Ministry of Energy Top Issues - April 27, 2018

From: "Cvjeticanin, Dan (ENERGY)" <dan.cvjeticanin@ontario.ca>
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Date: Fri, 27 Apr 2018 06:58:31 -0400

Good morning,

Here's what's making:

- 'Cooked' Books Shouldn't Be A Shock To Ford's Progressive Conservatives -- Ottawa Citizen, pg. A4
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- Power play; Ontarians can only look west with envy at Alberta's jaw-droppingly cheap renewable power prices -- The Globe and Mail, pg. P14
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- Carbon tax cost a secret?; Data on cash hit to consumers blacked out in gov't study -- Toronto Sun, pg. A14
- Amherstburg residents to receive Iodide pills -- windsorstar.com

'Cooked' Books Shouldn't Be A Shock To Ford's Progressive Conservatives

Ottawa Citizen
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: A4
Section: City
Byline: David Reevely

Professing shock at the provincial auditor's condemnation of how the Liberals have kept Ontario's books, Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford is promising a major inquiry into provincial finances if he wins the June election.

“We will initiate a full, independent, end-to-end commission of inquiry that builds on and includes the work of the auditor general (and) includes the independent participation of outside auditors and investigators,” Ford said at a Toronto news conference Thursday. The commission “will be mandated to investigate and recommend options for how to restore integrity in the government of Ontario’s financial reporting.”

Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk reported this week that the province is running an $11.7-billion deficit - not the $6.7-billion deficit the Liberals claim.

This is simultaneously (a) true, (b) bad and (c) known to anyone who was paying attention to Ontario politics before a few weeks ago.

Especially during campaigns, political leaders all try to appeal to ordinary decent people who don’t pay a ton of attention to politics, but study up a bit when an election is coming. It’s one thing for politicians to play to “low-information voters” - that’s democracy. They aren’t supposed to be low-information voters.

”(Lysyk) uncovered that, in their desperation, the (Kathleen) Wynne Liberals have cooked the books. We thought they were cooking the books and she just confirmed that they have been cooking the books on the taxpayers of this province,” Ford said. No. What Lysyk did Wednesday, in a review she’s required to file on the provincial finances before an election, was restate things she has been saying for a long time: the Liberals shouldn’t treat several billion dollars in two public pension funds as if the government owns them; and the Liberals’“Fair Hydro Plan” uses Ontario Power Generation to borrow a bunch of money to lower consumers’electricity bills for a few years without putting the debt on the government’s books.

Doing both of these things makes the Ontario government’s budget look $5 billion better than Lysyk says it is. Lysyk is the final authority on the books and what she says goes or ought to. The Liberals are defying her. That is bad. But also not newly discovered.

Lysyk complained publicly in 2016 about how the government was treating the pension money, forcing the Liberals to release an annual financial report without a routine auditor’s sign-off because Lysyk refused to give it.

The auditor has renewed her complaint repeatedly. The legislature’s separate financial accountability office has echoed it. The opposition parties have pounded the Liberals in the legislature on it. Tory finance critic Vic Fedeli has done so in question period almost every day for weeks at a time Then Lysyk issued a 50-page special report last fall on the financial jiggery-pokery in the Fair Hydro Plan. Here's the title of Chapter 1: "Government Legislated an Accounting/Financing Structure to Improperly Avoid Showing a Deficit and an Increase in Net Debt." That's unwieldy wording, but it's hard to miss the message.

What the Liberals have done is self-serving, but it's all been executed in the open. Figuring out how to fix it does not require a team of forensic accountants. You just move those two items into a different section of the spreadsheet.

Of course, if you're intending to balance the provincial budget, that deepens the hole quite a bit and you have to find the $5 billion somewhere. In their nowinoperative People's Guarantee, the Tories used both of the Liberals' tricks. The New Democrats'platform does the same thing. Which isn't great if behaving this way is one of the largest financial scandals in Canadian history.

"We are putting out a costed plan," Ford said. (He'd once promised a blueprint for his government with financial figures attached, then backtracked and now he's tracked forward again.) "We're going to do this in a modest, a responsible fashion. We never knew there was an additional $5 billion (to find)."

Again, that is false. Maybe Ford didn't know. His party definitely did. Fedeli, for one, predicted the $5-billion figure before the auditor announced it because he can read and add two numbers together.

Ford said his party does intend to balance the budget if he becomes premier, but not in its first year in power. That will be hard and not something an inquiry can easily help with. Recommitting to generally accepting accounting principles is ultimately simple; deciding what taxes to raise or what budgets to cut is what we have politicians for.

Dalton McGuinty had economist Don Drummond oversee a detailed report on government efficiencies and reforms in 2012. Just one item - pay doctors less for procedures that technology has made easier - meant a war between the health ministry and the Ontario Medical Association that's still being fought six years later. Another bit of advice was to cancel full-day kindergarten, a signature McGuinty policy. Hahaha, no, the Liberals said.

Fixing the accounting is simple. Reforming the government the accounting describes will be hard. Making a fuss about the simple problem distracts from the much tougher one.

Auditor's deficit allegations could be bad news for all parties

Waterloo Region Record
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: A6
Section: EDITORIAL
Byline: Martin Regg Cohn

History, like politics, has a way of repeating itself. Especially at election time.

In opposition 15 years ago, Ontario's Liberal Party smelled a rat. They accused the Tory government of the day of cooking the books.

Playing the reformist card in the 2003 campaign, Dalton McGuinty's Liberals proposed that all future pre-election budgets be reviewed by the auditor. Upon winning power, McGuinty ordered a special audit that uncovered a deficit of more than $5 billion "hidden" by the previous Progressive Conservative government.

Fast forward to 2018. Now, the PC opposition is accusing the governing Liberals of playing with numbers - and this time, the auditor general of the day, Bonnie Lysyk, is on their side.

Lysyk held a news conference Wednesday to declare the Liberals are understating the true deficit by $5 billion.

The law of unintended consequences has a way of catching up to you. All that Liberal reformist zeal from 2003 is now fresh ammunition for the PCs as they accuse McGuinty's successor as of fudging the numbers.

There is nothing new in the auditor's latest report. But in auditing as in politicking, timing is everything. Which makes the Liberals electorally unlucky.

Few paid the auditor much heed two years ago when Lysyk suddenly declared she was reversing the accounting rules established by previous auditors: Accumulated surpluses in major public sector pension plans could no longer be counted as budgetary assets, as they had been since Tory times.

The effect of her ruling was to produce a gaping multibillion-dollar hole in the government's accounting framework at the very moment they were striving to meet a 2017-18 target for deficit elimination. The government convened an outside panel of accounting and pension experts, who declared that Lysyk couldn't have it both ways: Just as pension shortfalls count as a liability on the balance sheet, a pension surplus should count for something - not nothing, as the auditor insisted.

Lysyk still wouldn't budge. But Bay Street didn't bite, ignoring the auditor's alarm bells. Credit rating agencies also looked at the books but didn't buy into her alarmist assessments.

But if the pension fight was a professional disagreement that eroded Lysyk's credibility, the next battle - over an ambitious borrowing scheme to reduce hydro rates - was more complicated. Under opposition pressure, Wynne's Liberals dreamed up a refinancing plan that would put off today's bills for tomorrow, supposedly smoothing out the cost curve.

Politically, the plan had some success. But fiscally, the plan looked like aggressive accounting, by off-loading the debt onto a new financing arm of Ontario Power Generation.

The auditor general's proof point that she's right and everyone else is wrong. Her opponents are in the pay of the Liberal government - from the public servants contesting her arguments, to the private auditing firms and outside experts who disagree with her: "They paid their advisers well," she said dismissively at a news conference Wednesday.

Which suggests that any auditor or accountant who charges a fee has been bought - lock, stock and budget. Except for Lysyk, who boasts of her independence as an officer of the legislature.

The opposition PCs and New Democrats have embraced the auditor's critique, but not her numbers. They should be careful what they wish for.

The NDP's campaign platform uses the government's fiscal framework as its starting point, and so did the PC "People's Guarantee" released last November (suspended after the party's leadership race). If the opposition parties abide by the auditor's latest analysis, that means they too will have to explain how they will handle deficits that are billions of dollars higher than they were banking on, for years to come.

Does that mean more program cuts? Reduced campaign promises? Pretending that pension surpluses don't exist, until they do?

An arcane accounting dispute is now a pressing political issue on the eve of the campaign, and may well be in the aftermath: The new PC leader, Doug Ford, is taking a page from the McGuinty Liberals of 2003 by promising to bring in an outside auditor to settle the budget question that Lysyk has thrown into such confusion.

The Conservatives know well their political history. As they should, given the budgetary events of 15 years ago, when they were last in power.

Accounting tricks have no place in government

The Globe and Mail

Fri Apr 27 2018

Page: A15

Section: Comment

Byline: ALEXANDRE LAURIN, WILLIAM ROBSON

William Robson is president and CEO of the C.D. Howe Institute, and a member of the Auditor-General of Ontario's panel of senior advisers.

Alexandre Laurin is director of research at the C.D. Howe Institute.

This week's review of the Ontario government's pre-election financial report from the provincial Auditor-General reconfirmed what The Globe and Mail reported last weekend: The government is using an accounting trick to shrink its reported deficit and debt. It is hiding the cost of borrowing to subsidize electricity prices over the next few years by inventing an "asset" - revenue from the higher prices Ontario's electricity consumers will pay later on - to keep the borrowing from showing in the government's bottom line.

Auditor-General Bonnie Lysyk's review concludes that the pre-election report is not a reasonable presentation of Ontario's finances. Her concerns deserve wide attention - not just in Ontario, but throughout Canada.

Although electricity is not the only element in the pre-election report Ms. Lysyk comments on, the province's Fair Hydro Plan - and the way the government is trying to hide its costs - is the most concerning problem she finds.

The plan will subsidize 25 per cent of the cost of households' electricity bills for more than 10 years. But the government plans to record only 9 per cent of this subsidy in its spending for those years.

The remaining 16 per cent will be offset by a recently invented asset: planned future excess electricity revenues that would come from charging higher electricity rates to future consumers. Because the government has a legislated right to charge higher electricity rates to future customers, it claims it can book these future excess revenues as if they were already earned.

But nobody knows for sure what future prices will be - electricity policy has been anything but stable in Ontario - and the revenues will depend on power that may or may not ever be generated and sold. Inventing assets that turn out to be worth less or nothing is a hallmark of scams in the private sector, and the fact that Ontario can legislate its own accounting standards does not make it okay for a government.

For most observers, this budget's sleight-of-hand would be a slap in the face of transparency. The Auditor-General of Ontario strongly denounced the practice, arguing it runs against generally accepted standards of accounting for governments. And other governments could be tempted to pull this manoeuvre if Ontario gets away with it. But one question on many people's minds is this: Why should we care?

Governments are elected for a short period of time, and their primary incentive is to focus on re-election through the welfare of their voters, who demand immediate results. Yet government decisions affect the welfare of many generations to come. Voters concerned by these intergenerational transfers have only a few indicators to rely on to evaluate their magnitude. The primary indicator is the increase in accumulated deficits.

Despite the Auditor-General's recommendations, the Ontario government continues in its budget to understate the true value of the deficits for years to come. After properly accounting for the impact of the Fair Hydro Plan and certain employee pension assets, annual deficits reported in last month's budget through to 2021/22 would total more than $50-billion, double the $25-billion shown in the budget. For a government that had pledged a balanced budget, this makes a sizable difference.

Not all intergenerational transfers are the same. Some are backward-looking. For example, social security benefits for injured war veterans are easily defensible. Some forward-looking transfers, such as running government surpluses to reduce the burden of the public debt on future generations, are also well grounded. Others have their origins in demographic changes; for example, an aging population means that the cost for financing the public health-care system will be greater on future generations.

But other intergenerational transfers stand on shaky moral grounds because they are pure windfalls for the current cohorts of voters at the expense of future generations. The generous subsidization of electricity rates for current customers, which will mainly be paid for by the next generation of Ontario families, clearly enters this category. Yet most of this debt is nowhere to be found on the government's books.

If such blatant intergenerational transfers can be hidden from view, how can voters hold their governments to account? With election time coming, they can demand responsible accounting practices. We condemn misleading financial statements in the private sector.

They are no more acceptable from governments.

Federal government finalizes regulations to reduce methane emissions by 2025

Edmonton Journal
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: A9
Section: City

The federal government said Thursday it has finalized regulations that should reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by close to half.

The regulations include flexibilities to reduce costs, while ensuring industry meets the target of reducing methane emissions by 40 to 45 per cent below 2012 levels by 2025, it said.

Announced by Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, the regulations are expected to cut carbon pollution by about 20 million tonnes a year, the equivalent to taking about five million vehicles off the road per year.

Several environmental groups including Environmental Defence and the David Suzuki Foundation welcomed the regulations.

In a joint statement, the groups said the test now will be whether the federal government will ensure any provincial regulations achieve at least the same level of reduction. The groups are particularly concerned about draft regulations released by Alberta earlier this week that they say is a “much weaker” regulatory approach.

Patrick McDonald, director of climate and innovation at the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, said while industry supports the reduction target, the regulations are too prescriptive and will make industry less competitive.

Avista’s three-year rate plan denied by Washington regulators; small electric increase approved

The Spokesman-Review
2018-04-26
Byline: Becky Kramer

Washington regulators shot down Avista’s request for three years of rate hikes on Thursday, approving a one-year increase in electric rates instead.

The Spokane-based utility is in the midst of major changes – including a proposed sale to Hydro One Ltd. of Toronto – that weigh against approving a multiyear rate plan, the three-member Utilities and Transportation Commission wrote in its decision.

Instead, Avista received approval to increase electric rates 2.7 percent for residential customers starting May 1. Natural gas rates will decrease 1.2 percent.

Avista's savings from the 2017 federal tax reform bill tempered the impact of the electric rate increase and contributed to the natural gas decrease. In January, the UTC told utilities they had to pass tax-related savings onto customers.

Base rates for Avista's electric customers reflect the return of about $26.9 million in corporate tax savings. For natural gas customers, the base rate reduction includes about $5.5 million in tax savings.

Customers will see additional credits from the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act on their utility bills over the next year. Those credits will be identified in a separate line item.

With both credits in place, a typical household using 938 kilowatt hours of electricity per month will see electric bills increase by $2.33 monthly, for a total of $89.42.

For natural gas, a typical household using 65 therms of gas monthly would see its bill decrease by 70 cents per month, for a total of $57.44.

The UTC will consider returning an additional $10.4 million in tax savings to Avista customers as part of the sale to Hydro One. The commission is expected to vote on the sale by mid-August.

Thursday's decision includes an extra $350,000 for funding low-income weatherization for Avista's electric customers.

In May, Avista filed its request for three years of rate increases, including a first-year electric rate hike of 12.5 percent and a 9.3 percent natural gas rate hike. The company's requested increases tapered in the second and third year.

Casey Fielder, an Avista spokeswoman, said company officials were reviewing the UTC's decision and had no immediate comment.

The UTC regulates investor-owned electric and gas utilities in Washington. The commission is charged with ensuring that utilities provide safe and reliable service at a reasonable rate, while allowing them the opportunity to earn a fair profit.

Avista serves about 240,000 electric customers and 153,000 natural gas customers in

Washington.

Ford vows 'full inquiry' into provincial bookkeeping

Ottawa Sun
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: A13
Section: News
Byline: David Reevely

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Doug Ford promises 'commission of inquiry' into Liberal deficit numbers

CBC.CA News
Thu Apr 26 2018, 4:12pm ET
Section: Toronto

Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford would appoint an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the $5 billion difference between the deficit numbers of the governing Liberals and the auditor general.

Ford made the campaign pledge Thursday, one day after Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk reported the government’s deficit for 2018-19 should be calculated as $11.7 billion, not the $6.7 billion figure the Liberals tabled in their March budget.

This is “one of the largest financial scandals in Canadian history,” Ford told a news conference in downtown Toronto. “In their desperation, the Wynne Liberals have cooked the books.”

The Liberals characterize the difference in the budget figures as an accounting dispute over two issues: the funding of their Fair Hydro Plan to cut electricity rates and the expenses related to two provincial pension plans.

“What we are witnessing is a betrayal of the public trust,” Ford said. “We cannot trust anything about the Liberal estimates or projections. Their budget is no longer worth the paper it’s written on.”

Ford said the inquiry would recommend options to “restore integrity” to the government’s financial reporting.

He likened the inquiry to former federal auditor general Sheila Fraser’s probe of the sponsorship scandal. However, he stopped short of alleging any criminal activity in the provincial Liberals’ deficit numbers.

Ford pledges inquiry into Ontario's books; PC leader calls finding in watchdog's report a betrayal of public trust

Toronto Star
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: A9
Section: News
Byline: Robert Benzie

Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford says he will launch an “independent commission of inquiry” into Ontario‘s books in the wake of a damning auditor general’s report into the Liberal government.

Ford said Thursday that budget watchdog Bonnie Lysyk’s finding that the deficit is at $11.7 billion, not $6.7 billion, has exposed “a betrayal of the public trust.”

Premier Kathleen Wynne, however, countered that the larger shortfall calculated by Lysyk stems from “a dispute that’s been going on between professional accountants for a couple of years now.

“We appreciate her perspective and I think that that disagreement, that dispute, between the accountants will go on for some time,” Wynne said.

There are two key points of contention between the government and Lysyk.

The auditor is concerned about the way the Liberals have structured the Fair Hydro Plan that borrows money to reduce electricity rates by 25 per cent, but is kept off the books because it is bankrolled through government-owned OPG Trust. She also disputes whether $11 billion in government co-sponsored Ontario Public Service Employees’ Union Pension Plan and Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan holdings should be counted as assets.

While Ford promised his own hydro scheme to replace the Liberals’ rate cut, he pointedly would not rule out a future PC government booking the pension billions against the bottom line. “The auditor general performed a valuable public service and uncovered one of the largest financial scandals in Canadian history,” he told reporters at the Hilton Hotel on Richmond St. W. “We now know that, in their desperation, Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals cooked the books,”

“The consequence of Kathleen Wynne’s desperation is now clear: we cannot trust anything about Liberal estimates or projections, and their budget is no longer worth the paper it was printed on,” the PC leader said. “I know that people are angry and want answers. We’re going to get those answers,” he said, adding outside auditors would be hired to complement Lysyk’s work on a publicly funded commission of inquiry.

That commission would be expected to report back quickly and could lead to accounting changes at the province.

In her pre-election report to the Legislature, the auditor general estimated the deficit for next year at $12.2 billion.

Ford said the Tories would soon release a “costed plan” for the June 7 election.

While he vowed to find 4 per cent in “efficiencies,” which would necessitate slashing spending by at least $6 billion a year, he admitted he would be unable to balance the budget right away. “It won’t be in the first year. We’re going to do this in a modest and responsible fashion,” he said.

Power play; Ontarians can only look west with envy at Alberta's jaw-droppingly cheap renewable power prices

The Globe and Mail
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: P14
Section: ROB Magazine
Byline: Judith Pereira

Alberta’s image is inextricably linked to the oil sands, which have been the major driver of the province’s economy for decades. But NDP Premier Rachel Notley is hoping to add up to 5,000 megawatts of renewable energy to Alberta’s grid through private-sector investment of up to $10 billion by 2030.

Last December, the province held an auction for renewable power contracts; the winning bids guaranteed a price of just 3.7 cents per kilowatt hour. That’s the lowest electricity rate in Canada and less than half of Ontario‘s 2016 procurement, which resulted in an average of 8.5 cents per kilowatt hour. Ontario‘s top rate for electricity has risen four times faster than inflation since 2006, and power prices are considered a major challenge for Kathleen Wynne’s Liberal government as it heads into an election on June 7.

The winning bids in Alberta came from Edmonton-based Capital Power, with a 201-megawatt project; Lisbon-based EDP Renewables, with a 248-megawatt plan; and Enel Green Power Canada, a division of a Romebased global power company, with two projects worth a total of 146 megawatts. All four ventures are due to come online in 2019, though Capital Power already has several wind farms in Alberta, including the Halkirk Wind facility, which opened in October 2012 and is the single largest wind power project in Alberta.

8.5 CENTS/kWh AVERAGE PRICE OF ONTARIO‘S WIND POWER. THE PROVINCE’S INITIAL LONG-TERM WIND POWER CONTRACTS WERE FOR ALMOST 80 CENTS PER kWh

$37 BILLION AMOUNT ONTARIANS PAID ABOVE THE MARKET PRICE FOR ELECTRICITY BETWEEN 2006 AND 2014. THEY CAN EXPECT TO OVERPAY BY ANOTHER $133 BILLION BY 2032

3.7 CENTS/kWh WEIGHTED AVERAGE PRICE OF ELECTRICITY GUARANTEED BY THE WINNING BIDS IN ALBERTA'S FIRST-EVER AUCTION FOR RENEWABLE POWER CONTRACTS

$10 MILLION ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST OF SUBSIDIES FOR THESE CONTRACTS

Province targets air quality; Environment ministry plans several projects for Sarnia area while enhanced air monitoring continues

Sarnia Observer
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: A1 / Front
Section: News
Byline: Tyler Kula

Ontario's Environment Ministry is considering several projects in Sarnia-Lambton related to air pollution and people's health.

"We recognize there are a number of questions and concerns related to air pollutants in the Sarnia area," said spokesperson Gary Wheeler. "A mix of projects, including a study, could be carried out to address these concerns under a broader Sarnia Area Environmental Health Initiative."

On March 20, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change spoke with Sarnia-area "stakeholders" and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, gathering feedback on how local chemical and petroleum industries might be affecting the health of people in the community.

Some of the options under consideration for the initiative, Wheeler said, include gauging links between exposures to various compounds in the environment and health risks, understanding available health data while documenting perspectives in the community about "impacts," and supporting existing work with industry and government partners to enhance how response to leaks and other incidents or emergencies are managed.

The government is in the midst of "enhanced air monitoring," he said, using two temporary airmonitoring stations at Clearwater Community Park and Eddings Street in Sarnia to measure sulphur dioxide, particulate matter, ozone and nitrogen dioxide hourly.

Also measuring volatile organic compounds like benzene approximately every six days, the stations are part of a one-year trial project being conducted to determine if modifications might be needed to the Sarnia air-monitoring network, he said.

“All data should be received by the fall of 2018,” Wheeler said, noting the findings will be discussed with members of Clean Air Sarnia and Area.

The projects come amid recently stepped up benzene and sulphur dioxide emissions standards, included requirements for publicly posted property line monitoring for benzene on websites of regulated facilities.

The ministry, local governments, environmental groups and First Nations have also teamed up for the Sarnia Air Action Plan, which launched cleanairsarniaandarea.com earlier this year to report near-real-time air quality results from seven local monitoring stations.

“Sarnia’s air quality has been improving significantly over the last 10 years, but we know there is more that can be done,” said Chris Ballard, Ontario‘s environment minister.

Ballard pledged help last fall for “a health study to understand the localized impact of air pollution on Sarnia residents,” following media reports about industrial spills in Sarnia-Lambton’s Chemical Valley.

The pledge also came after the Lambton Community Health Study, trying to uncover if and what impact local pollution has on residents’health, folded in 2016 when federal and provincial funding couldn’t be found.

Plans are to arrange a followup to the March 20 meeting, Wheeler said.

“Through the Sarnia Air Action Plan, the ministry will continue to look for innovative opportunities to improve the air quality in the Sarnia area.”

Carbon tax cost a secret?; Data on cash hit to consumers blacked out in gov't study

Toronto Sun
Fri Apr 27 2018
Page: A14
Section: News
Byline: Anthony Furey

The federal finance department is now under investigation by the Office of the Information Commissioner for their refusal to release data about the financial costs of a carbon tax per household.

Responding to a complaint made by Conservative finance critic Pierre Poilievre, the office headed up by Caroline Maynard has begun investigating whether the department violated sections 21 and 18 of the Access to Information Act.

Poilievre, the MP for Carleton, had filed an access request asking for government documents that explain the projected annual costs per household of the carbon tax. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau plans to impose a carbon tax on every province in Canada that will be $50 per tonne by 2022.

Documents shared with Postmedia show that while Poilievre received a response, the pertinent information was redacted.

One document is a memo sent to deputy finance minister Paul Rochon with the subject line “impact of a carbon price on households’consumption costs across the income distribution.”

The summary goes on to explain the widespread ramifications of such a tax: “Imposing a price on carbon emissions, either through a tax or a cap-andtrade system, would raise the cost of fossil fuels and energy. These higher costs would then cascade through the economy in the form of higher prices, thus leading all firms and consumers to pay more for goods and services with higher carbon content.”

The memo then states “Key findings are:” and the rest of the page is blank, with the projections redacted.

The document is dated October 20, 2015 - the day after Trudeau was elected PM but before he was sworn in.

Section 18 of the Access to Information Act allows the head of a government institution to refuse to disclose any record should it divulge trade secrets or financially harm the government. Section 21 allows the withholding of information if it's an account of advice, recommendations or deliberations within the department.

It'll be up to the commissioner to determine if not releasing carbon tax projections falls within these parameters or if the finance department misapplied the act in keeping the info secret.

While the commissioner's reports determine whether or not the complaint is well-founded and then recommends action on the part of the government, she has no power to compel the government to release the information. However, both the complainant and the commissioner can apply for the Federal Court to review the matter.

"Very simply, they want Canadians to pay up without knowing how much it's going to cost," Poilievre said at a press conference Monday. He's now pushing for a motion in the House of Commons that will see MPs vote on whether or not to demand the Liberals release the data.

Amherstburg residents to receive Iodide pills

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Byline: City Desk

Potassium Iodide pills will be distributed to Amherstburg residents living close to the Fermi 2 Nuclear reactor in Ohio.

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and the Town of Amherstburg will hand out the pills starting May 7.

Residents living within the primary zone and on Boblo Island will be receiving letters this week with details inviting them to pick up free pills for their home and ask any questions they may have. The letters will only be sent to residents who live within 16 km from the nuclear generating station, which is visible along the town’s waterfront, south of BobLo Island.

The pills block the thyroid from absorbing radioactive iodine which may be released during a nuclear incident. In the very unlikely event of a nuclear emergency, the pills would help to prevent the long term development of thyroid cancer.

Residents living further than 16 km away will have an opportunity to receive pills for their home in the near future. The Iodide pills are only to be taken if instructed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario. They should be stored in a safe, dry, and accessible place along with your 72-hour emergency kit, the health unit says.

“It is important to point out that the risk has not changed at Fermi 2, however what has changed is the regulatory framework for Canadian nuclear installations,” the health unit said in a statement. “The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has mandated that all residents within the primary zone of a nuclear installation have (Iodide) pills available in their homes.”

While Fermi 2 is not regulated by the CNSC, the pills are being provided to residents living within the primary zone of Fermi 2, so they are “as prepared as all other Canadian residents.”