Transcript – Todd Smith responds to Thibeault Announcement

– May 11, 2017

Media: Jeffords, zochodne, citytv, brule, global, CFRB (Moore), McGrath, Ferguson, rath, CTV, bliss

Smith:

- --And then I can take any questions that you have but
- After listening to the minister here this afternoon I would say there is nothing fair about the liberal government's fair hydro scheme
- And the reason that I say that is because we've received a document that we've shared with the media, it's a confidential cabinet document, that shows that the price of electricity is going to sky rocket after the next election
- First of all what I should do is thank that whistleblower who provided that document to us
- We've been talking with a lot of people who work in the Ministry who are upset about the state of affairs when it comes to the Ministry and our electricity system in Ontario
- That's an understatement
- And a lot of them have shared their concerns with me as the relatively new energy critic for the PC caucus and our leader Patrick Brown as well
- So what I would say is thank you to those who have the courage to step forward and provide us with this information that we can share with the people of Ontario
- Because the government isn't being honest with the people of Ontario when it comes to the price of electricity
- We are going to see electricity prices, electricity bills skyrocket after the next election
- And we are also going to see a return of the debt retirement charge, the minister can call it whatever he wants, but its right there in the graph, that there is going to be a new charge on lines of bills, on the line, he calls it the clean energy adjustment I believe
- Were the words that he used
- Clearly what it is is the return of the debt retirement charge
- And it's the debt retirement charge on steroids
- The debt retirement charge was $4 or $5 on the average residential bill
- This was going to reach $21 by the year 2028

- It’s a concern for all electricity customers, it should be a concern for all electricity customers in the province
- And I would say that, it’s interesting to me how the Minister was able to stand here
- And in all of his answers to your question say that, it’s the Ontario Energy Board that setting rates in Ontario
- So how did the OEB come up with a 25% rate
- Or did he direct them to that
- And I think it’s a very appropriate question
- We’ve seen this government interfere time and time again in the electricity sector
- They can’t keep their fingers out of the pie
- And that’s why we’re in the mess that we’re in here in Ontario
- The government just continues to meddle in the electricity sector and the energy sector
- And we’re seeing it happen again
- And It’s going to result – and as I’ve said soaring electricity prices
- So I thought I was going to be scrumming with you
- I didn’t have anything prepared
- But I’m ready to take your questions now

Bliss: The Minister says the numbers wrong. What do you – do you buy it? What do you think?

Smith

- Well this is – it’s a cabinet document that was leaked to us
- There are many as I say people working within the Ministry and Bureaucrats that have concerns about what the government is doing to our energy sector
- And so, you know it’s – it’s a real document
- The minister today in question period, when I asked him about the price of electricity in 2024, he said he didn’t have a crystal ball
- But it’s right there in black and white in that document, what they were briefed on
- As far as the cost goes for electricity in 2024
- So you know the average price of electricity certainly, is it going to go down next year
- Compared to this year
- Yes, but we’re going to see those rates soar to heights we’ve never seen in Ontario as a result of the plan that the government has brought forward

Ferguson: Todd, just about the – this ongoing global adjustment charge, I mean --- I I know that you’re calling it like a new DRC on steroids and stuff like that but isn’t it just *the cost of, it's just the cost of the interest of doing this plan which you already don't like. So do you see what I'm saying it's the same thing?*

Smith:

- Well the debt retirement charge which was on bills up until 2016 it was on their far longer than it should've been especially on the residential portion of the bills disappeared in 2017
- It's not going to be on bills but this is just another version of a debt retirement charge
- Call it the—what did he call it?
- The CEB or whatever it was, CEA
- The CEA, it's just more gobberty-goop
- But what it is, it's costing the people of Ontario a lot of money every month
- By 2028, $21 per month that's a huge hit to people in especially in rural and northern Ontario, they can't afford to pay their electricity bills
- We're seeing energy poverty now, we're going to see more after the next election

*Ferguson: I guess I'm trying to drill down into your objections because like I said, that's part of the interest cost of this whole cut the rates plan. Um so is your point that we shouldn't be paying long term to cut the rates, we should do structural *inaudible* couldn't you make that point please?*

Smith:

- Yea I can absolutely yes
- The government—the government hasn't done anything to address the root cause of why electricity prices are where they are right now
- They simply are borrowing to get them through the next election and now dealing with the underlying reason as to why our electricity prices are as high as they are
- They're continuing to add new infrastructure onto the grid, generation that we don't need
- They're continuing down that road, you know they need to stop adding to the problem and the government hasn't done that
- They may say that they've saved a little bit of money on the Samsung deal
- They could have saved several billion dollars more had they done the right thing
- The government isn't being sincere about dealing with the problem
- They're trying to save Kathleen Wynne's bacon
- I wouldn't call it the clean energy adjustment or the debt retirement charge
- I would call it the Kathleen Wynne retirement charge because that's what this is

- This is the Kathleen Wynne retirement charge that's going to appear on bills for not just my generation but our kids' generation

McGrath: The government says that they are structuring these financial instruments to try and bind the hands of future governments – they don't want you or the NDP mucking with the legislative machinery of this. Do you think that's going to actually bind whoever is the next government or do you think - whoever replaces the liberals - eventually - is going to have to undo this?

Smith:

- I would like to see the legislation
- And clearly the government has rushed this legislation
- I believe if you went back and watched the tapes of the initial announcement about 70 days ago or so back in March Jeff Lyash who was here said that this was going to take about 120 days to put this debt entity together at OPG
- I think they're rushing it
- Clearly this is a desperate government
- This is a desperate issue for this government
- And uhm- they are creating legislation or they created legislation that we are only going to have a few days to look at
- So this is a real concern
- But I want to see the legislation to know - how big of an impact it's going to have on the future generations in Ontario

*Brule: *French**

Smith:

- *French*