Message

From: John Cannella [/O=POWER AUTHORITY/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=JOHN CANNELLA1A9]
Sent: 2016-09-22 6:45:48 AM
Subject: Today's News - Thursday, September 22, 2016

Today's News

powered by:

Date: Thursday, September 22, 2016
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Dutton-Dunwich to play hardball on hydro

www.stthomastimesjournal.com - Wed Sep 21 2016

Dutton/Dunwich council wants to pay less for electricity. Last week council put the finishing touches on a resolution it will circulate to municipalities across the province addressing the rising energy costs and asking for a hydro rate reduction ...

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Tory delivers hydro privatization pitch; Mayor says selling parts of Toronto Hyrdo will generate money to pay for upgrades

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Mayor John Tory is powering up a debate over the potential privatization of Toronto's century-old electricity provider, which he says is necessary to help fund city-building projects and upgrade the electricity grid. "We have an obligation to look ...

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John Tory mulls new taxes and asset sales in Toronto - but not right now; Toronto Mayor prefers to consider 'revenue tools' and 'unlocking the value' in Toronto Hydro

theglobeandmail.com - Wed Sep 21 2016, 8:05pm ET
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Tips to tame fierce workplace electricity bills; Steps to avoid burning electricity require thoughtful change by business tenants and solid investment by landlords

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Hydro Ottawa installs more solar panels on city buildings

ottawacitizen.com - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Jon Willing

Hydro Ottawa's green-energy division is installing solar panels on eight more major city buildings. The capital cost for the solar project is $6 million. Energy Ottawa announced the installations Wednesday at the Jim Durrell Recreation ...

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City reduces energy use, but costs keep going up

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Sep 22 2016
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The good news is that City of Timmins has managed to reduce the amount of energy it uses. The bad news is this effort isn't resulting in a significant reduction in costs. That was the essence of the report presented to city council this week by an ...

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Tempers flare over proposed south Niagara hydro increase

www.niagarathisweek.com - Wed Sep 21 2016

PORT COLBORNE — She didn't want to yell. In fact, moments after her tearful outburst, she looked as if she regretted it. But her emotions got the better of her. "I can not pay this bill," shouted Maggie Chisholm as she thrust from her purse ...

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Premier wynne tours hydro ottawa, touts new electricity rebate

Nepean Barrhaven News - Thu Sep 22 2016
Byline: Megan Delaire
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Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne had a glimpse of the inner workings of Ottawa Hydro during a visit to the city on Sept. 16. Wynne was joined by Ottawa West-Nepean MPP Bob Chiarelli, Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi, Ottawa-Orléans MPP ...

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Ontario Energy Board investigating composition of Collus Powerstream board

Collingwood Connection - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: John Edwards

The Ontario Energy Board is investigating Collus Powerstream, specifically looking into whether the composition of the board of directors meets the rules. Karen Evans, director of corporate and communications, told Simcoe.com ...

256677271

Economic Development and Innovation Summit focuses on leveraging Bruce Power's investment to benefit region

Kincardine News - Thu Sep 22 2016
Byline: Troy Patterson
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Properly harnessing the Bruce Power refurbishment's economic shock wave can open new national and international opportunities for communities in Bruce, Grey and Huron counties. Over 50 local leaders, as well as regional and provincial economic ...

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Richmond Hill Lighting the Way to Savings

Canada Newswire - Wed Sep 21 2016, 12:25pm ET

Town awards contract for LED conversion project that will save the community $1.5 million a year RICHMOND HILL, ON, Sept. 21, 2016 /CNW/ - Richmond Hill has awarded Ameresco, Inc. the contract to design, supply and install LED lights and a Smart ...

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Transparency essential to cap and trade program

The Timmins Daily Press - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Allan O'Dette
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On behalf of the 135 chambers of commerce and boards of trade who make up our network across Ontario, i want to express our collective concerns about the Oeb's recent decision to include charges related to the recovery of cap and trade ...

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Your TV may use more energy than you think, group charges; Your TV may use more energy than you think, group charges

Canadian Press - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Michael Liedtke

SAN FRANCISCO - An environmental group accused three major television manufacturers Wednesday of misleading consumers and regulators about how much energy their high-definition screens devour by designing them to draw less power during government ...

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Puerto Rico hit with islandwide blackout after fire erupts; Puerto Rico hit with islandwide blackout after fire erupts

Canadian Press - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Danica Coto

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - A big fire erupted at an electricity plant that powers most of Puerto Rico on Wednesday, causing a blackout that swept across the U.S. territory of 3.5 million people. The Electric Power Authority said two ...

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Canada could meet emissions target without huge carbon tax: SFU professor

CBC.CA News - Wed Sep 21 2016, 4:58pm ET
Byline:CBC News

A new report says Canada could meet its emissions target under the Paris climate agreement without a hefty carbon tax. The carbon tax has been a contentious issue between the provinces and the federal government. Recently, the federal government ...

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Alberta should 'get going' on energy efficiency, Nova Scotia expert advises

CBC.CA News - Wed Sep 21 2016, 3:23pm ET
Byline:CBC News

As Alberta prepares to place greater emphasis on energy efficiency, another province is advising Alberta to get going. The head of Nova Scotia's electricity efficiency agency spoke at the Pembina Institute's Alberta ...

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Dutton-Dunwich to play hardball on hydro

www.stthomastimesjournal.com - Wed Sep 21 2016

Dutton/Dunwich council wants to pay less for electricity.

Last week council put the finishing touches on a resolution it will circulate to municipalities across the province addressing the rising energy costs and asking for a hydro rate reduction for local residents and businesses as compensation for hosting an unwanted wind turbine project.

Council passed the seven-clause resolution with Coun. Dan McKillop casting the only opposing vote.

The bone of contention is the awarding of a 57.5 megawatt project to Invenergy LLC for the Strong Breeze wind farm in March 2016 by the province's Independent Electricity System Operator. Dutton/Dunwich stated it did not want to host any wind turbine projects, which the provincial IESO chose to ignore.

"...It is unfair that the people of Ontario who have opposed industrial wind turbines in their municipality have to live with all the detrimental elements of these projects while their neighbours in cities, who may benefit from any power produced therefrom, do not," stated one of the preamble clauses in the resolution.

The resolution requests the province provide a "100 per cent hydro rate reduction" to residential customers in Dutton/Dunwich and a 100 per cent rate reduction to businesses and commercial operations" in order to compensate for the hosting of a wind turbine project.

It asks Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to provide full funding to help businesses in Dutton/Dunwich as a "forced wind turbine host municipality" to be completely outfitted with renewable energy to operate their businesses and "be removed from the grid without penalty."

"The removal from the grid should assist the government with its overall targets," the resolution states.

The resolution was written as council's' response to it citizens who say rising hydro costs are causing hardship.

"Many of these residents are on fixed incomes," states a staff report on the resolution. "Business owners are stating these high costs are crippling them and their livelihood. It is imperative that we find solutions for the residents of Dutton/Dunwich as well as to assist businesses to survive in this economically difficult time in our region and for the years to come."

McKillop, the lone voice of opposition, said, "Everything that is said in this resolution is true. It's the first resolution that takes our expenses and puts it on the backs of the rest of Ontario. I can't be part of that."

"We live in the province of Toronto, Dan," Mayor Cameron McWilliam told him.

"They (the province) are making decisions that have no relevancy to here," he added.

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256685371

Tory delivers hydro privatization pitch; Mayor says selling parts of Toronto Hyrdo will generate money to pay for upgrades

Toronto Star - Thu Sep 22 2016
Byline: Betsy Powell Toronto Star
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Mayor John Tory is powering up a debate over the potential privatization of Toronto's century-old electricity provider, which he says is necessary to help fund city-building projects and upgrade the electricity grid.

"We have an obligation to look at all the options including unlocking the value that already exists in Toronto Hydro, while keeping it in public hands," Tory said in a speech to the Toronto Region Board of Trade.

Tory told the business audience there have been "too many stories" recently of power failures in some of the big new condo towers, often due to aging infrastructure. The city not only has to keep the lights on now but provide power to a rapidly growing city of the future, he said.

Council must also find new revenue streams to pay for billions of dollars in unfunded projects, including a massive transit network expansion, poverty reduction strategy and public housing renewal plans.

"We must … identify a way to pay for large-scale projects that are urgently needed," he said.

At a news conference following the speech, Tory held up a photo of the giant cable that burst in the hot summer weather, saying it caused power outages in a massive downtown condo complex, CityPlace.

Tory said there are only three ways to pay for upgrades needed by the utility: raise property taxes then inject the money into the utility, forgo money the city collects from the annual dividend, leaving the cash-strapped city with a fiscal gap, or tap into the value of Toronto Hydro and "use that money to do what they must do."

Toronto Hydro paid a $56 million dividend to the city in 2015.

Tory declined to say how much of the utility might be sold, subject to a majority of Toronto's 44 councillors going along with the plan.

Asked about polls showing a majority of Ontarians oppose the province selling Hydro One, Tory said "we'll be obviously trying to do it in a way that maintains the public confidence."

The Liberal government is planning to eventually sell off 60 per cent of Hydro One.

The Society of Energy Professionals said in a news release that selling any part of Toronto's electricity system is "sheer madness." The union represents 8,000 Ontario energy sector employees, including Toronto Hydro engineers.

"Privatization is not a solution to poor fiscal policy, under investment in infrastructure or increasing hydro bills. Privatization makes all three of those problems worse," union president Scott Travers said in the release.

The union has launched a website, FairHydro.ca, urging the public to tell the mayor and council "why hydro privatization is a dangerous idea."

Tory noted that city council has also directed staff to look at selling parking and real estate assets, in addition to reviewing, and recommending, a number of revenue generating measures, such as imposing road tolls or a parking tax.

City staff reports on proposed asset sales, taxes and levies are expected this fall.

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256666557

John Tory mulls new taxes and asset sales in Toronto - but not right now; Toronto Mayor prefers to consider 'revenue tools' and 'unlocking the value' in Toronto Hydro

theglobeandmail.com - Wed Sep 21 2016, 8:05pm ET
Byline:MARCUS GEE

John Tory says he is ready to be bold, but, at least for now, he is being bold very, very carefully.

The mayor gave a speech on Wednesday to the board of trade. He told his lunchtime audience that Toronto finds itself at a special moment in time. The city is thriving and poised to do great things, but it needs to invest. To cope with soaring growth and build for the future, city hall is preparing to spend billions on everything from transit to housing to poverty reduction. It has to find a way to pay for all this, and the mayor says he is looking at a range of options, including introducing new "revenue tools" and selling city assets.

Refusing even to consider those options, he said, would not be responsible. "I think it is time for us, as a city, to be bold."

The risks are obvious. Mr. Tory need only look up University Avenue to Queen's Park. Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne is taking heat for deciding to sell off chunks of the electricity utility Hydro One. On top of that, and mixed up with it, she faces public anger over rising power rates. She was booed at a plowing match on Tuesday, despite her efforts to calm the public with a billion-dollar-a-year rebate.

No wonder Mr. Tory is moving ahead gingerly. In his board of trade speech he said his options for raising money include "unlocking the value" in Toronto Hydro, but only while keeping it in "public hands." The bit about public hands is signalling that even if city hall went ahead with a partial sell-off, it would retain control. That is meant to address concerns, often raised by trade unions and others, about giving over the power system to private interests. True to form, the Society of Energy Professionals said after the speech that "selling off any part of Toronto's electricity system is sheer madness."

On revenue tools, as well, the mayor is inching toward a decision like a man edging along the ledge of a skyscraper. City staff have put together reams of reports on the options, from sin taxes to sales taxes to development levies. Mr. Tory insists that, very soon, he will decide which of them he will champion. To address the city's rising costs, he told the board of trade, "I'm going to be honest about what is necessary." But not quite yet.

His caution is understandable. He is up for re-election in 2018. He feels the hot breath of Doug Ford and the rest of Ford Nation on the back of his neck. The latest Ford on city council, Michael, has roasted Mr. Tory for even thinking about new taxes.

They would be sure to go after him for changing his tune, and with good reason. He was quiet about revenue tools when he was running for office in 2014. Back then, running against Rob then Doug Ford, he was keen on protecting the overburdened taxpayer. When another candidate, Karen Stintz, proposed raising money for public transit expansion by leasing Toronto Hydro or selling part of the utility, Mr. Tory responded that "As a businessman, I'm very wary of asset fire sales." Expect his critics to throw that back in his face if he commits himself.

Sooner or later, though, Mr. Tory will have to show his cards. Toronto has billions of necessary projects and deferred maintenance to pay for. As he told the board of trade, Toronto can't keep relying on short-term fixes. It is time to get serious about how the city is going to pay for all its needs.

Selling part of Hydro isn't madness. It's just common sense. It's the most attractive asset, for investors, that city hall has on its books. Hydro needs investment so that it can bring its aging equipment up to scratch. There is no special reason a public company should deliver the electricity to light our houses. Private companies send us the gas to warm them and no one thinks twice. Regulators monitor the price regardless.

Bringing in more revenue makes sense, too. A parking tax has merit in a city that is trying to encourage the use of public transit and a country that is trying to reduce greenhouse gases. Road tolls are a good idea for the same reasons. Hotel taxes are imposed by many North American cities to help pay for local needs.

Mr. Tory has a strong case to argue. Whatever the risks, he should not shy from making it.

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Tips to tame fierce workplace electricity bills; Steps to avoid burning electricity require thoughtful change by business tenants and solid investment by landlords

theglobeandmail.com - Thu Sep 22 2016, 5:00am ET
Byline:DAVID ISRAELSON

Myles Kesten has become something of a powerhouse in his business area, selling and repairing Apple products, but the power itself is getting pricey.

"My electricity bills seem to keep on growing," says Mr. Kesten, whose Mac-specialist stores in Toronto's Riverdale, Beaches and Bloor West neighbourhoods have thrived over the past two decades.

He's part of a worldwide conundrum. As new clean energy such as solar and wind power comes online to address climate change, energy costs have been going up, not only for households but for small businesses, too.

It's not just that it's hard to contend with the cost of lighting, heating and additional power needs for his tech-based business.

"One big problem with inner-city, older retail space is getting landlords to switch to gas heating and air conditioning," Mr. Kesten says.

On Sept. 12, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne removed the 8-per-cent portion of Ontario's Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) from electricity bills. The move, expected to cost the provincial treasury some $1-billion a year, will save the average household $130 a year and should save the average small business in the province more.

There are also other incentive programs that reward companies with lower hydro prices if they shift power usage away from peak times.

For example, Ontario's industrial conservation initiative is being expanded to about 1,000 companies from 300. It benefits factories that can shift to off-peak hours for production more than retailers, who must remain open at peak times.

While prices in Ontario have been rising fast, in 2015 Hydro Quebec looked at average monthly electric bills, including taxes, across North America and factored in the U.S. exchange rate for American cities. It found that while Ontario prices are higher than those in Manitoba and Quebec, which have lots of cheap hydroelectric power, the province compares favourably with other provinces and U.S. states.

Last year the average monthly bill for small power users who consume about 10,000 kWh, compared to 1,000 kWh for residential consumers, was $ 1,587.78 in Toronto and $1,674.23 in Ottawa. It was $2,708.71 in San Francisco, $2,963.05 in New York and $1,569.04 in Detroit.

Small businesses can do more to save on electricity, though.

Most utilities, including Mr. Kesten's own, Toronto Hydro, offer tips. Mr. Kesten says he's aware of many of the cost-saving measures, but he has to modify some of them to suit his particular business.

For example, Toronto Hydro's tips include changing store lighting to energy efficient compact fluorescent (CFL) lamps and bulbs or in some cases, new high efficiency T8 and T5 fluorescent tubes, replacing standard T12 ones.

CFL bulbs can provide the same lighting level and warmer, more comfortable lighting colours than old-fashioned incandescent bulbs. Newer fluorescent tubes don't hum and flicker the way the old ones do.

Mr. Kesten will need some persuading on this point. "Updating light bulbs to LED is a pain because they're so expensive and the light is worse," he says.

"Four years ago we outfitted a new store with 'efficient' LED lighting. I haven't changed any of those bulbs since, but I see no appreciable difference in those hydro bills."

Toronto Hydro says it is launching a rebate program with up to $2,000 for small businesses that seek to make their lighting more energy efficient.

Other energy saving tips for small businesses include:

- Using recommended thermostat set points. A store can still be comfortable if it's a degree or two colder in winter or warmer in summer, and it saves money - every degree of cooling in summer boosts energy use by 4 to 5 per cent. Unless the landlord locks the thermostat, this is a measure that storekeepers or office managers can take on their own.

- Replace older equipment with Energy Star-rated units. This can apply not only to your office bar fridge and toaster oven, but to office equipment such as scanners and TV monitors.

- Plant trees. If you do own your property, it's amazing how much energy can be saved by planting trees to keep the sunlight from roasting the office or store through the windows. They'll make the property look better, too.

- Programmable thermostats. By having the heating and cooling switch on automatically at set times when they're needed most, a business can save between 10 to 70 per cent on heating and cooling costs. Other measures that work are more low tech - adding insulation and weather stripping and installing shades, awnings or window tinting. These measures might require an investment by the landlord, but one does not - keep the door shut as shoppers come and go.

Some energy tips are not particularly applicable to a tech-focused consumer business like Mr. Kesten's stores. For example, it's commonly recommended that businesses keep computers on standby, as in a typical office they're only at work about 10 per cent of the time.

"Running computer repair centres as we do, there's no way around burning up electricity," Mr. Kesten says. As well, the sleek new Apple products on display in his stores need to be turned on so they will attract customers.

"Plus there's video surveillance, music for the store and computer-based point-of-sale terminals. It all adds up for sure," Mr. Kesten says.

Equipment such as photocopiers can be turned off - a copier kept on day and night costs more than $150 in wasted electricity - but Mr. Kesten's 21st century business relies less and less on photocopies.

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Hydro Ottawa installs more solar panels on city buildings

ottawacitizen.com - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Jon Willing

Hydro Ottawa's green-energy division is installing solar panels on eight more major city buildings.

The capital cost for the solar project is $6 million.

Energy Ottawa announced the installations Wednesday at the Jim Durrell Recreation Centre, one of the buildings included in the program.

The electricity generated by the eight solar sites is equivalent to removing 300 homes from the power grid annually, according to the utility. Solar panels on the Jim Durrell Recreation Centre will generate the equivalent power used by 30 homes.

The other city buildings in the program are the Ray Friel Complex on Tenth Line Road, Kanata Recreation Complex on Charlie Rogers Place, Walter Baker Sports Centre on Malvern Drive, François Dupuis Recreation Centre on Portobello Boulevard, an operations garage on Conroy Road, an articulated-bus garage on Industrial Avenue and an operations garage on Iber Road.

The utility says the solar panels will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 41,382 tonnes over a 20-year term.

Energy Ottawa installed solar panels on the roofs of city hall and the traffic control centre on Belfast Road as a pilot project in 2010.

In 2014 council voted on a deal with Energy Ottawa to install solar panels on more municipal buildings (www.ottawasun.com) . The deal wasn't as lucrative as the city originally thought it would be, but it's still making new revenue from leasing the roofs of buildings.

The city expects to receive $85,000 annually over the 20 years of the term.

Energy Ottawa, which sells electricity to the provincial grid, says it produces enough green power to run 62,000 homes annually. The company also has hydroelectric and landfill gas generating systems.

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City reduces energy use, but costs keep going up

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Sep 22 2016
Byline: Len Gillis
Page: A1 / Front

The good news is that City of Timmins has managed to reduce the amount of energy it uses.

The bad news is this effort isn't resulting in a significant reduction in costs.

That was the essence of the report presented to city council this week by an energy management firm.

The report revealed while Timmins is using less natural gas and less electricity, the market price of those commodities keeps going up.

City engineering director Luc Duval told council the city is mandated by the Green Energy Act to produce an annual report to demonstrate the city is actively working to conserve energy.

He introduced Steve Schmidt, a consultant with VIP Energy Services Inc, the company that is helping to manage energy costs for the city, by providing an energy management plan.

"In terms of natural gas, we're seeing that the consumption of natural gas is actually lower this year than the previous year," said Schmidt.

"But that hasn't directly translated into cost savings because some of the per unit costs have gone up."

Schmidt said the same trend is happening with electricity usage and costs by the City of Timmins.

In documents provided to council, Schmidt revealed actual kilowatt-hours used in city operations were down by 3% but the city's cost of electricity actually rose by 16% in the past year.

Similarly, the city's consumption of natural gas dropped by 7% but the cost to the city for purchasing natural rose by 15%.

However, Schmidt said the effort wasn't a complete lost cause. He said the efforts by city managers and workers to cut back on consumption still resulted in some cost savings.

"By reducing your consumption, you have avoided extra costs on top of what you already paid," he said. "The city's conservation efforts have allowed you to avoid over $100,000 in additional energy costs in the first six months of 2016."

Schmidt said it is still the right path to take because the city is developing the right approach to using and conserving energy.

"Because the cost of energy seems to be increasing every year, the value of activities you take today becomes more valuable as you move into the future, because the cost of each kilowatt hour (electricity) and each cubic metre (gas) is going up," he explained.

He said in the coming year, the city would also be paying more for carbon energy because of the provincial cap-and-trade energy program.

The "cap" is a limit, or a cap on the amount of greenhouse gas that can be produced by a factory for example. A factory that produces less greenhouse gas pollution gets credits for that.

The "trade" is the system that lets one factory trade or sell their credits to another factory or business that cannot reduce pollution so easily. The provincial target is to reduce carbon emissions by more than 4% per year.

The hope is that the system will encourage more big factories and refineries to innovate and reduce their carbon pollution in the long run.

Schmidt said the cap-and-trade program would not be a benefit for Timmins.

"In order to directly participate, you have be a very large user, in terms of per facility, far beyond any facility the city has," said Schmidt.

In fact, it would cost the city money.

"The fuel distributors are required to purchase credits on behalf of their clients and then pass the costs of those down to the city," Schmidt explained.

It means Timmins will have to pay a share of the cost of carbonbased pollution based on the rate of $17 per tonne of carbon. In real terms that means Timmins can be expected to pay 3.2-cents extra per cubic metre of natural gas and 4 to 6 cents more per litre on gasoline and diesel fuel.

He said Timmins has launched several energy improvement initiatives and activities that have helped the city overall.

He mentioned such things as the switchover to LED streetlights, compressor upgrades, improvements to heating and ventilation systems, and installing higher efficiency heater units.

"All of which, again, produces some savings with some pretty quick payback, so these are some smaller things but every bit helps," said Schmidt.

He also mentioned city energy costs are monitored and tracked on a regular basis. He said his company produces an Internet portal that city staffuses to check up on the consumption of energy, either building by building or for many buildings, on a monthly basis. Schmidt said this online monitoring has already resulted in cost savings for the city.

"Monitoring and tracking things is a very important part of any energy management program," he said.

Once Schmidt completed his presentation, he called for questions.

Mayor Steve Black asked about the province's recent offer made during the throne speech to provide residential users with a small tax rebate on their electricity bills.

"Have the cost escalations exceeded the 8% rebate we just got on the removal of HST?" the mayor asked.

Yes, Schmidt replied, stating the rising costs have exceeded the value of the rebate. He added it is not yet certain how that will impact Timmins.

He said it would be better if the HST rebate is applied as a credit. He said if the HST rebate actually removes the tax, the impact will be less for the city, because municipalities are usually able to reclaim some of their HST energy costs.

He said his company will be watching closely in the coming weeks for some clarity from the province on this issue.

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Opponents to Settler's Landing wind farm down but not out as Tribunal accepts wind company's remediation plan

www.mykawartha.com - Wed Sep 21 2016

PONTYPOOL - Manvers Wind Concerns president Paul Reid sums it up this way: "All in all, a predictable outcome from a thoroughly corrupt government...but thank you to all in our communities who stood up to these polished thugs."

Reid's comment came after the Environmental Review Tribunal (ERT) ruled in favour of a wind energy developer, accepting their proposed remedy for the Settler's Landing wind farm near Pontypool.

The Tribunal released its decision Monday (Sept. 19) after hearing final submissions on the appeal last month.

But it was a bitter pill to swallow for opponents of the project who were successful last year in proving the project would cause "serious and irreversible harm" to the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Capstone Infrastructure's Settler's Landing runs just west of Highway 35 along Telecom and Drum roads and involves the construction of five, 46-storey wind turbines. The director, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change issued a Renewable Energy Approval (REA) to Settlers Landing Nominee Ltd., granting approval for the construction, installation, operation, use and retiring of a Class 4 wind facility with a total name plate capacity of 10 megawatts.

A group of citizens opposed to the project later formed SLWP Opposition Corp. and appealed the REA to the Tribunal in May of 2015 on the grounds that the project will cause serious harm to human health and serious and irreversible harm to plant life, animal life or the natural environment.

The Tribunal held the hearing in Pontypool in September and October last year, and later found in favour of the appellants relating to harm to the environment.

The Tribunal, in last year's decision, found that construction and decommissioning of turbines 3 and 5, and the access roads to turbines 2, 3 and 5, would cause such harm to a significant woodland on the provincially-protected Moraine.

Last month, the Tribunal heard the wind developer's proposed remedy and the submissions from lawyers for the developer, the Ministry and the appellants. A representative for Capstone Infrastructure said the proposed remedy addressed four key findings in the Tribunals's decision, which included tree removal (clear cutting), fragmentation of the land because the access road would cut through it, impact on wildlife habitat and the time it would take for the woodland to re-grow.

The company's proposal was to remove turbine 5, leaving the trees in the area intact; move the proposed access road, and use the existing 'farm track' and widening it. (Three of the five turbines are planned to be built in this woodland area.)

In a 42-page decision on Monday, the Tribunal rejected the appellants' arguments and ruled that the developer's proposed remedies addressed the Tribunal's concerns, accepting the plan to rehabilitate the woodlands and tree growth, the removal of Turbine 5. There will now be four turbines instead of five.

Stuart Williams, one of the residents who fought against Settlers Landing said the decision was particularly hard to take, especially since the group had "proven our point" to the ERT last year (that the wind turbines would cause serious and irreversible harm to the environment."

"That forest was planted 40 years ago; it covers two and a half to three football fields," he said. "You can't replace it; it will be wiped out.

We were one of only three appellants who have won an ERT hearing in Canada. If this had been a year and one half ago we would be looking at a defeated wind turbine company. Just over a year ago the Ontario Court of Appeals ruled that a remediation proposal was required to be heard and subsequently it became part of the process if the wind company was to lose an ERT. We lost that appeal of the remediation phase of hearings.

"What we were successful in achieving is that Capstone has reduced the turbine installation by one turbine. They decided to remove the turbine which would have done the most damage to Oak Ridges Moraine Woodland #11. They also have removed the connecting road which would have also cleared much of this woodland. Capstone will also now be required to "create a woodland" equal to about three times the size of the forest to be cleared for turbine #3."

But, Williams noted the battle is David versus Goliath.

"We only had about $45,000; we couldn't afford to fly in all the experts like arborists...I'd say Capstone has probably spent $500,000 in legal costs and we just don't have that kind of money."

Williams said the group is extremely grateful to the people who gave time, money and what expertise they could to help the group accomplish what they have so far.

He said the group will take the next few days to review the decision and consider their options.

"People have seen the huge turbines on Highway 7; the Snowy Ridge project and they are saying they had no idea how big these monsters are," he said. "They have no idea of the enormity of this. It is difficult to be a part of a team involved in a fight like this for so long and not have an emotional response to what has just happened.

"But, when you get knocked down, you have to be able to get back up."

The second Tilting at Windmills fundraising sale will help raise money for legal expenses. The sale takes Saturday, Oct. 1 at 9 a.m. at 1402 Highway 7A, just west of Bethany.

The first sale in July raised more than $5,000, which paid off the Snowy Ridge appeal legal expenses and contributed to the Settler's Landing legal challenge.

The sale offers a wide variety of unique and one-of-a-kind items and all proceeds will go to the Settler's Landing group's legal expenses.

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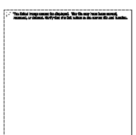

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Tempers flare over proposed south Niagara hydro increase

www.niagarathisweek.com - Wed Sep 21 2016

PORT COLBORNE — She didn't want to yell. In fact, moments after her tearful outburst, she looked as if she regretted it. But her emotions got the better of her.

“I can not pay this bill,” shouted Maggie Chisholm as she thrust from her purse a recent hydro bill which, due to a scorching hot summer in Niagara, topped $400. Faced with the very real prospect of choosing between buying groceries and keeping the lights on, Chisholm was disconsolate when she learned that her hydro provider had applied for a rate increase.

“You don’t care about your customers,” she screamed, wiping tears from her eyes as she laid into the corporate suit from Canadian Niagara Power (CNP) who was attempting to justify the increase. “This is bullshit.”

Over the summer, with home air conditioning costs soaring, CNP applied to the Ontario Energy Board for permission to increase its rates by nearly $60 a year for the average customer.

Before that increase can be approved, a public meeting was held where CNP’s customers in Fort Erie and Port Colborne could gather information and ask questions.

To say it didn’t go well would be an understatement.

It started off well enough. For the first 20 minutes, CNP’s vice president of operations, Jie Han, spoke to the crowd of about 100 ratepayers about the lovely community focused initiatives which his company is involved in. The flowery language continued until a woman from the crowd interrupted his presentation.

“This is all nice and stuff, but I’m here for one reason and one reason only: because I can’t afford to pay for these hydro increases,” shouted Heather Hudson. “I may have to sell my house because of this. How am I supposed to pay for this increase?”

A man from the Ontario Energy Board politely tried to ask her to wait until the end of the presentation to ask questions, but by then it was too late. The floodgates opened and a wave of shouting and jeering consumed the conference room for the next few minutes. Someone hollered something derogatory about Premier Kathleen Wynne, to which the crowd responded with uproarious applause.

Realizing he had lost control, Han threw in the towel and gave in to the angry crowd’s demands.

“You don’t wanna hear all this stuff, fine, we’ll skip it,” said Han as he turned off his presentation and got down to the point. “I’m not the one generating this power. We just buy the power, and re-sell it to you.”

And according Han, it’s the people generating the power – the province and its crown agencies like Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One – who are driving up the price. Infrastructure improvements and other costs at at the local level incurred by CNP account for some of the increase, but the bulk comes from the province, he insisted.

However, in a bizarre twist of governmental tinkering, generating electricity in Ontario is actually the cheapest it’s been in decades. On average, electricity in Ontario is being generated for about three cents per kilowatt hour (kWh). Ontario hydro prices refuse to drop proportionately though, because of the extremely lucrative contracts signed between the provincial government and a small group of green energy suppliers.

The green energy contracts guarantee those producers 13.5 cents per kWh for energy produced by wind farms, and an even higher rate for energy pumping into the grid from solar farms.

So if electricity can be produced here for three cents per kWh, but the green energy producers have to get paid at least 13.5 cents per kWh, then who makes up the difference? The ratepayers do, in the form of enormous subsidies through the Green Energy Act.

Over the course of the 20-year green energy contracts, Ontario's auditor general estimates hydro customers will be overcharged for wind and solar energy by $9.2 billion.

In 2013, wind and solar energy provided about four per cent of the energy pumped into Ontario's grid, and yet, the bill for that clean energy accounted for 20 per cent of the costs paid by consumers that year.

In a bid to ease some of that burden, the province announced last week that it would be dropping the provincial HST portion off customer's hydro bills. The eight per cent cut will come into effect on Jan. 1, 2017.

Later this fall, the Ontario Energy Board will decide whether or not to let CNP increase the rate it charges to its 24,000 customers in south Niagara.

If approved, the increase will come into effect on Jan. 1, 2017.

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Premier wynne tours hydro ottawa, touts new electricity rebate

Nepean Barrhaven News - Thu Sep 22 2016
Byline: Megan Delaire
Page: A19

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne had a glimpse of the inner workings of Ottawa Hydro during a visit to the city on Sept. 16.

Wynne was joined by Ottawa West-Nepean MPP Bob Chiarelli, Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi, Ottawa-Orléans MPP Marie-France Lalonde, Ottawa South MPP John Fraser and Hydro Ottawa CEO Bryce Conrad.

The premier's trip to Ottawa came days after her government announced plans to offer a new rebate on electricity in Ontario.

Amid growing criticism over the high cost of electricity in the province, the provincial government pledged in a Sept. 12 Throne Speech to reinstate an eight per cent tax rebate on electricity bills.

The rebate amounts to the provincial portion of the HST and is expected to save a typical household $130 a year. Wynne used her Hydro Ottawa tour as well as stops at

the National Gallery of Canada and the Kanata Seniors Centre as an opportunity to tout the rebate in Ottawa.

"I've heard from people in the Ottawa region and in every region across the province that its become too much,"

Wynne said of the cost of electricity in Ontario.

"And we've listened to those concerns, because it's not just an electricity issue. People need more help with the cost of living, and it's our job to give people that break wherever we can."

The rebate would go into effect Jan. 1, affecting 5 million residential consumers. Eligible rural customers would receive a larger rebate in the form of lowered rural delivery charges, saving $540 a year.

"We've recognized that there needs to be a change," Wynne said. "And that's exactly why we've made the changes that we announced in the throne speech."

But not everyone is buying What the premier is selling.

In an open letter to Wynne, Osgood Coun. George Darouze highlighted the disparity between Hydro Ottawa customers' bills and those of Hydro One customers. The rural Ottawa councillor said many Hydro One customers in Ontario face a daily choice "between feeding their families and turning on the lights." "Removing the eight per cent HST from hydro bills is no more than a small bandaid on a much larger wound," Darouze wrote, adding that the move would only serve to decrease provincial revenue while allowing Hydro One to continue gouging rural customers.

"Not only does this not address the gap between Hydro One rate payers and Hydro Ottawa rate payers, it does not correct the issue at its core."

Darouze, who plans to present a petition entitled Fair Hydro for Ottawa to the Ontario legislature in the fall, said more needs to be done to make the cost of hydro more equitable.

"I urge you to take serious and immediate action towards correcting the erroneous cost of hydro rates under Hydro One," he said. "We deserve a real and substantive solution."

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Ontario Energy Board investigating composition of Collus Powerstream board

Collingwood Connection - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: John Edwards

The Ontario Energy Board is investigating Collus Powerstream, specifically looking into whether the composition of the board of directors meets the rules.

Karen Evans, director of corporate and communications, told Simcoe.com investigators are looking into whether the current composition of the board of directors is within the rules outlined in the Affiliate Relationships Code.

"The Affiliate Relationships Code (ARC) lays out the rules for how monopoly utilities deal with their affiliated companies," Evans said. "One of the key objectives of the ARC is to ensure that ratepayers are not harmed by these affiliate relationships."

According to a letter on Wednesday's Strategic Initiatives Committee agenda from Sophie Rousseau, advisor for consumer protection and industry performance for the OEB, the investigations centers around section 2.1.2 of the ARC.

The section says: "A utility shall ensure that at least one-third of its board of directors is independent from any affiliate."

The current board is comprised of Town of Collingwood clerk and board co-chairperson Sara Almas, CAO John Brown, treasurer Marjory Leonard, Powerstream President Brian Bentz, Executive Vice-President Corporate Services and Secretary for Powerstream, and board co-chairperson Dan Horchik.

In June, Collingwood council replaced Mayor Sandra Cooper, David McFadden and John Wortz with the three staff members.

Evans said the investigation is ongoing and no decision has been made.

"If we find that a utility has broken the rules, the OEB has a number of actions it can take including requiring the utility to comply with the rules or applying penalties," she said. "The OEB's process for this includes giving the utility a chance to present its side of the story before we make our final decision."

The matter was included on the Collingwood council agenda today. Watch this story for updates following the council discussion.

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256677271

Economic Development and Innovation Summit focuses on leveraging Bruce Power's investment to benefit region

Kincardine News - Thu Sep 22 2016
Byline: Troy Patterson
Page: A5

Properly harnessing the Bruce Power refurbishment's economic shock wave can open new national and international opportunities for communities in Bruce, Grey and Huron counties.

Over 50 local leaders, as well as regional and provincial economic development professionals, took part in the Economic Development and Innovation Summit Sept. 14, 2016 at Kincardine's Marritott TownePlace Suites, with a day of speakers touching on the sustainable growth of the nuclear industry, in the region, province and internationally that benefit from the refurbishment of the world's largest operating nuclear site.

The event formally launched the joint economic development initiative between Bruce Power and Bruce County, which emphasized the impact the multi-year, $13 billion investment by Bruce Power will have on the region.

"It's the biggest nuclear facility in the world, so any big change in a centre of that size is going to have global eyes looking upon it for sure ," said Robert Lavigne, managing director of economic research for Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) Capital Markets. "All communities are become impacted by global forces, so for this conference my goal was to make sure that global context and national and provincial context made relevant what was being discussed here today."

Organized by Bruce County and Bruce Power, the focus of the event on 'affordable power, jobs and growth'dissected the impact the nuclear portion of Ontario's Long Term

Energy Plan will have, injecting 18,000 jobs in the region annually and $4 billion in annual economic benefit.

"The world is slowing, becoming more volatile, and we're running out of room for monetary policy to stimulate things ," Lavigne said.

Lavigne said Ontario and its municipalities have an opportunity to take advantage of a number of economic factors alongside the Bruce Power refurbishment boom, from the cost of the Canadian dollar attracting American investment and buying exports, the interest in Toronto as an international financial centre, housing market and what future consumption in the province could look like.

"These factors we can't ignore when you think of future electricity demand, challenges the region faces, taking advantage of these period to make sure the future is bright and we don't go through bad times like we did in the recession ," he said.

The world is watching nuclear power, its expansive energy capacity and availability of uranium as a longterm resource. Alongside renewable energy, Lavigne said nuclear makes more sense than fossil fuels over the long term, even with the recent dip in oil prices.

"Of course you have to think about communications strategies for nuclear, and I think this is a great example of how nuclear power can work with communities to make sure that safety is first and that people realize the positive spinoffs ," he said. "The world is going to end up being nuclear in some shape or form down the road. Resources are a commodity, they are scarce, where nuclear isn't."

The morning session saw Bruce Power's new president and CEO Mike Rencheck share the company's strategic long-term vision in a multi-year outlook. Patrick Dillon of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario outlined the building trades perspective on workforce development in the region.

After lunch, the crowd heard from Michael Fenn, former Ontario Deputy Minister and former chief administrative officer of Hamilton and Burlington outline how both counties and their municipalities can "Think globally, act regionally, and benefit locally " by building successful economic partnerships.

Fenn said with 10,000 municipalities in North America, it makes sense that competition is going to happen within areas like Bruce, Grey and Huron counties. But a regional platform and outlook should be the goal of each, "in terms of attracting regional investment."

Rural areas like this deal with challenges ranging from transportation, to youth migration to major centres, fluctuations in the agriculture and tourism industries they often rely on, and infrastructure hurdles that may impact future investments, he said.

"If you're going to play in the big leagues, you have to understand what the big leagues are doing to your area ," said Fenn.

With 190 firms involved with Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries, Fenn said the regions have to be prepared to capitalize on the potential investors that accompany major economic boons like Bruce Power's refurbishment. From First Nations, to trade unions, credit unions, not-for-profits and immigrant investors, the region can benefit from the interest of these groups if it fills the gaps in local infrastructure that may deter investment.

This means making regions attractive to executives, professionals and tradespeople, strengthening healthcare education and housing, which he said the Bruce region has demonstrated with its success in sectors like community revitalization and physician recruitment.

"It's a question of how you're seen by the world ," said Fenn. "It's a good opportunity with the Bruce (Power) investment for a makeover in Bruce County.

There are new global markets for local products."

Fenn used University of Toronto's Richard Florida's example that a community needs to cultivate a "creative class " to grow with the new economy, with technology and video game companies, as well as arts and culture industries mentioned.

In order to do this, strengthening broadband internet in the region to benefit e-commerce, is essential to attracting business and allowing local firms to compete internationally, like the Eastern Ontario Wardens were successful by establishing the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) to ensure internet reaches remote rural areas. Similarly the Bruce, Grey Huron Region is currently undertaking the $180 million SWIFT ultrahigh-speed internet project to see high speed internet reach rural areas in Southwestern Ontario and Niagara region.

"Infrastructure will change the way we do business in the future ," he said.

Fenn said local leaders have to work to dispel myths about the challenges of doing business in the area, while being realistic about local limitations and the infrastructure needed to meet their goals.

"The area has a great deal to offer if it embraces the challenges and opportunities ," he said.

The afternoon also included segments by Bruce County chief administrative officer Kelley Coulter on a 'Macro Approach'economic development in the region. James Scongack discussed Bruce Power and Bruce County's 'Collaborative Economic Development Initiative'. Stellina Williams spoke on the Nuclear Industry's Investment Strategy and the day rounded off with a working session on 'How to collaboratively support business investment in the region as it relates to Bruce Power's investment activities

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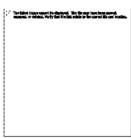

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Richmond Hill Lighting the Way to Savings

Canada Newswire - Wed Sep 21 2016, 12:25pm ET

Town awards contract for LED conversion project that will save the community $1.5 million a year

RICHMOND HILL, ON, Sept. 21, 2016 /CNW/ - Richmond Hill has awarded Ameresco, Inc. the contract to design, supply and install LED lights and a Smart Lighting Control System on its outdoor lighting network. The contract was awarded as a result of a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

Richmond Hill operates and maintains a network of approximately 17,000 street, park and parking lot lights. This represents a significant portion of the Town's overall energy consumption and cost. The $8 million (approximately) project to convert more than 15,000 of the outdoor lights is expected to result in an estimated savings of $1.5 million in operations and maintenance costs annually.

"This is an upfront and forward thinking investment that will pay for itself in roughly six to seven years," said Mayor Dave Barrow. "Switching to LED lights will help us conserve energy, save money and protect the environment."

Research has shown that LED lights are better than the current High Pressure Sodium lights because they consume 50 to 60 per cent less energy, they have a 20-year life expectancy, reducing maintenance costs by up to 80 per cent and they have superior light quality, making our community safer for drivers and pedestrians. In addition, the LED lights will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our lighting network by 575 tonnes per year - that's the equivalent to taking 121 passenger cars off the road!

Smart lighting controls installed on each light will allow staff to monitor and operate the lights remotely. Staff will be able to monitor electricity consumption more accurately, program certain operations like dimming, and receive real-time lights-out or trouble notifications. These features will help save energy and cost, and improve service.

The inclusion of smart lighting controls is significant because it essentially creates a wireless narrow band communications network throughout Richmond Hill. With this wireless network in place, Richmond Hill is one of the few Canadian municipalities to lay the foundation for high-tech systems management and is establishing the foundation for future 'smart cities' applications such as smart traffic lights, water and gas metering.

Ameresco, Inc. is an independent provider of comprehensive energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions throughout North America and the United Kingdom. Work will begin in October with installation starting in January 2017. The project is expected to take one year to complete. Once work is underway, progress updates will be available on the Town's website at RichmondHill.ca (www.richmondhill.ca) .

SOURCE Town of Richmond Hill

Image with caption: "Town of Richmond Hill (CNW Group/Town of Richmond Hill)". Image available at: http://photos.newswire.ca/images/download/20160921_C3925_PHOTO_EN_778576.jpg (photos.newswire.ca)

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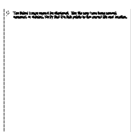

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Transparency essential to cap and trade program

The Timmins Daily Press - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Allan O'Dette
Page: A4

On behalf of the 135 chambers of commerce and boards of trade who make up our network across Ontario, i want to express our collective concerns about the Oeb's recent decision to include charges related to the recovery of cap and trade program costs in the delivery charge on utility customers' bills.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has publicly indicated support for the province's efforts in dealing with climate change through the Climate Change action plan and specifically the decision to move forward with a cap and trade program which is designed to significantly reduce GhG emissions and deliver a lower carbon future for all Ontarians.

In the ramp-up to the last election and in the months that followed, ontario's business community was more than pleased to hear that the premier will be expecting her government to be the most transparent and accountable government anywhere in Canada and that she will always work to ensure the broadest consultation and the most transparent process when it comes to implementing new policies in the province of Ontario.

We believe that this exemplary doctrine should be applied across all parts of the government and the various stakeholder agencies and Crown corporations that support it.

Unfortunately, this decision of the Oeb seems on the surface to run counter to that doctrine of transparency.

Indeed the entire premise of cap and trade program is to place a price on carbon in order to motivate customers to take action and change behaviour.

This could be achieved through various programs to reduce consumption and associated emissions.

To remove this line of sight from customers who make it more difficult to achieve GhG emissions reductions, and would likely result in increased costs for businesses and consumers as the price of carbon increases over time.

This is not consistent with the philosophy of the program, and is in our view, not in the public interest.

Our chambers believe that the transparency of the cap and trade program is an essential component of driving changes in customer behaviour, which is fundamental to achieving the government's emissions reduction objectives.

All natural gas customers need to see the cost of carbon allowances clearly identified on their bills to make informed decisions in respect to that price signal.

We would therefore respectfully request that the Oeb reverse this decision in the interest of successfully moving the cap and trade program forward.

Allan O'Dette President CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce

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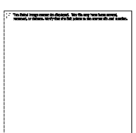

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Your TV may use more energy than you think, group charges; Your TV may use more energy than you think, group charges

Canadian Press - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Michael Liedtke

SAN FRANCISCO - An environmental group accused three major television manufacturers Wednesday of misleading consumers and regulators about how much energy their high-definition screens devour by designing them to draw less power during government testing than in ordinary use.

The Natural Resources Defence Council concluded that the TVs made by Samsung, LG Electronics and Vizio saddle households with an extra $120 million in electricity bills each year and generate tons of additional pollution.

The added expense works out to about $10 to $20 per household annually over the anticipated decade-long life of the typical widescreen TV.

Both Samsung and LG Electronics disputed the findings.

"It appears that some major manufacturers have modified their TV designs to get strong energy-use marks during government testing but may not perform as well in consumer homes," said Noah Horowitz, senior scientist and director for the NRDC's centre for energy efficiency standards.

The report called to mind elements of the Volkswagen emissions scandal in which the automaker duped U.S. regulators by using sophisticated software to turn on emissions controls when the cars were being tested and turn them off during real-world driving.

Samsung and LG did not break any laws, according to the report, but rather exploited weaknesses in the Department of Energy's system to measure electricity usage.

The behaviour "smacks of bad faith," Horowitz said.

The findings were based on an analysis of high-definition TVs with screens spanning at least 55 inches made in 2015 and 2016. The estimates on electricity costs are based on high-definition TVs with screens 32 inches and larger.

The study concluded that Samsung and LG exploited the testing system to get better scores on the yellow "EnergyGuide" labels that appear on sets in stores. Those scores often influence the buying decisions of consumers looking to save money on utility bills.

Samsung and LG sets have a dimming feature that turns off the screens' backlight during the 10-minute video clip used in government tests, according to the study. But that does not typically happen when the sets are being used in homes to watch sports, comedies, dramas and news programming.

The reason the TVs perform differently during tests is because the government relies on an 8-year-old clip that stitches together 260 separate scenes that rapidly change, keeping the backlight off. The NRDC study found scenes lasted longer in a football game, the HBO comedy "Silicon Valley," the AMC drama "Breaking Bad" and a CNN program. The longer scenes resulted in the picture staying brighter, drawing more electricity than in government tests.

LG spokesman John Taylor wrote in an email that the company was "confident that our products are being tested properly and are delivering energy efficiency in real world use."

Samsung said the government-tested ratings are based on the factory settings for the picture - something that most consumers do not change. That is consistent with the report, which assumes that two-thirds of consumers leave those settings in place.

The company did not comment on what happens to energy usage when the settings are changed except to say that consumers should have the option to choose the picture they want.

Vizio did not respond to requests for comment.

The NRDC called on the Department of Energy to test energy usage with a montage of clips mirroring how TV is typically watched in homes. The department said Wednesday that it is reviewing whether it needs to change its testing to keep up with the latest TV technology.

The analysis also found that Samsung, LG and Vizio disable energy-saving features in their TVs when consumers change the factory setting on the picture with a remote control. The report estimated that happens in one-third of all homes.

The energy-saving feature is turned off with little or no warning on the screen, sometimes doubling the amount of electricity consumed, according to the NRDC report. This potential uptick in energy usage is not detected in government testing either.

Other TV sets made by Sony and Philips did not deactivate their power-saving features when changes were made to the default setting for the picture, according to the study.

Add it all up, and the report estimates that total electricity bills during a decade of watching the high-definition TVs will be $1.2 billion higher than the energy ratings imply. The higher energy usage generates an additional 5 million metric tons of carbon pollution, potentially affecting the climate, the report warned.

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This story has been corrected to change the reference to the yellow power-rating label to "EnergyGuide" instead of "Energy Star."

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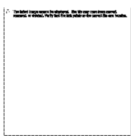

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Puerto Rico hit with islandwide blackout after fire erupts; Puerto Rico hit with islandwide blackout after fire erupts

Canadian Press - Wed Sep 21 2016
Byline: Danica Coto

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - A big fire erupted at an electricity plant that powers most of Puerto Rico on Wednesday, causing a blackout that swept across the U.S. territory of 3.5 million people.

The Electric Power Authority said two transmission lines of 230,000 volts each failed. Executive Director Javier Quintana told reporters that he expected most power to be restored by Thursday morning, adding that airports, hospitals, police stations and water plants would get priority.

"The entire island is without power," said Angel Crespo, director of Puerto Rico's fire department.

He said firefighters extinguished the blaze at the southern power plant, which serves a majority of customers on the island.

Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla told reporters the fire began in a switch and initially destroyed a system that provides 30 per cent of Puerto Rico's overall power.

"This is a very serious event," he said. "The system is not designed to withstand a failure of this magnitude."

He did not directly answer a question about whether the power company has any kind of backup should another similar situation occur, or if the island was hit by a major hurricane.

"I assume complete responsibility," Garcia said of the outage. "Everyone knows that the company's maintenance problems began decades ago."

The power company is struggling with a $9 billion debt that it hopes to restructure as it faces numerous corruption allegations. Company officials have said they are seeking more revenue to update what they say is outdated equipment.

Garcia, however, said that no amount of money or maintenance would have prevented the fire.

Authorities said the outage caused 15 fires across Puerto Rico as a result of malfunctioning generators, including at the upscale Vanderbilt hotel in the popular tourist area of Condado and at the mayor's office in the northern coastal town of Catano. All those fires were put out and no one was injured, officials said.

The outage also affected water service across the island, with officials urging customers to be prudent in their usage.

The blackout snarled road traffic and the government had to cancel train service in the capital of San Juan and close a busy traffic tunnel in the south. Businesses, universities and government offices shuttered early, creating even more chaos on roads. A police officer directing traffic was hit and taken to the hospital.

"I call on people to co-operate and respect drivers and government officials ... to avoid any regrettable incidents," Transportation Secretary Miguel Torres said.

The outage angered many Puerto Ricans who are struggling with power bills that are on average twice that of the U.S. mainland. People took to social media to demand where exactly their money is going.

Puerto Rico is mired in a decade-long economic slump, and a newly created federal control board is working to restructure nearly $70 billion in public debt that the governor has said is unpayable.

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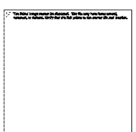

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Canada could meet emissions target without huge carbon tax: SFU professor

CBC.CA News - Wed Sep 21 2016, 4:58pm ET
Byline:CBC News

A new report says Canada could meet its emissions target under the Paris climate agreement without a hefty carbon tax.

The carbon tax has been a contentious issue between the provinces and the federal government.

Recently, the federal government announced it will impose carbon pricing on provinces that don't find a way to regulate carbon emissions themselves.

Alberta and B.C. have adopted a carbon tax, while Ontario and Quebec have opted for a cap and trade policy.

Sill, many provinces ? particularly Saskatchewan ? have voiced strong opposition to the scheme.

Even B.C.'s much lauded 2008 carbon tax was only adopted after substantial debate.

Premier Christy Clark made and kept a campaign promise to freeze the tax since she came into office in 2011.

Simon Fraser University energy economist Mark Jaccard ? the report's author ? says Canada can by-pass the political battle over carbon pricing and still meet its obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent by 2030.

Proposed carbon price not politically tenable

Jaccard, one of the original architects of B.C.'s carbon pricing plan, said he was motivated to write the report because of the emphasis on carbon pricing as the only solution.

"Different organizations are saying to politicians the only way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to price carbon ... but what would the price actually be and is it politically tenable?"

In order to meet the Paris agreement, Jaccard calculated a national carbon tax would need to start at $30 per tonne of carbon dioxide and eventually hit $200 per tonne in 2030.

In other words, B.C. residents would have pay an additional four cents per litre on gas every year for the next 14 years.

That, he said, would be politically unpopular.

Less political resistance

Jaccard suggests a modest carbon tax paired with other industry regulation would face less political resistance.

"A jurisdiction like California has avoided the [carbon tax] battle and kept moving forward with regulations like changing the vehicle fleet and electricity generation."

Regulation in industries like personal vehicle manufacturing, electricity, and public transit can be amended without great political opposition, Jaccard said.

One California example, he explained, is car manufacturers have to sell a certain proportion of low emission cars, or face penalties.

Manufacturers who sell a lot can trade with others who sell less.

"The policy is almost as efficient as an emissions price."

Beyond carbon pricing

Matt Horne, associate director in B.C. of the Pembina Institute and a member of B.C.'s Climate Leadership Team, says the report is a good reminder to look beyond carbon pricing.

He acknowledged, for example, many critics evaluated the success of B.C.'s recent climate change plan based on whether or not the province increased the carbon tax ? simplifying a complicated policy.

- B.C. Premier Christy Clark's climate change plan does not raise carbon tax

"The reality is that a meaningful climate plan is going to need a bunch of different pieces working together. There is a tendency to boil it down to shorthand which in some cases just focuses on the carbon price ... We have to look at a mix of carbon pricing and regulations."

The federal government is expected to meet with the provinces this fall to create a national climate strategy, including a national carbon pricing plan.

With files from The Early Edition

To hear the interview, click on the link labelled SFU prof on how Canada can meet its Paris commitments without carbon pricing

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Alberta should 'get going' on energy efficiency, Nova Scotia expert advises

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As Alberta prepares to place greater emphasis on energy efficiency, another province is advising Alberta to get going.

The head of Nova Scotia's electricity efficiency agency spoke at the Pembina Institute's Alberta climate summit in Calgary on Tuesday.

Alberta's environment minister has repeatedly said Alberta is a bit of a laggard in North America when it comes to energy efficiency.

Stephen MacDonald with Nova Scotia's Efficiency One says it's never too late to start.

"There's a lot of things that can be done very quickly and so my key piece of advice is to get going," he said.

In Nova Scotia, MacDonald says the non-profit agency took an early focus on easy things, such as getting people to switch to LED light bulbs.

This year alone, he says Nova Scotia is using eight per cent less electricity, saving the province about $110 million.

"Energy efficiency is something that not only saves people money, it's also good for the environment. Energy efficiency is one of the fastest, most cost-effective and lowest risk ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

The issue is something Albertans are going to be hearing a lot more about soon.

The provincial government is expecting a report in November from its energy efficiency advisory panel on what steps Alberta should take first to cut its energy usage.

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