



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Pamela Robertson, Executive Director
Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce
3 Market Street West, Suite 1
Brockville, ON K6V 7L2

HAND DELIVERED

Dear Ms. Robertson:

Thank you for your recent letter and the information package, including a copy of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's (OCC) *Empowering Ontario* report. I appreciate you keeping me updated on the advocacy efforts of our local Chamber and OCC and I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond.

Certainly, the rising cost of electricity and its impact on Ontario's industrial, commercial and small business sector is an issue I have been highlighting regularly at Queen's Park. I appreciate the efforts of the Ontario Chamber, through evidence-based reports like *Empowering Ontario*, to emphasize the need for the Energy Minister to immediately address these concerns.

You asked for my comments on the report and the reply from Minister Chiarelli.

I'm disappointed that the minister's response resembles what he had to say in the wake of a recent damning report from the Auditor General. You will recall that instead of accepting her report and committing to reviewing her well-documented concerns, he criticized her and suggested she lacked the requisite understanding of Ontario's energy system.

Similarly, Minister Chiarelli opens his response to the Ontario Chamber by suggesting "many of the key aspects of electricity planning and system management were not captured in your report." In other words, the Chamber doesn't understand the system.

I'd suggest the Ontario Chamber and the 60,000 businesses it represents do understand the issue well – because their members are footing an increasingly larger bill for the decisions this government is making.

As I outlined in my speech to the Chamber today, industrial power rates in Ontario will climb by 13% in the next five years, while those for small businesses will soar 25%. This sky-rocketing cost of energy is the single biggest barrier we face in Ontario to growing our economy.

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Despite the fact that Minister Chiarelli may wish it to be so, this problem will not be solved through conservation efforts alone. We need real solutions and I'm pleased that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Brockville and District Chamber remain committed to presenting alternatives to the government.

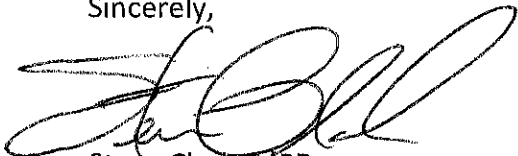
As an Opposition, we are currently in the process of developing our policies ahead of the next provincial election.

Our vision for affordable energy for Ontario will obviously be an important part of that discussion. You have my commitment to bring forward the ideas contained in the *Empowering Ontario* report as part of that policy process.

I'd also welcome any input from you as well as the Chamber's executive and membership on energy or any other policy area. Please don't hesitate to contact my office at: info@steveclarkmpp.com.

Again, thank you for your letter and I look forward to continuing to work with the Brockville Chamber throughout the year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Clark', written in a cursive style.

Steve Clark, MPP,
Leeds-Grenville