending and pension reform. But as her party and personal popularity have tanked in the polls, her message has shifted to that of fairness and everyday affordability.

She recently unveiled a "Fair Hydro Plan" and a "Fair Housing Plan" and in a speech Monday to announce details of a basic income pilot project, fairness was a theme she often returned to.

"In this time of turmoil, we must work harder than ever to build and preserve a fair society," she said. "We must make sure that hard work is rewarded with a decent pay cheque. We must make sure that the opportunities available to our people and especially our young people not only endure, but grow."

By eliminating the deficit, Ontario is in a position to do those things, she said.

"My plan builds on the action we have taken and the investments we have made over the past five years," Wynne said. "It takes dead aim at the challenges that confront us in this new, uncertain world. It puts fairness at the heart of all we do and all we aspire to achieve for the people of Ontario."

Wynne said her approach is not to "cut back on public services, reduce taxes, slash regulations on corporations and let the results trickle down."

That wouldn't help people who are struggling, Wynne said, adding that the three main elements to her plan are creating a "fair economy," a "fair future for Ontario workers," and education.

Ontario's finance minister has already announced that the budget will contain new spending to benefit seniors, students, parents, caregivers and patients.

"I'm balancing the budget and I'm proud of that, but that's not an end in itself," Charles Sousa told The Canadian Press in a recent interview. "It's what are we doing as a result of the balance."

Sousa has announced the budget will include a public transit tax credit for seniors 65 years and older.

He has also promised a "booster shot" for health care, specifically funding to deal with the problem of overcrowded hospitals, which forces patients to be placed in hallways and other unconventional spaces.

On Tuesday, ministers also announced $20 million in funding to increase the available respite services for unpaid caregivers who help friends and family members.

The government is also launching an initiative to create 40,000 job training placements and internships over three years for students of all ages and recent graduates, as part of a $190-million Career Kick-Start Strategy.

In a recent speech, Sousa highlighted investments the government has made in the innovation sector, saying more of that can be expected in the budget as the government embraces, "new, potentially disruptive technologies."

Sousa has said the budget will refer to the recent housing affordability measures the government announced. However, Sousa's office said there is "no line in the budget" attributed to a newly announced 15-per-cent foreign buyer tax. It's expected to be revenue neutral, as any money coming in should offset a decrease in revenue from land transfer tax.

No further such housing measures will be unveiled in the budget, Sousa said Wednesday, but there will be measures on social housing for low-income residents.

Additionally, $200 million will go toward creating 24,000 child care spaces and subsidies for families for about 60 per cent of those spots - as part of the government's promise last year to create 100,000 more licensed spaces.

Cuts to hydro bills will add nearly $2 billion to the budget. An eight-per-cent rebate that took effect Jan. 1 is estimated to cost $1 billion a year, and more measures announced last month to help low-income and rural residents will cost taxpayers about $833 million a year.

Even with a balanced budget this year, Ontario will still have debt of more than $300 billion. In 2016-17, interest on debt was the province's fourth-largest spending area, with $11.4 billion of interest on approximately $317 billion of debt.

The official opposition maintains the Liberals will only achieve "fake" balance in the budget as a political ploy ahead of the 2018 election. The Progressive Conservatives have even created a "Chef Charles Sousa" online caricature who talks about "cooking the books."

PC Leader Patrick Brown said he believes the Liberals can only balance the budget by dramatically cutting services or raising taxes, or by using accounting "tricks." He's specifically watching out for two such tricks:counting public pension surpluses as assets, against the advice of the province's Auditor general, and counting revenue from the partial sale of Hydro One against the deficit, when the money is intended for a separate trust for infrastructure projects.

"It's Chef Sousa cooking the books to look good in an election year," said Brown.

Ontario's NDP also sees politics in the budget.

"The government's had 14 years to address the problems that we've seen in this province, and they're now scrambling at the last minute to save their own political skin, as opposed to really being concerned about the realities of life for Ontarians," said Deputy Leader Jagmeet Singh.

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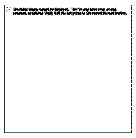

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Six Nations of Grand River lead the charge on green energy

thestar.com - Wed Apr 26 2017
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When it comes to green energy, Six Nations development corporation CEO Matt Jamieson knows his stuff.

"There are 2,307 solar panels on this roof," he says with a grin.

He's standing atop the Oneida Business Park, in Ohsweken, Ontario.

The solar project he's talking about produces 500 kilowatts of power, but that's just a fraction of Six Nations total green energy holdings.

Jamieson's First Nation is one of more than 120 that has signed a treaty alliance opposing oil sands expansion and pipelines across North America.

Battle lines are being drawn in Vancouver over Kinder Morgan's planned expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline while other alliance members are in court fighting TransCanada's Energy East pipeline.

But while many of the alliance's leaders are invoking standoffs like the Oka crisis and last winter's Standing Rock in their fight to block fossil fuel energy projects in Canada, they are also looking to green energy alternatives, and to Six Nations as an example of how to do it.

Tsleil-Waututh Nation counselor Charlene Aleck's first nation, in North Vancouver, B.C., is on the front lines of the campaign to stop the Kinder Morgan project.

"We're not just the 'forces of no," Aleck said. "We are taking steps towards the 'forces of yes.' We definitely have a 'yes agenda' when it comes to green energy."

For the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, that means starting small - with a roof-top solar project on the new administration and health centre that's now under construction.

The Six Nations of the Grand River is already leading the country in renewable power projects, and is setting an example for its allies to follow.

In November, the Niagara Regional Wind Farm project reached full operation. Seventy-seven wind turbines across Southwestern Ontario started turning out an estimated 230 megawatts of power.

The Six Nations development corporation owns half of it.

Add that to the other 16 green energy projects that Six Nations is involved in, and the community will see contributions of "well over $100 million over 20 years," Jamieson said.

Those projects also create more than 900 megawatts of renewable energy that helps feed Ontario's power grid - enough to light roughly 185,000 homes.

Other alliance members are also following suit.

Manitoba's Long Plain First Nation is working with the province to expand a geothermal heating project.

And the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi - three Mi'gmaq in Eastern Quebec are partners in a 150-megawatt wind farm project that's expected to produce enough power for 30,000 homes. That project went online in December.

While Six Nations is now nearly a decade into its involvement with large-scale green energy projects, Jamieson said getting here wasn't as easy as throwing a switch.

The Six Nations shift towards green energy projects started in 2009 when Ontario launched the Green Energy Act. One of the first major projects to come out of that plan was the 404-hectare Grand Renewable Solar and Wind farm - part of a larger $5 billion deal Ontario made with South Korean giant Samsung to add more than 1,300 megawatts of green power to the provincial grid.

"The green energy act triggered a lot of development activity around our territory and specifically the Haldimand Tract," Jamieson said.

Through negotiations with the province, Six Nations was able to reach an agreement that would see the province lease the land from them. But there was another challenge to overcome as well.

At the time, the development corporation that Jamieson now heads didn't exist. It was a branch of the Six Nations band council, and didn't have the resources or the human capital to be a partner on a project as big as the Samsung solar and wind farm.

To address that issue, the community also negotiated support to help it create a full-fledged development corporation so it could take a seat at the energy table, instead of sitting on the sidelines.

Now, eight years on, one of the development corporations more modest projects, a 500-kilowatt rooftop solar installation at the Oneida Business Park in Ohsweken, Ontario, was just awarded Aboriginal Project of the year by the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association.

The development corporation owns 90 per cent of it. The County of Brandt owns the other 10 per cent.

It's the kind of project that the Tsleil-Waututh Nation is hoping to have at their new administration building. For them, funding is the main constraint, Aleck said.

"We've spent a great amount of time, energy and money opposing (the Trans Mountain pipeline) in our territory," Aleck said. "Getting onto greener things, we're trying but yes, funding is challenge."

The Tsleil-Waututh Nation is fundraising and taking donations for the solar project. It also owns a company that builds wind turbine equipment and is looking at projects like geothermal and harnessing the power of ocean tides.

While the Grand Renewable solar and wind farm, and the other green projects that followed have been a boon for Six Nations, the political tide may be turning.

In September 2016 Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault suspended plans for another round of solar, wind and hydro projects. In February he admitted the Green Energy Act hasn't had the bright green outcomes the government hoped for, contributing to rising energy prices across the province.

For Jamieson, that highlights the importance of First Nations being prepared to take advantage of investment opportunities when the door is open.

"Development opportunities come and go ... and if the First Nation's not organized, they're going to miss the opportunities," Jamieson said.

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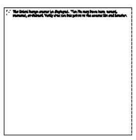

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Tribunal ruling lauded by anti-turbine group

The Belleville Intelligencer - Thu Apr 27 2017
Byline: Bruce Bell
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An Environmental Review Tribunal's (ERT) decision on the White Pines Wind Project on Wednesday afternoon has the head of the Alliance to Protect Prince Edward County (APPEC) declaring it a great environmental win.

"I think the ERT's decision fully supports what the people of Prince Edward County want and that's to protect the environment of our South Shore," said APPEC chairman Gord Gibbins. "So many groups have fought this fight over the years and this one just happened to be our battle, but it"s another we can all enjoy together."

Both APPEC and wpd Canada have been waiting since last year for the ERT to rule if wpd's mitigation measures were appropriate enough to allow the 29-turbine White Pines project to proceed.

In February 2016 the ERT ruled the project "will cause serious and irreversible harm" to animal life and the natural environment - including the endangered

Blandings turtles and little brown bats. However, the Tribunal ruled the company could prepare a mitigation plan for submission.

On Wednesday, the ERT ruled: With specified amendments, the proposed mitigation measures are satisfactory for little brown bats.

With specified amendments, the proposed mitigation measures are satisfactory for Blanding's turtles, for turbines one through 11.

The proposed mitigation measures for turbines to be accessed by specified upgraded municipal secondary and tertiary road segments and intersections in Blanding's turtle habitat are not satisfactory, and, therefore, turbines 12 through 29 are removed from the REA.

With turbines seven and 11 already removed from the project's Renewable Energy Approval in 2105 under the Heritage Act, the project has now been reduced to nine turbines from the original 29.

"I don't know if it's financially viable now, but I guess that's a decision for (wpd canada) to make," Gibbins said.

A month after the February 2016 decision, the ERT ruled wpd Canada could proceed with site preparation despite the previous ruling the project would cause serious and irreversible damage to Blanding's turtles and Little Brown Bats. At that time, the ERT provided APPEC with no explanation or reasons why it ruled against the motion of stay to delay site work. A week later an Ontario Divisional Court judge dismissed another appeal by the group to have work delayed until the ERT provides reasons for its March 22 decision. APPEC withdrew another motion for a stay on site preparation for the project at the Ontario Court of Appeal in Toronto after it was determined the appeal required a panel of three judges to rule, not the solo judge who attended the Osgoode Hall courtroom for the hearing.

Last week, wpd Canada again commenced with site preparation, clearing vegetation on private property along Royal Road in South Marysburgh.

Gibbins said crews have been busy at five or six locations clearing vegetation, often adjacent to the spring foraging areas of the turtles, but all fell quiet and work halted immediately following the decision.

When contacted Wednesday evening, wpd Canada spokesman Kevin Surette said it was too early for the company to offer much comment.

"We'll take the next several days to review the decision with our legal team and decide what our next steps will be," he replied.

Meanwhile, Mayor Robert Quaiff echoed Gibbins comments, calling it a win the municipality.

"I see this as an incredibly positive development. Our community has been fighting this project for quite some time now, and I'm glad to see that the Environmental Review Tribunal has recognized and given credence to our concerns," he said. "I want to congratulate the Alliance to Protect Prince Edward County for their tenacity throughout this process. From what I understand, this decision will make it very difficult, if not impossible, for WPD to proceed with the project."
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Hydro One finance chief going to Empire as it revives Sobeys grocery business; Empire hires Hydro One's finance chief

Canadian Press - Wed Apr 26 2017

STELLARTON, N.S. - The parent company of the Sobeys grocery chain has hired away Hydro One's chief financial officer.

Michael Vels will leave the Ontario power grid operator on May 19 and become chief financial officer at Empire Co. Ltd. of Stellarton, N.S., on June 12.

Vels played a key role in the 2015 initial public offering of Hydro One stock (TSX:H), which had been 100 per cent owned by the provincial government.

Prior to that, he spent about a decade as CFO at Maple Leaf Foods (TSX:MFI) as the company underwent a multi-year transformation of its business, including the sale of its Canada Bread subsidiary to a Mexican company.

Empire CEO Michael Medline - himself a recent addition to Sobeys - says Vels is qualified for his new role because of his understanding of the food business and successful corporate transformations.

Hydro One says it will begin a search for a new chief financial officer immediately.

Medline, a former Canadian Tire executive who was hired by Empire (TSX:EMP.A) in January, is leading the company's efforts to win back customer loyalty that was lost after Sobeys bought Safeway's stores in Western Canada.

Clinton Keay, who has been Empire's interim chief financial officer since July 2016, will become executive vice-president for technology and lead efforts to restructure how it does business.

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Ontario Power Generation preparing DGR answers for CEAA

Kincardine News - Thu Apr 27 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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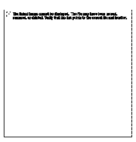

271959228

United Way reaching out to community regarding electricity charge changes

Hanover Post - Thu Apr 27 2017 Page: A20

May 1 will bring changes to electricity files for the United Way of Bruce Grey.

The United Way is reaching out to the community and reminding residents who are in arrears on their electricity bills, that the winter disconnection ban is lifting on that date.

"Consumers who are behind can find themselves disconnected if they have not made payment arrangements or resourced communities supports" said United Way executive director Francesca Dobbyn. "We encourage everyone who is behind to call 211 to connect to community services".

Applying to the LEAP (Lowincome Energy Assistance Program) puts a 21 day hold on a disconnection and gives applicants time to complete the application. If an applicant has already accessed the LEAP program there may be other resources to assist with arrears. Consumers can find out about those programs by calling 211.

May 1 also marks significant changes to electricity rates across the province.

· Off peak charges are dropping to 7.7 cents kwh (11% reduction) · Mid-peak is dropping from 13.2 cents kwh to 11.3 cents kWh (14% reduction) · On-peak is dropping from 18 cents kWh to 15.7 cents kWh (13% reduction).

The OESP (Ontario Electricity Support Program) a rebate for eligible low income consumers will see a 50% increase in the monthly rebate. A consumer who has a $30 monthly rebate will automatically go to $45 a month. Consumers heating with electricity will have a base rate change from $45 a month to $68 a month.

"The OESP is a simple mechanism to increase supports to a cohort of consumers already verified as low income" Dobbyn said. "Applying for the OESP is fairly simple and there are many agencies in the community, including the United Way that can assist with an application for qualifying households".

To qualify the electricity bill has to be in the applicant's name and meet income guidelines. The income guidelines are available by calling 211.

"As the provinces implements the various components of the Fair Hydro Plan, we expect electricity bills to further drop" Dobbyn stated, "there are more changes coming on the delivery side for our most rural residents, but I don't have a clear timeline on those changes, and the degree those changes will affect consumer bills."

Since October 1, 2016, the United Way has processed over 160 applications for electricity support with another 50 files in the application process. This represents $83 000 in support provided to assist with $122 000 in arrears with $40 000 in arrears to be processed.

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Energy Star Program For Homes And Appliances Is On Trump's Chopping Block

NPR - Wed Apr 26 2017

Appliance manufacturers and home builders are in Washington, D.C., today to celebrate a popular energy efficiency program, even as it's slated for elimination in President Trump's proposed budget.

You probably know the program's little blue label with the star — the Environmental Protection Agency says 90 percent of U.S. households do.

"The Energy Star brand has brand recognition on par with, like, Coke and Pepsi," says Steve Byers, CEO of EnergyLogic. His company, which is among those receiving an Energy Star award at this year's event, inspects buildings to make sure they qualify for the program's seal of approval. "This is a very successful program," he says. "I don't know what more one could want out of a government program."

In fact, the 25-year-old Energy Star program appears to be targeted simply because it's run by the federal government. It's one of 50 EPA programs that would be axed under Trump's budget plan, which would shrink the agency's funding by more than 30 percent. (The U.S. Department of Energy also helps administer Energy Star, and would see a 5.6 percent budget cut.)

Critics of Energy Star say the government should get involved in the marketplace only when absolutely necessary. But that argument doesn't hold sway for the program's legions of supporters, which span nonprofits, companies and trade groups.

"These cuts make no sense," says Lowell Ungar, senior policy adviser with the nonprofit American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. His group, along with about 80 other nonprofits and companies, has written to Congress urging it to keep the program. More than 1,000 companies have called for strengthening the program in another letter, organized by the Alliance to Save Energy.

"The bottom line is proposed cuts to Energy Star would harm American consumers, they would destroy jobs, and they would make air pollution worse," Ungar says.

The federal government launched Energy Star in 1992 to rate the efficiency of computer monitors. Now it covers dozens of product categories, from washers to electronics and homes.

Here's how it works: The government sets criteria for efficient products. A third party inspects goods or housing, and if they meet the criteria, manufacturers can use the familiar blue sticker to market the product as energy-efficient.

In a North Denver development called Midtown, Steve Eagleburger of EnergyLogic was recently inspecting a home while construction workers put on finishing touches. This part of the Energy Star program has existed since 1995.

"What we're doing here is checking to make sure this attic is insulated," Eagleburger said as he stood on a ladder and peered through a raised attic hatch. "This one is not insulated at all."

He makes a note on a tablet, then he's off to the next thing — a checklist of dozens of items such as fans and air-duct seals. This house won't get the Energy Star label unless it fulfills all the requirements.

Energy Star is a voluntary program. It costs about $50 million a year to run, but punches above its weight in impact. In 2014, the EPA estimates the program helped American consumers and businesses save $34 billion and prevent more than 300 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

A study published last month in the journal Nature Energy found that Energy Star-rated buildings in Los Angeles used nearly 20 percent less energy compared with other buildings.

The little blue label also has an audience in countries such as Mexico and Canada.

"We do see that actually as a distinguishing factor," says Mike Gazzano of Delta Products, which makes fans for bathroom ventilation and other uses. He says customers consider Energy Star the mark of "a premium product" in terms of engineering and technology.

The idea for eliminating Energy Star might have come from conservative groups such as the Heritage Foundation, which targets a range of efficiency programs in its own budget blueprint.
"This is something that the private sector can market and sell as a great quality for their product. So why is the government trying to nudge people in one direction when they simply shouldn't need to," says Nick Loris, an energy and environment policy fellow at the foundation.

Another critic is Myron Ebell, a climate change skeptic with the Competitive Enterprise Institute and head of Trump's EPA transition team. "It's good that Energy Star is a voluntary program," he says in a statement, "but it's not clear why taxpayer dollars should be used to promote some products over other products."

Energy Star has also weathered a scandal. In 2010, workers at the Government Accountability Office posed as product developers and got the Energy Star label for fictitious products. That launched the third-party certification that exists now.

Doug Johnson, vice president of technology policy with the trade group Consumer Technology Association, says that process can take time out of the already crunched product development cycle.

"It's a part of the program that we think should be reexamined," he says. "In fact we've been advocates for improving that part of the Energy Star program."

Johnson says there are other successful federal programs such as EnergyGuide that measure efficiency. Still, he doesn't think the entire Energy Star program should go away.

Ultimately, it will be up to Congress to decide whether shoppers continue to see the familiar blue sticker on goods in the showroom.

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