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THE HKLB NEW DEMOCRAT

New Democrats have a plan to reduce Ontario hydro bills by 30%

Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath announces an immediate and long term plan to fix the province's disastrous hydro system.

New Democrats have a plan to reduce hydro bills by as much as 30 per cent which is based on the fact that the only way to deliver real, long-term reductions in bills is to fix the system itself.

The plan includes reversing the sell-off of Hydro One, take immediate steps to cut hydro bills down to size and make permanent changes to the system to fix it for the long-term.

No rate increase would be required to finance the return of Hydro One to public ownership. The NDP plan pays off the return of Hydro One quickly; and within 10 years Ontario would have $1.6 billion more from dividends and payments to invest in hospitals, schools and Ontarians.

Several highlights of the plan include:

Returning Hydro One back to public ownership and control, ensuring it serves the public interest; provide protection so future governments can never again sell-off Hydro without the permission of the public through a referendum; immediately re-establish independent, transparent, public oversight of Hydro One; establish an expert advisory panel tasked with providing the most responsible path towards public ownership of power and power generation.

Immediate steps would be taken to fix unfair delivery cost - Ontarians will pay the same delivery costs whether urban or rural; end mandatory Time of Use and cap private profit margins; use tax benefits to help ratepayers; make the current HST rebate permanent, and negotiate with the federal government to remove their 5% portion on hydro bills.

Ontarians are paying for extra electricity that nobody needs. The NDP will stop that.

Premier Wynne is moving forward with a 17 per cent reduction on monthly bills this summer atop the eight per cent rebate of the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax that took effect January 1.

Overall, the 25 per cent Liberal plan will cost about 14 billion dollars more in interest over the next 10 years.

The move comes after the average residential hydro bill has jumped from $91 a month in 2005 to $156 last year, threatening the governing Liberals' re-election chances.

For 20 years, Liberal and Conservative governments have signed long-term private contracts that are making insiders wealthy, and leaving Ontarians paying for electricity that cannot be used. The NDP would renegotiate or refuse to renew these types of contracts.

Visit the *HKLB NDP website* for full details of the NDP plan to fix Ontario's hydro system,

Ontario Liberal electricity rates has negative impact on jobs

By Lloyd Fournier - Thunderbird Rising

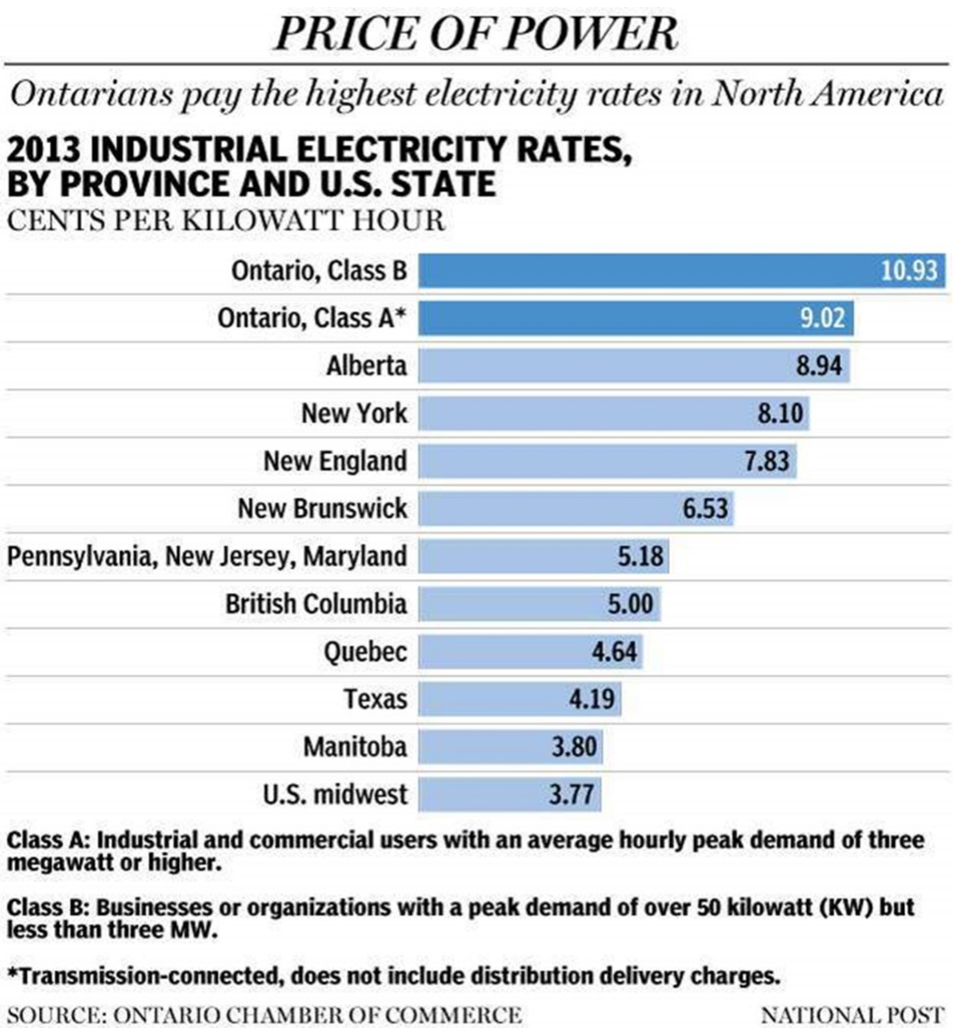
Southern Ontario was once the manufacturing hub of the province and the nation. The jobs paid well and prospects for a worry-free future were once solely dependent on each factory's ability to produce good quality products for a world-wide market.

Ontario families deriving income from those same factories paid down payments on family homes and negotiated mortgages wagering that the quality of their workmanship would eventually pay off those mortgages. At the dinner table each evening, those families began discussing post secondary education for the kids. Thousands of other mini-dreams (a new car, perhaps even a European vacation) all seemed not just dreams, but attainable realities.

But then the lay off notices began circulating through the workplace and the future suddenly stopped.

In hundreds of towns and in the homes of thousands of Ontario families, the bad news spread.

As example, London, Ontario saw Caterpillar closing its Electro-Motive Diesel factory and 450 families cast into unemployment (2012). Those workers were informed that the London facility was "being consolidated elsewhere with other existing Caterpillar operations. Another 450 workers at the London Kellogg cereal manufacturer (2014) were handed similar news.



In Leamington, Ontario the H.J. Heinz Co.'s ketchup factory closed shop in 2014, eliminating 740 jobs. That closure literally gutted local tomato growers whose farms had supplied the factory for generations. In nearby St. Thomas, Ontario 1,200 families were cast into unemployment in 2011.

The layoff notices have continued to appear throughout the province and are certainly not confined to small-town south western Ontario towns. Caterpillar had shut down its Toronto factory that manufactured tunnel boring gear in 2014 jobs for 330.

I guarantee that you will still find Kellogg's cereal and its iconic "corn flakes" still amply stocked in most supermarkets as is Heinz' world famous ketchup. Unfortunately for hundreds of Ontario farm families, that ketchup is no longer manufactured from Ontario grown tomatoes. In the supermarket parking lot, there still lots of Ford cars and trucks though fewer than the foreign made vehicles parked beside them.

Walk through Canada's retail icon Canadian Tire. I defy to gather even a small hand basket of products from the thousands on display that are made in Canada. You would need four or five shopping carts to gather even one of each "Made in China" products from that company's retail shelves.

But, International trade agreements in and of themselves are a sword with two edges. Where quality is concerned, we should be being an overall increase in worldwide demands for high quality Ontario made manufacturing goods.

With increased automation, increased electricity usage is a given. In hundreds of boardrooms across the manufacturing sector, hundreds of us presented compelling arguments that automation was the corporate answer. Based on Ontario's readily available supply of electrical energy, investments in automation would not only

Continued on Page 3 ....

Continued from Page 2......

abate labor economics but (also) throw the doors wide open to unfathomable export markets paving the way for Ontario's future.

Though those decisions to automate an Ontario based manufacturing sector were based Ontario's more than ample supply of electric energy, something took a bad turn. Ontario first elected a Liberal government run by Dalton McGuinty in 2003. By the end of his second term, Premier McGuinty and his caucus began tinkering with the supply side of the electricity market.

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles CEO Sergio Marchionne, who voiced concerns that the province's hydro costs and a cap-and-trade system are making Ontario too expensive for business. "It's not fair for us as a manufacturer … to be paying for the mistakes done by the province," "We are a Canadian company, but how much can we take?"

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association adds, "Competitive electricity rates are fundamental to the success of Ontario's manufacturing sector and our economy. Despite progressive reforms including the demand based allocation of the global adjustment for large volume users, Ontario has among the highest electricity rates in North America. The only path forward for Ontario is to adopt a manufacturing action plan with an industrial/electricity rate as a core component."

When the McGuinty Liberals arrived in Queen's Park things looked promising in Ontario. When McGuinty arrived along with his cronies, Ontario (Canada's manufacturing heartland) had excess capacity of electricity and was actually exporting that energy source to nearby domestic jurisdictions in Manitoba and Quebec but also to nearby USA states such as New York and Michigan.

Those pre-Liberal times were halcyon times for Ontario's families who annually consuming 15,000 kWh of electricity per person, one of the highest levels in the world. There was no need for smart meters telling us to do our laundry during "off peak hours" until the Liberals re-engineered Ontario and sent electricity costs spiraling.

About $13.26 billion (in 2005 dollars) was invested by the government in Canada's nuclear program over 1952-2006 through Atomic Energy Canada Limited (AECL). This investment has generated more than $160 billion in GDP benefits to Canada from power production, research and development, Candu exports, uranium, medical radioisotopes and professional services, according to AECL.

When the Liberals first took office, Ontario was generating sufficient electricity to assure future growth of the Ontario economy. The sources were a Nanticoke coal-fired power station Nanticoke, Ontario as well as our "famous" hydro electricity generation at Niagara and collection of state of the art nuclear generation facilities in Bruce (4 reactors) and Darlington (6 reactors).

Those jobs at Caterpillar, Kellogg, Ford, and Heinz along over 50,000 Ontario manufacturing jobs were doomed and on death-watch when the McGuinty caucus announced a "twenty year energy plan for Ontario" in June 2006.

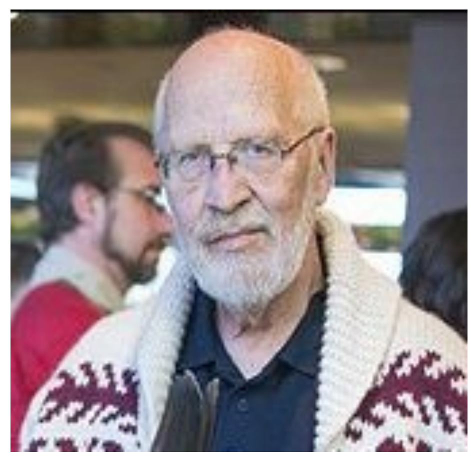
There is always some noble and good cause for just about any Liberal policy. The use of coal (or any other fossil fuel) to generate electricity generates high levels of carbon emissions. Thus, the closing of the coal fired generators at Nanticoke had solid environmental reasoning at its roots. Nanticoke stopped production in 2014 amid much hoopla and publicity by the Liberals in Queen's Park. Though, in other parts of the world, clean technology has greatly diminished the environmental harm caused by burning coal to produce electricity and it is highly comical to have observed the McGuinty "dance" with natural gas generated electricity in 2014. Both coal and natural gas are (after all) fossil fuels each capable of generating not only electricity but pollution if burned without using state of the art scrubbers.

When McGuinty arrived in office, Ontario was producing 14,000 megawatts of electricity across its coal, hydro and nuclear driven platforms. By 2010, the Liberals slashed total overall planned capacity of electricity by 2,000 megawatts annually thereby limiting Ontario economic growth and manufacturing job opportunities for future generations. Moreover, by 2010 plans to expand nuclear electricity capacity with the addition of two new reactors at Darlington were deferred by the Liberal government

When you open your household electricity bill each month, you will be looking at years of bad planning by a government (the Liberals) who plan by impulse and view energy as a publicity stunt instead to a key component of our economic futures.

Today, one half of the ten nuclear reactors in Ontario (Bruce and Darlington) are turned off and long overdue for maintenance. While, at the same time fanciful wind turbine schemes with Samsung brought with them then higher consumer costs as incentive for Samsung to take part in Dalton's ill-advised energy plan as now perpetuated by Premier Kathleen Wynne and her Liberal caucus.

Suffice to say, the high price of hydro and decline in Ontario's manufacturing jobs was caused by a government that clearly needs to refocus.



Lloyd Fournier is the founder of Thunderbird Rising and the recent recipient of a Humanitarian Award, an author and freelance writer. His drill down style of writing is a throwback to classic journalism. His work presents the reader an opportunity to rethink issues.

THE HKLB NDP RIDING ASSOCIATION

Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Brock NDP Riding Association

Email: hklb.ndp@gmail.com
Website: http://hklbndp.weebly.com

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Federal budget fails to help build a fair economy: NDP

Many Canadians struggling with precarious employment, rising costs, and record household debt got very little in the 2017 Liberal budget to make Canada's economy work for them, while the wealthy and well-connected were rewarded.

By failing to follow through on Trudeau's promise to close CEO stock option loopholes, the federal budget hands over $725 million to the wealthiest CEOs every year. At the same time the budget does not allocate the $155 million needed to end racial discrimination in the provision of welfare services to indigenous children.

"Budgets are about choices and unfortunately Liberals have chosen tax breaks for wealthy CEOs and giveaways to large corporations over helping the unemployed, veterans, and Indigenous children", said NDP Leader Tom Mulcair.

Budget 2017 also pushes forward the Liberal's plans to privatize public infrastructure that will leave Canadians paying higher prices for generations through new and increased user fees and tolls while private investors get rich. At the same time, there is no mention of concrete plans to address precarious work and to create good full time jobs to replace the tens of thousands that have been lost since the Liberals took office. There is also no tax relief for small and medium businesses.

"Just like the recent words of the Finance Minister, this budget tells Canadians to get used to part-time, low-paid precarious work. Canadians welcome more training opportunities - but they expect them to lead to good full-time work", said NDP Finance Critic Alexandre Boulerice. "The government hasn't put forward a plan to create those jobs and Canadians are waiting."

In addition to confirming Stephen Harper's health care funding plan, the federal budget is also a missed opportunity to make the cost of medicine more affordable for Canadians and to save billions by implementing a pharmacare plan. Canada is the only country with universal health care that doesn't include prescription drug coverage.

Without question, this federal budget has failed to help build a fair economy for Canadians.