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Liberals criticize lucrative contract

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The Alberta Liberals are questioning the size of a contract given to one of the architects of controversial Bill 46.

Kellan Fluckiger has received almost \$1.4 million from the government over the past four years. Last year, he got \$354,087 from Alberta Energy.

Liberal energy critic Hugh MacDonald questioned the wisdom of the contract.

"This guy was hired out of California, when they were in their own electricity crisis. Four years later, we've paid him \$1.4 million and our problems haven't been solved," MacDonald said.

Jason Chance, a spokesman for Alberta Energy, said Fluckiger was hired on contract because of his unique knowledge of deregulated electricity markets.

"He was hired not only to apply those skills in his role as executive director of the electricity division, but also fulfil the role of the senior civil servant," Chance said.

Such a situation is rare, but not unheard of, Chance added.

Fluckiger has been a controversial figure during his time in Alberta. The auditor general has confirmed that he has been asked to look into allegations of a possible conflict of interest.

One of Fluckiger's family members is a senior executive with AltaLink, a company that would benefit directly from potential decisions made by the department. Fluckiger and Alberta Energy have denied a conflict exists.

Fluckiger has most recently come under fire for Bill 46, which he helped write. The bill, which splits the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board into two bodies, raised the ire of landowners who believed it would limit their ability to participate in the regulatory process.

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