

Coalition of Ontario Manufacturers for Competitive Industrial Power Rates

The Coalition is a group of manufacturing companies and associations (members include the Canadian Cement Association, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Construction Secretariat, Canadian Foundry Association, Canadian Plastics Industry Association, Quinte West Manufacturers' Association and Northumberland Manufacturers' Association) which addresses a major barrier for Ontario business: **High Electricity Rates**.

The thrust of the Coalition's message in 2015 had been on saving jobs through the implementation of a taxed based farm/industrial power rate - competitive with elsewhere in North America - with phased-in implementation through 2018.

The Coalition began the year by making a presentation on January 26 to the Standing Committee on Finance & Economic Affairs for a tax based farm/industrial power rate and has pushed hard for an inter-ministerial working group to be struck to develop the appropriate strategy. In the place of such a group, various branches of the government have reviewed the Coalition's position paper (including Energy; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Finance; Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure). This has culminated with a study on the proposal's feasibility by Dan Skilleter, policy advisor to the Minister of Finance with questions and some doubts about the importance of electricity pricing on business investment. The Coalition is presently formulating a response with support data to point out that our proposed measures would increase economic activity and job creation resulting in increased revenues for the province.

In support of the political goal of the Coalition, the group continues to work to expand both the size of the group's membership and the scope of the demand for power reform. Meetings with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Manufacturers' and Exporters as well as some parallel messaging from these and other groups is intended to build a media pressure with the plan of this leading to a more favourable response from the current government.

The Coalition remains in contact with the opposition parties through e-mail and group meetings. The key members of the PC shadow caucus have been particularly interested in the Coalition's arguments and this has led to meetings with new leader Patrick Brown, Vic Fedeli and John Yakabuski to keep them current with the requests to the government.

Next steps include:

- Continue to work with the government and its agencies to push for a phased-in farm/industrial power rate beginning with the 2017 budget.
- Provide question period topics to the Opposition parties to keep pressure on in the Legislature for energy cost policy change.
- Garnering support from other industry stakeholders and politicians, both municipally and provincially, for energy reform.
- Use the media to advance the industrial rate discussion.
- Expand the coalition to increase its political clout.

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