Message

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

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Date: Tuesday, July 18, 2017
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Contact Editor

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Ontario's energy minister says Tories are without a plan for cutting hydro costs

Stoney Creek News - Mon Jul 17 2017 **Page:** 1

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Part of power costs or waste of money?

Daily Observer (Pembroke) - Tue Jul 18 2017
Byline: Elizabeth F. Marshall
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Windsor Star - Tue Jul 18 2017
Byline: Brian Cross
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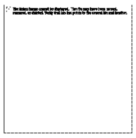

Ontario's energy minister says Tories are without a plan for cutting hydro costs

Stoney Creek News - Mon Jul 17 2017 Page: 1

Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault called the Tories' proposal to restrict selling electricity to nearby provinces and the United States and instead divert the excess power to local businesses so they can create jobs "back-of-the-napkin" thinking.

"It is no wonder they don't want to release a (hydro) plan," said Thibeault in a statement.

The energy minister was reacting to an interview Hamilton Community News had with Nipissing Tory MPP Vic Fedeli in June, who pilloried the Liberals' hydro strategy.

Fedeli in a speech and later in an interview castigated the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan that took effect July 1 that they say will cut hydro rates by on average 25 per cent annually. The Tories, he said, would eliminate the Liberals' Green Energy contracts, reduce Hydro One officials' salaries, and halt the province from selling excess electricity to Quebec and other U.S. states, such as New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan.

"Essentially, (Fedeli) suggested Ontario should build a wall, banning all electricity exports," said Thibeault.

The Tories are not the only ones that have criticized the province for subsidizing the dumping of cheap electricity to neighbouring states and provinces. The NDP said the province in 2012 paid $1 billion to export electricity to Quebec and a number of U.S. states.

In 2012 the Council for Clean and Reliable Electricity published a paper stating that Ontario consumers subsidized out-of-province electricity buyers estimated to be about $1.2 billion over the previous three years.

Thibeault said Ontario "doesn't have sufficient electricity demand at home to use up the electricity we export to other markets."

He said Fedeli's idea would mean building expensive infrastructure to "soak up this energy" and eventually make for "poor" long-term planning.

He said Ontario only exports excess electricity "when it's economically viable and presents a benefit to our electricity system."

Thibeault, citing the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), said exporting excess electricity has "lowered costs" to the province's hydro system by between $200 million and $300 million every year since 2013, ultimately benefiting Ontario's consumers.

"Ontario makes use of strategy exports on a frequent basis to maintain the reliability of our grid and to keep costs low," said Thibeault.

Thibeault went on to say the Conservatives "have consistently opposed our efforts" to improve the province's electricity system over the last 15 years. He said the Tories voted against the Fair Hydro Plan that will provide "the largest cut to electricity rates in Ontario's history.

"It's clear the Conservatives still have no plan for energy in this province," stated Thibeault.

Ontario Tory Leader Patrick Brown told a crowd of business people at a June lunch meeting in Burlington that if elected in next year's provincial election "I will fix this (hydro) mess."

Brown said he will stop subsidizing excess electricity to nearby provinces and U.S. states, cut Hydro One executive salaries and reveal "secret" energy contracts that have been signed by the province. But Brown did not say when his party will release its own hydro plan to reduce electricity rates, something the Liberals and NDP have already done.

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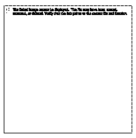

Part of power costs or waste of money?

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It has been reported that Hydro One is applying to the Ontario Energy Board for an increase in the electricity charges. This is on top of the Wynne government's Fair Hydro Plan which will injuriously affect our children through this government's mismanagement of the energy file, up to $93 billion according to the Financial Accountability Officer.

It has also been reported, in various newspaper articles, that, in 2016, Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt was paid $4.4 million in salary and bonuses. But this is only the reported costs of one senior executive's wages under the Electricity Act. What about the other entities included in the Electricity Act? There are five, maybe six, different entities/corporations whose senior executives Ontarians are on the hook for wages. The reason I say "five maybe six" is because these various entities/corporations have, now and in the past, been amalgamated, renamed, and in some instances, are private-public partnerships. These entities included in the Electricity Act are: 1. Ontario Power Generation (OPG) 2. Hydro One 3. Ontario Power Authority (OPA) 4. "Smart Metering Entity" -means the corporation incorporated, the limited partnership or the partnership formed or the entity designated, pursuant to section 53.7, to accomplish the government's smart metering initiative and is said to be part of the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), 5. Ontario Energy Board and 6. "IESO" means the Independent Electricity System Operator under Part II -5. Amalgamation of IESO and OPA.

Of course we can't forget the renewable energy companies and their input into this. I'm surprised that Samsung, KEPCO (Korea Consortium) and/or Korea (South Korea) aren't also included in this list, considering they have so much input into the

FIT/renewable energy projects and the contracts for the affiliations of the Korea Consortium. For now, though, let's look at the entities included in the Electricity Act.

From the March 2016 Sunshine List: CEO of Ontario Power Generation earned nearly $1.2 million and could be paid a maximum of $1.9 million with a $3.8-million compensation package; Hydro One CEO is paid $4.4 million in salary and bonuses (newspaper articles). But good luck finding the salaries of the other entities…seems they're buried very deep - funny that, isn't it? So what are the salaries plus benefits of the IESO and any of the other questionable entities created, amalgamated, de-amalgamated, re-incorporated, re-created with a different name/names under the Energy File? As it stands right now, only the New-Demo-Progressive-Con-Liberal Party can tell…so is this just part of electricity costs or a complete waste of money? Elizabeth F. Marshall Director of Research Ontario Landowners Association

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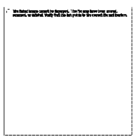

Council commits city to 40% cut in energy use

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City council agreed to a Community Energy Plan Monday that targets reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in Windsor by 40 per cent over the next 24 years.

The intent is to reduce the environmental impact of the city's energy use in an economically viable way," consultant Peter Garforth said as he explained the importance of the CEP, that took 18 months to create.

It makes the case that the Windsor community spent more than $842 million on natural gas, electricity and fuels in 2014, a figure that's going to climb if nothing's done, to between $1.8 billion and $3.1 billion by 2014.

The CEP goals include: increasing the efficiency of all new and existing buildings in the city; encourage industries and to shift to low-carbon technologies; foster a shift in transportation so vehicles are low-carbon and people use public transportation and cycling more frequently; design neighbourhoods as "complete communities" that offer public transportation and other transportation options; change behaviour toward a culture of energy conservation; and educate and train people to "deliver innovative energy solutions at the local scale."

Councillors noted that many of the actions laid out in the CEP are out of the municipality's scope.

"We can play a leadership role but it's not something we can dictate," agreed the city's CAO Onorio Colucci.

If the city can fulfil the CEP's aims, the city would save $8.6 billion to $12.4 billion over the next 24 years. Karina Richters, the city's supervisor of environmental sustainability and climate change, said it will be a challenge convincing people to get aboard with the plan. "But I think if we look at the overall benefit and look at the risk if we do nothing, that people will recognize the great rewards."

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Goderich Council is scheduled to pick up debate on a proposed merger of Goderich Hydro and Ingersoll-based Erie Thames Powerlines at its regular meeting this afternoon (MON.)

The issue was tabled for further study, following a two-hour special session on June 26th.

Goderich Hydro board member Duncan Jewell says merging the two electricity distribution companies would be a win for both, as well as for customers.

He says a merger would result in a savings of $350,000 a year, for services Erie Thames already provides to Goderich Hydro.

Jewell points out that under a 10-year agreement between the two, the only increases on customers' Hydro bills would come from the province under the Fair Hydro Act.

He adds that hikes could be imposed if electricity distribution rates are increased through annual reviews.

Jewell says merging with Erie Thames is Goderich Hydro's best bet, because areas surrounding the town get their electricity from Hydro One.

If the merger proposal is approved, the Erie Thames customer service centre in Mitchell would move to Goderich and local electricity operations would continue from Huckins Street.

Jewell reminds us that there were 350 electricity distribution companies across Ontario in the early 1990s, and the province is looking to further reduce the number from the current 65.

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Turbine plant on verge of closing; 300 jobs in Tillsonburg in jeopardy as Siemens locks doors ahead of meeting

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Tillsonburg is teetering on the edge of losing 300 jobs at one of its largest employers.

The closing or temporary shutdown of Siemens Canada's wind turbine blade plant in the Southwestern Ontario town would also raise questions about the fallout from Ontario's controversial green energy policy.

Rumours of some kind of looming shutdown or closing at Siemens, one of four green energy plants lured to Ontario under a controversial multi-billion-dollar provincial deal with Korean industrial giant Samsung, began a few weeks ago and intensified over the weekend.

A four-year Siemens employee said workers who called the plant's sick line over the weekend were told there was no production Monday and were to attend a Tuesday morning meeting at the town community centre.

"It was the joke around there that they were just going to lock the doors, but we didn't think it was going to happen," said the man, who did not want to be named.

Workers who showed up at the plant for the midnight shift Sunday found the doors locked and called security, another employee said.

They were played a recording saying production was halted and they were required to attend Tuesday's meeting.

"They got locked out! With no notice! It's very scary for us," the worker said in an email.

Other workers who showed up Monday morning for their shifts were given a paper telling them the same thing, a worker said.

One employee said they'd heard earlier the plant would shut down in July.

"It's not really a big surprise," said the employee, who asked not to be identified.

A company notice obtained by the London Free Press requires employees to attend a 10 a.m. meeting at the Tillsonburg Community Centre, but provides no other details.

The meeting - and what it might mean for the workers and the town - comes almost a year after the province pulled the plug on major new green energy projects.

Ontario - where electricity prices have basically doubled over the last decade, and where the energy file has become hugely political heading into next year's election - had started the process to contract for an additional 600 megawatts of wind energy, requiring construction of about a dozen new wind farms.

But amid rising criticism and after reports indicated Ontario will have enough generation capacity for at least a decade, the Liberal government suspended plans for new projects in September. Projects already in development weren't affected.

"Clearly, the Liberal government should be working to build and promote our manufacturing sector - not set up situations where we're losing these jobs," said MPP Peter Tabuns, the NDP energy critic at Queen's Park. "There seems to be a growing disinterest on the part of the Liberals to actually invest in green energy. I think that may well lock us out of where the rest of the world is going in terms of energy technology."

Conservative energy critic Todd Smith, the MPP for Prince Edward Hastings, couldn't be reached for comment.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault's office said, in a written statement, "the province has no comment on what is only speculation at this time."

The Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWea), an industry umbrella group, says the market remains healthy in Ontario, regardless of the news from Siemens.

Despite the province's decision last fall to suspend new projects, there are orders to fill in Ontario and bids for projects in Alberta and Saskatchewan, said Brandy Giannetta, CanWea's Ontario regional director.

"The outlook is positive," Giannetta said, declining to comment on the Siemens situation.

Tillsonburg Mayor Stephen Molnar refused to comment before information is shared with employees.

"I'm not prepared, nor would I be responsible, to make any comment in advance of the meeting."

In 2010, four plants to make parts for wind and energy farms were set up under the Samsung deal between the company and the province to generate power for Ontario and create manufacturing jobs in green energy.

The four plants were to create about 1,000 jobs.

In exchange, Ontario agreed to buy heavily-subsidized power from Samsung wind and solar projects and guarantee the company space on the province's crowded electricity transmission grid.

The Liberal government, sharply criticized over the cost of the agreement, later renegotiated it after the company missed some deadlines, slashing by more than one-third of the nearly $10 billion in power it agreed to buy and reducing to $5 billion from $7 billion Samsung's investment commitment.

While wind energy has its supporters, fierce opposition in rural communities - especially in Southwestern Ontario, home to the largest number of wind turbines in Ontario - remains and helped defeat two prominent Liberal cabinet ministers in the region in the 2011 election. Much of the opposition has focused on the loss of local control, taken away by the province, over where the megaprojects can be built.

GREEN ENERGY JOBS

THE DEAL

In 2010, under a multi-billiondollar deal with the province, Samsung announced four manufacturing plants would be built to supply the wind and solar energy market - in Windsor, Tillsonburg, Toronto and London.

THE PLANTS

Employment originally expected at each: London: Solar module plant, about 200 jobs, partnering with Canadian Solar.

Windsor: Wind turbine tower plant, about 300 jobs, partnering with CS Wind.

Tillsonburg: Wind turbine blade manufacturer, about 300 jobs, partnering with Siemens. Toronto: Solar inverter maker, about 200 jobs, partnering with SMA.

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