

John Bozzo

From: John Bozzo
Sent: November 30, 2017 9:36 AM
To: ##Clippings_Distribution_List
Subject: Morning News Summary - Thurs. Nov. 30, 2017

Good morning,

Here is your morning news summary.

Highlight is coverage of yesterday's OEB community meeting in Thunder Bay.

[Thunder Bay - The News Watch: Hydro One proposes rate hike for remote northern communities](#) (note **OEB quoted**)

- Hydro One Remote Communities, has **applied to the Ontario Energy Board for a 1.8 per cent hike** that would add \$1.55 per month for a typical year-round residential customer that would take effect on May 1, 2018.
- Kraemer Coulter, managing director of Hydro One Remote Communities, said the proposed increase would be consistent with the rate of inflation.
- The Ontario Energy Board held a community meeting at the Victoria Inn in Thunder Bay on Wednesday as part of its rate review process.
- **Ontario Energy Board counsel Michael Millar** said all of the feedback received is thoroughly reviewed and impacts the decision that will ultimately be made on the application.
 - "We think one of the most important things is to get out and make sure we got to the communities, or as close as we can reasonably get, and hear directly from the people impacted by the application," Millar said. "We want to know what they think about service levels, about the level of the rate and we can only hear that from directly engaging with them."
- Bearskin Lake First Nation economic development officer Bruce Kamenawatamin, who made a presentation at the meeting, said many people in the community are struggling with the high cost of living.
- Government-funded residential customers would see an increase ranging from \$8.90 to \$13.05 per month, depending on the community's accessibility.
- **Millar said of the 130 rate applications that have come before the board since 2009 and generally utilities have only been able to recover 40 per cent of their proposed increase.** (**Note: this is incorrect and we have a call into the reporter to correct the story**)

A picture and caption of the community meeting was also covered in the [Chronicle Journal](#) online.

Other news

[Toronto Star: Hydro One unveils simplified electricity bills](#)

- Instead of a statement with a lot of fine print, customers receiving the new bills will see boxes with headlines clearly stating "what do I owe?" and "when is it due" with more detailed explanations on the back page.
- Change comes after more than a year of research through surveys of 5,000 customers and testing with focus groups.
- "35% of the calls into our call centre are people phoning in to have their bills explained to them,"

customer service executive vice-president Ferio Pugliese said Wednesday.

- Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said his department has a bill redesign team that is working with the Electricity Distributors Association that will come out with recommendations and guidelines early next year.
- The new Hydro One bills were revealed after the utility has been under fire for days over concerns it is seeking permission from the Ontario Energy Board to install prepaid meters, which critics say will hurt low-income customers.
- Thibeault said Hydro One officials have said “none of this will be forced onto any customer . . . it will be at the customer’s discretion.”

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Morning News Clippings

powered by: **infomart**

Date: Thursday, November 30, 2017

Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@oeb.ca)

[Contact Editor](#)

Clippings Summary

News - 15 Results



Hydro One proposes rate hike for remote northern communities - TBNewsWatch.com

www.tbnewswatch.com - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

Paul Crawford noted on Wednesday, November 29, 2017

OEB is mentioned.

About 3,600 customers in nearly two dozen Northern Ontario communities could see an increase to their electricity rates next year.



Concerns heard over proposed remote electricity costs | Gallery | chroniclejournal.com

www.chroniclejournal.com - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

First Nation leaders met with the Ontario Energy Board and representatives of Hydro One at the Victoria Inn Wednesday to voice their concerns over a proposed increase in electricity generation and distribution costs.



Is the proposed merger of Guelph Hydro and Alectra the real deal? | GuelphMercury.com

www.guelphmercury.com - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**
Permalink

Guelph council will be voting soon on the proposed merger with Alectra Utilities. So who or what is Alectra, and do we know enough about them?



Barrie butcher blames hydro rates for killing his business

Barrie Advance - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**
Ad Value: \$33
Reach: 51249 Page: 1

Lawrence Vindum is blaming Ontario's **hydro rates** - and Premier Kathleen Wynne - for putting his butcher shop out of business. Vindum was forced to close the doors at The Butcher Shop on Cundles Road Nov. 27 after falling ...



Lambton County in line for hydro improvements; Hydro One replacing transformer station and upgrading transmission line

Sarnia This Week - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Neutral**
Byline: Paul Morden

Ad Value: \$342
Reach: 22937 Page: A11

Hydro One will spend \$60 million or more replacing and upgrading **electricity transmission** equipment in Lambton County. Work began in September on a \$30-million to \$35-million construction project to ...



Parry Sound's new generating station up and running

Parry Sound North Star - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral** Page: 1

PARRY SOUND - The Cascade Street Generating Station is up and running. Aside from a few minor items to complete including its testing phase, the facility is ready to produce **electricity**. Fully computerized, the \$17.5 million station ...



Hydro One simplifies electric bills

Toronto Star - Thu Nov 30 2017

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Byline: Rob Ferguson Toronto Star

Ad Value: \$8,253
Reach: 361323 Page: A2

Hydro One has come out with simpler, easier-to-read **electricity** bills in a move that could soon be copied by other **utilities**, such as **Toronto Hydro**. Instead of a statement with a lot ...



Patrick Brown's hydro policy amazingly manages to actually make Kathleen Wynne look good

Financial Post - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**
Byline: Special to Financial Post
Reach: 607500

Ontario Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown's election platform presents his "guarantee" that his party "will fix **Hydro**." His plan's core is to reverse the PCs' longstanding rejection of Premier Kathleen Wynne's ...



PC platform trips Wynne's Liberals

National Post - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Kelly McParland

Ad Value: \$14,563

Reach: 159480 Page: A11

Somewhere deep inside Election Planning Headquarters, **Ontario** premier Kathleen Wynne wearily removes her spectacles, massages her temples and sighs at news of the ultimate betrayal. "The **Toronto** Star," she moans softly, ...



Brown's Tories leap to centre

Waterloo Region Record - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$2,117

Reach: 63465 Page: A10

On our political Richter scale, Patrick Brown's election platform registers a ground-rumbling magnitude of 5.5. That's a moderate - but definite - earthquake. By promising billions of dollars in new spending in addition to carbon taxes and even - ...



Ontario's wrong-headed energy policy burns 75,000 jobs | Troy Media

troymedia.com - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

[Permalink](#)

How do you kill 75,000 jobs and turn your valuable location into a disadvantage?



Turbine turmoil continues to dog Wynne

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$242

Reach: 8941 Page: A6

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced 14 months ago that her government was suspending Ontario's **renewable energy** procurement process, she and her Liberal colleagues were caught in the middle of a **public** backlash against ...



Group looking for money to fight wind turbines

Chatham This Week - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: David Gough

Page: A5

Preparing for what they're calling a 'David versus Goliath battle', a grassroots group is organizing opposition to the Otter Creek **wind turbine** project proposed for **north** of Wallaceburg. But money is needed to fight ...



Dirty well water delivered to environment minister; MPP calls for halting two local wind farm projects

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$524

Reach: 8941 Page: A22

Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Monte McNaughton delivered a bottle of turbid water to Environment Minister Chris Ballard in the **Ontario** legislature Nov. 21 to emphasize the impact **wind turbine** construction has had on ...



Gas company investigating renewable gas opportunities at biodigester

Grimsby Lincoln News - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral** Page: 1

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Clippings Summary

Full Articles



Hydro One proposes rate hike for remote northern communities - TBNewsWatch.com

www.tbnewswatch.com - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

About 3,600 customers in nearly two dozen Northern Ontario communities could see an increase to their electricity rates next year.

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Is the proposed merger of Guelph Hydro and Alectra the real deal? | GuelphMercury.com

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Barrie butcher blames hydro rates for killing his business

Barrie Advance - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

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Lawrence Vindum is blaming **Ontario's hydro rates** - and Premier Kathleen Wynne - for putting his butcher shop out of business.

Vindum was forced to close the doors at The Butcher Shop on Cundles Road Nov. 27 after falling behind on other bills in an effort to keep the lights on.

"We used to have a bill of about \$800 prior to Dalton McGuinty," he said. "Our last highest bill was \$3,200. It was the **hydro** bills that finally finished me off."

The Butcher Shop has been in business since 1985, the last 15 years under Vindum's ownership.

"I had three employees who lost their jobs and so many of my customers are upset," he said.

"It's just such a shame right before Christmas."

Vindum posed with a sign in front of his business this week that said: "After 32 years in business, Kathleen Wynne killed it!"

Vindum admits he is a member of the Progressive Conservative party who ran for the nomination in the Barrie-Innisfil riding.

"But I'm not targeting Wynne because of my Conservative leanings," he said. "The economy has just been getting whittled down for small businesses for years now."

Vindum said the next blow for small business will be the "sudden rise" in the minimum wage, which will increase to \$14 in January and \$15 in January 2019.

"I don't think any business owner begrudges people getting paid better," he said. "But as those people get paid more, others who are already earning that will want to be paid more too."

Vindum said other factors hurt his business as well. Spinoff business from Zehr's fell off when the grocery store moved, a rainy summer reduced the barbecue season, and meat prices have increased.

But it was the **hydro** prices and the fact people have less money in their pockets to spend on luxuries such as high quality meats that finally forced his hand.

"Just the cost of living in **Ontario** has been exasperating over the last decade," Vindum said. "**Hydro** has certainly been the largest contributing factor."

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Lambton County in line for hydro improvements; Hydro One replacing transformer station and upgrading transmission line

Sarnia This Week - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Paul Morden

Ad Value: \$342

Reach: 22937 Page: A11

Hydro One will spend \$60 million or more replacing and upgrading **electricity transmission** equipment in Lambton County.

Work began in September on a \$30-million to \$35-million construction project to replace **Hydro** One's Wanstead Transformer Station, located east of Wyoming. Along with that, a \$30-million refurbishing project for a 230-kilovolt **transmission** line from **London** to Sarnia is set to start in January, according to **Hydro** One spokesperson Nancy Clark.

"A lot of our infrastructure was built in the 1950s and 60s, so we're reaching the point now where we need to replace or refurbish a lot of our equipment," she said.

The Wanstead station has been serving customers in the Lambton County area since the 1950s, Clark said.

"The replacement station will actually ensure that we can continue to deliver the reliable **electricity** that we're delivering now."

A new transformer station is being built next to the existing one, which will eventually be taken down.

That project is expected to be completed by the end of 2018, Clark said.

Bluewater Power, a municipally-owned **electricity distribution utility** serving 35,000 customers in six Lambton communities, contributed \$1 million to the Wanstead project to upgrade its capabilities, said Chris Gould, **Bluewater Power**'s vice-president of **utility** development.

"This upgrade that we've contributed to will provide a more reliable and robust supply," he said.

The upgrade will be attractive to industry, while also helping address long-standing issues **Bluewater Power** and Lambton communities have had with their **electricity** supply.

"The smaller municipalities out in the county are fed from the Wanstead station," Gould said.

"We were not happy, and neither were they... with the **service** we were receiving from the station."

Kevin Marriott, mayor of Enniskillen Township, said approximately half of the township's residents are served by the Wanstead station.

"I'm not sure this is going to correct all of our problems," he said. "It's going to help."

He estimated there have been four or five outages so far this year in the township, including one that lasted eight hours.

Marriott said the work at the Wanstead station is expected to benefit industrial **electricity** users in the area, including a medical marijuana facility British Columbia-based Tilray Canada is developing at an existing greenhouse site in his township.

The work to refurbish a **transmission** line between **London** and Sarnia includes reinforcing 260 steel **transmission** towers, "as well as replacing other components on the line that have reached the end of their life," Clark said.

That project includes replacing a "sky wire" protecting the line from lightning strikes.

Clark said the replacement wire will have telecommunication capability "which, will actually improve our ability to monitor the line and determine where outages are."

Work on the **transmission** line project is expected to run until the end of 2019, Clark said.

"The investment will ensure the line continues to deliver reliable **electricity** to the area," she said.

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Parry Sound's new generating station up and running

Parry Sound North Star - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral** Page: 1

PARRY SOUND - The Cascade Street Generating Station is up and running.

Aside from a few minor items to complete including its testing phase, the facility is ready to produce **electricity**.

Fully computerized, the \$17.5 million station can be controlled in Parry Sound, or remotely.

"We have the ability to control it in manual (setting), or by kilowatt set point, or level," said Bryan Ingram, Bracebridge Generation Ltd. operations manager. "Where we're running at right about now is about 92 per cent efficient in extracting the potential **energy** into kinetic **energy**. And at peak, which is about two thirds of what it's capable of producing ... at the peak efficiency is about 94 per cent."

Instead of guess work and trial and error, the system can take a number of factors into account and make changes immediately.

"It's pretty neat to see that the whole Parry Sound Seguin system was kind of run by driving around and looking at the water level and making a change. The old facility was all manual and basically the guys would stop in the morning, look at the water level, adjust the machine based on instinct - trying to balance the water level with the machine output and then at the end of the day checking in and see where they were," Ingram said. "This automated system basically keeps this system right where it needs to be and it will open and close the gates, if there's a disturbance on the grid like a **power** outage a protection system sees it and turns off the machine and sends us an email."

Ingram said for those living along the waterways upstream and downstream of the facility, they will likely see more consistent water levels with the new station.

"During a rainstorm - for example - the system will automatically see it and start to increase and use the water that comes down the system. It's highly efficient in using what water is there."

Performance testing of the station should be complete within the next month with landscaping finished in the spring of 2018 and an official grand opening in the summer.

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Hydro One simplifies electric bills

Toronto Star - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: Rob Ferguson Toronto Star

Ad Value: \$8,253
Reach: 361323 Page: A2

Hydro One has come out with simpler, easier-to-read **electricity** bills in a move that could soon be copied by other **utilities**, such as **Toronto Hydro**.

Instead of a statement with a lot of fine print, customers will see boxes with headlines clearly stating "what do I owe?" and "when is it due?" with more detailed explanations on the back page.

The change, prompted by complaints from customers that bills were difficult to understand, follows more than a year of research through surveys of 5,000 customers and testing with focus groups.

"Thirty-five per cent of the calls into our call **centre** are people phoning in to have their bills explained to them," **customer service** executive vice-president Ferio Pugliese said Wednesday. "It occupies a lot of time, not always leading to the best **customer** experience."

Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** said his department has a bill redesign team that is working with the **Electricity** Distributors Association that will come out with recommendations and guidelines early next year. Local **electric utilities** will be free to adopt them.

"Why wouldn't you want to make it as clear as possible for **ratepayers**?" Thibeault said.

Toronto Hydro said it is considering next steps, noting that **Hydro** One got special permission from the ministry for the revamped bills.

"Currently, **electricity** bills in **Ontario** are heavily regulated and there's been little opportunity to make changes," **Toronto Hydro** spokesperson Mallory Cunningham said. "We had actually started a bill redesign exercise of our own recently, as we know some components of our bills can be difficult to understand. However, this was put on hold when the **Ministry of Energy** began a bill design consultation process that has resulted in some proposed amendments to bill regulations.

"We're now focused on making the necessary changes to our bill that will align with the regulation amendments and after this is done, we'll determine if it makes sense to do a full-scale redesign of our bill."

The new **Hydro** One bills were revealed after the **utility** has been under fire for days over concerns it is seeking permission from the **Ontario Energy Board** to install prepaid meters, which critics say will hurt low-income customers.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath accused **Hydro** One of "trying to skirt the ban on wintertime **hydro disconnections**" and said customers "need a guarantee prepay meters will not be coming to **Ontario**."

Thibeault said **Hydro** One officials have said "none of this will be forced onto any **customer** ... it will be at the **customer**'s discretion."

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Patrick Brown's hydro policy amazingly manages to actually make Kathleen Wynne look good

Financial Post - Thu Nov 30 2017
Tone: **Negative**
Byline: Special to Financial Post
Reach: 607500

Ontario Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown's election platform presents his "guarantee" that his party "will fix **Hydro**." His **plan**'s core is to reverse the PCs' longstanding rejection of Premier Kathleen Wynne's "**Fair Hydro Plan**," which shifts 25 per cent of current household **rates** to taxpayers and future consumers.

Wynne's **electricity-rate** deferral and cost-shifting program had been roundly criticized by both the legislature's auditor general and financial-accountability officer. The PCs had hammered the government with this analysis. Just weeks ago, the PC's **energy** critic, Todd Smith, attacked the **Fair Hydro Plan**, saying "It is deceitful, it's dishonest and it's shady."

Now, the new PC position is that the only problem with Wynne's program is that it does not go far enough.

Brown's **Ontario** PCs are promising they will "save" households 12 per cent on their **rates** over and above Wynne's existing 25-per-cent cut. All the big-ticket items Brown calls cost "savings" are merely more cost shifting - removing costs from the **ratepayer**'s left pocket by taking from the taxpayer's right pocket.

Brown's largest cost shift - \$433 million per year to until 2022 at least - is to move conservation costs to taxpayers. **Electricity** demand in **Ontario** has been falling since 2005, **ratepayers** are burdened with a massive surplus of **power** sold to neighbouring **utilities** for prices close to zero, and generators are being paid massive but undisclosed amounts to not generate any **power**. Oblivious to all this, the PCs declare all existing conservation programs to be "worthwhile."

Driving off the PCs' longstanding opposition to the privatization of **Hydro** One, where they are aligned with the NDP, the other big-ticket cost-shifting item on Brown's list is to **rebate Hydro** One's dividends to households. The problem is that customers already receive every penny of **Hydro** One's dividend payments to the government, albeit by way of the **Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation** (OEFC). In the Brown **plan**, taxpayers will keep OEFC whole for its foregone revenue.

These new taxpayer costs will put pressure on the deficit. Until weeks ago, the PCs endorsed the auditor general's criticism that the **Fair Hydro Plan** losses belong in the calculation of the deficit. Now, the PCs have endorsed Wynne's deficit calculation with the **Fair Hydro Plan** losses excluded.

Another key to Brown's **plan** is to implement more direct political involvement in the **power** system. He promises that a legislative committee will take over the **review** of any future **energy** plans. He declares the last vestiges of **public utility** regulation the Liberals have not yet absorbed within the **Ministry of Energy** to be "red tape."

Brown's platform document makes some noises about addressing structural factors driving up **rates**. The PCs put numbers to promised cost savings from reviews of existing **power** generation contracts, but those numbers appear speculative.

The PCs also promise to repeal former premier Dalton McGuinty's legacy Green **Energy** and Green Economy Act, much loved by **renewable-energy** developers for its rich subsidies. But now that it's deeply threaded into the administrative legal structure of **Ontario's power** situation, simply erasing the **Green Energy Act** is not an option. The PCs are silent on what they will replace the **Green Energy Act** with. Particularly given their recent flip-flop on Wynne's **Fair Hydro Plan**, there is no way to know what their alternative might be.

Wynne's justifications for her **electricity** policies are flock of canards that the PCs have never been able to effectively shoot down. The Liberals just keep repeating that **Ontario's power** exports and conservation programs are profitable and that **wind** and **solar** succeeded in getting rid of coal **power**. Compared to Brown's **electricity plan**, Wynne's suddenly look honest and

responsible by comparison.

Tom Adams is a **Toronto**-based **energy** consultant.

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PC platform trips Wynne's Liberals

National Post - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Kelly McParland

Ad Value: \$14,563

Reach: 159480 **Page:** A11

Somewhere deep inside Election Planning Headquarters, **Ontario** premier Kathleen Wynne wearily removes her spectacles, massages her temples and sighs at news of the ultimate betrayal.

"The **Toronto** Star," she moans softly, glancing up at the array of aides and advisers assembled in the grim little room. Then again, almost in a whisper ... "The **Toronto** Star."

On the desk are several neatlyclipped articles from recent editions of the Liberal government's most loyal advocate. A profile portraying Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown as a decent, hard-working chap who loves his family and would like to get married some day. A usually-reliable columnist offering a positive **review** of the "People's Guarantee," the glitzy, glossy Progressive Conservative platform unveiled on the weekend. And ... the deepest cut ... an editorial announcing the newspaper's official approval of the turn the Official Opposition has taken, noting that one of its proposals was first suggested by The Star itself. "You're welcome," the editorial gushes, unable to contain its glee.

Wynne slowly replaces her glasses. "Et tu, Honderich?" she murmurs. "Who's next? Working Families? Working **Ontario** Women?" Silently pondering the endless perfidy of politics, she considers the usual arsenal of Liberal responses. A new wave of tax-funded "**public service** messages" lauding the glories of Liberal rule? Another cut to **Hydro rates** financed with loans run through some offbudget agency and loaded onto future generations? Painfully, she realizes it might be an idea to get that fellow in ... what was his name? ... to quietly wipe the office server of "personal" communications.

Raising her eyes to the worried faces, she gathers her dwindling reserves of **energy** and barks: "Don't just stand there staring at me, what are we going to do about it?" The much-discussed Tory manifesto, released a full seven months before the June election, has generated a degree of perplexity evident in the reaction of those few pundits who still track activities at the **Ontario** legislature. Normally left-of-**centre** observers were pleasantly surprised at the shameless outpouring of subsidies and giveaways. More centrist writers noted the cynicism - or was it just practical politics? - of a platform that out-Liberals the Liberals. Those on the right chafed angrily at the blatant abandonment of conservative orthodoxy, even if it might finally offer a hope of victory after 15 years of abject failure.

Beneath the confusion lies a riddle wrapped in an enigma. That Brown's guarantee bears little if any resemblance to conservative principles depends on what anyone regards those principles to be. In the age of Donald Trump and the ugly band of unscrupulous selfservers who make up the Republican majority in Congress, there can be very few self-respecting conservatives who see a bright future in embracing the bigotry, greed and flim-flam that has swallowed the U.S. capital. Is conservatism about nothing more than tax cuts? Are social conservatives the core of the camp simply because, like it or not, they claim the party as their own? Is it better to lose with orthodox conservatism than to govern from a less **pristine** position, just as the NDP consistently loses with the leftist

equivalent? **Ontario**'s PCs have lost four consecutive elections to the Liberals over almost 15 years, each deploying a different strategy. Voters have demonstrated again and again that they don't care how deeply the province goes into debt, as long as they get their share of the goodies. One Liberal scandal after another has erupted to a collective shrug; an endless parade of boondoggles has drawn little more than mild reproof; a regular tide of reversals, broken promises and legal scrapes have been unable to dent the apathy of a people who only get really annoyed when their **hydro** bill goes up or the commuter train is late. Only through their epic mishandling of the **energy** file did the Liberals finally manage to awaken enough resentment that a victory next June is less than certain.

If that's the riddle, the enigma is Brown, who seemed to present an easy target for the mud-masters of the Liberal election machine. A little-known backbencher from Stephen Harper's caucus who shocked Tory greybeards and seized the leadership by the simple tactic of out-hustling the favoured candidate to sign up more members, Brown seemed almost laughably vulnerable. The crazies on his right flank would eat him alive. He could be blamed for every valise in the Harper baggage car: his voting record in **Ottawa** could be used to smear him as a woman-hating, anti-gay, anti-abortion fanatic. Some early missteps as leader would allow him to be tagged as unprepared, never-mind the Liberals' own overwhelming record of mismanagement. Heck, this would be a cinch.

Somehow he's managed to hang on, winning a string of byelections and attracting some star candidates. He marches in gay pride parades. He proclaims himself entirely pro-choice. He's made it party policy to accept the reality of man-made **climate** change, over outraged cries from remaining bastions of resistance.

And now the Peoples'Guarantee, with its hokey promise to quit if he doesn't follow through. Tax cuts for lower incomes and small business. A carbon levy that would return the money to taxpayers. More subsidies for **hydro** bills, but without borrowing the money like the Liberals do. Dental care for seniors. More money for mental health. A transit takeover to reduce delays from fractious municipal councils. Free Wi-Fi on the GO train! Even a break on snow tires.

No one was prepared for this, including the Liberals. Their initial response was to insist the Tories wouldn't really do it, that it's all just an election ploy, as if Liberals have never thought of juicy promises as a means of getting elected. Working Families and WOW, the two union fronts that do much of the Liberal dirty work, are still busy denouncing the old Patrick Brown, who doesn't even have the same haircut any more.

What indeed will they do about it? Brown would keep most of their giveaways and add more of his own. Do they denounce him as too generous? As even more irresponsible than they've been? Not a real Tory? Liberal brains will be heavily taxed over the next seven months. It's a dirty game, this. After spending billions buying votes, how do you deal with voters who won't stay bought?

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Brown's Tories leap to centre

Waterloo Region Record - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$2,117

Reach: 63465 **Page:** A10

On our political Richter scale, Patrick Brown's election platform registers a ground-rumbling magnitude of 5.5.

That's a moderate - but definite - earthquake.

By promising billions of dollars in new spending in addition to carbon taxes and

even - shades of Justin Trudeau - a budgetary deficit, the **Ontario** Progressive Conservative leader has shifted the tectonic plates beneath Queen's Park and pushed his party to the **centre**.

These are not the staunchly right-wing Tories of former premier Mike Harris and his Common Sense Revolution or of fiscal hawk Tim Hudak who, as leader, proposed prison chain gangs and pink slips for 100,000 civil servants.

No, despite its ideological fuzziness and questionable pledge to give more to Ontarians for less, the "People's Guarantee" platform for next June's provincial election takes the party 40 years back to the golden days of then-premier Bill Davis and his centrist, if bland, Big Blue Machine.

If it were a beer, this platform would be called Liberal lite.

Predictably, critics have pounced on it with charges that Brown's platform is contradictory and promises far more than he can ever deliver.

For instance, while the Tories would cut taxes for the middle class, they'd replace the Liberals' **cap-and-trade** program for fighting **climate** change with a carbon tax which would actually bring more revenue into provincial coffers.

Somehow, voters are supposed to believe Brown can spend billions of new dollars on childcare subsidies, new subways, mental health and even subsidized snow tires while ferreting out billions in savings - all while he pays down **Ontario**'s \$312-billion debt and leaves more cash in everyone's wallet.

Then there's the complaint that Brown is prepared to gain a government by sacrificing the Progressive Conservative soul.

He's gleefully keeping big-ticket Liberal spending initiatives such as expanded drug coverage and tuition rebates. He'd even stick with the Liberal **plan** to raise the hourly minimum wage to \$15 - though over a longer time period.

But at heart, this platform isn't about left-versus-right ideology as much as it's about crafting a strategy to win a provincial election, something the Tories have failed to do four times in a row.

Of course the platform's details matter and Brown did voters a favour by releasing it last weekend, seven months before the election.

But Brown's most important message transcends the details.

He's saying his party stands smack dab in the **centre** of the political spectrum.

He's saying that if you're tired of 14 years of the Liberals and have had enough of Premier Kathleen Wynne, elect Progressive Conservatives and be rest assured they won't rock the boat too much. In the coming months, voters should carefully study this platform for themselves before making a call, even as they pay attention to the other election issues such as the riding nomination scandals that have hit the Tories, particularly in Hamilton, where police are investigating the contest in Hamilton **West**-Ancaster-Dundas.

For now, however, voters can welcome Brown's platform for its radical remake of the PC party and for the new and viable centrist option it gives them.

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Ontario's wrong-headed energy policy burns 75,000 jobs | Troy Media

troymedia.com - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

How do you kill 75,000 jobs and turn your valuable location into a disadvantage?

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Turbine turmoil continues to dog Wynne

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Ad Value: \$242

Reach: 8941 Page: A6

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced 14 months ago that her government was suspending **Ontario's renewable energy** procurement process, she and her Liberal colleagues were caught in the middle of a **public** backlash against skyrocketing **electricity** bills. Halting a costly **plan** that promoted **wind turbine** farms was a quick and convenient response to the government's naysayers. Indeed, Wynne's own **energy** minister admitted **Ontario** didn't need the **electricity** that would be produced by new turbines.

But there was a problem. Six months earlier, several **wind turbine** projects had been approved, and the September announcement didn't mean they would be cancelled. The contracts would be honoured. **Ontario** would be allowing the development of **wind** turbines to produce **electricity** that wasn't needed.

Among those projects are two in Chatham-Kent and another in Elgin County. One has become an enormous **public** relations problem for the Wynne government, while the other two have the potential to become the same.

The first project is almost complete; but the others should be halted before they begin.

The **North** Kent 1 **wind** project was mired in controversy even before Wynne announced suspension of the renewable program. A citizen group's initial worry that water wells would be fouled because of interference to the area's unique geology has since been justified. Construction activity has fouled and in some cases plugged 16 water wells. Residents with damaged wells have made arrangements to have clean water trucked into their property.

The problems at the **North** Kent 1 project have stirred up fears a few miles away, at the Otter Creek project. Work has yet to begin, but residents are worried the same problems will affect their water quality. They're also worried proposed **turbine** towers, the tallest in Canada, will be erected in an important migratory bird flight path.

MPP Monte McNaughton wants Otter Creek halted.

"These turbines are being built to generate **electricity** we don't need, and they're only going to contribute to driving **hydro** prices even higher," the Lambton Kent Middlesex MPP said.

Residents in Dutton Dunwich, meanwhile, continue to campaign against a **wind** farm that has yet to be built. Residents are particularly irked that in their 2014 municipal election, 84 per cent voted against their community becoming a **wind** farm host, and yet the **Ontario** government - in an act that can only be perceived as stupidity, arrogance or both - approved a Dutton Dunwich project 16 months later.

Wynne may have hoped rural **Ontario's** long-held discontent with the Green **Energy Plan** would be mostly forgotten by next June's provincial election. But that's not about to happen as the remnants of her government's multi-billion-dollar green **energy** campaign, and its continued and varied controversies, continue to be a problem.

Peter Epp

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Group looking for money to fight wind turbines

Chatham This Week - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Neutral**

Byline: David Gough

Page: A5

Preparing for what they're calling a 'David versus Goliath battle', a grassroots group is organizing opposition to the Otter Creek **wind turbine** project proposed for **north** of Wallaceburg.

But money is needed to fight a large **wind** company. Wallaceburg Area **Wind** Concerns has a GoFundMe account, which has brought in \$1,325 of their \$50,000 goal. As well, the organization is accepting donations at the TD bank branch on James Street in Wallaceburg.

Earl Towell, a member of the newly formed group, said donations are coming in to prepare for the fight.

"These things aren't cheap.

We're up against a company with plenty of lawyer services. If we want to be able to put forward any kind of battle against this, we have to hire experts," Towell said.

Along with lawyers, Wallaceburg Area **Wind** Concerns is looking at hiring expert witnesses.

The ministry is currently undertaking a technical **review** of the **Renewable Energy** Approval **application** for Otter Creek, which will include reviewing and considering all comments made about the company's REA when it was posted to the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry earlier this year. Once the **review** is complete the REA can be appealed.

Timelines are very short for appealing the REA.

Individuals or groups only have 15 calendar days to file an appeal, once the REA announcement is posted on the **Ministry of Energy** and **Climate** Change website.

The Otter Creek **wind** farm project is scheduled to have 12 **wind** turbines.

Towell and his wife Violet are looking at the website daily for when the REA can be appealed.

"If a challenge is put forward past the 15 days, the ministry is not allowed to hear it. They are not allowed to accept it," Towell said.

Violet said it's imperative that Wallaceburg Area **Wind** Concerns is well-prepared if they appeal the REA.

"The people in this region deserve better than what they've received. They didn't have a say in what happened, yet it's happening, and happening very close to the town of Wallaceburg," Violet said.

The group is trying to make the community aware of the project, said Violet. Not only are there concerns about potential problems with water wells, but there are also concerns about noise and low frequency sound levels, due to their large size.

"Everyone in Wallaceburg is going to be affected by this," said Towell, noting the **wind** turbines will be close to the town, and 20 per cent of the population is sensitive to infrasound.

"Sleeping sickness, they're unable to sleep, unable to concentrate. It's a major impact to people's health."

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Dirty well water delivered to environment minister; MPP calls for halting two local wind farm projects

Wallaceburg Courier Press - Thu Nov 30 2017

Tone: **Negative**

Byline: Ellwood Shreve

Ad Value: \$524

Reach: 8941 Page: A22

Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Monte McNaughton delivered a bottle of turbid water to Environment Minister Chris Ballard in the **Ontario** legislature Nov. 21 to emphasize the impact **wind turbine** construction has had on area water wells.

"I want the minister to understand why communities are so troubled by the effect of **wind** turbines on their water," said McNaughton. "Wells that have produced clean, clear water for decades have begun producing dirty brown, unpotable water since construction of turbines for the **North Kent** **wind** project began."

The MPP noted the number of families affected by damaged wells in the former Chatham Township area has grown to 16, fueling concerns in the Wallaceburg area where environmental approval may come soon for a similar **turbine** project to get underway at Otter Creek.

A major concern raised by two local citizen groups is steel piles used to anchor the industrial **wind** turbines being driven into Kettle Point black shale bedrock, stirring up heavy metals in the aquifer that are known to be dangerous to human health.

However, consultants and company officials for the Korean industrial giant, Samsung **Renewable Energy**, and its U.S. partner, Pattern **Energy**, developers of the **North Kent Wind** project, have stated at two recent **public** meetings the construction has had no impact on area water wells.

"The government should do the right thing and stop Otter Creek immediately and stop the **North Kent** project," McNaughton said.

"I think this is just yet another example of the Liberal government showing disrespect to families in rural **Ontario**," the MPP added. "If this happened in the GTA, they would shut these projects down immediately."

Responding to direct questions by McNaughton during question period on Monday at Queen's Park, Ballard said: "Our government takes these concerns regarding groundwater quality very seriously."

He added the **renewable energy** process requires proponents to undertake extensive consultation with municipalities, Indigenous communities and the **public**.

He noted **North Kent Wind** has done extensive monitoring prior to construction and the ministry is going to require the developer to continue to monitor the vibration data during the construction and operation of the **wind** turbines.

When asked if halting these two **wind** projects could trigger another \$1-billion hit to taxpayers, similar to the cancellation of the **natural gas** projects in the GTA

area, McNaughton stated: "Not at all, the savings for Otter Creek alone would amount to \$570 million."

He said there are other environmental reasons for stopping the Otter Creek project, including the fact the nearly 200-metre high towers - the highest in Canada - will be erected in a migratory bird flight path as well as be located in an area where there are 24 species-at-risk.

The MPP said there is also an economic reason for halting these projects.

"These turbines are being built to generate **electricity** we don't need, and they're only going to contribute to driving **hydro** prices even higher," McNaughton said. "This is a bad decision by the Liberal government economically, environmentally, and for the health and wellbeing of my constituents."

McNaughton said when the Liberal government announced it was suspending the **renewable energy** procurement process in September 2016, he then asked why they wouldn't cancel the **North Kent** and Otter Creek projects.

Speaking to the economic impact, Ballard said clean air and clean **energy** is responsible for **Ontario** saving more than \$4 billion in annual health and environmental costs, "because of this government's commitment to clean **energy**."

He called **renewable energy** projects as being crucial to the ministry's carbon switch, adding, "we're not going to back down."

Ballard said, "we have taken a very cautious, science-based approach when setting the standards for **renewable energy** projects in order to protect the health of the **Ontario** people."

McNaughton said, "the claim that a science-based approach has been taken to analyzing the effect of **wind turbine** construction on well water is contradicted by the empirical evidence.

"Observation is the first rule of science," he added. "We need to stop **turbine** construction until more thorough testing can be completed and measures taken to ensure our groundwater is safe."

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Gas company investigating renewable gas opportunities at biodigester

Grimsby Lincoln News - Wed Nov 29 2017

Tone: **Neutral** Page: 1

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GRIMSBY - Representatives from **Union Gas** have had several discussions with **Grimsby Energy** about opportunities to create renewable **natural gas** (RNG) at the biodigester, ultimately opening the door to potential new revenue streams.

Grimsby Energy co-chair Joe Panetta said business development officials with the **utility** approached **Grimsby Energy** about the prospect of partnering on a project. Currently the one-megawatt plant uses agricultural and other organic materials to produce **electricity** as part of a provincial **feed-in-tariff contract**.

Panetta said it started with a simple discussion about synergies, which led to a visit by about 28 engineers to the Sobie Road site three weeks ago.

"I gave them a full tour of the facility and we are going to start to discuss further opportunities. I think it's a positive avenue and next year we will talk to them a bit more seriously," said Panetta. "It's an attractive opportunity. With RNG, we could provide that as an additional revenue stream to our bottom line."

Panetta said it is far too early to discuss what type of revenue opportunity the addition of RNG would provide for the project. The goal, he said, would be **Union Gas** would provide the necessary infrastructure to take the **gas** from the biodigester to a **gasline** at the nearby intersection of Park and Sobie roads.

"There are so many opportunities. It's all brand new, so we're trying to look at the possibilities out there," said Panetta.

The talks come as **Grimsby Energy** celebrated the grand opening of the facility with a ribbon cutting on Nov. 17. While the \$10-million project has been a source of controversy, Panetta said operations are going well since it started it became fully operational a few months ago.

"We're a growing business," said Panetta. "We need the community to be patient with us and they'll start seeing some of the benefits. It's going to benefit our town tremendously."

Panetta said it's a work in progress to find the right "recipe" that generates the best results for the plant. They have been feeding a mix of organics to the biodigester, ranging from grape pomace to potatoes to a mix of natural oils, sugars and more.

"We're only considering organics," Panetta stressed, adding there are no intentions for the plant to accept biosolids, a by-product from sewage treatment, as was feared earlier this summer when **Grimsby Energy** applied for a change to accommodate source-separated organics.

Right now efficiency levels are running at about 60 to 70 per cent, but with appropriate levels of feedstock, said Panetta, the plant should be operating at 80 to 85 per cent capacity, continuously, in January. He said levels have been increasing gradually on a monthly basis, with revenues increasing each month as well. Right now, the town's 20-year FIT **contract** gives them 16.1 cents per kilowatt hour up to 23.1 cents per kilowatt hour during peak times.

Because the project is in what he describes the "infancy stages", with some final site work to be completed, they are not yet paying down the loan for the project, but Panetta said they hope to apply some of that revenue soon to help with repayment. It will take about eight to 10 years before any debts are fulfilled, but in the meantime, he said, the subsidiaries that funds were borrowed from will be paid interest notes.

"Half of the 20-year **contract** should be going right back to the shareholder," said Panetta.

Panetta said those interested in **renewable energy** projects are taking notice. They recently had communication with three municipalities looking to build similar projects - two of which he expects to see move forward with a facility, and they've also been asked to speak at a **Canadian** Biomass association event in March.

"They're seeing a model here," said Panetta. "It's been a long road, but we're on the right track and people are taking notice."

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