John Bozzo

From:	John Bozzo
Sent:	December 22, 2016 9:39 AM
To:	##Clippings_Distribution_List
Cc:	Karen Evans
Subject:	Fwd: OEB Morning News Summary - Thursday, December 22, 2016
Attachments:	126C348D-501D-4B56-BABB-FC27C47764BE[40].png; ENT_LOGO_RGB_SIG_01.jpg[40].png

Good morning,

Here is the OEB news summary for Thursday, Dec. 22.

OVERVIEW

The Canadian Press reported on Wednesday's OEB announcement on changes to natural gas rates for 2017, which included QRAMs, cap and trade and rate adjustments. The story was picked up by many national and regional outlets. It was written almost entirely based on the backgrounder that was posted along with the decision on the OEB website, although CP and other outlets that picked up the story focused on cap-and-trade in the story and in headlines and did not mention QRAMs or rate adjustments for Enbridge/Union, or the Union rate zone changes. The story also included messaging that despite these increases, customers will still be paying significantly less than they were in peak periods in 2009 and 2014. It also picked up messaging that utilities are expected to include an on-bill message about cap-and-trade and will be providing information about cap and trade costs on their websites.

The Toronto Star's Robert Benzie reported that the Premier has no plans to impose a freeze on hydro prices amidst the high attention on rates in Ontario. The Premier said her Liberal government will not reprise former Progressive Conservative premier Ernie Eves's 2002 freezing of rates, which cost the treasury $550 million a year, but reiterated that relief is coming for consumers in the form of the 8 per cent rebate and the additional relief for rural customers, which will cost Queen's Park $1 billion per year.

The North Bay Nugget and Timmins Press both covered the recent news of the 20 Ontario Chambers of Commerce calling for the government to defer cap-and-trade in addition to the Ontario Chambers of Commerce demanding to breakout the cost on bills. Timmins Chamber of Commerce policy manager Nick Stewart is quoted saying there's "no real transparency on what happens when cap-and-trade comes into effect in January," and that the OEB will not break out those costs, which "makes it impossible for businesses to know how their activity is driving those costs and adjust their behaviours accordingly." The articles also mention the recent report issued by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which indicated that one in 20 Ontario businesses expect to close their doors in the next five years due to rising electricity prices and 38% will see their bottom line shrink, with the cost of electricity delaying or cancelling investment in the years to come.

FLAGGED FOR DISCUSSION

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

- Canadian Press Story
- Chamber of Commerce News

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Canadian Press story on natural gas changes in January was highly shared on social media by media outlets and the general public. Tom Adams was also actively tweeting about the decision yesterday.

Global News Toronto @globalnewsto

Cap-and-trade will raise natural gas bills across province: Ontario Energy Boardhttps://t.co/fUzkGkVYqa

Reply / Retweet / Like 2016-12-21 20:27:36

Tom Adams (@tomadamsenergy)

2016-12-21, 10:17 PM

Since ON announced cap-and-trade this Feb., the home monthly natgas direct charge for Jan 1/17 increased by 23-34%.ontarioenergyboard.ca/oeb/_Documents…

Tom Adams (@tomadamsenergy)

2016-12-21, 7:28 PM

According to the @OntEnergyBoard, the annual cost of ON's cap-and-trade for natgas households about $74-$80.

ontarioenergyboard.ca/oeb/_Documents…

From: Infomart Newsletters
Date: Thursday, December 22, 2016 at 8:11 AM
To: Jeff Blay
Subject: Morning News Clippings - Thursday, December 22, 2016

View in Browser

Morning News Clippings

powered by: infomart

Date: Thursday, December 22, 2016
Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@ontarioenergyboard.ca)

Editor's Note
The Canadian Press story (re: January 1st QRAM) was repeated in part or in its entirety in 14+ media outlets.

Contact Editor

Clippings Summary

News - 17 Results

Gas bills going up in the new year | CTV Kitchener News

kitchener.ctvnews.ca - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

The Ontario Energy board says customers across the province will see increases in their natural gas bills as the Liberal government's cap-and-trade plan comes into effect next month. The OEB says the typical Enbridge residential customer will see a ...

OEB approves new natural gas rates for Enbridge, Union | CP24.com

www.cp24.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

The Ontario Energy board has approved new natural gas rates for Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas.

Councillors should pay a political price for selling PDI

Peterborough This Week - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $15
Reach: 47038

To the editor: **HydroOne** is probably the most despised corporation in Ontario and your council has just sold your PDI to them. This, I believe, was a done deal long before the possible sale became public knowledge. Council ...

BlackburnNews.com - Possible Merger For Two Energy Companies

blackburnnews.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Paul Crawford noted on Wednesday, December 21, 2016
OEB is mentioned.

Chatham-Kent's Entegrus Powerlines could be merging with St. Thomas Energy.

As relief nears, Wynne won't freeze hydro rates; Ontario premier promises to look at other ways to make power more affordable

Toronto Star - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Byline: Robert Benzie Toronto Star

Ad Value: $15,884
Reach: 361323 **Page:** A10

Relief is on the horizon for **electricity** **ratepayers**, but Premier Kathleen Wynne has no plans to impose a freeze on **hydro** prices. Wynne will next month remove the 8-per-cent provincial portion of the 13-per-cent ...

Defer cap and trade - chambers; 'b??in????? ?r? ?lr???? struggling under the weight of everincreasing costs'

North Bay Nugget - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $346
Reach: 11505 **Page:** A2

A group of 20 chambers of com merce across the province, including the North Bay & District Chamber, is calling for the province to defer its **cap**-**and**-**trade** program. The program is scheduled to be implemented Jan. ...

zap gov't on cost of electricity

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Sarah Moore

Ad Value: $843
Reach: 9196 **Page:** A1 / Front

A coalition of Northern Ontario Chambers of Commerce, including the Timmins Chamber, is calling on the province to address the unique challenges that businesses in the North face in regard to **energy** costs and a lack of transparency in ...

Mayor refuses debate challenge; Taxpayers group says Mayor's Plan will cost hydro ratepayers an additional $9.2M in interest

North Bay Nugget - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $300
Reach: 11505 **Page:** A1 / Front

North Bay Mayor Al McDonald has turned down a request from the North Bay Taxpayers Association to debate the Mayor's Plan. "We will not be providing a comment," Jaclyn Bucik, the city's communications and strategic development officer stated in an ...

Hydro relief to save average Ontario household $130 in 2017

thespec.com - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative **Reach:** 90600

Relief is on the horizon for **electricity** **ratepayers**, but Premier Kathleen Wynne has no plans to impose a freeze on **hydro** prices. Wynne will next month remove the 8 per cent provincial portion of the 13 per cent ...

Hydrorate relief

Brantford Expositor - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Positive
Byline: Ferio Pugliese

Ad Value: $270
Reach: 29497 **Page:** A8

I wanted to provide your readers with an update on the Winter Relief Program, into its third week. **Hydro** **One** is reaching out to 1,400 customers to have their **electricity** service reconnected. The purpose of the ...

HydroOne working on reconnections for winter

Hanover Post - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Denis Langlois

Ad Value: $293
Reach: 15209 **Page:** A12

Hydro **One** says it is continuing its work to contact customers without **power** with the goal of reconnecting their service for the rest of winter. "All letters have gone out to the known properties, (we've tried) ...

THE EXPOSITOR

A failure to deliver; With an approval rating of 20 per cent, Kathleen Wynne is Canada's most unpopular premier

Brantford Expositor - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Byline: R. Michael Warren

Ad Value: $1,019
Reach: 29497 **Page:** A9

Premier Kathleen Wynne had a stellar start as head of the Liberal minority government in 2013. She negotiated her first "activist" budget, enjoyed a 43 per cent approval rating, won two byelections and delivered a majority government in 2014. She ...

OTTAWA SUN

Costly green schemes topped the list in 2016

Ottawa Sun - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $715
Reach: 45442 **Page:** A22

One of the biggest stories of 2016 was how regular folks woke up to the harmful effects of the green scheme agenda. If only the elites would now clue into this, as well. Earlier this month over a thousand Albertans attended a rally to protest NDP ...

THE SUN TIMES

Province's handling of energy is the problem

Owen Sound Sun Times - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Byline: John Bruce

Ad Value: $370
Reach: 13178 **Page:** A4

Re: Dieter Heinrich's recent letter concerning **natural gas** subsidies. Mr. Heinrich has an interesting take on opposing the subsidy program he mentions and is arguably correct. However, I disagree with his assertion that all ...

Letter: Liberal incompetence ruining Christmas | Sudbury Star

www.thesudburystar.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

The ineptness of the current Liberal government in Ontario is beyond belief. The Ontario Energy Board consists of appointed government hacks who have very little interest in the public with whom they are supposed to serve or we would not be in the ...

NP

Income equality, well oiled

National Post - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Positive
Byline: Jasmin Guénette And Karl-Javid Lalonde-Dhanji

Ad Value: $9,214
Reach: 159480 **Page:** FP7

With the approval of two major pipeline projects, proponents of policies aimed at reducing income inequality should rejoice: They just (unwittingly) won the jackpot. They should regard these wealth-creating projects as one of the best and easiest ...

Canada won't be swayed from carbon moves by U.S., Trudeau says - The Globe and Mail

www.theglobeandmail.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Canada will press ahead with policies aimed at cutting carbon emissions regardless of any U.S. retreat from anti-climate-change measures under President-elect Donald Trump.

Clippings Summary

Full Articles

Gas bills going up in the new year | CTV Kitchener News

kitchener.ctvnews.ca - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Neutral

The Ontario Energy board says customers across the province will see increases in their natural gas bills as the Liberal government's cap-and-trade plan comes into effect next month. The OEB says the typical Enbridge residential customer will see a monthly increase of about $6.40.

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OEB approves new natural gas rates for Enbridge, Union | CP24.com

www.cp24.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral

The Ontario Energy board has approved new natural gas rates for Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas.

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Councillors should pay a political price for selling PDI

Peterborough This Week - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $15
Reach: 47038

To the editor:

Hydro One is probably the most despised corporation in Ontario and your council has just sold your PDI to them.

This, I believe, was a done deal long before the possible sale became public knowledge. Council was just going through the motions with public input and then when you did have input, more than 90 per cent of respondents were against the sale, councillors ignored them. Councillors said they knew more and inferred that they were smarter than the public.

I think that every person in Peterborough that voted against this sale should write, email or call the councillors that voted for this deal and demand their resignation. I think you have been betrayed and councillors should pay a political price for their actions because down the road you sure are going to pay a price for them.

Wade Warren

Buckhorn

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BlackburnNews.com - Possible Merger For Two Energy Companies

blackburnnews.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral

Chatham-Kent's Entegrus Powerlines could be merging with St. Thomas Energy.

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As relief nears, Wynne won't freeze hydro rates; Ontario premier promises to look at other ways to make power more affordable

Toronto Star - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
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Ad Value: $15,884
Reach: 361323 **Page:** A10

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Wynne will next month remove the 8-per-cent provincial portion of the 13-per-cent **harmonized sales tax** from **electricity** bills.

It's a move that will cost Queen's Park $1 billion a year and save the average household $130 in 2017.

As well, there is relief for rural customers that should save them on average $540 annually.

Wynne said her Liberal government will not reprise former Progressive Conservative premier Ernie Eves's 2002 freezing of **rates**, which cost the treasury $550 million a year.

"We ended up paying for that," she said in an interview with the Toronto Star earlier this week.

"When we came into office (in 2003), we had a system that was degraded and the real price of **electricity** hadn't been accounted for," said Wynne.

"So that's the kind of fix I don't want to put in place. I want to figure out how to do something that doesn't have to be undone by the next government, because it was a really bad policy."

Fourteen years ago, Eves's government froze **hydro rates** at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour when the average price was actually 6.2 cents.

That subsidy was to offset the impact on consumers of the opening of the **electricity** market to competition earlier in 2002, which had led to soaring bills when prices jumped.

Rates skyrocketed 23 per cent between May and November that year, so Eves was forced to intervene with an election looming in 2003.

While his Liberal successor, Dalton McGuinty, lifted the freeze because it was too expensive, he later bowed to political pressure and introduced a 10-per-cent **rate rebate** marketed as the "clean **energy** benefit."

That controversial measure, which was blasted by conservationists because it effectively rewarded **ratepayers** for using more **electricity**, cost the treasury $1.1 billion a year before it was phased out.

Wynne, whose approval ratings have plunged this year, is now suffering the same political fallout over rising **hydro** costs as her two predecessors.

Wynne, who faces a challenging re-election campaign in June 2018, promised there would be other measures to make **power** more affordable for Ontarians in 2017.

"Now, we need to look for the other . . . systemic ideas. I'm going to be meeting with the leadership of all of the parts of the **electricity** system to say 'OK, folks, this is up to all of us to find a way to make this system work better for people and to take costs off their bills,' " the premier said.

"I mean we did it with the rural distribution charges. We looked across the system and said, 'How can we redistribute some of these costs so that people who are suffering the most get relief?' " she said.

"How do we figure out how to make this work better for the people who are having the most trouble?

"We've got to look at the whole system in order to find those answers."

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NUGGET

Defer cap and trade - chambers; 'b??in????? ?r? ?lr???? struggling under the weight of everincreasing costs'

North Bay Nugget - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $346
Reach: 11505 **Page:** A2

A group of 20 chambers of com merce across the province, including the North Bay & District Chamber, is calling for the province to defer its **cap-and-trade** program.

The program is scheduled to be implemented Jan. 1.The chambers cite high costs of the program, combined with sky rocketing **electricity** prices, a lack of sector-by-sector economic impact analysis and a change in direction in the united states.

Electricity prices have increased 383 per cent in ontario since 2004, from a flat **rate** of 4.7 cents a kilo watt hours to 18 cents per kilowatt hour at peak times, the chambers say.

They warn the introduction of the **cap-and-trade** system will add fur ther charges on **natural gas**, **gaso**

line and diesel fuel that will be keenly felt by every individual and business in Ontario.

"Businesses are already struggling under the weight of ever-increas ing costs," North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce executive director Patti Carr said.

Carr said the local chamber is "extremely concerned about the impacts of these additional charges on jobs and the economy.

"We have already lost hundreds of millions of investment in Ontario to other jurisdictions like the United States and Quebec due to high elec tricity prices, layering on **cap and trade** will, no doubt, make it much worse."

The "unintended impact of Ontario's **cap and trade** will lead to the removal of jobs and invest ment from clean grids like Ontario to much dirtier grids in the U.S. and elsewhere," the chambers warn.

And with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump and many U.S. states unlikely to participate in the **cap-and-trade** program, they are calling on the province to delay implementation of the program for a year.

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THE DAILY PRESS

zap gov't on cost of electricity

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Sarah Moore

Ad Value: $843
Reach: 9196 **Page:** A1 / Front

A coalition of Northern Ontario Chambers of Commerce, including the Timmins Chamber, is calling on the province to address the unique challenges that businesses in the North face in regard to **energy** costs and a lack of transparency in pricing.

They filed a joint submission to the Ontario government's Ontario's Long-Term **Energy** Plan 2017 (LTEP) review process, which included 12 recommendations to combat these challenges and help businesses in the region remain economically viable.

As well as the Timmins Chamber of Commerce, representatives from the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce and North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce also partnered on the submission.

"The geographic and economic realities of Northern Ontario mean that **energy** costs make up a greater portion of a business' expenses here than elsewhere in the province," said Timmins Chamber president Christine Bender, in a press release. "It's no surprise that our member businesses have routinely identified the rising cost of **energy** as their largest challenge, as these prices have continued to climb at an unsustainable **rate**.

"The province has taken some commendable steps in recent years, such as the establishment of the Northern Industrial **Electricity Rate** program, but much more needs to be done, which is what we have tried to identify with our LTEP submission."

Harsher winter climates, higher transportation costs and a large number number of natural-resource-sector firms who are counted among the province's largest users of **energy** have caused soaring **energy rates** to be felt more acutely in the North than other regions of the province, she added.

Further, a recent report issued by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Top 3 Obstacles to Small Business Success, indicated that one in 20 Ontario businesses expect to close their doors in the next five years due to rising **electricity** prices.

In addition, 38% will see their bottom line shrink, with the cost of **electricity** delaying or canceling investment in the years to come.

Chamber leaders have suggested that the LTEP, which will help form the basis of Ontario's **energy** strategy over the next 20 years, will have a dramatic effect on the economy of Northern Ontario if regionally specific recommendations that address these concerns are put into consideration.

Arguing that uncertainty about **electricity** pricing is one of the greatest barriers to investment into Northern Ontario businesses, the Timmins Chamber of Commerce is hopeful that the government takes steps to combat soaring costs and provide more concrete and transparent commentary on the calculation of **ratepayers**' **energy** bills.

"It's easy to say that costs need to come down - and they most certainly do - but the government also has to be more transparent when they address these things," said Timmins Chamber of Commerce policy manager Nick Stewart. "Right now, the global adjustment on **ratepayers**' bills is not clear where it comes from or what impact it has on bills. There's no real transparency on what happens when **cap-and-trade** comes into effect in January, it's already been stated the **Ontario Energy Board** will not break out those costs, which in turn, makes it impossible for businesses to know how their activity is driving those costs and adjust their behaviours accordingly."

The fact that there are still so many unanswered questions about the full impact of the **cap and trade** program, which comes into effect on Jan. 1, 2017, and how proceeds from the program will be spent is "deeply concerning" to many of the businesses represented by the chamber, Stewart added.

The province's plan to reduce greenhouse emissions is another variable that Northern businesses feel they have been given scarce details about.

They are also expressing concern that the impacts of this targeted reduction plan will hit Northern businesses especially hard, given the majority of the reductions required will come from the heating and cooling of buildings and from transportation.

"What support is government going to offer to businesses to help them remain prosperous when they try to find solutions to reduce their emissions?" Stewart asked.

While he agrees that the government has indeed made some positive steps forward, by making the Northern Industrial **Electricity Rate** Program permanent and expanding the Industrial Conservation Initiative, for example, there are many more pressing issues still to be addressed.

"These are positive steps and we certainly do applaud the understanding that these are ways to help alleviate the specific pressures our businesses face - but more has to be done," he said. "I think the government is certainly at a point where it has to take this seriously because, quite simply, **energy** is absolutely top of mind for businesses in Timmins; it's the number one issue we hear about on a continuous basis."

Some of the recommendations put forward in the submission are as follows: Include economic development among the principles governing the LTEP. Economic development should be the first and over-riding principle; Increase transparency and offer greater detail on how the government will achieve targeted Green House **Gas** reductions, including what support government will offer to businesses so they can remain prosperous while finding innovative solutions to reduce their emissions; Clarify the global adjustment (GA) so that **ratepayers** can better understand their **electricity** bills. Take steps to reduce the GA as a portion of **electricity** bills so that businesses are able to see real savings from their conservation efforts; Increase transparency and accountability by publishing additional details about **cap and trade**, including specifying how proceeds from **cap and trade** will be spent to help transitioning businesses, and publishing regular economic impact assessments on how **cap and trade** is affecting local businesses and supply chains; Publish additional details about the future of **electricity** pricing in Ontario and the government's plans to prevent further increases and volatility in order to make **electricity** prices more predictable for business. This should include plans to expedite the elimination of the **Debt Retirement Charge** (**DRC**).

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NORTH BAY NUGGET

Mayor refuses debate challenge; Taxpayers group says Mayor's Plan will cost hydro ratepayers an additional $9.2M in interest

North Bay Nugget - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $300
Reach: 11505 **Page:** A1 / Front

North Bay Mayor Al McDonald has turned down a request from the North Bay Taxpayers Association to debate the Mayor's Plan.

"We will not be providing a comment," Jaclyn Bucik, the city's communications and strategic development officer stated in an e-mail to The Nugget. "The mayor will not debate with an individual or association."

The association says the plan, approved by council, calls for the North Bay **Hydro** group of companies, including North Bay **Hydro** Distribution Limited (NBHDL), to borrow about $25 million from outside lenders to repay loans due to the city.

"When the mayor first introduced and promoted this plan," the association says, "he talked of using **hydro** money to reduce the tax levy, pay off the city's hospital commitment and reduce city capital borrowing.

"In reality, what he was talking about was money that **hydro** had to borrow. There was never any mention by the mayor that this borrowed money had to be repaid to outside parties with interest."

This means principal and interest payments that were being paid to taxpayers will go to outside lenders for the next 20 years, the association says.

The end result, it says, is an additional $9.2-million cost to fund "this shell game" The association challenged McDonald to debate its figures and to "prove that his plan is nothing more than a lavish public relations scheme funded by taxpayers."

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THESPEC.COM SPEC

Hydro relief to save average Ontario household $130 in 2017

thespec.com - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative **Reach:** 90600

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Hydrorate relief

THE EXPOSITOR

Brantford Expositor - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: **Positive**
Byline: Ferio Pugliese

Ad Value:$270
Reach: 29497 **Page:** A8

I wanted to provide your readers with an update on the Winter Relief Program, into its third week. **Hydro** One is reaching out to 1,400 customers to have their **electricity** service reconnected.

The purpose of the program is to provide these customers with some relief over the winter and give them a fresh start to help get their accounts back on track. **Hydro** One has always had a winter pause for disconnections that starts on Nov. 1 for our customers in northern Ontario and Dec. 1 for our customers in southern Ontario.

In fact, this year we started our pause for southern Ontario one week early on Nov. 24. The Winter Relief Program is taking the additional step to reconnect customers that were disconnected during warmer weather and work with them to find a reasonable payment plan that works.

In addition, we are waiving reconnection fees and covering the **Electricity** Safety Authority's inspection costs.

We have asked customers affected to contact us and are visiting the properties of those we have not heard from to ensure we give every customer the opportunity to participate in the program.

I also want to strongly encourage our customers who have not heard from us to reach out so that we can get them involved in the program. Visit HydroOne.com or call us at 1-844-814-7411.

Ferio Pugliese

Executive vice-president Customer Care and Corporate Affairs **Hydro** One

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Hydro One working on reconnections for winter

THE POST

Hanover Post - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: **Neutral**
Byline: Denis Langlois

Ad Value:$293
Reach: 15209 **Page:** A12

Hydro One says it is continuing its work to contact customers without power with the goal of reconnecting their service for the rest of winter.

"All letters have gone out to the known properties, (we've tried) calling customers and now we're going through the process of physically going to properties," Hydro One spokesperson Tiziana Baccega Rosa said in an interview.

"We're very committed to doing everything we can, based on the last known information we have for these customers, to reach them and engage in this process with them."

Ontario's largest electricity provider said 1,400 of its residential customers were without power due to unpaid balances when it introduced a new Winter Relief Program Dec. 7.

Hydro One said it would reach out to those customers to arrange reconnection for winter. The utility said it would waive all reconnection fees, determine what payment arrangements each customer could afford, discuss plans to help customers get back on track and highlight available assistance programs.

Baccega Rosa said 134 customers as of Dec. 16 had been reconnected as part of the program.

The number of Grey-Bruce customers that have had their power restored was unavailable, she said.

A Hydro One spokesperson told The Sun Times last week that 56 customers in the area that includes Owen Sound, most of Grey County and a northern portion of Bruce County were without power due to unpaid balances.

Baccega Rosa said Hydro One estimates that up to 500 of the 1,400 residential accounts without electrical services are for premises that are now vacant.

"We're still going to look at the properties to make sure no one's living there that just hasn't notified us to be reconnected," she said. "That is underway right now."

She said any customers without power are being urged to contact Hydro One.

"If there are folks out there that are perhaps living somewhere else and need assistance, whether it's part of this program or just need assistance in general, please contact us," she said.

Francesca Dobbyn, executive director of the United Way of Bruce Grey, said she knows of only two Hydro One customers in Grey-Bruce who are currently without power.

One person who lives in the Hanover area was planning to call Hydro One to enquire about the program, she said, and another has chosen not to be reconnected.

"They just feel they can't afford it and have made other arrangements and have been living for well over a year without it," she said.

Dobbyn said she doesn't know of any Westario Power customers without electricity. Unlike Hydro One, the Walkerton-based utility does not have in place a winter moratorium for disconnections.

Dobbyn said anyone who is struggling to pay a utility bill should call 211.

She said the local United Way, which oversees a utility assistance program, is seeking donations for its community fund, which helps people purchase wood, propane or oil to heat their homes.

The agency has a waiting list, worth about $30,000, of people seeking assistance from that fund.

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THE EXPOSITOR

A failure to deliver; With an approval rating of 20 per cent, Kathleen Wynne is Canada's most unpopular premier

Brantford Expositor - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Byline: R. Michael Warren

Ad Value: $1,019
Reach: 29497 **Page:** A9

Premier Kathleen Wynne had a stellar start as head of the Liberal minority government in 2013. She negotiated her first "activist" budget, enjoyed a 43 per cent approval rating, won two byelections and delivered a majority government in 2014.

She came across as a consensus-building leader, a change agent who was likeable, intelligent and authentic.

However, with less than two years to the next provincial election, the latest Angus Reid poll says her approval rating has plummeted to 20 per cent. Seventy-four per cent of those surveyed said they disapproved of the job she was doing.

Wynne now is the most unpopular premier in Canada. A recent cabinet shuffle, a prorogued legislature followed by a visionless throne speech hasn't moved the needle. Neither has an embarrassing byelection loss of a predominantly Liberal seat in Toronto to Patrick Brown's Progressive Conservatives.

There is no mystery about this fall from grace. It's a direct result of the drip, drip, drip of failure to deliver on pocketbook issues. It's not a failure of policy, but a failure of timely implementation.

Remember the promise to cut the province's auto insurance **rate** by 15 per cent? Two years after the pledge, **rates** came down by about seven per cent, less than half the amount promised. Wynne tried to explain this by saying the pledge was only a "stretch goal." For financially struggling Ontarians this sounds like an evasive excuse.

The September Throne Speech failed to deal with the underlying causes of soaring **electricity rates**. Removing the eight per cent provincial component of the **HST** will provide momentary relief. But experience tells us rebates do nothing to stop **rates** from climbing in the future.

When **rates** are rising at about eight per cent a year, a one-time **HST rebate** of eight per cent leaves a widespread feeling that the Liberals are unable to deliver the basic commodity of **electricity** at affordable **rates**.

Winning the liberal leadership in 2013 meant distancing herself from the McGuinty **gas** plant, e-Health and Ornge air ambulance scandals. At first, Wynne seemed to be succeeding.

But her handling of the Sudbury byelection and her staff's involvement showed a lapse in judgement. Instead of asking her deputy chief of staff, Pat Sorbara, to step down in the face of Elections Ontario bribery allegations, she promoted Sorbara to the role of chair of the 2018 Liberal re-election campaign.

A month later, the OPP charged Sorbara with allegedly trying to bribe **Energy** Minister Glenn Thibeault to switch from the federal NDP to the provincial Liberals. And also for offering the former Liberal candidate another role if he stepped down in favour of Thibeault. This selfinflicted wound erases Wynne's scandal-free record.

First quarter results for this year show Ontario's economy is growing at a faster **rate** than Canada and other G7 countries. Good news. But economic performance during the last decade has been dismal. And we're still feeling the financial down-draft.

Between 2003 and 2014, Ontario grew at one-third the **rate** of the rest of Canada. Wages stagnated. Income and wealth disparity worsened. At the beginning of this century, Ontarians enjoyed the highest disposable incomes in the country. By 2014 our standard of living has fallen below the national average.

Wynne has promised $29 billion during ten years for expanding rapid transit. Construction is underway in several cities. She knows that more transit alone won't curb congestion. Road pricing (congestion fees, parking levies, and tolls) is needed to both raise money and change driver behaviour. Instead, the premier decided to sell off a portion of Ontario **Hydro**. That raises money, but does little to change driver behaviour when new rapid transit opens.

Wynne is in the midst of a major effort to contain health care costs. She's trimming hospital budgets, rolling back doctor's fees and trying to reform the system with the bureaucracy-busting Bill 41, the Patient First Act. In the meantime, excessive wait times are hurting patients who need access to extensive care.

The premier deserves credit for a number of initiatives: Pushing an Ontario Retirement Plan that pressured Ottawa to improve the Canada Pension Plan; a widely lauded sex assault strategy; a massive multi-year infrastructure program.

But so many of her progressive programs are taking too long to implement, too long to be felt on the streets. Wynne is aware of her poor performance rating. At a recent Liberal gathering she took personal responsibility for high **electricity rates** - calling them her "mistake" - and said she plans to find more ways to lower **energy** costs.

"I think that people look at me and many think, 'She's not who we thought she was. She's become a typical politician. She'll do anything to win.' Frankly, I think I sometimes have given them reason to think that." (Think Scarborough subway.) Acknowledging shortcomings can be an effective way to change the channel, but it has to be combined with delivering on main street issues: jobs, health care, **electricity rates** and a host of simmering rural concerns.

If the Liberals are to have any chance of winning in 2018, average Ontarians needs to feel their everyday lives are improving.

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Costly green schemes topped the list in 2016

Ottawa Sun - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $715
Reach: 45442 **Page:** A22

One of the biggest stories of 2016 was how regular folks woke up to the harmful effects of the green scheme agenda.

If only the elites would now clue into this, as well.

Earlier this month over a thousand Albertans attended a rally to protest NDP Premier Rachel Notley's looming carbon tax.

Starting Jan. 1, it's going to raise the cost of living for everyone in the province.

Its negative impacts will only ramp up over the years.

Even government reports admit this, although they say some of the money will be returned to the public.

People have been speaking up, posting on social media, writing to Sun columnists, attending events and making their voices heard. They're genuinely concerned.

But did the politicians and liberal media hear what they had to say? Nope. Instead, they tried to belittle them. They fixated on a "lock her up" chant of little consequence. What they should have focused on was asking how politicians like Notley are getting away with implementing punitive taxes they never campaigned on.

Ontario is no different. Premier Kathleen Wynne never promised in the 2014 provincial election she would impose a job-killing capand-trade scheme on Jan. 1, 2017.

Meanwhile, **hydroratepayers** in Ontario have already been feeling green scheme pains for a while now.

According to the provincial auditor general, **ratepayers** will have shelled out an extra $170 billion from 2006 to 2032 in unnecessary fees, in part to pay for above market **electricity rates** the Liberals promised so-called green **energy** companies.

And no, that's not a typo. It's billions, not millions. Shocking and unacceptable.

People in Ontario wrote in to the Sun to share their stories of **energy** poverty: literally sitting in the dark, wearing jackets indoors in the winter, roasting in the summer from not turning on their A/C. It shouldn't be this way. Yet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is determined to force punitive carbon pricing on people living in every province and territory.

His plan is to make every Canadian feel the hardships already being felt in Ontario.

A decade ago, ignorance was an excuse. Now, knowing what we know, it's not.

There's still time for Canadians to demand that their governments halt this failed experiment.

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Province's handling of energy is the problem

THE SUN TIMES

Owen Sound Sun Times - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Negative
Byline: John Bruce

Ad Value: $370
Reach: 13178 **Page:** A4

Re: Dieter Heinrich's recent letter concerning **natural gas** subsidies.

Mr. Heinrich has an interesting take on opposing the subsidy program he mentions and is arguably correct. However, I disagree with his assertion that all that is required to alleviate our high **electricity** bills is more efficient housing. That may work in Germany but will have no effect in Ontario after a decade of mismanagement by the Liberals. Mr. Heinrich must have missed the recent article in The Sun Times showing how street lighting in Owen Sound used $400 of **electricity** but the bill was $10,000 due to delivery charges and other fees.

I recommend everyone to check out Parker Gallant's articles in the Financial Post, Ontario's **Power** Trip, for a full review of the boondoggle that our **electric** system has become. You will see how the **debt retirement charge** was finally removed from billing after collecting approximately $12 billion to pay a $7 billion debt. You will learn how shares from the partial sale of **Hydro** One were given to union employees to buy labour peace while the sale goes through, despite the fact that this asset belongs to all Ontarians. The Liberals also changed the law so they could keep some of the proceeds from the sale, rather than put it toward the **Hydro** One debt. This was done to help keep their promise of a balanced budget in 2017.

In 2014, Ontario's auditor general, Bonnie Lysyk, reported how Ontarians have overpaid $37 billion over the past eight years because, in part, of the **Green Energy Act**. Ontario is producing too much **electricity**, buying renewables first at higher cost, backing that **power** up with nuclear and **natural gas** and then selling the excess at a loss. There's also the cancelled **gas** plants which we are paying for through the global adjustment fee and don't forget the cancelled Windstream offshore **wind** project which could see financial penalties up to $568 million with nothing to show for it.

These are just some examples of the incompetence at Queen's Park over the past decade that are hurting all Ontarians, but mostly in rural areas. People are having to decide whether to pay for **hydro** or buy food and it is disgraceful. Conserving **energy** does little to reduce the financial burden due to excessive fees.

So I say to Mr. Heinrich, we've overpaid $37 billion, I think we can, with a clear conscience, use a little financial relief of the $230 million available.

John Bruce Hanover

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Letter: Liberal incompetence ruining Christmas | Sudbury Star

www.thesudburystar.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: Neutral

The ineptness of the current Liberal government in Ontario is beyond belief. The Ontario Energy Board consists of appointed government hacks who have very little interest in the public with whom they are supposed to serve or we would not be in the deep muck that exists with our energy costs.

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Income equality, well oiled

National Post - Thu Dec 22 2016
Tone: Positive
Byline: Jasmin Guénette And Karl-Javid Lalonde-Dhanji

Ad Value: $9,214
Reach: 159480 **Page:** FP7

With the approval of two major pipeline projects, proponents of policies aimed at reducing income inequality should rejoice: They just (unwittingly) won the jackpot. They should regard these wealth-creating projects as one of the best and easiest ways to create good, sustainable jobs, foster wage growth, and reduce income inequality.

The **energy** sector has contributed to reducing the gap between the rich and the poor in resource-rich provinces. According to a 2015 study by Nicole Fortin and Thomas Lemieux of the Vancouver School of Economics at UBC, inequality declined in Alberta and Saskatchewan over the 1999-2013 period.

Furthermore, "wages in Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and Alberta grew much faster than in other provinces," especially for low-skilled workers, who saw substantially faster growth in wages than their university-educated counterparts. In Ontario, the average wage grew by 23 percentage points less than in these three provinces since the late 1990s, where employment in the extractive resource sector soared by 50 per cent.

Fortin and Lemieux estimate that the "boom" in this sector is responsible for two thirds of the difference in wage growth between these provinces and the rest of Canada. Politicians can only dream of designing redistributive measures that could have such a large, positive impact on workers. All of this without raising taxes or creating costly new programs.

According to industry estimates, the two projects just approved by Ottawa, Enbridge's Line 3 and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline, should directly create 22,000 jobs during the construction phase and thousands more indirectly through spillover effects in the service sector. That is, thousands upon thousands of Canadian families benefiting from greater opportunities and better wages.

And these are not "Mc-Jobs" but rather high-paying work. Companies also often provide apprenticeship programs and courses to employees wanting to improve their skillsets, which have a lasting positive impact on these workers' lives.

Of course, the government's announcement left some things to be desired. Enbridge's $7.9-billion Northern Gateway project is now most probably dead, and TransCanada's **Energy** East pipeline is still stalled because of aggressive activism and excruciating red tape. That's a total of 11,000 to 12,000 annual jobs not created during the construction phase.

It is no secret that the Maritime region isn't living through the best of times. The **Energy** East project would be a great help during this period of economic hardship. In New Brunswick, the Maritime province where the economic benefits of this pipeline would be most concentrated, the effect on GDP is estimated at $3.2 billion during the first nine years and another $3.3 billion during the following 20 years, for a total of over $6.5 billion added to the economy of this province alone.

But we should go beyond the regionalist approach. Provincial governments shouldn't act like jealous siblings. We're all winners when Saskatchewan and Alberta are thriving, and we're all losers when huge infrastructure projects like these are gridlocked. We should strive to make our country as a whole more prosperous, even if it means that some provinces are better off for a while. One day, Ontario or Quebec might need Alberta and Saskatchewan to approve some other great project. They will assuredly remember how the Canadian family came together to help them create wealth and reduce inequality. Or how it didn't.

Jasmin Guénette is vicepresident, and Karl-Javid Lalonde-Dhanji is analyst, current affairs, at the Montreal Economic Institute.

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Canada won’t be swayed from carbon moves by U.S., Trudeau says - The Globe and Mail

www.theglobeandmail.com - Wed Dec 21 2016
Tone: **Neutral**

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Canada will press ahead with policies aimed at cutting carbon emissions regardless of any U.S. retreat from anti-climate-change measures under President-elect Donald Trump.

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