

Queen's Park Today – Daily Report November 29, 2017

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Quotation of the day

“It’s great that they have now come around to acknowledging that they agree with our Fair Hydro Plan ... The 100,000 child-care spaces, I mean, we’re implementing that, so that’s great that they agree with that ... They’re basically just doing what we’re already doing.”

Premier Kathleen Wynne weighs in on People's Guarantee in an interview from China (via [Toronto Star](#))

Today at Queen's Park

On the schedule

The **Bill 139**, Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, is scheduled for third reading debate during the morning session. This will be the second day of debate on the third reading stage of **Bill 139**.

The time allocation motion on **Bill 177**, Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act, will be voted on after question period.

The afternoon is scheduled as an opposition day. NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will put forward a motion calling on the government to “bring Hydro One back into public hands by financing the purchase of shares using Hydro One shareholder dividends.” The non-binding motion will be debated and voted on.

Debates and proceedings

MPPs convened at 9 a.m. to continue consideration of **Bill 177**, Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act. The government tabled a time allocation on the fall economic statement legislation that sends the bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy so it can hold public hearings on Thursday, December 7 and complete clause-by-clause consideration by Monday, December 11. There would then be one hour reserved for third reading debate in the House. The motion was debated in the morning and afternoon and the vote was deferred until Wednesday.

The Standing Committee on Social Policy reported **Bill 166**, Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, back from committee. A time allocation motion previously passed on the bill allows for only two hours of debate on the third reading stage.

NDP MPP **Gilles Bisson** introduced **Bill 183**, Fairness in Petroleum Products Pricing Act. Bisson's private members' bill would allow the Ontario Energy Board to regulate the retail price of gas to ensure transparency and to prevent price volatility in rural and north regions.

Bill 175, Safer Ontario Act, was also debated at second reading during the afternoon session.

PC MPP **Sylvia Jones** introduced a motion calling for Queen's Park to fly the Vietnamese freedom flag outside the legislature while Premier **Kathleen Wynne** and other officials are in Vietnam from December 3 to 6. The motion was denied, a fact that was noted by PC leader **Patrick Brown** during a town hall with members of Toronto's Vietnamese community on Tuesday evening.

In the park

The Ontario Lung Association will hold a lobby day and evening reception.

March of Dimes Canada, a charity supporting stroke recovery patients, will hold an MPP awareness luncheon.

Topics of conversation

- *National Post* columnist **Andrew Coyne** calls the PC platform "mush" of such "iridescent vapidty it might have better been titled Nothing To See Here." Coyne ponders whether a PC win would actually change the course of the province, or retain the "statist quo."
- The City of Toronto will carry a \$141.8 million budgetary surplus into next year, attributed to high municipal land transfer tax revenues. At a Canadian Club speech on Monday, Mayor **John Tory** suggested his third budget will continue his legacy of fiscal restraint, increasing spending by just one per cent.
- Reporting by the *Toronto Star* found the number of appeals before the Ontario Municipal Board has doubled in advance of the repeal of the Ontario Municipal Board Act and the creation of the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, as outlined in **Bill 139**, Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, which the government intends to pass at third reading within weeks.

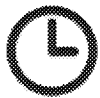
- Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will spend Wednesday in Chongqing, China. The premier will attend another MOU signing ceremony between Ontario business delegates and their Chinese counterparts and participate in a roundtable discussion with Ontario and Southwest Chinese science and tech educational leaders.
- A study from BMO projects the economic impact of the dissolution of NAFTA would be only a 0.7 per cent reduction to Canada's GDP, amounting to a rare sign of optimism as the tough negotiations with the protectionist White House plod on.
- The Ministry of Transportation has opened two new lanes on Highway 410, bringing the stretch from Highway 401 to Queen Street in Brampton to a total of eight lanes.
- The IESO has procured 55 MW of electricity storage capacity from Saturn Power in Owen Sound and Hecate Energy in Loyalist Township. The procurement of energy storage is part of the IESO's strategy to diversify how it meets its operational needs.

Today's events



November 29 at 9 a.m. — Toronto

Housing Minister **Peter Milczyn** will make an announcement at 66 Isabella Street.



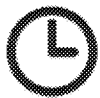
November 29 at 10 a.m. — Toronto

NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will hold a press conference at Queen's Park about her opposition day motion on returning Hydro One to public hands.



November 29 at 1 p.m. — Toronto

Transportation Minister **Steve Del Duca** will make an announcement at the Rexdale Community Hub.



November 29 at 6:30 p.m. — Toronto

Lieutenant Governor **Elizabeth Dowdeswell** and Community Safety Minister **Marie-France Lalonde** will honour one firefighter and five police officers "for acts of exceptional bravery and courage" at a ceremony at Queen's Park.

News briefs — Non-Governmental

Ministry of Infrastructure

At a speech to a business audience in Toronto on Tuesday, Infrastructure Minister **Bob Chiarelli** released an updated Long-Term Infrastructure Plan. The plan confirms the province's \$130 billion infrastructure investment over the next 13 years is on track.

The updated strategy includes a rural high-speed broadband strategy and a promise to integrate climate change considerations into all infrastructure decision-making, including project lifecycle assessments, by mid-2020.

It also includes a new community benefit framework that will make sure people in communities where infrastructure projects are being built receive job opportunities and training. The government said its infrastructure investments will support 125,000 jobs per year. In 2017, \$400 million of the annual investment will be derived from the Trillium Trust, which holds funds from the sale of government's assets.

NDP Infrastructure critic **Wayne Gates** said the release of the Liberals' latest batch of infrastructure promises is "more about paving the way to the election for **Kathleen Wynne**, than it is about building our province."

Funding announcements

- The **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care** announced \$8.15 million for the Alzheimer Society's First Link care navigator program, which will help people diagnosed with dementia and their families locate care in their local communities.
 - The program will allow the Alzheimer Society to hire 46 First Link care navigators.
- The **Ministry of Housing** announced \$30 million in funding over three years to provide housing to victims of human trafficking and survivors of domestic violence.
 - Eligible Ontarians will receive a housing subsidy and be able to choose where they want to live, rather than be tied to a specific social housing unit.

News briefs — Non-governmental

Toronto Board of Trade

The Toronto Board of Trade released its "Energy Policy Playbook" on how Ontario political parties can steer an "agenda for growth" going into the spring election campaign. TBOT is calling for further privatization of the energy sector, including by increasing the role of the private sector in local distribution companies. It would like the procurement process to become "more competitive and less prescriptive" about which technologies it favours, a dog whistle to those who opposed years of Liberal green energy targets.

The policy playbook says in order to improve transparency, the government should put its Long-Term Energy Plan before the House for substantive debate and allow the Financial Accountability Officer to evaluate the impact of its energy policies. The report also recommends removing energy costs not related to generation, transmission and distribution from electricity prices and refunding the costs of the carbon tax back to consumers and businesses, as proposed in the PC Party's platform.

Appointment and employments

Standing Committee on General Government

- PC MPP **Sam Oosterhoff** has replaced PC MPP **Julia Munro** in the membership of the Standing Committee on General Government.
 - Munro will retire from politics ahead of the June 2018 general election.

York Region District School Board

- **Louise Sirisko** was appointed the next director of education for York Region District School Board, effective in the new year.
 - This follows the dismissal of former director **J. Phillip Parappally** last spring after a Ministry of Education investigation identified him as the cause of the "culture of distrust" at the school board.

Question period

PC lead-off

Income tax cut

- PC Finance critic **Vic Fedeli** asked why the Liberal government will not support the PC's proposal to cut taxes for the middle class by 22.5 per cent and reduce taxes for the first income tax bracket by 10 per cent.
 - He asked whether the government thinks low- and middle-class Ontarians deserve a break.
- Finance Minister **Charles Sousa** said the 22.5 per cent income tax cut the PC's proposed is false and "incoherent" and not one single Ontarian will receive the tax cut their party is advertising.
 - "Even before the election has even started, they're making promises that they can't keep. I would argue: Step down now," said Sousa.

Mental health care

- PC MPP **Sylvia Jones** asked whether the Liberal government would match her party's \$1.9 billion commitment to mental health services.
- Health and Long-Term Care Minister **Dr. Eric Hoskins** said the PCs have repeatedly voted against the government's plans to increase funding for investments in mental health, cognitive behavioural therapy and dementia supports.

- Hoskins said not even **Mike Harris** presented an election platform as draconian as the PC plan for \$12.5 billion in cuts.

NDP lead-off

Hydro One sell-off

- NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** asked about Schedule 9 of **Bill 160**, which the NDP and the Ontario Health Coalition say will open the door to “even more private clinics.”
 - She said **Bill 160**’s repeal of the Private Hospitals Act removes the 44-year ban on future private hospitals in Ontario and will allow anybody to apply to open a new private clinic at any time.
- Health and Long-Term Care Minister **Dr. Eric Hoskins** said, “nothing could be further from the truth.” Hoskins said Schedule 9 will prevent the creation of any further private hospitals by transitioning them to a new regulatory system (Ontario has six private hospitals that were grandfathered into the system in the 1930s).

Grassy Narrows

- NDP MPP **Peter Tabuns** asked whether the province will agree to the request from the people of Grassy Narrows to build a health care facility for people suffering from mercury poisoning, which makes up 90 per cent of the people in this community.
- Indigenous Relations Minister **David Zimmer** said he is meeting with his federal counterpart, Indigenous Relations Minister **Jane Philpott**, and the Chiefs of Grassy Narrows and Whitedog First Nations in Toronto on Wednesday. Zimmer said he has received the request for the mercury health care facility and will be on the agenda.
 - Philpott committed to a feasibility study of the Mercury Home on November 17, but First Nations representatives said the funding amount she is providing is only two per cent of the expected \$4.5 million project cost.

Lead in drinking water

- NDP MPP **Peggy Sattler** asked when the province will replace the lead water fountains and fixtures at the 640 schools and child care centres that failed lead tests.
 - Sattler said lead in water is dangerous to children and the Liberals are to blame because of their failure to address the \$15 billion school maintenance backlog.