John Bozzo

From:	John Bozzo
Sent:	January 5, 2017 8:50 AM
To:	Brian Hewson; Ceiran Bishop; Christine Long; Corinne Carvalho; Debra Hazelton; Elisabeth DaSilva; John Bozzo; Julie Mitchell; June Colman; Karen Nunno; Ken Quesnelle; Lynne Anderson; Martine Band; Mary Anne Aldred; Nancy Mintz; Neil Brodie; Rosemarie Leclair; Sarah Branco; Veronica Mendes
Subject:	FW: OEB Morning News Summary - Thursday, January 5, 2017

Good morning,

Here is the OEB news summary for Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017.

OVERVIEW

The Toronto Sun published an article featuring the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), which says medium-sized businesses in Ontario are being "put at a competitive disadvantage" because they're either too small or too big to qualify for provincial breaks on punishing hydro costs. Julie Kwiecinski, CFIB's director of provincial affairs, said business owners have been calling after learning they don't qualify for the Ontario government's 8% rebate because they don’t meet usage criteria. Dan Moulton from the Ministry is quoted in the story saying average industrial electricity prices are in the "middle of the pack" compared to other Canadian provinces or American states, but said the government acknowledges that costs have increased and remain a concern for some small-and medium-sized businesses. He said the government intends to dedicate some of the proceeds from its cap-and-trade program to keeping electricity rates affordable for business.

QP Briefing published an article on the OESP program based on an OEB decision that went out on Dec. 21 regarding credits, which states that the OEB will be reviewing the OESP program. The reporter Geoff Zochodne reached out to the OEB Media Relations on Tuesday requesting information about the review, why it’s being conducted and how many applications/people enrolled in the program currently, which was provided to him and used in his story.

Cap and trade coverage continued yesterday and overnight across a number of outlets, including a The Toronto Sun, which published a column by Lorrie Goldstein, who addresses some misconceptions about carbon pricing including its impact on gasoline prices. Again, like we’ve seen in most Sun articles on cap and trade, Goldstein uses the government’s projected $2 billion annually in dividends from the program to suggest it will cost the average household $400 a year. The Ottawa Citizen’s Brian Platt also wrote about cap and trade and gas prices, and similar to Goldstein, acknowledged gasoline prices will go up in 2017, but cap and trade only has a small impact and the prices are rising for other reasons.

Howard Elliott wrote an editorial in the Hamilton Spectator on cap and trade, supporting the program and saying it’s “worth the cost” to take a leading role in reducing carbon emissions.

Environment Minister Glen Murray’s letter to the editor on cap and trade, which was published yesterday in the Owen Sound Sun-Times, was also published overnight in the Sudbury Star.

Coverage on Hydro One’s possible link to Russian hacking continued to be picked up and published yesterday and overnight.

FLAGGED FOR DISCUSSION

**The following items will be discussed by the communications team on the daily media and issues call.*

- Toronto Sun Piece on Medium Sized Businesses
- Cap and Trade

SOCIAL MEDIA

There are no items of concern to report on social media.

From: Infomart Newsletters
Date: Thursday, January 5, 2017 at 8:05 AM
To: Jeff Blay
Subject: Morning News Clippings - Thursday, January 5, 2017

View in Browser

Morning News Clippings

powered by: infomart

Date: Thursday, January 5, 2017
Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@ontarioenergyboard.ca)

Contact Editor

Clippings Summary

News - 22 Results

A year of reckoning for Brown, Horwath: Hepburn

thestar.com - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Bob Hepburn(https://author.thestar.com/ »)
Reach: 999000

It's a widely held belief in politics that governments fall by defeating themselves rather than an opposition party seizing victory on the strength of a charismatic leader or a compelling election platform. That scenario is playing itself out in ...

Possible cyber threat against Hydro One

Toronto Sun - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $2,124
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

Ontario's **HydroOne** says it is assisting Canadian law enforcement agencies in an ongoing investigation into a possible cyber threat against the **electricity** distributor. The company's chief security officer, Rick ...

'Zombie' hackers hungry for power; Old, unused IP addresses tempting prey for bots, security expert warns in wake of Hydro One hit

Toronto Star - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Peter Goffin Toronto Star

Ad Value: $12,041
Reach: 361323 **Page:** A1

A cyberattack on an archaic, unused IP address at **Hydro** **One** could be part of a broader hacking campaign, security experts say. Rick Haier, chief security officer of **Hydro** **One**, said the utility was ...

Ontario utility probes possible cyber threat

National Post - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $1,746
Reach: 159480 **Page:** A6

Ontario's **HydroOne** says it is assisting Canadian police agencies in an investigation into a possible cyber threat against the **electricity** distributor. The company's chief security officer, Rick Haier, said the ...

'Alarm bells' going off; Mid-size businesses don't qualify for hydro break?

Toronto Sun - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Antonella Artuso

Ad Value: $4,432
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

Medium-sized businesses are being put at a competitive disadvantage because they're either too small or too big to qualify for provincial breaks on punishing **hydro** costs, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) says. Julie ...

Queen's Park is squeezing the poor taxpayer

Niagara Falls Review - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Joe Galaburda

Ad Value: $143
Reach: 18119 **Page:** A6

Another day means another opportunity to tax us out of more of our diminishing disposable income. For example, why order a change in the billing of **hydro** from two months to every month, which will cost Horizon an extra $2.4 million to ...

Living in Ontario gets more expensive in the New Year

Kincardine News - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Positive
Byline: John Miner
Page: A7

Happy New Year and keep your wallet handy. You're going to be paying more for a whole bunch of Ontario government services starting Jan. 1, although there are a few breaks coming your way, too. The big hit is the Wynne government's ...

Lots of time for Wynne to rebound for win

Northumberland Today.com · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Larry Comeau

Ad Value: $186
Reach: 22777 **Page:** A4

Re: "Another Wynne win not out of question," Dec. 30. I hate to agree with Peter Epp, but even though Premier Wynne is at 13 per cent in recent polls, there is lots of time for her to rebound and win the next election. Let's not forget, she ...

Wynne may still pull off a victory

Sarnia This Week · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Peter Epp

Ad Value: $270
Reach: 22937 **Page:** A4

It's not inconceivable that Kathleen Wynne, Canada's least popular premier, could win the next provincial election in 2018. After a year in which her popularity dropped like a stone, mostly because of skyrocketing **electricity** bills, ...

Ontario Liberals are California scheming

Waterloo Region Record · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Peter Shawn Taylor Peter Shawn Taylor

Ad Value: $3,629
Reach: 63465 **Page:** A7

Since I didn't get a Christmas card from Kathleen Wynne, I can only imagine what sort of holiday greeting the premier sent out. But based on her end-of-year interviews, it was probably something like those cards that offer seasonal greetings in ...

Putting a price on carbon worth the cost

The Hamilton Spectator · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Howard Elliott

Ad Value: $2,431
Reach: 103267 **Page:** A12

It's a good time to be a tax-hater in Canada. In Ontario, and in Alberta, governments have just introduced measures that amount to a tax on carbon. And the federal government has said all provinces have to have some carbon pricing plan in effect by ...

CapAnd Trade Right Plan

Sudbury Star · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $541
Reach: 14934 **Page:** A10

Scientists agree - 2016 was the hottest year ever recorded. Whether it was higher costs due to a hotter summer or more severe flooding because of a faster spring melt, families and businesses - both urban and rural - felt the impact of ...

Cap-and-trade will hurt low-income families the most; Dobbyn says Grey-Bruce will see "very little benefit"

Hanover Post · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Denis Langlois

Ad Value: $504
Reach: 15209 **Page:** A9

The head of the United Way of Bruce Grey says she has "incredible concerns" about how Ontario's capand-trade program - which came into effect on Jan.1- will impact families that already struggle to pay their bills and put food on the table. ...

Naturalgas rate increases; Cap and trade adding between $5.68 and $6.70 on average per month

Lake of the Woods Enterprise · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral **Page:** A9

Natural gas customers across Ontario will see increases on their bills in the new year, but overall, prices will remain lower in 2017 than they have been during recent peak periods - even when factoring in the cost of ...

Snow, freezing rain in Ontario and Quebec; deepfreeze in BC and the Prairies

THE NATIONAL · Wed Jan 4 2017, 10:00pm ET
Tone: Positive
Byline: CAMERON MACINTOSH; MATT VEITH; DEREK ALBANA; JACK MARTIN

PAUL HUNTER (HOST): Well, across much of the country, it was a nasty day to be outside. Snow and freezing rain knocked out **power** to tens of thousands of people in eastern Ontario and Quebec, while parts of B.C. and the Prairies are in ...

Power outages in central, eastern Ontario due to weather | Globalnews.ca

globalnews.ca · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Hydro One says high winds, freezing rain and heavy snow that started late Tuesday night in areas throughout central and eastern Ontario are causing electricity outages across its distribution system.

Arrival of 2017 brings numerous new measures to the province

St. Lawrence News · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $164
Reach: 28201 **Page:** A6

Legislation and regulation changes that came into effect on Jan. 1 are aimed at helping to lower the cost of living, strengthen protections for consumers, and make Ontario a more inclusive place to live, work and raise a family, according to a ...

Relocating nuclear-waste bunker would cost billions

Toronto Star - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Colin Perkel The Canadian Press

Ad Value: $9,795
Reach: 361323 **Page:** A6

Relocating a nuclear-waste bunker from its proposed site on Lake Huron would cost billions of dollars, take decades to execute and increase health and environmental risks, according to a new report by the project's proponent. The report by ...

Bruce nuke dump ideal, study says; But critics dispute OPG's finding Kincardine-area site cheapest, safest option for deep waste vault

London Free Press - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Debora Van Brenk

Ad Value: $8,360
Reach: 70995 **Page:** A1 / Front

A deep vault for dry radioactive waste could technically be built somewhere beyond the giant Bruce nuclear plant - but at a higher cost, at greater transport risk and with no environmental advantage, says a new report prepared for the federal ...

Today's cartoon: Hydro clarity

www.durhamregion.com - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Today's cartoon is by Steve Nease.

Council wants to hear both sides before opposing Energy East pipeline

www.sackvilletribunepost.com - Wed Jan 4 2017
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Paul Crawford noted on Wednesday, January 4, 2017
Energy East is mentioned.

Members of town council will get into more discussion and debate on the Energy East pipeline in the new year.

U.S. energy department pulls plug on windmills

London Free Press - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $604
Reach: 70995 **Page:** N7

A plan to build windmills off the New Jersey coast that has already burned through nearly $11 million and remains dead in the water is being cut off from further government funding. The U.S. Department of Energy says Fishermen's ...

Clippings Summary

Full Articles

A year of reckoning for Brown, Horwath: Hepburn

thestar.com · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Bob Hepburn(https://author.thestar.com/ »)
Reach: 999000

It's a widely held belief in politics that governments fall by defeating themselves rather than an opposition party seizing victory on the strength of a charismatic leader or a compelling election platform.

That scenario is playing itself out in Ontario, where the Liberals under Premier Kathleen Wynne are feeling a lot of panic these days as the government lurches from bad news to more bad news.

The reasons for the Liberals' panic are obvious: a series of political scandals, soaring **electricity rates**, a struggling provincial economy and a general sense of fatigue after more than 13 years in **power**.

At this stage, Wynne appears down and out, with her approval rating at an all-time low of 14 per cent, the worst for any premier in Canada. One pollster (poll.forumresearch.com) is now predicting a "supermajority" victory for the Conservatives in the 2018 election, with the Liberals a distant third behind the second-place NDP.

Despite the favourable signs pointing their way, though, both the Tories and NDP run a serious risk of seeing their current advantages fade due to questionable leadership and internal strife within their own ranks.

Indeed, 2017 will be a year of reckoning for both Conservative leader Patrick Brown and NDP leader Andrea Horwath.

Over the next 12 months, Brown's strategy will be to say as little as possible, hammer away at a few key issues, such as **hydro rates**, and drive home a message that "it's time for change" given that the Liberals will have been in **power** for 15 years by the time the June 7, 2018, election rolls around.

As the year starts, Brown doesn't seem to be facing any serious trouble unless the small but highly vocal social conservative wing of the party undermines his caucus unity.

But Brown's lead in the polls is vulnerable. Despite being party leader for 17 months, he is still relatively unknown by voters.

More troubling is that some party insiders dismiss him as not a strong leader in the style of Mike Harris and others suggest he may not have control of his often-contentious legislative caucus.

Worrisome signs are already emerging for Brown.

First, he's gaining a reputation as a politician who flip-flops on key issues, as highlighted by his handling of the party's position on the updated sex-education curriculum.

Second, he's fighting a rearguard action against aggressive social conservatives (www.thestar.com) within the party who backed his 2015 leadership bid, but now feel he has betrayed them by announcing he has intention of rolling back abortion rights, gay marriage or the new sex ed curriculum.

Deb Hutton, a former top aide to Mike Harris and the wife of former Tory leader Tim Hudak, writing recently in QP Briefing (www.qpbriefing.com) newsletter, dismisses articles about the role of social conservatives within the party. "The notion that there is a growing shift in the makeup of the Ontario PC Party, or that the party is deeply divided along these lines is ridiculous," she wrote.

But then she criticized Brown, saying he "self-inflicted" the "wound" to some extent himself by trying to "distance himself from his previous position on some of these issues."

In particular, she noted that Brown's handling of Bill 28, the All Families Are Equal Act, "once again shone a light on issues that do little to lead to his electoral success in 2018." Hutton concluded that unless Brown "can find a way to shift the media focus from social issues, it will be a tougher road ahead."

For Horwath, the risk is that she plays it too safe, believing NDP voters who abandoned the party in the 2014 election and voted strategically for the Wynne Liberals in order to ensure Hudak was defeated will simply return to the fold in 2018.

But after nearly eight years as NDP leader, Horwath still seems to lack true political gut instincts. The most recent example of that is her decision to oppose Toronto's plan to impose tolls on the Don Valley Parkway and Gardiner Expressway. That directly conflicts with the views of every NDP-leaning Toronto councillor, the very people Horwath needs to help run her campaign in the city.

The anti-toll stand was "the last straw" for Paul Ferreira, a former MPP who quit the party (www.thestar.com) in protest. Ferreira is likely not alone in the NDP in his views.

As the Conservatives and NDP see it, there's lots of time for Brown and Horwath to "fix" these issues, gain control of their caucus, and get through 2017 with a game plan that includes consistent stands on key policies.

The question is what happens if Brown and Horwath fail to do just that.

Bob Hepburn's column appears Thursday. bhepburn@thestar.ca (mailto:bhepburn@thestar.ca)

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Possible cyber threat against Hydro One

Toronto Sun - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $2,124
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

Ontario's **Hydro** One says it is assisting Canadian law enforcement agencies in an ongoing investigation into a possible cyber threat against the **electricity** distributor.

The company's chief security officer, Rick Haier, says they were contacted by the RCMP on Dec. 29.

Haier suggests that a company IP address, which may have been the target of the cyber threat, is old, inactive and not connected to the **power** system.

Hydro One says in a statement that as the owner and operator of critical infrastructure, it takes its responsibility to combat cyber security very seriously.

The company says it has no reason to believe that its **power** system has been compromised.

The RCMP says it works diligently to disrupt cybercrime, but wouldn't comment on this matter in order to "protect a potential criminal investigation."

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'Zombie' hackers hungry for power ; Old, unused IP addresses tempting prey for bots, security expert warns in wake of Hydro One hit

Toronto Star - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Peter Goffin Toronto Star

Ad Value: $12,041
Reach: 361323 **Page:** A1

A cyberattack on an archaic, unused IP address at **Hydro** One could be part of a broader hacking campaign, security experts say.

Rick Haier, chief security officer of **Hydro** One, said the utility was contacted by the RCMP on Dec. 29, alerting it to an IP address in the company's system that had been targeted by hackers.

"The address in question is not an active IP address at **Hydro** One nor is it connected to the **power** system," Haier said in a written statement.

Hydro One has no reason to believe that its **power** system has been compromised, the company added.

But attacks on individual pieces of software are not necessarily targeted at that entity or its owners, said Ira Goldstein, a senior vice-president at Herjavec Group, an IT security firm.

These so-called "zombie" or "bot" hacks search for weak spots in the security of anything connected to the Internet, Goldstein said.

Internet protocol addresses, servers, computers and even baby monitors with Wi-Fi connections could be preyed upon, he said.

A virus is then sent to these vulnerable items, which allows them to be taken over and used for some separate, likely nefarious, purpose.

"A lot of the attacks that are happening on the Internet are just automated programs ... where people are setting up programs for criminal (or) political means," said Goldstein, who is not involved in the **Hydro** One hacking case and would not comment specifically on it.

Goldstein gave the example of hackers taking over thousands of Internet-connected items and using them all to bombard an organization's inbox with emails in an attempt to crash its system.

The IP address targeted in the **Hydro** One attack was set up in the 1990s by the now-defunct Ontario **Hydro**, said company spokesperson Tiziana Rosa.

When Ontario **Hydro** was split into smaller companies, the IP address migrated to **Hydro** One, but it is not used by anyone there, Rosa added.

Goldstein said older software or hardware devices can be the most vulnerable to cyberattacks, in part, because they are unused.

"If you're not monitoring them all the time, and you're not decommissioning them when someone leaves the company, and you're not having adequate controls on them then, that could be said to be the most dangerous thing," he said.

"The assets that you know the most about are probably the ones you're protecting the best."

The RCMP declined to comment on the hack or confirm the details provided by **Hydro** One.

"The RCMP is aware of the media reports and cannot comment any further in order to protect a potential criminal investigation," spokesperson Harold Pfleiderer said.

On Dec. 29, the FBI and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued a report outlining the tools and methods used by Russian military and civilian hackers in an "ongoing campaign" targeting government, infrastructure, think-tanks, universities, political groups and private companies in the U.S.

Homeland Security shared that report with "foreign government partners, including in the Canadian government," on Dec. 29, said agency spokesperson Scott McConnell.

Russian hackers have "conducted damaging and/or disruptive cyberattacks, including attacks on critical infrastructure networks" outside the U.S. as well, the report says.

The report includes a list of "signatures" used by Russian hackers and indicators that a network has been compromised.

In some cases, Russian hackers used fake online identities to mislead victims about the source of cyberattacks, said the FBI and Homeland Security.

With files from The Canadian Press

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Ontario utility probes possible cyber threat

National Post · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $1,746
Reach: 159480 **Page:** A6

Ontario's **Hydro** One says it is assisting Canadian police agencies in an investigation into a possible cyber threat against the **electricity** distributor. The company's chief security officer, Rick Haier, said the utility was contacted by the RCMP on Dec. 29. However, a company IP address that may have been the target of the cyber threat is old, inactive and not connected to the **power** system, he said. **Hydro** One said in a statement that as the owner and operator of critical infrastructure, it takes its responsibility to combat cyber security very seriously. The company said it had no reason to believe its **power** system has been compromised. While saying that it works diligently to disrupt cybercrime, the RCMP would not comment on the matter in order to "protect a potential criminal investigation."

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'Alarm bells' going off; Mid-size businesses don't qualify for hydro break?

Toronto Sun · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Antonella Artuso

Ad Value: $4,432
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

Medium-sized businesses are being put at a competitive disadvantage because they're either too small or too big to qualify for provincial breaks on punishing **hydro** costs, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) says.

Julie Kwiecinski, CFIB's director of provincial affairs, said business owners have been calling after learning they don't qualify for the Ontario government's 8% **rebate** on **electricity** prices that began Jan. 1.

"We've heard enough for alarm bells to go off," she said. "I would call them the forgotten middle sector of corporate Ontario."

Bill 13, which provides an 8% reduction in **hydro** bills before taxes - equal to the provincial portion of the **HST** - only applies to customers whose peak use doesn't exceed 50 kW and whose annual use doesn't top 250,000 kWh.

While this definition includes most small businesses, it shuts out many medium -sized companies, Kwiecinski said.

The province's Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI) provides financial incentives to large **electricity** consumers to encourage them to shift their use to off-peak hours.

Although the government announced in September that it would make it easier to qualify for the break - by reducing the threshold to one MW of peak use a month from three MWs - most mediumsized companies still don't make the cut, Kwiecinski said.

Dan Moulton, a spokesman for **Energy** Minister Glenn Thibeault, said average industrial **electricity** prices are in the "middle of the pack" compared to other Canadian provinces or American states.

"Any suggestion otherwise is false," Moulton insisted in an e-mail.

However, the government acknowledges that costs have increased as it went about "rebuilding and modernizing the badlyneglected **electricity** system we inherited from the previous Conservative government," and remain a concern for some small-and medium-sized businesses, he said.

The government intends to dedicate some of the proceeds from its **cap-and-trade** program to keeping **electricity** **rates** affordable for business, he said.

The Ontario government expects to take in about $1.9 billion annually from the **cap-and-trade** program which launched Jan. 1.

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Queen's Park is squeezing the poor taxpayer

NIAGARA FALLS REVIEW

Niagara Falls Review - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Joe Galaburda

Ad Value: $143
Reach: 18119 **Page:** A6

Another day means another opportunity to tax us out of more of our diminishing disposable income.

For example, why order a change in the billing of **hydro** from two months to every month, which will cost Horizon an extra $2.4 million to implement - and then suggest "we are empowering the customer."

Why refuse to show the actual cost of carbon fees on bills to reveal the impact on us. Why not **rebate** the **HST** on the extra cost of the **energy** tax, which the B.C.

government has done for its population.

The Ontario government is acting like the sheriff of Nottingham, tormenting and draining the weary and depleted taxpayer. Unfortunately, we don't have a Robin Hood to save us from our iniquitous sheriff.

Joe Galaburda

St. Catharines

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Living in Ontario gets more expensive in the New Year

KincardineNews

Kincardine News · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Positive
Byline: John Miner
Page: A7

Happy New Year and keep your wallet handy.

You're going to be paying more for a whole bunch of Ontario government services starting Jan. 1, although there are a few breaks coming your way, too.

The big hit is the Wynne government's **cap-and-trade** program aimed at fighting **climate** change.

If you heat with **natural gas**, you will pay about $70 to $80 a year more, according to an estimate released by **Union Gas**.

At the **gas** pump, expect to pay out about 4.3 cents a litre extra in 2017 for **cap-and-trade**.

On the plus side of the ledger, Ontario will cut **electricity** bills by about eight per cent when it drops its portion of the **HST**.

The province also is doubling the maximum refund of the land-transfer tax to $4,000 for first-time home buyers, which means they won't pay the tax on the first $368,000 of a purchase price.

Premier Kathleen Wynne touted the savings in a statement unveiling the changes: "We are building an Ontario where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from our growing economy. .. inclusive communities and. .. high quality of life."

Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Monte McNaughton, Tory critic for economic development and growth, said the **electricity** savings are "too little, too late," and **cap-and-trade** costs are sure to hurt.

"Life is going to be much harder under the Liberal government and it is going to continue in 2017 and beyond. Families are going to continue to suffer under Kathleen Wynne's poor management," McNaughton said Monday.

It's not only the province reaching for more money in 2017.

London households get hit with a 2.8 per cent property-tax increase Jan. 1, an extra $76 on an average home assessed at $221,000.

Families with children will get a break in the new year when kids 12 and under will ride free on London Transit buses. Currently only children under five don't have to pay.

Other new provincial fees and fee hikes coming in the new year: Appealing your assessment: fees for residential appeals go up to $125 from $75. Fees for nonresidential appeals change to $300 from $150.

Getting your suspended driver's licence reinstated will cost $198 in 2017, up from the current $180 Fee for a land severance application rises to $800 from $720.

Hunters will no longer have to pay $35 for the wild turkey education course, but commercial fishing licence fees are going up.

A series of regulation changes Jan. 1 won't cost you, but could change your life. They include: Restaurant chains with 20 or more Ontario locations must start posting caloric content, but not sodium levels, on menus.

Travel agents and wholesalers must include the all-in price for their services and vacation packages in all advertising.

Towing companies must post **rates** for towing and vehicle storage on their trucks and provide itemized invoices. They must also accept credit cards and cannot demand cash.

Child support will no longer be treated as income for people on social assistance or disability payments, ending the provincial clawback from some of its lowestincome residents.

The maximum cost of a payday loan will drop to $18 from $21 for every $100 borrowed.

The updated Smoke Free Ontario Act will ban sale of clove cigarettes and most menthol-flavoured tobacco products.

Police in Ontario will no longer be able to engage in carding, or random street checks.

With files from The Canadian Press Some Jan. 1 ups and downs **Natural gas**: $70 to $80 a year hike for Ontario's **cap-and-trade** program **Gas**: About 4.3 cent a litre hike for **cap and trade** **Electricity**: Eight per cent decrease because province will no longer collect

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Lots of time for Wynne to rebound for win

Northumberland Today.com - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Larry Comeau

Ad Value: $186
Reach: 22777 **Page:** A4

Re: "Another Wynne win not out of question," Dec. 30.

I hate to agree with Peter Epp, but even though Premier Wynne is at 13 per cent in recent polls, there is lots of time for her to rebound and win the next election. Let's not forget, she controls the purse strings, the public service unions and has a rock-solid grasp on the GTA, where so many seats are. She continues to funnel millions into that area.

Wynne's recent move to lower **hydro** costs was done to show voters she is aware of their concerns. In Wynne's favour is the fact Conservative Leader Patrick Brown simply is not catching on with Ontarians and remains basically unknown to many. Also, Brown is not providing a clear voter choice, as his policies on the green **energy** program, the economykilling carbon tax and providing sex education to very young children are mirror images of Wynne's policies. There is also dissention within the ranks of the PCs as the social conservatives stake out their territory.

As Mr. Epp points out, Ontarians have proven to have very poor memories come election time.

The next election will be very important for Ontario going forward, as getting more of the same with a Wynne government, with the current $11 billion deficit and nearly $300 billion debt, may well mean Ontario goes over the fiscal cliff! Larry Comeau Ottawa

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Wynne may still pull off a victory

Sarnia This Week - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Peter Epp

Ad Value: $270
Reach: 22937 **Page:** A4

It's not inconceivable that Kathleen Wynne, Canada's least popular premier, could win the next provincial election in 2018. After a year in which her popularity dropped like a stone, mostly because of skyrocketing **electricity** bills, Ontario's premier appears to be taking stock of her position and recalibrating her image and that of her party.

First there was her public retreat from the Green **Energy** Policy. Although the cost of developing an infrastructure for **wind** and **solarenergy** can't account entirely for Ontario's lofty **electricity** prices, they remain a visual reminder of a program that has been costly and is linked to higher **electricity** prices.

Wynne in September said her government wouldn't pursue new contracts under the Green **Energy** Policy. That doesn't mean existing contracts worth billions of dollars have been cancelled, but she has managed to momentarily distance herself from the program.

Secondly, in November she apologized to those who attended the annual general meeting of the provincial Liberal party, assuming the blame for the government's negative image, and promising to correct what needs to be corrected.

Thirdly, Wynne has been making overtures to those regions outside of the GTA that, for a variety of reasons, haven't fared as well in a strengthening Ontario economy. She has alluded to Donald Trump's triumph in U.S. election, concluding that while the conditions she believes led to his victory don't necessarily exist in Ontario, she wants to make sure they never do. To that end, Wynne has promised to make a greater effort in reaching out to the rest of the province - believing, perhaps arrogantly, that such an effort will endear herself and her government to those parts of Ontario where she hasn't achieved electoral support.

Such an effort would appear to be doomed, but it worked for Wynne in 2014 when she led her government to a resounding victory. The Liberals, weighed down by scandal, were ripe for the picking by the Progressive Conservatives. But PC leader Tim Hudak blundered by announcing a 100,000-job loss in the civil service if elected (the fact the reduction would be over eight years and achieved mostly through attrition was lost in the hysteria that followed) and Wynne coasted to victory.

The biggest thing Wynne has in her favour is the fickle memory of the electorate. Her personal support is low now, but the judgment that counts will come in June 2018.

~ Peter Epp

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Ontario Liberals are California scheming

Waterloo Region Record - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Peter Shawn Taylor Peter Shawn Taylor

Ad Value: $3,629
Reach: 63465 **Page:** A7

Since I didn't get a Christmas card from Kathleen Wynne, I can only imagine what sort of holiday greeting the premier sent out.

But based on her end-of-year interviews, it was probably something like those cards that offer seasonal greetings in numerous languages - Joyeux Noël, Buon Natale, Fröhliche Weihnachten; only I'm guessing the premier's festive missive featured countless different ways of saying: 'Sorry for jacking up your **hydro** bill.'

Thanks to green **energy** boondoggles, crass politics and general ideological incompetence, Ontario has the highest all-in cost for **electricity** in North America. The public outrage this has created is clearly a major preoccupation for the Ontario Liberals.

Now, with the new year upon us, comes even higher costs due to the impact of **cap and trade** on **electricity**, home heating, transportation etc.

But while Wynne is facing further grief from residents and opposition parties for these new costs, outside the province she's being criticized for unfairly sheltering Ontario residents from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's national carbon tax plan.

Complaining about Ontario's **cap-and-trade** system last month, British Columbia Premier Christy Clark said "There's nothing good about people in Terrace (B.C.) paying double in their carbon price than people in Toronto."

At home Wynne is getting hammered for rising **energy** costs. Elsewhere she's being attacked for not raising **energy** costs high enough. What gives?

To square this circle, we have to understand what's really going on with Ontario's **cap-and-trade** system. And what's likely to become of Trudeau's so-called national plan. Starting in 2018, Trudeau has decreed all provinces must price carbon emissions at $10 per tonne, rising annually by $10 until 2022, when the national carbon tax will hit $50.

Provinces such as Ontario and Quebec that opt for **cap and trade** (which involves the sale of carbon emissions permits) are exempt from the national tax provided their system delivers results similar to a tax. The goal of Trudeau's plan is to ensure carbon prices are roughly equal across all provinces.

Yet current projections suggest there will be huge differences in carbon prices between provinces with Trudeau's carbon tax and those with **cap and trade**.

Ontario will be linked with Quebec and California in a cross-border emissions permit trading scheme called the Western **Climate** Initiative. Because California's economy is so much larger, permit prices in Ontario will largely be determined by decisions made in the Golden State.

To avoid Ontario-style outrage over **electricity** prices, California has deliberately created a vast oversupply of carbon permits to mute the effect of **cap and trade**. Many of these policies offer no real benefit to the environment. Ontario's decision to go with **cap and trade** is all about gaining access to this gold mine of low-price carbon permits.

According to Californiacarbon.info, a carbon market advisory service, the price this year is expected to be around $18 (all figures Canadian dollars) per tonne. By 2020, when the rest of the country will be paying $30 per tonne under Trudeau's plan, Ontario permit prices are predicted to be $20. In 2022, when the national carbon tax hits $50, prices in our province will be just $24.

As B.C. already has a $30/tonne carbon tax, Clark appears to have a strong argument about Ontario's carbon prices.

"The only reason **cap and trade** is cheaper (than a tax) is because it makes available all these cheap credits from California," says Mark Cameron, executive director of the environmental lobby group Canadians for Clean Prosperity.

For Ontario residents fed up with sky-high **electricity** bills, this turn of events might seem like some rare good news. By making a deal with California, we'll end up paying less for carbon emissions than folks in other provinces. Payback time!

But hold the celebrations. Those price breaks Ontario gets from hooking up with California may not last very long.

As the provincial Auditor General noted in her report late last year, there are many reasons to worry about the permanence of California's carbon gold rush. If we lose access to those cheap American permits, perhaps due to legal actions or the policies of incoming U.S. President Donald Trump, Ontario's **energy** costs will skyrocket.

According to Ontario's own background research, without access to California's bargain basement of permits, provincial prices would have to rise from $18 per tonne to an astonishing $157 by next year. Such a hike would instantly cripple the Ontario economy.

And even if the California permit party continues, it seems unlikely other provinces will allow Ontario and Quebec to give themselves such a huge economic advantage into perpetuity.

Big discrepancies in carbon prices across the country are "potentially a big problem," observes Cameron in an interview. "Substantial differences in price suggest major disparities in effort."

This is why Clark extracted a promise from Ottawa to review cross-country carbon prices in 2020 to ensure all provinces are being treated fairly. If B.C. and Alberta are paying double the carbon price as Ontario and Quebec by that time, you can expect political fireworks.

Trudeau will then either have to force prices up in **cap-and-trade** provinces, or watch as his national plan crumbles amid provincial dissension.

Alongside death and taxes, it seems rising **electricity** prices have become another of life's certainties.

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

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Putting a price on carbon worth the cost

The Hamilton Spectator - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: **Negative**
Byline: Howard Elliott

Ad Value: $2,431
Reach: 103267 **Page:** A12

It's a good time to be a tax-hater in Canada. In Ontario, and in Alberta, governments have just introduced measures that amount to a tax on carbon. And the federal government has said all provinces have to have some carbon pricing plan in effect by the end of this year or early 2018.

It's a feast for those who disagree. Carbon taxes won't work, they shriek. And the timing is all wrong. And if they do work it won't make any difference in terms of world greenhouse **gas** emissions, especially since Donald Trump doesn't even believe **climate** change is real. (The U.S. president-elect says it's a hoax perpetrated on the world by China.) Whatever modest contribution Canada makes won't make a measurable difference if big producers like the U.S., China and India don't do their part.

So why bother? Why make Canadians pay more?

The central question is really very simple. Do we, as individuals, communities and a country, need to take measures to discourage the use of carbon-based (and therefore GHG producing) fuels and industries and move toward less damaging, more sustainable economic drivers? Unless you are in complete denial, you can see the evidence of the problem all around you. Is doing nothing, as proposed by dissenting national leaders like Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, really a viable option?

Happily, our federal government and most provincial leaders agree the answer is no. Is the timing right? There's never a good time to introduce new taxes. And in an economy like Alberta's, with the oil sector only now showing some signs of recovery, it wouldn't be hard to argue the timing isn't ideal. Ontario's situation is different. While individuals and families are struggling, in part due to government mismanagement of **hydro**, the province's economy overall is relatively strong - Ontario's economic performance led the nation last year and is forecast to continue strong growth through this year.

In short, although there's never a good time for new taxes, this is a good time for Ontario to begin playing a role in helping Canada catch up on environmental stewardship. Does that mean Ontarians should just suck it up and not complain? Not at all. The government promised real relief on **hydro** bill increases that have resulted from government ineptitude and failed policies. So far they've just tinkered. More fundamental change and relief is necessary, and Ontarians are right to insist on that.

Why should Canada act when Trump promises to move in the other direction? Why drive safely when many others don't? Why recycle when others litter? Why do the right thing when so many don't give a damn? Because it's the right thing to do. Sometimes that's enough, which is the case on carbon pricing.

Howard Elliott

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Cap And Trade Right Plan

Sudbury Star - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $541
Reach: 14934 **Page:** A10

Scientists agree - 2016 was the hottest year ever recorded. Whether it was higher costs due to a hotter summer or more severe flooding because of a faster spring melt, families and businesses - both urban and rural - felt the impact of **climate** change. These same consequences are also being felt on a global scale. Recognizing this, governments, businesses and citizens from around the world are taking action to fight **climate** change by committing to significantly reduce the amount of greenhouse **gas** pollution we emit. As a green leader, Ontario is committed to doing its part.

Last fall, the Federal Government announced its plan to fight **climate** change that will soon see the entire country covered by a carbon price. Within that framework, Ontario is moving forward with our **Climate** Change Action Plan, which includes putting a cap on the amount of emissions businesses can release into the atmosphere. We're taking this approach because it guarantees GHG reductions at the cheapest price possible for families and businesses, unlike a carbon tax scheme, which would cost four times more without guaranteeing any reductions.

Ontario is also reinvesting every dollar collected, allowing us to support up to $8.3 billion in green projects that fight **climate** change like transit, **electric** vehicle incentives and housing retrofits. These investments will help families and businesses reduce costs and make the switch to non-polluting choices easier and less expensive. This is a fair, responsible approach that has the support of third-party experts, businesses and other governments.

We know that the longer we wait to act on **climate** change, the more it will cost. Canadian business leaders agree, recently penning an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau calling the global shift to a low-carbon economy a "major economic opportunity and a vital environmental responsibility for Canada." Being a leader puts Ontario in the best position for long-term economic growth, allowing us to benefit from the opportunities and new jobs that will come with this transition. Our **Climate** Change Action Plan will help us do that.

With national carbon pricing being the new reality, we've worked hard to lead from the middle ground, balancing the need for action with what's best for Ontario families and businesses. Together with our Action Plan, we can make sure our children and grandchildren are poised for success in the new low-carbon economy.

Glen Murray

Environment and **Climate** Change minister

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Cap-and-trade will hurt low-income families the most; Dobbyn says Grey-Bruce will see "very little benefit"

Hanover Post - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Denis Langlois

Ad Value: $504
Reach: 15209 **Page:** A9

The head of the United Way of Bruce Grey says she has "incredible concerns" about how Ontario's capand-trade program - which came into effect on Jan.1- will impact families that already struggle to pay their bills and put food on the table.

"Anything like this always hits people with low incomes the hardest," executive director Francesca Dobbyn said in an interview on Dec. 30.

"They have the least amount of choice, they spend a considerable amount more (of their income) on **energy** than people who are not low income and a lot of the rebates," such as to help with furnace upgrades, will not benefit low-income families because they cannot afford the up-front upgrade costs.

People in parts of the province like Grey-Bruce will reap "very little benefit" from the **cap-and-trade** program, she added.

"From a rural perspective, we don't have access to mass transit," she said.

"People have no choice in a rural area but to use their cars so the increased cost of **gas** is going to be significant for people."

The Liberal government says its **cap-and-trade** program is designed to help fight **climate** change. It aims to reduce greenhouse **gas** emissions to 15 per cent below 1990 levels within the next four years.

The province will set annual limits on how many tonnes of greenhouse **gas** pollution businesses and institutions can emit and that cap will drop each year. Companies will be able to buy and sell allowances.

The program is expected to cost the average Ontario household $13 more each month to fuel a car and heat a home, the province says.

A report by Ontario's auditor general Bonnie Lysyk said that amount will increase from $156 in 2017 to $210 in 2019 plus additional yearly indirect costs on goods and services of $75 in 2019.

The province says the program will generate about $1.9 billion annually, which will be used to support projects that reduce greenhouse **gas** emissions. They include things like improvements to public transit systems and enhancements to **home energy audit** and retrofit programs, which assist homeowners to replace things like furnaces, water heaters and windows.

The province says the program will not increase home **electricity** costs, as $1.32 billion of cap-andtrade revenue will help offset the impact on **electricity** bills.

However, the auditor's report says that revenue will have only a small impact on reducing expected **electricity** price increases, which are still projected to rise by 13 per cent for businesses and 23 per cent for households by 2020.

Dobbyn said the government's promise to remove eight per cent - equivalent to the provincial portion of the **HST** - from **hydro** bills and further reduce **electricity** costs for rural residents will be "eaten up" by the increases associated with the cap-andtrade program.

"Whether or not we'll see the savings we were hoping to on the household level remains to be seen," she said.

Dobbyn said people in Grey-Bruce would love to use public transit, but those systems are not available in most areas.

"My concern is all the revenue **cap-and-trade** will generate will go back into the cities to increase their transit," she said.

Dobbyn said if the province projects the average Ontario household will see their costs increase by $13 a month due to **cap-and-trade**, "then put up Ontario Works and Ontario Disability up $13 a month.

"If $13 a month is not a lot of money, then give it to the people."

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Natural gasrate increases; Cap and trade adding between $5.68 and $6.70 on average per month

Lake of the Woods Enterprise · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral **Page:** A9

Natural gas customers across Ontario will see increases on their bills in the new year, but overall, prices will remain lower in 2017 than they have been during recent peak periods - even when factoring in the cost of cap and trade, says the Ontario Energy Board.

The changes include the routine quarterly adjustment for the market price of the natural gas commodity - known as the Quarterly Rate Adjustment Mechanism - which has taken place every three months since 2001 and will impact rates for customers of Ontario's three natural gas utilities - Enbridge, Union Gas and NRG - beginning Jan. 1.

In addition, the OEB recently granted interim rates for cap and trade and a rate adjustment for utility operations for Enbridge and Union Gas - all of which will impact customer bills in 2017. Union Gas is also changing its rate zones to better reflect where it buys natural gas from and how it transports it to its customers.

"The Ontario Energy Board wants customers to be well informed about cap and trade, both the program and the cost," said Lyan Khazanchi, consumer and corporate communications. "That's why we announced the monthly bill impacts for cap and trade (Dec. 21); it will add between $5.68 and $6.70 on average per month to the typical residential customers' natural gas bill. The exact cost will depend on how much natural gas a customer uses each month. These are interim rates and will be further reviewed by the OEB in an open and transparent process where customers can participate."

The OEB says the typical Enbridge residential customer will see a monthly increase of about $6.40 - $6.70 due to cap and trade after a downward quarterly rate adjustment.

For Union Gas customers, the OEB says they can expect to pay between $4.65 and $13.54 more a month depending on which zone they live in.

Customers currently in one of four previous northern rate zones (Northern, Eastern, Western or Fort Frances) will be divided geographically into new rate zones: North West (west of Kapuskasing) and North East (Kapuskasing to North Bay). The cap and trade impact is $6.17 for all Union Gas customers.

The OEB says a typical NRG customer will see a $6.98 increase on their monthly gas bill, with the cap and trade impact being $5.68.

Under cap-and-trade, Enbridge, Union Gas and NRG are required to manage their own business operations and buy allowances to cover the emissions that their customers - including Ontario households and small businesses - produce.

The OEB says that despite these increases customers will still be paying "significantly less" than they were in peak periods in 2009 and 2014 due to factors such as high market prices and unusually cold weather.

Both Union Gas and Enbridge have indicated they will be meeting the OEB's expectation to include an onbill message about cap and trade, which includes a direct link to information about cap and trade costs on their websites.

-with files from Canadian Press

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Power outages in central, eastern Ontario due to weather | Globalnews.ca

globalnews.ca - Thu Jan 5 2017

Tone: Neutral

Hydro One says high winds, freezing rain and heavy snow that started late Tuesday night in areas throughout central and eastern Ontario are causing electricity outages across its distribution system.

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Arrival of 2017 brings numerous new measures to the province

St. Lawrence News · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $164
Reach: 28201 **Page:** A6

Legislation and regulation changes that came into effect on Jan. 1 are aimed at helping to lower the cost of living, strengthen protections for consumers, and make Ontario a more inclusive place to live, work and raise a family, according to a government news release.

The province: Doubled the maximum refund of the Land Transfer Tax for eligible first-time homebuyers to $4,000, meaning that qualifying purchasers will pay no Land Transfer Tax on the first $368,000 of the cost of their first home.

Reduced **electricity** bills by an amount equal to the eight per cent portion of the **HST** for five million families, farms and small businesses and providing additional relief to reduce eligible rural **electricity ratepayers**' bills by about 20 per cent.

Is no longer treating child support payments as income for those receiving social assistance, leaving families with more income. To better protect consumers, Ontario is: Requiring restaurant chains and other food services providers with 20 or more locations in Ontario to include caloric content on menus, giving people the information with which they can make informed and healthier food choices.

Increasing protections for consumers who use towing and vehicle storage services by requiring towing and storage providers to disclose **rates**, notify drivers of where their vehicle is stored, and provide an itemized invoice.

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Relocating nuclear-waste bunker would cost billions

Toronto Star · Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Byline: Colin Perkel The Canadian Press

Ad Value: $9,795
Reach: 361323 **Page:** A6

Relocating a nuclear-waste bunker from its proposed site on Lake Huron would cost billions of dollars, take decades to execute and increase health and environmental risks, according to a new report by the project's proponent.

The report by **Ontario Power Generation**, done at the request of the federal environment minister, also asserts that the public doesn't care about the proposal for a deep geologic repository (DGR), even though scores of Great Lakes communities in both Canada and the United States have denounced the plan.

"There is little interest among the general public regarding the DGR project," the report states. "Ontarians are not looking for information on nuclear waste disposal in large volumes. This topic is not a popular one, nor is it generating large volumes of curiosity."

In May 2015, an environmental review panel approved the project - currently estimated to cost about $2.4 billion - which would see a bunker built at the Bruce nuclear **power** plant near Kincardine, Ont. Hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of radioactive waste, now stored at the site above ground, would be buried in bedrock 680 metres deep, about 1.2 kilometres from Lake Huron.

The federal government has since delayed making a final decision on the plan, instead asking **OPG** last February to provide information on locating the repository elsewhere.

But changing the location now would add as much as $3.5 billion, **OPG** says. The money would go toward buying and preparing the needed land, as well as to packaging and shipping the dangerous waste. In addition, the utility says, the current plan to start burying the waste in 2026 would be derailed and the in-service date would likely be pushed back to as late as 2055.

While the study does not identify any actual sites, it does find that vast stretches of the province, including much of southern Ontario, would be geologically suitable for a bunker.

Perhaps the biggest risk posed by building somewhere else would be the need to truck the hazardous material as far as 2,000 kilometres, at a cost of up to $1.4 billion.

"Relocating the DGR project to an alternate location would require approximately 22,000 to 24,000 radioactive shipments, resulting in over a million kilometres of travel on public roadways throughout the duration of the transportation campaign," the study states. "The incremental conventional transportation risks are estimated to be between three and 69 road collisions. It would also add a small but incremental risk of exposure to radioactivity to the public and workers."

Preparing an alternate 900-hectare site, including clearing the area and creating road access, would also hurt wildlife habitat and cause environmental damage, the report says.

And finding another community willing to take the waste - Kincardine has been supportive of the project - won't be easy.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency will now review and assess the utility's report, allow time for public comment and come up with its own recommendations to Environment Minister Catherine McKenna in the fall.

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Bruce nuke dump ideal, study says; But critics dispute OPG's finding Kincardine-area site cheapest, safest option for deep waste vault

London Free Press - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Debora Van Brenk

Ad Value: $8,360
Reach: 70995 **Page:** A1 / Front

A deep vault for dry radioactive waste could technically be built somewhere beyond the giant Bruce nuclear plant - but at a higher cost, at greater transport risk and with no environmental advantage, says a new report prepared for the federal government.

One of the most contentious environmental issues in the Great Lakes basin, the so-called deep geologic repository (DGR) - deeper underground than the CN Tower is tall - is best sited at the Bruce Nuclear plant near Kincardine as originally planned, the study says.

Critics have said the plan to put the DGR at the Bruce, site of the world's largest operating nuclear plant, is flawed in that it's too close to the Great Lakes and it was the only site ever considered by Ontario's **power** producer.

The federal government last February ordered **Ontario Power Generation** (**OPG**) to examine at least two other areas for their potential geological, environmental and economic suitability.

OPG has spent nearly a year examining what could happen if the DGR was sited in Northern Ontario granite or Southern Ontario sedimentary rock.

The bottom line of the new report: All factors still point to Bruce as the ideal site.

Building at either of the other two would cost more than double the Bruce location, use millions more litres of fuel to haul the waste and take decades longer to build.

"The science says that our proposed location for the deep geologic repository is the safest possible solution for the storage of low-and intermediate-level nuclear waste," **OPG** spokesperson Kevin Powers said Wednesday.

The issue in a nutshell **Nuclear energy** has long been touted as a cleaner, greener alternative to fossil fuels. But there's always a price - highly radioactive fuel bundles and assorted detritus, such as work gloves and filters, that has come in contact with the process. in this case, **ontario Power Generation** is seeking a safe burial place for dry, low-to intermediatelevel waste - not fuel bundles - from ontario's nuclear **power** plants. its proposed bunker at Bruce **Power** would be built 680 metres underground, 1.2 kilometres from the edge of Lake Huron in impermeable limestone that hasn't budged through 450 million years of ice ages and glaciers. **oPG** says this is as safe as it gets; opponents say it can't be guaranteed safe enough.

"From an environmental perspective, there is no increased environmental safety for the lake or the people by moving it from the proposed (Bruce) site," the document says.

The report says it's also the best use of taxpayer dollars, with an estimated $2.4-billion price tag. The other two options would cost at least twice as much, it says. A joint review panel in 2015 concluded the Bruce site - 1.2 kilometres from Lake Huron, and 680 metres below the surface, in fissure-free, virtually impermeable ancient sedimentary rock that hasn't moved in millions of years - would be ideal.

"You can look at this geographically or geologically," Powers said. "Geographically, it's located 1.2 km from the lake. Geologically, it is 450 million years from the lake." But that conclusion doesn't mollify opponents, who say even the smallest failure of the DGR could contaminate Great Lakes drinking water on which 40 million North Americans depend.

"**OPG** has looked at this from the point of view that this will not leak. We have to look at this from the perspective that this will leak," said Beverly Fernandez, head of a lobby group called Stop the Nuclear Waste Dump.

"Putting a nuclear waste repository (at the Bruce) is more than risky. It's knowing disregard for the health of millions of people." She said 186 jurisdictions representing 22 million people have passed resolutions opposing the DGR near Kincardine, and a petition opposing the plan has drawn 150,000 signatures.

"**OPG** is looking for a shortcut solution to a major long-term problem," she said.

The vault would hold waste byproducts of the nuclear **power** production process: Ash from incinerated work gloves and solid waste that has come into contact with reactors. It would not include highly radioactive fuel rods (the long-term storage of which is the subject of another study, that one by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization).

Low-and mid-level nuclear waste from Ontario's nuclear **power** plants already is trucked to the Bruce site, where most of it is incinerated before it's stored in smaller vaults just below ground level.

This new report was submitted to the federal government by a year-end 2016 deadline and was made public late Tuesday.

The two alternate "sites" described in the report actually are broadly defined areas that take in most of northwestern Ontario and southern Ontario. Unlike at the Bruce site, no boreholes were **drilled** to determine suitability at any specific locations.

This report now goes before the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency for review and public comment. The federal Environment Ministry is then expected to decide late in 2017 whether to approve the application for construction.

Kincardine has offered to be a willing host for the project.

Construction approval hinges not only on getting the go-ahead from Ottawa, but also on the blessing of the area Saugeen-Ojibway Nation. Talks with the First Nation continue, Powers said.

Critics - including thousands of people, municipalities and environmental groups who have petitioned against a DGR so near the Great Lakes - say the project must also be a matter of international jurisdiction, because it affects the safety of shared waters.

But the latest report says a DGR would inevitably be in the Hudson Bay watershed or the Great Lakes watershed and, with enough time and money, could be naturally safe or be made safe.

"With appropriate rock characteristics and design, the proximity of a water body to the DGR is not relevant because the movement of any fluid or **gas**, even if it was released from the DGR, would not reach the water body until the radioactivity of such fluid or **gas** had diminished to the levels generally found naturally occurring throughout Ontario." Meanwhile, in a separate process, officials with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization have launched the early stages of how to deal with the highly radioactive, spent fuel bundles that are the guts of nuclear **power** plants. dvanbrenk@postmedia.com With files by Denis Langlois, Owen Sound Sun-Times What they said Kincardine Mayor Anne Eadie: "Quite pleased" with the results of the report. "Due diligence is always good and **OPG**'s latest report just reaffirms the Joint Review Panel's report and recommendations to the minister," she said. "It's out of our hands and we trust the experts to the make the right decisions." Eadie said studies have confirmed many times that a DGR can be operated safely at the Bruce site in Kincardine due to the area's geology. "We live by the lake and the safety of the lake is paramount to us. We all love our lake. We realize the importance of the lake, but we also realize that the nuclear industry has proven over decades that they can do things safely," she said.

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley: A vocal critic of the plan, he said it's no surprise **OPG** is ending with the recommendation it started with. "They were going to fit that Kincardine site into the conclusion and work their way back from it. .. They've pre-ordained where this was going to go." Bradley said **OPG** had hoped the project would be a slam-dunk, until opposition started mounting in the last few years. "They've had decades and decades to get rid of this and it's kind of a Hail

Mary approach at the end." Bradley said he's convinced that environmental lobbyists and U.S. lawmakers will press their concerns with the federal Liberals and make this the first real test of the Liberals' commitment to the Great Lakes.

Mitch Twolan, mayor of Huron-Kinloss and a supporter of a DGR at the Bruce site: He said he was at a recent conference in Paris of DGR scientists and a leading Swedish geologist said rock at the Bruce was as ideal as could be imagined. The report reaffirms this. "I'm not surprised because a lot of time and money and effort have gone into this process over the many years this has gone on." This generation benefits from clean, carbon-free **nuclear energy** and is ethically bound to ensure its byproducts are safely stored, rather than the responsibility handed to the next generation, he said. "Doing nothing is not an option" Jill Taylor, president of SOS Great Lakes: The residents' group continues to believe the DGR plan is dangerous, fraught with problems and should be stopped immediately, she said. "The Ministry of the Environment has been unable to approve this project because of its failings and continues to ask questions about it. Everybody should be asking questions about it. It is not a safe project" she said.

The comparison Start-up date Existing nuclear facility nearby Additional costs Study compared environmental, geological, cost impact of three locations: 1) proposed site at Bruce Nuclear; 2) sedimentary region of Southern Ontario; 3) granite region of Northern Ontario 1 2 3 10 years 30 years 40 years yes no no no $2.7 billion $3.5 billion Transportation of waste: Half already transported to Bruce from other Ontario nuclear plants; estimated 22,000 more shipments across 300 km to another Southern Ontario site; 22,000 additional shipments across 2,000 km to Northern Ontario site for an additional use of 4.2 million litres of fuel over the lifetime of the DGR (compared to the Bruce site).

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Today's cartoon: Hydro clarity

www.durhamregion.com - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Neutral

Today's cartoon is by Steve Nease.

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Council wants to hear both sides before opposing Energy East pipeline

www.sackvilletribunepost.com - Wed Jan 4 2017
Tone: Neutral

Members of town council will get into more discussion and debate on the Energy East pipeline in the new year.

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U.S. energy department pulls plug on windmills

London Free Press - Thu Jan 5 2017
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $604
Reach: 70995 **Page:** N7

A plan to build windmills off the New Jersey coast that has already burned through nearly $11 million and remains dead in the water is being cut off from further government funding. The U.S. Department of **Energy** says Fishermen's **Energy** failed to meet a Dec. 31 deadline to have a **power** purchase agreement in place. The department is revoking most of the $47 million in funding it pledged to the project in 2014. About $10.6 million has been spent already on preliminary work. The project would have involved building six windmills about three miles off the coast of Atlantic City, which could have generated enough **electricity** to **power** 15,000 homes.

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