

MYTHS, REALITIES ABOUT ONTARIO'S NEW CARBON TAX

The carbon tax has arrived.

The four provinces that refused to adopt carbon pricing plans of their own - Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan - are facing higher prices on gas, natural gas, home heating oil and propane. We're paying about four cents per litre more at the pumps, along with five cents per litre more for home heating oil, just under four cents per cubic metre for natural gas and just over three cents a litre for propane.

Let's talk myths and realities.

MYTH: We're only paying this extra money because of Justin Trudeau. **REALITY:** Only true in part. We're being hit with the carbon tax because our provincial government didn't have its own plan to put a price on carbon. We had a perfectly good and working cap-and-trade system that would have allowed us to avoid the tax, but Doug Ford scrapped it, along with the millions in revenue it had generated that would have gone to schools, roads and community centres.

MYTH: The carbon tax will lead to a recession. **REALITY:** That's what Doug Ford said, but numerous economic experts have confirmed he's making that up. At worst, respected economists say, it might cause economic growth to slow modestly. And it might not even do that. British Columbia has had a carbon tax for more than 10 years and it has and continues to have one of the strongest economies in Canada.

MYTH: You don't need a carbon tax to fight climate change. **REALITY:** Maybe not, but you need something. Ford and Andrew Scheer are fond of saying we don't need the tax, but neither will say what we do need. Cap-and-trade is a valid option. But by saying they will kill the tax, what Ford and Scheer are really saying is they'll do nothing. And doing nothing about the biggest threat facing the planet and future generations cannot be an option.

MYTH: The carbon tax is an invention of Liberals, progressives and "the left." **REALITY:** Canadian conservative icon Preston Manning publicly supports a carbon tax. Former Alberta treasurer Jim Dinning supports the idea. Mark Cameron, former policy director for Stephen Harper, has said the Trudeau carbon tax plan is a "smart conservative policy." In America, four former heads of the U.S. reserve - Janet Yellen, Ben Bernanke, Alan Greenspan and Paul Volcker argue for a carbon tax in their country.

MYTH: The tax will cost me hundreds every year. **REALITY:** The average Ontario household will spend about \$244 annually because of the tax. The same household will receive \$300 in federal tax rebates. Most Ontarians will end up with more money in the end.

Almost nobody likes new taxes.

But almost everyone agrees on the need to do something to mitigate climate change.

Right now, this is the best idea on the table, certainly better than other political leaders are putting forward.

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SNAPSHOT



Uzma Khan photo

The sun sets over Derry Road and Scott Boulevard. Got a great local photo to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com.

THE SKY THIS MONTH: APRIL'S LYRID METEOR SHOWER

LOOK UP TO THE
HEAVENS FROM
MID-APRIL UNTIL
THE END OF THE
MONTH, WRITES
MARIO CARR



MARIO
CARR
Column

Start looking up to the heavens from mid-April until the end of the month and you'll see the Lyrid meteor shower.

The best time to see the shower will be during its peak on the evening of April 22 and after midnight. This year, the Moon will wash out most of the fainter meteors, but you might still see some bright ones.

The best place to see it is from a dark location laying on a lounge chair and looking up at the night sky.

Most meteors will appear to be radiating for the constellation Lyra but some can appear anywhere in the sky.

Here are April stargazing events, which are listed in the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers calendar.

April 11: Mercury is at its highest point above the horizon. This is the best time to see the planet low in the eastern sky just before dawn.

April 12: Hamilton Amateur Astronomers meeting 7:30 p.m., Hamilton Spectator auditorium, 44 Frid St. Free admission, door prizes and everybody welcome. An optional food bank donation of non-perishable goods will be collected and appreciated.

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada Kitchener

Waterloo Centre president Stephen Holmes will talk about SETI: How numerous are alien civilizations.

April 16-17: Mercury and Venus are close, low in the dawn sky.

April 19: This month's full Moon is called the Pink Moon by early First Nations people since it marked the arrival of moss pink, which is one of the first flowers of spring.

April 25: The Moon is close to Saturn just before sunrise.

For more information, see the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers website (amateurastronomy.org) or call 905-627-4323. The club offers a basic astronomy course for members.

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