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Roll back 407 rates, Liberals say

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stopped after the sale of 407, the highway's owners want it back.

If some 407 drivers don't pay, other customers have to absorb the difference, driving toll rates up, Mr. Klees said. "It's stealing," he added.

In February, Klees recounted for York Region business leaders his own frustration at being kept on hold while phoning about a 407 bill.

He suggested the 407's toll hikes had gone beyond what was reasonable "because people have nowhere else to go" and that 407's owners "have gone right off the deep end in terms of how they are administering that contract."

The government could take steps to force drastic action from the consortium, Mr. Klees said.

"Would you use it if I reduced the speed limit down to 50 kilo-

metres an hour?" he asked his audience.

This week it was the turn of Mr. McGuinty and Mario Racco, Thornhill candidate for the Liberals, to suggest severe measures were needed.

Mr. Racco said the province could use control of speed limits, noise laws and the possible expansion of the highway to control its owners.

Canvassing shows the tolls are a major issue, he said.

*It's not the subway,
it's not health care,
it is the 407 rates.*

"It's not the subway, it's not health care, it is the 407 rates."

Although the 407 was sold without toll restrictions as long as the owners attracted enough

traffic, Liberals cited a government news release from 1999, promising tolls would not rise beyond an amount equal to 2 per cent a year, plus inflation.

At the time, the consortium did not say anything to contradict that impression, said Tony Wong, Liberal candidate for Markham.

"They should be reasonable enough to negotiate with us, to roll back the rate," he said.

Dale Albers, spokesperson for 407 ETR, said any legal action to change the sale contract is bound to cost the government money. "It would be no different than trying to get out of a mortgage early."

As for a negotiated toll freeze, Mr. Albers said the consortium takes the government's views into account when it makes decisions. "But ultimately we will do what's best for the customer and for the business."

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