

Neil Brodie

From: Neil Brodie
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To: Rosemarie Leclair; Mary Anne Aldred
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Today at Queen's Park

On the schedule

This afternoon two pieces of private members' business will be debated including a new bill from Independent MPP Jack MacLaren called Bill 197, the Affordable Electricity Act.

MacLaren's bill calls for "clean energy" to be available at the "lowest possible cost" by ending subsidies for conservation programs and wind and energy projects, and by prohibiting "government measures that artificially lower electricity prices by borrowing money today that must be paid back in the future," like those in the Fair Hydro Act.

Other news

A Quebec-California-Ontario carbon market auction was held Wednesday afternoon. Overall, 98,215,920 emission units from the Current Auction and 12,427,950 emission units from the Advance Auction (2021 vintage) were made available for purchase at a price of \$18.34 CAD. The results will be made public in a week.

Appointments and employments

Hydro One announced Patrick Meneley has been appointed the utility's executive vice president and chief corporate development officer, effective March 1.

Meneley comes to Hydro One from TD Bank where he served most recently as executive vice president.

Rural groups push for investment in broadband

Ontario's strong agri-food sector is only as healthy as the communities that sustain it, and a coalition of farmers, municipal wardens and chambers of commerce say those communities require broadband access.

Robin Jones, chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, told reporters at Queen's Park Wednesday that the economic future of her region and those of many other rural regions in Ontario, depends on extensive and strong broadband connections. Businesses won't come to Eastern Ontario at three megabyte upload speeds, she said, nor will children want to remain in

the community if they have to drive to Tim Hortons or McDonald's to use their Wi-Fi to file homework assignments.

The urgency extends beyond keeping young people away from big cities. Greater broadband access will benefit local hospitals, aid job creation and keep farmland from being sold to developers for subdivided housing. Farmers will benefit, too. Keith Currie, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, said that dairy farmers these days rely on their cell phones to monitor how much milk their cows have produced.

Election season is the perfect time to take this united message to politicians of all stripes, said Rocco Rossi, president of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. His organization represents more than 60,000 businesses, many of whom are also affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

"You need distributed infrastructure investments," Rossi said: Broadband, but also things like natural gas pipelines to spur business with affordable energy. This isn't about a pastoral vision of rural Ontario, he said—this is about rural Ontario's future economic development.