

John Bozzo

From: John Bozzo
Sent: December 7, 2017 9:37 AM
To: ##Clippings_Distribution_List
Subject: Morning News Summary - December 7, 2017

d\plain Good morning,

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d\plain Here's the morning news summary for today:

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d\plain The auditor general's report dominates today's coverage. Some of this was highlighted in our news summary late yesterday, with the rest being new stories that were published since. **OEB references highlighted throughout.**

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d\plain Auditor general stories with OEB references:

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[d\plain Toronto Sun: Raccoon traps, scuba gear charged to hydro customers](#)

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλα1ν • The Standby Cost Recovery Program pays generators to keep their equipment going on standby in case the electricity is needed. **After pointed prodding by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB)**, the IESO audited the program and found that of the \$600 million paid out, \$260 million was for ineligible claims.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλα1ν • **Overall, Ontarians could have saved millions on their hydro bills if the**

IESO had followed through on recommendations made to it by the OEB, the auditor found.

Because generators were shutting down their equipment, and restarting it in two hours to take advantage of the Standby Cost Recovery Program, hydro ratepayers paid \$19 million more in extra electricity costs in the summer of 2010, the OEB reported.

The OEB estimates hydro customers could save about \$30 million a year if the program was revamped to eliminate coverage for some maintenance and operating costs.

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[CP via National Post: Ontario AG's annual report digs into energy, sick days, ad costs](#)

The Independent Electricity System Operator has not implemented some recommendations made by the Ontario Energy Board which could have saved ratepayers millions over the past 15 years.

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[CP via London Free Press: Ontario Auditor zaps power firm charges](#)

She also found ratepayers are paying the cost for large industrial companies' electricity savings, and that Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) hasn't implemented repeated recommendations from the Ontario Energy Board, including one that could save ratepayers \$30 million a year.

The OEB found in 2014 the program was relied on less than one per cent of the time to meet domestic demand, and has repeatedly urged it be scaled back to stop reimbursing generators for certain costs.

Doing so would save ratepayers \$30 million a year, the OEB says.

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[Ottawa Citizen: Reevely: Power plants have cheated millions from Ontario's electricity system, auditor finds](#)

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• The Ontario Energy Board, the king of Ontario's energy regulators, has warned the IESO about this a lot, Lysyk says. Like, a couple of dozen times. But the IESO isn't actually required to do anything with what the OEB says, and it hasn't restructured the program to cut the risk of rip-offs.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• One case involved Resolute Forest Products (the former AbitibiBowater), which is both a consumer and producer of energy at its various operations. Read for yourself: "The OEB panel reported that the company used one of the panel's past reports, which recommended that the IESO fix the rules, to learn how to misuse the rules," Lysyk reports.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• The OEB has also warned about a separate program that pays private generating companies to keep their plants on standby in case they're needed, even if we don't buy power from them in the end. This is also legit, in concept. But the IESO has not routinely reviewed the expenses they claim, Lysyk finds.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• The IESO itself found \$260 million in questionable claims, approaching half of the \$600 million it's paid out under the standby program. It's retrieved \$168 million. The OEB has smacked the IESO's ears on this five times in seven years.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• "Abuses within the system are completely unacceptable," Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said in a prepared response to Lysyk's work. "That's why they have been investigated, and where wrongdoing was present, costs have been recovered and returned to ratepayers. We are also working together with our agency partners to review the potential for increasing legislative powers to assist our system operator in performing its critical responsibilities."

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[d\plainCP via CTV News: Ontarians pay millions for ineligible power generator costs, auditor finds](#)

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk said in her annual report that the Independent Electricity System Operator hasn't implemented repeated recommendations from the Ontario Energy Board, including one that could save ratepayers \$30 million a year.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Nine generators claimed up to \$260 million in ineligible costs between 2006 and 2015, Lysyk said, and about two-thirds of that has been paid back. One natural gas plant in Brampton, Ont., "gamed" the system for about \$100 million, the OEB has reported.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• The OEB found in 2014 that the standby program was relied on less than one per cent of the time to meet domestic demand, and has recommended repeatedly that it be scaled back to stop reimbursing generators for certain operating and maintenance costs. Doing so would save ratepayers \$30 million a year, the OEB says.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said the program and other similar ones play an important role in the electricity system.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• "These are programs that ensure that when Ontario families and businesses need electricity, it's there for them," he said in a statement. "If these programs were eliminated, reliability would be put at risk."

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• The IESO is working on a redesign of the electricity market, but Lysyk noted that some members of a working group advising the system operator on that work for companies that have claimed ineligible costs.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Lysyk also found that as electricity charges for large industrial ratepayers decrease under a program that gives them savings when they reduce consumption during peak demand, that results in higher costs for residential and small business ratepayers.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• The Industrial Conservation Initiative reduced charges for the large ratepayers by \$245 million in the first 10 months of its operation in 2011, and that same amount was directly added to residential and small business electricity bills, Lysyk wrote.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Since then, electricity charges for residents and small businesses have nearly doubled, while they have decreased for large industrial ratepayers, the auditor found.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Those charges come in the form of the global adjustment, a charge consumers pay for above-market rates guaranteed to power producers in long-term contracts. In 2016, the global adjustment accounted for 85 per cent of residential consumers' electricity charges, Lysyk said.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Thibeault said the industrial program has successfully reduced peak demand -- last year by about 1,300 megawatts, about six per cent of the province's peak demand.

δ.:λ1720.:φ1-360.:πλαιν• Lysyk also announced through her report that her office would be auditing the IESO's books.

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[d\plainArthur Enterprise News: Ontario government needs to take action based on Auditor General's report](#) (op-ed from Canadian Taxpayers' Federation)

δ.λ1720.φι-360.πλαιν• The Auditor General also found that the Independent Electricity System Operator hasn't implemented repeated recommendations from **the Ontario Energy Board**, which could save ratepayers \$30 million a year.

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d\plainAuditor general stories with references to energy but no OEB mentions:

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[d\plainCBC News: Ontario auditor general report: Here are the highlights](#)

[d\plainToronto Star: Auditor takes aim at Wynne's government over spending, waste, lax oversight](#)

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainMorning News Clippings

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainDate: Thursday, December 7, 2017
Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@oeb.ca)

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) [Contact Editor](#)

d\intbl\itap2\cbpat7\plainClippings Summary

d\intbl\itap2\cbpat7\plainNews - 31 Results



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Ratepayers Zapped; Raccoon traps, scuba gear charged to hydro customers

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOttawa Sun - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Antonella Artuso

Ad Value: \$1,814

Reach: 45442 **Page:** A8

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainHydro](#) customers were charged for raccoon traps, landscaping and staff car washes through a poorly monitored program to compensate [gas](#) and coal companies to operate on standby, [Ontario](#) Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Staff sick days jump 29% at school boards; Watchdog also finds sloppy hydro oversight cost consumers \$300 million in higher bills

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainToronto Star - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Robert Benzie and Rob Ferguson Toronto Star

Ad Value: \$23,190

Reach: 361323 **Page:** A1

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainSchool board employees are taking more sick days, [hydro ratepayers](#) are getting zapped and the government's books may not really be balanced, according to auditor general Bonnie Lysyk. In her annual report to the legislature - ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Auditor general would benefit from an editor](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainToronto Star - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Martin Regg Cohn

Ad Value: \$17,940

Reach: 361323 Page: A18

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario's auditor general generally gives good value for money. Like clockwork, Bonnie Lysyk uses her annual reports to expose government waste and incompetence, providing endless fodder for damning reports in this newspaper and other media. She ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Auditor general takes aim at Ontario Liberals over spending and waste | Toronto Star](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.thestar.com - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's fiscal watchdog does not believe the province's books are balanced, complains the government spends too much on "partisan" advertising, warns sick days for school board employees are soaring, and finds hydro ratepayers are getting ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Ontario auditor general report: Here are the highlights - Toronto - CBC News](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.cbc.ca - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe number of sick days being taken by school board employees has jumped 29 per cent since 2011-12, after the province stopped allowing teachers to bank their unused sick time and cash it out as a bonus upon retirement.



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Better planning could save Ontario hundreds of millions in health costs: Auditor-General - The Globe and Mail](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.theglobeandmail.com - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainHundreds of millions of dollars could be saved every year in drug purchases and health treatments if Ontario's government planned more thoughtfully and responded more quickly to problems, according to the province's Auditor-General.



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Ontarians pay millions for ineligible power generator costs, auditor finds | CTV News

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.ctvnews.ca](#) - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**
[Permalink](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario electricity ratepayers are paying millions for power generators' ineligible expenses -- including scuba gear and raccoon traps -- and are footing the bill for large industrial companies' savings, the province's auditor general reported ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Ag Zaps \$260M Power Payout Shocker

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainLondon Free Press](#) - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**
Ad Value: \$5,229
Reach: 70995 Page: A1 / Front

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainSoaring **power** prices, **wind** farms imposed on places that don't want them and now this: **Ontario** consumers being dinged by **power** companies for things such as raccoon traps, scuba gear and staff car washes. ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Lysyk digs into ad costs, sick days, energy

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOttawa Citizen](#) - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**
Ad Value: \$2,481
Reach: 114846 Page: A3

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario's auditor general released her annual report on Wednesday, shining a spotlight on **energy**, health care and school boards among other areas. Here are the highlights of the report: Nine coal and **gas** generators claimed as ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Reevely: Power plants have cheated millions from Ontario's electricity system, auditor finds | Ottawa Citizen

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainottawacitizen.com](#) - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**
[Permalink](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntarians have paid \$1.5 billion extra on our electricity bills to compensate large producers and consumers for power we've made them waste, some of which they never actually wasted, Ontario's auditor general Bonnie Lysyk reported Wednesday.



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Auditor General: Ontarians pay \\$30 million a year more for Hydro | Watch News Videos Online](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainglobalnews.ca - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said Wednesday that according to her report, Ontario residents pay as much as \$30 million dollars more per year for Hydro than they should.



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Among the dubious expenses filed by power generators in Ontario ... raccoon traps | National Post](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainnationalpost.com - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat14\plainPaul Crawford noted on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 OEB is mentioned.

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario electricity ratepayers are paying millions for power generators' ineligible expenses — including scuba gear and raccoon traps — and are footing the bill for large industrial companies' savings, the province's auditor general ...



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain AG takes on energy, social housing; Ontarians pay millions for ineligible power generator costs, auditor finds](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe Timmins Daily Press - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Allison Jones

Ad Value: \$930

Reach: 9196 Page: A5

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario electricity ratepayers are paying millions for power generators' ineligible expenses - including scuba gear and raccoon traps - and are footing the bill for large industrial companies' savings, the ...



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Auditor General: Ontarians pay \\$30 million a year more for Hydro | Watch News Videos Online](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainglobalnews.ca - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

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d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said Wednesday that according to her report, Ontario residents pay as much as \$30

million dollars more per year for Hydro than they should.



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Sick days, salaries taking away from kids, auditor says | Toronto Sun](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plaintorontosun.com - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainFunding meant to help kids at increased risk of failing or to learn English is "often" redirected by school boards to expenses like teacher salaries and staff sick days, the Ontario auditor general reports..



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Ontario government needs to take action based on Auditor General's report](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainArthur Enterprise News - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Negative** Page: 1

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe **Canadian** Taxpayers Federation (CTF) is calling on the government to take immediate action based on the findings of the 2017 Annual Report by the Auditor General of **Ontario**. The report revealed that **Ontario** ...



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain AG Reports Excessive Government Waste – The Square](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.windsorsquare.ca - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe Canadian Taxpayers Federation is calling on the provincial government to take immediate action based on the findings of the 2017 Annual Report by Bonnie Lysyk, the Auditor General of Ontario.



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[d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Newsroom : Statements from Minister of Energy on the 2017 Auditor General's Report](#)

d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainnews.ontario.ca - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

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d:\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainMinister of Energy Glenn Thibeault issued the following statements in response to the release of the Auditor General's report:



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) ONTARIO CAP-AND-TRADE AUCTIONS BRING IN NEARLY \$2-BILLION

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe Globe and Mail - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Positive**
Ad Value: \$3,843
Reach: 309154 Page: B3

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario's **cap-and-trade** auctions brought in nearly \$2-billion in its first year, ahead of entering a joint market with Quebec and California next year. The final auction took place last week and results released on ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Ontario cap-and-trade auctions bring in nearly \$2B this year | Globalnews.ca

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainglobalnews.ca - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Neutral**
[Permalink](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's final cap-and-trade auction before entering a joint market with Quebec and California next year has pulled in \$422 million. That means that the province's system aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions has brought in nearly \$2 ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Liberals out of control

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainToronto Sun - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Negative**
Byline: Lisamacleod
Ad Value: \$3,565
Reach: 171076 Page: A5

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainPremier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals have the nerve to say there's no waste in the provincial government. But the auditor general has confirmed it in her report, and it reflects badly on the Liberals every time. In total, the auditor's report ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Muskoka hospitals rising electricity costs - using less, paying more

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainBracebridge Examiner - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Neutral** Page: 1

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe **electricity** bill for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has increased by \$265,462 over five-year period, according to a press release from the **Canadian** Taxpayers Federation. And Harold Featherston, chief executive of ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Corner stores struggling in Ontario business environment, says Oshawa owner](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOshawa This Week - Mon Dec 4 2017
Tone: **Negative**
Ad Value: \$2,652
Reach: 111985 Page: 1

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOSHAWA - A rising minimum wage, increased **hydro** costs and the proliferation of contraband cigarettes are just some of the issues making it difficult for local **independent** convenience stores to keep their doors ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Cost and timing of new pipeline crossing undetermined; Enbridge commits to replacing St. Clair River pipeline crossing](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Neutral**
Byline: Paul Morden
Ad Value: \$385
Reach: 8941 Page: A16

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainEnbridge says it could take a year to get government approvals, on both sides of the border, to replace a pipeline crossing under the St. Clair **River**. The project is included in commitments Enbridge made in an agreement announced on Nov. ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Elliot Lake excluded as nuclear waste storage site](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainLondon Free Press - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Negative**
Ad Value: \$1,291
Reach: 70995 Page: A6

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWaste management authorities have ruled out one part of **northern Ontario** as a suitable site for a bunker to store used, but highly radioactive, nuclear-reactor fuel rods. Three other **northern** communities and two in ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Province narrows sites for nuclear fuel rods; Three communities in northern Ontario still in running for underground facility](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWindsor Star - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Neutral**
Ad Value: \$3,443
Reach: 54680 Page: A6

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWaste management authorities have ruled out one part

of **northern Ontario** as a suitable site for a bunker to store used, but highly radioactive, nuclear-reactor fuel rods. In a statement on Wednesday, the Nuclear Waste ...



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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Conservatives' Brown sounds much like Liberals' Wynne

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOttawa Citizen - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Peter Haley

Ad Value: \$1,154

Reach: 114846 **Page:** A11

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainRe: Tories promise to be all things to all people with new election platform, Nov. 28. Seems like we'll have three left-of-**centre** parties to choose from in **Ontario**, after the Progressive Conservatives announced their platform. ...



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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Play your position, Patrick Brown

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWaterloo Region Record - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Peter Shawn Taylor

Ad Value: \$3,681

Reach: 63465 **Page:** A11

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThis past summer I was invited to play a game of pickup hockey with **Ontario** Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown. I was there as a friend of a friend. Roster filler, if you will. And while I'm pleased to report I scored just as ...



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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Ontario Tory leader Patrick Brown avoids media while in Hamilton

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainHamilton Mountain News - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$452

Reach: 50352 **Page:** 1

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain**Ontario** Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown returned to Hamilton Dec. 6, but has barred the media from his events. Brown was scheduled to attend a breakfast meeting from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. at the Best Western Premier C ...



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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Let's make wind turbines an election issue

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Dick Primeau

Ad Value: \$148
Reach: 8941 Page: A28

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainIt has sure been a rough ride for all of us in the area regarding the **wind** turbines! You all know that I don't really like to get into the controversial stuff in my column, but sometimes it's hard to keep it to myself. That's how I felt ...



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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain The Drilldown: First Nations purchase major stake in Suncor facility - iPolitics](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainipolitics.ca - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat14\plainPaul Crawford noted on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 Energy East is mentioned.

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe Fort McKay and Mikisew First Nations have purchased a 49 per cent share in a Suncor Energy Inc. storage facility.

d\intbl\itap2\cbpat7\plainClippings Summary

Full Articles



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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainRatepayers Zapped; Raccoon traps, scuba gear charged to hydro customers

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOttawa Sun - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Antonella Artuso

Ad Value: \$1,814

Reach: 45442 Page: A8

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainHydro customers were charged for raccoon traps, landscaping and staff car washes through a poorly monitored program to compensate **gas** and coal companies to operate on standby, **Ontario** Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says.

Design weaknesses in both the Standby Cost Recovery Program and the Lost Profit Recovery Program are inflating people's bills, she said.

"Some market participants have exploited these flaws, resulting in millions of dollars of additional costs for residential **ratepayers**," Lysyk said Wednesday, on the release of her 829-page annual report that included 14 value-for-money audits on government responsibilities such as cancer care, emergency preparedness and the **Independent Electricity** System Operator (**IESO**).

The Standby Cost Recovery Program pays generators to keep their equipment going on standby in case the **electricity** is needed.

After pointed prodding by the **Ontario Energy Board (OEB)**, the **IESO** audited the program and found that of the \$600 million paid out, \$260 million was for ineligible claims.

"Generators claimed thousands of dollars annually for staff car washes, carpet cleaning, road repairs, landscaping, scuba gear and raccoon traps which have nothing to do with running **power** equipment on standby," the auditor's report says. "One generator claimed about \$175,000 for coveralls and parks at one facility over a two-year period."

About \$168 million in ineligible claims has been recouped.

Overall, Ontarians could have saved millions on their **hydro** bills if the **IESO** had followed through on recommendations made to it by the **OEB**, the auditor found.

Because generators were shutting down their equipment, and restarting it in two hours to take advantage of the Standby Cost Recovery Program, **hydro ratepayers** paid \$19 million more in extra **electricity** costs in the summer of 2010, the **OEB** reported.

The **OEB** estimates **hydro** customers could save about \$30 million a year if the program was revamped to eliminate coverage for some maintenance and operating costs.

The Lost Profit Recovery Program, another compensation program for **electricity** market players, is also vulnerable to exploitation, the auditor found, with one generator claiming \$11 million for non-existent 'lost profits.' "Both programs have evolved over the years, and costs have been constrained substantially," **Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault** said in a statement. "Abuses within the system are completely unacceptable.

That's why they have been investigated, and where wrongdoing was present, costs have been recovered and returned to **ratepayers**."

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainStaff sick days jump 29% at school boards; Watchdog also finds sloppy hydro oversight cost consumers \$300 million in higher bills

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainToronto Star - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Robert Benzie and Rob Ferguson Toronto Star

Ad Value: \$23,190

Reach: 361323 **Page:** A1

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainSchool board employees are taking more sick days, **hydro ratepayers** are getting zapped and the government's books may not really be balanced, according to auditor general Bonnie Lysyk.

In her annual report to the legislature - the last one before the June 7 provincial election - Lysyk expressed alarm at the rising absenteeism among education workers. An end to the practice of banking sick days to be cashed out at retirement appears to be prompting teachers to take more leave.

"I would think, as a taxpayer, that in order to book a sick leave I need to be sick, right?" she told reporters at Queen's Park on Wednesday.

"With the increase that we're seeing, we're just saying: 'School boards, you need to monitor this to make sure that a sick leave program is in place, that is followed, that would withstand our scrutiny.' "

The auditor found the average number of sick days taken by employees at four **Ontario** boards of education randomly audited - the **Toronto** Catholic, Hamilton-Wentworth, **Halton** Catholic, and Hastings and Prince Edward - jumped to 13 in 2015-16 from 8.4 in 2011-12 to 13 in 2015-16. That includes teachers and support staff, such as custodians and administrative employees.

At the four boards audited, nearly 25 per cent of special-needs **students** wait longer than a year to get psychological assessments and some had been on the waiting list for more than two years. In the **Toronto** Catholic board, half of the \$46.5 million earmarked for at-risk **students** was used to cover shortfalls on teachers' salaries and special education.

Lysyk slammed boards for being "ineffective" in dealing with the rise in absences, citing concerns that sick-leave plans are too generous.

Under changes from provincial bargaining in 2012, workers are allowed up to 131 days off with pay from a 194-day school year, with the first 11 days off at full salary and 120 days at 90 per cent.

However, Education Minister Mitzie Hunter said there have been "certain savings to the system" as a result of that change in 2012.

"Well-being is a priority for **students** as well as for staff. We want the whole school environment to be that place of well-being," Hunter said.

The **Ontario Public** School Boards Association fired back at Lysyk, saying boards face growing financial pressures. "Contrary to the auditor general's findings, school boards need more flexibility, not less," president Laurie French said.

Lysyk also took aim at Premier Kathleen Wynne's Liberals for lax oversight of **electricity** companies, which has cost consumers \$300 million in higher bills.

That includes **power** plants billing for coveralls and parkas along with "staff car washes, carpet cleaning, road repairs, landscaping and raccoon traps, which have nothing to do with running **power** equipment on standby."

The auditor castigated the province's **Independent Electricity** System Operator for paying owners of **natural gas**-fired **power** plants about \$30 million more than necessary for being on standby to produce **electricity**. She also found nine **power**-generation companies, using **natural gas** and coal, billed the province as much as \$260 million between 2006 and 2015 in "ineligible costs," of which only \$168 million has been recovered.

Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** said "abuses within the system are completely unacceptable.

"That's why they have been investigated, and where wrongdoing was present, costs have been recovered and returned to **ratepayers**," he said.

Progressive Conservative MPP Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton) said Lysyk exposed "a disgusting display of Liberal entitlement and waste."

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said "there needs to be a crackdown" on private **electricity** suppliers fleecing the system.

Lysyk highlighted a litany of other problems, including **Ontario** paying more than other jurisdictions for generic prescription drugs while failing to cover the full cost of some cancer medications.

She noted there is a critical need for social housing with 185,000 households - this represents 481,000 people - on the waiting list while 170,805 households are now served.

Over two volumes and 1,119 pages, Lysyk outlines her concerns about spending on 812 vacant government buildings, 600 of them unoccupied for an average of eight years, which costs \$19 million a year for operations and maintenance.

While many are up for sale, including the old **Ontario** Provincial Police detachments and jails, she urged the government to expedite the sell-off.

Even though a government-appointed expert panel of accountants concluded she is wrong about excluding the publicly owned assets of two joint-sponsored pension plans on the government's bottom line, Lysyk continues to claim she is in the right on the actuarial tiff.

"This is, by far, the most serious value-for-money issue this year," she said, disputing that government has "a pension asset worth \$11.5 billion" and criticizing how the Liberals' delivered a 25-per-cent **rebate** on **hydro** bills.

"We continue to disagree with the government's proposed accounting for its 2017 **electricity rate** reduction that will keep billions of dollars in real costs of its policy decision from impacting the province's deficit and net debt figures," said Lysyk, who estimated there is a \$4.5-billion hole in the budget.

Notwithstanding her assertions, the Conservatives, who lead in **public** opinion polls, are using the Liberals' numbers for their fiscal forecasts should Tory Leader Patrick Brown topple Wynne next spring. That suggests the accounting kerfuffle will likely continue past the election.

Another recurring complaint from the auditor is the fact the Liberals amended the Government Advertising Act in 2015 limiting her office's authority to veto commercials they deemed to be "partisan."

She noted last year government advertising reached its highest level in a decade - at \$58 million - with 30 per cent spent on ads that "appeared intended" to make Wynne's administration look good. But overall ad spending is far lower than it was in 2006-07.

That included a \$330,000-radio ad blitz to promote Finance Minister Charles Sousa's spring budget. The campaign referred to Owen Sound, Parry Sound, Petawawa and Wawa, all of which are in ridings not represented by Liberal MPPs. No other communities were mentioned in the province-wide radio spots. But the names appear to have been chosen for rhyming reasons.

This year's report also found homeowners are becoming increasingly frustrated in efforts to challenge their property-tax assessments.

A backlog in appeals had 16,600 households waiting for decisions as of last March, with more than 1,800 appeals outstanding for more than four years.

The **Ontario** Municipal Board, which adjudicates disputes about land-use issues by homeowners, developers and municipalities, takes heat from Lysyk for taking up to a year to issue decisions on about one-fifth of cases. However, 80 per cent of decisions are issued within 60 days.

Highlights

Sick days by employees at 50 school boards jumped 29 per cent in the past five years to an average of 11.6 days a year, up from 9.

Lax oversight of **power** producers by **Ontario's Independent Electricity** System Operator has added hundreds of millions of dollars to **hydro** bills, including for

staff car washes.

Government financial statements are "unreliable," concealing a deficit of up to \$4.5 billion.

Ontario is "not fully prepared" for large-scale emergencies, given that the last provincial risk assessment was based on 2009 conditions.

The province spends \$19 million a year to maintain 812 vacant buildings.

Spending on government advertising is at a 10-year high.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Auditor general would benefit from an editor

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Toronto Star - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Martin Regg Cohn

Ad Value: \$17,940

Reach: 361323 Page: A18

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Ontario's auditor general generally gives good value for money. Like clockwork, Bonnie Lysyk uses her annual reports to expose government waste and incompetence, providing endless fodder for damning reports in this newspaper and other media.

She calls out teachers for calling in sick in droves. Catches out the Liberal government for high prescription prices. And demands **greater** scrutiny of **hydro** costs.

But just as columnists need editors, so do auditors. All that fine print, brimming with outsized numbers, adds up to a whopping 1,119 pages in two volumes.

Her introductory chapter is titled, "Reflections" - as if our auditor general has become our philosopher general. In her chapter critiquing government finances, Lysyk strays from her non-partisan, value-for-money mandate by inserting her own values about borrowed money.

The auditor suggests the government's deficit and debt are too high, normally the purview of **independent** economists, partisan politicians and opinionated columnists - not auditors. Which is why a good auditor needs a good editor, the better to watch over the watchdog.

Left to her own devices, what sticks out about Lysyk's latest report is what she leaves out. Such as, for example, the other side of the story.

By tradition, the annual report leaves space for a government response to any specific findings. Call it professional **fair** play, or best practices.

But Lysyk does it her way: She has her say - and then, in section after section, truncates the government's written response into a single terse sentence that reads, "Treasury Board Secretariat does not agree with the recommendation."

At first, one assumes these repetitively terse official responses to be a fit of pique by a government being passive-aggressive - churlish in its uncharacteristic brevity. But the giveaway comes later in the report, in the space normally allotted to the government: "The response from the Treasury Board

Secretariat did not address the (auditor's) recommendation."

Ah. Put another way, the auditor disagreed with the government's disagreement - and unilaterally decided not to print any of it.

Throughout the report's most contentious chapter, Lysyk takes several pages to critique the government's finances. **Public** servants rebut her conclusions, but note diplomatically that "The government is open to continue to discuss the matter in the hopes of resolving this matter." Yet Lysyk deletes those words, and the rest of the rebuttal, printing instead just this one-sentence summary in her own (six) words: "Treasury Board Secretariat does not agree."

The ordinary reader has no idea of the government's position (unless you are a columnist who happens to have obtained the correspondence received by Lysyk, which she believes no one should see, having also rejected previous Access to Information requests).

Ah, you might well say, she's just editing out Liberal press lines to save space - notwithstanding the 1,119 pages she takes to make her points. In fact, the government's responses are put together by non-political civil servants who interact with the supposedly non-partisan auditor general.

It's no secret they've had a long-running professional disagreement about accounting standards. Deadlocked, the government brought in an outside panel of experts last year who heard the auditor out, then threw her conclusions out. Lysyk responded by withholding final approval of the government's books.

In a burst of melodrama, she writes that "the government uses these incorrect accounting treatments to claim it has balanced the books, but in reality, legislators (and) the financial community ... will be misled as to the true condition of the province's finances."

News flash: MPPs have already drawn their own conclusions, depending on their partisan affiliations. **Bay** Street analysts who have read all those warnings from the auditor who cries wolf are still lining up to buy government bonds with minimal risk premiums.

Yet this ancient and arcane accounting dispute refuses to go away, because it has a bearing on the books going forward: The Liberals now claim to have eliminated the deficit, whereas Lysyk insists they (and everyone else) must be wrong - that the current deficit is actually \$4.5 billion.

This is where it gets interesting, because Lysyk has suddenly become the odd auditor out. For it turns out that not only the government but the opposition Progressive Conservatives are going by the books - the Liberal books.

In their election platform released late last month, the PCs pointedly adopted the Liberal budgetary framework as their starting point - assuming, in other words (but not other numbers), that the budget is balanced. Asked again Wednesday, opposition finance critic Vic Fedeli declined to embrace the auditor's deficit numbers, which would saddle his party with an even higher burden should they win **power** next year.

In fact, the Tory platform calls for a deficit of their own making that adds up to \$2.8 billion next year - which, when added to the auditor's putative number of \$4.5 billion, would suggest a PC deficit of more than \$7.3 billion.

This accounting dispute will escalate into a political clash in the months leading up to next June's provincial election. Under legislation brought in by the Liberals after they toppled the Tories in 2003 (and the then-auditor discovered a "hidden deficit" of \$5 billion), Lysyk - alone among **Canadian public** auditors - is empowered to evaluate the government's pre-election budget next spring, which will have implications for the PC platform's assumptions, too.

It is a tall order for any auditor, with or without a good editor. It will prove especially challenging for someone who has so strained credulity and credibility in recent years.

Martin Regg Cohn's political column appears Tuesday, Thursday and

Saturday. mcohn@thestar.ca, Twitter: @reggcohn

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainAuditor general takes aim at Ontario Liberals over spending and waste | Toronto Star

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.thestar.com](#) - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's fiscal watchdog does not believe the province's books are balanced, complains the government spends too much on "partisan" advertising, warns sick days for school board employees are soaring, and finds hydro ratepayers are getting zapped.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario auditor general report: Here are the highlights - Toronto - CBC News

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.cbc.ca](#) - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe number of sick days being taken by school board employees has jumped 29 per cent since 2011-12, after the province stopped allowing teachers to bank their unused sick time and cash it out as a bonus upon retirement.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainBetter planning could save Ontario hundreds of millions in health costs: Auditor-General - The Globe and Mail

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.theglobeandmail.com](#) - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainHundreds of millions of dollars could be saved every year in drug purchases and health treatments if Ontario's government planned more thoughtfully and responded more quickly to problems, according to the province's Auditor-General.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntarians pay millions for ineligible power generator costs, auditor finds | CTV News

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.ctvnews.ca](http://www.ctvnews.ca) - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario electricity ratepayers are paying millions for power generators' ineligible expenses -- including scuba gear and raccoon traps -- and are footing the bill for large industrial companies' savings, the province's auditor general reported Wednesday. Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk said in her annual report that the Independent Electricity System Operator hasn't implemented repeated recommendations from the Ontario Energy Board, including one that could save ratepayers \$30 million a year.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainAg Zaps \$260M Power Payout Shocker

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainLondon Free Press - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Ad Value: \$5,229

Reach: 70995 Page: A1 / Front

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainSoaring **power** prices, **wind** farms imposed on places that don't want them and now this: **Ontario** consumers being dinged by **power** companies for things such as raccoon traps, scuba gear and staff car washes.

Zapped before by the province's spending watchdog for its handling of the **energy** file, **Ontario**'s Liberal government - heading into an election year - took it on the chin again Wednesday in Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk's annual report, which found **ratepayers** have footed the bill for up to \$260 million in ineligible expenses under a provincial program that puts the producers on standby to generate **power**.

She also found **ratepayers** are paying the cost for large industrial companies' **electricity** savings, and that **Ontario**'s **Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO)** hasn't implemented repeated recommendations from the **Ontario Energy Board**, including one that could save **ratepayers** \$30 million a year.

Lysyk's latest report looked at a program that pays **power** generators for fuel, maintenance and operating costs when the **IESO** puts them on standby to supply **energy**. Nine generators claimed up to \$260 million in ineligible costs between 2006 and 2015, Lysyk said.

about two-thirds of that has been paid back.

One **natural gas** plant in brampton "gamed" the system for about \$100 million, the **energy** board, the province's **regulator**, has reported.

Generators claimed thousands of dollars a year for staff car washes, carpet cleaning, road repairs, landscaping, scuba gear and raccoon traps, "which have nothing to do with running **power** equipment on standby," Lysyk wrote.

One company claimed about \$175,000 for coveralls and parkas over two years,

she said.

"The program was such that bills could be submitted but without any support for the bills and the bills were being paid, and it wasn't until more requests were made for detailed information that (the **lesO**) became aware that there were costs behind that bill that probably shouldn't be reimbursed," Lysyk said.

Lysyk had previously skewered the Liberals over **electricity**, concluding customers paid \$37 billion for the government's decisions to ignore its own planning process for new **power** projects, and that a \$2-billion **smart meter** program spent double its projected costs and didn't ensure conservation goals were met. her conclusions about the **smart meter** program led then-**energy** minister bob chiarelli to say the auditor's numbers were less credible than his because the **electricity** system is complex and difficult to understand.

Lysyk spent 10 years working at manitoba **hydro**.

The program to pay costs when **energy** suppliers are put on standby began in 2003, when **Ontario's electricity** grid had supply issues, but now the province has surplus **power**.

The **Oeb** found in 2014 the program was relied on less than one per cent of the time to meet domestic demand, and has repeatedly urged it be scaled back to stop reimburs-ing generators for certain costs. doing so would save **ratepayers** \$30 million a year, the **Oeb** says. **energy** minister **Glenn Thibeault** said the program is important.

"These are programs that ensure that when **Ontario** families and businesses need **electricity**, it's there for them," he said in a statement. "If these programs were eliminated, reliability would be put at risk."

The **lesO** is working to redesign the **electricity** market, but Lysyk noted some members of an **lesO** advisory group a work for firms that have claimed ineligible costs.

One member resigned his post on Friday.

Lysyk also found that as **electricity** charges for large industrial **ratepayers** decrease under a savings program when they reduce peak use, higher costs result for residential and small business **ratepayers**.

The program reduced charges for the large **ratepayers** by \$245 million in its first 10 months of 2011, and that same amount was directly added to residential and small business bills, Lysyk wrote. since then, charges for residents and small businesses have nearly doubled, while they have decreased for large industrial **ratepayers**, the auditor found.

Those charges come in the form of the global adjustment, a charge consumers pay for above-market **rates** guaranteed to **power** producers in long-term contracts. In 2016, the global adjustment accounted for 85 per cent of residential consumers' **electricity** charges, Lysyk said.

Thibeault said the industrial program has succeeded in reducing peak demand - last year by about 1,300 megawatts, about six per cent of the province's peak demand.

"That means this program helped avoid the need to build costly new generation in the longer term, which is a benefit to all **ratepayers** across the province," he said.

Lysyk also announced through her report that her office would audit the **lesO's** books.

That comes amid one of two accounting disputes the auditor has been

engaged in with the Liberal government. she recently accused the government of purposely obscuring the true financial impact of its 25 per cent cut to **hydro** bills by keeping billions in debt used to finance that **plan** off the province's books.

Other highlights Sick days up 29% over five years at 50 school boards, to 11.6 days per average employee, since **Ontario** stopped letting teachers bank sick days.

Long waits for key biopsies to diagnose cancer; only 46 per cent done within 14-day target.

More households waiting for social housing than people living in the units.

Ontario not ready for major emergency; no updates to preparedness or nuclear plans since 2008 and '09.

One-third of government advertising spending last year appeared meant to help make government look good.

Ontario paid almost \$19 million last year to operate and maintain 812 vacant buildings.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Lysyk digs into ad costs, sick days, energy

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Ottawa Citizen - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Ad Value: \$2,481

Reach: 114846 Page: A3

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain **Ontario's** auditor general released her annual report on Wednesday, shining a spotlight on **energy**, health care and school boards among other areas. Here are the highlights of the report:

Nine coal and **gas** generators claimed as much as \$260 million in ineligible expenses, including thousands of dollars each year for raccoon traps, scuba gear, carpet cleaning and staff car washes.

The **Independent Electricity** System Operator has not implemented some recommendations made by the **Ontario Energy Board** which could have saved **ratepayers** millions over the past 15 years.

The report found long wait times for key biopsies to diagnose cancer, with only 46 per cent performed within the Ministry of Health's 14-day target.

The government is spending millions of dollars to send cancer patients to the United States for stem cell transplants because of limited capacity to perform the procedure in **Ontario**. A stem cell transplant costs \$660,000 to perform in the United States, compared with the \$128,000 average cost in **Ontario**.

A provincial target to provide radiation therapy in 48 per cent of cancer cases has not been met, with 39 per cent of patients actually receiving the treatment in 2015-2016.

There are more households on waiting lists for social housing than the number of people actually living in social housing in **Ontario**. The report found there are

about 185,000 households on the provincial wait list and 168,000 households who receive social housing annually.

Sick days are up by 29 per cent over a five-year-period at 50 of **Ontario's public** school boards - from an average of nine days to 11.6 days per employee - causing financial and resource allocation pressures.

The increased cost of sick leave paid as a percentage of school board payroll rose from 4.2 per cent in 2011-2012 to 5.3 per cent in 2015-16. The change came after the last collective bargaining agreement stopped allowing teachers to bank sick days.

Government advertising spending was \$58 million in 2016-17, a 10-year high, and the auditor describes 30 per cent of the ads as appearing to have the intention of helping to make the government look good.

The government paid almost \$19 million in 2016-17 to operate and maintain 812 vacant buildings across the province. About 600 of them were unoccupied for an average of eight years.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainReeveley: Power plants have cheated millions from Ontario's electricity system, auditor finds | Ottawa Citizen

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainottawacitizen.com - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntarians have paid \$1.5 billion extra on our electricity bills to compensate large producers and consumers for power we've made them waste, some of which they never actually wasted, Ontario's auditor general Bonnie Lysyk reported Wednesday.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainAuditor General: Ontarians pay \$30 million a year more for Hydro | Watch News Videos Online

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainglobalnews.ca - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said Wednesday that according to her report, Ontario residents pay as much as \$30 million dollars more per year for Hydro than they should.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainAmong the dubious expenses filed by power generators in Ontario ... raccoon traps | National Post

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainnationalpost.com - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario electricity ratepayers are paying millions for power generators' ineligible expenses — including scuba gear and raccoon traps — and are footing the bill for large industrial companies' savings, the province's auditor general reported Wednesday.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainAG takes on energy , social housing; Ontarians pay millions for ineligible power generator costs, auditor finds

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe Timmins Daily Press - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Allison Jones

Ad Value: \$930

Reach: 9196 Page: A5

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario **electricity ratepayers** are paying millions for **power** generators' ineligible expenses - including scuba gear and raccoon traps - and are footing the bill for large industrial companies' savings, the province's auditor general reported Wednesday.

Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk said in her annual report that the **Independent Electricity** System Operator hasn't implemented repeated recommendations from the **Ontario Energy Board**, including one that could save **ratepayers** \$30 million a year.

Lysyk also wrote that teachers and other school board employees are taking more sick days - almost 12 days each per year up from nine days five years ago - that more families are waiting for social housing than are actually living in social housing, and that **Ontario** is paying tens of millions to send cancer patients to the U.S. for stem cell treatments because the capacity doesn't exist in the province.

In the **energy** file, a frequent target of Lysyk's, her report looked at a program that pays **power** generators for fuel, maintenance and operating costs when the **IESO** puts them on standby to supply **energy**.

Nine generators claimed up to \$260 million in ineligible costs between 2006 and 2015, Lysyk said, and about two-thirds of that has been paid back. One **natural gas** plant in Brampton, Ont., "gamed" the system for about \$100 million, the **OEB** has reported.

Generators claimed thousands of dollars a year for staff car washes, carpet cleaning, road repairs, landscaping, scuba gear and raccoon traps, "which have nothing to do with running **power** equipment on standby," Lysyk wrote. One generator claimed about \$175,000 for coveralls and parkas over two years, she said.

"The program was such that bills could be submitted but without any support for

the bills and the bills were being paid, and it wasn't until more requests were made for detailed information that (the **IESO**) became aware that there were costs behind that bill that probably shouldn't be reimbursed," Lysyk said.

The program was originally started in 2003, when **Ontario's** grid had supply issues, though now the province has surplus **power**.

The **OEB** found in 2014 that the standby program was relied on less than one per cent of the time to meet domestic demand, and has recommended repeatedly that it be scaled back to stop reimbursing generators for certain operating and maintenance costs. Doing so would save **ratepayers** \$30 million a year, the **OEB** says.

Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** said the program and other similar ones play an important role in the **electricity** system.

"These are programs that ensure that when **Ontario** families and businesses need **electricity**, it's there for them," he said in a statement. "If these programs were eliminated, reliability would be put at risk."

The **IESO** is working on a redesign of the **electricity** market, but Lysyk noted that some members of a working group advising the system operator on that work for companies that have claimed ineligible costs. One member resigned his post on Friday.

Lysyk also found that as **electricity** charges for large industrial **ratepayers** decrease under a program that gives them savings when they reduce consumption during peak demand, that results in higher costs for residential and small business **ratepayers**.

The Industrial Conservation Initiative reduced charges for the large **ratepayers** by \$245 million in the first 10 months of its operation in 2011, and that same amount was directly added to residential and small business **electricity** bills, Lysyk wrote.

Since then, **electricity** charges for residents and small businesses have nearly doubled, while they have decreased for large industrial **ratepayers**, the auditor found.

Those charges come in the form of the global adjustment, a charge consumers pay for above-market **rates** guaranteed to **power** producers in long-term contracts. In 2016, the global adjustment accounted for 85 per cent of residential consumers' **electricity** charges, Lysyk said.

Thibeault said the industrial program has successfully reduced peak demand - last year by about 1,300 megawatts, about six per cent of the province's peak demand.

"That means that this program helped avoid the need to build costly new generation in the longer term, which is a benefit to all **ratepayers** across the province, both residential and commercial," he said in a statement.

Lysyk also announced through her report that her office would be auditing the **IESO's** books. That comes amid one of two accounting disputes the auditor has been engaged in with the Liberal government.

She recently accused the government of purposely obscuring the true financial impact of its 25 per cent cut to **hydro** bills by keeping billions in debt used to finance that **plan** off the province's books. Lysyk said she will audit the **IESO** because of its role in the **hydro plan's** complex accounting scheme.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainAuditor General: Ontarians pay \$30 million a year more for Hydro | Watch News Videos Online

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainglobalnews.ca - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said Wednesday that according to her report, Ontario residents pay as much as \$30 million dollars more per year for Hydro than they should.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainSick days, salaries taking away from kids, auditor says | Toronto Sun

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plaintorontosun.com - Thu Dec 7 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainFunding meant to help kids at increased risk of failing or to learn English is "often" redirected by school boards to expenses like teacher salaries and staff sick days, the Ontario auditor general reports..

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario government needs to take action based on Auditor General's report

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainArthur Enterprise News - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Negative** Page: 1

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe **Canadian** Taxpayers Federation (CTF) is calling on the government to take immediate action based on the findings of the 2017 Annual Report by the Auditor General of **Ontario**.

The report revealed that **Ontario electricity ratepayers** paid \$260 million for **power** generators' ineligible expenses, for things like scuba gear, staff car washes, landscaping and raccoon traps. The Auditor General also found that the **Independent Electricity** System Operator hasn't implemented repeated recommendations from the **Ontario Energy Board**, which could save **ratepayers** \$30 million a year.

"The Auditor General has found obvious and egregious waste in the **electricity** sector in **Ontario**, and it's time for the government to act on it. If it's possible to save **ratepayers** money today, it's shameful that the government hasn't done anything about it yet," said Christine Van Geyn, **Ontario** Director for the **Canadian** Taxpayers Federation. "What we need from the government is real cost savings on **electricity**, not election gimmicks that kick the debt can down the road."

The Auditor General also found that there are 812 provincially owned buildings sitting vacant, and costing taxpayers \$19 million each year to maintain.

"The government needs to take immediate action to sell that property where appropriate, so that it's generating money for the **public** coffers instead of acting as a perpetual taxpayer money pit," continued Van Geyn.

Other issues highlighted by the report included a dramatic increase in sick days being taken by **Ontario** teachers, with the amount of absenteeism jumping 29 per cent since 2011-12, and teachers in the **public** board taking an average of 11.6 sick days per year.

The Auditor General also noted that the government had spent \$54 million on taxpayer funded advertising in the last year, the most since 2006-07, and that she would consider 30 per cent of that advertising "partisan."

"When politicians tell you they're running a tight fiscal ship, you really need to question them. Every year, the Auditor General finds more waste, some of it obvious and all of it troubling. If the government is serious about improving this province's finances, they won't question the **independent** Auditor General's findings the way they usually do. Instead, they'll take action to save taxpayers money. The ball is in their court," concluded Van Geyn.

Christine Van Geyn is the **Ontario** director for the **Canadian** Taxpayers Federation. She can be reached at cvangeyn@taxpayer.com, and on Twitter @cvangeyn.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainAG Reports Excessive Government Waste – The Square

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainwww.windsorsquare.ca - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe Canadian Taxpayers Federation is calling on the provincial government to take immediate action based on the findings of the 2017 Annual Report by Bonnie Lysyk, the Auditor General of Ontario.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainNewsroom : Statements from Minister of Energy on the 2017 Auditor General's Report

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainnews.ontario.ca - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainMinister of Energy Glenn Thibeault issued the following statements in response to the release of the Auditor General's report:

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainONTARIO CAP-AND-TRADE AUCTIONS BRING IN NEARLY \$2-BILLION

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThe Globe and Mail - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Ad Value: \$3,843

Reach: 309154 Page: B3

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario's **cap-and-trade** auctions brought in nearly \$2-billion in its first year, ahead of entering a joint market with Quebec and California next year.

The final auction took place last week and results released on Wednesday show that 83 per cent of current credits were sold, giving the province \$422-million.

That means the province's system aimed at lowering greenhouse **gas** emissions has brought in \$1.9-billion for green projects in 2017, such as **energy**-efficient improvements at hospitals, green rebates for homeowners and bike lanes.

Environment Minister Chris Ballard said in a statement that Wednesday's results show the system is functioning as it should. It puts caps on the amount of pollution companies in certain industries can emit, and if they exceed those limits, they must buy allowances at auction or from other companies that come in under their limits.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario cap-and-trade auctions bring in nearly \$2B this year | Globalnews.ca

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainglobalnews.ca - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario 's final cap-and-trade auction before entering a joint market with Quebec and California next year has pulled in \$422 million.

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainThat means that the province's system aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions has brought in nearly \$2 billion for green projects this year.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainLiberals out of control

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainToronto Sun - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Lisamacleod

Ad Value: \$3,565

Reach: 171076 Page: A5

d:\ntbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainPremier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals have the nerve to say there's no waste in the provincial government. But the auditor general has confirmed it in her report, and it reflects badly on the Liberals every time.

In total, the auditor's report shows over \$1 billion in waste. There are hundreds and hundreds of pages of examples.

Ontarians cannot trust a government that has allowed a culture of waste to fester.

Yet, the Liberals still forge ahead like drunken sailors spending tens of millions on programs such as self-congratulatory advertising ahead of an election. Their total advertising budget has reached a 10-year high. The auditor exposed (again) that these are "intended to make the government look good."

The auditor also unveiled widespread and egregious waste in the **energy** system.

Under the Liberal government's watch, **Ontario power** companies have gamed the **hydro** system - and families - for hundreds of millions of dollars. This represents hundreds of millions that could have been shaved off your **hydro** bill.

Under the Liberals' watch, wealthy **power** executives were expensing and getting reimbursed for items like raccoon traps, scuba gear, landscaping, car washes, carpet cleaning, and parkas.

Shockingly, these executives were then appointed by the Liberals to the committee supposedly responsible for cleaning the **energy** system up! It's nothing but smoke and mirrors.

Was the government ignorant? Not at all, according to the auditor general. The Liberal government was warned for years about the possibility of this bad activity, but failed to listen. Four consecutive **energy** ministers failed to listen.

It begs the question, what deal-making was happening at Liberal Ministerial fundraising soirees over all these years? Another headscratcher was the Liberals dishing out \$50 million to handpicked Liberal insiders and friends for infrastructure contracts.

One of the companies responsible for managing a \$900-million capital project had previously performed poorly under another government **contract**.

The trend of bad decisions made by this government has meant that essential program areas - like education and health care - are impacted.

The auditor general pointed out that Liberals let **student** math scores fall below the provincial standards for years upon years before acting. Also, **students** with special needs are still sitting on wait lists for psychological, speech and language assessments.

Hard-earned tax dollars should be respected by politicians at Queen's Park. Insiders should not be getting rich. And the culture of waste and entitlement under the Liberals' watch needs to come to a full-stop.

Now more than ever, it's time for a change at Queen's Park.

Because there's nothing wrong with **Ontario** that can't be fixed by a change in government. MacLeod is the **Ontario** PC Treasury Board Critic and vice-chairman on the **Public** Accounts Committee

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainMuskoka hospitals rising electricity costs - using less, paying more

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainBracebridge Examiner - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Neutral** Page: 1

The **electricity** bill for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has increased by \$265,462 over five-year period, according to a press release from the **Canadian** Taxpayers Federation.

And Harold Featherston, chief executive of Diagnostics, Ambulatory and Planning at MAHC says they are using less **electricity**.

Documents obtained by the taxpayer's group show bills growing from \$825,816 in 2013 to \$1,091,278 in 2017, an increase of over 32 per cent.

"How is Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare expected to manage their budget when **electricity** bills have rising dramatically every year?" asked CTF **Ontario** director, Christine Van Geyn. "The more these hospitals have to spend keeping their lights on, the fewer resources they have for patients."

"Families across the province all feel the pain of rapid increases to the cost of **electricity** when they pay their home **electricity** bill. But what many people don't think about is the cost of the **Ontario** government's failed **electricity** policy to the institutions we all rely on, like Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare," continued Van Geyn. "Instead of paying an extra \$265,462 for inflated **electricity** bills, Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare could have paid for 80 C-sections. That's something that **Ontario** patients expect their health care system to spend money on, rather than wasting money on this government's **hydro** rip-off."

"Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare's **electricity** usage (kilowatt hours consumption) has been decreasing consistently over the past five years, but the global adjustment applied by the **Independent Electricity** System Operator is driving **electricity** costs up. Costs associated with the global adjustment are beyond the control of MAHC," said Featherstone. "Between 2012 and 2015, through **energy** savings initiatives implemented at the hospitals to upgrade and improve efficiency of lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and building automation systems, MAHC used 588,298.80 less kilowatt hours of **electricity**. And in 2016, MAHC used 190,000 less kilowatt hours over 2015. MAHC is required to report annual **energy** use and this information is available on our website at mahc.ca/en/about/**Energy**-Usage-and-Efficiency-.asp."

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainCorner stores struggling in Ontario business environment, says Oshawa owner

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOshawa This Week - Mon Dec 4 2017
Tone: **Negative**
Ad Value: \$2,652
Reach: 111985 Page: 1

OSHAWA - A rising minimum wage, increased **hydro** costs and the proliferation of contraband cigarettes are just some of the issues making it difficult for local **independent** convenience stores to keep their doors open, says an **Oshawa** store owner.

Sung-Ho Lee has owned and operated Millennium Variety and Video in **Oshawa** for the past 15 years and is chair of the **Ontario** Korean Businessmen's Association (OKBA), an organization representing 1,500 convenience store owners across the province.

Last week, Lee hosted the OKBA at his store, as the organization rallied to raise awareness of issues affecting businesses like Lee's in the lead-up to the next provincial election through the Save Our Stores campaign.

OKBA general manager Don Cha listed a rising minimum wage, skyrocketing **hydro** costs, the loss of cigarette sales due to the proliferation of contraband cigarettes, bureaucratic red tape and the inability to sell wine and beer in corner stores as the five main issues faced by convenience store owners.

"Over the last 10 years, more than 500 of our members have closed down their convenience stores because of the worsening business environment in **Ontario** - and more convenience stores will continue to close, unless political leaders from all parties start to recognize the challenges we face," said Cha.

He estimates his members employ about 3,000 people, including part-time workers. With minimum wage increases, Cha said business owners have to think twice about hiring, including hiring **students** in the summer to fill gaps. He expects business owners to simply work more hours instead.

"We're not against the hike of minimum wage, we're all for it, but they have to give us enough time for us to adjust," he said.

On the issue of contraband cigarettes, he estimates that it's \$70 to \$100 cheaper per carton if people buy contraband cigarettes on a reserve.

With cigarette sales accounting for about half of all sales in convenience stores, losing customers is a big hit, said Cha. He adds that he wants to see the province deliver on a promise of a special unit to deal with contraband cigarettes.

He also pointed out that other provinces allow convenience stores to sell beer and wine, but in **Ontario**, only grocery stores are allowed to do so. Cha said convenience store workers already effectively manage the sale of age-restricted products in cigarettes and lottery tickets.

"We are not selling restricted products to minors, so we've already proven that," he said.

At Millennium Variety, Lee's son, Chris Lee, believes alcohol sales would make a difference for the store.

"It's going to draw a lot more people. When they buy a beer, they won't just buy beer; they'll buy a lottery ticket, chips," he said. The store owners also believe it would reduce drunk driving, as people can walk to corner stores to pick up beer.

Cha said the organization is not asking for special treatment, but instead they're looking for a level playing field. He points out that the families who own and run the stores are already work long hours.

"Most of our members are hard-working immigrant families, who came to Canada to build a better life for themselves and their families," he said. "Many have invested their life savings into their business and worked seven days a week, every week of the year, including holidays."

Indeed, at Millennium Variety, Chris and Sung-Ho Lee split the majority of the 12-hour shifts, seven days per week, with Sung-Ho Lee's wife pitching in on occasion.

"No holidays; don't have time, don't have life," said Sung-Ho Lee.

He does, however, take the time to flip through the paper and read the local obituaries.

"If my **customer** passed away, I go to the funeral every time," he said.

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CourierPress

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainCost and timing of new pipeline crossing undetermined; Enbridge commits to replacing St. Clair River pipeline crossing

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Paul Morden

Ad Value: \$385

Reach: 8941 Page: A16

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainEnbridge says it could take a year to get government approvals, on both sides of the border, to replace a pipeline crossing under the St. Clair **River**.

The project is included in commitments Enbridge made in an agreement announced on Nov. 27 with the State of Michigan.

While much of the deal focuses on a section of Enbridge's Line 5 oil and **natural gas** pipeline crossing under the Straits of Mackinac in **northern** Michigan, it includes a commitment by the **Canadian** pipeline company to replace the crossing under the St. Clair, as soon as approvals are in place.

"The process is just getting started and it will take some time," said Enbridge spokesperson Ken Hall.

"It's probably going to be about a year" to get permits in place from state, provincial, local and national governments, he said.

Hall said he has already spoken with mayors in Sarnia and St. Clair Township in **Ontario**, and Enbridge plans to meet with officials at the Aamjiwnaang First Nation in the coming days.

"A number of stakeholders need to be engaged, so they understand the concept, the purpose and how we're going to execute the project," Hall said.

Engineers are already looking at specifics of the replacement project but it's too early to say how much the new crossing will cost to build, he said.

"It's not a cheap undertaking, by any means."

Hall said the current pipeline under the St. Clair **River** is in good condition and isn't a risk to the environment.

"That we know, for sure," based on monitoring the company carries out, he said.

"But none the less, the state has asked us that we look at a replacement there, so that's what we've committed to do."

The agreement calls for the St. Clair **River** crossing to be replaced using horizontal directional **drilling** into the riverbed, a process Enbridge used in 2012

when it replaced another pipeline crossing there.

That replacement followed a 2010 spill of heavy crude from an Enbridge pipeline near Marshall, Mich., into a tributary of the Kalamazoo **River**.

In the days following the spill, it was revealed a dent had been left in the pipeline crossing when it was built.

Hall said the 2010 spill near Marshall "had a huge reputational impact on the company, and it resulted in a loss of trust and a loss of faith" in Enbridge by residents and leaders of the state.

That incident also focused attention and concern in Michigan on the Straits of Mackinac where the company's Line 5 pipeline crosses under the water.

Built in the 1950s, that pipeline carries about 87-million litres of oil and **natural gas** from the **west** through Wisconsin and Michigan to Sarnia.

Environmentalists and some state and federal politicians in Michigan have been calling for the crossing to be replaced or shut down over concerns about the impact a spill in the straits would have on the Great Lakes.

Hall said the agreement signed on Nov. 27 is "an attempt to turn a page, and move that relationship forward." St. Clair Township Mayor Steve Arnold said he believes the agreement "will go a long way for everyone to have confidence in the integrity of the pipeline."

Arnold added the agreement "shows the willingness of the company to try and alleviate **public** perception and **public** fears that are negative towards pipelines."

Sarnia and St. Clair Township are home to several refineries and chemical industries making up what's known as the Chemical Valley, and several pipelines cross the St. Clair **River** there.

"Pipelines are really the single safest way to transport large quantities of material," Arnold said.

Line 5 lands in **Ontario** at Froomfield, near the intersection of LaSalle Line and **River** Road, Hall said.

One of the issues the company needs to address is finding somewhere to lay down a large amount of pipe that will make up the new crossing, he said.

Enbridge's agreement with Michigan also calls for evaluating three methods of replacing the crossing at the Straits of Mackinac, as well as other steps to reduce risks from the pipeline and ensure the state and **public** are kept informed.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainElliot Lake excluded as nuclear waste storage site

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainLondon Free Press - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$1,291

Reach: 70995 Page: A6

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWaste management authorities have ruled out one part of **northern Ontario** as a suitable site for a bunker to store used, but highly

radioactive, nuclear-reactor fuel rods.

Three other **northern** communities and two in southwestern **Ontario** - south Bruce and **huron**-Kinloss, near the world's largest operating nuclear plant - remain as potential sites.

In a statement Wednesday, the Nuclear Waste management Organization said the Elliot Lake and Blind **river** area between the cities of Sault Ste. Marie and **Sudbury** is out of the running.

"A number of factors that would pose challenges in siting a repository" were identified, the organization said. "These include complexities associated with the geology, limited access and rugged terrain, and low potential to develop the breadth of partnerships needed to implement the project."

Other communities that remain potential sites include Ignace, about 250 kilometres northwest of **Thunder Bay**, Manitouwadge, about 395 km east of **Thunder Bay**, and Hornepayne, about 480 km east of **Thunder Bay**.

The two potential southwestern **Ontario** sites are near the Bruce nuclear complex on Lake **huron** near Kincardine, site of a long and ongoing battle by **Ontario Power Generation** to win approval for a deep underground vault to store low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste. Elliot Lake Mayor Dan Marchisella expressed disappointment at the exclusion of his community after five years, calling it a "huge potential loss" for the district.

The former mining town felt putting itself forward was the responsible thing to do given the vexing question of how best to safely store waste that remains toxic

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Province narrows sites for nuclear fuel rods; Three communities in northern Ontario still in running for underground facility

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain Windsor Star - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Ad Value: \$3,443

Reach: 54680 Page: A6

Waste management authorities have ruled out one part of **northern Ontario** as a suitable site for a bunker to store used, but highly radioactive, nuclear-reactor fuel rods.

In a statement on Wednesday, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization said the Elliot Lake and Blind **River** area between the cities of **Sudbury** and Sault Ste. Marie are out of the running.

"Technical studies and engagement with people in the area identified a number of factors that would pose challenges in siting a repository," the organization said. "These include complexities associated with the geology, limited access and rugged terrain, and low potential to develop the breadth of partnerships needed to implement the project."

Three other communities in **northern Ontario** remain as potential sites: Ignace, about 250 kilometres northwest of **Thunder Bay**, Manitouwadge, about 395 kilometres east of **Thunder Bay**, and Hornepayne, about 480 kilometres east of **Thunder Bay**.

The other two remaining potential sites - South Bruce and **Huron**-Kinloss - are

close to the Bruce nuclear reactor on the Lake **Huron** shoreline near Kincardine, site of a long and ongoing battle by **Ontario Power Generation** to win approval for a deep geologic repository for low and intermediate level radioactive waste.

Dan Marchisella, mayor of Elliot Lake, expressed disappointment at the exclusion of his community after five years, calling it a "huge potential loss" for the entire district.

The former mining town, once known as the uranium capital of the world, felt that putting itself forward was the responsible thing to do given the vexing question of how best to safely store waste that remains toxic for thousands of years, he said. "The footprint of that geology they were looking for is not large enough," Marchisella said in an interview. "It's very difficult to access that area."

The hunt for a place to permanently store used nuclear fuel rods - about 2.7 million bundles currently exist - began in earnest in 2010, with 22 communities expressing interest. The dangerous material is currently stored in pools of water or in vaults on site at reactors in **Ontario**, Quebec, New Brunswick and Manitoba. The envisaged repository would be about 500 metres underground.

"The decision to narrow our focus is part of an ongoing, rigorous process to identify a single, safe site in an area with an informed and willing host and strong potential for the partnerships that will be required to implement the project," said Mahrez Ben Belfadhel, a vice-president with the wastemanagement organization.

While the organization expects to be able to choose its preferred site by about 2023, winning any approval for an underground bunker is likely to go years beyond that date if **Ontario Power Generation**'s odyssey is anything to go by.

The **utility** took years to win tentative approval in 2015 to build a bunker at the Bruce site near Lake **Huron** for material that is far less toxic than nuclear fuel rods but has made little progress since.

Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna is now waiting for Indigenous communities in the area to weigh in - a process likely to take at least another year. In addition, scores of communities around the Great Lakes have decried any suggestion the site so close to the lake is suitable - paving the way for what could be years of court battles.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainConservatives' Brown sounds much like Liberals' Wynne

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOttawa Citizen - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Peter Haley

Ad Value: \$1,154

Reach: 114846 Page: A11

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainRe: Tories promise to be all things to all people with new election platform, Nov. 28. Seems like we'll have three left-of-**centre** parties to choose from in **Ontario**, after the Progressive Conservatives announced their platform.

One of the central planks is an undisclosed amount of "carbon tax," which would bring in significant enough revenue to replace that lost by lowering two middle-income tax brackets. This would have a larger effect on individuals and

industries than the current **cap-and-trade** program considered so outrageous and hurtful to the economy by the very same party not so long ago.

Also, it seems that free spending also heavily criticized by the PCs is to be continued with "small deficits."

Where have we heard that promise before? If Patrick Brown pulls this off, he'll have to give much of the credit to his apparent mentor, Kathleen Wynne.

Peter Haley

Ottawa

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[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) **Play your position, Patrick Brown**

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) Waterloo Region Record - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Peter Shawn Taylor

Ad Value: \$3,681

Reach: 63465 **Page:** A11

[d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plain](#) This past summer I was invited to play a game of pickup hockey with **Ontario** Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown. I was there as a friend of a friend. Roster filler, if you will.

And while I'm pleased to report I scored just as many goals (two!) as the player who may soon be our next premier, that's not the anecdote I'll be using to start this column.

This is: the team Brown and I were on was a player short. And having an odd number of players means everyone has to rotate through the various positions rather than play the same position the whole game.

So whenever I jumped on the ice, I had to figure out who was playing where. And it was never clear to me where Brown, a freewheeling skater who's also a bit of a puck hog, was supposed to be. Sometimes he was playing right wing. Sometimes left wing.

I get that same sense of frustration reading his election platform.

Released two weeks ago, Brown's "People's Guarantee" is a glossy magazine-style document that supposedly lays out how he'll govern if he wins the provincial election next June.

The platform has been heralded as a clever jump to the **centre** by a right-wing party that has often shot itself in the foot at election time.

The **Toronto** Star's editorial board - a perpetual critic of past Tory leaders - claims Brown has finally delivered a credible alternative to Premier Kathleen Wynne's Liberals.

"Next spring's election is shaping up to be a real contest of ideas," a Star editorial chirps.

Baloney. A "real contest of ideas" would require Brown to stake out positions at sharp odds with the Liberals. Instead, Brown spends most of his time promising to do exactly what Wynne is already doing.

Name an expensive and controversial Liberal policy, and Brown pledges to keep it. Growth-inhibiting Green Belt restrictions. Pedagogically-pointless full-day kindergarten.

The explicitly-deceptive **Fair Hydro Plan**. Job-killing \$15-an-hour minimum wage. Giveaways to the movie industry. Pharmacare.

On and on it goes. Reading the document, you get the impression Brown thinks the Liberals are doing a wonderful job. The only change required is to swap out Wynne with himself.

Oh, there are occasional quibbles with existing government policy. Brown rightly says he'll do what he can to get out from under the Liberal's absurd green **energy** commitments.

And the document correctly identifies the problem with rising housing prices as a lack of supply caused by restrictive government zoning regulations. (Although it's strangely mute on rent controls, another silent assassin of housing supply.)

But every time economic common sense makes an appearance, Brown switches positions and starts playing the other side of the rink.

Consider Brown's claim he'll save you an additional 12 per cent off your **hydro** bill. Like the Wynne government's fantastical 25 per cent cut, Brown is simply shifting money around from your **hydro** bill to your tax bill - as if voters can't tell the difference between their front and back pockets.

Then there are crazy market-meddling ideas such as a **plan** to ban car insurance companies from charging differential **rates** based on location. Plus tax goodies for winter tires.

Beyond this muddle of objectives, however, is the fact Brown seems so determined to avoid conflict or complaints about his platform that he appears incapable of making difficult choices.

Competing interests and trade-offs are unavoidable in government. Instead of acknowledging the existence of such controversies and telling voters how he'll govern in the real world, Brown declares a policy of perpetual rainbows. He'll keep everything Wynne has already promised, plus offer up a whole bunch of new treats. And yeah, he'll balance the budget thanks to a new federal carbon tax.

While this might be good marketing, it's bad news for voters who have no clue about how, or if, he intends to tackle the biggest, stickiest problems we face.

For **Waterloo** Region, the most glaring omission in Brown's platform is the fact it never mentions municipal closed-shop tendering.

Many construction firms here and throughout the province have lost the ability to bid on large municipal infrastructure projects due to deceptive union practices and the Byzantine provincial labour code. For **regional** taxpayers, this means fewer bids and higher prices.

A \$658,000 paving **contract** at the **regional** airport was recently awarded to a company that isn't even a paving company. It only won because it has the required approval from the necessary union. An actual paving company bid \$130,000 lower, but was rejected outright because it isn't a signatory to the closed-shop union deal. And that massive King-Victoria transit hub project? It received just one qualified bidder. This lack of competition has a real and substantial effect on local tax bills.

Curiously enough, local Tory MPP Michael Harris has worked long and hard on this issue, and he's already suggested a fix with a private member's bill.

Following through on this commitment would be a pro-market plank in any 'conservative' party's platform. Unfortunately, vowing to change the labour code to protect taxpayer rights would anger some noisy unions, court controversy and spoil Brown's safe-as-milk plans for winning the election. So it's nowhere to be found.

You never win hockey games by playing it safe. We'll see if the same holds true for elections.

Peter Shawn Taylor is editor-at-large of Maclean's. He lives in **Waterloo**.

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario Tory leader Patrick Brown avoids media while in Hamilton

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainHamilton Mountain News - Wed Dec 6 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$452

Reach: 50352 Page: 1

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainOntario Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown returned to Hamilton Dec. 6, but has barred the media from his events.

Brown was scheduled to attend a breakfast meeting from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. at the Best Western Premier C Hotel by Carmen's hosted by the Hamilton chapter of the Macdonald-Cartier Club in the first stop of several events throughout the day in the Steel City.

The riding association had been touting Brown's appearance for a number of weeks, but a few days before the opposition leader's keynote address, Brown's officials informed the media they would be unable to attend his events in Hamilton.

Hamilton Mountain Tory provincial riding association president Robert Cooper stated Brown's officials informed organizers that the Tory leader needed time to examine the Auditor General's report that is expected to be released Dec. 6, so the media would be prevented from attending his activities.

"There is no ability for him to be briefed on (the Auditor General's report) while he is here," stated Cooper. "As a result, he will not be available to media Wednesday."

Cooper stated that Brown will be with Hamilton Mountain provincial Tory candidate Esther Pauls from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 6.

A request for comment from Brown's communications team was not returned.

Brown has attended events hosted by the Hamilton Mountain Tory riding association in the past. Cooper stated that the leader "has committed to coming to Hamilton in the New Year for the sole purpose of being available to local media."

Brown is in Hamilton while his party is facing controversy over how it handled the May 7 Hamilton **West**-Ancaster-Dundas Tory nomination meeting that resulted in Ben Levitt being declared the candidate by party officials. The second place finisher, Dundas lawyer Vikram Singh, has taken legal action against the party. His hearing had been scheduled for the first week of December, but it was put off for the third time to the first week of February.

Meanwhile, Hamilton Police is conducting a criminal probe of the nomination meeting. Const. Lorraine Edwards recently stated to Hamilton Community News the investigation is reviewing materials that have been provided by party officials. Edwards has stated the investigation will take "several months" and continue into the new year.

Brown is also promoting his party's recently released election platform, called the People's Guarantee, across the province that promises billions of dollars in new spending. Contained in the **plan** is if the Tories win government in the June 7 provincial election they would run a \$2.8 billion deficit in 2018-19, while posting modest surpluses from \$8 million in 2019-2020 to \$767 million in 2021-2022.

The Tories also, among the 140 promises contained in the **plan**, will initiate a tax cut for the middle class, introduce a child tax credit, cut **hydro rates** by a further 12 per cent and provide \$1.9-billion in new spending on mental health programs over the next decade.

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CourierPress

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d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainLet's make wind turbines an election issue

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainWallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Dec 7 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Dick Primeau

Ad Value: \$148

Reach: 8941 **Page:** A28

It has sure been a rough ride for all of us in the area regarding the **wind** turbines! You all know that I don't really like to get into the controversial stuff in my column, but sometimes it's hard to keep it to myself. That's how I felt when I read Peter Epp's 'Point of View' in the **London** Free Press on Nov. 23.

He reminded me that 14 months ago Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the suspension of **Ontario's renewable energy** procurement process. This triggered the halt of plans which promoted **wind** turbines. According to the POV, Wynne's own **energy** minister admitted that **Ontario** didn't need the **electricity** that would be produced by new turbines, but since there were some windmill projects that had already been approved, the contracts would not be cancelled. Bottom line, the **wind** turbines would be producing **electricity** that wasn't needed.

Of course, that means that there will be two more projects in Chatham-Kent and another in Elgin County, even though in the **North** Kent 1 **wind** project the construction activities seem to have caused at least 16 water wells to be fouled or clogged.

So, the next step is to move on to the Otter Creek project, which now certainly creates uncertainties for the people who live in these areas. MPP Monte McNaughton is opposed to the projects and wants them halted. Therefore I guess it's up to all of us to make sure that our representatives know where we stand. Let us keep all of this activity fresh in our minds, especially in June of 2018.

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The Drilldown: First Nations purchase major stake in Suncor facility - iPolitics

d\intbl\itap3\cbpat7\plainipolitics.ca - Wed Dec 6 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

The Fort McKay and Mikisew First Nations have purchased a 49 per cent share in a Suncor Energy Inc. storage facility.

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