On October 26, 2017, the Ministry of Energy released the Long-Term Energy Plan. LTEP 2017 is intended to make energy cleaner and more affordable, and to inform planning forecasts and energy investments. LTEP 2017 is also centred on system flexibility under an outlook projection of steady demand and robust supply.

Thousands of Ontario individuals, stakeholders, Indigenous communities and organizations were engaged in the development of LTEP 2017. This input resulted in the expansion of the Aboriginal Community Energy Plan program and continued support of local and distributed energy systems. Key to LTEP 2017 are that energy price forecasts are lower and grow less sharply than in previous LTEPs, and that supply / demand become closely matched.

Of importance for agricultural communities and rural Ontario:
- Local distribution company (LDC) support to pursue system efficiencies towards customer cost and energy savings
- Support for regulations to expand LDC distributed resources (OFA initiative)
- Expanded net metering options
- Support for renewable natural gas into the natural gas supply and expanding the use of lower-carbon fuels for transportation (OFA initiative)
- Continuing to implement Conservation First policy in regional and local energy planning processes (OFA initiative)
- Electric vehicle integration into distribution grids, and smart charging in homes

LTEP 2017 Affordable and Accessible Energy highlights existing efforts:
- Expanded Ontario Electricity Support (OESP) and Rural or Remote Electricity Rate Protection (RRRP) Programs, moving costs from utility bills to the general tax base
- Refinanced Global Adjustment to defer costs to match asset life
- Reduced threshold for Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI) eligibility
- Established the Affordability Fund and enacting the Fair Hydro Act
- LTEP will expand Green Button to the entire province so customers can control energy conservation opportunities. However, the program is reliant on internet access not yet available to much of rural and remote Ontario
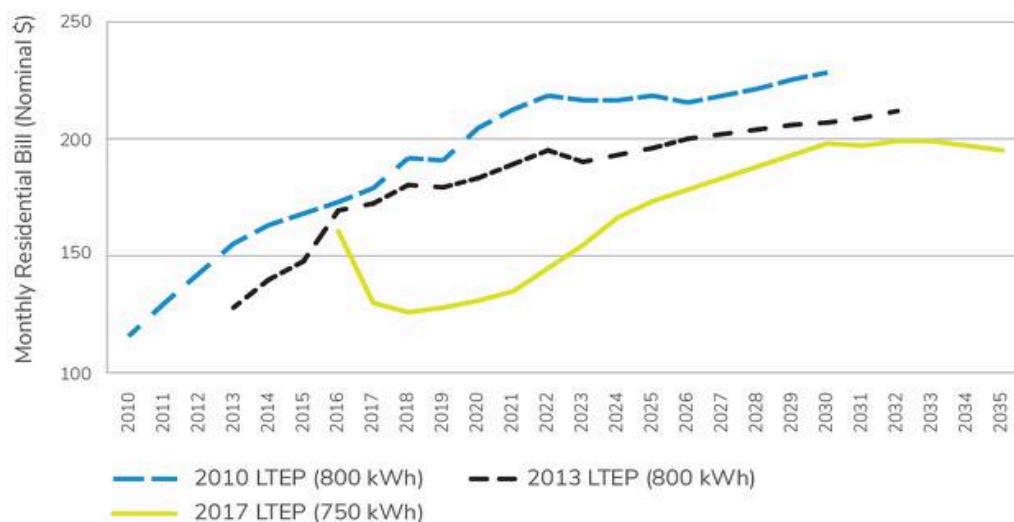
Costs
$70 billion was invested in our electricity system over the past 15 years, much of these investments were for the shift to non-emitting generation sources. Understandably, Ontarians feel electricity costs are too high and that these high prices hurt industrial competitiveness. To help address costs LTEP 2017 promotes continued customer and system conservation and normalized delivery charges province wide.

Even with those system and infrastructure investments, stakeholders noted that we need new technologies and methods to manage energy use. OFA feels long-term strategic investments to expand access to natural gas infrastructure and for RNG pipeline injection, beyond those dollars previously committed, are vital to improved energy management choices and ushering in new technologies for rural Ontario.

LTEP 2017 forecasts electricity prices to remain below those estimated in previous long-term plans. For context, it should be noted that the current projection incorporates lower customer average power consumption, and that kWh prices have doubled since deregulation in 2004, and are still expected to increase 50% in the next fifteen years before levelling off.
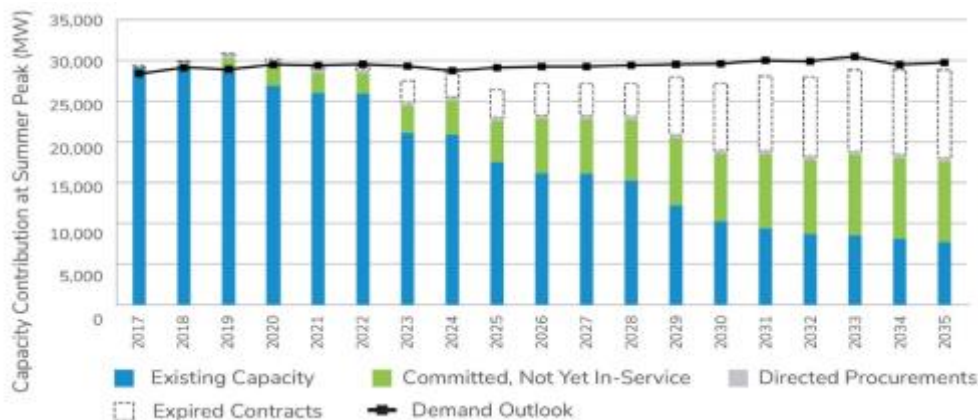
Electricity Price Outlook – Residential Consumers

Supply and Demand

Due to nuclear generator shutdowns and refurbishments, a capacity shortfall is expected in early-mid 2020. Capacity needs will be addressed via IESO's Market Renewal Initiative, aimed to redesign Ontario's energy markets. Ontario plans to rely less and less on long-term electricity contracts and hopes to move towards a market-based approach. LTEP 2017 assumes a very gradual demand increase due to adoption of electric vehicles and transportation.

For more information:

Ontario's 2017 LTEP news release: https://news.ontario.ca/mei/en/2017/10/2017-long-term-energy-plan.html