

[NOTES] Environmental Commissioner in the media studio - April 10, 2018

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Attachments: 04 -- April 10, 2018 - Environmental Commissioner - Ontario's energy plan falls short.pdf (2.26 MB)

MPPs attending:
Peter tabuns

Media: hains

Saxon:
Halfway between 2005 and 2030
2005 Ontario electricity system at lowest point

2030 need to meet climate targets

A lot of public discussion and concern about electrify in Ontario Discussion needs to be based on information not rumors

19 non partisan answers to questions ontarians are asking These questions are table of contents We have a lot to be proud of We used to have an aging and highly polluting electricity system Looked cheap on power bills, this came at a high cost to environment and human health Public health groups spoke up to show connections between the pollution and negative health consequences Mentions stakeholders who helped in the audience Electricity system is more expensive but cleaner and more reliable Smog days dropped to 0 Greenhouse gas and air pollution have dropped 96% of Ontario's electricity was essentially emissions free No longer face brownouts on hot summer days Electricity rates had to go up and they did Rates went up higher than emissions Increase in costs of essential services can be challenging People need to know why rates have gone up People are paying for more and cleaner electricity rates Some charges on bills that could have been avoided \$3 and \$4 on bill out of 100

20 cents relocation of gas plants

Sale of hydro one not contributed anything to increase of hydro rates Selling surplus rates More electricity rate increases ahead to refurbish nuclear stations Rates will also increase to Pay back money to pay for fair hydro plan Challenge is not just electrify but fossil fuels we use Electricity is cleanest of energy sources but also the smallest Ontario will need more low carbon electricity Province should be planning for that Government is burying head in sand

2017 long term energy plan is betting it will keep prices down by thinking electrify needs will be flat Ontario can be proud of its system Since 2005 we took first steps We need much more conservation and low carbon fuels Good public policy should be based on facts

Hains:

Ministry of energy is betting province won't comply and using that assumption to make finances add up?

Saxon:

Ministry making no plans to comply

Ignore how province can comply

Leave that to MOECC

Two branches that must work together are going in opposite directions

Hains: policy and economic problems of this?

Saxon:

Province turned back on renewable energy we spent so long building Forcing industries to look elsewhere and with Ontario no clear path to achieve goals Province does not have a path forward with renewable energy that makes sense

Hains: cost of heating and how it affects households especially in rural. What types of programs would you like to see to fill void with current program that are missing?

Saxon:

Energy poverty is about 7% which is lower than national average Needs to be real attention to making homes more energy efficient Average family spends 3.5% of income Electric heating they spend more They will have even higher rates going forward unless there is more focus on making those homes more efficient We know electricity rates will go up We will have to pay back money being borrowed for fair hydro rates Natural gas rates will also go up More hardships for families with energy poverty Better long term plan is to make changes to those homes instead of just giving the families money because the amount of money you need to give will keep increasing

Hains: time to act on conservation measures is now ?

Saxon:

Good paying jobs created

Homes more comfortable, cold in winter, hot in summer, hard on health of people there A lot of benefits for conservation Conservation should be focused when it does the most value

Hains: ford made comments about this issue such as no carbon pricing and he would lower hydro costs. What consequences would that have for the province's policies and meeting those longer term goals for greenhouse gas emissions?

Saxon:

No party positions on any party

Most cost effective ways of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a price on carbon Either through cap and trade or carbon tax Other ways are more expensive and less efficient Climate crisis is real and advancing rapidly Electricity rates: what are people paying when we pay our electricity bills People want to know what are we paying for? All for gas plants or something else?

Much more reliable system

More clean air

Better public health

Ontario spent two decades paying off debt Again we are paying off debt Much easier to borrow than pay back

Hains: ford says he prefers to let free market decide. Do you think that is a feasible route to the province reaching greenhouse gas targets?

Saxon:

Free market does have a role

In 2002 we had an experiment with a competitive electricity market Started well but in two months wholesale prices doubled Free markets prices can go down but they can go up Task force for eves said this wasn't a good idea People need predictability I hope whatever prices are adopted they think and learn from mistakes from before