



Office of the Auditor General of Ontario
Bureau du vérificateur général de l'Ontario

**REPORT ON COMPLIANCE
WITH THE GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING ACT, 2004, AS AMENDED ON
JUNE 16, 2015 (ACT)**

To Serge Imbrogno, Deputy Minister of Energy

Report on Item OAGO/F0617-190 Under the *Government Advertising Act, 2004*, as amended on June 16, 2015 (Act)

I have reviewed your 30-second English and French television ads, English and French 30-second radio ads, 15-second English and French digital video ads and two English and two French 6-second digital bumper ads for “Ontario Fair Hydro Plan,” submitted for Final Review on June 23, 2017. I reviewed these Items in order to assess whether they are in compliance with the *Government Advertising Act, 2004*, as amended on June 16, 2015 (Act).

Ministry Responsibility

The Ministry is responsible for preparing Items in accordance with the Act and submitting Items for final approval to the Auditor General as per Section 4.1 (1) of the Act.

Auditor General’s Responsibility

My responsibility is to issue an opinion on whether submitted Items are in compliance with the Act. My review is limited to confirming that Items:

- include a statement that the Item is paid for by the Government of Ontario;
- do not include the name, voice or image of a member of the Executive Council or of a member of the Assembly as the target audience is located within Ontario;
- do not include the name or logo of a recognized party within the meaning of subsection 62 (5) of the Legislative Assembly Act;
- do not directly identify or criticize a recognized party or member of the Assembly; and
- do not include, to a significant degree, a colour associated with the governing party.

Opinion

In my opinion, based on the advertising material submitted by your office to mine, these Items are in compliance with the Act.

Other Matter

In our opinion, a primary objective of these television ads is to foster a positive impression of the governing party for political advantage. This submission would have been found in violation under the previous version of the *Government Advertising Act, 2004*. We are also concerned that the radio and TV ads suggest that “upgrades to our electricity system” and “the elimination of coal plants” are what have caused hydro prices to increase. This could be seen as misleading as there are other important reasons not mentioned. As well, the TV and radio ads reference that there will be no increases to hydro rates beyond the rate of inflation for four years. This could change because of the upcoming election in June 2018.


Bonnie Lysyk, CPA, CA, LPA
Auditor General of Ontario

June 29, 2017