

The Hydro One limbo dancer

To the Editor,

You remember the dance, how low can you go? Recently Hydro One's new ombudsman was in Bancroft on a tour she has been taking throughout the area serviced by Hydro One. She just started in March and the first half hour she spent working hard to lower the bar on expectations of the crowd.

She can't do anything about electricity prices and what Hydro One calls "delivery charges." Of course, she has no jurisdiction around smart meter installation, the gas plant fiascos, the outrageous costs and mismanagement of the solar and wind power generation. The list is lengthy

She is primarily a resource of last resort primarily on billing and charges (estimates or actual) after Hydro One has been given a chance to satisfy you, the customer.

While the meeting was respectful of Fiona, which is a tribute to her empathy skills, it didn't help her cause that she spent so much time working to lower audience expectations

Is she right that she can't do anything about the Hydro One culture that is so arrogant, dismissive and unconcerned about the impact of their high costs on the average person in North Hastings?

Well, Fiona has been a public servant for her working life rising to assistant deputy minister in the Ontario government before taking on the role of ombudsman for the City of Toronto from 2008 to 2015. In 2016, she joined Hydro One in the same role.

She did prove in her role in Toronto that she is adept at taking on poor public policy as well as mismanagement, and winning many battles. That included cultures that were as rotten for consumers as Hydro One

But she seems to have prospered in her public service roles by ensuring the bar is set initially very low. And also by making sure she has her case very well developed before she strikes. It could take three to four years before we can expect to see any substantive action on Hydro One customer service culture.

In the meantime expect her to be effective at fire fighting for individuals. She will try to be in your corner.

So keep the pressure on for Crean to demonstrate action on the broader culture issues at Hydro One regarding customers. The best indicator of what folks will do in the future is what they have done in the past. Fiona Crean has a track record with demonstrable results, but Hydro One customers can't let her take three years to see any action.

**Bill Cheshire,
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