Message

From: John Cannella [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CD667C6D53774DD0A749783BB02AE89D-JOHN CANNEL]
Sent: 2017-11-22 6:41:10 AM
Subject: Today's News - Wednesday, November 22, 2017

Today's News

powered by:

Date: Wednesday, November 22, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Clean Power, Dirty Deal; Province lost up to $2B selling its surplus

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The power of change in Ontario's power

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GuelphMercury.com - Tue Nov 21 2017

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The Sault Star - Wed Nov 22 2017
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Top power grid exec resigns after domestic violence charge; Top power grid exec resigns after domestic violence charge

Canadian Press - Tue Nov 21 2017

WASHINGTON - The head of an international authority that oversees the North American power grid has resigned following his arrest on a domestic violence charge in Georgia. Gerry Cauley stepped down Monday as CEO of the North American Electric ...

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Avista shareholders approve utility's sale to Canadian utility Hydro One

MCT Regional News - Tue Nov 21 2017
Byline: By Becky Kramer, The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, Wash.

Nov. 21--With little fanfare, Avista Corp.'s shareholders approved the sale of the 128-year-old company to Canadian utility Hydro One Ltd. on Tuesday. About 98 percent of shareholders voted in favor of the $5.3 billion ...

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Clean Power, Dirty Deal; Province lost up to $2B selling its surplus

Toronto Sun - Wed Nov 22 2017
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Ontario lost between $732 million and $1.25 billion over the past two years selling surplus clean electricity outside the province, an analysis by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) estimates.

That's the difference between what Ontario agreed to pay to produce nuclear, water, wind and solar power, and the bargain basement price it sold it for on the international market.

Energy expert Paul Acchione, OSPE's past president and chair, said excess clean electricity should be offered first to Ontario businesses and residents at that lower wholesale cost.

"This represents a year's worth of power for more than a million homes that Ontario has sold to other jurisdictions for less than it costs us to produce," Acchione said. "Ontario ratepayers are essentially subsidizing hydro bills in places like Michigan and New York to the tune of $500 million per year."

Only after all possible domestic demand has been satisfied should the provincial electricity system try to sell off its extra clean power to other jurisdictions, he said.

Instead, Ontario has been directly exporting excess clean energy to adjoining power grids since 2014, the OSPE says.

"You don't build clean capacity for export - that's suicide because you can't make enough money on the export market," Acchione said Tuesday. "If you have some extra of the clean electricity you sure as hell don't want to export it. You want to use it yourself."

The OSPE report touched off a debate during Question Period Tuesday with Progressive Conservative MPP Todd Smith demanding if the Liberal government had actually lost almost $1.25 billion exporting power.

"The numbers from the engineers are staggering," Smith said. "We're subsidizing power for Michigan, New York and other neighbouring jurisdictions and to make matters worse, they're poaching our jobs because they're taking our electricity at a low cost."

Premier Kathleen Wynne said the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) estimates that electricity exports save Ontarians hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

"This net benefit to Ontario was $236 million last year," she said.

The provincial government number includes the export of natural gas generation, which is excluded from the engineers' report.

A statement from Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault's office says that the "net benefit" to Ontarians was $320 million in 2014 and $300 million in 2013.

"We are obligated as a province to produce enough electricity to meet North American reliability standards," the minister's office statement says. "Our electricity supply provides grid reliability and affordability which we lacked before 2005, when Ontario was a net importer of electricity. That lack of reliability was partially responsible for the province-wide blackout of 2003, which was an enormous economic hit."

Acchione said the $236 million in net benefit the government estimates it earned last year does not represent profit to Ontario hydro customers, but rather is a reduction in the loss that the system is incurring by having that capacity idle, he said.

"That's not the way you do accounting in Canada; you can't say you're making a profit unless you pay all your costs," he said. aartuso@postmedia.com INSIDE EDITORIAL:

Liberals'energy fiasco costing us billions Page 16

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FAO backs nuclear plan

Toronto Sun - Wed Nov 22 2017
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A report by an independent financial watchdog has concluded that the Kathleen Wynne government's nuclear refurbishment plan is the most cost efficient option to provide base electricity power for decades to come.

Environmentalists are criticizing the report by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO), saying it failed to take into account that nuclear refurbishment projects routinely go way over budget.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said in a statement Tuesday that the report confirms that his government has carefully considered the nuclear projects at Bruce Power and Ontario Power Generation (OPG).

"The FAO report also makes it clear that there is currently no alternative clean, emission-free generation which could replace nuclear generation at a comparable cost for Ontario ratepayers," Thibeault said.

Ontario plans to refurbish 10 nuclear reactors and prolong the life of six more at the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station.

Jack Gibbons, of Ontario Clean Air Alliance, said that hydro bills will go through the roof if the government heeds this report.

"Every nuclear project in Ontario's history has gone massively over budget on average by two-and-a-half times," Gibbons said.

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The power of change in Ontario's Power

Global News - Wed Nov 22 2017

Greek philosopher Heraclitus gets credit for first saying the only constant in the world is change.

Can you imagine what the 'Dark Philosopher' from 500BC would make of our times where perpetual change has accelerated to dizzying speeds?

In the past decade alone, technological advances have changed basic assumptions about what is a viable business. Ask a taxi company owner if their business is less valuable now. Ask a traditional mattress retailer if online disruptors like Casper or Endy have eaten into their bottom line.

Already, memories of physically going to a video rental store seem sepia-toned, as if all those hours browsing in Blockbuster happened to someone else in a long distant past.

It's those same forces of change that are about to alter how we generate and consume power.

Except this time it won't be taxi companies or department stores feeling the pain, but instead, it will be the owners of massive power plants.

And that is us.

What is on the horizon are developments in energy storage, allowing small micro generators to capture and keep green energy for use when needed. It's conceivable in the coming years that an Uber-style company could help underwrite capital costs of solar panels and energy storage for consumers, who, in return, could remove themselves from the grid and stop paying the local utility.

That's one less ratepayer (a fancy way of separating those who pay for electricity from the general tax base) to share the burden of the cost of transmission lines, power plants and nuclear refurbishment.

To compound the problem in Ontario, the recently passed Fair Hydro Plan will pass on a mountain of accumulated debt in a decade's time, just around the time technological change is expected to fundamentally alter things.

The conundrum for a future Ontario government will be how to pay the bill if a significant number of people leave the grid. That won't be helped by the high electricity prices the current government is passing along.

The recently released Long-Term Energy Plan addresses these issues but has no real answers for our future leaders.

"While we know that our electricity system will continue the trend towards smaller, more distributed energy resources, for the foreseeable future it remains impractical to fully disconnect from the grid," said Colin Nekolaichuk from the Ministry of Energy.

The government says the Fair Hydro Plan has variables programmed in it to allow for changes in energy consumption and prices, but the debt will still remain and getting consumers to pay it will be tough if there are other better cheaper options.

Which means it could eventually be future taxpayers paying for the hydro we're using now.

A dark prediction perhaps, but one Heraclitus would likely recognize.

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Federation misses mark on hospital hydro

Sarnia Observer - Wed Nov 22 2017
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A current media campaign underway from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (Nov. 20, The Observer) is cherry-picking from hospital hydro bills, while failing to see the bigger picture on both the health-care and energy systems in Ontario.

We're talking about numbers, so I'll share a significant that we're proud of as a government. Since coming into office, we've increased hospital funding by 59 per cent. This trend continued in the 2017 budget, which delivered a $4,127,593 funding increase for Bluewater Health, for a total of $134,376,926 this year. In fact, all hospitals in Ontario are seeing funding increases, including 16 in the southwest. This is allowing our hospitals to treat more patients, improve access to care and reduce wait times to some of the shortest in the country.

Meanwhile, we've made investments in our electricity system that have left it significantly cleaner, having eliminated coal generation in Ontario. We have virtually eliminated smog days in Ontario, which is an enormous public health achievement. A Toronto Vital Signs report shows that premature deaths and hospitalizations as a result of air pollution in that region have dropped by 23 per cent and 41 per cent respectively since 2004. The Taxpayers Federation ignores the fact that eliminating coal has saved billions in health-care costs over the years and will continue to do so, for generations to come.

The reality is that hospitals spend an average of only 1.6 per cent of their total operating budgets on electricity bills. That means over 98 per cent of hospital budgets go towards their other priorities - hiring nurses and doctors, keeping wait times low, and ensuring patients have access to high-quality services, where and when they need them.

Ontario hospitals are also eligible for a range of programs, like SaveOnEnergy's audit and retrofit initiatives, to help lower their energy bills by becoming more energy efficient. The Industrial Conservation Initiative, another program that has been very successful in reducing energy costs, can save participants up to one-third on their electricity bills. Bluewater Health is now taking advantage of the program.

On July 1, electricity rates for hospitals dropped by two to four per cent because of our Fair Hydro Plan. Rates for all residential customers dropped significantly - 25 per cent on average across the province. And any rate increases will be held to the rate of inflation for four years, while we continue to work hard to take costs out of our electricity system.

We are already hearing that these reductions are making a difference in the pocketbooks of families and businesses. For hospitals, the savings from the Fair Hydro Plan and programs like SaveOnEnergy and the Industrial Conservation Initiative are building on the health care investments we've made each and every year, and ensure our hospitals can stay focused on putting patients first.

MPP Glenn Thibeault

Ontario Ministry of Energy

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Ontario must pull the plug on painful electricity-related policies

PLANT - Wed Nov 22 2017

Ontario manufacturers are feeling the pinch from high electricity prices, but how high are industrial rates relative to other jurisdictions?

Ontario has the highest residential electricity costs of all Canadian provinces. Prices increased twice as fast as the national average over the past decade, and the average Toronto resident in 2016 paid $60 more a month than the average Canadian.

That takes us back to industrial electricity rates, which are paid by industries including manufacturing (automakers, for example) and mining. A recent Fraser Institute study showed that in 2016, out of 16 major cities, Toronto and Ottawa ranked third and fourth behind only New York and Boston.

Small industrial consumers (with a power demand of one megawatt and monthly consumption of up to 400 megawatt hours) in the Toronto area paid, on average, 16.27 cents per kilowatt hour, nearly double what comparable-sized firms paid in Montreal (9.11 cents) and Vancouver (9.49 cents), and nearly three times what they paid in Calgary (6.53 cents).

And although industrial electricity costs in New York and Boston remain higher than those in Ontario cities, the differential is shrinking over time as Ontario cities experience faster increases. In 2010, for example, electricity costs for small industrial users in Toronto were 85% lower than in New York. By 2016, the differential had shrunk to 51%.

The same pattern exists with large industrial consumers. In 2016, large users (with a power demand of five megawatts and monthly consumption of 3,060 megawatt hours) in Toronto and Ottawa paid almost three times more than consumers in Montreal and Calgary and almost twice what large consumers in Vancouver paid. Even some select large industrial consumers (Class A) that were granted rate reductions from the provincial government still paid higher rates than large users in Quebec, Alberta and BC.

Between 2010 and 2016, electricity costs paid by large industrial consumers rose 53% in Ottawa and 4% in Toronto compared to 14% in the rest of Canada. Montreal saw a modest increase of 10%, while costs dropped in Edmonton (-7%), Calgary (-5%) and Chicago (-19%).

Out of 16 cities examined, the fastest rates of increase were in Portland and Seattle. But even with their rapid growth, their electricity costs for large industrial consumers were significantly lower than Toronto's in 2016 (71% lower in Portland and 62% Seattle).

So what's caused surging electricity prices for residents and industries in Ontario?

Government policy choices are to blame, in particular the province's aggressive promotion of renewable energy sources (solar, wind and biomass). Other policy decisions – including poor structuring of long-term contracts with generators and phasing out coal – have also contributed to the pain.

To finally lower electricity bills for current and future ratepayers, the government should look at electricity costs in other jurisdictions and pursue meaningful policy reform.

This article was written by Ross McKitrick, a senior fellow, and Elmira Aliakbari, a policy analyst, at the Fraser Institute.

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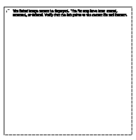

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Well, water you gonna do?; MPP takes turbid water to minister in question period, urges halt to two local wind farm projects

The Chatham Daily News - Wed Nov 22 2017
Byline: Ellwood Shreve
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Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Monte McNaughton delivered a bottle of turbid water to Environment Minister Chris Ballard in the Ontario legislature Tuesday to emphasize the impact wind turbine construction has had on area water wells.

"I want the minister to understand why communities are so troubled by the effect of wind turbines on their water," said McNaughton. "Wells that have produced clean, clear water for decades have begun producing dirty brown, unpotable water since construction of turbines for the North Kent I wind project began."

The MPP noted the number of families affected by damaged wells in the former Chatham Township area has grown to 16, fuelling concerns in the Wallaceburg area where environmental approval may come soon for a similar turbine project to get underway at Otter Creek.

A major concern raised by two local citizen groups is steel piles used to anchor the industrial wind turbines being driven into Kettle Point black shale bedrock, stirring up heavy metals in the aquifer that are known to be dangerous to human health.

However, consultants and company officials for the Korean industrial giant, Samsung Renewable Energy, and its U.S. partner, Pattern Energy, developers of the North Kent Wind project, have stated at two recent public meetings the construction has had no impact on area water wells.

"The government should do the right thing and stop Otter Creek immediately and stop the North Kent project," McNaughton said.

"I think this is just yet another example of the Liberal government showing disrespect to families in rural Ontario," the MPP added. "If this happened in the GTA, they would shut these projects down immediately."

Responding to direct questions by McNaughton during question period on Monday at Queen's Park, Ballard said: "Our government takes these concerns regarding groundwater quality very seriously."

He added the renewable energy process requires proponents to undertake extensive consultation with municipalities, Indigenous communities and the public.

He noted North Kent Wind has done extensive monitoring prior to construction, and the ministry is going to require the developer to continue to monitor the vibration data during the construction and operation of the wind turbines.

When asked if halting these two wind projects could trigger another $1-billion hit to taxpayers, similar to the cancellation of the natural gas projects in the GTA area, McNaughton stated: "Not at all, the savings for Otter Creek alone would amount to $570 million."

He said there are other environmental reasons for stopping the Otter Creek project, including the fact the nearly 200-metre high towers - the highest in Canada - will be erected in a migratory bird flight path, in an area where there are 24 at-risk species.

The MPP said there is also an economic reason for halting these projects.

"These turbines are being built to generate electricity we don't need, and they're only going to contribute to driving hydro prices even higher," McNaughton said. "This is a bad decision by the Liberal government economically, environmentally, and for the health and well-being of my constituents."

McNaughton said when the Liberal government announced it was suspending the renewable energy procurement process in September 2016, he asked why they wouldn't cancel the North Kent and Otter Creek projects.

Speaking to the economic impact, Ballard said clean air and clean energy is responsible for Ontario saving more than $4 billion in annual health and environmental costs "because of this government's commitment to clean energy."

He called renewable energy projects as being crucial to the ministry's carbon switch, adding, "we're not going to back down."

Ballard said, "we have taken a very cautious, science-based approach when setting the standards for renewable energy projects in order to protect the health of the Ontario people."

"The claim that a science-based approach has been taken to analyzing the effect of wind turbine construction on well water is contradicted by the empirical evidence," McNaughton said. "Observation is the first rule of science. We need to stop turbine construction until more thorough testing can be completed and measures taken to ensure our groundwater is safe." eshreve@postmedia.com
Twitter.com/@DailyNewsES

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Guelph Hydro, Alectra to host Facebook chat on proposed merger

GuelphMercury.com - Tue Nov 21 2017

With a decision on a potential merger not far away, Guelph Hydro and Alectra will be hosting a live Facebook session to see what people think about the proposal.

From 6 to 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 28, representatives from Guelph Hydro, Alectra and the City of Guelph will answer questions on the proposed merger.

Taking part will be Pankaj Sardana, the chief executive officer of Guelph Hydro; Dan Pastoric, the vice-president of strategic growth and special projects for Alectra; and Derrick Thomson, the City of Guelph's chief administrative officer.

The session will be available to watch at facebook.com/cityofguelph.

The live Facebook session is in addition to three open houses held earlier this month in Guelph and Rockwood, information pop-up tables, a phone survey and an online survey.

Feedback from all of the above will be included in the final staff report to council for its Dec. 13 meeting, when councillors will vote on whether to move ahead with the merger. That report will be made available Nov. 30.

Those looking to speak to council at the Dec. 13 meeting have until Dec. 8 to register with the city clerk's office.

On Oct. 18, Guelph Hydro announced that it would be pursuing a merger with Alectra - the company formed following the merger of Mississauga's Enersource; Markham, Barrie and Vaughan's PowerStream; and Hamilton and St. Catharines' Horizon. That merger was done in order to purchase Hydro One Brampton from the Ontario government.

To date, the Guelph Hydro asset review - which led to this potential merger - has cost $810,000 for Guelph Municipal Holdings Inc. (GMHI), the holding company which owns and operates Guelph Hydro on behalf of the city. GMHI is expected to spend another $1.55 million between now and the finalization of the merger process, bringing total costs to about $2.36 million. The funds come from the dividend from Guelph Hydro paid out to the city every year.

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Ontario Energy Board embarks on customer service guidelines review

East York Mirror - Tue Nov 21 2017 **Page:** 1

Should customers with poor credit records or a history of late payment be required to provide security deposits? The Ontario Energy Board wants to know.

The provincial energy regulator is in search of public feedback as it undertakes a review of customer service guidelines set in 2011, which all Ontario energy providers, electricity or natural gas, are legally required to follow.

According to the board, all public feedback will be considered in the establishment of an updated set of guidelines as part of a review of the board's mandate. To garner opinions, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has teamed with market research pollsters Ipsos to create an online survey for provincial residential and small business energy customers.

In addition to the question of security deposits, the survey also asks when customer disconnections can take place and on what condition, as well as questions related to payment period and making late payments.

The updated customer service policy is also expected to provide new customer guidelines for sub-meter providers such as condominiums or apartments which have their own meters and bill residents directly. As part of provincial legislative changes, the OEB will have a greater mandate to regulate the dealings of such providers.

In a statement, the OEB said all feedback provided including demographic information will be kept confidential.

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Lambton in line for hydro upgrades; Hydro One replacing transformer station near Wyoming to address power issues

Sarnia Observer - Wed Nov 22 2017
Byline: Paul Morden
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Hydro One is set to spend $60 million or more replacing and upgrading electricity transmission equipment in Lambton County.

Work began in September on a $30-million to $35-million construction project to replace Hydro One's Wanstead Transformer Station east of Wyoming. Along with that, a $30-million refurbishing project for a 230-kilovolt transmission line from London to Sarnia is set to start in January, said Hydro One spokesperson Nancy Clark.

"A lot of our infrastructure was built in the 1950s and '60s, so we're reaching the point now where we need to replace or refurbish a lot of our equipment," she said.

The Wanstead station has been serving customers in the Lambton County area since the 1950s, Clark said.

"The replacement station will actually ensure that we can continue to deliver the reliable electricity that we're delivering now."

A new transformer station is being built next to the existing one, which will eventually be taken down.

That project is expected to be completed by the end of next year, Clark said.

Bluewater Power, a municipally owned electricity distribution utility serving 35,000 customers in six Lambton communities, contributed $1 million to the Wanstead project to upgrade its capabilities, said Chris Gould, Bluewater Power's vice-president of utility development.

"This upgrade that we've contributed to will provide a more reliable and robust supply," he said.

The upgrade will be attractive to industry, while also helping address long-standing issues Bluewater Power and Lambton communities have had with their electricity supply.

"The smaller municipalities out in the county are fed from the Wanstead station," Gould said. "We were not happy, and neither were they… with the service we were receiving from the station."

Kevin Marriott, mayor of Enniskillen Township, said about half of the township's residents are served by the Wanstead station.

"I'm not sure this is going to correct all of our problems," he said. "It's going to help."

He estimated there have been four or five outages this year in the township, including one that lasted eight hours.

Marriott said the work at the Wanstead station is expected to benefit industrial electricity users in the area, including a medical marijuana facility British Columbia-based Tilray Canada is developing at an existing greenhouse site in his township.

The work to refurbish a transmission line between London and Sarnia includes reinforcing 260 steel transmission towers, "as well as replacing other components on the line that have reached the end of their life," Clark said.

That project includes replacing a "sky wire" protecting the line from lightning strikes.

Clark said the replacement wire will have telecommunication capability "which, will actually improve our ability to monitor the line and determine where outages are."

Work on the transmission line project is expected to run until the end of 2019, Clark said.

"The investment will ensure the line continues to deliver reliable electricity to the area," she said. pmorden@postmedia.com

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FOI documents show Orangeville hospital spent $3.1M on hydro in last five years

Orangeville Banner - Tue Nov 21 2017 **Page:** 1

Documents obtained through a freedom of information request have revealed the Headwaters Health Care Centre has spent more than $3.1 million on electricity since 2012.

The billing information obtained through a freedom of information request made by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) shows the Orangeville hospital's annual electricity bill has increased nearly 51 per cent to $728,139 last year from $482,724 in 2012.

"The more the hospital has to spend keeping their lights on, the fewer resources they have for patients," CTF Ontario director Christine Van Geyn said in a news release.

"Families across the province all feel the pain of rapid increases to the cost of electricity when they pay their home electricity bill," she added. "But what many people don't think about is the cost of the Ontario government's failed electricity policy to the institutions we all rely on."

According to documents obtained by CTF, Headwaters spent $482,724 on electricity in 2012, followed by a respective $552,668, $586,616, $671,880 and $728,139 from 2013 to 2016. From January to April of 2017, Headwaters spent $171,878 on electricity.

CTF is a not-for-profit citizen's advocacy group dedicated to lowering taxes, reducing wasteful spending and accountable government.

The organization has called on the provincial government to dismantle the Green Energy Act and "stop letting green ideology guide our energy policies at the expense of Ontario ratepayers and taxpayers."

Van Geyn reports Ontario has seen dramatic increases to the cost of electricity, with bills for residential consumers more than doubling in the last decade. As she explained, publicly-funded institutions such as Orangeville's hospital are not immune.

"Instead of paying $245,415 for inflated electricity bills, Headwaters Health could have paid for 32 knee replacement surgeries," Van Geyn said. "That's something that Ontario patients expect their health care system to spend money on."

Documents detailing Headwaters Health Care Centre's electricity bills can be found by visiting bit.ly/2yECUZY.

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Ontario blowing in the wind

The Sault Star - Wed Nov 22 2017
Byline: Jane Wilson
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Every time I am interviewed by the media, or speak at a public meeting, I am asked: Why is Ontario continuing to push ahead with its program of industrial-scale wind turbines and wind power, when all the facts seem to argue against it? I don't know. I don't understand why Ontario's Liberal government never did a cost-benefit analysis, or why it has ignored the admonitions of two auditors general about impacts and costs, or why it seems unable, or unwilling, to look at the real-world experience of its wind power experiment.

I don't know why the government signed contracts in 2016 for 600 megawatts of wind power when we already have a power surplus.

In 2016, Ontario paid $2.7 billion for generators of electricity from nuclear, gas and hydro not to produce power, because we were forced to accept wind power (when it shows up) to the grid.

In September, a new 100-megawatt wind power facility started commercial operation, but that same month, 42% of wind power in Ontario's west region was curtailed (surplus, not added to the grid).

Ontario's electricity customers paid for that power, anyway.

I don't know why the government keeps adding more new power, which adds costs to people's electricity bills, so much so that "energy poverty" is a new, sad phrase in Ontario.

The government claims to have reduced electricity bills by 25%, but it has done nothing to cut costs by cancelling contracts for unneeded power.

I don't know why we are adding more "green" power when Ontario is already "green" by most standards.

Ontario's engineers point out that more intermittent wind power means more natural gas back-up, which means more fossil fuel use, not less.

I don't know why the government persists in saying wind power is good for the environment when its effect on the natural environment and wildlife is well known.

Last month, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner pointed out that no request to "kill, harm or harass" wildlife had been refused for four years - she cited wind power projects where development actually took precedence over environmental balance.

Finally, I don't know why the government is ignoring the thousands of reports of negative impacts from the huge, noiseproducing turbines.

Between 2006 and 2014, the government received well over 3,100 formal reports of excessive noise and vibration, according to documents provided to Wind Concerns Ontario.

New wind turbine projects will be affected by the Ontario Liberal government canceling their green energy act to save money. Photograph taken on Tuesday September 27, 2016 near Strathroy, Ontario west of London. (Mike Hensen/The London Free Press) When the Green Energy Act was passed in 2009, the government already knew there were problems, but it pushed ahead anyway, going so far as to remove local land use planning power from municipalities seeking to protect their residents.

Of those thousands of reports, more than 50% received no response from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. Only 1% resulted in a priority response.

On the formal Pollution Incident Reports kept by the government, there is space to name the "client".

Who might that be, for the ministry whose pledge it is to protect the environment and human health? Not the people of Ontario. On each report, the "client" listed is the wind power developer.

New noise protocols were released earlier this year but guess what? The newly contracted projects don't have to abide by the new rules.

There are concerns about the effect of the vibration from wind turbine construction and operation (picture a giant tuning fork stuck in the ground).

But the environment ministry appears to have abdicated its role as regulator, and relies instead on self-regulation by the multibillion-dollar wind power industry.

What is the reason behind these social, economic and environment costs that so moves the Ontario government to keep pressing ahead with this problematic program? I don't know. The government is not answering. Jane Wilson is a Registered Nurse and health care writer; she is volunteer president of Wind Concerns Ontario, a coalition of 30 community groups and hundreds of Ontario citizens

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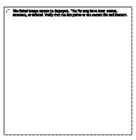

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Top power grid exec resigns after domestic violence charge; Top power grid exec resigns after domestic violence charge

Canadian Press - Tue Nov 21 2017

WASHINGTON - The head of an international authority that oversees the North American power grid has resigned following his arrest on a domestic violence charge in Georgia.

Gerry Cauley stepped down Monday as CEO of the North American Electric Reliability Corp., an international regulatory authority that seeks to assure reliability and security of the electric grid in the United States, Canada and northern Mexico.

Jail records show the 64-year-old was arrested Nov. 10 at his home outside Atlanta. He was charged with battery-family violence and released on bond.

A message was left Tuesday with Cauley's divorce lawyer.

NERC senior vice-president and general counsel Charles Berardesco is serving as interim president and CEO.

Board chairman Roy Thilly says NERC remains committed to maintaining the reliability and resilience of the bulk power system.

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Avista shareholders approve utility's sale to Canadian utility Hydro One

MCT Regional News - Tue Nov 21 2017
Byline: By Becky Kramer, The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, Wash.

Nov. 21—With little fanfare, Avista Corp.'s shareholders approved the sale of the 128-year-old company to Canadian utility Hydro One Ltd. on Tuesday.

About 98 percent of shareholders voted in favor of the $5.3 billion transaction, which is expected to be finalized in August.

Most of Avista's shareholders are institutional investors, who voted in advance of the Tuesday morning meeting.

About 60 people attended the brief shareholders' meeting in Avista's auditorium. Several hundred, however, gathered for a community reception for Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt Monday evening at the Historic Davenport Hotel.

"We don't view this as an acquisition. We view this as a coming together, a partnership," Schmidt told the crowd at the Davenport.

The Toronto-based utility, which serves 1.3 million customers in suburban and rural Ontario, is the right size for the acquisition to be a "merger of equals," said Scott Morris, Avista's chairman and CEO.

Spokane-based Avista started exploring merger and sale options late last year. Several utilities expressed interest before Avista's board of directors approved Hydro One's offer.

Morris said a number of community residents have asked him why Avista didn't seek an alliance with a publicly traded utility in the Northwest, such as Puget Sound Energy or PacifiCorp. It came down to size, he said.

"We're smaller than they are," Morris said.

By aligning with Hydro One, Avista was able to negotiate key concessions, such as keeping Avista's corporate headquarters in Spokane, securing an increase in the company's charitable giving and continuing its role in local economic development initiatives, he said.

"You'll still see the same Avista," Morris promised the crowd at the reception.

The sale must be reviewed and approved by state and federal regulators, which is expected to take about nine months. When the transaction is complete, Avista will operate as a wholly owned subsidiary of Hydro One.

At the time of the sale, Hydro One will purchase Avista's outstanding stock for $53 per share. The price represents a 23 percent premium over the company's closing share price on July 19, the day the sale was announced.

Despite the large payout, at least one local shareholder was disappointed by Avista's decision to sell.

Dennis Hueber, of Spokane, owns about 1,000 shares of Avista. He likes to invest in local stocks and considers Avista a stable, well-managed company.

"I'd prefer to hang on to those shares," said Hueber, who didn't attend Tuesday's shareholder meeting. "I feel like I'm being pushed out by this move.

"It's hard to find something that you will feel as comfortable parking your money in as a local utility," he said.

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