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JOHN YAKABUSKI, M.P.P. - RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE

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ENERGY RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, the only thing that happened between the posting of the regulation creating the new backdoor energy tax and its disappearance from public access was that you gave a media interview on the subject. Thirty minutes after the interview, the regulation was gone, but the tax lives on.

Who ordered the regulation to be pulled and hidden from public access?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I guess my question to the member and his leader is, when was the last time you checked the website? It's there; it's there as we speak. You might just want to make sure that you've got up-to-date information before you stand up in this House and make those kinds of accusations.

The fact-

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister. The member from Halton.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The Minister of Economic Development.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I know the member, in his heart of hearts, would support this program-and I know he believes that consumers deserve to have the opportunity to save, on average, 23% on their energy bill by engaging in the home energy audit program, by engaging in the retrofit program, which can provide families up to \$5,000 in rebates.

These programs are working. They're benefiting 160,000 families through the retrofit program; 348,000 people have-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's typical of the way the Liberals do business. They put it up, they pull it, and they put it back up while members are being walked into the House here. That's the way they do business and that's the way they treat the public in this province as well. At 10:30 this morning, that regulation was not there.

Minister, the regulation that we retrieved from e-Laws before you pulled it contradicts what you've been telling the media. You say it's for one year, but the regulation calls for the tax to be reassessed at the end of the year. Did you order the regulation to be pulled so that the public wouldn't know about the new hidden tax, the backdoor tax, or was it just so you could take the time to get your story straight?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll say it again: The regulation is on the site. Check. It's there.

It's funny how you talk about changing positions on things. I remember-

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Lanark will withdraw the comment he just made.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: What happened to your belief when you said in this Legislature not long ago—in fact, it was February 23 of this year—that there's no question that conservation is important? You talked about reducing your own usage in your home. You said that it's an important thing and that-

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister.

The member from Renfrew knows the rules. If he's not satisfied with the answer, following question period, he can put a late show in.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: You said, "I think that is an important thing, and I think there are some gains to be made out there today in that part of this act," and you were referring to the Green Energy Act. You supported it just a few months ago. Why are you all of a sudden opposed to conservation? Why do you want to deny your constituents the opportunity to save up to 23% on their energy bills? Why do you want to deny Ontario consumers the ability, through this conservation, to be able to-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

