

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Government fails to spend 20 per cent of their promised infrastructure budget

The 2016-2017 public accounts documents show that the government of Ontario failed to spend nearly \$3.3 billion or 20 per cent of the infrastructure budget they had promised to Ontarians.

I asked the Minister of Infrastructure about this significant underspend, and to provide the list of infrastructure projects that the government had promised, but had been delayed or not started. The Minister instead chose to blame municipal and federal partners for the delays saying, "yes, there were some delays because of the processing with the federal government," and "some of those municipalities have not been able to deliver the actual shovel in the ground on time."

Now the Minister has continued this line and is quoted by Global News saying "project review and federal approval has taken more time than expected."

Unfortunately for the Minister, this does not remove his responsibility. The government has never shied away from an opportunity to boast about its promises to communities. But time and time again, the government isn't getting the job done for Ontarians. It is ultimately up to the Minister of Infrastructure to keep the government's infrastructure moving. So far this government has failed to do so.

By not spending 20 per cent of their infrastructure budget, the government is adding onto a list of broken infrastructure promises. For instance, the government had promised two-way all-day GO train service to Kitchener by 2019, but significant delays mean that the revised timeline for this project is 2024. Nearly 10 years after its discovery, the government has still failed to develop the Ring of Fire.

This \$3.3 billion left on the table, is even more frustrating when I think about the important infrastructure projects communities in Dufferin-Caledon have been asking for, but have received little provincial support for. For instance, the Town of Mono has been asking for safety improvements on Highway 10 south of Primrose, but instead the government has decided to only provide culvert and maintenance work to Highway 10. Meanwhile, Shelburne and Bolton are looking investments in GO transit. Communities across Dufferin-Caledon are in need of support with their sewer and water treatment infrastructure. The Town of Shelburne is looking for an advanced green at Highway 89 and 124, and the needs continue to grow.

Communities across Dufferin-Caledon and Ontario expect the government to keep their infrastructure investment promises.

However, their track record shows that the government is more interested in making promises than getting the job done. The government has promised investment in Ontario's infrastructure needs. It's time for them to deliver.

