

From: John Cannella [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CD667C6D53774DD0A749783BB02AE89D-JOHN CANNEL]
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Subject: Today's News - Monday, January 29, 2018



Today's News

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Date: Monday, January 29, 2018
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Industry News

News - 5 Results



319975444

Citizens sue province over proposed wind turbine parks

CBC.CA News - Sun Jan 28 2018, 6:20am ET
Byline: CBC News

Citizens living near five proposed wind turbine parks in Ontario have launched a lawsuit alleging the provincial government is allowing the companies behind the projects to defy safe noise limits. The province approved the wind park ...



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Owen Sound Sun Times - Mon Jan 29 2018
Byline: Don Crosby
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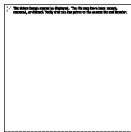


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Walkerton Herald-Times - Fri Jan 26 2018 Page: 1

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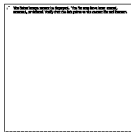


320064861

'Energy hunters': Bitcoin miners search for cheap, innovative energy sources; 'Energy hunters': the search for cheap Bitcoin mining

Canadian Press - Sun Jan 28 2018
Byline:Ian Bickis

CALGARY - For most Canadians, Drumheller conjures up images of dinosaur bones and ancient fossils, but entrepreneur Sean Clark's expedition in the southern Alberta town is focused on a very current obsession: Bitcoin. The CEO of Hut 8 Mining Corp. ...



319814808

Hydro-Québec says U.S. export deal will keep local hikes below inflation

National Post - Sat Jan 27 2018
Byline:Ross Marowitz
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Industry News

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Citizens sue province over proposed wind turbine parks

CBC.CA News - Sun Jan 28 2018, 6:20am ET
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Citizens living near five proposed wind turbine parks in Ontario have launched a lawsuit alleging the provincial government is allowing the companies behind the projects to defy safe noise limits.

The province approved the wind park projects in 2016. They are scattered around rural Ontario, and two are within an hour's drive from Ottawa.

The projects are now going through a "technical review" as part of the final approval process by the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.

- Wind turbines approved for eastern Ontario despite objections

In 2016, the Ontario government also introduced new and more accurate standards for how companies model the noise impact of turbines before they're built.

Suit alleges standards out of date

The lawsuit, however, alleges the proponents behind the five projects have been using old modelling standards.

"It appears that the majority of proposed turbine sites are out of compliance with the [new] requirements," states the suit, which has been filed with the Ontario Divisional Court.

If the projects were forced to adhere to the new standards, three quarters of the more than 200 proposed turbines in the province would be breaking the rules, according to Eric Gillespie, the Toronto lawyer who filed the suit on behalf of concerned citizens.

If the companies used the new guidelines for modelling, Gillespie said, those rule-breaking turbines "will have to be relocated or removed."

Citizens concerned about impact on health

The suit doesn't ask for monetary damages, said Gillespie, but is about ensuring "that anyone living near an industrial wind turbine project is safe."

"There's well-documented research that you don't want to go above the legislated level," said Gillespie, adding that the noise associated with the loud, rhythmic drumbeat of the turbines can affect sleep, heart health, and general well-being.

"Unfortunately, it appears almost all these projects and most of the turbines in them

are going to [break the guidelines] if they're allowed to proceed."

The lawsuit includes affidavits from experts on noise pollution, as well as from residents affected by the projects.

Gary Wheeler, a spokesperson with the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, wrote in an email that the ministry is working with the companies behind the wind turbine projects to make sure they meet "our stringent noise standards."

"We will be determining the appropriate next steps," said Wheeler, who declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Residents plan strategy

The five proposed projects include two in eastern Ontario:

- Eastern Fields Wind Power Project, in the Municipality of The Nation.
- Nation Rise Wind Farm, in the Township of North Stormont,

Some of the residents living close to those projects met Saturday to discuss the suit and their next steps.

"We're asking the government to consider the sentence they're imposing on the people of rural Ontario," said Margaret Benke, who lives near the proposed Nation Rise Wind Farm, about 60 kilometres southwest of Ottawa.

Benke said she's concerned that almost three quarters of the turbines proposed in her community would break the current noise standard.

"I can move out," she said, "but there are many people without that option. Even if their health is affected."

The three other projects are all in southern Ontario:

- Otter Creek Wind Farm, north of Wallaceburg, Ont., in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.
- Romney Wind Energy Centre, in Lakeshore, Ont.
- Strong Breeze Wind Power Project in the Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich.

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320086602

Westario increase planned; People at meeting about small increase to pay for system more interested in ways to save on use

Owen Sound Sun Times - Mon Jan 29 2018

Byline: Don Crosby

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Westario Power customers didn't appear concerned about the utility's application to the Ontario Energy Board for a slight raise in its electricity distribution rate, but had

other questions at a recent meeting in Walkerton.

The increase amounts to \$2.78 more a month for a typical residential customer.

About two dozen people turned out for the community meeting in Walkerton Wednesday to ask the independent energy sector regulator and Westario Power staff questions about the application and provide comments during a question and answer period.

Dave Leonce, vice-president of operations at Westario Power, explained that the rate increase is needed to maintain the utility's infrastructure. He agreed that the rate increase doesn't appear to be a concern for customers.

"I think our application speaks for itself," Leonce said.

Dian Foxton of Teeswater said she has tried all the conservation measures suggested to lower power use, but is not seeing any reduction in her hydro bill.

"We're quite in tune with the time of use rates, using the dishwasher, dryer and all those high-demand appliances on the low-demand times and not really seeing any major changes; we're done, we're at our limit right now. We can't do any more," she said.

Francesca Dobbyn, executive director of the United Way of Bruce Grey, said there is a new program called the Affordability Fund that for people who do not qualify for low-income programs.

She described it as a program for higher income earners with high energy costs.

"They've done the light bulb thing, maybe they need windows, maybe they need insulation. It also works for tenants as well as homeowners," she said.

Dobbyn said capital improvement and depreciation are issues facing utilities but, she expects that the Fair Hydro plan initiated by the government in 2017 will step in if the increases are greater than inflation.

Foxton said she thought Westario made a strong case for its rate increase.

"They have a product to sell and they have to keep up with infrastructure, that's just a given. They are not talking about increasing wages, or increased compensation, they are talking strictly the replacement... I'm quite comfortable with that. I think it all makes sense. The money has to come from somewhere," she said.

The OEB has just begun reviewing Westario Power's rate application. Reviews typically take between six and nine months to allow the regulator time to properly examine all of the evidence in the case. The timeline also provides customers of the utility, stakeholders and other interested parties to be heard by the OEB.

"The utility has to prove to the OEB that it needs a rate increase," said James Sidlofsky, legal counsel for the OEB. He noted utilities rarely get all they ask for.

He said that between 2009 and 2016 the OEB reviewed more than 130 major rate applications and reduced requested rate increases by an average of 40 per cent.

"Overall, the OEB has kept the annual growth in the average distribution rates close to the rate of inflation over the same period," Sidlofsky, said.

He said since 2016, the OEB has held more than 30 community meetings. Feedback from community meetings helps inform the OEB's final rate decision.

The amounts requested by Westario Power in its application to the OEB relate to its distribution business and does not reflect any credits or other changes resulting from the Fair Hydro Act of 2017.

Westario is an electricity provider to 15 communities in Grey, Bruce and Wellington counties.

George Bridge, chair of Westario's board of directors, said he would like to see a better way to mediate close boundary disputes between Westario and Hydro One as the two utilities expand their coverage areas.

He said it's difficult to get the provincial utility to give up territory to Westario as the service areas grow and neighbours are faced with different hydro rates.

"I think it should all come back to what is best for the consumer. At one time Hydro One may have been the only that had the infrastructure there; I understand they don't want to give it up but at the same token what is best for the consumer," he said.

Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MPP Bill Walker said he thought it was good for people to attend OEB public meetings which provide the opportunity to see how the regulator works and how these type of applications go forward.

"People in the room were trying to figure out what the energy policy is and where that is coming from... there were a lot of questions about how do I save money and what was not being told tonight," he said.

Walker said hydro bills aren't going down because the government is buying some electricity produced by wind energy and solar at rates higher than the three cents a kilowatt hour from Niagara Falls or six cents from Bruce Power.

That is policy decision of the government and the government wasn't there to answer those questions, said Walker said Westario was running a pretty tight ship.

"As Westario has said in its rate application if you want safe reliable, consistent energy they have to make sure their infrastructure is in place."

"At the end of the day you have to separate the two components. They are running a distribution company, that's their business, most people's concern is how much energy they use and the cost to the portion of their bill," said Walker.

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319822469

No objections to Westario request to raise electricity rate

Walkerton Herald-Times - Fri Jan 26 2018 Page: 1

WALKERTON, ON - It was supposed to be a meeting to discuss Westario Power's application to Ontario Energy Board to raise its electricity distribution rate by \$2.78 a month for the typical residential customers, but that wasn't the main reason people attended the meeting.

If the rate increase is approved, it may affect customers for the next five years.

Dave Leonce, vice president of operations at Westario Power, explained that rate increase was needed to maintain the utility's infrastructure. He agreed with others that the rate increase doesn't appear to be a concern for customers.

"I think our application speaks for itself," Leonce said.

Most of the people who turned out to the Jan. 24 meeting at the Walkerton Legion were more interested in finding out how they could save money on their hydro bill.

Diane Foxton of Teeswater was one of the customers that has tried all of the conservation measures and is not seeing any reduction in her hydro bill.

"We're quite in tune with the time of use rates, using the dishwasher, dryer and all those high demand appliances on the low demand times and not really seeing any major changes; we're done, we're at our limit right now. We can't do any more," she said.

Foxton said she thought Westario made a strong case for its rate increase.

"They have a product to sell and they have to keep up with infrastructure, that's just a given. They are not talking about increasing wages, or increased compensation, they are talking strictly the replacement ... I'm quite comfortable with that. I think it all makes sense. The money has to come from someplace," she said.

Francesca Dobbyn, executive director of the Grey Bruce United Way, said there is a new program called the Affordability Fund that provides \$100 million over two years for people who do not qualify for low income programs.

She described it as program for high income earners with high energy costs.

"They've done the light bulb thing, maybe they need windows, maybe they need insulation. It also works for tenants as well as homeowners," she said.

Dobbyn said capital improvement and depreciation are issues facing utilities but she expects that the Fair Hydro Plan initiated by the government in 2017 will step in if the increases are greater than inflation.

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"I think it should all come back to what is best for the consumer. At one time Hydro One may have been the only that had the infrastructure there; I understand they don't want to give it up but at the same token what is best for the consumer," he said.

Bruce Grey Owen Sound MPP Bill Walker, who attended the Jan. 24 meeting, said he thought it was good for people to attend OEB public meetings, which provide the opportunity to see how the regulator works and how these type of applications go forward. But he agreed it wasn't the interest shown by customers who attended the meeting.

"People in the room were trying to figure out what the energy policy is and where that is coming from ... there were a lot of questions about how do I save money and what was not being told tonight," he said.

Walker said the reason hydro bills aren't going down is because the government is buying some electricity produced by wind energy and solar panels for 80 cents kilowatt compared to three cents a kilowatt from Niagara Falls or six cents from Bruce Power.

That is policy decision of the government and the government wasn't there to answer those questions said Walker said Westario was running a pretty tight ship.

"As Westario has said in its rate application if you want safe reliable, consistent energy they have to make sure their infrastructure is in place."

"At the end of the day you have to separate the two components. They are running a distribution company, that's their business, most people's concern is how much energy they use and the cost to the portion of their bill," said Walker.

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320064861

'Energy hunters': Bitcoin miners search for cheap, innovative energy sources; 'Energy hunters': the search for cheap Bitcoin mining

Canadian Press - Sun Jan 28 2018
Byline: Ian Bickis

CALGARY - For most Canadians, Drumheller conjures up images of dinosaur bones and ancient fossils, but entrepreneur Sean Clark's expedition in the southern Alberta town is focused on a very current obsession: Bitcoin.

The CEO of Hut 8 Mining Corp. recently set up his company in the self-proclaimed 'dinosaur capital of the world' because its cheap electricity rates give him the biggest margins for his Bitcoin mining business.

The cryptocurrency boom is pushing Canadian companies to join the global rush to find the cheapest sources of energy as computing competition drives power demands higher, resulting in crypto hotspots cropping up in communities like Drumheller, Winnipeg and Montreal.

"Because electricity is our highest cost, we become energy hunters," Clark said. "We find the cheapest sources of energy, put a container down, plug it in and start mining."

Access to cheap energy is crucial because Bitcoin miners around the world are competing to solve the equations that feed into the blockchain that supports the currency.

The more computing power miners throw at the system, the better their chances of being rewarded with Bitcoin, said Clark.

Thanks to the abundance of cheap natural gas and lower-than-expected demand growth, Alberta power prices are some of the cheapest around. Clark said he's getting electricity at about three cents per kilowatt hour.

Should prices rise, the company would simply put the 12-metre containers that hold its data centres on 18-wheelers and roll them to the next-cheapest energy spot, he said.

The competition in Bitcoin mining has increased considerably as it and other cryptocurrencies have seen huge price gains in the past year - trading as high as US\$19,000 in December - putting an end to the early days when mining could be done on a laptop.

A typical laptop might be able to make about 40 calculations a second, whereas the 1.1-megawatt containers supplied by Hut 8's partner Bitfury can handle 7.5 quadrillion calculations per second. The company expects to have about 60 megawatts of installed capacity by the end of the year.

The demand for computing and electrical power has led smaller previously pure-play energy companies to add cryptocurrency mining to the mix.

Oil and gas explorer Iron Bridge Resources Inc., for one, recently announced plans to launch a cryptocurrency mining division that will use excess energy from its oil and gas operations in northern Alberta.

Chief executive Rob Colcleugh said the company is planing to pilot a roughly 600 kilowatt crypto-mining operation to make use of the high Bitcoin prices and extremely low natural gas prices.

"The economics at these levels are pretty astounding," he said.

Colcleugh said he'd look to create a partnership that could offer power costs "orders of magnitude" less than provincial utility rates.

Meanwhile Toronto-based Blockchain Power Trust, which this year changed its name from Transeastern Power Trust, plans to use the renewable power it has been developing largely in Romania to power new cryptocurrency mining operations in the eastern European country.

Global Bitcoin miners have also taken note of Canada's abundant cheap electricity, as China looks to crack down on mining operations in the country.

Manitoba Hydro said it's had more than 100 inquiries and has already seen operations set up, while Hydro-Quebec said it has had more than 70 inquiries for projects with some as big as 300 megawatts.

"We have quite a lot of available energy in Quebec," said Hydro-Quebec spokesman Marc-Antoine Pouliot.

"We are moving forward quite quickly, so we think we might have a project going ahead in 2018."

The rush in energy demand from cryptomining has led to dire warnings about the energy consumed by the power-hungry operations, especially with the large contingent of coal-powered mining in China.

The website Digiconomist currently estimates Bitcoin mining is consuming energy at a rate of about 44.5 terawatt hours of electricity a year and climbing - or about the same as Iraq - and up from under 10 terawatts as of March last year.

But the wide variables and rapidly evolving technology mean accurate estimates are difficult. Credit Suisse recently put power usage somewhere between 16 and 21 terawatt hours.

The bank said that if Bitcoin hovered around US\$13,500, then power demand could go up at the "ultra-high-end" scenario to 350 terawatt hours and still be profitable - but that even then, it would consume less than 1.5 per cent of total electricity demand.

"This is a far cry from the power and environmental Armageddon that some have feared," said analyst Michael Weinstein in a note.

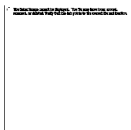
With more companies looking to get in on Bitcoin mining though, the power demands are expected to keep climbing.

Morgan Stanley projects in a recent note that just this year Bitcoin power demand would hit 120 to 140 terawatt hours - or about the consumption of Argentina - in an industry that didn't exist a decade ago.

Companies in this story: (TSX:IBR, TSX-V:BPWR.UN)

Note to readers: This is a corrected story. A previous version incorrectly stated that Drumheller is in northern Alberta.

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319814808

Hydro-Québec says U.S. export deal will keep local hikes below inflation

National Post - Sat Jan 27 2018

Byline: Ross Marowitz

Page: FP13

Quebecers won't get a break on already low hydroelectricity rates but a massive export deal with Massachusetts will give the public utility flexibility to keep increases below inflation, Hydro-Québec's CEO said Friday.

"It relieves some pressure," Eric Martel said. "It gives us a certain flexibility for things to come."

The biggest export contract in Hydro-Québec's history, run with U.S. partner Eversource Energy, would send up to 9.45 terawatt hours of electricity per year from Quebec's hydroelectric plants to Massachusetts.

Hydro-Québec promised several years ago to keep domestic power rates below inflation and to increase the utility's profitability. It kept the rate promise over the last three years with annual increases of 0.7 per cent.

The \$10-billion deal over 20 years with the New England state will generate higher returns, he told reporters.

Martel wouldn't provide the rate Massachusetts would pay but said it is above the three cents per kilowatt-hour cost to produce and transport the energy.

He told reporters Friday that the contract will be profitable, largely because electricity prices are stable and the firm has the available production capacity.

That's good news for all Quebecers because the government will receive a larger dividend from the Crown corporation, added Energy Minister Pierre Moreau. "Whenever the profit goes up it's good news for the shareholders, which is the government of Quebec and basically all Quebecers," he added.

The contract, expected to be signed in March, could generate up to \$500 million in annual revenues.

In 2016, Hydro-Québec's exports represented \$803 million of its \$2.86-billion profit.

The contract will also help the utility achieve its goal of doubling revenues to about \$27 billion by 2030.

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