

Newly minted environment critic Ted Arnott talks cap and trade

By Graeme Frisque
gfrisque@metroland.com

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott has a new gig.

The long-sitting provincial representative has been tabbed by Ontario Progressive Conservative leader, Patrick Brown, to serve as official opposition critic to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change at Queen's Park moving forward. The appointment was confirmed through a press release from the party issued last week.

"I'm excited about this new challenge and I'm looking forward (to) it. My colleague Lisa Thompson did a superb job as Environment Critic. I hope to pick up where she left off," said Arnott in the release. "We believe that growing the economy and protecting the environment are not mutually exclusive. They can and must go hand-in-hand."

Arnott, a native of Arthur, Ont., was first elected to the provincial legislature as representative in 1990 and has served many legislative roles, both in government and



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as a member of the opposition.

"I think our riding has a great deal of interest in the environment, and over the years I've been privileged to serve we've been involved in a lot of issues. Perhaps most recently, the bottled water issue," said Arnott while speaking to The IFP.

"We have three Nestle water facilities in our riding and that's a concern to a lot of people, but of course there's another side to it."

"I think we need to make an effort to find ways to grow the economy while at the same time protecting the environment. And I believe there's a way to do that," he added.

From confronting very unpopular Cap and Trade legislation recently enacted by the Wynne Government to uncertainty surrounding environmental regulations south of the border, there is no shortage of challenges waiting for the veteran legislator in his new role.

"Our party has opposed the Liberal government's cap and trade scheme from the beginning"

said Arnott. "But at the same time we recognize that climate change is a fact, it's happening and human activities are a contributing factor."

"We all have to do our part to reduce carbon emissions. That's going to be, I think, the focus of our opposition to government going forward on the environment file and we look forward to the legislature resuming to continue that discussion," he added. With U.S. trade being a major component of Ontario's economy, Arnott also believes the province needs to be mindful of the newly minted Trump Administration's early proclamations relating to environmental regulation.

"I think we have to be watching very carefully what's happening south of the border with the new administration. It's very unpredictable as to what's going to happen next," said Arnott.

"I hope we can forge a relationship with the new administration, (with) the Government of Canada (and) the provincial governments working with some of their state counterparts."

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