

Rosemarie Leclair

From: Rosemarie Leclair
Sent: March 16, 2017 8:19 PM
To: John Bozzo
Subject: Fwd: Morning News Clippings - Thursday, March 16, 2017

Do all board members get the clippings ?

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Infomart Newsletters <Infomart.newsletters@infomart.com>
Date: March 16, 2017 at 7:21:07 AM EDT
To: "Rosemarie.Leclair@ontarioenergyboard.ca" <Rosemarie.Leclair@ontarioenergyboard.ca>
Subject: Morning News Clippings - Thursday, March 16, 2017

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Morning News Clippings

powered by: **infomart**

Date: Thursday, March 16, 2017
 Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@ontarioenergyboard.ca)

[Contact Editor](#)

Clippings Summary

News - 30 Results



Info sessions for Entegrus, St. Thomas Energy merger; Combined utility will have nearly 60,000 customers

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017
Tone: **Positive**
Ad Value: \$193
Reach: 8941 **Page:** A8

Members of the public will have a chance to learn more details and ask questions about the planned merger of Entegrus Powerlines Inc. with St. Thomas **Energy** Inc. Information sessions are planned for later this month when members of both ...



Horwath rips Wynne's hydro plan; Demands premier show details of rate cut

Ottawa Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017
Tone: **Negative**
Byline: Shawn Jeffords

Ad Value: \$587

Reach: 45442 Page: A14

Show us your plan, premier. NDP Leader Andrea Horwath Wednesday stepped up her attack on the Liberal **hydro** plan, challenging Premier Kathleen Wynne to release the details of her scheme to slash **rates**. Horwath said she wants ...



Horwath demands legislation soon for hydro rate cuts; NDP leader fears Liberal plan excludes hospitals, businesses

Toronto Star - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Rob Ferguson Toronto Star

Ad Value: \$23,569

Reach: 361323 Page: A14

New Democrats are raising questions about Premier Kathleen Wynne's plan to cut **hydro rates** 25 per cent and are demanding legislation to put it in place this summer be introduced next week. "People deserve to see it in black ...



NDP calls on wynne government to table hydro bill

National Post - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Ad Value: \$1,793

Reach: 159480 Page: A10

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table legislation for its **hydro bill** reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation." The legislature is not ...



CTV Toronto: NDP's plan to cut pricy hydro rates | CTV News

www.ctvnews.ca - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: CTV Toronto: NDP's plan to cut pricy hydro rates

[Permalink](#)



Ontario NDP leader challenges Kathleen Wynne on hydro plan | Watch News Videos Online

globalnews.ca - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath challenged Premier Kathleen Wynne to show the public what her proposed Hydro plan really means.



NDP calls on Ontario government to table hydro legislation | CTV Toronto News

toronto.ctvnews.ca - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table legislation for its hydro bill reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation."



Bringing hydro prices down for real; Forget Wynne's cheap electoral politics; Ontario is working on a permanent fix

Ottawa Citizen - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Byline: Brian Platt

Ad Value: \$4,672

Reach: 114846 Page: A11

When Premier Kathleen Wynne finally announced her **hydro** relief package earlier this month, it put to rest the immediate political question of how to reduce bills quickly. The reduction mostly comes from kicking generation costs further ...



Powering Ontario's Remote First Nations | TVO.org

tvo.org - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Permalink

Ontarians may chafe at the price of electricity these days, but for most of them, at least it's readily available and reliable. That's not true for many of the First Nations in Ontario's north, where expensive and often unreliable diesel-powered ...



Voters plugging into short-term rate relief

Woodstock Sentinel-Review - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Peter Epp

Ad Value: \$316

Reach: 7920 Page: A4

Incredibly and against all odds, Ontarians may be prepared to forgive Premier Kathleen Wynne and her liberals when they go to the polls in June 2018. according to a Mainstreet research/Postmedia poll, approximately 47 per cent of Ontarians approve ...



Broadcast news

Broadcast news - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

--- (WEA-Ont-Que) A stretch of Highway 4-0-1 in eastern Ontario that was closed for more than 24 hours because of a major pileup is now fully open. The O-P-P re-opened the highway in the Kingston area last night after clearing away wrecked ...



Addressing poverty in rural Ontario; MPP Monte McNaughton gathering regional info for task force

Sarnia Observer - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$715

Reach: 12173 Page: A1 / Front

While soaring **hydro** prices have placed an added burden on the cost of living, there are other factors causing poverty in rural and small towns. Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Monte McNaughton is holding roundtable discussions in communities ...



Energy minister weighs in on provincial hydro bill plan

www.manitoulin.ca - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Permalink

On March 2, Premier Wynne announced a plan that will lower residential hydro bills by an average of 25 percent starting this summer. This significant reduction in rates will go to every household in Ontario with no asterisks, loop holes or ...



Wynne's no hydro caped crusader

Toronto Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Negative

Byline: Vic Fedeli

Ad Value: \$3,790

Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

It's hard not to shake your head as the premier parades around the province playing hero on **hydro** relief. Kathleen Wynne is, after all, responsible for forcing people in Ontario to choose between heating or eating. It was her government ...



Delivery charge for reserves nixed

Toronto Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Neutral

Byline: Shawn Jeffords

Ad Value: \$2,390

Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

The Liberal government's new **hydro rate** cut will remove delivery charges for every on-reserve First Nations household in Ontario. Colin Nekolaichuk, spokesman for **Energy** Minister Glenn Thibeault, said the credit ...



Stop paying hydro employees like millionaires

North Bay Nugget - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Negative

Byline: James C. Chaput

Ad Value: \$490

Reach: 11505 **Page:** A5

To the editor: Premier Kathleen Wynne recently admitted that her grandchildren will be paying for the break in **hydro rates** her government is bestowing upon us. When she announced carbon tax, useless in terms of lowering global ...

Bruce Power CEO writes environment minister to support OPG DGR

Kincardine News - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Negative

Byline: Michael W. Rencheck

Page: A6

Dear Minister McKenna, I would like to express Bruce Power's support for Ontario **Power** Generation's (**OPG**) proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) at the Bruce **Power** site, near Tiverton, ON. As concluded by the ...

Nuclear energy caused rate increases

Peterborough Examiner - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Neutral

Byline: Jenny Carter

Ad Value: \$312

Reach: 19693 **Page:** A4

I agree with your Point of View from Friday that Premier Kathleen Wynne is merely delaying the **energy** bills Ontarians will have to pay and shifting the burden onto taxpayers. However, this article is at least the third published recently ...

Nuclear energy is a boondoggle

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Negative

Byline: Cathy Orlando

Ad Value: \$340

Reach: 9196 Page: A4

The Wynne government's solution to high **electricity** costs has a \$14-billion price tag over the next 10 years that we are hoisting on the next generation. We must do better. In August, **Ontario Energy** Minister Glenn ...



March 15: Hydro not a political issue, too many school boards and other letters to the editor

www.thespec.com - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Permalink

Reading this editorial got me wondering why whenever I read about electrical rates it focuses only on Ontario and makes it seem a political problem. The realization that our addiction to electricity is not going away and that consuming vast amounts ...

A change in the charge

West Carleton Review - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$100

Reach: 6483 Page: A8

You can't live without it in today's society and in recent times, some haven't been able to live with it due to the cost. We are talking about the **electricity** which powers virtually every aspect of our lives. So when Ontario Premier ...

Hydro crisis affects hospital jobs: Fedeli

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$644

Reach: 9196 Page: A2

Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli is arguing that hospitals across the province, including Timmins & District Hospital (TADH), are being forced to cut jobs to pay for soaring **hydro** bills, "The (Kathleen) Wynne Liberals have created a ...

Social agencies welcomes competing hydro cuts

Pelham News - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Allan Benner

Page: A17

After years of increasing **energy** bills, any plan to reduce that trend is welcome news to social service agencies. "The Hope Centre is grateful for (relief efforts) because we've been swamped with **hydro** bills, from people being ...



Zapped hydro customers turning to churches; Soaring rates driving some in Southwestern Ontario to seek relief from churches

Sarnia Observer - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$843

Reach: 12173 Page: A3

They've driven people to food banks and even prompted one Ontario woman to tearfully plea for relief to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It gets worse. Ontario's soaring **electricity** prices are now zapping churches in some parts of ...



Assistant to Ontario's Minister of Energy in Windsor Thursday | Windsor Star

windsorstar.com - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Permalink

Ontario's much-maligned Fair Hydro Plan will be the topic of discussion Thursday in Windsor.

Forge provides details of \$25M renewal fuel plant

Sarnia This Week - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Byline: Carl Hnatyshyn

Ad Value: \$572

Reach: 22937 Page: A3

Forge Hydrocarbons will invest approximately \$25 million at the former Methes site in St. Clair Township to develop a 25-million litre renewal fuel plant at Sombra. Details of the plans were explained by Tom Haig, president and CEO of the company, ...



Various levels of government ignore environment

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Peter J. Hensel

Ad Value: \$212

Reach: 8941 Page: A7

To the Editor: What politician, be they municipal, provincial or federal, can say that they have done everything in their **power** to stop or correct the damage being done to rural water wells through the damaging of the aquifer by ...



Proper water testing could pay off

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$324

Reach: 8941 Page: A5

Landowners who want to ensure they can mount a challenge if they believe an industrial **wind turbine** is damaging their water well must have the proper baseline testing done by a qualified tester. The Water Wells First citizen ...



Turbine turmoil is avoidable: Study

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Hank Daniszewski

Ad Value: \$254

Reach: 8941 Page: A5

Wind farms don't have to be a flashpoint for community resentment, if the benefits are spread around. That's the conclusion of a study by two Western University geography researchers who compared the relatively smooth rollout of ...

Council seeks turbine test

Owen Sound Sun Times - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Byline: Frances Learment

Ad Value: \$437

Reach: 13178 Page: A3

Saugeen Shores councillors believe only an independent, parallel acoustic audit will determine if the UNIFOR **turbine** in Port Elgin is operating in compliance with government standards. Councillors unanimously asked at a March 13 ...

Clippings Summary

Full Articles



Info sessions for Entegrus, St. Thomas Energy merger; Combined utility will have nearly 60,000 customers

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Ad Value: \$193

Reach: 8941 Page: A8

Members of the public will have a chance to learn more details and ask questions about the planned merger of Entegrus Powerlines Inc. with St. Thomas **Energy** Inc.

Information sessions are planned for later this month when members of both organizations will be available to answer questions.

Although both companies are in the due diligence phase and continue to complete merger agreements, with a projected merger date of Jan. 1, 2018, both agree with providing the affected communities an opportunity to learn more about the merger.

"Local is a key aspect of this merger," said Jim Hogan, president and CEO of Entegrus Inc., in a written release.

"As a merged utility, we will have a larger voice in the industry and reap the benefits of a larger utility, with the benefit of continuing to be locally owned and operated ensuring local community interests are met," he added.

Rob Kent, chief operating officer of St. Thomas **Energy**, said, in a written release: "Our companies have similar values and operating philosophies.

"We welcome the public to come out and learn about both companies and see that once the merger occurs, there will be no changes to their service," he added. "If anything, they will experience a more robust utility."

Currently Entegrus, of which the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is a majority owner, operates and maintains **electrical** distribution systems for more than 40,000 customers in southwestern Ontario. The merger of St. Thomas **Energy** will see that grow by more than 17,000 more customers.

Three public sessions, which will run 6:30-8:30 p.m., are planned, beginning in Chatham on March 21 at the John D. Bradley Convention Centre in Meeting Room 1A.

A session will be held in Strathroy on March 23 at the Gemini Sports Complex and on March 30 in St. Thomas at the CASO Station.

The companies have launched a website www.poweringourpath.com where relevant information regarding the merger will be posted as it becomes available.

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Horwath rips Wynne's hydro plan; Demands premier show details of rate cut

Ottawa Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Shawn Jeffords

Ad Value: \$587

Reach: 45442 Page: A14

Show us your plan, premier.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath Wednesday stepped up her attack on the Liberal **hydro** plan, challenging Premier Kathleen Wynne to release the details of her scheme to slash **rates**.

Horwath said she wants to see details of the plan on Monday, the day the Legislature resumes from its March Break.

The government needs to table legislation so Ontarians know what they're getting into, especially the amount of debt they'll be taking on to achieve immediate **rate** relief, she said.

"People deserve to see it in black and white so they can debate it," Horwath said. "Don't hide the details. Don't delay. Don't come to the Legislature just before it rises this summer with a last-minute bill, ultimatums and no time for committees, experts and the people of Ontario to take the time they need to examine the bill."

The Liberal government announced two weeks ago that it would slash **hydro rates** by reamortizing long-term **energy** deals.

That means Ontarians will be charged less for **electricity** in the short term, but will pay billions in interest on the deal over the next 30 years.

No substance Horwath has said that Ontarians have yet to see the substance of the 17% **rate** cut.

She also accused the government of creating a \$40-billion debt to finance the scheme, a figure the government has said is actually \$25 billion.

"Let's just say I have a healthy amount of skepticism when it comes to any numbers the Liberals provide," Horwath said Wednesday. "Look, this is a party that talked about a \$40-million cost to cancel two **gas** plants ... That bill ended up where? I think \$1.1 billion was the last figure pegged to the cancellation of the **gas** plants."

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Horwath demands legislation soon for hydro rate cuts; NDP leader fears Liberal plan excludes hospitals, businesses

Toronto Star - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Rob Ferguson Toronto Star

Ad Value: \$23,569

Reach: 361323 Page: A14

New Democrats are raising questions about Premier Kathleen Wynne's plan to cut **hydro rates** 25 per cent and are demanding legislation to put it in place this summer be introduced next week.

"People deserve to see it in black and white," NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said Wednesday on the heels of an internal government poll suggesting the plan, which will cost \$25 billion in interest charges over 30 years, is popular.

While the government says the **rate** cuts will apply to families and 500,000 farms and small businesses, Horwath said it appears hospitals and organizations struggling with high **electricity** costs will be left out.

That leaves people in the dark on how far the price break will go and how the interest will affect Ontarians over the long haul, she said.

The Liberals "have more questions right now than they do answers," Horwath told a news conference after returning to Toronto from a road trip touting her own plan to cut **rates** by 17 to 30 per cent for all if the NDP forms the government after the June 2018 provincial election.

"Will it apply to medium-sized Ontario businesses? Will it help municipalities struggling to pay **hydro** bills at arenas and community centres? And who's going to pay for all that interest that Premier Wynne is racking up?" Horwath asked of the Liberal proposal.

"Will a hospital that sees virtually no savings still be expected to help pick up the \$40-billion tab?" she added, claiming the government is underestimating the \$25 billion in interest costs.

Officials in **Energy** Minister Glenn Thibeault's office said the **rate** cut, aside from residential customers, applies to retirement homes, nursing homes, housing co-ops, community agencies and small offices as well as small businesses.

Thibeault did not set a date for legislation, but said it will be introduced in time for public hearings and debate so **rate** cuts can take effect this summer.

He took aim at Horwath's plan, released two weeks ago, to persuade the federal government to scrap its 5-per-cent **HST** on **electricity** and to buy back shares from the partially privatized **Hydro** One.

"These offer little to Ontarians in the short term, compared to the real and meaningful relief our government's fair **hydro** plan will provide to everyone," Thibeault said in a statement, calling the federal **HST** push "pie-in-the-sky."

"The NDP's most expensive idea - buying back more than \$4 billion in shares of **Hydro** One - will not take one cent off **electricity** bills. What it will do is send billions to the stock market, instead of making much-needed infrastructure investments in communities across Ontario."

Wynne's government is selling up to 60 per cent of **Hydro** One to raise an estimated \$9 billion toward new transit lines and other infrastructure and pay down **hydro** system debt.

Internal government polling, obtained by the Star, suggests 82 per cent of Ontarians support the Wynne **rate** cut, while a Mainstreet poll for Postmedia found 47 per cent support it and 35 per cent disapprove.

Horwath also took aim at Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown, whose party has not yet released a plan to deal with **hydro rates**, which have doubled in the past decade.

"It's kind of worrisome. He's got no plan at all. Nobody knows who Patrick Brown is, what he believes, what his vision is for **hydro**, because he hasn't put a plan forward," she told reporters.

Brown said last week that Wynne's plan sets a "low bar" for fixing the **electricity** system, because it doesn't address "structural issues," such as the surplus of **power** and expensive **renewable energy** contracts still coming on line.

He did not set a target for how much a Tory plan could save **ratepayers**, but promised to reveal details in the "near future."

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NDP calls on wynne government to table hydro bill

National Post - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Ad Value: \$1,793

Reach: 159480 Page: A10

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table

legislation for its **hydro** bill reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation." The legislature is not sitting this week for March Break, but Horwath, pictured, said Ontarians need to see the planned legislation as soon as possible. "People deserve to see it in black and white so they can debate it and so the legislature can debate it too," she said. The government indicated the legislation won't come as quickly as Monday. Premier Kathleen Wynne announced earlier this month that people will receive an average 25-per-cent cut to their **electricity** bills starting this summer. But the plan will ultimately cost **ratepayers** about \$25 billion more in interest, the government has said.

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CTV Toronto: NDP's plan to cut pricy hydro rates | CTV News

www.ctvnews.ca - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: CTV Toronto: NDP's plan to cut pricy hydro rates

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Ontario NDP leader challenges Kathleen Wynne on hydro plan | Watch News Videos Online

globalnews.ca - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath challenged Premier Kathleen Wynne to show the public what her proposed Hydro plan really means.

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NDP calls on Ontario government to table hydro legislation | CTV Toronto News

toronto.ctvnews.ca - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Liberal government to table legislation for its hydro bill reduction plan on Monday, saying it's short on details and "warrants one heck of an explanation."

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Bringing hydro prices down for real; Forget Wynne's cheap electoral politics; Ontario is working on a permanent fix

Ottawa Citizen - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Byline: Brian Platt

Ad Value: \$4,672

Reach: 114846 Page: A11

When Premier Kathleen Wynne finally announced her **hydro** relief package earlier this month, it put to rest the immediate political question of how to reduce bills quickly.

The reduction mostly comes from kicking generation costs further down the road, which makes bills cheaper now but will eventually cost us more. Further relief directed at low-income and rural residents will come from drawing money out of general tax revenues.

Yes, this was politics. It simply shifts around money so it seems like you're paying less. But everyone was demanding substantial relief right away, and there was no painless way to do it. What did you expect? Magic? In the big picture, the real question is what we're doing to lower the total cost of the system so we can stop monkeying around with "refinancing" and tax subsidies. Here,

there is one big project worth keeping an eye on.

The Independent **Electricity** System Operator, the agency in charge of the

province's **electricity** grid, is in the midst of what it calls "market renewal." Currently, Ontario manages its daily **electricity** demand using a 15-year-old system built for a simpler time - before the province shut down its coal-fired plants and built renewable generators such as **wind** and **solar**, and before time-of-use pricing was brought in to encourage consumers to use **power** in off-peak periods."What it's really about is revisiting the fundamental design of the market," the

IESO's Chuck Farmer said in an interview. The market is how generators are contracted to produce a certain amount of **electricity** in a certain amount of time. It's a tricky balance: produce too little and you have brown-outs; produce too much and you have to sell the excess to U.S. states at a loss. How it all works in practice is an extraordinarily complex thing for the average person (or, say, newspaper columnist) to understand, but the core goal of market renewal is to improve how the **IESO** anticipates daily **electricity** needs, and to build in more flexibility. A large report on how to do this was just released, and the **IESO** is now gathering feedback. Any changes are still about four years away. There are two other big elements of the renewal process. One is to improve how Ontario trades **electricity** with neighbouring jurisdictions so that it's done more efficiently and reduces the cost of selling our surplus. The other is to use "technology-agnostic" auctions when the province needs to build new **power** plants. In other words, instead of calling for a certain amount of **wind**, **solar** or **natural gas**, the province will simply go for the most cost-effective solution that meets its needs (including on carbon emissions). How much money will all of this save consumers? Over roughly 10 years, the **IESO** hopes about \$3.5 billion in total. It's not a game-changing amount. The government's plan to "refinance" the global adjustment charge, for example, will take about \$1.5 billion off bills annually (for now). But the **IESO's** project represents permanent savings, not artificial ones created through financial gimmicks.

There are other programs underway. The **Ontario Energy Board** has launched pilot projects with distribution companies to experiment with peak and off-peak prices. Eventually you may be able to choose your own **electricity** pricing plan, which could help some people (especially seniors, who tend to be home during peak hours).

So, yes, there is some money to be saved in the system. Overall, these reforms are common-sense initiatives that are just hard to achieve in practice. Yet what all of this really shows is how grindingly hard it is to get those permanent savings.

When new costs are put into the **electricity** system, they stay there for a long, long time (see: green **energy** contracts).

Every time you hear a politician musing about some big idea to inject into the **electricity** system, alarm bells should start ringing.

Something to keep in mind as we enter election season.

Brian Platt is the deputy digital editor for the Ottawa Citizen. Previously, he was based at Queen's Park as a policy reporter. twitter.com/btplatt
bplatt@postmedia.com

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Powering Ontario's Remote First Nations | TVO.org

tvo.org - Wed Mar 15 2017
Tone: **Neutral**

Ontarians may chafe at the price of electricity these days, but for most of them, at least it's readily available and reliable. That's not true for many of the First Nations in Ontario's north, where expensive and often unreliable diesel-powered generators are all that keep the lights on. The Watay-nika-neyap power project promises to change all that for 17 remote First Nations communities by

2023.

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Voters plugging into short-term rate relief

Woodstock Sentinel-Review - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Peter Epp

Ad Value: \$316

Reach: 7920 Page: A4

Incredibly and against all odds, Ontarians may be prepared to forgive Premier Kathleen Wynne and her liberals when they go to the polls in June 2018. according to a Mainstreet research/Postmedia poll, approximately 47 per cent of Ontarians approve of Wynne's decision earlier this month to lower **electricity rates** by an average of 17 per cent, beginning with the June billing - even as that decision would create additional long-term debt of an estimated \$26 billion. indeed, the same poll found 41 per cent of Ontarians believe the liberals' **electricity** plan is really a ploy to put the controversial issue behind them as Wynne and her party gear up for the next election campaign. But guess what?

They're also willing to accept it for what it is and enjoy lower **electricity** bills. it's not only the liberals who are cynical here; it is also those who support them while acknowledging and even applauding their opportunism. what's interesting is even as Wynne's personal approval rating drags, her party continues to enjoy more support than the New Democrats, for whom only 17 per cent of Ontarians would vote if a general election was held today. The liberals stand at 22 per cent, while the Progressive Conservatives are at 32 per cent. But the number of undecided Ontarians sits at 25 per cent, and they will probably be the ones to elect the next government. Their decision will not be based on **electricity rates** alone but on a wide variety of issues, including the popularity of party leaders.

But by slightly moving the issue of **electricity rates** off the table, the liberals have potentially removed an enormous obstacle to re-election. and with their plan set to begin in June, they'll have 12 months to remind Ontarians they were able to cut **electricity rates**.

The Mainstreet Research/Postmedia poll illustrates a compelling truth: many voters are searching for short-term and immediate solutions while disregarding long-term consequences. They are willing to be bought.

The NDP's Andrea Horwath has also put forward a plan to deal with Ontario's **electricity** challenges but the New Democrats have received little public traction, and what they have received pales to the liberals' ability as the sitting government to simply cut immediate **electricity** bills while pushing the actual cost down the road.

Many voters aren't worried about "down the road" - they want relief, and are apparently willing to reward the party that provides that relief, even while understanding their relief will leave a substantial debt for future generations.

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Addressing poverty in rural Ontario; MPP Monte McNaughton gathering regional info for task force

Sarnia Observer - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$715

Reach: 12173 Page: A1 / Front

While soaring **hydro** prices have placed an added burden on the cost of living, there are other factors causing poverty in rural and small towns.

Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Monte McNaughton is holding roundtable discussions in communities around his riding to address this issue.

He met with community stakeholders in Wallaceburg on Tuesday to talk about the challenges being faced.

McNaughton said the loss of well-paying jobs, particularly in the manufacturing sector, and transportation issues that make getting to work or accessing health services difficult, are contributing factors to poverty.

He noted a sign of this is the fact some people are having to rely on social assistance more today than in the past.

McNaughton said he heard from Chatham-Kent officials that of the 2,700 individuals and families on Ontario Works, about 50 per cent have been for two years or longer, when the average was once four months.

"I want politicians and Queen's Park to realize there's poverty happening in small towns across Ontario," he said.

Churches are seeing the impact of poverty with more requests to help provide food and even cover **electricity** bills.

Brian Horrobin, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Wallaceburg, said in less than two weeks in February a total of 11 people sought help from the church, including a few who needed both **electricity** and **gas** bills paid, along with help with groceries.

Another sign is the increased numbers of people attending free community meals offered by churches.

"We've noticed our numbers have really gone up," Horrobin said, adding 162 people attended the monthly meal the First Baptist church provided in January.

He noted the meals once attracted 60 to 70 people and now "we're not under 100 anymore."

However, he said some people not facing financial hardships come out for the social aspect of it.

Colleen Keane, pastoral minister at the St. Agnes and Blessed Sacrament cluster of parishes in Chatham, said the local St. Vincent de Paul gives out food vouchers for the hungry to receive food from the local food bank, Outreach for Hunger.

"I would say that we are seeing a noticeable increase in people out there asking for our help" she said.

"I'm hearing from people that their shelves are bare," Keane added. "Also, our clients who come for help are telling us that what the vouchers and so on can buy at the store is less and less. The money does not go far."

Keane said St. Agnes runs a soup kitchen that typically serves 65 people a week, but noted, "some weeks, it's closer to 90 people. There's no question that people are in poverty."

Horrobin said in rural areas it's more difficult to see homelessness because most people aren't on the streets or park benches.

"That's an intangible," he said. "How do you even count people who are doing that? It could be any number of people."

Horrobin believes it's important these stories be brought up in the legislature.

"I think when you put real names and real faces to the problems, it becomes more than just... something out there and it's not relevant and it doesn't affect me," he said. "These are actual people going through this."

McNaughton said he has been working with Liberal MPP Ted McMeekin from the Hamilton area, who has been appointed to lead a rural task force on poverty.

McMeekin said he's pleased to be working with McNaughton and another

Conservative MPP Jeff Yurek, from Elgin-Middlesex-London to get whatever input they can offer.

He points to the fact Premier Kathleen Wynne "has real interest in building on the agri-food industry, (the) single largest contributor to Ontario's gross domestic product."

He said she wants to double that by 2025.

McMeekin also talked about one-industry towns and the problems that can arise if that one industry runs into trouble.

"One of the challenges might be to be proactive about trying to help one-industry towns become two-industry towns so that there's more options," he said.

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Energy minister weighs in on provincial hydro bill plan

www.manitoulin.ca - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

On March 2, Premier Wynne announced a plan that will lower residential hydro bills by an average of 25 percent starting this summer. This significant reduction in rates will go to every household in Ontario with no asterisks, loop holes or exceptions. And your bill won't increase beyond inflation for at least four years.

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Wynne's no hydro caped crusader

Toronto Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Vic Fedeli

Ad Value: \$3,790

Reach: 171076 Page: A8

It's hard not to shake your head as the premier parades around the province playing hero on **hydro** relief.

Kathleen Wynne is, after all, responsible for forcing people in Ontario to choose between heating or eating. It was her government that created this **hydro** crisis. But now she wants Ontarians to believe she is coming to your rescue. Well put away your cape, premier, because you aren't being honest.

What's missing on her self-congratulatory tour is honesty about who exactly will get help. Every single time, Wynne conveniently fails to mention who isn't eligible to get much relief at all: Ontario's hospitals.

They run 24/7. Lighting and equipment run around the clock. There is no such thing as operating a hospital at offpeak hours. Across Ontario, hospitals have seen **rates** soar and they're being sucked up.

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre in Barrie has seen **rates** increase by \$200,000. The Timmins and District Hospital has seen **rates** increase by \$375,000. The Collingwood General & Marine Hospital has seen an alarming 35% **rate** hike, and at the Sault Area Hospital we've seen them explode by 45%. This represents massive chunks of a hospital's operating budget, but they won't see a single cent of relief come under this expensive new **hydro** scheme.

And we're starting to see the effects of these soaring **rates** where it hurts the most: The frontline care our most vulnerable patients receive. Hospitals are being forced to lay off staff in order to afford these everincreasing fixed costs.

Think about that for just one minute. Our nurses, our frontline staff, the ones we count on to care for our friends and family in times of need, are being let go to pay for Wynne's **hydro** mistakes.

In my riding of Nipissing, the North Bay Regional Health Centre announced this

week it is cutting 40 positions. That's on top of another 350 cut in the last three years. The president and CEO of the hospital specifically referenced **hydro** costs as one of the underlying reasons.

Barrie, Timmins, Collingwood and the Sault have all also seen health-care cuts.

When is this all going to stop? For hospitals across Ontario, evidently, it doesn't. Whether it's cut or frozen budgets, cuts to doctors and nurses, and now soaring **hydro rates**, for years, the Wynne Liberals have forced our hospitals to do more with less.

Not only that, but the problems are only going to get worse. The Wynne Liberals' **hydro** scheme is nothing but a Band-Aid that's only going to lead to even higher taxes and **rates** down the road, and the government continues to sign even more costly green **energy** contracts.

Patient care is only going to continue to slide, as hospitals are left with even bigger bills.

Premier, as you tour this province touting your relief plan, I'd suggest you put away your cape. You are no hero to those paying the enormous price of your mistakes.

Fedeli is the PC MPP for Nipissing

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Delivery charge for reserves nixed

Toronto Sun - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Neutral

Byline: Shawn Jeffords

Ad Value: \$2,390

Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

The Liberal government's new **hydro rate** cut will remove delivery charges for every on-reserve First Nations household in Ontario.

Colin Nikolaichuk, spokesman for **Energy** Minister Glenn Thibeault, said the credit will help alleviate the large delivery charges to many Ontario First Nation's reserves and remote communities.

The credit will cover 100% of the delivery charges.

The ministry says 21,500 on-reserve customers will automatically qualify for the credit.

The **Ontario Energy Board** recommended the changes after consulting with First Nations.

The government is also expanding its Ontario **Electricity** Support Program, which will provide additional support for some low-income First Nation's **ratepayers**.

Those who qualify for the lowest credit will see an increase from a \$45-permonth subsidy to \$65.

Those measures, along with a number of other credits to help low-income Ontarians, will cost the government \$2.5 billion over the next three years, Nikolaichuk said in a statement to the Sun.

Ontario's First Nations leaders have welcomed the news, with Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day saying the decision will reduce "**energy** poverty" in many communities.

"Poverty, lack of opportunity and choosing to pay for **electricity** over food is a reality that affects our people," Day said.

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Stop paying hydro employees like millionaires

North Bay Nugget - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Negative

Byline: James C. Chaput

Ad Value: \$490

Reach: 11505 **Page:** A5

To the editor: Premier Kathleen Wynne recently admitted that her grandchildren will be paying for the break in **hydro rates** her government is bestowing upon us.

When she announced carbon tax, useless in terms of lowering global carbon emissions but useful as another tax grab, she stated she was making a better world for her granddaughter. Now she's making her granddaughter pay for that better world.

Sorry granddaughter Wynne, but you will be paying not only for delayed **hydro** costs but also accumulated government debt and a carbon tax for your entire life.

In addition, the infrastructure your grandmother instituted today will probably be outdated or worn out so you will also have to pay for new infrastructure, as well.

Don't think that you can do like Granny and tack it onto the bill for your grandchildren. Methinks the deficit-spending miracle will be severely restricted.

Hopefully, future generations will learn from their grandparents' ill-fated experiment. They will certainly atone for their grandparents' sins at any **rate**.

And don't you youth believe you will get any relief on the carbon tax. We have an election coming up in which the carbon tax is not even on the ballot. We just get to choose which one of the three carbon tax stooges to vote for, or, my personal choice, spoil your ballot.

Ms. Wynne also states that **Hydro** One is much better in customer satisfaction under her tutelage. Announcing that it won't continue any winter **hydro** cutoffs results in increased customer satisfaction I suppose.

She also threw her esteemed colleague, Dalton McGuinty, under the bus for the green **energy** fiasco. Much like Justin Trudeau did to her when responding to a financially stressed private-sector grandmother. There are few, if any, financially stressed public-sector grandmothers.

Did the inane green **energy** program and **gas** plants scandal really cause this **hydro** financial disaster? It didn't help, but what about the systematic problem in the first place? The fact that we pay **hydro** employees like millionaires, like they own the joint. Hiring another multi-millionaire executive (\$4-million annual salary) won't solve higher-than-average compensation problems.

Let's start by not paying \$4 into their exclusive pension plans while the employee pays just \$1. Let's not give their powerful unions **Hydro** One stock, the unions do not own **OPG** and **Hydro** One, we do (for now). Eventually, let's ban unions from taxpayer-owned utilities.

Want to make life better for our grandchildren? Eliminate unrestricted deficit spending, enact a carbon tax vote, work to pay down government long term debts and not dig the hole deeper, and ban public-sector unionism like it was 50 years ago.

James C. Chaput

North Bay

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Bruce Power CEO writes environment minister to support OPG DGR

Kincardine News - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Michael W. Rencheck

Page: A6

Dear Minister McKenna, I would like to express Bruce **Power's** support for **Ontario Power Generation's (OPG)** proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) at the Bruce **Power** site, near Tiverton, ON.

As concluded by the Joint Review Panel, this is a safe and effective way to manage this level of waste over the long term, and it's important that we accept the findings of this independent, science-based process. In addition, as an active member in the host region of the proposed DGR, we think it's also important for us to recognize support from local municipalities and the commitment **OPG** has made to Indigenous Communities moving forward.

The long-term storage of low and intermediate level waste through a DGR facility is an internationally accepted strategy, which results in a safe and scientifically sound solution. It is also one that we at Bruce **Power** have integrated into our long-term waste management strategy for our Life-Extension Program, as well as the continued operation of our site to 2064 and beyond.

We have a requirement to fully fund the cost of the waste products we produce and the eventual decommissioning of the facility, and this is included in our price of **power**. The cost of the DGR as a key element to this equation is funded within both Bruce **Power's** and **OPG's** long-term planning.

In the nuclear industry, we pride ourselves on our ability to provide reliable, low-cost and low-carbon **electricity**, resulting in the avoidance of millions of tons of greenhouse **gas** emissions globally. Like all forms of **power**, we strive to continuously lessen our impact, and, as is often highlighted through various public forums, waste minimization and storage is one of our industry's leading efforts.

Through a unique agreement by which Bruce **Power** leases its two stations from **OPG**, we work very closely on waste management reduction strategies and strive to remain on the cutting edge of innovation. Even with the approval of the DGR, we will continue to innovate to minimize waste through our operations and across our industry.

We acknowledge that decisions of this scale require extensive analysis and scrutiny to ensure that it truly is a sound decision. This project has been in development and part of the regulatory process for a long time, and all involved have asked challenging questions during the process. However, the CEEA Panel process is both extensive and independent and relies on facts and science to make its conclusions. The process has yielded a very clear result, and it is important that **OPG** is now enabled to move forward.

Nuclear has powered the Province of Ontario for decades, providing low-cost, reliable **electricity**, and allowing Canada to be a leader in the production of medical isotopes such as Cobalt-60 which is exported around the world. The industry has created good jobs and economic growth, while keeping the air we breathe clean.

As you know, waste is a by-product of our industry that requires safe, long-term management. The industry has managed this for over 50 years in a safe way, and we need to position ourselves to build on this strong track record. **OPG** has proven to be a leader in minimizing and safely storing this material for decades, and for over 10 years has been rigorously evaluating a safe and responsible long-term solution for waste management. The DGR is its proposed solution, and based on the technical case, the Bruce site is the right location for it to be constructed.

Please accept this letter as Bruce **Power's** full support for a DGR on the Bruce site. We are confident in the regulatory process that has taken the project to this point and our understanding that **OPG** will continue to follow through on the commitments it has made to engage local municipalities and Indigenous

communities who have an interest in this project.

Michael W. Rencheck

President and Chief Executive Officer Bruce **Power**

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Nuclear energy caused rate increases

Peterborough Examiner - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Jenny Carter

Ad Value: \$312

Reach: 19693 **Page:** A4

I agree with your Point of View from Friday that Premier Kathleen Wynne is merely delaying the **energy** bills Ontarians will have to pay and shifting the burden onto taxpayers.

However, this article is at least the third published recently in your paper to claim that money wasted on green **energy** is the cause of escalating **electricity rates**.

This is such nonsense as to qualify as one of the "alternative truths" we are increasingly being expected to believe. All **renewable energy** combined provides only about 10 per cent of our **electricity**. **Solar energy** is becoming the cheapest option of all.

Ontario's Liberal governments have messed up the development of **wind energy** by their top-down approach, but it is still not a major factor. Sixty per cent of our **electricity** comes from nuclear **power** stations. That is where the **rate** increases are coming from.

We rely on our newspapers to give us the facts, without which we cannot have real democracy.

Jenny Carter

Hillcrest Ave.

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Nuclear energy is a boondoggle

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Cathy Orlando

Ad Value: \$340

Reach: 9196 **Page:** A4

The Wynne government's solution to high **electricity** costs has a \$14-billion price tag over the next 10 years that we are hoisting on the next generation. We must do better.

In August, **Ontario Energy** Minister Glenn Thibeault likened Ontario's **energy** system to a Rubik's cube: you move one part of the Rubik's cube and all others move.

A key to solving the Rubik's cube is aligning certain pieces. If we line up certain parts of Ontario's **electricity** system, we can solve much of this expensive problem.

Missing from the Minister Thibeault's plan is **nuclear energy**.

Instead of pouring billions of more dollars into nuclear **power**, let's close Pickering in 2018. **Nuclear energy** is a boondoggle. According to the David Suzuki Foundation, "between 1956 and 2000, Canada's state-owned Atomic **Energy** of Canada Limited received subsidies totalling \$16.6 billion. Even with

these subsidies, nuclear **power** is far more expensive than both fossil fuels and renewables." And these costs don't consider the lifecycle costs for cleanup after accidents, waste disposal and decommissioning nuclear **power** plants.

This would also help reduce Global Adjustment Fees that are driving up **electricity** prices. On our bills, 46 per cent of the increase in these fees is due to nuclear **power**.

Getting rid of **nuclear energy** will also reduce our need to sell our **electricity** at a loss. Ontario replaced most of its **coal-fired electricity** with refurbished **nuclear energy** and **natural gas** plants. Nuclear is an inflexible source of **electricity** so, at times of low demand, we have to offload excess **electricity** onto other **electrical** grids or risk overloading the grid. By reducing nuclear on our grid, we will reduce having to sell our **electricity** at a loss.

I also agree with others that we should not sell **Hydro One**. The Ontario Treasury over the long term needs that income.

Finally, the rebates should not compensate high-**energy** usage. Low- and middle-income earners use less **energy** than the top 1 per cent of earners. Thus, there should not be across the board 17-per-cent rebates - especially to the high earners living in monster homes that suck massive amounts of **electricity**.

The **rebate** should be 17 per cent of the average **energy** usage with special compensations for low- and middle-income residents that have rural, northern and medical needs.

I look forward to hearing Minister Thibault's thoughts on these suggestions.

Cathy Orlando

Sudbury

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March 15: Hydro not a political issue, too many school boards and other letters to the editor

www.thespec.com - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Reading this editorial got me wondering why whenever I read about electrical rates it focuses only on Ontario and makes it seem a political problem. The realization that our addiction to electricity is not going away and that consuming vast amounts of fossil fuels to make it is destroying our planet is a worldwide issue.

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A change in the charge

West Carleton Review - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$100

Reach: 6483 Page: A8

You can't live without it in today's society and in recent times, some haven't been able to live with it due to the cost. We are talking about the **electricity** which powers virtually every aspect of our lives.

So when Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne announces a 17 per cent reduction in **rates**, you take notice. Some are citing this as a cynical political move. Well, surprise, surprise - **hydro rates** have been a political football in Ontario ever since **electricity** started flowing in the early 1900s.

The **electricity** system has been reliable recently, not like the frequent, annoying outages that plagued the system in the notso-distant past.

The principle that future generations - rather than present-day **ratepayers** - should pay a share of the infrastructure costs related to **electricity**, which is the justification for this **rate** reduction, is a good one.

It works when buying a home, with the costs distributed over future years. It now will apply to the **electricity** system.

But more could and should be done to reduce **electricity rates**.

Can you image today's society with no **electricity**? Hardly, so why is the federal portion of the **HST** charged on **electricity**? Other essential items in society like food are exempt. That should be the case with **electricity** as well.

It might be a better use of Carleton MP Pierre Poilievre's time if he railed against this injustice rather than tilting at the windmill of the proposed carbon tax as he has been doing.

Furthermore, if Wynne is so concerned about **hydro** consumers getting a break so they can afford to live in today's society, why is she not coming to the aid of those City of Ottawa residents in Cumberland, Osgoode, Rideau and West Carleton who are now served by **Hydro** One, but should be served by local municipal utility **Hydro** Ottawa with its lower **rates**.

This should be simple and easy to do, particularly by a premier who claims to want to lower **electricity rates** for customers. Yet many Ottawa residents remain shut out of being served by their more efficient local municipal utility.

It's time that the premier stepped up to the plate on this issue and forced change.

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Hydro crisis affects hospital jobs: Fedeli

The Timmins Daily Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$644

Reach: 9196 Page: A2

Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli is arguing that hospitals across the province, including Timmins & District Hospital (TADH), are being forced to cut jobs to pay for soaring **hydro** bills, "The (Kathleen) Wynne Liberals have created a **hydro** crisis in Ontario where our **hydro** bills are the fastest rising in North America. This is hurting hospitals across Ontario," Fedeli says.

"But, the Wynne Liberals' expensive **hydro** Band-Aid does absolutely nothing to reduce the cost of **electricity** for hospitals. **Electricity** bills are going to continue to soar and nurses and front-line staff will be let go."

On Tuesday, it was revealed that the North Bay Regional Health Centre is eliminating 30 to 40 positions, in addition to 350 cuts over the past three years, while its **hydro** costs are soaring by more than \$200,000.

Paul Heinrich, the hospital's president and chief executive officer, specifically noted that the hospital doesn't qualify for the new **hydro rebate**. Across the province, there are a number of other examples of hospitals struggling to pay for skyrocketing **hydro rates**.

"Our hospitals are being forced to do more with less. For years they've been forced to deal with Wynne Liberal cuts and now they're being forced to pay for Wynne Liberal mismanagement of the **electricity** sector," Fedeli says.

"Hospitals are going to be faced with no other option but to cut staff as **electricity rates** continue to soar. These cuts will be Premier Kathleen Wynne's legacy."

Fedeli says **energy rates** will keep rising in Ontario because the Liberals are dedicated to signing more expensive **wind** and **solar power** contracts despite a surplus **energy** problem.

He says the Liberals accepted more than 1,100 applications this month for more expensive **wind** and **solar power** projects. Across the province: -The Timmins and District Hospital is expecting to pay \$1.2 million for **hydro** this year. Five years ago, the hospital was paying \$825,000 a year on **hydro**. This represents an increase of \$375,000 a year. In 2014, the hospital cut 40 jobs.

-The Sault Area Hospital's **electricity** bills have increased by \$800,000 or 45 per cent over a four-year period. In 2015, the Sault Area Hospital was forced to cut 35 positions.

-The Collingwood General & Marine Hospital saw a 35 per cent increase in its **hydro** costs. In 2015, Collingwood projected a \$1-million operating deficit.

-The Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) in Barrie is expecting a \$200,000 increase in its **energy** bill. RVH has been forced to cut staff positions a number of times over the past few years, including the elimination of 56 full-time positions in 2016.

-Windsor Regional Hospital's **hydro** bills have increased by 32 per cent over a four-year period. In total, the hospital is paying \$5 million a year on **hydro** costs. In 2016, the hospital announced that it would eliminate 86 jobs to deal with a \$20-million budget shortfall.

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Social agencies welcomes competing hydro cuts

Pelham News - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Allan Benner

Page: A17

After years of increasing **energy** bills, any plan to reduce that trend is welcome news to social service agencies.

"The Hope Centre is grateful for (relief efforts) because we've been swamped with **hydro** bills, from people being disconnected or really far in arrears," said Mark Carl, executive director of the Welland agency.

"If you live in poverty and have no real money at the end of the month, when **hydro** is going up and food is going up, it's harder and harder for people to make the payments and not get disconnected," Carl said.

"People just can't afford the **hydro rates**, and they've been coming to the Hope Centre when they're at risk of being disconnected."

Meanwhile, the organization's food bank has seen an increase in demand of about six per cent in the past year, and Carl suspects that increase "is directly related to higher **energy** costs."

Hydro prices have led to some bickering at Queen's Park among opposition parties.

While a Liberal government plan would cut **rates** by an average of 25 per cent, the New Democratic Party says a plan it introduced would save **ratepayers** 30 per cent on bills.

The Progressive Conservatives referred the Liberal plan to the auditor general while developing an alternative **rate** reduction plan of its own.

Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates said the NDP's plan includes buying back assets of **Hydro One**, a utility that has been earning hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Selling it "makes no sense," he said.

Gates said about "94 per cent of the people of the province of Ontario have been very clear - do not sell **Hydro One**."

He said the promised 25 per cent Liberal cut really only amounts to 17 per cent, because it includes previously announced plans to eliminate the eight per cent **HST on electricity** bills.

Gates is also concerned about the Liberal plan to cut costs by deferring debt payments. The burden of that debt, would then be borne by future generations.

"I worked my entire life to try and make a better life for my kids and my grandkids. I do not want to give them any more hardship," he said. "It makes absolutely no sense to me."

Progressive Conservative MPP Sam Oosterhoff, representing Niagara West-Glanbrook, called the Liberal plan "a shell game."

He said it fails to address costs associated with the Liberal's **Green Energy Act**, while extending the payment period which leads to increased interest payments.

"We're seeing some estimates that this could be an extra \$25 billion to taxpayers here and down the road," he said. "They're not addressing those root causes within the **Green Energy Act** that they signed back in the day, backed up by the NDP."

He called the NDP's plan "just absolutely ridiculous."

Oosterhoff said the PC party's plan is still in development but it will be designed to address underlying causes of **rate** increases - including wages paid to upper management.

He said the Tories asked the auditor general to look into the Liberal plan, alleging that the governing party is "making hugely speculative plans about all sorts of issues that they're not backing up by facts."

"We believe the people of Ontario deserve accountability and transparency," he said.

St. Catharines Liberal MPP Jim Bradley said the PC party ought to be developing its own **rate**-cutting plan rather than worrying about the auditor general.

"When you don't have a plan yourself, I guess you're calling the auditor to look at someone else's plan," he said.

He said the Liberals introduced a comprehensive plan that recognizes the substantial cost incurred in transforming **electrical** generation away from fossil fuels like coal.

"We've invested more than \$50 billion in generation, transmission and distribution," he said, adding the **hydro** tunnel recently built in Niagara Falls was part of that initiative.

"The government has determined ... that there should be a fairer way of sharing that cost. That's why they have accepted a recommendation which involves paying for that over a longer period of time," Bradley said.

"We thought that on average a 25 per cent cut in the cost of **electricity** would be fair to people in this province, and also special programs which assist those at the low end of the income scale."

Hydro One vice-president of customer and corporate affairs Ferio Pugliese said the Liberal plan addresses a "sizable amount of the issues, if not most of the issues" that its 1.3 million customers are looking for.

"We're hearing from many of them about the need for relief and affordability. With **hydro** it's certainly necessary given the escalations that we've seen in recent years," Pugliese said. "Certainly from the point of view of the people we serve, I see it as a welcome change for them, and one that will lead, with policies, to be very sustainable change."

In addition to the average savings across the province, he said many of **Hydro** One's customers could save even more.

About 75 per cent of its residential customers live in remote areas, which means they have been paying higher **rates** to recover costs. The Liberal plan would bring rural delivery **rates** in line with urban areas, "and that will be a very welcome change for our customers," Pugliese said.

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Zapped hydro customers turning to churches; Soaring rates driving some in Southwestern Ontario to seek relief from churches

Sarnia Observer - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Negative

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$843

Reach: 12173 **Page:** A3

They've driven people to food banks and even prompted one Ontario woman to tearfully plea for relief to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It gets worse. Ontario's soaring **electricity** prices are now zapping churches in some parts of Southwestern Ontario, hit by consumers unable to shoulder the burden.

The problem is so bad, one cleric in Wallaceburg says his church's benevolent fund has gone into overdraft three times in the last two years - something he hadn't seen before in 24 years on the job - as people come looking for help to cope with their **power** bills.

"I know on paper, from my own accounting, I've overdrafted it three times" within the last two years, said Pastor Brian Horrobin of First Baptist Church.

"There's definitely been a marked increase in people coming for help," said Horrobin, noting the same has happened at other churches in the area.

Horrobin said his church has either directly helped people pay outstanding **hydro** bills or given them prepaid grocery cards because they can't afford groceries after paying for **electricity**.

Ontario **electricity rates** have essentially doubled over the past decade, with the province's own auditor-general finding **ratepayers** paid \$37 billion more than market prices for **power** over much of that period and will fork out more than three-and-a-half times as much in extra costs by 2032 because, she reported, the Liberal government ignored its own **energy** experts and made political decisions that hiked the cost for consumers.

The fallout has also set the stage for the next election in 2018, with the New Democrats proposing to cut **power** prices by 30 per cent and the Liberals, their popularity in the polls hard-hit by the **energy** file, saying they'll cut bills by 17 per cent this summer on top of an eight-per-cent cut that took effect Jan. 1 when they removed the provincial sales tax on **hydro** bills.

Horrobin raised his concerns during an anti-poverty roundtable held by Progressive Conservative MPP Monte McNaughton, whose Lambton-Kent-Middlesex riding takes in vast rural reaches where **electricity** delivery **rates** are higher than in many urban areas.

"A story that hit home for me is that a number of churches in North Kent are now raiding benevolent funds to pay people's **hydro** bills. ... because they can't afford to pay those bills (since) the costs have gone up so much," McNaughton said.

Southwestern Ontario's ranking MPP, 22-year veteran Ernie Hardeman in Oxford, said social agencies and churches in his riding are also reporting more people coming to them seeking relief from **energy** bills.

"Just coming in and getting help with food just doesn't seem to do it anymore, because their **hydro** bill is a bigger problem than not being able to get their groceries," he said.

Late last year, Wynne called Ontario's high **electricity** prices her "mistake" and vowed to fix them, paving the way for the new reductions coming.

But Hardeman is critical of Wynne's promise, calling it a "Band-Aid" fix that doesn't address structural problems.

"The premier says she's solving the problem, and yet she's done nothing about changing the system," he said.

The Liberals have stood by their handling of the **energy** file, noting they closed Ontario's dirty coal-fired **power** plants in favour of green **energy**.

But critics point out the government's plunge into green **energy** since 2009, which greatly expanded **wind**- and **solar**-generated **power**, included sweetheart long-term contracts that guaranteed **energy** producers far more than what consumers pay for **power**, inflating the cost.

Liberal MPP Ted McMeekin said he's been saying all along the delivery charges weren't fair, and the government listened.

The Liberals inherited problems with the **electricity** system from the former PC government, he said, citing the frequent number of smog days Ontario had then - a problem aggravated by coal-fired **power** - and the 2003 blackout, when **power** plants across Ontario scrambled to get the province's grid operational after 50 million North Americans were plunged into darkness.

He noted a \$50-billion investment was made to upgrade the **power** system, and "somebody's got to pay for that."

The government's plan to lower **hydro** costs takes the pressure off that bill, essentially spreading the pain over a longer period, like remortgaging a house, at an added cost of \$25 billion in interest.

The plan also contains a delivery charge reduction for some rural customers, removing the charge entirely for on-reserve First Nations customers, and expanding a low-income support program.

Deputy Premier Deb Matthews of London said the government heard Ontarians "loud and clear" on **hydro**.

"**Electricity** prices are a big deal for the people of this province," she said, adding "that is why we came out strongly with a significant reduction."

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Assistant to Ontario's Minister of Energy in Windsor Thursday | Windsor Star

windsorstar.com - Wed Mar 15 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Ontario's much-maligned Fair Hydro Plan will be the topic of discussion Thursday in Windsor.

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Forge provides details of \$25M renewal fuel plant

Sarnia This Week - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Byline: Carl Hnatyshyn

Ad Value: \$572

Reach: 22937 Page: A3

Forge Hydrocarbons will invest approximately \$25 million at the former Methes site in St. Clair Township to develop a 25-million litre renewal fuel plant at Sombra.

Details of the plans were explained by Tom Haig, president and CEO of the company, and members of the Forge Project team, as they met with township

council members on March 6.

Haig, founder, past president and former CEO of BIOX corporation, provided an outline of the company's plans to set up the facility located at the former Methes site at 224 West Holt Line and answered several questions from councillors about the proposed facility.

The plant would be operational by the end of 2018, Haig told council, and would use technology purchased from the University of Alberta three years ago that would allow the company to use feedstock and lipids into green 'drop-in' fuels.

"In about 18 months, we'll have a 25-million litre facility in Sombra," he said. "We are excited and grateful to work once again with the community and... we're going to make sure that we're good neighbours."

Council members asked Haig several questions about the facility, including how many modules would need to be added to the plant, how the feedstock would be delivered to the plant and whether there would be any potential safety hazards for nearby residents.

Haig said the plant would require five to 10 new modules. When asked if those could be produced locally, Haig said that would be a possibility.

"We're putting it out to tender, but there certainly are aspects that can be done locally," he said.

Coun. Jim DeGurse wondered how the feedstock would arrive at the plant.

"In the short term, it would come in by truck... but once BIOX and Forge are fully operational, we'll need to get the rails moving once again," said Haig.

Coun. Darrell Randell asked about safety concerns.

"This site has a history," he told Haig. "What are the chances of off-site mishaps occurring?" "We're very conscious of the concerns expressed by residents, but... we will operate in a safe, closed system... and we will continue to abide by the culture of BIOX," said Haig. "We want to be good neighbours."

"We are really looking forward to the groundbreaking," said Mayor Steve Arnold said. "Your team clearly carries a great enthusiasm about the project and we look forward to working with you in the future."

The proposed plant still requires a site plan to be submitted to the township for approval. **Hydro** One conservation analyst Gennaro D'Atri and CLEAResult's (a provider of **energy** efficiency services) Braedyn Stockfish came to the March 6 council meeting bearing gifts in the form of a \$118,554.85 **rebate** cheque - rewarding the township for its recent switch from traditional to LED bulbs in their streetlights.

Council was unanimous in passing its first-ever sign bylaw. The bylaw deals with general requirements and provisions for the erection, display, alteration, repair or removal of signs in the township, touching on residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, portable, inflatable, sandwich board and pedestal signs.

The bylaw also lays out fines for individuals or businesses that contravene the sign bylaw.

Initially, the draft bylaw prohibited the future construction of rooftop signs, but Coun. Tracy Kingston introduced a motion that rooftop signs be permitted, subject to a review by a structural engineer. Council passed her motion.

An online version of the by-law can be accessed by visiting the St. Clair Township website at www.stclairtownship.ca.

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Various levels of government ignore environment

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Negative

Byline: Peter J. Hensel

Ad Value: \$212

Reach: 8941 **Page:** A7

To the Editor: What politician, be they municipal, provincial or federal, can say that they have done everything in their **power** to stop or correct the damage being done to rural water wells through the damaging of the aquifer by **wind** turbines as long as the problem still exists? Which politician, other than MPP Rick Nicholls, has been out to a location to observe first-hand the effects of the damage done to water wells? If you have not observed, you have not done your job, when you know that the problem is out there.

Do our local politicians think they already know it all because the **wind** companies have told them everything? Or, is it a case of "don't confuse me with facts as my mind is already made up."

Is that why they did not want to speak to and observe the hydrologist installing equipment in Otter Creek and in Dover? Every level of government has been notified of the problem and every level has indicated, "not my job man." I know this because I have addressed municipal council, written to the premier and several related ministries and the Ontario Ombudsman more than once, and to date, after three months, have not seen any evidence of any action taking place.

The "Shame Award" is a way of bringing attention to the general public, and the further this attention spreads, the more chance there is to get provincial, federal and perhaps international attention. If this "Shame Award" continues, maybe someone will eventually realize that it is their job to protect our environment, especially fresh drinking water.

Perhaps it needs to continue on to more municipal council members, the mayor, people in the Ministry of Environment and **Climate** Change and then on to the premier. If any or all of these had done due diligence, would we be in the aquifer and water well situation that we presently are finding ourselves? If you don't want to get your ego bruised by getting a "Shame Award", work toward solving the problem with water wells, which has already been there since **turbine** were erected in this area. Building more turbines, and adding more affected wells to the problem is a solution that stinks of incompetency.

Peter J. Hensel

Dover Centre

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Proper water testing could pay off

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: Neutral

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$324

Reach: 8941 **Page:** A5

Landowners who want to ensure they can mount a challenge if they believe an industrial **wind turbine** is damaging their water well must have the proper baseline testing done by a qualified tester.

The Water Wells First citizen group on March 7 introduced the person they have enlisted to conduct this baseline testing before construction starts on the North Kent **Wind** farm project in the Chatham Township.

Bill Clarke, a retired **hydro** geologist, told those in attendance at the public meeting at Country View Golf Course that well interference is a change in the quantity or quality of some body's water well caused by something being done nearby.

Water Wells First has been raising concerns it believes vibrations from industrial turbines, constructed with piles being driven into the heavy metal-laden Kettle Point black shale bedrock formation in the region, have damaged water wells in Dover Township.

The concern is the same will happen when turbines are erected in the same fashion for the North Kent **Wind** project.

While the baseline water testing Clarke is conducting costs about \$2,000, he said it's being done through a legal chain of custody viewed as acceptable in a court of law.

He said this is "extremely important" because what has been found in Dover is that people observed a changed in their water wells "as far as an anecdotal story goes, according to the Ministry of Environment."

But there isn't a "before criteria" in comparison to what's happened in time based on the observation of the residents, Clarke said.

He added, "the Ministry of Environment has told us straight out that this is interesting and of concern, but there is a very doubtful way that this could be entered into the Ontario Water Resources Act, reg. 903, in order to say this is truly a well interference, because we don't have the scientific support to follow that course of action."

Clarke said the samples being collected in the North Kent **Wind** project area are "representative of pre-construction, pre-disturbed or better still, historical, like thousands of years that's been the status of the aquifer."

He added by obtaining "pre-construction" samples from wells in the North Kent **Wind** area that provides the chance to see if ground water quality changes with the construction of **wind** turbines in the area.

Of particular concern is the heavy metals such as uranium, arsenic and mercury found in Kettle Point black shale bedrock.

Clarke said these materials are so fine it's difficult to filter them out so it causes water systems to not function properly.

Kevin Jakubec, spokesperson for Water Wells First, told the **crowd** he and a few other residents have found turbidity tests done by AECOM, the firm hired to baseline well testing for the **wind** developer, doesn't seem to be accurate.

"It seems to be extremely inaccurate," he added.

Jakubec said he did a "challenge test" by taking water samples to a lab in Windsor.

"We saw that when we compared the turbidity on the field test that AECOM took to the test that were taken from another lab. ... they don't jive, they're really out."

Lab results from Windsor on the turbidity of his water were 0.2 to 0.4 NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units) compared to a score of 31 the AECOM testing showed for turbidity on his well water that looked clear, he said.

Jakubec said a letter has been delivered to Samsung Electronics Canada Inc. CEO Gi Yong Seo, asking that his corporation stop construction of the North Kent **Wind** farm and that it invest in ground water research before allowing pile driving construction into sensitive aquifers.

He noted a response has not been received yet.

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Turbine turmoil is avoidable: Study

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Hank Daniszewski

Ad Value: \$254
Reach: 8941 Page: A5

Wind farms don't have to be a flashpoint for community resentment, if the benefits are spread around.

That's the conclusion of a study by two Western University geography researchers who compared the relatively smooth rollout of **wind** farms in Nova Scotia with the often hostile reception in rural Ontario.

Chad Walker and Jamie Baxter surveyed residents in 10 communities as part of the study. They found support for **wind** farms in Nova Scotia was three times higher than Ontario because provincial rules require more community control.

In Ontario, there's a perception the corporate owners of **wind** farms and the owners of the property where they're located are the only winners, Walker said.

"People in the area don't feel like they are benefiting. .. It's not the technology, it's the way it is introduced."

Nova Scotia's Community **Feed-in-Tariff** program required community involvement.

"They would not be approved unless the local community owned 51 per cent," Walker said.

By contrast, almost all Ontario **wind** projects are owned by large corporations, he said.

The pushback against **wind** farms in Ontario has been unusual, especially compared to continental Europe that had a big head start in **wind energy**, Walker said.

"Most places in the world do not see this high level of opposition."

In Ontario, local municipalities were left almost powerless to control the projects. Politicians and residents of Dutton-Dunwich in Elgin County were stunned last year when the province awarded a **contract** to a Chicago-based firm to build dozens of industrial turbines there. The municipality had declared itself an unwilling host to **wind** farms after 84 per cent of residents who voted in a referendum opposed them.

The Western study included surveys of residents in three communities in Ontario: Adelaide-Metcalf west of London, Norwich Township in Oxford County and Wainfleet in Niagara Region and seven in Nova Scotia.

Walker said they only studied public acceptance of **wind** farms, not their economics.

The Nova Scotia government cancelled its program, not because of opposition, but because of concerns it would drive up **electricity rates**.

Jane Wilson, president of **Wind Concerns Ontario**, a coalition of groups opposed to **wind** farm development, said the Western study shows local support of a **wind** farm should be required.

"Municipalities should be able to say no, which is not allowed by the province. The **Green Energy Act** was written for the **wind power** industry and not the people of Ontario," she said.

Robert Hornung, president of the Canadian **Wind Energy** Association, said Ontario **wind** farms have met more opposition because of the rapid development and greater population density.

"Requirements for community engagement and participation are getting more stringent. It's hard for a project to be successful if it does not have broad community support."

Wind energy companies are trying to broaden community benefits of **wind** farms by compensating owners of neighbouring properties and creating

community funds.

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Council seeks turbine test

THE SUN TIMES

Owen Sound Sun Times - Thu Mar 16 2017

Tone: **Positive**

Byline: Frances Learment

Ad Value: \$437

Reach: 13178 Page: A3

Saugeen Shores councillors believe only an independent, parallel acoustic audit will determine if the UNIFOR **turbine** in Port Elgin is operating in compliance with government standards.

Councillors unanimously asked at a March 13 committee of the whole meeting for a third-party review and directed staff to negotiate with UNIFOR to allow town testing when UNIFOR conducts an acoustic audit of the **turbine** this spring.

More than 350 local residents have filed complaints with the Ministry of the Environment and **Climate** Change (MOECC) about health issues they believe are related to **turbine** operations. Freedom of Information request found test results showing apparent non-compliant noise readings.

The MOECC expects UNIFOR to deliver results of its acoustic testing before June 30 - testing that has been promised, but not done, since the **turbine** began operating four years ago. Councillors also asked staff to work with the **turbine** opposition group S.T.O.P. (Saugeen Shores **Turbine** Operation Policy) to find a qualified contractor to do the parallel acoustic audit, and possibly share the cost.

Members of S.T.O.P "continue to be tortured" by audible and inaudible noise from UNIFOR's 35-storey industrial **turbine** at Gobles Grove, according to S.T.O.P. spokesman Greg Schmalz, who told councillors that despite headaches, vertigo, sleep disruption, high blood pressure and dizziness and the town calling for the **turbine** to cease operating, no compliance testing has been done since 2014 when an audit was called off because of adverse **wind** conditions.

In response to an earlier letter from the town asking for a mandatory, not voluntary, acoustic audit, MOECC Minister Glen Murray said it informed UNIFOR that the full acoustic audit must be completed and submitted for review by the end of June.

Deputy-mayor Luke Charbonneau, who drafted the motion along with Coun. Cheryl Grace, said he continues to get **turbine** operation complaints "almost daily" and asked how far the town would go to ensure the test information gathered is accurate, fair and presented in a balanced way.

He said results of an independent acoustic audit would allow the town to know if the **turbine** was operating in compliance with the law.

"And that's an important thing for the community to know, and I think it will help UNIFOR honestly, because it will help them to have results ... taken seriously and be trusted," Charbonneau said, adding he is fully willing to accept the testing outcome.

Noting that the town, with little influence, had struggled against provincial legislation, including filing a complaint to the Ontario Ombudsman that is currently investigating possible non-compliance claims raised by the town, Mayor Mike Smith suggested only a change in government at Queen's Park in 2018 could resolve the dispute.

Outside the council chambers, Schmalz said the MOECC called the UNIFOR **turbine** a "high profile and contentious **turbine** approval", and after the Port Elgin approval, the law was changed to require a 550-metre setback from a **turbine** to the nearest property. There are 100 properties n that range around the UNIFOR **turbine**.

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