



Legislative Assembly

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 13, 2005

Will Cansfield Appointment Bring Common Sense to Energy?

(Queen's Park) - Progressive Conservative Energy Critic John Yakabuski said today that Dalton McGuinty's decision to promote Liberal backbencher Donna Cansfield to Energy Minister - a move necessitated by the resignation of Greg Sorbara - provides his government with an excellent opportunity to take a fresh look at their controversial energy policies.

"We will be anxious to see what direction Minister Cansfield will take this important file," said Yakabuski. "Hopefully the Cabinet shuffle lays the groundwork for the McGuinty government to get off their narrow-minded, down-hill slide which is guaranteed to leave Ontario in the dark and in economic chaos."

Yakabuski said, "Dwight Duncan made absolute shambles of the energy portfolio, blindly holding the party line as he tried to institute the Liberal's irresponsible election promises. To add insult to injury, on his way out the door, Duncan made offensive comments that anyone who disagrees with his government's energy policies is a Neanderthal and that the recommendations of the Ontario Power Authority will only be accepted if they are in sync with his views."

The McGuinty Liberals' made the election promise to close coal-fired plants by 2007 (later changed to 2009), a move that would eliminate approximately 25 percent of the province's power supply and they have yet to release a plan to show Ontarians how this supply will be replaced. Since the McGuinty Liberals were elected in 2003, electricity costs have increased for the average home by \$180 per year, prices are set to increase again this winter and natural gas costs are exploding.

"Energy in Ontario is in a very fragile state," said Yakabuski. "We have been somewhat lucky over the past couple of months, but luck runs out and we need a real plan." He asked, "Can we expect Minister Cansfield to follow in Minister Duncan's near-sighted vision or will she meet with the experts and consumers; will she understand what Ontario needs and make fresh tracks towards accomplishing that? Can Minister Cansfield provide Ontarians with a responsible and affordable energy plan to bring us out of the mess her government has put us in? I very much hope so and Ontarians can be assured that our party will be keeping a close watch."