MPP Lisa Thompson

June 3, 2016

**Statements about the revenue-neutrality or elimination of Ontario’s Drive Clean Program**

**When questioned by PC MPP Michael Harris during the Estimates Committee, Minister Charles Sousa repeatedly stated that the Liberals had eliminated Drive Clean fees:**

**1.April 19, 2016:** [**http://tinyurl.com/j9zoora**](http://tinyurl.com/j9zoora)

1. **Hon. Sousa:** “You’re right to say that — while it’s not within this ministry’s control of the Drive Clean program — it was an introduction made by the Conservative government years ago, **which we eliminated since then**, in this year. **It is cost-neutral and it is revenue-neutral**, going forward.”
2. **MPP Michael Harris:** You didn’t eliminate the requirement to have a Drive Clean test; you just eliminated the fee.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** **Yes.**

1. **MPP Michael Harris:** But you were generating a significant surplus. It comes to your treasury, right? As a revenue-neutral program, you would agree that it’s a cost recovery only. Correct? Generating revenue for a cost-recovery program is illegal, would it not be?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** **We have eliminated, and as you’ve cited, the fees are no longer there, and it is cost-neutral.**

1. **Mr. Michael Harris:** Did you generate a surplus ever in a fiscal year on Drive Clean? Yes or no?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We’ll have to ask environment.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** But you’re the treasury. You collect the revenue.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** But I’m telling you, **it’s cost-neutral and it’s revenue-neutral and we have eliminated the fees,** as we proceed forward.

1. The purpose of the program is to ensure that we provide greater safety, elimination of emissions, improve the environment and the operation of those vehicles. The fees and the success of that program have enabled greater consumer safety in that regard. **The elimination of the fees was made this year going forward.** **The degree of impact: It’s cost-neutral.**

**The Premier, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Environment and Climate Change have also claimed that the Drive Clean program is revenue neutral, and/or that the program has been eliminated.**

**1. Premier Wynne, Question Period (March 10):**

**Premier Wynne**: Also in our budget, and just to speak to the fee issue: the lowering of hospital fees, making the shingles vaccine free for eligible seniors, **and the elimination of the Drive Clean emissions fee.**

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/house-proceedings/house_detail.do?Date=2016-03-10&Parl=41&Sess=1&locale=en>

**2. Minister Murray, Question Period (April 5):**

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** … We have moved to have a cost recovery of the program as is necessary. That’s what we admitted to and that will proceed, unlike what the member opposite’s party had introduced initially, which created excess revenues. **We’ve curbed that activity and we made it cost-neutral.**

**Minister Murray**: Mr. Speaker, as the Member may know, there are actually going to be no charges for the Drive Clean program because, in the budget, **we eliminated it.**

Mr. Speaker, only the Conservatives could see the elimination of a fee as somehow costing people something, but their math has never been that good.

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/house-proceedings/house_detail.do?Date=2016-04-05&Parl=41&Sess=1&locale=en>