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Ford says Ontario will 'put more money on the table' to save Stellantis plant in Windsor

Premier Doug Ford says Ontario will spend more money to save Windsor's planned Stellantis electric vehicle (EV) battery plant.

Ford said Friday morning his government will sweeten the deal for the automaker on the NextStar plant, which would employ 2,500 people.

"I will confirm we're putting more money on the table. This is all about saving jobs and giving people the quality of life they deserve in southwestern Ontario."

"Down in Windsor, before we came into office, you could shoot a cannon down the street in the middle of downtown and you wouldn't hit anyone. This is going to be an opportunity for people to get great-paying jobs. It's going to bring certainty and stability within that region."

Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens said it was a step in the right direction toward the province and Ottawa finalizing a deal for the battery plant, a joint venture between Stellantis and



LG Energy Solution (LGES), which is headquartered in South Korea. "The city remains proactive in gathering information to extend assistance to stop the uncertainty," Dilkens said on Twitter. Stellantis had begun construction on the plant, which is due to open next year.

But a week ago, the company said it was looking at "contingency plans," claiming the federal government hasn't kept its promises in negotiations. Last weekend, Stellantis halted most construction. Ontario needs to pay "their share," Ireland.

In an interview with CBC Radio's

The House that was recorded prior to Ford's comments Friday, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said there were positive but "very pointed" conversations with Ontario and Stellantis this week.

"This is the money of all Canadians, and so it really behooves us as a government to work really, really hard to get a good deal, and that means ensuring that Stellantis is reasonable. It means ensuring that Ontario pays its fair share, and Ontario does have the fiscal capacity to do that."

François-Philippe Champagne, federal minister of innovation, science and industry, was in South Korea this week as part of a Canadian contingent to meet with business and industry leaders. He said Friday he had dinner with the president of LG Energy Solution and it lasted over two hours.

"I think we have a common understanding of the way forward."

Analysis says one of the culprits that may be impacting plans for the Stellantis EV battery plant is the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, which provides incentives for automakers to set up companies south of the border. Also at issue is a new Volkswagen plant near St. Thomas, Ont., which is receiving as much as \$1 billion in incentives. The federal government committed about \$500 million to the Windsor plant.

Canada's got a drinking problem - and one senator says Ottawa needs to step up

The federal government pitched a sizeable increase to the alcohol excise tax earlier this year - only to walk back that commitment in response to backlash from some MPs, lobby groups and cost-conscious Canadian drinkers.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's budget kept the annual tax increase much lower than inflation - it'll grow by just 2 per cent this year - after a well-organized letter-writing campaign convinced the government that the political repercussions of such a hike weren't worth the relatively modest revenue bump.

There was similar blowback when the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) recently issued new drinking guidelines that deleted most amount of alcohol is safe.

The recommendation prompted derision from some who said the health professionals behind the research are fine-averse tentacles bent on needlessly worrying people about the risks of wine, beer and spirits. The government-funded data still hasn't been posted publicly by Health Canada.

These incidents reveal just how deeply entrenched alcohol is in Canadian life - and how reluctant the government is to crack down on drinking. "You know, alcohol is the favorite substance of many policymakers and indeed for a lot of us. It has sort of an iconic cultural status. Politicians - they don't want to do much about it," said Dr. Tim Naimi, the director of the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria.

"It's the leading cause of preventable death in Canada. It's the government's job to protect Canadians from the tremendous harm caused by alcohol. For some reason, they feel threatened by the facts."

At least one politician wants to do something to curb consumption. Quebec Sen. Patrick Brazeau is a recovering alcoholic. His struggles with addiction have been well-documented.

Sober for three years, Brazeau now wants other Canadians to avoid the potentially life-altering effects of alcohol abuse.

"If you had told me 10 years ago I'd be sober and introducing a bill to label alcohol products, I would've

told you you're crazy," Brazeau told CBC. "I was drinking way too much because I was hurting inside. I was trying to kill the pain."

Brazeau said alcohol is the only known carcinogen that comes without warning labels.

He's introduced Bill S-254, which would mandate health labels on all alcohol bottles alerting consumers to the responsibility of cancer.

Tobacco, vape and cannabis packages are already plastered with dire warnings, he said, and alcohol shouldn't get a pass.

"There's still a lot of taboo around alcohol - it's so widely accepted in our society," he said.

"But alcohol is not good for us and we have to stop pretending that it is. [It] doesn't seem there are too many officials, who are willing to take the bull by the horns and do something."

According to data collected by Naimi's institute, about 25 per cent of Canadian drinkers have no idea that alcohol can cause seven fatal cancers, "too," said Naimi.

"It's just that alcohol has been with us for a long time. We've essentially learned to live with a high rate of problems from many, many years."

Canada recorded 3,875 alcohol-induced deaths in 2021, according to the latest data from Statistics Canada - a 21 per cent increase over 2019 that likely was driven by pandemic-related spike in consumption.

Other Canadian research suggests alcohol is even more deadly than those numbers suggest.

A peer-reviewed study published by the Public Health Agency of Canada suggests alcohol consumption in Canada is associated with approximately 15,000 preventable

deaths (including 7,000 cancer deaths) and 90,000 preventable hospital admissions every year.

Preventable deaths from alcohol are defined as alcohol-related cancers, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, unintentional injuries and violence.

Those numbers closely track what's been reported in the U.S., a country with a population almost ten times that of Canada. The United States reports about 140,000 alcohol-related deaths each year.

While the government has rolled out a suite of policy measures to curb opioid-related deaths - there are more safe-consumption sites now and naloxone kits are ubiquitous - it's said comparatively little about what can be done to reduce alcohol-related death and disease.

Data shows that about 20 per cent of Canadians reported alcohol consumption that classified them as "heavy drinkers," according to Statistics Canada.

The numbers are higher in Newfoundland and Labrador (27.7 per cent) and Quebec (21.2 per cent) and lower in Manitoba (16 per cent) and Ontario (17.3 per cent).

Over the past decade, about 600,000 Canadians have become physically dependent on alcohol - a condition that can lead to injuries, violence, alcohol poisoning, risky sexual behaviour, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, cancer and mental health problems.

While alcohol is a cash cow for all levels of government, researchers say that profit is dwarfed by other costs. The provincially owned Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), the world's largest alcohol importer, generated an annual dividend of roughly \$2.4 billion in 2020-21.

By comparison, the collective impact of alcohol use on health care, crime and lost productivity has been pegged at an estimated \$22.4 billion a year - a figure higher than the costs of tobacco use and the costs of all other psychoactive substances combined, including opioids and cannabis - according to research by Naimi's institute in Victoria.

"This is a big ticket item. Taxpayers are footing the bill for what amounts to ... a subsidy on alcohol and heavy drinking in particular," Naimi said.

A spokesperson for federal Mental Health and Addictions Minister Carolyn Bennett said the government will "continue to monitor" Brazeau's bill as it makes its way through Parliament.

As for the charge that it hasn't done enough to curb problem drinking, the spokesperson said "alcohol use is a serious and complex public health and safety issue."



Governments depend on liquor sales to generate billions of dollars in revenue to fund public programs.

The federal and provincial governments earned an eye-popping \$13.6 billion from alcohol sales in 2021-22, according to Statistics Canada.

Drinkers - about 76 per cent of all Canadians consume alcohol in a given year - are understandably reluctant to pay more for a product that, statistics show, many regularly enjoy.

Some drinkers also bristle at the suggestion that moderate consumption is a problem, and defend alcohol as one of life's little pleasures.

While much attention has been paid to the ongoing opioid epidemic - a tragic health event that has claimed the lives of thousands of Canadian drug users - publicly available data reveals there's a parallel crisis underway.

"The opioid epidemic is a massive public health problem, but we have a very serious problem with alcohol, too," said Naimi.

"It's just that alcohol has been with us for a long time. We've essentially learned to live with a high rate of problems from many, many years."

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Salman Khan to bring the Bigg Boss magic to OTT, shooting for a promo featuring Raftaar

Fans of the popular reality show Bigg Boss have something to cheer about as Salman Khan gears up to host Bigg Boss OTT season 2. Following the conclusion of Bigg Boss 16 in February, viewers have been eagerly awaiting the return of the daily drama that the show brings. After Karan Johar hosted the first season of Bigg Boss OTT, which saw Divya Agarwal emerge as the winner, Salman Khan is all set to take the reins for the upcoming season.

As per a report by Indian Express, the Bollywood superstar was recently confirmed for the show and is scheduled to shoot the promo with rapper-singer Raftaar at Filmcity on Saturday. A source told the portal, "While a few contestants are almost locked, conversations with others are at different stages. The makers want to make an official announcement with Salman via a promo soon. The Bollywood star is shooting with Raftaar, and the two will have a jugabandi kind of act in the teaser video. The video will drop in a couple of days."



The news of Salman Khan's involvement has sparked excitement among fans, and the show's makers are leaving no stone unturned to ensure a swift production process. With Jio Studios recently announcing an extensive content slate, the inclusion of Bigg Boss OTT on the Jio Cinema and Voot Select platforms aims to attract a wider audience to their streaming services.

Sara Ali Khan confirms Ibrahim Ali Khan gearing up for Bollywood debut: "He just finished shooting his first film"

Bollywood actor Sara Ali Khan recently made her Cannes Film Festival debut. At the French Riviera, the actress confirmed that her younger brother Ibrahim Ali Khan is gearing up for his Bollywood debut. She said that he recently wrapped shooting for his first film.

In an interview with Film Companion, Sara Ali Khan said, "You know, he just finished shooting his first film as an actor, which I can't believe."

Sara Ali Khan said that every time Ibrahim returned from school or his current shoots, she and her mother Amrita Singh would greet him with affection. She said, "That is when I realized, I do have the heart of my mother. Because we do treat Ibrahim very similarly."

She revealed her mother's reaction to Ibrahim's first film and said, "I think we are both emotional beings and I think we are both when I see Ibrahim come home."



Meanwhile, Sara Ali Khan is gearing up for the release of Zareh Iqbal Zam Zam, co-starring Vicky Kaulwal. Helmed by Latam Ushkar, the film releases on June 2, 2023.

IIFA 2023: Kamal Haasan, Riteish Deshmukh, Genelia Deshmukh and Manish Malhotra to be honoured

Film personalities, Kamal Haasan, Riteish Deshmukh, Genelia Deshmukh and Manish Malhotra will be honoured during this year's IIFA (International Indian Film Academy) Awards, which will be taking place at Yas Viceroy Hotel in Abu Dhabi on May 26 and 27.

Kamal Haasan will be felicitated with 'Outstanding Achievement in Indian Cinema' while Riteish and Genelia will be presented with 'Outstanding Achievement in Regional Cinema'. Manish Malhotra will be bestowed upon with 'Outstanding Achievement in Fashion and Cinema'.

Kamal Haasan has had a decade-long relationship with IIFA. Speaking about the same, he said in a statement, "I am extremely honoured and grateful that I have been a part of many IIFA events and they are doing a great job promoting Indian cinema globally and this time I am being honoured at IIFA 2023 at Yas Viceroy, Abu Dhabi. Excited to be present at the event."

Kamal Haasan, 68, began his career as a child artist, at the age of six, in the 1960 Tamil film Kalathar Kanazham, bagging the President's Gold Medal. Since then, he has acted in over 200 films and bagged four National Awards. He has also earned accolades as a filmmaker.

Buoyant Kohli feels back to his best following latest IPL heroics

India star Virat Kohli has issued a warning ahead of next year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup by declaring he is at the top of his game and feels like he is playing his best T20 cricket.

Kohli finished as the leading run scorer at the most recent edition of the T20 World Cup in Australia when he amassed an eye-catching 296 runs for his country at a Bradman-esque average of 98.66 and a strike rate greater than 156, but was expected to face greater competition from India's bevy of young batters in the lead-up to next year's event in the Caribbean and USA.

But the 34-year-old is showing no signs of slowing down based on his recent efforts in the Indian Premier League and has given every indication he wants to continue playing 30-over cricket for his country.

The champion right-hander has scored 639 runs from 14 matches while opening the batting for Royal Challengers Bangalore, with his most recent contribution an unbeaten 101 from just 61 balls as his side fell out of the playoffs to Chennai Super Kings.

It was Kohli's second century on the trot for his IPL franchise and the veteran said he is back playing his best when asked by former India coach Ravi Shastri at the completion of his innings.

"Ya, I felt great. A lot of people feel my T20 cricket is declining, but I don't feel like that at all," Kohli said. "I feel I am playing my best T20 cricket again. I'm just enjoying myself, this is how I play T20 cricket. I look to hit gaps, hit a lot of boundaries and the big ones in the end if the situation allows me."

"Strike rates, all those kind of things like I said in the past as well, you have to read the situation and rise up to the occasion when the situation demands, and that's something I take a lot of pride in doing, and I've been doing it for a while now. I feel really good with my game at the moment and how I'm batting out there in the middle."

Kohli hasn't been the only experienced campaigner performing well at the top of the order for Royal Challengers Bangalore this season, with South Africa batter Faf du Plessis also in good touch having scored 730 runs to be the leading run scorer for the tournament thus far.



Like most cricketers, Kohli has been asked to play one-day international duty in order to play the One Day Cup for Warwickshire County Club, scheduled to start from August 1 till September 16.

The all-rounder received the offer to play for Warwickshire from Jack Linton, who played with him for Mohammadan Sporting Club in the just concluded Dhaka Premier League, country's traditional list A tournament.

"Linton asked me whether I am interested to play one-day tournament for Warwickshire where he is also playing and I told him that if there is no national commitment I can go and play couple of games," Mehedy said.

"For me the most important thing is national duty and I am not willing to skip it for anything. If there is a gap I will ask NCC from BCB to play there as the experience of playing in that tournament will surely enrich my experience," he said.

Bangladesh are scheduled to play a one-off Test against Afghanistan from June 10. Following that, the visitors will leave for India to play a white-ball series and later they will return to play the remaining part of the series that includes three ODIs and two T20Is. The series will run till July 16.

Later Bangladesh are scheduled to take part in the Asia Cup, slated from last week of August till mid-September.

Not many cricketers from Bangladesh have featured for English County Clubs in the past. Shakib Al Hasan played for Worcestershire while Tamim Iqbal featured for Nottinghamshire in the early stages of their career. Apart from them, Mustafizur Rahman played for Sussex.

Aussie quick skips County chance to remain "a bit fresh" for WTC final and the Ashes

Australia fast bowler Scott Boland turned down an opportunity for County cricket experience, prioritising freshness for the all-important ICC World Test Championship Final and the Ashes.

Boland, who made his Test debut in December 2021 at the age of 22, impressed everyone with his sensational second-innings performance in the third Ashes Test at the MCG. He returned 67 from just four overs, earning him the Player of the Match and helping Australia secure the series victory after winning the first two matches of the five.

In his seven-Test career so far, Boland has claimed 38 wickets at 13.42. Australia named Boland in the 17-player squad for the World Test Championship final and the first two Ashes Tests against England.

However, they are yet to announce their final 15-member squad for the clash against India, prior to May 28.



Currently 34, Boland is focussing on extending his career by giving his body enough rest to remain fit for the demanding schedule of six Tests in two months.

"I did have the opportunity to play county cricket this year, but I prioritized being a bit fresher going into six Tests in two months," he said. "I know my body, that if I'm at a stage where I'm getting tired, I want to keep my career going for as long as I can. I don't want to burn out."

In the last Ashes series Down Under, Boland accounted for 18 wickets in three games, only behind skipper Pat Cummins (21 wickets from four games) and star pacer Mitch Starc (19 wickets from five games). Boland admitted that it would be difficult to call all the fast bowlers to feature in all six Tests but expressed his readiness to give his all whenever he gets the opportunity.

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Gang associate arrested in Surrey on Canada-wide warrant

An associate of the Wolfpack gang wanted for breaching parole conditions was arrested in Surrey this week after breaking out of the side door of a restaurant when anti-gang officers entered.

Cardoso had been ordered to live in a halfway house in November when he was released on parole after serving time for unlawful confinement and other offences. But he never showed up at the halfway house, resulting in a Canada-wide warrant for his arrest.

Meanwhile, the Surrey RCMP's gang enforcement team was doing checks at a South Surrey restaurant May 15 as part of its Inadmissible Persons Program.

Munn said the program, like Barwash in Vancouver, "is designed to help prevent violent criminal activity in and around licensed establishments and to deter gang members from conducting their criminal activities in Surrey."

"An inadmissible person is a person whose lifestyle, associations and/or



activities pose a risk to public safety, either directly or from third party associates."

During the officers' checks, they saw someone "sitting with people known to them quickly exit out a side door of the restaurant. Two of the parties at the table were ejected as they met the IPP criteria," Munn said.

They determined the man who

slipped away was Cardoso and arrested him at a residence in West Cloverdale on Wednesday with the help of the Lower Mainland emergency response team.

Cardoso was serving a sentence for break and enter, robbery using a firearm, forcible confinement, using a firearm in the commission of an offence, disguise with intent and discharging a firearm, stemming from

a 2016 incident that occurred in Maple Ridge.

A 2020 B.C. Court of Appeal ruling said Cardoso and one of four other co-accused were wearing balaclavas when they and two others forced their way into their victims' home on Nov. 29, 2016.

Cardoso and another intruder were armed, the ruling said with the intention of the break-in "to rob its occupants of money, jewelry and possibly drugs."

One of the people in the house escaped and called police from a neighbour's residence.

Cardoso exchanged words with a woman in the house who "confronted him saying that they were 'punks and probably the guns were not real.'" He discharged the firearm he was holding into the wall of the bedroom.

"The hole in the wall was later identified as having come from a Ruger .45-calibre handgun found on the stairs adjacent to the point of entry after the departure of both Mr. Cardoso and co-accused."

"During the home invasion, a number of items were taken, mostly jewelry and cash. Most of it was retrieved when police captured all four assailants," the ruling said.

David Johnston will recommend Tuesday whether Canada needs interference inquiry

Special rapporteur David Johnston is expected to release his decision Tuesday on whether the federal Liberals should call a public inquiry on foreign interference.

With allegations that China meddled in the last two federal elections dominating the political conversation for months, experts say an inquiry would allow for a detailed, transparent conversation about what kind of threat Canada is actually facing.

It would also allow the Liberal government to demonstrate that it is doing more to address the issue, they say.

Johnston's recommendation on the inquiry is set to come as part of an initial report about how the government should proceed with the allegations of interference. The former governor general is scheduled to give a news conference at noon on Tuesday upon releasing the report publicly.

In what many saw at the time as too little, too late, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tapped Johnston in March to lead an investigation into the extent and impact of foreign interference in Canada.

The federal government said it gave Johnston access to classified documents and Canada's security agencies to conduct the work.

Though opposition parties had by then been clamouring for a formal public inquiry for weeks, Trudeau said Johnston would have until late May to decide whether it was warranted. He would have until the end of October to produce a final report.

"The pressure has not abated since then."

"The way that the conversation has evolved over the past few months has really aggravated and made more stark partisan divides in the country," said University of Ottawa professor Artur Wilczynski.

"That, in my opinion, has not contributed to an effective defence of Canadian democracy and has not contributed to an effective governmental response to the threats of foreign interference."

Wilczynski, who spent more than 30 years in the public service working on foreign policy, intelligence, security and defence issues, said an inquiry would help bring the



conversation back around to the details of the foreign interference threat itself and how Canada should position itself to combat that threat.

The signs that foreign interference was happening - and getting worse - were already in plain sight well before the current controversy began.

Officials in Canada knew the 2016 American election was subject to foreign interference attempts.

And for years, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service has been warning of growing concern in its annual reports.

But a series of reports by the Globe and Mail and Global News beginning last fall, many of which cited unnamed security sources, brought new attention to the issue. The reports alleged that specific influence attempts had taken place in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.

"Despite various attempts by officials to talk about foreign interference, the only thing that prompted a real fundamental conversation about foreign interference were the illegal leaks," Wilczynski said.

When a Global News report was published in November that alleged China was funding campaigns through an illegal network of donors, Trudeau and his officials said they had no knowledge of specific candidates receiving backing by Beijing.

But the government began showing signs that it was reframing its approach to China.

A week after the allegations emerged, Trudeau's office said the prime minister raised concerns about

"interference" with Chinese President Xi Jinping face-to-face at the G20 summit.

Later the same month, Canada released an Indo-Pacific strategy that dedicated a slice of its \$2.3 billion value to combating foreign interference.

And before November ended, then-RCMP commissioner Brenda Lucki confirmed an ongoing investigation into broad foreign interference allegations.

Still, the calls for further scrutiny were amplified as more reports emerged, including a February story from the Globe and Mail that asserted the Chinese government sought to defeat Conservative politicians in the 2021 election who were considered unfriendly to the regime.

By the time Trudeau announced in early March that a special rapporteur would be named - and that investigations by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency would begin - the writing was on the wall.

His political opponents already saw any action other than an independent public inquiry as far too little. A parliamentary committee passed a non-binding motion calling on the government to do better.

"It's not a huge political drum for the Liberal government and put it on the defensive, certainly," said Wesley Weir, a senior fellow with the Centre for International Governance Innovation.

"The Liberal government has struggled to come up with a

convincing portrait of the actions and policies it has taken to respond forcefully to foreign interference. It clearly has done some things, but it hasn't been enough."

Since Trudeau named Johnston as the special rapporteur in mid-March, the government promised funding to combat foreign interference in its 2023 budget, launched consultations on a foreign agent registry and ordered security agencies to improve their reporting mechanisms up to the political level.

But even as the Liberals sought to show they were working on the issue, still more reports emerged that ramped up the pressure.

accused him of being too close to Trudeau - MP Han Dong announced he was leaving the Liberal caucus.

Global News had published a story citing unidentified security sources who alleged Dong told a Chinese diplomat in February 2021 that releasing Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor would benefit the Conservatives.

The two Canadian men had been detained in China since December 2018, just over a week after the RCMP arrested Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver on a U.S. extradition warrant.

Global had previously published allegations that Dong benefited from Chinese foreign interference in his successful bid to become the Liberal candidate for his riding in 2019.

Dong has denied the allegations and is suing Global over its reporting.

"Global News is governed by a rigorous set of journalistic Principles and Practices. We are very mindful of the public interest and legal responsibility of this important accountability reporting," Rishma Gervais, a spokeswoman for Global News and Corus Entertainment, has said previously.

Early this month, the Globe and Mail reported that Conservative MP Michael Chong and his relatives in Hong Kong had been targeted by the Chinese government via a Toronto-based diplomat.

Chong said he confirmed that allegation was contained in a CSIS intelligence assessment that had reached officials in the Privy Council Office, while Trudeau denied that the information about the alleged threat had ever reached his office.

Canada expelled the accused Chinese official. China responded by expelling a Canadian diplomat. And this week, the public safety minister ordered security agencies to ensure that any future threats against parliamentarians, their families or their staff are communicated at the political level.

Contractor scams bilking Ottawans out of thousands, police say

It's spring and fraud is in the air, as Ottawa police say there's an organized group running a contractor scam in the city's west end.

Det. Shana Wabbes says police have received complaints this May from around 10 residents, many of whom have given money - up to \$13,000 as a deposit - and either aren't seeing work done or not getting it finished at a satisfactory level.

A couple of years ago, Wabbes said police tracked down another group running a similar scam in the spring and they were deported back to the United Kingdom.

"Usually they pop up in the spring, and it's an organized group that comes in, does as much as they can and then [they] flee to a different jurisdiction. So next month they're back in Kingston," Wabbes told CBC News at 6.

The group has been door-knocking, saying they're working in the area and with a significant deposit right away they'll do a job for the prospective



client.

"People are falling for it. They're not asking questions, they're not doing their due diligence and they're giving them money," Wabbes said.

He says there are various levels of the scam, ranging from doing poor work to taking a deposit and not

doing anything at all.

That can affect the kind of recourse available to victims, Wabbes said. If they take money without starting the job it's a criminal prosecution, but it would be civil litigation if the work is shoddy or remains unfinished.

As of this weekend, police had not caught the current group.

Do your homework.

Regardless of what happens, Wabbes recommends filing a police report and leaving an online review to prevent others from being victimized.

He said this current scam has a few facets that should always be red flags: the speed at which a homeowner is being asked to make a decision and the door-knocking.

Perpetrators of such scams will try a variety of methods to pressure homeowners, from offering what appear to be large discounts or suggesting the property needs urgent work. Reliable contractors, on the other hand, are often busy and don't have time to knock on doors, he said.

John DeVries, president and general manager of the Ottawa Construction Association, agrees that door-to-door promotions are warning signs, along with requests for money up front.

He said customers should always do their research, and while a bit of internet sleuthing is a good start, nothing compares to reaching out and speaking to real people.

"If a contractor is gun shy at [provide names of] past customers who are happy, there's a red flag right there," DeVries said.

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