

It was disappointing to read Conservative leader Patrick Brown's op-ed yesterday. Once again, Mr. Brown is sticking to his talking points when it comes to the province's energy sector, while refusing to offer anything remotely resembling a real plan for Ontarians.

When it comes down to it, Patrick Brown authored an op-ed despite having absolutely nothing new to say, much less any plan to finally present. Instead, in a series of pre-canned attack lines, the Conservative leader repeated his same political spin. It was an obvious attempt to distract from the fact that just last week he called our plan to increase minimum wage to \$15 'silly', and has deeply rooted internal problems over candidate nominations in Hamilton, Ottawa, Newmarket, and Scarborough area ridings. These nomination problems have been such a headache for the Conservative Leader that a former Mike Harris cabinet minister recently stated publicly that "it would be an absolute disaster if Patrick Brown became the next premier of the province".

No wonder Patrick Brown wants to be talking about something else. So, it is worthwhile taking a moment to clear up some of the misleading claims Mr. Brown has made about Ontario's energy sector.

It's no surprise that Patrick Brown is opposed to green energy, as he was at pains to point out in his op-ed. After all, the Conservatives have opposed from the start our efforts to move our province away from coal plants and towards cleaner sources of energy. In 2014, we closed our last coal plant in Ontario, marking the completion of the biggest climate change initiative ever undertaken in North America. And yet despite our electricity system being cleaner and more reliable than ever, Patrick Brown continues to treat green energy as a boogeyman.

The investments we made in cleaning up our system for the future put a significant burden on ratepayers today, and that is exactly why our government introduced our Fair Hydro Plan. This plan is reducing bills by 25 per cent on average, in part by spreading our investments over a longer time period, more fairly sharing the costs among all those who will benefit. Yet the Conservatives opposed this plan as well, going so far as to vote against this relief for Ontarians. That means they voted "no" to a 25 per cent on average reduction on bills for every household in the province, along with as many as half a million small businesses and farms, "no" to savings of up to 40-50 per cent for rural, remote, or low-income families, and "no" to our plan to hold rates to inflation for four years.

Given this track record from Patrick Brown, perhaps it should come as no surprise that he continues to refuse to offer anything of substance as he did in his op-ed. Nonetheless, it's disappointing. While Patrick Brown remains focused on his talking points, our government remains focused on what matters – providing clean, reliable, and affordable electricity in this province. That's what it means to have a plan, and that's exactly what we're doing.