

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Cabinet documents show high hydro rates will return after the election

It was revealed May 11, through an internal Liberal cabinet document, that hydro rates will continue to skyrocket after the 2018 election.

We also know from the independent Financial Accountability Officer, Ontario's budget watchdog, that this Liberal hydro hoax could cost billions. In fact, while the government is providing short-term relief of \$24 billion, doing so will cost up to \$93 billion: nearly quadruple the proposed savings! Ontarians want hydro relief, but they do not want to jeopardize future generations to get it.

Since the hydro crisis began, my leader Patrick Brown and I have been calling on the government to address the systemic problems with the province's electricity system. Specifically, the Progressive Conservative Party has been calling on the government to rein in executive salaries, stop signing bad contracts for energy we do not need, and stop the fire sale of Hydro One. Unfortunately, the Liberals decided to simply kick the can down the road, neglecting to deal with these systemic issues.

The government has decided to offer a short-term solution instead of dealing with the systemic issues. As a result, the average monthly residential bill will start to rise again in 2018. Meaning the average monthly hydro bill will rise to be more than 36.5 per cent higher than they were in 2010, four years after the election.

Another important revelation from these cabinet documents is the return of the debt retirement charge (DRC) in a newly named 'Clean Energy Adjustment.' The original DRC was created to pay off Hydro One's \$7.8 billion stranded debt, but in 2011 the Auditor General revealed the government had already collected enough money to pay the DRC. When this information was made public the government removed the DRC from residential bills, but did not remove it from businesses'. Now the new DRC is returning to your bill to pay for the massive debt the government is incurring with their hydro plan. Unsurprisingly, the Premier and the Minister of Energy failed to mention the return of this charge during the release of their plan.

When the government announced their plan, Ontarians hoped that the government had finally listened to them and was going to deal with skyrocketing hydro rates. Instead it appears the government decided to create a short term program which will cost Ontario taxpayers billions in the long-run and will see a return to skyrocketing hydro rates

