

Rosemarie Leclair

From: Rosemarie Leclair
Sent: September 27, 2016 2:45 PM
To: John Bozzo
Subject: RE: Ipsos Poll on Hydro rates: More than half of Ontarians say new rebates don't go far enough

John...can you add the Vice Chairs to this distribution list and Neil; if he is not included

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From: John Bozzo
Sent: September-27-16 2:27 PM
To: ##Executive Team
Cc: Martine Band
Subject: Ipsos Poll on Hydro rates: More than half of Ontarians say new rebates don't go far enough

I wanted to share an article published today by Global News based on a new poll by Ipsos on the Liberals' new hydro rebates. It came out online after this morning's scan was complete so I thought I'd pass along in case you haven't seen it. I've included it in full below along with a link to the online story.

Hydro rates: More than half of Ontarians say new rebates don't go far enough

By Monique Muise National Online Journalist, Politics

Global News

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2964410/hydro-rates-more-than-half-of-ontarians-say-new-rebates-dont-go-far-enough/>

The Ontario government's plans to tackle skyrocketing hydro bills are getting a failing grade from a majority of the province's residents, a new poll shows.

According to the survey, conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Global News between September 19 and 22, just over half (52 per cent) of Ontarians say the hydro rebates recently announced in the government's Speech from the Throne don't go far enough.

One in four (24 per cent) believe the rebates are "a prudent decision because it will make a difference to those who need it." And one in ten (10 per cent) disagree with the move because Ontario "can't afford these rebates," while 14 per cent don't know how they feel about the announcement.

"When you give people back money, you'd think they'd be more enthusiastic about it," said Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs. "It just shows you that there's more going on here, that there's a context of disappointment and anger that preceded whatever the government decided to implement."

Specifically, the Liberal government plans to remove the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax (HST) from hydro bills to offset soaring costs for ratepayers.

The government expects that removing the eight per cent provincial share of the HST as of Jan. 1 will result in savings of \$130 for the average household each year. Rural ratepayers, who are some of the hardest hit, could receive additional relief, resulting in \$540 a year in savings.

Global News began reporting on the astronomical hydro bills arriving in rural mailboxes last summer, chronicling the harrowing stories of rural residents who were forced to choose between feeding their families and keeping the lights on.

Then, earlier this month, Global News reported that customers living in the lowest density rural areas, who use the least amount of power, will see their distribution rates soar by as much as 25 per cent. The increase will mean total hydro bills will be up to 11.5 per cent higher by 2017.

Around two thirds (63 per cent) of Ontarians were aware of the government's rebate plan prior to participating in the Ipsos poll. The people who were aware of the Liberal promise were most likely (60 per cent) to believe it didn't go far enough. In that same group, 22 per cent said they believe the policy is prudent, 11 per cent disagree with it, and just six per cent are unsure. Among those who were not aware of the announcement before participating in the poll, the results were different. Four in ten (38 per cent) say it doesn't go far enough, 28 per cent call it prudent, seven per cent disagree with it and 27 per cent are unsure.

The poll also revealed significant variation in opinion by region of the province and by age of the respondents. In short, the Liberals' announcement appears to have resonated the most with younger people living in the city.

Older, more rural residents living outside of Toronto tended to feel more strongly that not enough is being done to provide relief on hydro rates.

"That's the exact opposite of what the targeting was," Bricker pointed out.

"The reason (the Liberals) brought it in was because people who were living in rural communities were upset about the rate of increases for rural power. Quite clearly, at this stage of the game, for the people for whom it was supposed to have the most positive effect it doesn't seem to have moved them very much."

The Ipsos poll was conducted between September 19 to 22, 2016. For this survey, a sample of 800 Ontarians from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The poll is accurate to within +/- 4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Ontarian adults been polled.

Thanks

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