

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Progressive Conservatives have items they want to see in budget



The Ontario Budget is expected to be released today (Thursday).

My Progressive Conservative colleagues and I have asked this government to make commitments in five key areas that we believe will make Ontario a better place to live and work.

The government needs to back off implementing the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP). This new payroll tax will further increase the cost of doing business in Ontario. The CFIB and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have said that businesses in Ontario can't afford a mandatory pension plan, adding an additional 1.9 per cent in the form of a payroll tax. The ORPP will also result in less take home pay, since employees will also be forced to contribute 1.9 per cent of their salary. Suggesting that government can manage your retirement savings better than individuals is naïve at best.

My PC colleagues and I have also recommended the Wynne Liberals shelve their carbon tax proposal. The government recently announced they intend to implement a "cap-and-trade program," which is simply another name for a carbon tax. This government's history shows we can't believe their carbon tax will accomplish any objective other than picking the pockets of hard working Ontarians and businesses. A carbon tax is simply a cost Ontarians and businesses cannot afford, and will only cause further damage to the problem of skyrocketing energy rates in Ontario.

We also requested the government fix homecare in Ontario by dealing with the underlying issues at the Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) across the province. Currently the CCAC's are too often not able to assist people who have been discharged from hospitals and need some medical assistance. I have heard from too many constituents who have been refused help while management and administrative costs continue to rise. Many of these patients are being told there simply isn't enough money to care for them. We believe there should be better planning and more localized care in Ontario.

This government needs to commit to stabilizing energy rates for individuals and businesses in Ontario. Ontario already has some of the highest energy rates in all of North America, and there seems to be no relief in sight with the recent announcement that the average household hydro bill will increase by another \$137 per year starting in 2016. This government must stop tinkering with Ontario's energy sector, as shown by wind and solar subsidy programs or the \$2 billion wasted on the Smart Meter Program. Finally, we are asking the Wynne Liberal government to prepare a detailed plan on how they intend to balance the budget by 2017-2018. This government continues to claim they will balance the books by this date, but they have not released a plan of how they will do so. A number of credit rating agencies and the Auditor General have warned the government to get their financial affairs in order, but the government continues to ignore these calls for action. My PC colleagues and I believe this government needs a plan that is financially responsible and transparent so all Ontarians can access their commitment to reign in over-spending.