

TRANSCRIPT – Todd Smith Scrum Response to LTEP – October 26, 2017

MPP: Todd Smith

Media: Global News, Toronto Star, CTV, NEWSTALK1010, CBC, Jones

[START TRANSCRIPT]

[In progress]

Global: --Minister about cost versus price, what did you hear?

Smith:

- Well clearly a lack of understanding from the Minister on the actual cost of electricity
- Clearly people in Ontario aren't paying true cost of electricity
- And I think this document that was released today shows that the government is simply hiding the cost and borrowing billions of dollars to hide the cost from electricity customers in Ontario
- We know that the cost of electricity is going to spike after the next election and this document shows that

Global: But the Minister's response was "this was the way it's always been done" and that is indeed the truth

Smith:

- Well, he's actually talking about costs buried at OPG and keeping them in the electricity sector I believe is what he meant by that
- But it didn't make any sense to me
- Because the price that you see on your electricity bill in Ontario right now is not the true cost of generating electricity and delivering electricity in Ontario
- And the Minister has to know that but he continues to play this political game with electricity

Benzie: So prices will go up if you guys win the election next year I mean that's the – because people have to pay the higher cost is that right?

Smith:

- No actually
- What we didn't hear today and what was so disappointing to me is that the minister said the words "taking the cost out of the system" about a hundred times up there

- But nowhere in the document does it reflect anywhere that the government is rolling up its sleeves
- Getting down to negotiating better deals for the people of Ontario
- And removing cost from the system and that's something a PC government would do
- Is actually reducing the cost of electricity

Benzie: so hydro rates will go down if you guys win the election, but this plan is fantastical because it says hydro rates are going – are going – are stabilizing?

Smith:

- Yeah I mean
- No I mean the minister said that he wouldn't want to uh – freeze rates
- Um, but essentially that's what he's doing for a very, very short term
- And this is all about getting Kathleen Wynne reelected next year
- They're freezing rates to get us through the next election period because they know how detrimental this whole energy crisis is for Ontario
- Um, so this is all about freezing rates for a short period of time
- And this is billions and billions of dollars on the back of electricity customers in Ontario simply as a re-election ploy for Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals

Bliss: Do you tear this up if you guys are elected and re-write it? This long-term energy plan?

Smith:

- Yeah there's not much in there to be honest
- I was quite disappointed and quite surprised about the lack of detail about removing costs from the system
- Uh you know one of the things that I was hopeful for is that the government would realize that they are the ones that got us in this mess in the first place
- They're the ones that um – are responsible for driving up the cost of electricity
- They're the ones that are responsible for uh – super uh – increases after the next election in our electricity rates
- But yet they're not doing anything to actually take costs out of the system –

*Bliss: *crosstalk* do you end the fair hydro plan? Do you tear *crosstalk**

Smith:

- Well I think what we would say is that we would keep the fair hydro plan in place until we actually get in a position where we can start to remove costs from the system

- We have a plan to do that but as PCs we want to get into that office, take a look at the mess that the Liberals have made in our electricity sector
- And start to remove the costs from the system that will truly be an electricity break for the people of Ontario and our businesses

Media: So how long would you keep the fair hydro plan for?

Smith:

- Yeah I – that, that - I don't know the answer to that question
- But it's going to take some time to figure out the landscape
- Um, you know, clear- clearly um, the government is not interested in doing the heavy lifting to remove costs from the system
- He talked about rolling his short- his shirt sleeves up and getting down to sharpening pencils and working at a better deal for Ontario
- But he hasn't done that
- And why hasn't he done that?
- Um, you know he's been – he's been the energy Minister now for well over a year
- He's had the opportunity to go in and look at renegotiating some of these contracts
- And trying to get a better deal from Ontario
- But there's nothing in this document that shows um, that uh that this government is sincere about removing costs from this system

[becomes one-off]

[END TRANSCRIPT]