

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? Carbon initiative another tax grab

It is to weep.

Once again, under the guise of securing a better world for our children and grandchildren, Premier Kathleen Wynne is trotting out the old scam that a cap-and-trade system on carbon ? in cooperation with Quebec and California ? will help save the planet.

Funny thing, a lot of people buy into this nonsense.

Here's the truth: if Wynne shut down the entire province and took all the cars off the road it would cut global emissions by ? wait for it ? a miniscule 0.5 per cent.

Even if you believe ? perhaps with fingers crossed ? that humans are the main culprits for climate change (which, if true, makes me wonder where the glaciers went that used to cover this part of the world) ? the fact is that this phony eco initiative is just another tax grab.

I actually wouldn't mind so much if Wynne had the basic decency to call it what it is ? another way for her profligate government to skim money from Mr. and Mrs. Beleaguered Taxpayer.

But no such luck.

You'll perhaps recall the grandly named Green Energy Act in 2009 when former premier Dalton McGuinty and then energy minister George Smitherman announced a series of green initiatives that they claimed would create 50,000 jobs.

We all know how that turned out. A 2011 report by then auditor-general Jim McCarter concluded that a)- the majority of jobs created were in temporary construction; and b)- for each green job created between two and four jobs were lost because of skyrocketing electricity costs.

While the big polluters ? China and India ? forge full-speed-ahead generating cheap electricity with coal-fired plants ? the electricity source the Liberals have continued to shut down ? manufacturing plants have continued to leave Ontario in favour of jurisdictions where electricity prices can keep them competitive within their industries.

Add to that the reality that you'll be paying another three cents or so for you gas and your home heating fuel, and you should know that you're being conned once more into the false notion that this tax will make an impact on global emissions. It won't. Period.

Before the aforementioned Green Energy Act, Ontario generated more than 60 per cent of its energy with zero greenhouse gas emissions.

That's right, zero. But that wasn't good enough for the Liberals, so they decided to waste billions of your tax dollars on ill-conceived notions such as wind generation and other madcap schemes which have made no perceptible impact on emissions but have certainly made an impact on your monthly heating and traveling costs.

People aren't going to stop driving their cars or heating their homes because the government is slapping another tax on top of existing taxes. We still have to get where we have to get. And we still have cold winters which can't be met by shutting down thermostats and donning indoor parkas to keep warm.

The Toronto Star, as you'd expect, was absolutely delighted with Wynne's plan, congratulating her for ?getting serious about curbing greenhouse gases that feed climate change? and, just as predictably, knocking Prime Minister Stephen Harper for not going along with this plan.

?Climate change needs to be fought around the globe,? said Wynne. ?And it needs to be fought here.?

Except, of course, her scheme will, as we've pointed out above, have virtually no impact on anything beyond your wallet or purse. In the world of carbon emitters, Ontario ? and Canada for that matter ? is a bit player. In the world of taxation, however, the Ontario Liberals are major leaguers. But then, in order to pay for their well-documented spending follies, they have to be big time tax grabbers. Their only other option would be to reel in spending but, being Liberals, that's out of the question.

And so Wynne ? cheered on by the usual suspects ? sells yet another tax ? which could generate up to \$2 billion a year for her to waste ? cloaked in the cynical notion that it will make a difference to the world's climate.

It will not.

Then again, we re-elected the Liberals, so it's not realistic to expect anything else from them.

And if you can convince yourself that doling out more taxes for the Liberals is your contribution to a better world, then dream on Alice. Wonderland is just around the corner.

