

Queen's Park Today – Daily Report November 30, 2017

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Quotation of the day

“We’re going to cut the Economic Development Minister who lost 330,000 manufacturing jobs. We’re going to cut a Minister of Infrastructure who doesn’t know how to roll out infrastructure. We’re going to cut a Minister of Health who lets patients stay on hospital floors. We’re going to cut a Deputy Premier who allowed the longest college strike in Ontario history.”

PC MPP Lisa MacLeod responds to questions on what cuts a PC government would make if elected government

Today at Queen's Park

On the schedule

Bill 175, Safer Ontario Act, will continue to be debated a second reading on Thursday morning. **Bill 177**, Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act, will likely be voted on at second reading after question period so it can be sent to committee ahead of next Thursday's hearings.

One bill and two motions will be debated during the afternoon's private members' business:

- PC MPP **Randy Pettapiece** will put forward a motion calling on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to halt the transfer of long-term care beds out of Perth County;

- NDP MPP **Cheri DiNovo** will put forward **Bill 74**, Trans Day of Remembrance Act, for debate. The bill proclaims November 20 of each year as a day to honour victims of anti-trans violence; and
- NDP MPP **Teresa Armstrong** will put forward a motion calling on the Minister of Housing to immediately start funding one third of the capital repairs required to rehabilitate Ontario's social housing stock.

Bill 139, Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, will be debated at third reading for the remainder of the afternoon.

Debates and proceedings

Bill 139, Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, was debated at third reading during the morning session.

MPPs voted on a time allocation motion on **Bill 177**, Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act. The motion passed with Liberal support (Ayes 48; Nays 41).

In the afternoon, NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** put forward an opposition day 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 was debated and voted down by the Liberals and the PCs (Ayes 15; Nays 55).

In a statement, Horwath said this shows the PCs and Liberals are now “lock-step on hydro privatization.”

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy held its first public hearings on **Bill 174**, the Cannabis Act, on Wednesday. The committee heard from mental health, safe driving and vaping advocates as well as from **Jodie** and **Marc Emery**, Canada's most famous marijuana advocates.

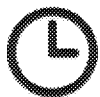
Reflecting the wide range of policies affected by the cannabis legislation, the committee will hear from long, varied list of stakeholders on Thursday, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Pharmacists Association, the Ontario Public School Boards Association and the proprietor of a Windsor-based cannabis lounge.

Topics of conversation

- Hydro One rolled out a redesigned electricity bill format. The bill is designed to be easier for ratepayers to understand, but faced criticism for including a “What do I need to know?” section that breaks down how much the government's Fair Hydro Plan saved customers each month.
- Liberal MPP **Yvan Baker** is applauding Toronto Mayor **John Tory** and his executive committee's support of a motion directing city staff to study tunnelling and/or grade separation options for the Eglinton West LRT, an issue Baker has been advocating for since 2016.

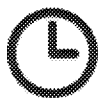
- On Wednesday, Ontario held its final cap-and-trade auction before the province links its cap-and-trade system with the Quebec and California market on January 1, 2018. The results of the auction will be released within the coming weeks.
- The TTC board voted Wednesday to approve the introduction of time-based transfers in August 2018. Under the new system, Presto card users will be able to ride TTC routes freely for two hours after payment.
- The federal government is bringing the United States' softwood lumber "anti-dumping" tariff to the World Trade Organization. Canada also brought a challenge to the U.S. tariffs to NAFTA's Chapter 19 dispute panel on November 14.
- Federal Indigenous Services Minister **Jane Philpott** committed Wednesday to funding a health care facility at Grassy Narrows to care for patients suffering from symptoms of mercury poisoning. In the words of Grassy Narrows Chief **Simon Fobister**, for the people of his community "Christmas came early."
- In an interview with the *Toronto Star* from Nanjing, China, Premier **Kathleen Wynne** said PC leader **Patrick Brown** must respond to the Hamilton Police's fraud investigation into his party's nomination scandal. "He's got to look to his own conscience on this," said Wynne, adding that she answered "a million questions" about the Sudbury by-election scandal.

Today's events



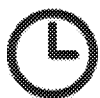
November 30 at 8:30 a.m. — Toronto

The Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association will launch a new "Sexual Violence and Harassment Intervention" training program at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Status of Women Minister **Indira Naidoo-Harris** and Labour Minister **Kevin Flynn** will be in attendance. This is part of the province's "It's Never Okay" action plan against sexual violence.



November 30 at 8:30 a.m. — Windsor

Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner **Brian Beamish** will host an information event on his office's upcoming developments related to the recently passed Child, Youth and Family Services Act at the University of Windsor.



November 30 at 10 a.m. — London

PC leader **Patrick Brown** will make an announcement at Western University's Talbot College.

 November 30 at 10 a.m. — Toronto

The Ontario Human Rights Commission will announce a “major inquiry” into policing and human rights at its head office, 180 Dundas Street West.

 November 30 at 12 p.m. — Toronto

Education Minister **Mitzie Hunter** will give a speech at the Empire Club on her vision for public education in Ontario and how the province is using experiential learning techniques to equip students with tools for the future. The event will take place at the Fairmont Royal York.

 November 30 at 12:45 p.m. — Toronto

Health and Long-Term Care Minister **Dr. Eric Hoskins** will make an announcement at Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacy at 465 Yonge Street.

 November 30 at 7:10 p.m. — Waterloo

PC leader **Patrick Brown** will deliver a speech to supporters at Inn of Waterloo.

News briefs — Non-Governmental

Ministry of the Attorney General

Attorney General **Yasir Naqvi** released a new strategy for bringing the province’s legal system into the digital age. “Putting Justice Within Reach: The Foundation for User-Focused Justice in Ontario” is a multi-faceted initiative to move many of the justice system’s services online, including preliminary jury vetting, filing civil claims and divorce papers, information on traffic ticket statuses, and dispute resolution for landlords and tenants. One of the new services will also allow parents to set up or change their child support online so they can save money on legal fees and avoid visits to the courthouse.

Naqvi also announced \$80,000 in seed funding for companies that can “develop artificial intelligence solutions that help lawyers and consumers, or increase access to justice.”

Ministry of Housing

Housing Minister **Peter Milczyn** re-announced his commitment to rebating development charges on new rental housing. As part of its Fair Housing Plan, Ontario will rebate up to \$125 million in development charges over five years for purpose-built rental developments in municipalities with low vacancy rates or high tenant populations.

Housing Minister **Peter Milczyn** has put a call out to municipalities to present proposals for how they would implement the development charge rebate program and target it to their communities’ needs.

A recent report from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation determined the overall vacancy rate in the GTA is 1.1 per cent, down from 1.4 per cent in 2016. In Toronto, the vacancy rate dropped from 1.3 per cent in 2016 to one per cent in 2017.

Milczyn told reporters the province's rent control program did not have an impact on the drop in vacancy rates. He said the \$25 million per year over five years will "deliver many new rental homes."

Question period

PC lead-off

Hydro rates

- PC Energy critic **Todd Smith** lauded the PC's hydro rate reduction plan, which the party says will save ratepayers 12 per cent more off their hydro bills, or an average of \$173 per year.
 - Smith asked why the Liberals don't think families deserve long-lasting hydro relief after years of paying the highest prices in North America.
- Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** said under the PC's carbon tax plan costs will rise.
- Thibeault cited expert analysis from the C. D. Howe Institute that affirms the PC's carbon tax will cost families \$1,200 per year without guaranteeing any emission reductions.
 - The Liberals are distributing numbers from C. D. Howe that state a \$50 per tonne carbon tax will add over 11 cents per litre to gas prices and \$2.50 per gigajoule to natural gas rates.
- The energy minister also quoted *National Post* columnist **Terence Corcoran** who called the PC Party's carbon tax a "shell game" that will result in an 81 per cent hike to the tax on a litre of gasoline.

Liberal opposition research

- PC MPP **Steve Clark** said since the PC's released the party's People's Guarantee, the Liberal Party's level of debate has been appalling: "They have been reduced to being talking-point robots, spoon-fed by the nonsense from their Liberal research bureau."
 - Citing the Liberals' botched opposition research concerning PC candidate **Troy Crowder** winning a hockey fight and leader **Patrick Brown's** alleged speech at an all-men's club, Clark said Ontarians cannot trust anything the party says about the PC platform because it all comes from Liberal researchers who "can't fact check out of a wet paper bag."

MacLeod cuts cabinet

- During a series of questions about the PC's proposed child care refund, Finance Minister **Charles Sousa** asked MacLeod what a PC government would cut to fund it.
- MacLeod replied with the question period quote of the week: "We're going to cut the Economic Development Minister who lost 330,000 manufacturing jobs. We're going to cut a Minister of Infrastructure who doesn't know how to roll out infrastructure. We're going to cut a Minister of Health who lets patients stay on hospital floors. We're going to cut a Deputy Premier who allowed the longest college strike in Ontario history. We're going to cut a Finance Minister who had to save his own seat by cancelling \$1.2 billion in gas plants. We're going to cut a Treasury Board president who has to fight with the Auditor General all the time. We're going to cut a Transportation Minister who built an upside down bridge."

NDP lead-off

Hydro One sell-off

- NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** says Hydro One wants to use electricity prepaid meters to skirt the province's new rules on winter disconnections. She called for the government to block the prepaid meter proposal.
 - Horwath said looking out for ratepayers is the responsibility of the government, not the Ontario Energy Board.
- Thibeault repeated his talking points about the pre-pay proposal being a voluntary, opt-in program and that all winter disconnections have been blocked by legislation.

Hydro One sell-off

- Horwath repeated her series of questions about **Bill 160's** Schedule 9 and the repeal of the Private Hospitals Act. She said the NDP has an amendment to repeal Schedule 9 in front of committee.
- Health and Long-Term Care Minister **Dr. Eric Hoskins** said there has been a moratorium on new for-profit clinics for the better part of a decade, and the government will continue with that.
 - He said the purpose of **Bill 160** is to increase the oversight and regulation for out-of-hospital premises and of the six for-profit hospitals that have been grandfathered into Ontario's system.
- (Also at committee, the government introduced an amendment to **Bill 160** that would ban eye tattooing).

Online ticket sales

- NDP MPP **Wayne Gates** asked why the government used an amendment at committee to remove the section of **Bill 166** that would require ticket sellers to make the number of tickets that are available for sale public.
 - Gates said **Bill 166** was supposed to be about transparency and consumer protection, but removing this provision means Ontarians will still not know how many tickets are given away to VIPs or re-sold at higher prices.
- Attorney General **Yasir Naqvi** said the government talked to a lot of artists and wanted to make sure the legislation had no negative consequences to the live music industry.
 - He said the results of those consultations led to the aforementioned amendment.