

Statement by Secretary of the Cabinet Steve Orsini on Role of Ontario Public Service and Fair Hydro Plan

April XX, 2018

Today, Secretary of the Cabinet Steve Orsini issued the following statement about the role of the Ontario Public Service in the development of Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan:

"As professional public servants of the Ontario Public Service (OPS), it is our role to be factual, objective and non-partisan and conduct our due diligence in implementing government decision-making. For the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan, like any other government policy matter, our professional staff ensured the proper due diligence was completed in implementing their direction.

For public servants, that due diligence includes an objective evaluation of the government's policy options, completing our own internal analysis, building prudence into financial forecasts, looking to other jurisdictions or external advisors to supplement our own analysis, and always bringing our best professional judgment to the table.

Ultimately, it is the government's role to make decisions. If the public service has provided its best advice on implementation based on this due diligence, and if the decisions made are constitutional, and the effects of the policy are accounted for transparently, then we have fulfilled our role as public servants.

With respect to the accounting advice that OPS staff provided for the government's Fair Hydro Plan, all Chartered Professional Accountants (CPAs), including those employed by the OPS, are required to comply with the Code of Professional Conduct for CPAs. One of those rules is that they not be associated with false or misleading information. That means that if the professional accountants in the OPS do not agree with the judgment of the Ontario Auditor General, it is not as simple as agreeing to accept the interpretation of the Office of the Auditor General if they believe that interpretation would result in false or misleading financial statements. While we expect professional accountants to agree on the vast majority of issues, we acknowledge that they may not agree on everything. We will continue to work with all officers of the legislature to keep them informed and engage constructively on considerations and approaches.

As public servants, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and integrity in conducting our work. I, and my colleagues across the OPS, will continue to ensure our due diligence to support government decision-making for this policy item and any others."