John Bozzo

From:	John Bozzo
Sent:	December 19, 2017 9:50 AM
To:	##Clippings_Distribution_List
Subject:	Morning News Summary - Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Good morning,

Here is today's morning news summary, with OEB mentions highlighted throughout:

North Bay Nugget: The Ontario Energy Board reviewing customer service rules

- News story encouraging people to take the OEB's CSR survey, based on submitted matte article

Global Newswire: Ontario Energy Association Comments on Panel to Modernize the Ontario Energy Board

- News release from the Ontario Energy Association (OEA) congratulating the Ministry of Energy for setting up panel to modernize the OEB
- OEA says it called on the government to review Ontario's regulatory framework to ensure the OEB has the appropriate mandate, structure and resources to deliver an efficient regulatory system that adapts with a sector going through technological change and innovation

Anishinabek News: Ontario East-West Tie Line Project contract agreement signed

- NextBridge Infrastructure and Valard signed a contracting agreement for the Ontario East-West Tie Line Project on Dec. 12.
- NextBridge Infrastructure was designated by the Ontario Energy Board to develop the East-West Tie Line in 2013. NextBridge Infrastructure filed a Leave to Construct application for the project on July 31.

St. Catharines Standard: Regulating gasoline prices bill defeated

- The majority Liberal government defeated legislation brought forward by the NDP to regulate gasoline prices in Ontario
- The act, which was moved to second reading late last week by NDP MPP Gilles Bisson, sought to allow the Ontario Energy Board to regulate the retail and wholesale mark-up of petroleum products in the province.
- Similar story in Timmins Daily Press (no OEB mentions)

Arthur Enterprise News: Ontario government needs to take action based on Auditor General's report (Link not available, full story below)

- The 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 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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Morning News Clippings

powered by: infomart

Date: Tuesday, December 19, 2017
Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@oeb.ca)

Contact Editor

Clippings Summary

News - 18 Results

Speak up before the rules change | North Bay Nugget

www.nugget.ca - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

The Ontario Energy Board encouraging all energy consumers to have their say about customer service rules for the electricity and natural gas sectors.

Liberals kill bill to regulate gas prices

The Standard

St. Catharines Standard - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Ray Spiteri

Ad Value: $2,740
Reach: 30196 **Page:** A1 / Front

The majority Liberal government defeated legislation brought forward by the NDP to regulate gasoline prices in Ontario. The Fairness in Petroleum Products Pricing Act, which was supported by members of the New Democratic ...

Bisson's gas bill a non-starter

THE DAILY PRESS

The Timmins Daily Press - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Emma Meldrum

Ad Value: $634
Reach: 9196 **Page:** A2

Timmins -James Bay MPP Gilles Bisson's bill, an act to regulate the price of petroleum products, failed to pass its second reading in Queen's Park on Thursday. The motion failed 14 to 20, after the bill was originally introduced Nov. 28. ...

Ontario Energy Association Comments on Panel to Modernize the Ontario Energy Board

globenewswire.com - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

The Ontario Energy Association (OEA) congratulates the Ministry of Energy for launching an expert review panel to modernize the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), the province's energy regulator, so that it can best adapt for the innovation taking place in ...

Kathleen Wynne's 12 'daze' of Christmas

Ottawa Sun - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Jerry Agar

Ad Value: $1,071
Reach: 45442 **Page:** A15

It's scary to realize **Ontario** Premier Kathleen Wynne and I are thinking along the same lines. Just as I was preparing my "12 Days of Christmas" inventory to illuminate Wynne's "naughty" list, she began her list of the 12 ways she has ...

Secrecy, lack of oversight at Hydro One may cost us

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Andre Marin

Ad Value: $407
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A5

Another billion-dollar **Ontario** Liberal government boondoggle might be in the works. Think eHealth and **gas** plants. The problem is, we might never find out about this one. Fears are starting to emerge regarding business and ...

Ontario government needs to take action based on Auditor General's report

Arthur Enterprise News - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral **Page:** 1

The **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** ...

Changes ahead for St. Catharines Hydro

Niagara This Week - St. Catharines - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral **Page:** 1

ST. CATHARINES - With its only two employees set to leave by the end of January, there are changes ahead for St. Catharines **Hydro**. Wholly owned by the city, St. Catharines **Hydro** is a shareholder in Alectra ...

Meet Mister; Patrick Brown's all about family, politics and hockey

Toronto Sun - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Antonella Artuso

Ad Value: $6,604
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A7

His Twitter followers know he dotes on his 103-year-old grandmother. Political trivia junkies might be aware he keeps a fridge stocked fully with Red Bull in his Queen's Park office. But when students on a recent class trip came through the halls ...

Wynne wants to 'level the playing field' for Ontarians

thestar.com - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Positive
Byline: Rob Ferguson
Reach: 999000

Premier Kathleen Wynne says she'll campaign in next June's election on more ways to "level the playing field" for Ontarians struggling even as the economy improves with unemployment at a 17-year low. "Everybody in the province knows what I stand ...

Wynne on trial

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Paul Leinweber

Ad Value: $84
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A5

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown has no reason to apologize because Premier Kathleen Wynne is on trial every day that she is premier of this province. Her actions around **Hydro One** money giveaways, **wind** ...

The emission reduction plans of all major Ontario political parties fall short

thestar.com - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Positive
Byline: Mark Winfield
Reach: 999000

Ontario PC leader Patrick Brown's proposal to replace the Kathleen Wynne's **cap and trade** system for reducing the province's greenhouse **gas** emissions with a carbon tax has set off a series of ...

Canada's approach to carbon pricing ambitious, challenging, says OECD

National Post - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: The Canadian Press
Reach: 607500

OTTAWA - Canada's decentralized approach to putting a price on pollution is overly complex and will be difficult to implement, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development says in a new report. The OECD, an international ...

Fraudulent ads

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Dave Plumb

Ad Value: $65
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A5

Partisan messages in **hydro** bills should come as no surprise from the **Ontario** Liberal party that spent $58 million on self-promotion advertising in 2016 and 2017. I am incensed every time I see a television advertisement with ...

New photo from Hydro One helicopter crash released | CTV News

www.ctvnews.ca - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Ontario East-West Tie Line Project contract agreement signed

anishinabeknews.ca - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Six Northern Superior Region communities are looking forward to economic development and employment opportunities after NextBridge Infrastructure and Valard signed a contracting agreement for the Ontario East-West Tie Line Project on Dec. 12.

Chatham Daily News

Wind work spurs noise complaints; North Kent Wind construction goes ahead despite developer being denied C-K noise bylaw exemption

The Chatham Daily News - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: $623
Reach: 15320 **Page:** A1 / Front

It appears the developer of the **North** Kent **Wind** farm was able to carry out construction activities on Sunday, despite being denied an exemption to Chatham-Kent's excessive noise bylaw. The Chatham Daily News was contacted by ...

Alberta blows past competition to claim cheapest wind energy rate | National Observer

www.nationalobserver.com - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

The Canadian province with the largest proven oil reserves has now become home to the country's cheapest wind energy.

Clippings Summary

Full Articles

Speak up before the rules change | North Bay Nugget

www.nugget.ca - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral

The Ontario Energy Board encouraging all energy consumers to have their say about customer service rules for the electricity and natural gas sectors.

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Liberals kill bill to regulate gas prices

The Standard

St. Catharines Standard - Tue Dec 19 2017
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The majority Liberal government defeated legislation brought forward by the NDP to regulate **gasoline** prices in **Ontario**.

The Fairness in Petroleum Products Pricing Act, which was supported by members of the New Democratic Party, including **Niagara** Falls MPP Wayne Gates and members of the Progressive Conservative Party, including **Niagara West**-Glanbrook MPP Sam Oosterhoff, was defeated in a 20-14 vote.

The 20 no votes all came from Liberal MPPs, while the 14 yes votes came from eight NDP MPPs and six PC MPPs.

Gates began raising the issue of what he believes to be **gasoline** price gouging in **Ontario** in 2015.

In the legislature recently, Gates said the price of a barrel of oil was about $110 on June 30, 2014.

In **Ontario**, **gas** was $1.30 a litre. "Early in 2015, the price of oil completely crashed across the world. In fact, it crashed more than 60 per cent," he said.

"In September/October 2017, the price of oil hasn't rebounded. It's still around US$50 to US$55 a barrel. Yet the price of the **gasoline** even in **Niagara** is $1.20. Think about that. Anybody in this room is smart enough to see someone is making a major profit on prices."

The act, which was moved to second reading late last week by NDP MPP Gilles Bisson, sought to allow the **Ontario Energy Board** to regulate the retail and wholesale markup of petroleum products in the province.

The bill also guided the board and lieutenant governor in council to provide predictable and consistent retail pricing of petroleum products; prevent pricing practices that undermine competitiveness in the retail market; and ensure transparency in the prices of petroleum products.

"On a long weekend, you want to go enjoy time with your family. What happens? They raise the price 10 or 15 cents just like that because they can and it's a weekend," said Gates.

"They got rid of all the independents. You can look at **Toronto** and you can be within one or two cents of the price of a litre of **gas** today - one or two cents. You come to **Niagara**, there's a price war going on on **Ontario** Street (in St. Catharines) for two years. You know why it's gone on for two years? They want to get rid of the independents. They want to make sure they have a monopoly so they can keep the **gas** high. Make no mistake about it: We're being gouged at the pumps every single day."

Gates said **Ontario** used to refine its own oil, creating good-paying jobs.

"We got rid of that. Remember we used to own Petro-Canada? The oil companies lobbied to get rid of it because they didn't want it. They wanted the refineries to make more money. That's what is going on in the province of **Ontario**, make no mistake about it."

Liberal MPP Arthur Potts said this kind of a bill on **gas** prices is "almost an annual event - or maybe more of an election-time event."

"As the price of **gasoline** starts to go up, people are confused about it, and members will stand up and bring a bill promising lower prices through government regulation," he said.

"We've seen this act before numerous times, and members on our side of the House are equally responsible - we've done it a few times."

Potts said he does wonder why prices seem to go up "really quickly" in response to events such as fires or hurricanes threatening or knocking out refineries, but it takes "such a long time" for them to come back down.

"I'm not an expert, but what I do know is that within the Competition Bureau, within the federal responsibilities that look into these matters, there are some very clear **consumer** oversights that don't allow for price gouging, that don't allow for collusion, that don't allow for taking predatory positions," he said.

"The best people to **review** that within the federal scheme are the **consumer** advocates who are out there, who are keeping a very close eye on where the price is going."

Potts said from a **consumer**'s perspective, "it's really easy" for such a bill to "ratchet up a lot of support" because "you're attacking big oil, and big oil appears an easy target."

"All these rich fat cats with cigars playing golf who are making money at the expense of the **consumer**. We all know that's just not the reality of how we see things out there."

He said the feds regulate, and the **Ontario Energy Board** is there to regulate prices amongst monopolies and oligopolies.

"There is enough competition in the system that you can have competitive pricing for **gasoline** in the province of **Ontario**. It does probably require better explanations for the consumers, so as to alleviate the confusion we see, but there is opportunity for competition."

Potts said the concept of starting to regulate **gasoline** is "way too late."

"You're five years away from it being a non-issue, because the price will be so low, because there will be so much supply and so little demand."

He said the demand for petroleum products is going to be "bottoming out, worldwide, into the $40-a-barrel **rate**."

"The demand is going to be extremely low because we won't be using it for **transportation** at the level that we are now. We will have **electric**-powered and hydrogen-powered tractors pulling trailers across **Ontario** and across **North** America. We will have hydrogen-powered trains not burning diesel. These transformations are coming. When I look at the bill here, what I see is a piece of unnecessary red tape." rspiteri@postmedia.com

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THE DAILY PRESS

Bisson's gas bill a non-starter

The Timmins Daily Press - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Emma Meldrum

Ad Value: $634
Reach: 9196 **Page:** A2

Timmins -James **Bay** MPP Gilles Bisson's bill, an act to regulate the price of petroleum products, failed to pass its second reading in Queen's Park on

Thursday.

The motion failed 14 to 20, after the bill was originally introduced Nov. 28. Bisson spoke ahead of Thursday's vote, arguing against the large differences in **gas** prices across the province.

"Nobody is going to tell me it costs 40 cents a litre to transport **gas** from somewhere in Southern **Ontario** to **Northern Ontario**," said Bisson. "It just does not make any sense. Clearly, what you're got is very few people who are the refiners, and very few people who are the distributors, and they set the price of **gas**."

He spoke against the idea that regulation is impractical, arguing that milk, butter and **natural gas** are all regulated by the government.

"We regulate many things in our society because we recognize that if you sometimes let the market do what it wants, there are people who will take advantage."

He said the system isn't competitive - and the larger companies "charge whatever the price (it) is that they think the market will bear.

"It doesn't relate to anything having to do with the price of the barrel. It doesn't relate to anything having to do with the issue as far (as) what it costs to move **gas** and produce **gas** and get it from the well to the **gas** pump."

The New Democrat MPP said he wasn't against oil companies making a profit.

"There has to be a return on investment for the oil companies," he said. "I believe that oil companies, refiners, distributors and retailers have to get a return on investment that makes some sense. But let's not have a system where they are able to peg the price - those very few distributors and refiners - based on how much they can pick out of your pocket to put more in their checkbooks."

Bisson argued that this bill is a question of picking sides.

"Whose side are you on? Are you on the side of the **consumer** or are you on the side of the large **gas** companies? "I think it's high time that somebody in the **public** sees somebody standing on their side and somebody picks them for a change and says, 'You know what? That's enough.'" Despite words of support from fellow New Democratic Party members, the bill failed to pass second reading. Six Progressive Conservatives and eight NDP MPPS voted for, while 20 Liberals voted against.

On Monday night, the lowest price of **gas** in Timmins was 127.6, compared to 115.6 in Kirkland Lake, 119.9 in New Liskeard and 109.9 in **Toronto**, according to **Gas** Buddy.

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Ontario Energy Association Comments on Panel to Modernize the Ontario Energy Board

globenewswire.com · Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral

The Ontario Energy Association (OEA) congratulates the Ministry of Energy for launching an expert review panel to modernize the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), the province's energy regulator, so that it can best adapt for the innovation taking place in the energy sector.

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Kathleen Wynne's 12 'daze' of Christmas

Ottawa Sun - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Jerry Agar

Ad Value: $1,071
Reach: 45442 **Page:** A15

It's scary to realize **Ontario** Premier Kathleen Wynne and I are thinking along the same lines.

Just as I was preparing my "12 Days of Christmas" inventory to illuminate Wynne's "naughty" list, she began her list of the 12 ways she has made **Ontario** "more **fair**."

Fair? For whom? Here's my list. Contrast and compare with hers.

1. Misled us about balancing the budget. As Lorrie Goldstein reported in the Sunday Sun: "Both the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Office (FAO) say that despite claims by Wynne and Finance Minister Charles Sousa that the government's books are now balanced and will be for at least the next two years, the reality is the Liberals are running multi-billion-dollar deficits that will only get bigger over time."

2. Allowed sick days to balloon out of control, while school boards used special education money to cover for absent teachers and other expenses. There's no logical reason teachers are sick so many more days than the rest of us. Yes, they are with runny-nosed children, but so are their parents in the private sector.

3. Ignored responsibility.

Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says Wynne's Liberals were lax in oversight of **electricity** companies, costing consumers millions of dollars in higher bills.

4. Shafted us. Wynne's government told us to use less **electricity**. We did. It raised the price.

5. Shafted us again. Our government sells **electricity** we pay for at a loss out-ofprovince.

6. Endangered employment. Raising minimum wage by 31.6% over 15 months, making **Ontario** the most expensive place in Canada to hire workers. **Independent** experts say it will cost 50,000 jobs or more. Add in the high cost of **power** and you see why Maclean's magazine wrote last year, "How Kathleen Wynne has **Ontario** going backwards."

7. Claims to be lowering our **electricity** bills, but really will be passing billions in extra cost on to future **ratepayers**. Good luck, kids.

8. Claims to care about jobs and the economy, but since the Liberals took **power** **Ontario** has lost 347,000 manufacturing jobs and gained 368,000 government workers. That has contributed to **Ontario**'s unprecedented, growing **public** debt. Growth is confined mainly to **Toronto** and **Ottawa**, hollowing out a once-great province that was the economic engine of Canada.

9. Promised to lower auto insurance premiums by 15%, didn't, then called it a "stretch goal". Hasn't explained why **rates** are so high, since **Ontario** has some of Canada's highest insurance **rates** while its drivers are among the nation's safest.

10. Ignored reality. Wynne told me on NEWSTALK1010 people come from around the world to study our education system. To learn what? How not to do it? Half our Grade 6 children don't meet the provincial standard in math.

11. Damaged economic growth. As the NDP recently reported, "Despite paying high prices for everything from **hydro** to housing, **Ontario** households faced the slowest median income growth in the nation, according to 2016 Census data from Statistics Canada. Of the 152 **Canadian** cities included in the report, nine saw median incomes fall. Eight of those nine are **Ontario** cities."

12. Uncaring or politically delusional. Despite burning bridges behind her, Wynne marches cheerily forward telling us everything's OK, ignoring not only the damage but good economic advice the Liberals received from economic experts like Don Drummond, who told them to scrap all-day kindergarten because we couldn't afford it.

There's a reason she's the most unpopular **Ontario** premier of all time.

Agar hosts the 9 a.m. to noon show on NEWSTALK1010
jerry.agar@sunmedia.ca @jerryagar1010

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Secrecy, lack of oversight at Hydro One may cost us

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Andre Marin

Ad Value: $407
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A5

Another billion-dollar **Ontario** Liberal government boondoggle might be in the works. Think eHealth and **gas** plants. The problem is, we might never find out about this one.

Fears are starting to emerge regarding business and residential green-**energy** producers who feed **Ontario**'s **hydro** grid. It's just another sad chapter in the incompetence of the provincial government in managing the **energy** portfolio.

Producers are being paid between 20 and just over 80 cents per kilowatt-hour. With new technology emerging, they can increase their output by an extra 40 per cent whether the grid needs it or not. How do we know they are not abusing the system? Well, we don't.

If these producers feed excess **power**, they are overbilling the system - the system being you and me.

To make matters worse, when we have an oversupply, we have to shed it, which means giving it away or selling it under cost to **energy**-starved jurisdictions. In 2016 alone, this cost us a whopping amount, between $384 million and $675 million, according to the **Ontario** Society of Professional Engineers.

Hydro One says it monitors the production and payouts to the producers, but will provide scant details, because legally it's not obliged to. Trust us, they say. Sure.

With **Hydro** One's track record of **public service**, we should be very weary.

How can this lack of accountability be possible? It's a direct result of privatizing **Hydro** One in 2015 by Premier Kathleen Wynne and then-**energy** minister Bob Chiarelli and their decision to remove the oversight jurisdiction of **independent** officers of parliament and neuter statutes such as the freedom of information laws.

This, despite the fact the government still owns almost half of **Hydro** One's shares.

The overly simplistic rationale for removing outside oversight is that it's not the way the private sector works. Plus, Hydro One has its own internal ombudsman (We all know how well that works).

Public ombudsmen oversee private sector consumer organizations all over the world - there is ample precedence. Even at the federal level, Canada Post, structured much like a private company with a president, chair and board of directors, is subject to the federal Access to Information Act.

But Hydro One, with a reputation of overpaying its employees, offering shoddy treatment to its customers and under-delivering on its promises, managed nonetheless to carve out its own zone of oversight and statutory immunity, thanks to Wynne and Chiarelli.

The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), one of the governing players in the energy sector, rarely tracks the amount of money paid to producers to check whether they are over producing. The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has no role in the monitoring.

A poorly informed spokesperson for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault offered this misleading reassurance: "We have confidence in both the IESO and the OEB to ensure that our renewables contracts are being managed appropriately."

The resulting lack of proper checks and balance was an entirely predictable result. In my last report as Ontario's ombudsman in May 2015, titled In the Dark, I warned the government not to remove ombudsman oversight over Hydro One given its historical record of not living up "to principles of good public administration."

It was the only one of 66 recommendations rejected by Wynne and Chiarelli. - Andre Marin is the former Ontario Ombudsman and a former Ontario Progressive Conservative candidate.

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Ontario government needs to take action based on Auditor General's report

Arthur Enterprise News - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral **Page:** 1

The 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. 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.

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.

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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Changes ahead for St. Catharines Hydro

Niagara This Week - St. Catharines - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral **Page:** 1

ST. CATHARINES - With its only two employees set to leave by the end of January, there are changes ahead for St. Catharines Hydro.

Wholly owned by the city, St. Catharines Hydro is a shareholder in Alectra Utilities Inc., the electricity distribution company that serves customers in St. Catharines, Hamilton, Markham, Vaughan, Barrie and Mississauga areas. It is also a holding company for St. Catharines Hydro Generation Inc., which currently operates the Heywood Station at Port Dalhousie.

Overseen by a six-member board of directors, St. Catharines Hydro will be losing its current general manager and office assistant - its only two employees.

In August, the company posted for the general manager position, seeking expressions of interest to manage St. Catharines Hydro In. and its generation company. The posting specified that it can be in the capacity of a general manager or contracted through a management company that has the necessary experience and can provide the necessary services, reporting to the company's board of directors.

At the Nov. 27 St. Catharines council meeting, Coun. Matt Harris - one of the three city councillors who sits as a hydro board director - put forward a notice of motion, asking for a staff report exploring the possibility of having the city take over operations of St. Catharines Hydro along with legal comment on how to dissolve the current hydro board.

His proposal would see Mayor Walter Sendzik sit as the representative of Alectra's board, city chief administrative officer Shelley Chemnitz act as the sole director of the holding company and the committee of the whole act as directors of the generating company.

"It makes total sense to have Walter sit on Alectra's board," Harris said after the meeting, noting that all of the other municipalities have their mayors as the representatives on the board. "You want someone parochial who will fight for the city. I don't want to see in eight years that we lose the call centre to Vaughan. If anything, we should be expanding the call centre."

Harris said the infrastructure is in place to make the changes proposed and with Hydro's employees leaving, now is the time.

"With the cancellation of Shickluna (Hydro Generating Station project), we don't really need a general manager anymore - there should be an opportunity here for the city to step into the role as manager of the generating station and administrator of the service contracts in hopes that we can manage it effectively and perhaps achieve a bigger dividend for the city," said Harris.

Shickluna was a hydro generating station project that had been in the works for years. The city first announced its long-sought approval from the Ontario government for construction in March 2014, approved under Ontario's hydroelectrical standard offer program. However, during his state of the city address this January, Sendzik announced that pursuing the project no longer seemed like a viable option for the St. Catharines Hydro board and council approved withdrawal from the project later that month.

Escalated construction costs were cited as the reason.

Included in the Dec. 11 council package, a report from Chemnitz' office, prepared by executive research assistant Maggie Riopelle and submitted by director of transportation and environmental services Dan Dillon, outlined city staffing capacity to operate and manage Heywood Generating Station. The report was requested during an in-camera council meeting on Oct. 16.

While the report finds that the city does have the capability of managing projects, no current staff have experience managing and operating a hydro generating station.

"If council determines that it wishes to move forward with the operation and maintenance of the Heywood Generating Station, it is the recommendation of staff that additional city staff and/or a company with the necessary skills and experience in management and operation of a hydro generating station would be required," the report reads.

With current employment contracts at St. Catharines Hydro set to expire, the report said it is "crucial that a decision be made" regarding the management of Heywood.

For council to move forward with the operation and maintenance of Heywood, the report estimates it would take six months to hire the necessary expertise and an anticipated nine to 12 months for the full transition to occur.

Calls to St. Catharines Hydro general manager Frank Perri were not returned.

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Meet Mister; Patrick Brown's all about family, politics and hockey

Toronto Sun - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Antonella Artuso

Ad Value: $6,604
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A7

His Twitter followers know he dotes on his 103-year-old grandmother.

Political trivia junkies might be aware he keeps a fridge stocked fully with Red Bull in his Queen's Park office.

But when students on a recent class trip came through the halls of the legislature, not one of the three dozen teenagers could name the leader of

Ontario's Progressive Conservatives.

Polling suggests most Ontarians don't know much more than his name, if that.

That same polling says Patrick Brown is considered at this moment the provincial leader most likely to occupy the premier's office after next June's general election.

Once an obscure federal backbencher, he doesn't talk about himself much.

Still, a theme emerged Monday during a oneon-one interview with the Toronto Sun.

His favourite non-political activity - playing hockey twice a week with friends.

What he's looking forward to - taking his three young nephews to their first professional hockey game Tuesday, an afternoon event that won't interfere with their bed time.

Brown even laughingly points to his fake front teeth, replacements for the ones he lost playing - no big guess required - hockey.

"I love playing hockey; it's one of my passions," he said. "I played hockey at St. Mike's high school in Toronto, I played in the MTHL ... I think I love practically every sport."

He comes from a tight knit family, and they all get together for a meal once a week.

He and his dad have a ritual of going to see action flicks because his mom favours romantic comedies.

Brown is currently reading Doug Gilmour's new autobiography, Killer: My Life in Hockey.

"He was one of the, I think, hardest working captains Toronto ever had," Brown said. "I admire anyone who shows tremendous tenacity and work ethic.

"And there was a guy who was much smaller than most NHLers, in weight and in height, and he just gave it his all."

Here's what Brown had to say to the Toronto Sun: You've brought in arguably one of the most centrist political platforms of any Ontario PC leader since the 1980s, the People's Guarantee.

Is this a strategic move because the Liberals have moved to the political left, or is this a true reflection of you and your values? "I do think it's fair to say the Liberals have tried to out-NDP the NDP, and we've got one of the furthest left governments right now with (Premier) Kathleen Wynne that we've ever had in Ontario history.

But I would say this platform is actually not about right or left. It was going around the province and listening, and actually doing our homework. I asked to get the best idea under the auspices there's no monopoly on a good idea - I don't care if an idea comes from the NDP, the Liberals, the Green Party, what corner of Ontario it comes from. How do we get this province back on track? ... Mental health's not a left-right issue, but it's a dirty little secret in Ontario that we've abandoned people who have the courage to confront a mental health challenge."

Many argue you're a social conservative with a hidden agenda; social conservatives want to defeat you in the next election. Where are you on the social issues spectrum? "Who I am is I was proud to be the first PC Leader to lead an official delegation in the Toronto Pride Parade. I've been in the last three

Toronto Pride parades. I was at the Ottawa Pride Parade. Love is love is love. It's none of government's business who you love. I just want people to be happy. And this isn't new for me. I was the first MP in Barrie's history to attend a parade flag raising ... I start off a lot of my speeches that: 'It doesn't matter who you love, where you're born, what the colour of your skin is, what God you worship, everyone has a home in Ontario.'I'm not interested in revisiting divisive social issues."

How will you be different from the current Liberal government? "That's going to be a long list ... One, we're going to have a trust, integrity and accountability act, we're going to end the endless political corruption we see in Ontario. Two, we're going to offer tax relief. That's something that Kathleen Wynne has never heard of. We're going to offer 22.5% tax cut to the middle class. We're going to offer hydro relief by actually getting rid of the Green Energy Act. Liberals are proud of their bad contracts that were propped up by the NDP... I'm going to clean up their hydro disaster ... I'd also say that when it comes to deficit and debt, this is a government that has no interest in having a debt repayment plan ... The other thing I'd say is the biggest difference is you can trust what the PC Party is saying. The Liberals have played Ontario for 14 years ... I have signed a contract with the people of Ontario ... that if I don't honour my promises ... then I'm resigning."

If the Liberals release an election platform with significant new promises, including new spending, will you match it? "I'm happy and proud to run on the People's Guarantee...

(The Liberals have) been in government 14 years... I think any promise they make today would be insincere, it would be an election gimmick."

Why did you base your platform on Liberal government numbers that your own MPPs have been criticizing for years? Doesn't this mean a largerthan-advertised deficit? "For the purposes of the platform, even the auditor general says you have to compare apples-to-apples, oranges to oranges. I am worried that we have three sets of books right now. You've got the government's numbers, you have the FAO (Financial Accountability Office) and you've got the auditor general's ... I can tell you in our own platform we've created a cushion. We are worried that it's going to be worse than it looks ... Making sure we get our financial house in order is very important to me. And what we've done in year one we've booked $1.5 billion leftover Liberal mismanagement, leftover Liberal contractual commitments ... Shows that we're being prudent with the legacy they're going to leave behind."

So you will not raise taxes in your first term of office? "I'm going to cut taxes."

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Wynne wants to 'level the playing field' for Ontarians

thestar.com - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Positive
Byline: Rob Ferguson
Reach: 999000

Premier Kathleen Wynne says she'll campaign in next June's election on more ways to "level the playing field" for Ontarians struggling even as the economy improves with unemployment at a 17-year low.

"Everybody in the province knows what I stand for," Wynne told the Star in a year-end interview, touting a new pharmacare plan for people under 25 and a $14 minimum wage (www.thestar.com) starting Jan. 1, moving to $15 in 2019.

"Anything we do going forward is going to be consistent with what we've already done," she added, flagging prescription drug and dental coverage as "gaps" in medicare that need to be addressed.

"I have a deep belief that we don't play on a level field. And so, what can I do to level that playing field?"

While Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown has released his full "People's Guarantee" platform for the June 7 vote - including four-year delay to the $15 minimum wage - Wynne is cagey on when the Liberal effort will be revealed.

Most elements are widely expected in the government's annual budget, expected earlier than the usual late March or April.

"We will be introducing a budget in the spring. . . the rest of the strategy we'll have to wait and see," the premier said, quickly changing the time frame to a more vague "in the new year" when reminded spring begins March 20.

Nor will Wynne reveal whether the government will push the Legislature to pass the budget before it adjourns for the campaign, which will officially kick off in the second week of May.

A recent poll by the firm Campaign Research (www.thestar.com) after the PC platform was released suggests the election race has tightened, with the Conservatives and Liberals neck-and-neck for top spot within the survey's margin of error and the New Democrats about 13 points behind at 22 per cent.

But Wynne's approval rating was 19 per cent, compared with 29 for Brown and 33 for NDP Leader Andrea Horwath.

The premier, who has embarked on a series of taxpayer-financed town hall meetings (www.thestar.com) to hear from the **public**, acknowledges voter perceptions of her are "relevant" but said she has no plans to change course.

"I have to do my job and I have to listen to people and put in place what I believe to be the supports the people need. . . their determination about me personally is up to them."

Wynne cites 25 per cent off **hydro** bills, new transit lines in the works and the Vaughan subway extension that just opened, free tuition for low- and middle-income families, more child-care spaces, her successful push for an improved Canada Pension **Plan** and indexing the $15 minimum wage to inflation as ways she has tried to improve the daily lives of Ontarians.

Opposition parties, however, say overcrowded hospitals, **hydro** bills that skyrocketed out of control and almost 15 years in office leave the Liberals ripe for defeat.

"This is about patients waiting in agony, treatments being delayed and people having their health and dignity impacted by hallway medicine. This is about people's lives," Horwath said last week, highlighting an issue that her party will hit in the campaign.

While she wouldn't reveal details about the Liberal election strategy, Wynne was certain she won't be pictured buying pot at one of the new government-controlled cannabis shops as she was buying wine at a grocery store.

"I don't use marijuana, so I won't be doing that," she said, noting she tried pot "a long, long time ago. I'm on the record on that."

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Wynne on trial

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Paul Leinweber

Ad Value: $84
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A5

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown has no reason to apologize because Premier Kathleen Wynne is on trial every day that she is premier of this province.

Her actions around **Hydro** One money giveaways, **wind** turbines, closing **gas** plants, wasted money on government-run hospitals, overpaying CEOs working on ridiculous contracts, Elgin-Middlesex Detention **Centre** problems, starting a useless **Ontario** Pension **Plan**, rising **energy** costs, milliondollar handouts to cities to garner votes come election times, poor handling of the **community college** strike, raising the minimum wage too quickly, and poor results from elementary school testing are all examples of how she is on trial every day of the year.

Paul Leinweber

St. Marys, Ont.

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The emission reduction plans of all major Ontario political parties fall short

thestar.com - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Positive
Byline: Mark Winfield
Reach: 999000

Ontario PC leader Patrick Brown's proposal to replace the Kathleen Wynne's **cap and trade** system for reducing the province's greenhouse **gas** emissions with a carbon tax has set off a series of debates about the merits of these different approaches to address the challenge of **climate** change.

Almost lost in this debate has been one of the most remarkable aspects of Brown's proposed policy - the implicit political acceptance of some form of substantial carbon pricing across the political spectrum in **Ontario**.

The change in the Progressive Conservative party's position on the issue represents is a major shift in the **climate** change conversation, relative to where it was not more than a year ago.

In terms of the specific options being offered by Wynne and Brown, it is important to recognized that a central, but unspoken, feature of the government's approach is that it doesn't rely on the carbon price generated through its **cap and trade** system for emissions per se as its primary mechanism for reducing greenhouse **gas** (GHG) emissions. The carbon price being generated through the system (~$18/tonne) is far too low to have any meaningful impact on individual or corporate behaviour.

Rather, the purpose of the **cap and trade** system, at this point, is to generate revenues, which then can be invested in low-carbon transition strategies, such as expanding **public** transit services. The granting of free emission allowances to industrial emitters, at least for the initial phases of the program, reinforces that view.

In some ways, the strategy makes sense, as **Ontario**'s industrial emissions of GHGs have fallen dramatically since the signing of the original United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. The shift has largely been a result of economic restructuring, rather than any climate change strategy. In the meantime, transportation has emerged as the key area of growth in emissions in the province.

Transportation-related emissions, particularly for passenger transportation, are hard to address through pricing mechanisms alone. Transportation patterns are driven by embedded long-term factors, such as existing infrastructure (e.g. roads), urban forms that separate housing from work and other activities, and the lack of viable alternatives to automobiles, such as good and reliable transit services.

In that context, major investments in transit services may make good sense in Ontario as a GHG emission reduction strategy.

A key weakness in the province's current strategy is that it hasn't provided a real mechanism to ensure the revenues generated through the cap and trade system are invested projects that give a good return on investment in terms of GHG reductions.

There is a real risk of the revenues being used on high-profile projects that are relatively ineffective in either reducing emissions or adapting to a changing climate.

Brown has proposed we move from a cap and trade system to a carbon tax. At this point, such a shift could still be feasible given that what we have now, with the granting of free allowances to the large industrial emitters, is a de facto carbon tax on heating and transportation fuels.

The distributors of those fuels are the only people actually paying for allowances under Ontario's system. A shift in approach will get harder if industrial emitters start having to buy and trade credits.

A key flaw in Brown's approach is that the carbon price he proposes ($50/tonne by 2022) is still far too low to affect behaviour enough to get us anywhere near the Paris targets. Additional measures will be needed.

In Ontario, the areas of focus will need to be transportation and buildings. Buildings can be partially addressed through regulatory measures, such as the building code and efficiency standards for heating and cooling systems, but financial incentives to help build capacity and support new technologies and practices will be needed too.

Transportation will require substantial investments in new infrastructure and services. Rather than doing that, Brown proposes to give away the revenues in the form of tax cuts.

As for the province's other parties, Mike Schreiner's Greens propose to retain the Liberals' cap and trade system, but eliminate the free allowances for large industrial polluters.

Andrea Horwath's New Democrats also propose to keep the cap and trade system, with greater transparency, and to dedicate 25 per cent of the revenues to communities likely to suffer disproportionate economic impacts of carbon pricing.

The bottom line at this stage is that none of the province's major parties proposed a comprehensive strategy for meeting the province's (or Ottawa's) GHG emission targets.

Mark Winfield is a professor of Environmental Studies at York University.

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Canada's approach to carbon pricing ambitious, challenging, says OECD

National Post - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: The Canadian Press
Reach: 607500

OTTAWA - Canada's decentralized approach to putting a price on pollution is overly complex and will be difficult to implement, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development says in a new report.

The OECD, an international economic partnership of 35 free market economies, today released the third ever **review** of Canada's environmental policies and progress, in which it suggests Canada will likely feel pressure to eventually nationalize many parts of the carbon price system.

The report looks at everything from **climate** change action and adaptation to water pollution, air pollution, garbage dumps and protected lands and waterways since the last **review** in 2004.

It praises Canada for making some progress in the last decade and a half, such as reducing emissions from **electricity** generation.

However the report finds Canada lags behind other OECD nations in the amount of garbage that ends up in landfills and is the second-most carbon and **energy**-intensive economy within the OECD.

For every US$1,000 in GDP created in Canada, this country uses 62 per cent more **energy** and produces 44 per cent more carbon emissions than the OECD average.

This is largely because of Canada's resource-heavy economy. However the report also notes Canada's use of resources and **energy** is high even when compared to other resource-heavy economies.

The OECD report calls the Pan-**Canadian** Framework on Clean Growth and **Climate** Change a "well thought-out strategy" and the national carbon price included within it is critical to Canada's ability to cut its emissions enough to meet its international obligations.

However the OECD has concerns with allowing every province to decide how to implement a minimum price on carbon emissions, which is to start at $10 a tonne in 2018 and rise to $50 a tonne by 2022.

"Practical implementation will, however, be a huge challenge," the report says of the system.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in October 2016 every province would have to have a minimum price on carbon by 2018, but each is being allowed to implement their own system as long as it meets federal benchmarks. Provinces that don't will have a federal carbon tax imposed on them and the revenues returned to the province, likely in the form of direct grants to individuals and businesses.

Environment Minister Catherine McKenna said last week provinces will have until the end of 2018 to submit their plans for **Ottawa** to decide whether it has to impose the national price **plan** or not.

Six provinces have either a carbon tax or **cap-and-trade** system in place or planned for 2018.

New Brunswick intends to use its existing **gas** tax as a de facto carbon price, while Saskatchewan has no intention of introducing a price on carbon and the government says it will sue if **Ottawa** tries to impose one.

Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland are still working on their plans to be released in 2018.

The OECD says a lot of work is going to be required to figure out how to measure provincial **cap-and-trade** systems against the federal benchmarks and notes the existing provincial plans have many variants, including price and what products the price is charged on. It expects those variations "may eventually create frictions and pressures" for the different provincial systems to merge at least to some degree.

It also wants Canada to go beyond the 2022 $50 a tonne commitment soon to reduce uncertainty for investors and also to establish an accountability mechanism that can better compare and track provincial systems to each other. Canada should also ensure exemptions to give **energy**-intensive industries more time to adapt should be temporary.

The OECD notes overall Canada has among the lowest environmental tax loads, ahead of only the United States and Mexico as a share of GDP. That's largely because Canada's fuel taxes are low, heating **fuels** are rarely taxed at all and excise taxes on inefficient vehicles don't apply to pick-up trucks, which are the best-selling vehicles in the country with the most emissions among passenger vehicles.

Overall the OECD makes 46 recommendations for Canada, ranging from improving air pollution standards to a better alignment of **energy** development and **climate** change policies.

- follow @mrabson on Twitter.

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Fraudulent ads

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Dave Plumb

Ad Value: $65
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A5

Partisan messages in **hydro** bills should come as no surprise from the **Ontario** Liberal party that spent $58 million on self-promotion advertising in 2016 and 2017.

I am incensed every time I see a television advertisement with the tag line, "Paid for by the Government of **Ontario**." The government has no money of its own to spend on such ads. The proper attribution would be, "Paid for by the taxpayers of **Ontario**." Premier Kathleen Wynne should be on trial for fraudulent advertising.

Dave Plumb

Belmont, Ont.

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New photo from Hydro One helicopter crash released | CTV News

www.ctvnews.ca - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral

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Ontario East-West Tie Line Project contract agreement signed

anishinabeknews.ca - Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral

Six Northern Superior Region communities are looking forward to economic development and employment opportunities after NextBridge Infrastructure and Valard signed a contracting agreement for the Ontario East-West Tie Line Project on Dec. 12.

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Chatham Daily News

Wind work spurs noise complaints; North Kent Wind construction goes ahead despite developer being denied C-K noise bylaw exemption

The Chatham Daily News - Tue Dec 19 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: $623
Reach: 15320 **Page:** A1 / Front

It appears the developer of the **North** Kent **Wind** farm was able to carry out construction activities on Sunday, despite being denied an exemption to Chatham-Kent's excessive noise bylaw.

The Chatham Daily News was contacted by Chatham Coun. Michael Bondy, who said he received calls on Sunday about work taking place at a **turbine** construction site for the **North** Kent **Wind** project, including at night with bright lights being used.

The Daily News reported earlier this month the developer was denied an exemption to the noise bylaw, due in large part to well over 100 residents who expressed opposition to having construction be carried out overnight, as well as on Sunday and holidays.

Pattern **Energy**, which is developing the project with Korean industrial giant Samsung **Renewable Energy**, told The Daily News, in a previous email, the exemption was only being sought in case the construction schedule was delayed.

"But we have remained on schedule, so there's no need for evening work," the email added.

When contacted on Monday, Pattern **Energy** said it was contacting the site team and would respond later in the day. A response was not received by press time.

"If they're working anyway, why did they bother applying for an exemption that was denied?" Bondy asked.

"Frankly, it's more of an insult to the rural community," he added.

Paul Lacina, Chatham-Kent's director of building services, told The Daily News on Monday, with respect to working on Sundays, the municipal noise bylaw states: "The operation of any construction equipment, in connection with construction, is prohibited."

The Daily News asked if noise complaints come to his office and Lacina said, the police enforce the noise bylaw.

The Daily News contacted Chatham-Kent police regarding the number of noise complaints it received about **turbine** construction activity on Sunday.

An email from **public** information officer Const. Kelly Helbin indicated two noise complaints were recorded: at about 11 a.m. on Greenvalley Line, and at 11:54 a.m. on Bush Line.

Helbin also noted in the email that "police received numerous complaints on that date and many individuals seem to be under the impression that all work on **turbine** sites is prohibited on Sundays, regardless of the amount of noise being produced.

"However, the noise of the trucks moving site to site is not excessive and workers were allowed to continue.

The bylaw does not prohibit all activity on the worksite."

Helbin noted the incidents are no longer being probed, but the reports have been sent to the CKPS Community Mobilization Unit.

Water Wells First spokesperson Kevin Jakubec said he received several calls from members of the citizen group about construction happening at four sites.

"You could hear it," said Jakubec, adding he went to two sites to take pictures and video of construction taking place that included two cranes being used to lift large sections of a **wind** **turbine**.

"If you work, especially this nature of work, you generate noise," he said.

Jakubec said he also spoke with a resident in the area who could hear transport trucks backing up along the long laneway to a **turbine** site located two concessions over.

"It was road traffic, which is noisy," he said.

Jakubec said several residents are aware of media reports about **North** Kent **Wind** being denied an exemption to the noise bylaw, which has prompted many to be more aware of what's happening at the **turbine** construction sites. ellwood.shreve@postmedia.com Twitter.com/@DailyNewsES

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Alberta blows past competition to claim cheapest wind energy rate | National Observer

www.nationalobserver.com · Mon Dec 18 2017
Tone: Neutral

The Canadian province with the largest proven oil reserves has now become home to the country’s cheapest wind energy.

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