

## It's time to listen up

There's been a shake up at Queen's Park.

Last week, Premier Kathleen Wynne tweaked her cabinet, appointing important portfolios to a number of her Liberal MPPs, including first-time ministers Indira Naidoo-Harris (Halton) and Eleanor McMahon (Burlington). They were sworn in Monday.

While McMahon was appointed Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sports, Naidoo-Harris was named Associate Minister of Finance, tasked with overseeing the rollout of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Important in their own right, their responsibilities are no match to those of Michael Coteau (Don Valley East) and Mitzi Hunter (Scarborough-Guildwood), the newly-minted ministers of Children and Youth Services, and Education, respectively.

Coteau takes over from Tracy MacCharles (Pickering-Scarborough East), who is now responsible for women's issues and accessibility. Hunter replaces Liz Sandals (Guelph), who is now at the Treasury Board.

MacCharles recently drew the ire of parents of children living on the autism spectrum when she announced plans to implement the Ontario Autism Program.

Touted by the government as a program that will provide families with more flexible and individualized services, parents vehemently disagree and continue to voice their concerns with the program, which essentially removes children ages five and up from the government-funded, intensive behavioural intervention therapy wait list—a list they've languished on for months, if not years. Instead, they'll receive funding—a one-time, \$8,000 payment that the government claims will allow parents and guardians to independently seek autism therapies.

Autism, stress parents and critics, doesn't end at five.

An equally strong message has been sent to the education ministry, which initiated a consultation process on the future of provincial schools for children with severe dyslexia. Trillium Demonstration School in Milton is one of three educational facilities across the province that collectively provide specialized educational programs for more than 100 students. Parents of demonstration school students fear the consultation will lead to the schools' closure.

These decisions have not been well received by the public. And while we know the Province cannot shy away from making tough or unpopular decisions, we urge the new ministers appointed to oversee these portfolios to listen actually listen to the valid concerns raised by these families.

It's the least they can do.

### The Independent & Free Press

The Independent & Free Press is published Thursday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited. The Independent & Free Press is a member of the Ontario Press Council, which is an independent ethical organization established to deal with editorial concerns. For additional information or to file a complaint, contact info@ontpress.com or call 416-340-1981.



## THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

905-873-0301  
 Publisher: Neil Oliver  
 General manager: Steve Foreman (sforeman@theifp.ca, 905-234-1011)  
 Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell (ccampbell@theifp.ca, 905-234-1012)  
 Managing editor: Chris Vernon (cvernon@metroland.com, 905-234-1020)  
 Distribution: Shelley Papineau (spapineau@metroland.com, 1-866-8960)  
**Classifieds/Real Estate**  
 Kristie Pells (realstate@theifp.ca, 905-234-1016)  
**Advertising Sales**  
 Jenny Hawkins (jhawkins@theifp.ca, 905-234-1014)  
 Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@theifp.ca, 905-234-1013)  
 Rachael Scutt (rscutt@theifp.ca, 905-234-1015)  
 Kelli Kosonic (kkosonic@theifp.ca, 905-234-1018)  
**Classified Call Centre**  
 1-800-263-6480, Fax 1-866-299-1499  
 classifieds@metroland.com  
**Accounting:** 1-866-773-6575  
**Editorial**  
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/photographer (emaher@theifp.ca, 905-234-1023)  
 Kathryn Boyle: Staff writer/photographer (kboyle@theifp.ca, 905-234-1022)

### Production

Shelli Harrison (sharrison@theifp.ca 905-234-1017)

Get the latest headlines delivered to your inbox by signing up for our twice weekly electronic newsletter. Go to [www.theifp.ca](http://www.theifp.ca) and click on Newsletter sign-up at the bottom of the homepage.

## Letters to the editor

### A missed opportunity

Lisa Simpson  
Georgetown

**Note:** The library has responded and has plans to recognize the day next year.

June 21st was National Aboriginal Day, a day in which many cities and towns throughout Canada celebrated First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples. What did Georgetown do? Nothing. As a small town, I completely understand that funds are limited however words are not: The Mayor should have acknowledged the day on the town's website or on his twitter feed or via any means which would have highlighted the significance of the day with the citizens of Georgetown.

I'm also disappointed in the library for not honouring this special day as they are usually very good at public commemoration of special events and/or days. The display cabinet on the lower level would have been a perfect place to visually educate the public about those who came before.

Perhaps as we all look forward to celebrating Canada Day—a day for those who came after—we can take a moment to honour First Nations Peoples of Canada.

### Asking for the right choice

Re: June 16, 2016 editorial Ontario's climate plan will cost

Dear Editor,  
There is a better, more cost effective solution to mitigating climate change than the current Government's push towards Cap and Trade.

A steadily increasing Carbon Fee and Dividend, as promoted by Citizens Climate Lobby, will get people and corporations to switch away from polluting technologies to clean ones.

Carbon fee and dividend is a revenue-neutral price on carbon that functions as follows:

- A fee is placed on carbon-based fuels at the source (well, mine or port of entry)

- This fee increases steadily each year so that clean energy is cheaper than fossil fuels within a decade

- All of the money collected is returned to Ontarians on an equitable basis (i.e. revenue neutral).

- Most Ontario residents would break even or receive more in their dividend cheque than they would pay for the increased cost of energy, thereby protecting those most vulnerable escalating prices.

- A predictably increasing carbon price sends a clear market signal which will unleash entrepreneurs and investors in the new clean-energy economy. Allow the free market to decide who wins and loses.

Economists all agree that Carbon Fee and Dividend yields the best cost vs. reward ratio. No other plan or regulatory scheme comes close to reducing emissions for the least cost. And it addresses the social justice aspects of pricing carbon.

It is not too late to switch from Cap and Trade to Fee and Dividend. Isn't it time the Ontario Government made the right choice?

Gord Cumming,  
Georgetown