

Editorial ? Should there be a referendum?

The pending sale of shares of Hydro One raises the question of whether the Wynne government should be considering consulting the electorate, via a referendum.

We would normally not be big fans of referendums. We are more inclined to let government govern, and then present their record to the electorate at the appropriate time.

But this deal involves a public utility, and we would argue it's debatable that people envisioned its sale last year, when voters gave Kathleen Wynne a majority. As well, Hydro is something that people depend on. It's not one of those nice little things to have around ? it's essential to the well-being of people. In many cases, their lives depend on it. Such assets need to be controlled and closely regulated, not peddled in the marketplace.

Granted referendums are rather rare, but not unprecedented. Voters in Toronto in 1997 were given the opportunity to vote on a referendum regarding the amalgamation of the various municipalities in what used to be known as Metro. The government chose to ignore the results, but Wynne would be well positioned to set a new standard.

After all, she was one of the organizers of the '97 referendum.