

Minister responds to article

Regarding 'Ontario PCs say they alone have plan to preserve horseracing?' (Citizen, Nov. 28, 2013):

I believe that Ontario's horse racing industry has a bright future. I know many involved with the industry have been through tough times and faced many challenges. These are concerns I take very seriously.

But I don't believe in playing political games with an industry that is so important to communities across the province.

The opposition is advocating a return to a program which lacked accountability and transparency. It was identified in three separate reviews as bad public policy.

Our government, under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, has moved forward with a new plan.

Backed by a five-year, \$400-million commitment, our Horse Racing Partnership Plan establishes a solid foundation for the industry and provides opportunities for growth. I believe it will be the model for public support for racing across North America.

Horse racing is an historic and culturally important industry for the province. I understand this has been a difficult period of transition, but I am confident our plan will return strength to the industry.

Whether it's a five-point plan or a three-point plan, the opposition proposals are at the starting gate, and we're off to the races.

Jeff Leal,

Minister of Rural Affairs