



# Low-Income Energy Network

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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**December 7, 2016**

### **Disconnected customers to get winter relief from Hydro One**

The Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN) welcomes Hydro One's announcement today that it is restoring electricity service to all of its residential customers who are currently living without power due to disconnection for bill payment arrears. Hydro One advises that they will be reaching out to each of these 1,425 customers to assist them in addressing the financial difficulties that led to their loss of service.

This new Winter Relief program is in addition to Hydro One Inc.'s voluntary policy of not disconnecting service for bill payment arrears during the winter season (i.e. usually from Dec. 1 to March 31).

LIEN is encouraged by Hydro One's promise of a proactive and comprehensive approach to resolving payment difficulties for its vulnerable customers while continuing to provide essential electricity service, particularly for those who heat their home with electricity. Hydro One's recognition that vulnerable, low-income customers face particular hardships and that they should be assisted rather than penalized is an important step forward in better addressing the energy needs of these Ontarians. Many low-income individuals face difficult financial pressures on a daily basis to meet their basic needs such as paying for rent, utilities, transportation, food, medicine and other necessities. This announcement from Hydro One is a positive step in supporting low-income customers who are unable to pay the rising cost of electricity in the province, as we await the cold winter months ahead.

LIEN looks forward to ongoing work with the government and Ontario utility companies on solutions to energy affordability.

**For more information including interviews with a LIEN representative, please contact:**

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## **About LIEN**

The Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN) was formed in 2004 by anti-poverty, affordable housing and environmental groups in response to the impact of rising energy prices on low-income Ontarians. LIEN promotes programs and policies which tackle the problems of energy poverty and homelessness, reduce Ontario's contribution to smog and climate change, and promote a healthy economy through the more efficient use of energy, a transition to renewable sources of energy, education and consumer protection.