

From: John Cannella [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CD667C6D53774DD0A749783BB02AE89D-JOHN CANNEL]
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Subject: Today's News - Thursday, March 16, 2017



Today's News

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Date: Thursday, March 16, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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269021067

How can we lower power costs for good?

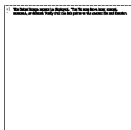
ottawacitizen.com - Wed Mar 15 2017
Byline: Brian Platt

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NDP says Wynne's 25-per-cent hydro-rate cut won't help bigger businesses, hospitals

thestar.com - Wed Mar 15 2017
Byline: Rob Ferguson

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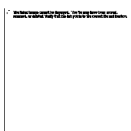


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NDP calls on Ontario government to table hydro legislation on Monday; NDP calls for Ontario hydro bill on Monday

Canadian Press - Wed Mar 15 2017
Byline: Allison Jones

TORONTO - NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table legislation for its hydro bill reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation." The legislature is not sitting this ...



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Ontario Liberals' hydro rate cut plan did little to spark voter support, new poll suggests

CBC.CA News - Wed Mar 15 2017, 12:41pm ET
Byline: CBC News

The Ontario government's plan to dramatically cut hydro rates did little to boost support for the Liberals ahead of next year's provincial election, a new poll suggests. The Mainstreet research poll, commissioned by Postmedia and ...



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Toronto Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017
Byline: Shawn Jeffords
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Sarnia Observer - Thu Mar 16 2017
Byline:Ellwood Shreve
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Windsor Star - Wed Mar 15 2017
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Byline:Peter Epp
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269021067

How can we lower power costs for good?

ottawacitizen.com - Wed Mar 15 2017
Byline: Brian Platt

When Premier Kathleen Wynne finally announced her hydro relief package earlier this month, it put to rest the immediate political question of how to reduce bills quickly.

The reduction mostly comes from kicking generation costs further down the road, which makes bills cheaper now but will eventually cost us more. Further relief directed at low-income and rural residents will come from drawing money out of general tax revenues.

Yes, this was politics. It simply shifts around money so it seems like you're paying less. But everyone was demanding substantial relief right away, and there was no painless way to do it. What did you expect? Magic?

In the big picture, the real question is what we're doing to lower the total cost of the system so we can stop monkeying around with "refinancing" and tax subsidies. Here, there is one big project worth keeping an eye on.

The Independent Electricity System Operator, the agency in charge of the province's electricity grid, is in the midst of what it calls "market renewal." Currently, Ontario manages its daily electricity demand using a 15-year-old system built for a simpler time - before the province shut down its coal-fired plants and built renewable generators such as wind and solar, and before time-of-use pricing was brought in to encourage consumers to use power in off-peak periods.

"What it's really about is revisiting the fundamental design of the market," the IESO's Chuck Farmer said in an interview.

The market is how generators are contracted to produce a certain amount of electricity in a certain amount of time. It's a tricky balance: produce too little and you have brown-outs; produce too much and you have to sell the excess to U.S. states at a loss.

How it all works in practice is an extraordinarily complex thing for the average person (or, say, newspaper columnist) to understand, but the core goal of market renewal is to improve how the IESO anticipates daily electricity needs, and to build in more flexibility. A large report on how to do this was just released (www.ieso.ca), and the IESO is now gathering feedback. Any changes are still about four years away.

There are two other big elements of the renewal process. One is to improve how Ontario trades electricity with neighbouring jurisdictions so that it's done more efficiently and reduces the cost of selling our surplus. The other is to use "technology-agnostic" auctions when the province needs to build new power plants. In other words, instead of calling for a certain amount of wind, solar or natural gas, the province will simply go for the most cost-effective solution that meets its needs (including on carbon emissions).

How much money will all of this save consumers? Over roughly 10 years, the IESO hopes about \$3.5 billion in total. It's not a game-changing amount. The government's plan to "refinance" the global adjustment charge, for example, will

take about \$1.5 billion off bills annually (for now). But the IESO's project represents permanent savings, not artificial ones created through financial gimmicks.

There are other programs underway. The Ontario Energy Board has launched pilot projects with distribution companies to experiment with peak and off-peak prices. Eventually you may be able to choose your own electricity pricing plan, which could help some people (especially seniors, who tend to be home during peak hours).

So, yes, there is some money to be saved in the system. Overall, these reforms are common-sense initiatives that are just hard to achieve in practice. Yet what all of this really shows is how grindingly hard it is to get those permanent savings.

When new costs are put into the electricity system, they stay there for a long, long time (see: green energy contracts). Every time you hear a politician musing about some big idea to inject into the electricity system, alarm bells should start ringing. Something to keep in mind as we enter election season.

Brian Platt is the deputy digital editor for the Ottawa Citizen. Previously, he was based at Queen's Park as a policy reporter.

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NDP says Wynne's 25-per-cent hydro-rate cut won't help bigger businesses, hospitals

thestar.com - Wed Mar 15 2017
Byline: Rob Ferguson

New Democrats are raising questions about Premier Kathleen Wynne's plan to cut hydro rates 25 per cent (www.thestar.com) and are demanding legislation to put it in place this summer be introduced next week.

"People deserve to see it in black and white," NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said Wednesday, on the heels of an internal government poll suggesting the plan, which will cost \$25 billion in interest charges over 30 years, is popular.

"It's so far been press releases and talking points."

While the government says the rate cuts will apply to families and 500,000 farms and small businesses, Horwath said it appears hospitals and other organizations struggling with high electricity costs will be left out.

That leaves people in the dark on how far the price break will go, and how the interest charges will impact Ontarians over the long haul, she said.

"They now have more questions right now than they do answers," Horwath told a news conference after returning to Toronto from a road trip touting her own plan to cut rates by 17 to 30 per cent (www.thestar.com) for all if the NDP forms the government after the June 2018 provincial election.

"Will it apply to medium-sized Ontario businesses? Will it help municipalities struggling to pay hydro bills at arenas and community centres? And who's going to pay for all that interest that Premier Wynne is racking up?" Horwath asked of the Liberal proposal.

"Will a hospital that sees virtually no savings still be expected to help pick up the \$40-billion tab?" she added, claiming the government is underestimating the \$25 billion in interest costs.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault did not set a date, but said legislation will be introduced in time for public hearings and debate so rate cuts can take effect this summer.

He took aim at Horwath's plan, released two weeks ago, to convince the federal government to scrap its 5 per cent HST on electricity and to buy back shares from the partially privatized Hydro One.

"These offer little to Ontarians in the short term, compared to the real and meaningful relief our government's fair hydro plan will provide to everyone," Thibeault said in a statement, calling the federal HST push "pie-in-the-sky."

"The NDP's most expensive idea - buying back more than \$4 billion in shares of Hydro One - will not take one cent off electricity bills. What it will do is send billions to the stock market, instead of making much-needed infrastructure investments in communities across Ontario."

Wynne's government is selling up to 60 per cent of Hydro One to raise an estimated \$9 billion toward new transit lines and other infrastructure and pay down hydro system debt.

Internal government polling (www.thestar.com), obtained by the Star, suggests 82 per cent of Ontarians support the Wynne rate cut, while a Mainstreet poll for PostMedia found 47 per cent support it and 35 per cent disapprove.

Horwath also took aim at Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown, whose party has not yet released a plan to deal with hydro rates, which have doubled in the last decade.

"It's kind of worrisome. He's got no plan at all. Nobody knows who Patrick Brown is, what he believes, what his vision is for hydro, because he hasn't put a plan forward," she told reporters.

Brown said last week that Wynne's plan sets a "low bar" (www.thestar.com) for fixing the electricity system, because it doesn't address "structural issues," such as the surplus of power and expensive renewable energy contracts still coming on line.

He did not set a target for how much a Tory plan could save ratepayers, but promised to reveal details in the "near future."

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269037619

NDP calls on Ontario government to table hydro legislation on Monday; NDP calls for Ontario hydro bill on Monday

Canadian Press - Wed Mar 15 2017

Byline: Allison Jones

TORONTO - NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table legislation for its hydro bill reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation."

The legislature is not sitting this week for March Break, but Horwath said Ontarians need to see the planned legislation as soon as possible.

"People deserve to see it in black and white so they can debate it and so the legislature can debate it too," she said.

"Don't hide the details, don't delay, don't come to the legislature just before it rises this summer with a last-minute bill, ultimatums and no time for committees, experts and the people of Ontario to take the time they need to examine the bill. Put this \$40-billion phantom plan on paper and let's have a real debate about what's best for Ontario's future."

The government indicated the legislation won't come as quickly as Monday.

"We will introduce legislation this session, with time for debate and public hearings at committee, ensuring real relief for Ontarians and a way to ensure greater fairness in our electricity system this summer," Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said in a statement.

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced earlier this month that people will receive an average 25-per-cent cut to their electricity bills starting this summer - 17 per cent in new reductions plus an eight-per-cent rebate that came into effect Jan. 1. Rates will also increase no higher than inflation for the next four years.

But the plan will ultimately cost ratepayers about \$25 billion more in interest, the government has said. The plan will take part of the global adjustment charge off bills for the next 10 years, but the cost isn't being eliminated, it's being deferred to future ratepayers, racking up interest on that debt in the meantime.

The fact that billions of dollars will ultimately go to bankers and not be spent on schools or roads "warrants one heck of an explanation," Horwath said.

Both opposition parties doubt the Liberal government's math and say the extra interest costs could be as high as \$40 billion.

"Let's just say I have a healthy amount of skepticism when it comes to any numbers that Liberals provide," said Horwath.

Horwath said it's not clear when the hydro plan's interest payments will come due, but the Liberals have said it won't be for at least 10 years.

Horwath also said it's not clear if it will apply to medium-sized businesses, but the Liberals have said the 25-per-cent reduction won't. Half a million small businesses and farms will qualify, but all other businesses except the largest manufacturers and industrial customers will only see a reduction of between two and four per cent, government officials have said.

On one thing, however, the NDP and Liberals can agree: "The Conservatives have no plan at all," Horwath said.

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown has said he will announce a plan "soon."

The NDP has proposed an alternative plan to lower hydro bills by 30 per cent, but the Liberals say while their relief will kick in within a few months, the NDP's proposed savings wouldn't take effect for a long time.

The New Democrats' plan calls for ending mandatory time-of-use pricing, reducing the delivery charge for rural customers, renegotiating power contracts, and returning Hydro One to public ownership. The Liberal government has sold 30 per cent of Hydro One and plans to sell up to 60 per cent in total.

The Liberal plan also contains a delivery charge reduction for some rural customers, removing the charge entirely for on-reserve First Nations customers, and expanding a low-income support program.

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Ontario Liberals' hydro rate cut plan did little to spark voter support, new poll suggests

CBC.CA News - Wed Mar 15 2017, 12:41pm ET
Byline: CBC News

The Ontario government's plan to dramatically cut hydro rates did little to boost support for the Liberals ahead of next year's provincial election, a new poll suggests.

The Mainstreet research poll, commissioned by Postmedia and released Wednesday, suggests the Ontario Provincial Conservative party remain in the lead despite the announcement, though more respondents say they are undecided about who they would vote for if an election were held today.

Earlier this month, Premier Kathleen Wynne unveiled a plan that would slash residential and small business hydro bills by an average of 17 per cent and see billions in costs lifted off customers in the short term. It meant that some \$28 billion in costs would be refinanced, with future ratepayers shouldering the interest.

The move came as the Liberal government was found to be trailing the PCs by some 14 per cent in a range of polls, and nearly even with the NDP.

Move helped to shake support for PCs, poll finds

According to the poll, which captured the views of 2,531 Ontarians on March 11-12, the move was received by 41 per cent of respondents as a political one. Even so, 47 per cent of those polled approved of the hydro plan, with 35 per cent disapproving.

For comparison purposes only, a random sample of this size would yield a margin of error of plus or minus 1.95 per cent. The poll was conducted by interactive voice response and included landline and cell line responses.

"Right now, it looks like Wynne has succeeded in expanding the number of Ontarians who might vote for her," Mainstreet Research executive vice-president David Valentin said. "But that doesn't mean they will."

"Everywhere I go I hear from people worried about the price that they are asked to pay for hydro and the impact that it has on their household budgets," Wynne said, making the announcement at Queen's Park almost exactly two weeks ago.

The Liberals don't appear to have garnered any new support following Wynne's announcement, the poll shows. In fact, it notes they dropped two percentage points within the margin of error.

"Anger over hydro prices doesn't just work like a light switch. You can't just turn it on and off," said Valentin. "I think if people begin to see a real tangible change in their hydro bills come September, then maybe we'll start to see more traction."

But with the number of undecided voters up among every demographic in the province, the numbers do indicate they've managed to "knock voters away from the opposition parties ? for now."

'Three-way race' on question of hydro plan alone

The largest jump in undecided voters came from southwestern Ontario, while the GTA's undecided rate was largely unchanged, it found. And among all those surveyed, the PCs posted a 10-point lead.

However, all bets were off on the issue of Ontario's hydro plan alone, the poll found, with PC leader Patrick Brown's lead disappearing altogether when respondents were asked who had the best plan for the province.

"When asked which provincial leader has the best Hydro plan, the results point to a three-way race," Valentin said.

"But I think the question is not how many people are going to base their vote just on who has the best hydro plan but has the premier been able to change the ballot question to not focus on hydro at all. If she can focus Ontarians on her plan for free tuition for low-income students in September or on upcoming job reform... she'll be doing a lot better."

The PCs have so far presented no plan for cutting hydro rates.

And earlier this month, Ontario's New Democratic Party leader Andrea Horwath released a plan to reduce rates by as much as 30 per cent for some households. The cornerstone of her plan was buying back shares of Hydro One sold by the government to private investors.

That plan appears to have resonated with voters, the poll found.

Horwath's score on the question of hydro alone was four percentage points higher than her score overall on voting intentions.

On Wednesday, Horwath issued what she called a challenge to Wynne: To table the details of her plan at the legislature for debate Monday.

"Show the people of Ontario what your \$40 billion dollar borrowing deal really means... People deserve to see it in black and white."

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269060061

Delivery charge for reserves nixed

Toronto Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017

Byline:Shawn Jeffords

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The Liberal government's new hydro rate cut will remove delivery charges for every on-reserve First Nations household in Ontario.

Colin Nikolaichuk, spokesman for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault, said the credit will help alleviate the large delivery charges to many Ontario First Nation's reserves and remote communities.

The credit will cover 100% of the delivery charges.

The ministry says 21,500 on-reserve customers will automatically qualify for the credit.

The Ontario Energy Board recommended the changes after consulting with First Nations.

The government is also expanding its Ontario Electricity Support Program, which will provide additional support for some low-income First Nation's ratepayers.

Those who qualify for the lowest credit will see an increase from a \$45-permonth subsidy to \$65.

Those measures, along with a number of other credits to help low-income Ontarians, will cost the government \$2.5 billion over the next three years, Nikolaichuk said in a statement to the Sun.

Ontario's First Nations leaders have welcomed the news, with Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day saying the decision will reduce "energy poverty" in many communities.

"Poverty, lack of opportunity and choosing to pay for electricity over food is a reality that affects our people," Day said.

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269048350

Bruce Power CEO writes environment minister to support OPG DGR

Kincardine News - Thu Mar 16 2017

Byline: Michael W. Rencheck

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Dear Minister McKenna, I would like to express Bruce Power's support for Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) at the Bruce Power site, near Tiverton, ON.

As concluded by the Joint Review Panel, this is a safe and effective way to manage this level of waste over the long term, and it's important that we accept the findings of this independent, science-based process. In addition, as an active member in the host region of the proposed DGR, we think it's also important for us to recognize support from local municipalities and the commitment OPG has made to Indigenous Communities moving forward.

The long-term storage of low and intermediate level waste through a DGR facility is an internationally accepted strategy, which results in a safe and scientifically sound solution. It is also one that we at Bruce Power have integrated into our long-term waste management strategy for our Life-Extension Program, as well as the continued operation of our site to 2064 and beyond.

We have a requirement to fully fund the cost of the waste products we produce and the eventual decommissioning of the facility, and this is included in our price of power. The cost of the DGR as a key element to this equation is funded within both Bruce Power's and OPG's long-term planning.

In the nuclear industry, we pride ourselves on our ability to provide reliable, low-cost and low-carbon electricity, resulting in the avoidance of millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions globally. Like all forms of power, we strive to continuously lessen our impact, and, as is often highlighted through various public forums, waste minimization and storage is one of our industry's leading efforts.

Through a unique agreement by which Bruce Power leases its two stations from OPG, we work very closely on waste management reduction strategies and strive to remain on the cutting edge of innovation. Even with the approval of the DGR, we will continue to innovate to minimize waste through our operations and across our industry.

We acknowledge that decisions of this scale require extensive analysis and scrutiny to ensure that it truly is a sound decision. This project has been in development and part of the regulatory process for a long time, and all involved have asked challenging questions during the process. However, the CEAA Panel process is both extensive and independent and relies on facts and science to make its conclusions. The process has yielded a very clear result, and it is important that OPG is now enabled to move forward.

Nuclear has powered the Province of Ontario for decades, providing low-cost, reliable electricity, and allowing Canada to be a leader in the production of medical isotopes such as Cobalt-60 which is exported around the world. The industry has created good jobs and economic growth, while keeping the air we breathe clean.

As you know, waste is a by-product of our industry that requires safe, long-term

management. The industry has managed this for over 50 years in a safe way, and we need to position ourselves to build on this strong track record. OPG has proven to be a leader in minimizing and safely storing this material for decades, and for over 10 years has been rigorously evaluating a safe and responsible long-term solution for waste management. The DGR is its proposed solution, and based on the technical case, the Bruce site is the right location for it to be constructed.

Please accept this letter as Bruce Power's full support for a DGR on the Bruce site. We are confident in the regulatory process that has taken the project to this point and our understanding that OPG will continue to follow through on the commitments it has made to engage local municipalities and Indigenous communities who have an interest in this project.

Michael W. Rencheck

President and Chief Executive Officer Bruce Power

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269067919

Zapped hydro customers turning to churches; Soaring rates driving some in Southwestern Ontario to seek relief from churches

Samia Observer - Thu Mar 16 2017

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

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They've driven people to food banks and even prompted one Ontario woman to tearfully plea for relief to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It gets worse. Ontario's soaring electricity prices are now zapping churches in some parts of Southwestern Ontario, hit by consumers unable to shoulder the burden.

The problem is so bad, one cleric in Wallaceburg says his church's benevolent fund has gone into overdraft three times in the last two years - something he hadn't seen before in 24 years on the job - as people come looking for help to cope with their power bills.

"I know on paper, from my own accounting, I've overdrafted it three times" within the last two years, said Pastor Brian Horrobin of First Baptist Church.

"There's definitely been a marked increase in people coming for help," said Horrobin, noting the same has happened at other churches in the area.

Horrobin said his church has either directly helped people pay outstanding hydro bills or given them prepaid grocery cards because they can't afford groceries after paying for electricity.

Ontario electricity rates have essentially doubled over the past decade, with the province's own auditor-general finding ratepayers paid \$37 billion more than market prices for power over much of that period and will fork out more than three-and-a-half times as much in extra costs by 2032 because, she reported, the Liberal government ignored its own energy experts and made political decisions that hiked the cost for consumers.

The fallout has also set the stage for the next election in 2018, with the New

Democrats proposing to cut power prices by 30 per cent and the Liberals, their popularity in the polls hard-hit by the energy file, saying they'll cut bills by 17 per cent this summer on top of an eight-per-cent cut that took effect Jan. 1 when they removed the provincial sales tax on hydro bills.

Horrobin raised his concerns during an anti-poverty roundtable held by Progressive Conservative MPP Monte McNaughton, whose Lambton-Kent-Middlesex riding takes in vast rural reaches where electricity delivery rates are higher than in many urban areas.

"A story that hit home for me is that a number of churches in North Kent are now raiding benevolent funds to pay people's hydro bills. ... because they can't afford to pay those bills (since) the costs have gone up so much," McNaughton said.

Southwestern Ontario's ranking MPP, 22-year veteran Ernie Hardeman in Oxford, said social agencies and churches in his riding are also reporting more people coming to them seeking relief from energy bills.

"Just coming in and getting help with food just doesn't seem to do it anymore, because their hydro bill is a bigger problem than not being able to get their groceries," he said.

Late last year, Wynne called Ontario's high electricity prices her "mistake" and vowed to fix them, paving the way for the new reductions coming.

But Hardeman is critical of Wynne's promise, calling it a "Band-Aid" fix that doesn't address structural problems.

"The premier says she's solving the problem, and yet she's done nothing about changing the system," he said.

The Liberals have stood by their handling of the energy file, noting they closed Ontario's dirty coal-fired power plants in favour of green energy.

But critics point out the government's plunge into green energy since 2009, which greatly expanded wind-and solar-generated power, included sweetheart long-term contracts that guaranteed energy producers far more than what consumers pay for power, inflating the cost.

Liberal MPP Ted McMeekin said he's been saying all along the delivery charges weren't fair, and the government listened.

The Liberals inherited problems with the electricity system from the former PC government, he said, citing the frequent number of smog days Ontario had then - a problem aggravated by coal-fired power - and the 2003 blackout, when power plants across Ontario scrambled to get the province's grid operational after 50 million North Americans were plunged into darkness.

He noted a \$50-billion investment was made to upgrade the power system, and "somebody's got to pay for that."

The government's plan to lower hydro costs takes the pressure off that bill, essentially spreading the pain over a longer period, like remortgaging a house, at an added cost of \$25 billion in interest.

The plan also contains a delivery charge reduction for some rural customers, removing the charge entirely for on-reserve First Nations customers, and expanding a low-income support program.

Deputy Premier Deb Matthews of London said the government heard Ontarians "loud and clear" on hydro.

"Electricity prices are a big deal for the people of this province," she said, adding "that is why we came out strongly with a significant reduction."

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269020021

Assistant to Ontario's Minister of Energy in Windsor Thursday

Windsor Star - Wed Mar 15 2017
Byline:City Desk

Ontario's much-maligned Fair Hydro Plan will be the topic of discussion Thursday in Windsor.

Bob Delaney, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, will discuss the plan with officials at the EnWin Utilities offices on Rhodes Drive.

The so-called Fair Hydro Plan proposes to give residential consumers an average of a 25 per cent cut on their energy bills - when factoring in the eight per cent reduction implemented Jan. 1 - by refinancing over a longer period a portion of the global adjustment charge. The plan also includes additional reductions for low-income and rural consumers as well as savings for many small businesses and farms.

But critics have accused the province of transferring hydro debt to future generations. The provincial Conservatives have argued the plan will cost taxpayers billions over decades in added interest costs to fix the hydro mess that they say was created by the Liberal government.

The Windsor visit is one stop on a province-wide tour the government is undertaking to help Ontario residents understand the plan.

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269067849

Voters plugging into short-term rate relief

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Mar 16 2017
Byline:Peter Epp
Page: A4

Incredibly and against all odds, Ontarians may be prepared to forgive Premier Kathleen Wynne and her Liberals when they go to the polls in June 2018.

According to a Mainstreet Research/Postmedia poll, approximately 47 per cent of Ontarians approve of Wynne's decision earlier this month to lower electricity rates by an average of 17 per cent, beginning with the June billing - even as that decision would create additional long-term debt of an estimated \$26 billion.

Indeed, the same poll found 41 per cent of Ontarians believe the Liberals' electricity plan is really a ploy to put the controversial issue behind them as Wynne and her party gear up for the next election campaign. But guess what? They're also willing to accept it for what it is and enjoy lower electricity bills. It's not only the Liberals who are cynical here; it is also those who support them while acknowledging and even applauding their opportunism.

What's interesting is even as Wynne's personal approval rating drags, her party continues to enjoy more support than the New Democrats, for whom only 17 per cent of Ontarians would vote if a general election was held today. The Liberals stand at 22 per cent, while the Progressive Conservatives are at 32 per cent.

But the number of undecided Ontarians sits at 25 per cent, and they will probably be the ones to elect the next government. Their decision will not be based on electricity rates alone but on a wide variety of issues, including the popularity of party leaders.

But by slightly moving the issue of electricity rates off the table, the Liberals have potentially removed an enormous obstacle to re-election. And with their plan set to begin in June, they'll have 12 months to remind Ontarians they were able to cut electricity rates.

The Mainstreet Research/Postmedia poll illustrates a compelling truth: many voters are searching for short-term and immediate solutions while disregarding long-term consequences. They are willing to be bought.

The NDP's Andrea Horwath has also put forward a plan to deal with Ontario's electricity challenges but the New Democrats have received little public traction, and what they have received pales to the Liberals' ability as the sitting government to simply cut immediate electricity bills while pushing the actual cost down the road.

Many voters aren't worried about "down the road" - they want relief, and are apparently willing to reward the party that provides that relief, even while understanding their relief will leave a substantial debt for future generations.

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