

Donna Kinapen

From: Donna Kinapen
Sent: November 29, 2016 12:25 PM
To: brett.smith@ontario.ca
Subject: FW: Hansard: Singh to Thibeault -- Hydro Costs

Hey Brett. Just a quick note further to our conversation...being a senior does not qualify an applicant for the enhanced sliding scale, only electric heat, Indigenous community or Oxygen concentrator / mechanical ventilator will do that (with kidney dialysis coming soon). Seniors 65+ do get a longer approval term (5 years) over the standard 2 years.

Thanks, Donna

From: Energy In The News (ENERGY) [mailto:energynews@ontario.ca]

Sent: November-29-16 10:59 AM

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Subject: Hansard: Singh to Thibeault -- Hydro Costs

INSTANT HANSARD

>> MPP Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the acting **Premier**. Keeping the fridge on, running a pump to get water from the well or running a baseboard heater aren't luxuries. These are necessities. These are basic. Does the acting **Premier** think it's ok that working people and seniors can't afford these basics because hydro bills are so high?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy to rise to anticipates that question, because it is an important question. It is something that we recognize that there are families, there are seniors out there, Mr. Speaker, that are having a difficult time paying their electricity bills and that's why, Mr. Speaker, we've brought forward with the from the speech from the throne the 8% reduction, the 20% reduction, Mr. Speaker, for the 330,000 families that qualify for that, Mr. Speaker. We know that more needs to be done,

Mr. Speaker. That's why we continue to talk about the programs that we have in place. The Ontario electricity support program, Mr. Speaker, for example. It can provide up to \$45 per month for those families that qualify, and for seniors, Mr. Speaker, and for those that actually need to plug in for example a piece of medical equipment, Mr. Speaker. They can actually get up to \$75 a month to help on their hydro bills, Mr. Speaker. We know that there's more to do. The **Premier** talked about that a few weeks ago. My ministry is working very hard on that, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to find ways to help families, help seniors, to help everyone across the province with their electricity.

>> MPP Singh: Mr. Speaker, I ask the government to listen very carefully to the story of BOB and Jeannine. BOB and Jeannine thought they'd be able to afford to retire. They budgeted to live on old age and C.P.P. But then their hydro bills started to climb. In spite of heating their home with wood, their hydro bills were almost as much as their rent. Now, after 80 years living in sundridge, BOB had to move out of his own community. He had to leave his own community. Does the acting **Premier** think that BOB and Jeannine need an apology or they need to actually have lower hydro bills?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. BOB and Jeannine will be getting lower hydro bills come January 1st with the 8% reduction, Mr. Speaker. I don't know the specifics of their story, Mr. Speaker, but he did mention sundridge. Sundridge is a community, Mr. Speaker, that does get services in some parts by Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, and that means they have potential for qualifying for that 20% reduction, Mr. Speaker. That's a significant savings for that type of family and for 330,000 families right across the province, Mr. Speaker, that will qualify for that 20% reduction. But on top of that, Mr. Speaker, there are other programs in place. There's the northern Ontario tax credit. There's the leap program if they need to access that if they're having difficulty paying their bills, Mr. Speaker. There's also the Ontario electricity support program in which they will qualify for, Mr. Speaker, because he did talk about what their income is, Mr. Speaker. They will qualify and get some benefit from the O.D. P. program. If they're also heating their home with electricity, Mr. Speaker, then they qualify for that higher benefit. I do hope that that family gets that information so they can qualify and reduce their bills, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Singh: Mr. Speaker, last week in question period Andrea Horwath brought stories of people who had their power cut off even though they've done everything they could to conserve. This is 2016. And noble in this province should be paying as much for their hydro bill as they're paying for their rent. And nobody with a job or a pension, good savings should find themselves in a position where they're living in the dark, where they can't afford to or they don't have electricity to keep their fridge on. Their food is going bad and they shouldn't be in a situation where mould is growing in their homes because they -- because their basement is flooded and they can't run a sump pump. These are real stories. These are tragic realities in this province because of the Liberal government's choices. Will the **Premier** ensure that no more people in this province face the reality of having their hydro cut off?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to electricity, it really is an important piece for us that vulnerable customers have the resources to help avoid disconnections, and that's why we've enhanced consumer protection rules, including requiring a ten-day advance notice of disconnection, Mr. Speaker, with accompanying resources to help customers with their arrears, Mr. Speaker. There is relief program that will help them. Many other programs in place will help these families that are struggling because we do agree, everyone in this House would agree, Mr. Speaker, that it is unacceptable for families to have to live that way, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we brought forward the programs that we did in the speech from the throne. That's why we have the programs that we have, Mr. Speaker, because we -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because we are it will proud of the system that we built. We have a clean, green reliable system, Mr. Speaker, in which we no longer have to send out warnings telling people to go outside. And worry about breathing, Mr. Speaker, because we've eliminated coal. We've actually saving billions on our health care system. We are very proud of the system that we've built but we understand we've got to make it affordable for as many as we can.

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