

## From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Liberal mismanagement of natural gas threatens Ontarians' pocketbooks



Earlier this month, we learned that the Provincial government was considering banning the use of natural gas. The government's 57-page Climate Change Action Plan, stamped "Cabinet Confidential," was leaked to the Globe and Mail and called for "new building code rules that require all homes and small buildings built in 2030 or later to be heated without using fossil fuels, such as natural gas. This would be expanded to all buildings before 2050."

Currently, 76 per cent of Ontarians rely on natural gas to heat their homes. By banning the use of natural gas, estimates are the plan would cost Ontarians an additional \$3,000 per year to heat their homes, in addition to a \$4,500 charge to retrofit their homes from natural gas to electricity. Instead of using affordable natural gas, Ontarians would be forced to use electricity, which in recent years has increased in price by 400 per cent. After the leak and pressure from experts, the public and opposition MPPs, the government is now denying that they plan on forcing Ontarians off natural gas.

However, what is clear is that Premier Wynne and her ministers spent government time and resources to look into banning the use of natural gas and then sat around the cabinet table to discuss the future of natural gas in the province. All of this begs the question, if the government had Jones col - 15.8

taken so many steps toward the realization of a plan to ban natural gas, how can they seriously say they were not planning for it to be part of their policies?

In the end, the fact that the government considered this plan is deeply concerning. The proposed plan threatened to cost Ontarians thousands of dollars, kill thousands of jobs and increase the cost of living in the province.