



NEWS

WATCH VIDEO: Finance Minister Rod Phillips resigns after trip to St. Barts

Pickering-Uxbridge MPP Peter Bethlenfalvy will be taking on the role of Finance Minister

By **Keith Gilligan** Ajax News Advertiser

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In the wake of his controversial vacation trip to St. Barts over Christmas, Rod Phillips has resigned as the provincial finance minister.

Phillips tendered his resignation following the uproar over his trip to the Caribbean island despite the Ontario government urging people not to travel unless it was essential due to the pandemic.

Pickering-Uxbridge MPP Bethlenfalvy will be taking on the role of Finance Minister while keeping his position as President of the Treasury Board.

In a statement, Phillips said, "Today I submitted my resignation as Ontario's Minister of Finance

"Travelling over the holidays was the wrong decision, and I once again offer my unreserved apology," Phillips added.

"I look forward to focusing my efforts on continuing to serve the people of Ajax as their Member of Provincial Parliament," Phillips stated.

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Phillips and his wife travelled to St. Barts on Dec. 13 and stayed there until the news broke earlier this week that he had left the country. He was ordered home by Premier Doug Ford on Thursday.

Ford had initially said he didn't know Phillips had left the country and then corrected himself on Wednesday when he said he had known.

Andrea Horwath, the leader of the Official Opposition NDP, said in a statement, "Doug Ford knew about Rod Phillips' trip to St. Barts two weeks ago. Not only did Ford not fire him then, he helped him keep the trip a secret. Phillips' resignation from cabinet today is not because of Phillips' vacation, it's because they got caught."

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Phillips noted in his statement, "Ensuring Ontario emerges from COVID-19 in a strong position was my priority as the Minister of Finance, and it should be the government's priority going forward

"Together we laid the groundwork for that recovery in Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover. I know that important work will continue and I wish Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy all the best as he takes on this additional responsibility," Phillips noted.

"I would like to thank my family, political staff and the officials at the Ministry of Finance," he added.

Keith Gilligan is a reporter, covering the Town of Ajax for Metroland Media Group's Durham Region Division. He can be reached at KGilligan@durhamregion.com. Follow DurhamRegion.com on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

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