Message

From: John Cannella [/O=IMO/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=JOHN CANNELLA5E4]
Sent: 2017-03-07 6:38:09 AM
Subject: Today's News - Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Today's News

powered by:

Date: Tuesday, March 7, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Cavan Monaghan mayor calls on province to install some fairness into the electricty price discussion

Peterborough This Week - Mon Mar 6 2017

To whom it may concern at Queen's Park, A 25 per cent reduction in electricity rates ... great idea to refinance over a longer period, increase the amount of interest paid, and continue to saddle our children's future with billions of dollars of ...

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Reducing hydro bills the fairer way forward

Toronto Star - Tue Mar 7 2017
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Budget watchdog to examine Ontario hydro relief plan; PCs question Liberal math; Watchdog to examine Ontario hydro plan

Canadian Press - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Allison Jones

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High hydro prices hurt Ontario factories, industry group says

CBC.CA News - Mon Mar 6 2017, 12:35pm ET
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A group that represents hundreds of small to medium sized manufacturers across the province is urging the Ontario government to lower hydro fees for industrial users, or face the prospect of some factories packing up and moving to other ...

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Windsor Star - Mon Mar 6 2017
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The community should feel insulted by OPG move says MPP

www.baytoday.ca - Mon Mar 6 2017
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Saving energy for profit Energy efficiency, energy management offer business success beyond cost management

The Chronicle Journal - Fri Mar 3 2017
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Turbine turmoil avoidable, study says

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Wind farms don't have to be a flashpoint for community resentment, if the benefits are spread around. That's the conclusion of a study by two Western University geography researchers who compared the relatively smooth rollout of wind farms in Nova ...

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Cutting costs way better than cutting power bills

Kingston Whig-Standard - Tue Mar 7 2017
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The Wynne government's announcement last week of a reduction in power rates in Ontario is good politics. Too bad it's lousy government. Something had to be done to ease power poverty in the province and the rate reduction at least begins ...

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Bunker opponents take concerns to top

London Free Press - Tue Mar 7 2017
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A non-profit group opposing a proposed nuclear-waste bunker near Lake Huron says it will provide its feedback to a report on the facility directly to the federal minister of the environment. "We are providing our response directly to (Environment ...

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EV charging station ready for business; Fees for use set at Sarnia electric vehicle charging station

Sarnia Observer - Tue Mar 7 2017
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A city-owned electric-vehicle charging station is online and ready to use at the Charlotte Street parking lot in Sarnia. Economic Development Director Peter Hungerford said the City of Sarnia has had a few phone calls since the pilot project, in ...

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Alectra warning business customers of phone scam

thespec.com - Mon Mar 6 2017

Alectra Utilities says its business customers are being targeted by a phone scammer who threatens to cut off their hydro if they don't make an immediate payment. The local hydro corporation says customers are receiving calls from someone ...

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Province should never have gotten involved in running our electrical power system

Clarington This Week - Mon Mar 6 2017

To the editor: I worked for Ontario Hydro and it's successor company OPG for 30 years. In the early days Ontario Hydro was one company that planned, produced and distributed electricity throughout the ...

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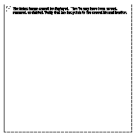

268383129

Cavan Monaghan mayor calls on province to install some fairness into the electricty price discussion

Peterborough This Week - Mon Mar 6 2017

To whom it may concern at Queen's Park,

A 25 per cent reduction in electricity rates … great idea to refinance over a longer period, increase the amount of interest paid, and continue to saddle our children's future with billions of dollars of debt before they even earn their first paycheque.

And the problem still isn't being fixed. Wind turbine projects and solar panel projects continue to be built. Too late to cancel? The $1 billion gas plant in a Liberal riding wasn't too late to cancel.

I just received correspondence from the Energy Ministry that part of the reason for the increase in electricity rates was due to an increase in demand.

Does anyone in the Ministry read the IESO reports to realize that demand has been decreasing for a decade, while the supply has continued to increase under these overpriced Green Energy contracts, generating huge surpluses that are sold to the states at less than it cost to generate? Enter the Global Adjustment Charge, to make up the difference, and stick it to the citizens and businesses of Ontario.

Massive delivery charges are still being added to rural Ontario customers' bills because, in the Province's own words, it costs more to deliver electricity to rural Ontario, so they should pay because it wouldn't be fair to make urban Ontario pay the same.

Since when has the principles of the Liberal Party been about being fair?

Seniors in rural Ontario on fixed incomes can't afford their electricity and the large delivery charges, but they pay educational taxes because that's fair.

Rural Ontario pays two cents per litre on their gasoline to go toward public transit projects in Urban Ontario because that's fair.

And to add salt to the wounds the 2 cents per litre of all gasoline sold in the province will increase to 4 cents per litre to go toward public transit in urban Ontario in the coming years because that's fair.

Province, wake up and start solving the problems, instead of saddling our children with more and more debt.

Deal with skyrocketing salaries in Hydro One and OPG.Regardless of whether you believe the CEOs are worth $4 million per year, we can't afford them, show them the door.

As for the thousands of others on those high six-figure salaries sitting at desks, get rid of the desks.

Hydro One is profitable on the backs of Ontario rate payers that can't afford their bills. How can rate increases be approved by the OEB when they're turning a profit?

Step in and force rate reductions. Worse case the stock values of Hydro One will drop and you can buy it back at a rock bottom price. I'm not seeing the downside.

Scott McFadden

Mayor of Cavan Monaghan Township

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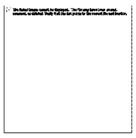

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Reducing hydro bills the fairer way forward

Toronto Star - Tue Mar 7 2017
Byline: Kathleen Wynne
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Since announcing our plan to lower hydro bills by an average of 25 per cent last Thursday, I have spoken with people all across Ontario. I was following up on conversations I've been having recently with people who had written me about their rising bills.

People such as Libby Keenan, who had taken the time to tell me about how they were personally struggling and share ideas about how to fix the problem. These calls were not a celebration. They were simply an opportunity for me to share the news that significant, lasting relief is coming.

If those conversations have made one thing clear, it's that everybody agrees: something had to be done. Rates have risen too much and too quickly, hitting households everywhere. For some families, it has gotten to the point where they must choose between groceries and electricity. It's unacceptable. People have not been getting a fair deal.

By delivering the biggest rate cut in Ontario's history and holding rate increases to inflation for at least four years, this plan provides an overdue solution. More importantly, it's a solution that will last. These structural changes we're making will also hold rate increases to inflation for at least four years. It's not just another quick fix that will catch up with us, like the rate freezes of the 1990s.

The '90s are a good place to start. By then, governments of all stripes had neglected the system for decades. And by the early 2000s, it had caught up with us.

Brownouts, blackouts and dirty coal plants endangered our economy and our health.

The project of rebuilding the system began about 15 years ago. We closed all of Ontario's coal plants, built thousands of kilometres of new transmission lines and introduced renewable energy. We have gone from having dozens of smog days a year to zero. There has been a drop in childhood asthma in just about every community. Ontario now has a clean, reliable system with a modern, diverse mix of generating sources. It will benefit the province for decades.

But - all of this came at a price. And our mistake was in setting unfair terms to cover the cost of those necessary renovations. We put the $50-billion cost of the rebuild onto the hydro bills of just one generation. It meant high bills because we were all helping to pay down those costs really quickly. Too quickly. You were paying for the sins of the past and subsidizing those who will benefit from these energy assets in the decades ahead.

With the plan announced Thursday, we're stretching those costs over a period that is now more in line with the lifespan of the energy assets themselves. That's helping to significantly lower bills in the short-term. It will cost us all a little more over the long-term. But this is absolutely the fairer way forward. It isn't right to ask a senior on a fixed income to pay a premium today so that in 20 years, a family can pay less. We all have to pay our fair share.

The other structural change has to do with the way we finance programs that help low-income families afford hydro and that subsidize the high cost of delivering electricity to rural and remote customers. Previously, the costs of both programs fell to ratepayers. That, too, was not fair.

Hydro is a necessity. The province, not ratepayers, should ensure everyone can afford to access to it. So, we're moving those programs off your bill and accounting for them in the provincial budget.

We're also expanding the programs. Rebates provided through the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) will increase by 50 per cent. We're also exploring automatic qualification for people already enrolled in other low-income social programs. And the Rural or Remote Rate Protection (RRRP) program will now lower delivery charges for about 800,000 homes - up from 350,000 today - so everyone in Ontario will pay roughly the same for delivery. Again, it's about making the system fairer.

Of course, these substantial and lasting structural fixes aren't free. We can afford this because our economy is the fastest growing in Canada, which is helping us eliminate the deficit this spring. I can think of no better way to use the province's new-found fiscal strength than giving everyone the break they need on their hydro bill.

But I don't expect to get credit for delivering relief that should have come sooner or fixing a problem that we shouldn't have let develop. This is just the right thing to do - policy-wise and for families across the province.

Our economic recovery hasn't been evenly shared. Many families are not feeling better off than they were before the recession. This plan for fairer hydro bills is one way we can make sure growth in our economy makes a real difference in people's lives.

Kathleen Wynne is the premier of Ontario.

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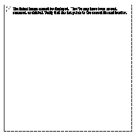

268390741

Budget watchdog to examine Ontario hydro relief plan; PCs question Liberal math; Watchdog to examine Ontario hydro plan

Canadian Press - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: Allison Jones

TORONTO - Ontario's budget watchdog will examine the Liberal government's plan to lower hydro bills, with the opposition parties questioning its estimated $25-billion in interest costs.

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown wrote to the financial accountability office, asking them to investigate the plan with a full costing analysis, but a spokeswoman for the office said Monday they had already been planning a report on it.

A recently announced 17-per-cent reduction in hydro bills comes this summer thanks to a move the Liberals say is like refinancing a mortgage over a longer period of time.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has acknowledged it will cost ratepayers more in the long run, but she says savings are needed now because people are struggling.

She has said the extra interest costs related to the plan would amount to $25 billion over 30 years, but the Tories say they're not clear on how the Liberals arrived at that number.

Wynne's $25-billion figure does not appear in the hydro relief announcement's background documents, which say the plan will involve "annual interest costs not exceeding $1.4 billion."

The premier said Monday that the financial accountability officer has already been briefed on the hydro plan, but the government can bring more technical information forward, if need be.

"We have used assumptions about interest over the next number of years, the next decade, and those are fairly conservative projections, so we've been very careful as we've laid out the plan," she said.

A spokesman for the energy minister said that based on a "conservative" estimate of a five-per-cent interest rate, they "see that number amounting to approximately $25 billion over 30 years."

PC Leader Patrick Brown said in the letter to the financial accountability officer that Ontarians may ultimately have to accept those added costs to get savings now "given the extent to which people are struggling," but the impact should at least be clear.

"To be candid, this government has a habit of deliberately using false numbers to cover up their worst policy failures," Brown wrote.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said Monday that several figures have been bandied about, so the FAO will help sort that out.

"(The Liberals are) rolling things out on the back of the napkin," she said. "When you do the math stretching it over 30 years they're saying it's $25 billion, when you do straight-line math it's over $40 billion."

A spokesman for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said Ontario has a track record of managing debt "responsibly." The province's net debt is more than $300 billion. Colin Nekolaichuk also noted that credit rating agency DBRS has said it views the hydro relief plan as "credit neutral."

The 17-per-cent cut in bills - in addition to an eight-per-cent rebate that took effect Jan. 1 - means ratepayers will pay about $2.5 billion less per year of the global adjustment charge for the next 10 years, the government has said.

The global adjustment is the charge consumers pay for above-market rates for power producers, which the government says ensures a reliable supply.

The auditor general has estimated the global adjustment charge cost $50 billion between 2006 and 2015 and increased by 1,200 per cent between 2006 and 2013 - meanwhile, the average electricity market price dropped by 46 per cent.

Eventually the costs of refinancing will be added back onto the global adjustment charge, which the energy minister has said won't happen for at least 10 years.

In the meantime, producers will continue being paid the same, so Ontario Power Generation has been tapped to oversee the debt that creates.

Brown also questions why that is being handled by OPG, and not the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation, which manages hydro debt.

Several other measures to reduce hydro bills were announced Thursday, including expanding a low-income support program, cutting delivery charges for some rural residents and eliminating them for on-reserve First Nations customers, and establishing a new fund to help people make energy efficiency improvements.

While the 17-per-cent cut will be paid for by future ratepayers, it's taxpayers who are footing the bill for the aforementioned social programs as well as the previously announced eight-per-cent cut - to the tune of $5.5 billion over the next three years.

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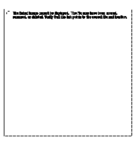

268371517

High hydro prices hurt Ontario factories, industry group says

CBC.CA News - Mon Mar 6 2017, 12:35pm ET
Byline:CBC News

A group that represents hundreds of small to medium sized manufacturers across the province is urging the Ontario government to lower hydro fees for industrial users, or face the prospect of some factories packing up and moving to other jurisdictions where electricity is cheaper.

The manufacturers banded together last October under the banner the Concerned Manufacturers of Ontario, a lobby group dedicated to standing up for smaller factories against a Liberal government that they claim doesn't care about them.

"We have to compete globally and we have to compete with companies in the United States," the group's founder Jocelyn Bamford told The Morning Edition host Craig Norris Monday. "The majority of those companies have a very competitive electricity rates."

She noted in Mississippi, the rate is 5.56 cents a kilowatt hour.

"In Toronto, I'm paying 19 cents a kilowatt hour and with electricity being our third largest expense," Bamford said. "When you look at the bottom line, it's very difficult to compete."

Cheaper power in the U.S.

Bamford's day job is vice president of marketing at Toronto-based Automatic Coating Limited. She said her factory could save a lot of money if it moved to the U.S., where it competes against American companies for many of its clients, which includes the U.S. Navy.

"A lot of family businesses have grown here and want to remain here, but with a very uncompetitive electricity price, it makes it very difficult to remain here," she said.

"I could move my business to the United States and save half a million dollars on energy costs."

Difference between profit and loss

Bamford said last month's power bill at her Scarborough factory was $45,000, but only $5,600 went towards paying for the amount of electricity the plant used.

Most of the bill, about $25,000 she said, is eaten up by the global adjustment charge, a levy added to all power bills in the province to pay for above-market rates paid to power providers in 20-year contracts meant to ensure a steady supply.

The other $14,400 on her power bill, Bamford said, is made up of a number of other fees.

Bamford said while she's happy for homeowners across Ontario, who recently learned they'd be getting a break this summer in the form of a 17 per cent reduction on their hydro bills, factories also need a break on what's quickly become one of their biggest expenses.

"That electricity pricing and energy pricing makes a difference for them from operating at a profit or a loss," she said.

Bamford said the Liberal government at Queen's Park would do well to take the concerns of Ontario's small and medium sized manufacturers seriously, who provide about 800,000 jobs for the province and another six spin-off jobs for every worker on the factory floor.

Manufacturers not missed entirely

Still, while the government's recent efforts to deflate the ballooning costs of electricity was largely geared to homeowners, it didn't miss manufacturers entirely.

The province announced it would expand the Industrial Conservation Initiative, which allows mid-sized manufacturers to save up to a third of their electricity costs on the global adjustment line of their power bill.

Eligible companies can pay based on how much power they use during the five hours each year that the Ontario power grid requires the most electricity.

The problem though, according to Bamford, is it requires factories to guess when the province's overall power demand will peak and then lower their power consumption accordingly.

"It's very difficult to power down and tell your customers, 'You have to wait,' or tell your employees that they have to come in and work on the nightshift because a lot employees have childcare commitments," she said.

Bamford also notes the program still excludes 85 per cent of Ontario factories, whose staff make up 50 people or less and use less than one megawatt of power.

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Utter waste of Energy; Politicians have been playing games with hydro rates for too many years

Windsor Star - Mon Mar 6 2017
Byline: David Reevely
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Urban Ontarians will subsidize electricity for 800,000 people who live in places where it's more expensive to deliver, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced last week, as part of the Liberals' plan to make people less angry about hydro prices.

The biggest piece of the plan we already knew about when Wynne announced it: Extending the payoff periods for generating stations to reduce prices now in exchange for paying more over time for their power.

The money will effectively be borrowed from Ontario Power Generation, the Crown corporation that runs hydro dams and nuclear stations, so the government won't have to renegotiate any of its contracts with private generating companies. We'll pay less as customers, OPG will cover the difference, and then we'll pay OPG back in a few decades.

This is more complicated and riskier than if we'd negotiated longer contracts in the first place. But it does have some logic behind it. We expect the wind farms and gas plants and whatnot to last longer than the 20-year payoff period we've been using, so 20-year contracts are artificially short. Extending them will definitely cost more - $25 billion over 30 years - but it saves pain now.

A much smaller part of the plan is to move the Ontario Electricity Support Program, a straight-up subsidy for poor customers, out of hydro budgets and into the government's general accounts, so it'd be covered through taxes instead of electricity users' bills. That's a social program, an anti-poverty measure, that never should have been paid for with people's hydro bills in the first place, any more than we put a levy on grocery bills to pay for school lunch programs.

In the middle is this big expansion of Rural or Remote Rate Protection, which costs about $175 million a year now. It'll go from covering about 350,000 customers to about 1.15 million and, like the program for poor customers, be covered by the provincial government's general revenues. However much rising electricity prices have hurt in urban Ontario, it's rural Ontario that's really taken it in the shorts. Hydro One is the provincial utility that delivers power to customers that local distribution companies like Hydro Ottawa didn't want when the power system was restructured 15 years ago. It's more expensive and its customer service is notoriously bad - former Ontario ombudsman André Marin delivered thundering report after thundering report on just what a horrible company Hydro One has been.

Rural Ontarians are also a lot more likely than urban Ontarians to use electric heat. That's where thousanddollar hydro bills, totally foreign to most urbanites, come in.

"When (rural Ontarians) feel they're being asked to pay for something they have no control over and that goes up and down, month by month, that is a challenge," she said. How is this fair? she asked. Electricity is a necessity.

By the time she's done, "Everyone in the province, in terms of distribution charge, will pay around the same amount as an urban user would pay," she added.

The thing is, Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault explained exactly how this is fair immediately.

"The way I explain this is: Downtown Toronto, downtown Sudbury, downtown London, you have 500 people on one pole," he said. "In the rural parts of our province, you have 500 poles to get to one person. They have been paying a higher proportion on their distribution rate."

That's a letter-perfect justification for the policy Thibeault and Wynne are doing away with. People have to pay for the extraordinary lengths companies have to go to get electricity to isolated villages and houses.

But no longer will it be the people in those isolated villages and individual houses, who've chosen to live there. Now it'll be the people who've chosen to live in places where electricity is cheap to deliver. Because that's fair.

(Water is also a necessity but cities are forbidden by provincial law from covering the costs of their water systems with taxes, because doing so would create perverse incentives to skimp on safety. Electricity, though? Totally different thing.)

There is at least an ideological consistency here. After promising an "adult conversation" about how we're going to pay for better transportation, Wynne and her government have fled from the idea of charging tolls for highways, so that the people who drive a long way on them would have to cover the cost. Doing adult things turns out to be hard. Insulating consumers from the consequences of their economic choices is much easier.

This province's stupid politics are a big reason why.

The New Democrats on Thursday assailed the Liberals because they didn't go socialist enough. They didn't also change the "unfair" policy of charging more for electricity at times of day when it's in high demand and more expensive.

Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown kept his attacks to the big part of the Liberal plan, the stretchingout of generation contracts. He's in a bind: making people pay for goods they consume is supposed to be the conservative position, but lots of Tory voters will benefit from the new subsidy. Brown's also going to have a heck of a time explaining how a Tory government would lower hydro prices after blasting away at everything the Liberals put up.

Bob Rae looked down the barrel of political annihilation and froze hydro prices. Ernie Eves did some deregulating but lost his nerve, so his dying government started paying more for wholesale power and subsidized retail prices.

Now here we are again. Problems unsolved, halfmeasures unsustained. Each premier passes a bag of turds unto the next. dreevely@postmedia.com twitter.com/davidreevely

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OPG's decision 'political' - mayor; 'OPG isn't laying off or reducing staff, they're moving people out of our community'

North Bay Nugget - Tue Mar 7 2017
Byline: Jennifer Hamilton-Mccharles
Page: A1 / Front

North Bay Mayor Al McDonald is calling on regional mayors to stand together to stop Ontario Power Generation jobs from leaving the region.

"I will do everything I can to keep the jobs here, but regional mayors need to speak up because this closure will affect their citizens, as well," he said Monday.

OPG delivered news to its 66 employees Monday that the North Bay operation will close within a year.

Twenty employees will be transferred from the control room in North Bay to Timmins. Another 20 in support, engineering and finance will be given opportunity to transfer to another OPG operation in the province.

McDonald said OPG originally scheduled a meeting for Feb. 22 to inform employees, but postponed it to Monday.

"I heard the Ontario government called OPG and asked them not to make their news public until the province made their announcement about hydro rates," he said.

McDonald said he contacted Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault about regarding rumours at OPG in North Bay.

"He told me he wasn't aware of this news, but would get back to me," McDonald said.

"I believe the minister didn't know and the call to OPG to delay the announcement could have only come from the premier's office.

"This was strictly a political decision. OPG isn't laying off or reducing staff, they're moving people out of our community."

McDonald has been in contact with affected staff who are "devastated" by this announcement.

"This is the time when Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath and Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown need to stand up and fight for Northern Ontario and North Bay."

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The community should feel insulted by OPG move says MPP

www.baytoday.ca - Mon Mar 6 2017

Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli says he's disappointed at the announcement by OPG this morning to close its North Bay operation and is angered by how they did it.

"I'm disappointed, especially in how they treated the community," Fedeli told BayToday. "They did it by stealth."

Fedeli says he stood in the Legislature this morning to ask the Minister of Energy, Glenn Thibeault about it, but Thibeault left early even though Fedeli had the first question. The MPP wrote to him last week but didn't get a reply.

"I feel insulted, and the community should feel insulted that OPG did this by stealth. They never consulted with the union, with the employees, or city leaders. This is a betrayal by OPG to a community that they have been into for more than 100 years."

Northern Ontario Party leader Trevor Holliday calls the move "political."

Holliday cites a source high up in OPG ranks.

"It's never about the budget. They're using economics as an excuse. It's just more high-paying jobs leaving this community. The annual salaries of the 60 people working there would be in the eight million dollar range, and OPG spends over 20 million in the community every year."

Holliday blames the Ontario government and Premier Wynne.

"It's the government making cuts. It's not that they can make it more efficient. They're looking at doing it from a political mind frame. Wynne just made a political announcement of a 25 per cent cut in hydro. You look at it, they're going to have some cost savings by closing down the operation here in North Bay. That takes away from the economy of North Bay."

North Bay Mayor Al McDonald is in meetings in Toronto today, but in a text, promised a reaction later this afternoon.

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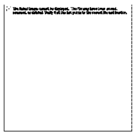

268368174

Saving energy for profit Energy efficiency, energy management offer business success beyond cost management

The Chronicle Journal - Fri Mar 3 2017
Byline: Ian Pattison

By Roopa Rakshit

For The Chronicle-Journal

When talking about energy efficiency what usually comes to mind is the business case of lowering energy bills - the dollar savings. Are there broader benefits that should be included in the traditional business case? The answer is yes and all it takes is a slight shift from just looking at the savings from installing energy-efficient products to a broader system or process analysis.

Energy efficiency goes hand-in-hand with energy management - which involves looking at the whole process of installing and maintaining energy-efficient equipment. This system approach offers the platform for business success that goes beyond cost management. "Energy management can be a fantastic platform for business competitiveness and profitability" says Sean Brady, president of Carbon Insights Inc.

According to Brady, asking questions on how and where to save energy usage on a daily, regular basis make will a good start. Most energy usage in small businesses goes to space heating, auxiliary equipment, water heating, and lighting. "To get help with answering some of those questions, speak with your local utility, such as Thunder Bay Hydro or Union Gas. They have people ready to support you with programs and assistance to make your energy management program more effective," says Brady.

"Thunder Bay Hydro is working to develop sustainable and collaborative relationships to help local organizations save on energy," says president of Thunder Bay Hydro, Robert Mace. Businesses can achieve 5-30 per cent of savings in their energy bills by being aware of electricity usage in terms of how much they use and when it is used. Both can be addressed through a proactive energy management initiative - going beyond the efficient technology and looking at how and when equipment or machines use electricity. What's more, those savings go straight to the bottom line with no risk to the business.

Simple cost-free behavioral changes go a long way in achieving savings by looking at the internal business process. Energy- and money-saving actions can be as easy as turning lights and appliances off, setting proper set points on boilers, chillers, rooftop units / unitary AC systems and lighting schedules on building automation systems, minimizing the use of hot and warm water, maintaining proper temperature in freezers and refrigerators, installing and maintaining weather stripping, checking and changing furnace and air conditioner filters monthly, and so on. This is all no cost - except for the effort a business can expend to analyze its processes that directly or indirectly use electricity.

Getting back to the standard business case, let's look at motors - which you may or may not see in the business processes that use electricity. Efficient motors can use up to 4 per cent less energy than standard motors. As a business, is 4 per cent savings important? Let's look at a systems approach. As a business, when you can save money (as when a piece of equipment breaks down) what other aspects should be considered? Future maintenance is one - how much longer will older less efficient equipment be manufactured? What about the 'second price tag' of electrically operated equipment? The actual value of the 4-per-cent efficiency gain keeps going up as electricity prices increase. And, there are lower operations and maintenance time and cost to be considered.

In 2014, the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) undertook a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems retrofit through the saveONenergy Program delivered by Thunder Bay Hydro that provides incentives for commercial operations to install newer, more energy-efficient upgrades. TBRHSC received the largest rebate in the history of Thunder Bay Hydro, and one of the most prevalent in Ontario, in the amount of $597,554.62. "More importantly, ongoing savings are reinvested into operations and improving patient care services. The retrofit program reduces costs and emissions, allowing us to focus more resources on direct patient care," said Jean Bartkowiak, president & CEO of TBRHSC and CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute.

Building enhancements are another effective way to further reduce energy costs. Upgrading building insulation, insulating hot water tanks and pipes, using occupancy sensors in rooms that are used infrequently such as staff rooms or meeting rooms and using programmable thermostats can all make a difference. Using high-velocity, low-flow kitchen sprayers can save up to $1,000 a year in hot water costs. Lighting costs can be reduced by up to 70 per cent by adding daylight sensors to outdoor light systems. LED lighting uses 75 per cent less energy than incandescent lighting.

Taking conscious energy decisions on office space improvements and upgrades can also provide for better work environment. The health case is a source of value creation with efficiently run work space that could potentially include low noise pollution, indoor comfort with improved ventilation, an access to outside air and daylight, with more visible access to the natural environment. Undoubtedly, measures taken to improve the energy performance of office space can help control moisture and pollutant sources.

Electricity service and utility providers serve well in the delivery of efficiency programs that range from energy management tools, education, outreach and awareness resources. Additionally, rigorous and accurate data collection, use of meaningful key performance indicators and benchmarks, and supporting corporate culture by introducing ISO 50001 (see www.nrcan.gc.ca), development of an energy management system (EnMS) are approaches with strong incentives for businesses to invest in energy efficiency.

Effective energy conservation involves people, processes, and technology. A significant portion of the opportunity can also be realized through relatively minor, low- or no-cost continuous energy improvement projects with effecting a change in culture. Concentrating on the 'soft' side - besides technology and equipment is also a key driving force. Getting staff/workers on board, by communicating effectively and encouraging ways to save energy; aligning the awareness with actions promotes corporate social responsibility . . . while creating the ownership for doing the right thing.

Wise use of energy and establishing energy-efficiency measures are some of the lowest cost options for meeting energy demands while providing many other economic, environmental, including reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, cost avoidance, and savings. Not to overlook the social benefits - as small to medium size businesses also make concerned members of the community.

This article is co-authored with John Jeza.

Roopa Rakshit is a Ph.D. candidate, Faculty of Natural Resources Management, Lakehead University. She is pursuing community energy transition planning. She is a board member of Environment North.

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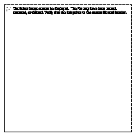

268410661

Turbine turmoil avoidable, study says

London Free Press - Tue Mar 7 2017
Byline: Hank Daniszewski
Page: A3

Wind farms don't have to be a flashpoint for community resentment, if the benefits are spread around.

That's the conclusion of a study by two Western University geography researchers who compared the relatively smooth rollout of wind farms in Nova scotia with the often hostile reception in rural Ontario. chad Walker and Jamie Baxter surveyed residents in ten communities as part of the study. They found support for wind farms in Nova scotia was three times higher than Ontario because provincial rules require more community control.

In Ontario, there's a perception the corporate owners of wind farms and the owners of the property where they're located are the only winners, Walker said.

"People in the area don't feel like they are benefiting. .. It's not the technology, it's the way it is introduced." Nova scotia's community Feedin-Tariff program required community involvement.

"They would not be approved unless the local community owned 51 per cent," Walker said.

By contrast, almost all Ontario wind projects are owned by large corporations, he said.

The pushback against wind farms in Ontario has been unusual, especially compared to continental Europe that had a big head start in wind energy, Walker said.

"Most places in the world do not see this high level of opposition." In Ontario, local municipalities were left almost powerless to control the projects. Politicians and residents of Dutton-Dunwich in Elgin county were stunned last year when the province awarded a contract to a chicago-based firm to build dozens of industrial turbines there. The municipality had declared itself an unwilling host to wind farms after 84 per cent of residents who voted in a referendum opposed them.

The Western study included surveys of residents in three communities in Ontario - Adelaide-Metcalfe west of London, Norwich Township in Oxford county and Wainfleet in Niagara region - and seven in Nova scotia.

Walker said they only studied public acceptance of wind farms, not their economics.

The Nova scotia government cancelled its program, not because of opposition, but because of concerns it would drive up electricity rates.

Jane Wilson, president of Wind concerns Ontario, a coalition of groups opposed to wind farm development, said the Western study shows local support of a wind farm should be required.

"Municipalities should be able to say no, which is not allowed by the province. The Green Energy Act was written for the wind power industry and not the people of Ontario," she said. robert Hornung, president of the canadian Wind Energy Association, said Ontario wind farms have met more opposition because of the rapid development and greater population density.

"requirements for community engagement and participation are getting more stringent. It's hard for a project to be successful if it does not have broad community support." Wind energy companies are trying to broaden community benefits of wind farms by compensating owners of neighbouring properties and creating community funds. hdaniszewski@postmedia.com twitter.com/HankatLFPress

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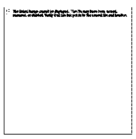

268407701

Cutting costs way better than cutting power bills

Kingston Whig-Standard - Tue Mar 7 2017
Byline: Jim Merriam
Page: A4

The Wynne government's announcement last week of a reduction in power rates in Ontario is good politics. Too bad it's lousy government.

Something had to be done to ease power poverty in the province and the rate reduction at least begins to address that problem.

Added to the provincial tax rebate announced earlier, the reduction should total about 25 per cent off most electricity bills in the province by this summer.

But here's the rub. The change lifts some of the burden from today's hard-pressed ratepayers and places it on the shoulders of our grandchildren.

The high costs associated with power production - as organized by the Liberal government in the province today - will simply be paid off during a longer period of time.

Many have used the "robbing Peter to pay Paul," analogy to explain the effects of this rate reduction.

More precisely it's robbing future generations to pay for serious mistakes made by this government during the past 14 years in office.

Instead of just cutting power bills for consumers, good government would have addressed the underlying causes of the out-of-control rates.

That might have meant introducing legislation to allow the province an escape clause out of high price contracts for wind and solar power.

Or it might have meant a meaningful examination of all the high-priced bureaucrats in all the various government agencies that have their hand in the power cookie jar.

The system would work better, at a lower cost, if a bunch of these positions were eliminated.

There were all kinds of options available to the deep thinkers at Queen's Park.

But instead of working hard to try to cure the disease, Wynne and crew chose instead to dress it with a flashy bandage that people could confuse with real action. It's more of the smoke and mirrors for which this government is famous.

Those who are praising the government for this reduction in rates are doing nothing but helping the Liberal re-election plan in the provincial vote to come in June next year.

And that would be a shame for which Ontario's people would pay and pay and pay for generations, unless the Wynne Liberals have had some kind of epiphany that would lead them to control spending.

Since 2007, the provincial debt has approximately doubled to $308 billion and appears well on the way to a whopping $350 billion.

An incredibly irresponsible record on fiscal issues for any government in the year before an election.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, the government got here in part because it refused to listen to anybody outside the inner circle at Queen's Park.

I've listed before all the voices that tried to tell the Grits their Green Energy Act was the roadmap to disaster that it has proven to be.

And they continue not to listen to parents, community leaders and others as they close schools and decimate communities across the province in the service of some illconceived bureaucratic standard.

An immediate moratorium on such closings would be an indication that the Liberals are beginning to understand how much damage they're doing in the province.

But schools aren't the only other out-of-control area. There's a looming disaster in health care with the entire system likely to collapse under the weight of the ever-growing bureaucracy.

Pointing all this out time and again is an exercise in frustration, but there's always hope someone might pay attention, as unlikely as that seems. jmerriam@bmts.com

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Bunker opponents take concerns to top

London Free Press - Tue Mar 7 2017
Byline: Dan Brown
Page: A4

A non-profit group opposing a proposed nuclear-waste bunker near Lake Huron says it will provide its feedback to a report on the facility directly to the federal minister of the environment.

"We are providing our response directly to (Environment Minister Catherine McKenna)," said Beverly Fernandez, a spokesperson for Stop the Nuclear Dump. "She needs to see it herself." The deadline for feedback on the report was Monday.

The report is from Ontario Power Generation that wants to bury maintenance material and other nuclear waste in an underground vault that would be as deep as the CN Tower is tall.

OPG stood its ground Monday in a statement to The Free Press.

"Scientists from around the world agree the proposed location is the right one," spokesperson Neal Kelly said. "We have a responsibility to future generations to dispose of the waste safely and permanently."

Fernandez accuses Ontario Power Generation of misleading the minister, the public and the media by understating opposition to the project.

"They're saying the public is not interested," said Fernandez, whose group is based in Guelph.

The study deals with possible locations other than near Kincardine for the proposed storage facility.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency could not be reached Monday for comment. The agency gave members of the public an additional two weeks to comment, after setting an initial deadline of Feb. 17.

"Providing the public with more time to provide input is a positive thing," Fernandez said. "I know that a lot of organizations and nonprofits have been opposing it." Fernandez said the dump "is more than risky." The three existing deep geologic depositories in the world all have leaked, she said.

The vault would hold low-and medium-level nuclear waste, including maintenance materials and equipment, from nucleargeneratingplants. The waste would be entombed in ancient rock in the shadow of the Bruce power station, the world's largest operating nuclear plant.

The proposal has drawn widespread opposition in the Great Lakes region, amid fears a leak could menace its waters that supply drinking water for 40 million Canadians and Americans.

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EV charging station ready for business; Fees for use set at Sarnia electric vehicle charging station

Sarnia Observer - Tue Mar 7 2017
Byline: Tyler Kula
Page: A1 / Front

A city-owned electric-vehicle charging station is online and ready to use at the Charlotte Street parking lot in Sarnia.

Economic Development Director Peter Hungerford said the City of Sarnia has had a few phone calls since the pilot project, in partnership with Bluewater Power, was announced in September.

"We've had people call up and want to know when it will be operational and what have you," Hungerford said.

"There must be general knowledge out there that we have it because there was a vehicle plugged in Friday."

The level-two charging station has been budgeted for three years at $25,000 and is an attempt to gauge interest, while also promoting the city as progressive, said Hungerford.

Using it costs a connection fee of $1.50, and 1.5 cents per minute to charge, working out to about $5.10 for a four-hour charge - the expected norm, he wrote in a recent update to city council.

Users must have a smartphone app called myEVroute from system operator Koben Systems Inc. (KSI) installed to use the charger, he said.

Using the app, users register a credit card, and can then plug in a code at any KSI charger in the province, he said.

"You plug your car in and you charge and the unit keeps track of the costs," Hungerford.

Anyone with a fully charged vehicle plugged in at the Sarnia station is subject to a three-centper-minute idle fee: about $2 per hour, Hungerford said.

That - along with $20 fines applicable for vehicles using the charging spots improperly - is to discourage free parking, Hungerford said.

Plans are to check back quarterly on the pricing, he said, noting hopes are funds from charging will more than offset the price of electricity - billed at about $1,200 monthly.

"It depends on usage," Hungerford said.

An official opening for the charging station is being planned for next week, he said, but details haven't been set.

He also tipped his cap to Bluewater Power.

"They provided a lot of technical expertise in getting the unit placed and constructed and what have you," along with helping arrange for the power supply, he said.

"We were happy to partner with Bluewater Power."

A level-three charging station at the Colborne Road Tim Horton's is also planned, also under the KSI umbrella.

It's one in a 500-station rollout in a $20-million provincial plan announced last July.

The Ministry of Transportation has set a March 31 installation deadline, with the caveat that some sites may be subject to change. tkula@postmedia.com

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Alectra warning business customers of phone scam

thespec.com - Mon Mar 6 2017

Alectra Utilities says its business customers are being targeted by a phone scammer who threatens to cut off their hydro if they don't make an immediate payment.

The local hydro corporation says customers are receiving calls from someone claiming to be an employee who instructs them to visit a cheque-cashing store to make a payment right away.

In the past, residential and business customers have been asked to buy a pre-paid credit card for the exact amount they apparently owe on electricity bills and to dial a phone number to provide the card and a PIN number. A recorded message said the customer had reached the utility's billing department, despite this not being the case.

The utility says it never asks for a pre-paid credit card as payment for an outstanding balance and doesn't disconnect services after 4 p.m. on weekdays or at any point on weekends or holidays.

If you receive a suspicious phone call, Alectra suggests:

not providing any personal information, including account or credit card numbers;

collecting information about the caller;

contacting the utility's customer service department to report the incident.

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268380339

Province should never have gotten involved in running our electrical power system

Clarington This Week - Mon Mar 6 2017

To the editor:

I worked for Ontario Hydro and it's successor company OPG for 30 years. In the early days Ontario Hydro was one company that planned, produced and distributed electricity throughout the province. It even had its own construction division that would design, and build generating stations and dams. It planned the electrical needs of the province 50-75 years into the future forecasting how much growth there would be and planning for future transmission lines and the need and location of new generating stations. The provincial government was at arms length and usually approved the plans that Ontario Hydro presented to the government.

This arrangement changed in the early 1990s. The government began to take an interest and began directing the decisions regarding plant construction. Many of these decisions were political decisions and not business decisions. The Rae government came to power and was opposed to nuclear power so they tried to stop the Darlington plant from being built, but only managed to delay the construction which ultimately resulted in additional costs.

In 1999 the Harris government decided to break Ontario Hydro up and sell off pieces to private enterprises and eliminated the construction division. This attempt to sell off parts of the utility failed but they did manage to create five separate enterprises, the main two being OPG and Hydro One, the power producer and the distribution arm respectively. The other three are involved in planning and debt restructuring.

During the McGuinty/Wynne government we have seen cancelled power plants costing millions of dollars based on political reasons. The construction of several gas fired power stations by private firms which get paid to produce electricity whether they run or not and excessive payments to companies to provide wind and solar power to the grid. The Wynne government is busy selling off Hydro One and have so far got $3.9 billion for the shares. They subsequently removed the tax on hydro bills because of voter backlash that will cost the province $1 billion a year. Using my math that means that four years from now they will have given back the $3.9 billion, but will only own 70 per cent of a publicly owned asset that used to contribute $800 million a year to the provincial coffers.

The latest political decision is to stretch out the payment of their debt over a longer period of time to provide some financial relief to ratepayers because they want to get elected again. This initiative will again cost the province millions of dollars a year.

From my view over an extended period of time it seems that once the politicians took an interest in running the electrical power system it began its downward spiral. This is in a large part because they make political decision instead of business decisions. Running a company and running the government are not the same. They should have stuck to running the government and I believe today we would have had a publicly owned asset that could have delivered electricity at a reasonable rate and contributed financially to the province. They needed only to provide oversight and not got involved in the day-to-day operation.

Joe Virio

Bowmanville

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