Neil Brodie

From:	Neil Brodie
Sent:	May 12, 2017 8:18 AM
To:	Rosemarie Leclair
Subject:	Legislative Affairs

Quotation of the day
“The PCs have decided to share an outdated document with data that is months old … We have been working on this plan for months, and as we worked on it the documents and calculations evolved, meaning that numbers shared by the PCs today are completely inaccurate.”
Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault denies the accuracy of alleged cabinet documents leaked by the PCs, which show average hydro bills increasing to $215/month by 2028

Debates and proceedings

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault introduced the government’s long-awaited Fair Hydro Plan legislation. Bill 132, the Fair Hydro Act, was given first reading. Thibeault said the government will be able to pass the legislation before the spring session ends on June 1.

News briefs – Governmental

Ministry of Energy

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault tabled Bill 132, the Fair Hydro Act. The legislation lays out how the province will lower electricity bills by 25 per cent (that figure includes removing 8 per cent provincial HST off bills, which was implemented on January 1, 2017). The legislation allows OPG and the IESO to refinance a portion of the Global Adjustment in order to ensure the costs of Ontario’s clean energy investments are “allocated fairly among current and future ratepayers.” It also increases government funding for the Ontario Electricity Support Program, “enhances” the Rural or Remote Rate Protection program and provides free delivery charges for First Nations households.

The Fair Hydro Plan holds hydro bill increases to the rate of inflation for four years. After that, a “Clean Energy Adjustment” will be added to bills to recover the cost of refinancing, which has been estimated at $25 million over 30 years. The bill includes “Provincial Guarantees” that would stop future governments from “impairing the recovery of Clean Energy Adjustments.”

The PC caucus released alleged leaked cabinet documents that PC MPP Todd Smith said came from a whistleblower. The documents contain charts showing the average cost of monthly hydro bills jumping once inflation-tracking ends in 2021. According to the documents, bills will increase to over $200 per month by 2027-28. The average cost in 2017 is $123. Smith said it is “the return of the debt retirement charge.”

Thibeault said the information in the document is months old and said PC leader Patrick Brown only released it to “justify his opposition to [the government’s] plan to reduce electricity rates.” Thibeault said the correct forecast for how the Fair Hydro Plan will affect rates over 20 years will be included in the release of the 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan.

Appointments and employments

Commissioner of Official Languages

Federal Government
• It is expected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will appoint former Ontario attorney general Madeleine Meilleur as the country's Commissioner of Official Languages.

Question Period

PC Lead

Fair Hydro Plan

• PC MPP Todd Smith asked about a response to an order paper question he received from Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault on the Fair Hydro Plan.
o Smith said he requested "documents and correspondence from January and February from the Ministry of Energy, IESO and OPG that used words like 'fees,' 'commissions,' 'broker,' 'lender' and 'refinancing'" — but all he received was a response telling him to file an FOI.
• Smith said "people of Ontario deserve to know if the government's hydro plan involves millions or billions paid out in fees to brokers or bankers."
• PC MPP Steve Clark asked whether cabinet has ever been briefed on the expected cost of electricity up to 2024.
• Thibeault said he does not have a crystal ball, but the Fair Hydro Plan refinances the global adjustment over 20 additional years in order to lower rates now.

NDP Lead

Hydro One sale

• NDP MPP Peter Tabuns again went after the government over the Hydro One sale.
o He asked why the government will not listen to countless stories of Ontarians who can't pay their hydro bills because privatization has caused rates to soar 300 per cent since the Conservatives first began to privatize the system.