

RE: SCOPA Instant Hansard October 25

From: "Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY)" <kevin.denheijer@ontario.ca>
To: "Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY)" <andrew.teliszewsky@ontario.ca>, "Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY)" <colin.nekolaichuk@ontario.ca>, "Berry, James (ENERGY)" <james.berry5@ontario.ca>
Date: Wed, 25 Oct 2017 16:49:38 -0400

Just waiting on PO for their thoughts.

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From: Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY)
Sent: October-25-17 4:49 PM
To: Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY); Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY); Berry, James (ENERGY)
Subject: RE: SCOPA Instant Hansard October 25

House book!

Andrew Teliszewsky
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From: Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY) <Kevin.DenHeijer@ontario.ca>
Date: Wednesday, Oct 25, 2017, 4:44 PM
To: Nekolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY) <Colin.Nekolaichuk@ontario.ca>, Berry, James (ENERGY) <James.Berry5@ontario.ca>
Cc: Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY) <Andrew.Teliszewsky@ontario.ca>
Subject: FW: SCOPA Instant Hansard October 25

Testimony from Committee on Public Accounts this morning, where the auditor chimed in.

Please see highlighted below for your interest.

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From: Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY)
Sent: October-25-17 4:44 PM
To: Richardson, Kyle (OCOC/GHLO); Forgione, Andrew (OPO)
Cc: Codd-Downey, Beckie (GHLO)
Subject: RE: SCOPA Instant Hansard October 25

Highlighted is what MPP Delaney was talking about. Is this public or a closed session?

Ms. Bonnie Lysyk: When we started this—putting together our understanding of the fair hydro plan accounting and financing structure, we requested emails from the Independent Electricity

System Operator, Ontario Power Generation, the Ministry of Energy, the OPCD, which is the controller's office and Treasury Board Secretariat. We did that on a voluntary request. We said, "Please provide us with all emails relating to the accounting and financing"—and the Ontario Financing Authority—"related to this initiative."

The emails we requested were on a request only basis, not an official "make sure you have given us everything," although our assumption is, when we ask for emails, all of that is received. At the time of finishing the report, we were working under the assumption that we had received all emails from all the entities with the exception of the Ministry of Energy. The Ministry of Energy decided to hire a legal counsel to go through the emails and provide us emails, what they thought we needed. We have not received all of those yet, but as I said last week, we had enough information from what we requested to complete our work, so we are not continuing an ongoing review of the emails, although we continue to receive emails. We are receiving USBs with emails on them.

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From: Richardson, Kyle (OCOC/GHLO)
Sent: October-25-17 4:32 PM
To: Forgione, Andrew (OPO)
Cc: Den Heijer, Kevin (ENERGY); Codd-Downey, Beckie (GHLO)
Subject: SCOPA Instant Hansard October 25

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I call the meeting of the public accounts committee to order. This is the meeting for Wednesday, October 25. We start this morning's meeting with two ?? notices of motion that were filed at the last meeting. The first one is a motion from Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts postpone consideration of all matters currently before the committee until the completion of its review on the report on The Fair Hydro Plan: Concerns about Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Value for Money from the Office of the Auditor General.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm hoping we can deal with it in an expedited way simply because I have a speech I must give in the Legislature on a very pressing issue indeed.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We will deal with it as expediently as the committee will allow us to do.

With that, you've heard the motion. Discussion?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I believe there's a vote so—vote?

Mr. Han Dong: No.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): A vote?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I guess I'll ??

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Pardon?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Nobody has anything to say.

Mr. Han Dong: No. She has her hand up.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Chair. We have this before us, but I would like to put on the record that I think you know we're going to be voting against this motion.

The Minister of Energy has provided ample information throughout last week and this week to the Auditor General. In particular, the Independent Electricity System Operator has so far provided 1,200 records to the Auditor General. Ontario Power Generation has provided hundreds of records. The Ontario Financing Authority has provided 3,242 records. Treasury Board has provided thousands of records, and as of October 13, the ministry has provided a total 13,212 records to the Auditor General's office.

Again, the minister and the ministry have been very supportive. They've been transparent. They've been co-operative and, for that reason, we see no merit in this motion. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I call the vote.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Mr. Colle?

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes. I guess the root of this motion is that the Conservative opposition party does not support the fair hydro plan that lowers hydro rates for consumers all across Ontario, and that is what consumers have been asking for, "Lower my rates." As you know, Mr. Speaker, many of the hydro support programs—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker? Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Point of order?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No. I want to be on the list.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Oh, okay.

Yes?

P015-0900-25 ends

P015-0905-25 begins

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Point of order?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No. I want to be on the list.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Okay.

Yes.

Mr. Mike Colle: As you know, many of the hydro support programs—people on fixed income or low income or people who need supplementary support, whether it be hydro or other things—have asked for government plans to subsidize some of their hydro bills.

As you know, the big debate has been, traditionally: Who pays for these subsidized programs? Is it the ratepayers or the taxpayers? Many of these programs are really more to do with supplementing people whose income is just not quite adequate or they have no income. They're living on the financial margins. So over the years, whether it would be the hydro billing programs or whether it would be the other similar-type utility programs, there has been this debate that's going on. There are some people who philosophically disagree. They say, "The ratepayers have to pay no matter what. Let the ratepayers pay." And yet there are others who say, "The ratepayers sometimes cannot afford to pay so it has to be paid from the general pot," which is the general income base. That's the philosophical difference. The fair hydro plan attempts to finally come to grips with that reality, that many ratepayers cannot pay. And then the ratepayers, who are then, through their payments, subsidizing people who can't afford to pay, are saying, "My rates are going too high because I'm subsidizing the others." That is the philosophical difference. That's what I think is at the basis of this plan.

I can understand that the reports that we've seen and this motion are all part of that underlying

attack on that principle that there should be support from the general population for people who, in many cases through no fault of their own, cannot afford to pay on a regular basis. So they have asked for relief. This is a relief plan that takes it off the back of the ratepayers. That's the fundamental issue—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order. We're not talking about the motion here. I understand that the government wants to rag the puck because they presently do not have the votes that we have in order—we would actually allow this to succeed. If the Liberals can't get five members of their caucus to show up to vote, I suggest we do what the member from Eglinton–Lawrence suggested when we sat down, which is just call the vote. He said that; it should be on the record. And he's not speaking to the motion.

If we need a five-minute recess so that they can get their act together as a majority government here and actually put people in their seats, then I'll be happy to do that. But I think we need to move on this expeditiously.

As I had indicated to my colleagues, I am expected to be in the House. This is my motion; I want to vote on it. Whether or not the government agrees with their fair hydro plan or not I could care less. I'm asking for this committee to pursue a study on an Auditor General's report that was released last week. So can we put the question, as was suggested by the government when we sat down?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's not a point of order, we—

Mr. Mike Colle: Okay, so before I was rudely interrupted by the member across—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Rude? Rude? Rude? You wrote the book on rude, my friend.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Order.

Mr. Mike Colle: Jeez.

Mr. Han Dong: Oh my God, Lisa, come on.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Mr. Colle, you have the floor.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Let's call for a vote. You guys asked for a vote earlier on.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Ms. MacLeod, Mr. Colle has the floor.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They've got their saviour in here now, so let's call the vote.

Mr. Mike Colle: Before I was rudely interrupted, I know sometimes the member opposite doesn't want to hear debate because—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: A point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: A point of order. He's impugning motive. He's also trying to attempt to misrepresent my character.

Now that they have a member here that they can win their vote—their whip's office, I think, should be doing a bit better job, but that's neither here nor there for me to comment.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's not a point of order. Back to Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: Again, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, repeatedly, by the member opposite: ...

P015-0905-25 ends

P015-0910-25 begins

Mr. Mike Colle: Again, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, repeatedly, by the member opposite: As she stated categorically, she doesn't care about the Fair Hydro Plan because she has got a different agenda and the agenda is basically to attack a plan that essentially recognizes the fact that there are many Ontarians who need support in paying their hydro bills.

Therefore—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Chair.

This motion is talking about the order of work that this committee is doing. It's not necessarily about his interpretation of government policy as much as it is about the order of work which we are pursuing in this committee.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): With that, I would advise the member to make sure that we speak to the motion.

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, and the motion, as stated, is that the standing committee postpone consideration of all matters, and part of the matters that this committee is dealing with is this report by the Auditor General, which looks at the plan.

She's basically stating here that she wants to delay everything and deal with her perspective on the Fair Hydro Plan, which is basically to block the work—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My motion is very clear and perhaps the member would like to read it: "I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts postpone consideration of all matters...before"—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's not a point of order.

Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: Can I continue?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): If you have more to say, yes.

Mr. Mike Colle: I do, and I have the right to say it.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Exactly.

Mr. Mike Colle: And I'm being challenged on my right to speak out on behalf of the people I represent. I'm not going to be muzzled by the member opposite. I have a right to speak.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): If we would get back to the discussion of the motion.

Mr. Mike Colle: Right. As the motion says, "Postpone consideration of all matters...before this committee...of its review on the report..."

The fundamental purpose of this motion—they've stated categorically, the member has, that she doesn't care about the Fair Hydro Plan. Well, many of my constituents care about the Fair Hydro Plan and want it to be—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Ernie, we're seriously getting nowhere. Do your job.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I would just, again, advise the member to speak to the motion.

Mr. Mike Colle: I am. I'm speaking about the Fair Hydro Plan, the concerns about fiscal transparency, accountability and value for money. My constituents are concerned about their ability to pay for hydro and how it's paid for. The question they ask, and it's a difficult question to answer sometimes, as you see the contradiction in the Auditor General's report who says she

basically doesn't support that approach of the Fair Hydro Plan.

I'm just trying to understand—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I would just point out again that this motion is on process, as to whether that discussion that the member is presently speaking to, whether the committee wants to have that discussion. This is about the process of doing that. I would ask the member to get—

The auditor wants to make a comment?

Ms. Bonnie Lysyk: Yes, I do. I just want to comment that the report that we've written here does not at all deal with the policy decision to give Ontarians a rate break. That is a government policy, and their decision. The report deals with the way the government plans to record the accounting for that transaction at the expense of additional interest for the citizens of Ontario.

The financial statements of the government reflect all of the operations of government, the electricity industry as well as government operations. So it's in accordance with the Canadian public sector accounting standards that the transaction be recorded properly in the government's financial statements.

We in no way have implied that Ontarians should not get a break on their rates, as the government has made a policy decision on that matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and clarify that.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much.

Again, I just caution the committee that the last comments of the auditor are not part of this motion. The motion, as it's written, is whether the committee wants to change the work schedule that we're working on in order to review the issue that you're discussing.

The issue is not for debate today, only the motion as to whether ...

P015-0910-25 ends

P015-0915-25 begins

(The Chair)

—working on in order to review the issue that you're discussing. The issue is not for debate today, only the motion as to whether the committee wishes to change the work plan. If you want to finish with your comments so we can take the next one. Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: As I was saying, and I appreciate the Auditor General clarifying that because the impression out there is that somehow this fair hydro plan is not something that should go forward, and there's opposition to it.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I ??guess ??you're saying that—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Again, I would caution the member to stick to the work plan that's in this motion, not the merits of the—

Mr. Mike Colle: Well, directly or indirectly, we are talking about the merits of the plan and obviously—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): No, we're not.

Mr. Mike Colle: —this motion tries to—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): It is not talking about that.

Mr. Mike Colle: —block the plan from going forward—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No, it doesn't.

Mr. Mike Colle: —and continuing the criticism of the plan, that she doesn't care about she says, so I'm saying the plan has merit and should be debated, but it shouldn't be postponed—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Again, I would caution the member, and this is the last caution. This debate is about the work plan, not the merits of the program.

Mr. Mike Colle: Well, as I said, I think the motivations are quite transparent here, and I recommend voting against this ongoing attempt to basically stop the fair hydro plan from going forward.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Ms. Forster.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I just have a couple of questions that perhaps the Auditor General can respond to. I understand that there's a request for some 13,000 documents from the government and the last we heard in the Legislature, earlier this week or late last week, you'd only received 1,300 or 1,400 of those documents. At this point, what percentage of documents requested have you received in order for you to continue the review of the plan?

Ms. Bonnie Lysyk: When we started this—putting together our understanding of the fair hydro plan accounting and financing structure, we requested emails from the Independent Electricity System Operator, Ontario Power Generation, the Ministry of Energy, the OPCD, which is the controller's office and Treasury Board Secretariat. We did that on a voluntary request. We said, "Please provide us with all emails relating to the accounting and financing"—and the Ontario Financing Authority—"related to this initiative."

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But our objective was to make people aware of the financing and accounting structure and we did that. At this point, we consider our work done and those emails, although they're being received, are not being reviewed anymore.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you. Ms. Macleod?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I would like to thank the NDP—I've missed my rotation to speak on the bubble zones for the abortion safety, and I would again request that we put this to a vote so that my colleagues in the Legislature—I can be part of that debate as the critic of that bill. The government's views are stated and well known. The opposition's views are stated and well known. I would ask just for some common decency so I can join the debate.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Any further discussion on the motion, not on the merits of any other plan. Any further discussion on this?

Seeing none, we'll call the vote.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Recorded vote.

Ayes

Forster, MacLeod, Martow.

Nays

Colle, Dong, Hoggarth, Vernile.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The motion is lost.

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