

Chamber's energy paper

Mar 24, 2013 - 6:15 PM EDT

Last Updated: Mar 24, 2013 - 6:58 PM EDT

By David Diemer

The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce released its regional energy paper. This is the second policy paper released by the Chamber since February 2013.

The paper examines the Ontario energy system in the context of the Windsor-Essex region and our business community. The Chamber is the voice of business for the region, representing approximately 1,000 business members collectively responsible for \$10 billion in sales.

This paper was the work of the Chamber's Environment and Energy Committee over a number of months of consultations with our business community and key stakeholders. The development of an energy paper was a vision from a 100 day plan by Matt Marchand, who was appointed Chamber President and CEO in March 2012.

The organizational structure of the Ontario energy system and the overlaying regulatory framework is sizable, complex and in need of a continuous and transparent examination.

From a business point of view the system needs to be accountable to its users and the public. Energy costs and pricing for electricity are a concern in a globally competitive business environment.

In many aspects, Ontario has done well in providing a reliable and affordable energy. The Ontario government, however, must address some of its current shortcomings such as increasing cost of electricity and transparency.

Ontario's energy system must ensure reliable, modern and efficient supply of energy to customers at reasonable rates.

The Chamber has set out to deliver a set of recommendations that would help us maintain our global energy advantage. The Chamber paper provides eleven

recommendations that concern the supply, delivery and pricing of electricity and natural gas in the Province.

The main recommendations include:

- More transparency in the actual breakdown of the global adjustment fees associated with energy bills in Ontario and reporting out to electricity users on a regular basis.
- More transparency in re-examining the costs, benefits and sustainability of the current energy supply mix, including renewables in the Province of Ontario.
- Keeping commitments made to participants in the renewable energy sector by making adequate and timely upgrades to accommodate planned power grid connections.
- Supporting the shift from coal to natural gas in the supply mix for electricity generation.

To access the Chamber's Energy Paper you can visit the Chamber's website at windsorchamber.org.

David Diemer is an associate with Dillon Consulting Limited and Chair of the Environment and Energy Policy Committee of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce.