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Today's News

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Date: Monday, November 6, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

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Thunder Bay Hydro is handing out free block heater timers

CBC.CA News - Fri Nov 3 2017, 5:30pm ET
Byline: CBC News

It's an all too familiar struggle for many people in northwestern Ontario. Plugging in your car so it starts in the morning during those cold winter months. Thunder Bay Hydro wants to help with that. They're launching a pilot project ...



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The Mining Journal - Sun Nov 5 2017

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Shock To The System; Wynne government's obsession with renewable energy sent electricity prices soaring

Toronto Sun - Sun Nov 5 2017

Byline: Kenneth Green, Elmira Aliakbari And Ashley Stedman

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Owen Sound Sun Times - Mon Nov 6 2017

Byline: Denis Langlois

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Key charge fizzles at gas plant trial; Crown says it has 'no reasonable prospect' of convicting ex-Liberal staffers for breach of trust, while defence calls for acquittal

Toronto Star - Sat Nov 4 2017
Byline: Kristin Rushowy Toronto Star
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The Crown says it has no "reasonable prospect" of convicting two top former Liberal staffers on breach of trust allegations in relation to the gas plants documents scandal, leaving the pair to each face two remaining charges. And on Friday, defence ...



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Crown drops breach-of-trust charge against McGuinty aides; David Livingston and Laura Miller still face two criminal charges in case related to the Liberals' move to cancel two gas plants in Ontario

theglobeandmail.com - Fri Nov 3 2017, 10:38am ET
Byline: Karen Howlett

Crown prosecutors have asked an Ontario court judge to drop one of three criminal charges against two senior staffers in former premier Dalton McGuinty's office. Prosecution lawyer Tom Lemon said in court on Friday that the "totality of ...



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Christie Blatchford: Gas plants trial becomes theatre of the absurd

News - National Post - Fri Nov 3 2017
Byline: Christie Blatchford

Pity Citizen Joe. Pity Joe Public. Whatever else, Ontarians deserved that the gas plants trial be a full and fair hearing, the usual sort of robust contest that a criminal trial in an adversarial system is meant to be. Instead, what they got ...



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Enwin warns of utility scam

Windsor Star - Sat Nov 4 2017 Page: A4

Enwin is warning its customers of potential text message scam targeting utility users across Ontario. The local utility said Friday it has received three reports of customers being sent text messages claiming to be from Ontario ...

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Thunder Bay Hydro is handing out free block heater timers

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It's an all too familiar struggle for many people in northwestern Ontario. Plugging in your car so it starts in the morning during those cold winter months.

Thunder Bay Hydro wants to help with that. They're launching a pilot project giving out free block heaters timers for your car.

The device connects the plug in your car to the outlet in your driveway setting it on a timer.

"It's not really necessary to have your car plugged in all night," said Jason Ramage, service manager at Done-Rite Tire and Auto in Thunder Bay.

When it's below -15 degrees the oil in your car becomes thicker and has a harder time lubricating the engine. The block heater warms your engine before you start the car so the oil is able to flow. Ramage recommends setting the heater block to four hours before you need to use the car.

"If you need to plug it in longer than there is some sort of under lying issue with the car," said Ramage.

Thunder Bay Hydro has 4,000 block heater timers to give out to their customers in Thunder Bay, Atikokan, Fort Frances, Kenora and Sioux Lookout. The Independent Electricity System Operator is funding the program to run until March. If it's successful than it can become a permanent program.

"This is something that they don't deal with necessarily in the rest of the province and this is an energy consumption that is unique to our customers," said Lesley Macniven, supervisor of energy efficiency services for Thunder Bay Hydro. "We wanted to do something that can help them with their winter energy bills."

The block heater can save customers up to \$25 a year, according to Thunder Bay Hydro. Anyone who would like a block heater can contact Thunder Bay Hydro.

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Study: Connecting U.P. Grid To Canada Not Worth It

The Mining Journal - Sun Nov 5 2017

MARQUETTE — Preliminary results of the Michigan Transmission Expansion Study show that none of the electrical transmission line tie-ins between Michigan and Canada that were studied had financial benefits that exceeded the cost of construction, according to a press release by the Michigan Agency for Energy.

The study, requested by Gov. Rick Snyder and the MAE, looked at connecting the Upper Peninsula to Ontario at Sault Ste. Marie and strengthening the electrical ties between the U.P. and the Lower Peninsula at the Straits of Mackinac.

The study was led by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator — which oversees the electrical grid in the central United States and part of Canada — in cooperation with the Independent Electric System Operator, the grid administrator for Ontario, Canada.

The study evaluated the potential cost savings, reliability and resource adequacy benefits of certain potential transmission grid improvements and proposed natural gas power plants. Because of the type of modeling used, the study allowed Michigan to identify areas where additional generation might best be located with minimal transmission infrastructure upgrades.

"This is an important piece of information for Michigan to have, and we appreciate very much the cooperation shown by our Canadian neighbors as well as the MISO staff," Valerie Brader, executive director of the MAE, said in the press release. "As we look for ways to reduce costs and increase reliability, it is important that we have the best information possible and we are glad MISO will share this information freely with stakeholders throughout the region."

Of all the options studied, a 100-megawatt generator sited near Pine River in the eastern U.P. would be a reliable option for producing power and could receive natural gas and provide electrical service with minimal infrastructure investment, the study showed. Building that level of generation would likely cost the same or less than other options studied.

Currently, there is not an electricity transmission connection between the U.P. and Ontario and significant upgrades would have to be made to transmission systems in Michigan and Canada to establish that connection. None of the transmission options studied by MISO provided enough benefit to cover the high construction costs of linking Michigan's transmission system to IESO, according to the release. Similarly, the cost of expanding transmission capability between the U.P. and the Lower Peninsula projected more costs than benefits.

Gov. Snyder requested MISO to study connecting the eastern U.P. to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and the northern Lower Peninsula at the Straits of Mackinac down to an existing 345-kilovolt transmission line near Gaylord. He also asked for the study to assume a large natural gas power plant is constructed in Otsego or Kalkaska County.

The study results come as the Michigan Public Service Commission recently announced its approval of a certificate of necessity by the Upper Michigan Energy Resources Corp. to build two natural gas-fueled electric generation facilities in Baraga and Negaunee townships in the central U.P.

Additionally, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission recently ruled that ratepayers will pay \$23 million less in system support resource payments to cover

past costs associated with keeping the Presque Isle Power Plant in Marquette running.

U.P. utility customers pay some of the highest electric rates in the nation and the MISO grid study was commissioned to try to find options for lowering energy costs and improving reliability.

"We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with the state of Michigan on the transmission study," said Jennifer Curran, MISO vice president of System Planning and Seams Coordination. "Providing context for policy decisions through our modeling and analysis is an important part of what we do as a regional transmission organization."

A final version of MISO's report is due in December.

For more information about MAE, visit www.michigan.gov/energy or sign up for its listservs to keep up on MAE matters.

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Shock To The System; Wynne government's obsession with renewable energy sent electricity prices soaring

Toronto Sun - Sun Nov 5 2017

Byline: Kenneth Green, Elmira Aliakbari And Ashley Stedman

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The Ontario government released an update to its longterm energy plan last month, projecting that the cost of electricity for homes and businesses will keep rising over the next 20 years.

Specifically, the average monthly electricity bills for residents and large industrial customers in northern Ontario will jump 52 %.

This increase will further inflate Ontario electricity prices, which are already the highest in Canada and among the highest in North America.

Despite the high prices, the Wynne government recently reaffirmed its commitment to costly solar and wind power, which is distorting market prices at the expense of Ontario's current and future ratepayers.

Ontario's electricity market is a stark example of what happens when government picks technology "winners" and "losers".

The government chose wind and solar power over cheaper alternatives such as nuclear, hydroelectric or clean coal power.

In fact, as documented in our recent study, a report from the Ontario Energy Board in 2016 found that nuclear and hydroelectric generators, despite providing the majority of electricity output in Ontario, received much lower rates than wind, solar and biofuel generators.

In other words, Ontarians paid less for nuclear and hydroelectric power than the renewable sources favoured by the government.

Specifically, between November, 2016 and October, 2017, the rate paid to wind generators (\$140 per megawatt hour or MWh, a common unit for measuring power) was more than double that of hydro and nuclear generators.

In addition, the rate paid to solar generators (\$480 per MWh), was more than seven times the rate paid to nuclear generators (\$66 per MWh) and more than eight times the rate paid to hydroelectric generators (\$58 per MWh).

Clearly, there's a substantial price difference between the rates paid to wind, solar and biofuel generators and the rates paid to other generators.

The high cost for renewable sources is even more glaring when you consider that in 2016, combined solar, wind and biomass generated less than 7% of electricity in Ontario.

And yet, the Ontario government has increased its renewable capacity significantly.

Between 2005 and 2015, the province increased its renewable capacity - solar, wind and bioenergy - by 18%. But because the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow, the government also had to secure more natural gas capacity as a back-up to renewable sources, increasing Ontario's gas capacity by 9%.

As a result, the province realized a 26% increase in capacity from 2005 to 2015.

Meanwhile, the demand for electricity declined, partly due to rising electricity costs.

The increase in capacity coupled with lower electricity demand has resulted in significant over-supply, which must often be exported to other jurisdictions at prices below cost.

Simply put, the government's rigorous pursuit of renewables has increased electricity costs far more than necessary in Ontario.

From 2008 to 2016, residential electricity prices in Ontario increased by 71% - more than double the national average.

To make matters worse, a recent study shows Ontario's skyrocketing electricity prices cost the province more than 74,000 manufacturing jobs between 2008 and 2015.

Finally, the Wynne government seems uninterested in meaningful policy reforms that would reduce electricity prices.

Instead, with its so-called Fair Hydro Plan, the government hides the true costs of

Ontario's energy policies.

The unfortunate reality is Ontario residents and businesses will continue to see their electricity bills rise due to the government's poor policy decisions.

Green is a senior director, Aliakbari and Stedman are analysts, at the Fraser Institute

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Hydro change applauded

Owen Sound Sun Times - Mon Nov 6 2017

Byline: Denis Langlois

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An Ontario Energy Board decision to ban electricity companies from disconnecting power to homes in winter over unpaid bills is something Francesca Dobbyn has been pushing for for more than a decade.

"I'm relieved," the executive director of the United Way of Bruce Grey said in an interview.

"We're exhausted. This has been a battle for years of getting these changes, getting the voices of people in our community into the hands of the decisionmakers."

The OEB decision, handed down Thursday, bans electricity distributors from disconnecting or threatening to disconnect homes for non-payment from Nov. 15 to April 30 each year.

It goes a step further by banning the use of load-control devices during that period.

The OEB has also ordered electricity distributors to reconnect as soon as possible and without charge all homes that are currently disconnected due to nonpayment.

In the future, homes must be reconnected by Nov. 15 each year.

The OEB decision comes nine months after Ontario MPPs passed the Protecting Vulnerable Energy Consumers Act in February, which gave the OEB the power to end winter disconnections.

A day after that legislation was passed, the OEB issued an order to utility companies to reconnect all customers that were without power and to not disconnect any electrical services due to non-payment or arrears until at least May 1.

The OEB, at the time, said the order was intended to be an interim measure to cover the rest of the 2016-17 winter. The energy regulator said it would launch a comprehensive review of customer service rules, including those related to winter disconnections, for electricity distributors.

The OEB's Nov. 2 decision makes the Nov. 15 to April 30 winter disconnection ban permanent.

Dobbyn said some companies already had in place voluntary bans on disconnecting electricity in winter before the Protecting Vulnerable Energy Consumers Act was passed.

Hydro One, for example, had a policy to not disconnect customers in arrears from Dec. 1 to March 31.

However, other companies, like Walkerton-based Westario Power, did not.

Dobbyn said the United Way has helped single parents with young children, seniors and others to get their power turned back on in the middle of winter.

She said Westario is required to put about \$25,000 a year into a fund to assist low-income customers with their hydro bills. However, that money was typically used up by March each year, Dobbyn said.

"Bruce County was running the Westario program and when they ran out of Westario money the clients came to us. And we were using our funds that we fundraise to assist Westario clients," she said.

The winter disconnection ban lets the United Way focus more on helping people who heat their homes with wood, oil and propane buy those heating sources in winter instead of scrambling to help Westario customers to have their power restored.

Only money that has been fundraised by the agency is available to help people buy wood, oil and propane.

Dobbyn said the United Way can also now do a better job of planning how to use its resources since the OEB decision includes the same winter disconnection ban period for all companies. For example, it can ensure all hands are on deck to help people once the ban period ends.

"We're a charity; we don't have a lot of staff, we don't have a lot of resources. So when we can plan and deploy them and genuinely help people, that makes us better at what we do," she said.

But Dobbyn said she wants to emphasize that the OEB decision does not give people permission to stop paying their hydro bill.

"You need to pay as much as you can on your bill and pay it off as much as you can every month," she said.

Assistance programs require that customers have a history of attempting to pay.

Dobbyn said it's also important for people who are struggling to pay their hydro bill to see the United Way or call 211 as soon as possible. The agencies can help direct those clients to assistance programs.

"We can also help with those applications," she said.

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Hydro One to refurbish transmission line between Burlington and Westover

Flamborough Review - Sun Nov 5 2017 Page: 1

Residents learned about Hydro One's plans to refurbish its Burlington-to-Westover transmission line at a public meeting Oct. 26 at the Millgrove United Church.

The project involves the existing 115 kilovolt transmission line, which connects the Burlington Transformer Station to the Enbridge Westover Customer Transformer Station. Hydro One has initiated the Class Environmental Assessment process for the line.

Hydro One environmental planner Libby Dwyer said the work, which includes refurbishing and replacing steel towers replacing some 30 wooden poles as well as conductors and insulators, is necessary because some of the pole infrastructure dates back to 1945.

"It's a refurbishment, not an upgrade," she stressed, noting the work will replace what currently exists on a like-for-like basis.

The Burlington-to-Westover line features a double line on steel tower structures from Burlington to Highway 6, where power is then transmitted up and down the highway. West of Highway 6 there is a single dedicated line on wooden structures, which supplies power to the Enbridge Westover facility.

During construction, a temporary distribution line will be built running from south of Highway 5, up Westover Road to the Enbridge facility, Dwyer explained.

"It's an extra wire going in on existing poles - there will be some new poles going in," she said of the temporary line, noting the construction will mostly take place on the existing road allowance. "We need this in to be able to have the outage on the transmission line."

The temporary line is necessary to provide power to the Enbridge Westover facility.

Construction on the project is expected to take place from February 2018 to August 2019. Project manager Shailesh Javali said construction on the temporary distribution line will begin in February and continue until October.

Hydro One community relations officer Stephanie Hodson said the work won't be focused in one area during that time period.

She added while most of the work can be done using existing right-of-ways, in some cases Hydro One will require access across people's properties.

However, she said any areas disturbed by construction will be restored to pre-construction conditions.

"They will be returned to pre-construction conditions," she said, noting most people are concerned about access.

For more information on the project, visit www.hydroone.com/about/corporate-information/major-projects/burlington-to-westover.

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Hydro cost sparks water rate increase

Welland Tribune - Mon Nov 6 2017

Byline: Allan Benner

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Increasing electricity and maintenance expenses are driving up the cost of water and sewer treatment, leading to a two per cent increase in Niagara Region's wholesale rates.

"Consistent with the last few years one of the most significant pressures is the increase in hydro costs," said Niagara's deputy treasurer Helen Chamberlain while discussing the 2018 water and wastewater budget during last Thursday night's budget meeting.

Regional council will consider approval of the \$116.7-million water and wastewater budget on Nov. 16.

The two per cent overall increase will add \$933,014 to water treatment funding, and \$1,298,924 more for wastewater, compared to 2017.

Chamberlain said individual municipalities will determine how the Region's rate increases impact the water bills sent out to Niagara ratepayers.

She said the retail rate is "obviously going to have a very different impact than what we distribute to local municipalities."

"You're going to see very different outcomes in terms of how this translates to the customer," she said.

Chamberlain said despite initiatives designed to reduce energy usage, Niagara's water and wastewater treatment plant electric bills are expected to cost about \$1 million next year.

Public works commissioner Ron Tripp later added that the Region is spending \$600,000 annually in energy-efficiency programs.

"It's really not savings, it's offsetting increases," he said.

Tripp said investing in new highefficiency equipment will also help reduce energy costs.

"One of our biggest energy drivers are our pumps, and the replacement of those pumps will ultimately take place through infrastructure renewal," Tripp said.

Fort Erie Coun. Sandy Annunziata pointed out that the increased electricity costs the Region is paying are entirely the result of increasing electricity charges, rather than increased power usage.

"The taxpayer is going to get hit twice now," Annunziata said.

"They're getting dinged with respect to the hydro bill they get every month, and now

they're getting dinged on their water bill, essentially, because this results in an increase of \$1 million."

Chamberlain said repair and maintenance for facilities is also having an impact on next year's budget.

After a few years of postponing those expenses, she said the Region is "trying to get back to a more appropriate level in that area."

The budget includes a \$26-million increase in infrastructure investment, above the five-year average, "allowing us to impact some of our infrastructure backlog and the needs of the asset management plan."

Meanwhile, stormwater infiltration continues to plague Niagara's infrastructure.

"The years where projected flows exceeded our actual, those are the years where we've experienced revenue shortfalls and they can be significant," Chamberlain said.

"Every one per cent decline in the revenue relates in a \$300,000 revenue loss."

The budget also includes funding for 7.5 full-time equivalent staff, including project managers.

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Key charge fizzles at gas plant trial; Crown says it has 'no reasonable prospect' of convicting ex-Liberal staffers for breach of trust, while defence calls for acquittal

Toronto Star - Sat Nov 4 2017

Byline: Kristin Rushowy Toronto Star

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The Crown says it has no "reasonable prospect" of convicting two top former Liberal staffers on breach of trust allegations in relation to the gas plants documents scandal, leaving the pair to each face two remaining charges.

And on Friday, defence lawyers argued the two should be immediately acquitted on those charges as well - mischief and unauthorized use of a computer - by way of a directed verdict.

But Crown prosecutor Tom Lemon told court while he did not wish to pursue the key breach of trust accusations, he urged the judge to "look at the totality of everything" on the other two charges - including arranging the "indiscriminate wiping of 20 hard drives" in the office of then-premier Dalton McGuinty when the duo did not have authority to do so.

Brian Gover, who represents McGuinty's former chief of staff David Livingston, characterized the Crown's case as based on "rank speculation bordering on conspiracy theory."

When their trial began in September, Livingston and Laura Miller, his deputy chief of

staff, each pleaded not guilty to breach of trust, mischief in relation to data and unauthorized use of a computer system in relation to the alleged deletion of documents as McGuinty stepped down amid controversy in February 2013.

McGuinty had announced plans to resign and prorogued the legislature in October 2012.

His minority government was under a legal order from an opposition-dominated legislative committee to produce documents explaining the decision to cancel natural gas-fired power plants in Oakville and Mississauga before the 2011 election.

Opposition parties accused the government of axing and moving the plants as a "seat saver" move because community opposition to the plants threatened to defeat Liberal MPPs representing areas surrounding the two plants.

McGuinty told a legislative committee the plants were cancelled because they were too close to residential areas.

He was not a subject of the police investigation and co-operated with detectives investigating the case.

On Friday, Lemon told court because the Crown "could not prove that specific emails were deleted," he had a "duty to act accordingly" and ask for dismissal the breach of trust charges.

Those charges each carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Lemon said an email from Livingston referring to "double deleting" emails, along with the wiping of the hard drives, was a two-pronged way to get rid of documents.

But Gover said there is no evidence that either of the accused had the "intention to commit mischief to data" and that the Crown had not presented any evidence that "work-related documents were erased" instead of being kept, as required.

He said they held a "sincere belief" they had the authority to do so.

He also said the "double delete" email was merely the same information given to all public servants, and was in no way an instruction.

Justice Timothy Lipson did query the defence on the "extraordinary lengths" the accused went to, if it was a "mundane task" of deleting personal information.

Miller's spouse, Peter Faist, was hired to wipe the hard drives, after Livingston sought, and was granted, special access.

The Crown has said the access that Livingston sought was granted "under false pretenses."

But Hutchison said Peter Faist cleaned the hard drives during business hours and was "escorted from machine to machine," and there was "zero effort" to conceal what they were doing.

Submissions on the directed verdict continue Tuesday. Such a verdict comes before the defence has presented their case.

With files from Rob Ferguson

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300789738

Crown drops breach-of-trust charge against McGuinty aides; David Livingston and Laura Miller still face two criminal charges in case related to the Liberals' move to cancel two gas plants in Ontario

theglobeandmail.com - Fri Nov 3 2017, 10:38am ET
Byline: Karen Howlett

Crown prosecutors have asked an Ontario court judge to drop one of three criminal charges against two senior staffers in former premier Dalton McGuinty's office.

Prosecution lawyer Tom Lemon said in court on Friday that the "totality of the evidence no longer has a reasonable prospect of conviction on the breach of trust count."

Justice Timothy Lipson of Ontario Court of Justice responded that he is "content" to have the case more focused on the two remaining counts.

The Crown's decision to dismiss the breach of trust charges against David Livingston, who was Mr. McGuinty's chief of staff, and Laura Miller, the deputy chief of staff, leaves the two facing mischief charges and unauthorized use of a computer charges in connection with the destruction of emails and other government records related to the Liberals' decision to cancel two gas-fired power plants.

Each has pleaded not guilty. Lawyers for Mr. Livingston and Ms. Miller will seek a directed verdict of acquittal on Friday. The directed-verdict application calls on a judge deciding a case to dismiss the charges before the defence has even called any witnesses, arguing the Crown has not proven its case.

Police allege that Mr. Livingston hired Peter Faist, a non-government IT expert and the spouse of Ms. Miller, to "wipe clean" computer hard drives in the Premier's Office just days before Mr. McGuinty resigned in February, 2013.

Follow this link to view this story on globeandmail.com: Crown drops breach-of-trust charge against McGuinty aides (www.theglobeandmail.com)

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300813191

Christie Blatchford: Gas plants trial becomes theatre of the absurd

News - National Post - Fri Nov 3 2017
Byline: Christie Blatchford

Pity Citizen Joe. Pity Joe Public.

Whatever else, Ontarians deserved that the gas plants trial be a full and fair hearing, the usual sort of robust contest that a criminal trial in an adversarial system is meant to be.

Instead, what they got Friday was the theatre of the absurd, with the judge clearly desperate for information that the lawyers (one side pleased as punch about it, the other not) have agreed he can't have.

In the end, the court was left with roughly this question: If a tree doesn't fall in the forest and no one sees it not fall did it not fall or not?

This trial, in other words, has become not about evidence, but about the absence of it.

David Livingston and Laura Miller, respectively the former chief of staff and deputy chief of staff to former Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, are pleading not guilty to charges of breach of trust and data destruction, all in connection to their alleged deletion of documents about the notorious gas plants.

Former top Dalton McGuinty staffers Laura Miller and David Livingston are accused in the alleged deliberate destruction of documents related to the McGuinty government's billion-dollar cancellation of gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga.

Or, rather, they were.

The first order of business Friday saw lead prosecutor Tom Lemon announce that the Crown no longer had a reasonable prospect of conviction on the breach of trust charges, so he invited the judge to dismiss them.

Lemon didn't say why this was, of course, because the court knew very well already: Prosecutors had failed to distance their expert tech witness, retired OPP Det.-Sgt. Bob Gagnon, from the investigation itself, with the result that he couldn't be considered non-partisan and couldn't testify as an expert.

In lieu of Gagnon's evidence, and to avoid having to call other witnesses to testify about the continuity of evidence, the lawyers agreed on what are called admissions.

Friday, they were arguing about what the admissions - bare-bones at best - actually admitted, or didn't, particularly two volumes of emails that are now an exhibit before Ontario Court Judge Tim Lipson.

These are hundreds of emails, many to or from Livingston and Miller, about the gas plants, the controversy, and the government's decisions - how to spin the story for the press; how to spin it for the legislature; how to get the controversy to disappear. The bald coarseness of backroom politics is beautifully laid out here.

One of the most interesting emails is one Livingston sent Miller and other deputies in the premier's office on Aug. 9, 2012, around the same time the Opposition was losing its collective mind over the issue and then-Energy Minister Chris Bentley's failure to produce any documents from his office.

The dormant construction site of a Mississauga power plant in 2011 that Dalton McGuinty's government cancelled mid-election that year.

(Later, it was learned that Bentley's chief of staff had a practice of deleting every note he got almost as soon as he got it.)

In any case, document retention, or the lack of it, was the central issue at Queen's

Park, and out of the blue, Livingston was writing his deputies about how to permanently delete emails, advising them they didn't need to "worry" about backup tapes (which backed up premier's office emails for two weeks, if they weren't double-deleted the same day) for Freedom of Information requests because they weren't used for FOI searches.

Defence lawyers tried to argue that this wasn't an instruction, no sir, just a helpful bit of information from the former premier's right-hand man.

Anyway, the email exhibits are helpfully labelled Volumes 1 and 2 of "Search Warrant Emails," which surely suggests they were retrieved by police with the authority of a search warrant, which in turn suggests they may have been double-deleted, and recovered elsewhere, though God forbid that ever be said.

But absent a witness to explain it, the admissions appear to admit only that the emails are authentic.

"What do I look for, where do I look for evidence business records were deleted?" the judge cried at one point.

At another, he said, "I did have one question, the actual origin of the emails found in Exhibit 22.... Were the emails recovered from computers?"

Christie Blatchford: How the prosecution's case in Ontario gas plants trial has gone to the brink (nationalpost.com)

Christie Blatchford: With case troubled from the start, prosecutors may drop some charges in gas plants trial (nationalpost.com)

Christie Blatchford: Nothing sinister about data destruction, defence tells gas plants trial (nationalpost.com)

Later still, the judge said, "It's been a mystery to me since those two volumes of emails were filed if there's an admission about where those emails are taken from? Are they from the hard drives seized by police? From government servers?"

And defence lawyer Scott Hutchison sniffed haughtily in reply, "It does not tell you where any of those emails come from. There is no evidence before you." He appeared, at the least, pleased about that.

Prosecutor Lemon on the other hand was beside himself, trying to say indirectly what he and his side had agreed not to say directly in the admissions.

Ontarians have spent upwards of \$1 billion (or as one clever reader pointed out, 1,000 million dollars) in costs for the cancellation and re-location of the two plants once slated for Mississauga and Oakville.

They are also on the hook for the four-year-long police investigation that ended with the charges laid against Livingston and Miller.

And now they are also paying for this trial, now weeks old.

They wuz robbed.

Argument about the defence motion for directed verdicts of acquittal on the

remaining charges resumes Tuesday.

. Email: cblatchford@postmedia.com(mailto:cblatchford@postmedia.com) Twitter: [blatchkiki](#) ([twitter.com](https://twitter.com/blatchkiki))

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Enwin warns of utility scam

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Enwin is warning its customers of potential text message scam targeting utility users across Ontario. The local utility said Friday it has received three reports of customers being sent text messages claiming to be from Ontario Hydro asking the recipient to tap a link in the text message in order to receive money. "We don't text message our customers," Enwin spokeswoman Barbara Peirce Marshall said in a news release. "This is the first time we have heard about this kind of fraud attempt in our area, so calling Enwin was the right thing to do." Enwin notified Hydro One and Windsor police about the texts and has since learned customers of other Ontario utilities have experienced similar text message scam attempts. "Cyber criminals have found a new way to defraud the public," said Marshall. Enwin reminded customers they should never provide any personal information in response to a text, email or phone call. Customers concerned about a suspicious text, email or phone call, can contact Enwin at 519-255-2727 or contact the Windsor Police Service.

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