

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Driving costs continue to rise in Ontario



We are seeing a growing trend with the Provincial government ? they are making it more expensive to own and drive a car in Ontario.

The most recent example is when Premier Wynne signaled she will consider approving the request by the City of Toronto to implement a toll on the Don Valley Parkway (DVP) and the Gardiner Expressway. The City of Toronto is proposing a toll of \$2 each way, meaning if you commute to work in Toronto you can plan on around \$80 extra per month to commute, as a result of these additional tolls.

My Progressive Conservative colleagues and I oppose the tolls because commuters cannot afford to pay up to \$1,000 more a year to drive to work. Ontario taxpayers already paid to build the Gardiner Expressway and DVP and they should not be expected to pay again and again through tolls.

The tolls in Toronto are not the only example of an increasing cost to driving. Another is the increase in licence plate stickers to \$120. For drivers in Dufferin-Caledon the Drive Clean fee is another added expense to owning a car. The government announced it planned to eliminate Drive Clean, but the program continues. Drive Clean was originally created to be a revenue-neutral program to reduce exhaust emissions. The government claimed that they were not making money from the Drive Clean program, but last summer the Progressive Conservative Environment Critic established that the program is running an \$11 million surplus. The government is making life more expensive because it is wasting and mismanaging taxpayer dollars.

In the recent report from the independent officer of the legislature, the Auditor General; the auditor showed how the Ministry of Transportation is wasting and mismanaging taxpayer dollars. The auditor found that a company installed a truss for a bridge upside down which had to be fixed at the taxpayers' expense, and then the minister of transportation awarded that company another contract. The auditor also found that some companies were using substandard asphalt which meant the road had to be repaved three years later. Incredibly the government hired the same company to do the resurfacing. These examples show that the government is wasting taxpayer's money ? money which could be used to help municipalities pay for transportation infrastructure.

Many commuters in Dufferin-Caledon do not have the option to take public transit. The government's decision to increase the cost of driving your car to work, to the grocery store or dropping your children off at school proves that life is more expensive under this Liberal government.