Neil Brodie

From: Neil Brodie
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To: Rosemarie Leclair
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Today at Queen's Park

On the schedule

The afternoon is scheduled for opposition day debate. PC leader Patrick Brown will put forward a motion calling on the government to reimburse Ontario taxpayers for the losses incurred by **exporting surplus energy** to neighbouring U.S. states for lower rates than Ontarians pay for energy. Brown pegs the government's annual loss from this practice at between $340 and $675 million per year.

Premier's public town hall

Members of the anti-Liberal social media group Ontario Proud caused a minor ruckus by accusing Wynne of avoiding their questions. When a man from the group was given a chance to ask a question, he asked about **high hydro executive salaries**. The moderator, Jane Taber of NATIONAL Public Affairs, intervened when he repeatedly interrupted the premier's answer. The audience responded with applause for Wynne.

Topics of conversation

• The Ontario Clean Air Alliance has received 10,000 signatures on its petition calling on the government to shutter the **Pickering Nuclear Station** as soon as possible. Citing high costs of generation and aging infrastructure, the petition encourages Ontario to import more hydro power from Quebec.

• **The Society of Energy Professionals** is rebranding as the Society of United Professionals. Since the Hydro One split up, the union has seen its membership diversify to include a wider range of industries, including Legal Aid workers. Members will vote on the new name in a referendum this winter.

Question period

PC

Hydro rate hike
• PC Energy critic Todd Smith asked about **Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt's** announcement last week that Hydro One is requesting a five per cent hydro rate hike in 2018.
• He said the CEO, who earns $4.5 million per year, justified the rate increase to an audience at a swanky downtown Toronto hotel as part of an infrastructure upgrade that could make the utility's grid less reliable.
• Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said thanks to the Fair Hydro Plan, energy bills will stay at the rate of inflation for the next four years.

• Smith said it sounds like Thibeault would be happy to let the rate increase go ahead while borrowing billions more to make sure it doesn't appear on bills until after the next election.

NDP

Hydro One

• NDP Energy critic Peter Tabuns said the province promised a privatized Hydro One would lower rates for customers, but it still trying to increase them, even after receiving a $2.6 billion tax break.

• Tabuns said Hydro One is not increasing rates so it can improve service, it is doing it so it can create an empire, "including its ridiculous $6-billion purchase of Avista."