

MCGUINTY LIBERALS HAVE NO PLAN TO FIX ONTARIO'S LOOMING ENERGY CRISIS: YAKABUSKI

PC Energy Critic says people of Ontario, economy will suffer as a result

(Queen's Park) – Ontario Progressive Conservative Energy Critic John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke) today blasted the McGuinty Liberals for their lack of a plan when it comes to addressing Ontario's energy needs.

"Ontario is facing a looming energy crisis," said Yakabuski. "After all of the dithering we have seen from this government when it comes to Ontario's energy supply, it should come as no surprise that neither Dalton McGuinty or his Minister of Energy have a plan to make sure the lights stay on in Ontario."

Yakabuski made the comments following an announcement by Minister of Energy Gerry Phillips that the government is moving forward with a competitive bidding process to choose who will replace the province's aging nuclear reactors. Ontario's Integrated Power System Plan forecasts peak demand for electricity will be close to 29,000 MW within ten years and will reach 33,677 MW by 2027. Current peak capacity in Ontario is between 26,000 and 28,000 MW. However, the plants that provide the majority of this power will need to be either be refurbished or replaced in the next 20 years.

"Today's announcement is more of the same from a government who would rather maintain the status quo when it comes to Ontario's nuclear capacity than take immediate steps to make sure the province has a reliable energy supply," said Yakabuski.

In 2002, Dalton McGuinty promised to close Ontario's coal fired plants by 2007. In 2006, the McGuinty Liberals delayed this promise. Today, they are promising to close the province's coal fired plants by 2014.

"Dalton McGuinty says he plans to shut down our coal plants by 2014, yet Ontario's new nuclear capacity won't be up and running until 2018," said Yakabuski. "Ontarians should be asking the question – where exactly does Mr. McGuinty think we are going to get our power during that four-year gap?"

"Unfortunately, it is the people of Ontario and our economy who will suffer the most as a result of the government's dithering and lack of a plan when it comes to Ontario's energy needs," added Yakabuski.