John Bozzo

From:	John Bozzo
Sent:	December 13, 2017 9:10 AM
To:	##Clippings_Distribution_List
Subject:	Morning News Summary - Wed. Dec. 13, 2017

Good morning,

Information about yesterday's community meeting in Ingersoll appeared on the Clinton News Record website. There is a special contribution in the Financial Post about gasoline price regulation. It is included it below as it mentions the Kent Group report that the OEB commissioned. There isn't an OEB mention but it's included for awareness. Other stories that mention the OEB are summarized below.

My Espanola Now: Gas companies planning to amalgamate – want rate framework

- Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. and Union Gas Limited have applied for approval to amalgamate to form a single company and a framework for rates.
- Enbridge and Union have asked to defer its full review of their costs for 10 years and proposed a methodology for setting rates from 2019 to the end of 2028 using a formula.
- The Ontario Energy Board to review the rate proposal in a separate proceeding and hold a public hearing.
- The article gives the EB numbers for both the cases (Enbridge, Union, EPCOR Natural Gas) and gives the OEB website for more information.

TBnewswatch.com: East-West Tie development pushes forward

- Contracting agreement signed for 450-kilometre transmission line project, which includes equity stake and partnership for six First Nations communities.
- $777-million power transmission line project has been more than four years in the making.
- The East-West Tie transmission project, a 450-kilometre line that would connect the Lakehead and Wawa transformer stations, moved forward on Monday with the signing of an agreement between developer NextBridge Infrastructure and general contractor Valard.
- A leave to construct application was filed with the Ontario Energy Board this July and approval could come next spring. That would put construction on target to have shovels in the ground in November 2018 with a goal of having the line in service in 2020.
- 6 First Nation groups have formed Supercom, an economic development company to pursue contracting and training opportunities related to the line development.
- The line, which would run generally parallel to the existing transmission line, would bring the electrical capacity to 650 megawatts.

Financial Post: This Ontario NDP idea to regulate gas prices would backfire at the pump

- According to Kent Group Ltd., which recently published a report entitled "Understanding Retail Transportation Fuel Pricing in Ontario," non-refiner marketers represented 70 per cent of Ontario's retail sites in 2016, and 78 per cent of sites had their prices set by independent retailers.
- In Ontario, the largest single component of the price at the pump is taxes: 36.2 cents per litre on average last year. We saw the pump prices rise an additional 4.3 cents per litre in Ontario as a direct result of the cap-and-trade program.
- The gross margin, from which retailers need to pay all operating costs and expenses, was just 8.2 cents per litre. Adjusted for inflation, marketing margins are only six cents per litre higher than in 1991.

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Morning News Clippings

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Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2017
Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@oeb.ca)

Contact Editor

Clippings Summary

News - 15 Results

Gas companies planning to amalgamate - want rate framework - My Espanola Now

www.myespanolanow.com - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Paul Crawford noted on Wednesday, December 13, 2017
OEB is mentioned.

Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. and Union Gas Limited have applied for approval to amalgamate to form a single company and a framework for rates.

East-West Tie development pushes forward - TBNewsWatch.com

www.tbnewswatch.com - Tue Dec 12 2017
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OEB to review rates, Fair Hydro Act today | Clinton News Record

www.clintonnewsrecord.com - Tue Dec 12 2017
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The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is bringing its rate review process to Ingersoll. The province's independent energy regulator has received an application from Erie Thames Powerlines to increase residential electricity distribution rates by $2.70 ...

NDP: Grits'hydro ads 'desperate'

Ottawa Sun - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Positive
Byline: Antonella Artuso

Ad Value: $1,131
Reach: 45442 **Page:** A10

The **Ontario** Liberals are making **hydro** customers pay for political advertising on their bills right up until the next election, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath charges. As evidence, Horwath pointed to a legal order signed by ...

Liberals hiding deficit, second watchdog says

Toronto Sun - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $1,782
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A16

The financial credibility of Premier Kathleen Wynne's government has taken another huge hit with a second **independent**, non-partisan financial watchdog of the **Ontario** Legislature saying Liberal claims they've balanced the budget ...

Grit spin debate powers up; NDP says campaign co-chair Deb Matthews ordered utilities to put partisan messages in hydro bills

London Free Press - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Dan Brown

Ad Value: $4,246
Reach: 70995 **Page:** A1 / Front

With the next **Ontario** election half a year away, Deputy Premier Deb Matthews of **London** - cochair of the Liberal campaign - is being accused of ordering a partisan spin on monthly household **hydro** bills. In the ...

Terence Corcoran: Another 'green' power boondoggle sinks taxpayers and consumers in the red

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Byline: Terence Corcoran
Reach: 607500

From Bonavista to Vancouver Island, from the Arctic Circle to the Great Lake waters, this land really belongs to **electric**-**power** monopolies and politicians who routinely bulldoze property rights, **ratepayers**, taxpayers ...

This Ontario NDP idea to regulate gas prices would backfire at the pump

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Ontario's deficit is growing — and the Fair Hydro Plan is largely to blame | TVO.org

tvo.org - Tue Dec 12 2017
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Ontario will have a $4 billion deficit in 2017-18 and its fiscal position will continue to deteriorate over the next four years, largely due to the government's Fair Hydro Plan, according to a new report published Monday by the Financial ...

Promoting energy policy

The Timmins Daily Press - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Positive
Ad Value: $151
Reach: 9196 **Page:** A3

Nathalie Des Rosiers, parliamentary assistant to the **minister of energy** was in Timmins Monday highlighting the benefits organizations and companies are seeing as a result of expansions to the Industrial Conservation ...

Liberals may have strong showing in next election

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Kathleen Wynne, Premier of **Ontario**, and leader of the Liberal party, pulled ahead of Patrick Brown's Progressive Conservative Party and Andrea Horwath's NDP party this week according to a major poll. "No way. That is impossible," would ...

Put Earth ahead of economy

Toronto Star - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $3,626
Reach: 361323 **Page:** A16

Changing a regime for change's sake, Cohn, Dec. 12 **Cap and trade**, carbon capture or carbon taxes are all euphemisms for business as usual. Politicians will never be serious about **climate change** ...

Enbridge seeks to allay concerns over big plans; Company stays course on multibillion-dollar energy projects with commitment to cut debt

The Globe and Mail - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: JEFF LEWIS

Ad Value: $16,312
Reach: 309154 **Page:** B6

Enbridge Inc. is reinforcing plans to chop debt and fund $22-billion in major projects as the company tries to allay concerns over big spending and tempered dividend growth. Top executives with the Calgary-based pipeline giant on Tuesday addressed ...

GM Canada proposes renewable energy plant to power St. Catharines factory

canada.autonews.com - Tue Dec 12 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

General Motors of Canada is proposing to build a 6.4 megawatt co-generation plant that will use renewable landfill gas as fuel to generate electricity for its St. Catharines propulsion plant and offset what it calls uncompetitive energy costs in ...

Federal judge again denies South Portland's plea to dismiss pipeline lawsuit - Portland Press Herald

www.pressherald.com - Tue Dec 12 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Paul Crawford noted on Tuesday, December 12, 2017
Energy East is mentioned.

A federal judge on Tuesday denied the city of South Portland's renewed motion to dismiss a nearly three-year-old lawsuit by the Portland Pipe Line Corp. over the city's ban on crude oil exports.

Clippings Summary

Full Articles

Gas companies planning to amalgamate - want rate framework - My Espanola Now

www.myespanolanow.com - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Neutral

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OEB to review rates, Fair Hydro Act today | Clinton News Record

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The Ontario Liberals are making hydro customers pay for political advertising on their bills right up until the next election, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath charges.

As evidence, Horwath pointed to a legal order signed by Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault and Chair of Cabinet Deb Matthews that requires local distribution companies (LDCs) to include an insert with hydro bills that mentions Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan.

"That means that partisan Liberal flyers are going to be mailed to homes across Ontario from now through to election day and beyond," Horwath said in the Ontario legislature. "So, let's agree to call these flyers what they are: Desperate Liberal campaign advertising."

If the Liberals want to run partisan advertising to boost their political fortunes, the party should pay for it, Horwath said.

Thibeault and Matthews signed an order in council on June 14 that spells out clearly what the bill inserts should say - "the word 'Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan'and "Bringing electricity bills down'must appear in a reasonably prominent location on the fact of the bill insert."

Ontario Fair Hydro Plan is the name that the Kathleen Wynne government gave to its strategy for reducing hydro bills by an average of 25%.

An order in council is a legally binding order by the government that does not require a bill to be introduced, debated and passed through the legislature.

"The only group that benefits from mailing out these partisan flyers is the Liberal Party," Horwath said.

"Is the Liberal Party paying for these flyers or is it the people and businesses of Ontario?" The Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro Board issued a statement last week accusing the Ontario government of politicizing electricity bills.

Hydro customers need simpler bills, not ones that add to their confusion by including the "calculation of the 'savings'from the Fair Hydro Plan," says a statement from the utility.

Thibeault said information in customer bills has long been regulated.

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Liberals hiding deficit, second watchdog says

Toronto Sun - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Negative
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The financial credibility of Premier Kathleen Wynne's government has taken another huge hit with a second independent, non-partisan financial watchdog of the Ontario Legislature saying Liberal claims they've balanced the budget are inaccurate.

The Legislature's Financial Accountability Office Monday supported an earlier finding by Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk that the Liberals are using accounting tricks to hide their deficits from the **public**.

Contrary to claims by Wynne and Finance Minister Charles Sousa in his April 28 budget speech projecting balanced **Ontario** budgets for 2017, 2018 and 2019, the FAO reported the Liberals are running a deficit this year and predicted they will continue to do so under their current fiscal policies.

The FAO projects the deficit at $4 billion this year, $7.1 billion in 2018, $7.8 billion in 2019, $9 billion in 2020 and $9.8 billion in 2021.

It says these projections are based on weaker revenue growth and the Wynne government's rejection of "the Auditor General of **Ontario**'s recommended accounting treatment for both the government's **Fair Hydro Plan** and the net pension assets of jointly-sponsored pension plans."

Defying the auditor general, the Wynne government hired what it called an expert panel, which endorsed its pension accounting.

It denied Lysyk's finding its financing of the **Fair Hydro Plan** to reduce **electricity rates** by 25% is an accounting trick.

Lysk said this will cost Ontarians $39.4 billion, including $4 billion extra in interest payments, because the Liberals are transferring the debt to **Ontario Power Generation** to keep it off the province's books.

FAO Chief Economist David **West** said Monday in releasing the FAO's report, which backed Lysyk that: "The government is out borrowing this money. This current year they're going to borrow $23 billion in the markets. That's going to rise to $45 billion in the coming years."

The FAO said the **Fair Hydro Plan** will add $3.2 billion to the deficit by 2021-22.

It added the Wynne government's rejection of Lysyk's recommended accounting measures means, "it is becoming more difficult for legislators and the **public** to assess the government's fiscal projections" which "has reduced the transparency and reliability of **Ontario**'s fiscal **plan**."

In other words, the Liberals'budgeting can't be trusted.

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Grit spin debate powers up; NDP says campaign co-chair Deb Matthews ordered utilities to put partisan messages in hydro bills

London Free Press - Wed Dec 13 2017
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Byline: Dan Brown

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Reach: 70995 **Page:** A1 / Front

With the next **Ontario** election half a year away, Deputy Premier Deb Matthews of **London** - cochair of the Liberal campaign - is being accused of ordering a partisan spin on monthly household **hydro** bills.

In the legislature Tuesday, Matthews and **Ontario Energy** Minister **Glenn Thibeault** came under fire by the New Democrats for signing an order the NDP say forced **utility** companies to inject campaign messaging into **electricity** bills from July 2017 to July 2018, even dictating precise words - "**Ontario Fair Hydro**

Plan" and "bringing electricity bills down" - to be shown on the bills.

The order, the NDP notes, extends to the month after the next election.

"It's so obviously partisan, it's shocking," Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath told The Free Press, insisting it's a conflict for Matthews, the London North Centre MPP, to be signing such cabinet orders while she's also in charge of the Liberals' re-election campaign.

Tuesday's flare-up came days after Ontario's spending watchdog, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk, who has clashed with the Liberals over their handling of the energy file amid soaring electricity prices, reported 30 per cent of the ads the government took out in 2016-17, when it spent a 10-year high of $58 million on advertising, appeared intended to make the government look good.

"Outrageous isn't even the word anymore," Horwath said.

She accuses the Liberals of putting their own political skin above the needs of ordinary Ontarians stung by rising energy bills.

Matthews couldn't be reached for comment Tuesday, her spokesperson instead responding with a statement by Thibeault's spokesperson, Colin Nekolaichuk, who said "we are simply following standard practice." In his statement, Nekolaichuk said it's been "standard practice for the province to require utilities to include additional on-bill messaging that's important to electricity consumers through regulation," such as changes to the debt retirement charge on monthly hydro bills.

"An order in council (cabinet order) is part of the process when passing regulations," Nekolaichuk added.

But Horwath insists it's all politics.

"It's only because it's politically advantageous," she said.

High electricity prices - and duelling plans by the political parties to reduce them - have dogged the Liberals for years.

Former premier Dalton McGuinty's government plunged headlong into costly green energy, including sweetheart deals that paid wind and solar power producers far more than consumers pay.

A 10-per-cent provincial subsidy paid on monthly bills was ended Dec. 31, 2015, but Premier Kathleen Wynne faced growing public anger over rising bills and this year the government brought in its Fair Hydro Plan to cut bills by 25 per cent after Wynne apologized "for not paying close enough attention to some of the daily stresses in Ontarians' lives" caused by soaring energy prices.

Horwath said including government messaging in utility bills preys on a captive audience.

"People don't have a choice" whether or not to open their bills, she said.

Lysyk, in her latest report, found Ontario consumers have been dinged $260 million for ineligible costs by power producers - including thousands for things like staff car washes, raccoon traps and scuba gear - under a provincial program that puts the producers on standby to generate electricity. She also recently accused the government of obscuring the true cost of its 25 per cent cut to hydro bills by keeping billions in debt used to pay for that off the province's books.

Government decisions to ignore the advice of its own planners for new energy projects cost Ontario ratepayers $37 billion, and its $2-billion smart meter program spent double its projected cost without ensuring conservation goals were met, Lysyk had earlier reported. Matthews, the advanced education minister in the government, has announced she won't seek re-election in 2018, ending what will be a 15-year run in office.

danbrown@postmedia.com twitter.com/DanatLFPress

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Terence Corcoran: Another 'green' power boondoggle sinks taxpayers and consumers in the red

Financial Post - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Terence Corcoran
Reach: 607500

From Bonavista to Vancouver Island, from the Arctic Circle to the Great Lake waters, this land really belongs to **electric**-**power** monopolies and politicians who routinely bulldoze property rights, **ratepayers**, taxpayers and the regulators that have become puppets of governing political string-pullers.

They promised green and clean. What they deliver to Canadians instead is expensive and in the red. From **coast** to **coast**, provincial governments continue to plow ahead with **power**-generating mega-projects and green-**power** schemes whose only certain output is massive debts and soaring costs to deliver **electricity** that may never be needed.

Out Bonavista way, Newfoundlanders are saddled with Muskrat Falls, a giant dam project under construction in Labrador. Nalcor **Energy**, the provincial **power** monopoly in cahoots with provincial and federal politicians, started with a cost estimate of $7.4 billion to ship **electricity** from Labrador to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. The latest estimated cost is $12.7 billion.

The original rationale for the project: Green and clean **electric** **power**. There is no way the project can return its costs, which means **electricity** consumers will be paying higher than market prices for **electricity** and/or taxpayers will be picking up most of the debt. DBRS recently gave $8 billion of Muskrat Falls' debt a triple-A rating, but only because the bonds carry a "flow-through" rating from the federal government. As a result, that debt carries "an irrevocable, unconditional, absolute and continuing obligation" of the government of Canada. Translation: Investors are rock-solid and federal taxpayers are screwed.

Around the Great Lakes, **Ontario**'s **electricity** regime is a giant house of fiscal smoke and dirty mirrors to fund the green and clean **power** the province has mandated, including billion-dollar **wind** and **solar** projects that produce expensive **electricity** the province does not need.

The result is a fiscal scam known as the **Fair** **Hydro** **Plan**, in which **ratepayers** see a fake 25-per-cent reduction in **electricity** **rates**. To pay for the **rate** cut, the province will have to either increase its debt or raise taxes, or both. A report Monday from the province's Fiscal Accountability Office said **Ontario** will run up $14.1 billion in debt over the next five years to finance below-cost prices for clean and green **energy**.

Out Vancouver way, the same smoke and mirror structures are under construction around BC **Hydro**.

On Monday, B.C. Premier John Horgan announced that his New Democratic government will continue to back BC **Hydro**'s Site C **hydro**-generating project, an $11-billion dam expansion along the Peace **River**, 1,200 kilometres **north** of Vancouver. At that distance, 14 per cent of the generated **power** is lost in **transmission**.

Stepping over the bodies of his Green Party coalition partners who wanted the project stopped - as Horgan had suggested he might do during last June's election -the premier produced a series of partial numbers and a lot of leftist cant. He claimed the decision to proceed with the project and avoid the costs of stopping the project in mid-course will save his government's $10-a-day daycare program and allow it to continue to fund hospitals and schools.

Using estimates from the provincial **regulator**'s **review** of the project, Horgan said that stopping Site C would cost the province $4 billion, including $2.1 billion already spent and another $1.8 billion to remediate the site. If the province had to absorb that loss, other programs would have to be cut. Or **electricity** **rates** would have to increase 12 per cent for the next decade if all $4 billion of the costs were loaded onto BC **Hydro**'s already substantial debt.

Horgan did not clearly spell out how much it will cost B.C. **ratepayers** to pay for Site C **electricity**. Nor could he guarantee the cost of the project, already heading for a 30-per-cent overrun, will avoid rising another 20 per cent to $12.5 billion as the province's **utilities** **regulator** has warned it could.

Most commentators gave Horgan a pat on the back for the decision, praising him for being pragmatic in the face of a fractious political situation. Blaming the Site C project on the previous Liberal government is appropriate. But Horgan's strategy is to pile aboard the governance regime that mars all **electricity** systems across Canada.

Washing over Horgan's decision as politically necessary and expedient ignores the fiscal risks building around BC **Hydro**. Recent Moody's credit reviews of the province and BC **Hydro** suggest a company that's building up a shaky balance sheet filled with nooks and crannies of debt that **ratepayers** will have to fund.

Taxpayers are already paying. In January, Moody's noted that BC **Hydro** will soon no longer be paying a dividend to the province, which means a loss of almost $300 million in annual revenue. The company is also sitting on $5.5 billion in deferred **rate** increases that will eventually have to be covered by **ratepayers**. "BC **Hydro** posts some metrics that are among the weakest of **Canadian** provincial **utilities**," said Moody's.

The impact of Site C means more debt to be covered by **rate** increases. "Should BC **Hydro**'s financial position deteriorate, the possibility that it would require some support from the province will increase. We will continue to monitor BC **Hydro**'s financial strength over the coming years through the construction and initial operations of Site C."

This is what happens when provincial politicians maintain giant **electric**-**utility** monopolies - BC **Hydro**, **Ontario**'s **hydro** companies and Nalcor in Newfoundland - that continue to bamboozle voters and **ratepayers**.

The long-term outcome of these still-growing provincial **power** regimes is that the green objectives of reducing carbon and moving to clean **hydro** **power** will never be met. If carbon taxes are imposed to move consumers off fossil **fuels**, then consumers will be looking at overpriced and monopolistic **electricity**. The cost of charging e-cars in the future is set to soar, from **coast** to **coast**, where **power** monopolies reign.

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NP

This Ontario NDP idea to regulate gas prices would backfire at the pump

Financial Post - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Special to Financial Post
Reach: 607500

There is a perception by some in **Ontario** that **gasoline** marketers are "greedy Big Oil," racketeers who relish increasing **gasoline** prices before long weekends or at other opportunistic times, pocketing the surplus. This notion of toying with **consumer** dollars for profit also seems to play well politically, and can be seen in the **Ontario** NDP's latest private members' bill proposing to regulate **gasoline** pricing.

This perception, quite simply, is false and feeds the inaccurate portrayal of the nation's **gasoline** marketing sector.

According to Kent Group Ltd., which recently published a report entitled "Understanding Retail **Transportation** Fuel Pricing in **Ontario** (www.kentgroupltd.com) ," non-refiner marketers represented 70 per cent of **Ontario**'s retail sites in 2016, and 78 per cent of sites had their prices set by **independent** retailers. This means **independent** business owners and companies run the vast majority of our **Canadian** retail **gasoline** sites. It's a competitive, free-market landscape where profit margins, regardless of fluctuating **gasoline** prices at the pumps, remain slim.

In **Ontario** specifically, the largest single component of the price at the pump is taxes: 36.2 cents per litre on average last year. We saw the pump prices rise an additional 4.3 cents per litre in **Ontario** as a direct result of the **cap-and-trade** program in 2016, an increase which consumers also pay tax on. The gross margin, from which retailers need to pay all operating costs and expenses, was just 8.2 cents per litre. Adjusted for inflation, marketing margins are only six cents per litre higher than in 1991. This will only become more constrained with the **Ontario** government pushing labour costs higher with new minimum wage **rules**.

Despite this lean operating model, the report found that markets with more volatility generally have lower retail margins. It also showed that **Ontario**'s 2016 retail margins and pump prices were rational given each market's characteristics. In fact, the province's markets showed competitive price behaviour, according to their analysis.

While the NDP points to market regulation as the answer to price volatility, the facts don't support this model. In Newfoundland, where prices are regulated, they are also among the highest in the country. According to the Kent Group report, "as with any regulation, the stated objectives of price regulation are not always consistent with its outcomes, and they can fundamentally alter the competitive dynamics of a market. There is evidence that current price regulations in some provinces are affecting markets in ways that may not necessarily benefit consumers."

Governments and political parties need to be prudent in their recommendations for regulatory change, and should be equipped with the facts before jumping to conclusions. In this scenario, a deeper dive into the actual workings of our province's - and our nation's - petroleum-marketing sector for the **Ontario** NDP party is merited.

Jennifer Stewart is president and CEO of the **Canadian** **Independent** Petroleum Marketers Association.

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Ontario’s deficit is growing — and the Fair Hydro Plan is largely to blame | TVO.org

tvo.org · Tue Dec 12 2017
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Promoting energy policy

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Nathalie Des Rosiers, parliamentary assistant to the **minister of energy** was in Timmins Monday highlighting the benefits organizations and companies are seeing as a result of expansions to the Industrial Conservation Initiative under the **Fair Hydro Plan**. The program allows large **electricity** users to lower their **electricity** costs by up to one-third by reducing their **electricity** use during peak hours. As of July 1, the province expanded the program to provide **electricity** bill reductions to more organizations and businesses, including consumers with an average monthly peak demand **greater** than one megawatt, and consumers with an average monthly peak demand **greater** than 500 kilowatts and less than one megawatt in the manufacturing and greenhouse sectors. "With the recent expansions to the Industrial Conservation Initiative included in **Ontario**'s **Fair Hydro Plan**, eligible businesses that reduce their peak **energy** consumption will see their **electricity** bills lowered," said Des Rosiers, the MPP for **Ottawa**-Vanier. "These savings will help ensure companies operating in the province can continue to stay competitive."

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Liberals may have strong showing in next election

The Belleville Intelligencer - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Colin Mackay

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Reach: 9723 **Page:** B2

Kathleen Wynne, Premier of **Ontario**, and leader of the Liberal party, pulled ahead of Patrick Brown's Progressive Conservative Party and Andrea Horwath's NDP party this week according to a major poll.

"No way. That is impossible," would have been most citizen's reaction. Yet, one poll says the Liberals have a slight lead. In fairness, it is only one poll, but other polls suggest the political race is tightening as Ontarians decide who to elect, likely, next June.

Numerous citizens from Belleville still believe the PCs should win in a landslide. Maybe they should, but it will not happen.

Todd Smith, local MPP for this riding, should win easily, as will most of the PCs in the adjacent ridings.

However, urban ridings will remain a tough sell. The PCs are not a lock because too many people fear them as a political party. Historically, they have performed disastrously leading up to an election often rendering extremely questionable decisions. Therefore, it makes sense they are attempting a different strategy for this impending election run. They have released the "People's Guarantee," a 78-page election platform, well ahead of time, and one that has been, essentially, approved as being financially sensible by Kevin Page, former Parliamentary Budget Officer. Nobody can claim they do not have a **plan** anymore.

The downside of releasing a **plan** this early in an election race is that people can analyze each little snippet and, essentially, find issues to put the PCs on the defensive. And it only takes one of these issues to become a negative election issue. Instead of highlighting the Liberals'incompetence, the PCs could end up constantly explaining their own negative issue. Thus, in voter's minds, gone would be their never-ending rising bills, **gas** plant scandals and over spending by the incumbent Liberals.

Naturally, focussing on **electricity** bills is a good move for the PCs and Smith has been going around the province berating the Liberals. Thus, the PCs have a better idea. They will remove the **smart meter** charge on your **hydro** bill, **rebate** the government's portion of **Hydro** One's dividend directly to **ratepayers** on their bill, scrap the **Green Energy Act**, and rein in exorbitant salaries at **Hydro** One and **Ontario Power Generation**. It all sounds wonderful, but will the PCs replace a similar "Green Act" or will the **climate** deniers of the party win out? This is a dangerous area for the PCs, as they are viewed by many citizens as backwards, and out of touch, especially when it comes to **climate** change.

Lowering taxes sounds wonderful too, until citizens realize cutting taxes also means a decrease in services. The Liberals claim that more than $12 billion less will be spent, by PCs, in **Ontario**, whereas the NDP claims cuts will equal $6 billion. Both the Liberals and NDP make these claims based on figures from page 76 of the PC', 'People's Guarantee.'Historically, the PCs have been the party most likely to cut services. Citizens realize that health care and education have little, if anything, left to cut. Questions about cuts have already been generated six months before the election.

On the other hand, the PCs now have plenty of time to displace these nagging issues that many citizens have toward the PC party. The PCs 'People's Guarantee'continually makes the point that now is the time for change, and many believe that to be true. Having a Liberal government in **power** for more than a decade is too long. A change is warranted. However, citizens, and potential voters remain wary. Convincing them considerable cuts will not come at an enormous cost is crucial.

With an economy running extremely well, a historical past filled with election gaffes means that, perhaps, the polls aren't questionable after all.

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Put Earth ahead of economy

Toronto Star - Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Negative
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Reach: 361323 **Page:** A16

Changing a regime for change's sake, Cohn, Dec. 12

Cap and trade, carbon capture or carbon taxes are all euphemisms for business as usual. Politicians will never be serious about **climate** change as long as they are held in thrall by economists.

If the powers that be are serious about **climate** change and carbon pollution, I suggest starting with simple solutions. Label every product and **service** with its real **carbon footprint** and consumers will do the right thing. The same people who recycle will buy the good or **service** with the lowest **carbon footprint**. Another solution is to plant trees - lots and lots of trees.

Sadly, even these ideas will have little effect until we change our thinking on growth as the fix for all our problems. Only curtailing growth will solve our problems.

James Schaefer's opinion piece ("Averting extinction, for people's sake," Dec.

12) makes a strong case for a new way of thinking about our relationship with all other life on Earth. We ignore it at our peril.

Kurt Crist, Consecon, Ont.

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Enbridge seeks to allay concerns over big plans; Company stays course on multibillion-dollar energy projects with commitment to cut debt

The Globe and Mail · Wed Dec 13 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: JEFF LEWIS

Ad Value: $16,312
Reach: 309154 **Page:** B6

Enbridge Inc. is reinforcing plans to chop debt and fund $22-billion in major projects as the company tries to allay concerns over big spending and tempered dividend growth.

Top executives with the Calgary-based pipeline giant on Tuesday addressed investors and analysts in New York for the first time following a series of financial moves designed to shore up finances.

Chief executive officer Al Monaco has sought to calm jittery investors who balked at the company's ability to fund multibillion-dollar pipeline expansions while supporting steadily rising dividend payments, triggering a rare sell-off in the company's shares last month.

In recent weeks, Enbridge and a subsidiary have sold $2.6billion in preferred and common shares and signalled plans to jettison a minimum of $3-billion in assets next year to help fund big-ticket growth projects.

The company also throttled back annual dividend growth plans to 10 per cent from 10 per cent to 12 per cent previously, while pledging to reduce its hefty debt load by $4-billion in coming years, pushing its overall capital requirement through 2020 to $26-billion.

Mr. Monaco said Tuesday the bulk of that will come from $14-billion of internally generated cash flow, net of dividends, with the balance generated by the sale of **hybrid** securities and other financial options available to the company.

"Bottom line is that the **plan** allows us to effectively fund our secured program while strengthening the balance sheet," he said at the webcast event.

Enbridge's **Toronto**-listed shares have climbed about 12 per cent from lows hit last month, a vote of confidence for the company's financing plans.

Still, the stock is down roughly 16.5 per cent since last year's $37-billion merger with rival Spectra **Energy** Corp.

The pricey deal vastly expanded Enbridge's **North** American network of pipelines, deepening exposure to expanding **shale gas** regions while lessening dependence on shipping crude from Alberta's oil sands into the United States.

But it has also added to Enbridge's already complicated financial structure.

U.S. rivals, such as Kinder Morgan Inc. and Sunoco Logistics Partners, have sought in recent years to simplify their organizations. Last year, Sunoco bought related entity **Energy** Transfer Partners LP in a $20billion (U.S.) deal. That followed Kinder's $70-billion consolidation in 2014.

Mr. Monaco said Enbridge has no plans to put its various units under one roof, but he acknowledged the cost-of-capital upside enjoyed by tax-advantaged master limited partnerships has waned.

"I also acknowledge that, longer term, it's obviously more complexity, and we get the fact that there are some issues with complexity in today's environment," he said. "Right now, we're going to focus on making sure they perform well."

Enbridge, which remains the dominant shipper of **Canadian** oil, has instead embarked on a multiyear effort to streamline operations, emphasizing that future growth will stick to areas offering predictable, regulated **rates** of return.

The company has identified $10-billion (**Canadian**) in assets it deems not crucial to its business, with at least $3-billion targeted for sale next year. They include unregulated onshore **renewable energy** projects and **natural gas** processing infrastructure.

The move to sell its renewable business comes as major investors press companies to beef up disclosures about how policies and regulations designed to stem growth in **climate**-warming greenhouse **gases** will impact their businesses.

Mr. Monaco defended the decision Tuesday and pointed to continued investments in European offshore **wind** developments. "We still believe in the notion that we are transitioning to a lower carbon future," he said. The decision "is more a reflection of capital allocation at this particular time."

Despite efforts to diversify, about half of the company's projected earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization through 2020 are tied to its liquids pipelines division.

That includes its massive Line 3 replacement project, which has seen costs escalate to around $9-billion while the pipeline awaits final clearances from regulators in Minnesota.

The company insists oil shipments will commence by 2020.

But Guy Jarvis, executive vice-president of liquids pipelines, said the industry could face a glut of export capacity if all the competing pipelines go ahead, causing volumes to temporarily dip on its key mainline shipping network.

ENBRIDGE (ENB)

CLOSE: $49.33, DOWN 24C/

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GM Canada proposes renewable energy plant to power St. Catharines factory

canada.autonews.com · Tue Dec 12 2017
Tone: Neutral

General Motors of Canada is proposing to build a 6.4 megawatt co-generation plant that will use renewable landfill gas as fuel to generate electricity for its St. Catharines propulsion plant and offset what it calls uncompetitive energy costs in Ontario.

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Federal judge again denies South Portland's plea to dismiss pipeline lawsuit - Portland Press Herald

www.pressherald.com - Tue Dec 12 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

A federal judge on Tuesday denied the city of South Portland’s renewed motion to dismiss a nearly three-year-old lawsuit by the Portland Pipe Line Corp. over the city’s ban on crude oil exports.

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