

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? Dipping into our pockets again

Well, here we are starting yet another year, and Premier Kathleen Wynne is already dipping into your pockets to ? once again ? extract money to subsidize the most profligate government in Ontario history.

Oh yes, as is often the case, the cover story is that it's necessary to save the planet, despite the fact that even if Ontario shut down completely and didn't emit a single bit of carbon into the atmosphere, the world would not notice.

Ontarians, however, would. Just as we have for years as this government ? and its McGuinty predecessor ? have continued to drink the Koolaid propaganda on humans being the primary cause of global warming.

Never mind that the earth has seen numerous periods where temperatures are warmer and storms are more frequent ? long before the advent of gas-guzzling cars, etc.

The ideologues at Queen's Park ? soon to be followed by the ideologues at Parliament Hill ? are stiffing you at the gas tank for 4.3 cents a litre and, for those who insist upon heating their homes, an extra tab of up to \$6.70 per month. According to Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk, Wynne's ill-considered cap and trade scheme will add an average of \$156 this new year to your household costs, up to \$210 in 2019, plus an extra \$75 in indirect goods and services. It all adds up to a \$1.9 billion tax heist. Sweet.

Add to that the planned carbon tax imposition by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and you'll begin to understand how much this misplaced madness is costing us. (And that's just directly, not counting the ongoing flow of businesses leaving Ontario because of these added costs.)

And for what? Beyond a thinly veiled tax grab ? and a bow to the environmental zealots out there ? nothing. It will, as we've said, have no discernible impact upon anything except the cost of living in Ontario and the cost of doing business here.

To be fair, however, you have to hand it to Wynne. Her timing is absolutely perfect. Same goes with her hero Trudeau.

If you were to pick a worse time to impose extra taxes of this nature you couldn't possibly come up with a better (worse?) time to do it.

I realize many have been traumatized by the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president, but all the hand-wringing and teeth-gnashing in the world is not going to change that.

So making Ontario ? and Canada, for that matter ? more costly venues to do business will make us even less competitive than we already are.

Yes, yes, Environment and Climate Minister Glen Murray is exempting some businesses from his new tax regime, but the fact is it will still add to the overall cost of doing business.

As much as it might offend you that Trump will be president, that will not change the reality that he absolutely will not play this trendy carbon tax game. What's more, there is no doubt that he also plans a dramatic cut in corporate taxes, all designed to make U.S. businesses more competitive in the world.

You will also know that Trump's surprising election win came about mainly because the northern industrial states, i.e. those in direct competition with Ontario, felt left behind by the tax-and-spend Democrats, and decided to break years of loyalty to that party by voting Republican. Trump owes them big time. And any payback for their support will absolutely hurt Ontario's struggling industrial base north of the U.S. border.

So rather than counter this reality by lowering competitive costs, our collective geniuses at Queen's Park and Ottawa have decided to make matters even worse. Then again, with their fixation on alternative energy, the Ontario Liberals have been doing this since McGuinty took over, which is a big reason why the historical engine of Canada's economy, i.e. Ontario, has been reduced to a ?have not? province.

This situation was bad enough when the Tories were in power in Ottawa ? when they, too, were big spenders while talking like fiscal conservatives ? but at least the Harper government made some effort to help our belabored industrial and manufacturing base.

Now, the combination of Wynne at Queen's Park and Trudeau in Ottawa ? squandering billions of your tax dollars on international carbon credits (while big polluters such as China and India continue unabated) ? will make 2017 and beyond what they like to call in sports parlance ?a self-inflicted wound.?

Good luck with that

