

Hansard: MacLeod to Thibeault -- Greenhouse Growers

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> **MPP MacLeod:** My question is to the **Premier**. Last week I visited suntech greenhouses with owner **BOB Mitchell**. BOB is a good man. He is a proud farmer and he is known in Ottawa for his little miracles in man and tech. But between the Liberal green energy tax, the H.S.T. -- The H.S.T. New carbon tax, the Liberal green energy tax and all the waste in energy from cancelled gas plants to power lines to nowhere mean that BOB's cucumbers and his tomatoes are 30% more expensive than his Mexican counterparts. He couldn't even run his lights this past winter to grow his beef steak tomatoes. Liberal energy policy is doing its best to put BOB out of business and what does he hear from the Liberal government? He hears from the P.A. Of the Minister of energy who says it's humidity not energy prices that are forcing greenhouses down south. BOB and every other greenhouse grower in Ontario deserves an answer from this government. Will they phase in the burden of cap and trade and will they inform that these farmers have abilities Profit?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Minister of energy.

>> **Minister Thibeault:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to thank the member for that question because the greenhouse growers throughout the province are an important part of our economy, Mr. Speaker. I not Minister of agriculture does great work with them as well. We met with them several times, Mr. Speaker, to talk about what are the programs that are out there, Mr. Speaker, that actually help our greenhouse growers? And, Mr. Speaker, the greenhouse growers were thrilled, Mr. Speaker. They were thrilled with the fact that we actually introduced the I.C.I. Program and dropped it from 3 mega Watts, Mr. Speaker, to 1

mega watt. Mr. Speaker, because many of those greenhouse growers can actually apply and qualify for the I.P.I. Program. Mr. Speaker, which will allow them, allow the greenhouse growers and any other business that is part of the I.P.I. Program drop their bills by up to one third, Mr. Speaker. And that is significant. For many of these greenhouse growers right across the province. And many of those companies as well that can benefit from the I.C.I. Program. Now what, Mr. Speaker? The Ontario fair hydro plan dropped that even further from 1 mega watt to 500 kilowatts so more businesses can apply.

>> MPP MacLeod: That's simply not true. That's counter to everything that BOB Mitchell told me. I met with Dwight Foster. He owns the largest green elevator operation in eastern Ontario. Fernando Medeiros of Carleton mushrooms. What you're telling me today is simply not true. Like Suntech all of them produce quality food. They employ dozens if not hundreds of people. But the Liberal energy policies of this government over the past decade are continuing to hurt them. The Liberal p.a.'s energy was clearly told by Jim da Mina president and C.E.O. Of Red Sun Farms last week humidity, that's not a deal breaker. The cost of energy is a deal breaker. Will the **Premier**. Stop handing out lofty flyers, self congratulating yourself and actually do something for grain growers of this province and –

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know they don't like to hear the fact that the I.C.I. Program actually lowers bills by a third but that is true, Mr. Speaker. And there are thousands of businesses that are actually taking this government up and doing just that. But, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is overlooking some -- Make their future right here in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. I'm particularly pleased with the recent announcement that Green Health Produce planned to invest up to 100 million Mr. Speaker -- \$100 million to develop a 100-acre greenhouse in Chatham-Kent. Up to 300 jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker. That is just one example of many, Mr. Speaker. We're continuing. Through the Minister of economic development and growth, through the great work of the Minister of agriculture and through the great work. Of this **Premier** to make sure that we continue to build this province up and make it the most competitive in North America.

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.