



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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March 17, 2017

Dear Minister Sandals:

I'm writing to you regarding your government's recent taxpayer-funded advertisements that promote the government's proposed hydro scheme. These advertisements detail your scheme as finalized, and identify a date when your government anticipates it will take effect.

Your government has no authority to be spending hard-earned taxpayer dollars on partisan radio and social media ads to promote a plan that has not yet been tabled, debated, and voted on in the Legislature.

I am concerned that these ads serve a partisan purpose that aim to improve the government's standing among the public using taxpayer dollars. Moreover, these ads are potentially costing taxpayers millions of dollars while millions of families, as well as businesses, hospitals and other public institutions, suffer every day from unaffordable electricity bills.

I ask that you take several immediate actions. First, that you immediately stop spending another cent on this advertising campaign, which so far we have seen on radio and social media. Second, you publicly release the budget for these taxpayer-funded ads. Third, we ask that you release the names of firms that hold these lucrative advertising contracts.

Your government has a long track record of misusing taxpayer funded ads for partisan purposes. Before the 2015 federal election, you ran \$8.1 million in self-congratulatory ads for a job-killing retirement pension scheme that never came to fruition. Your government has also previously awarded contracts to members of the Ontario Liberal Party campaign team.

In the past, I would have asked the Auditor General of Ontario, Bonnie Lysyk, to investigate any questionable and partisan advertisements. Unfortunately your government has stripped the Auditor General's ability to do so.

We respectfully ask that you respond to the requests as noted above by [Friday, March 25](#).

Sincerely,

Patrick Brown
Leader of the Official Opposition
MPP – Simcoe North