

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Ontarians struggling to pay for hydro

A new report by the Ontario Energy Board confirms what I hear from people across Dufferin-Caledon ? hydro rates continue to rise and there seems to be no end in sight.

In the last eight years, the Ontario Energy Board notes that the price of hydro during off-peak hours (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.) has nearly tripled, whereas the mid-peak (7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.) and on-peak (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.) has nearly doubled.

Everywhere across the province, Ontarians are having a difficult time paying their hydro bill. The cost of hydro continues to be the number one issue I hear from businesses and residents in Dufferin-Caledon.

Businesses owners are facing the difficult choice of trying to run their business and pay exorbitant hydro rates or move to a neighboring jurisdiction; while home owners are being forced to choose between food or hydro. According to the Ontario Energy Board, more than eight per cent of households in Ontario are in energy arrears, collectively owing in excess of \$172 million in 2015. This is clearly unacceptable and unsustainable.

It's clear the cost of hydro has grown uncontrollably because of this government's mismanagement. Last year, Ontario's Auditor General noted that over the last eight years, Ontarians have paid \$37 billion above market value for energy. It's no wonder individuals and families are having a tough time paying their bill and forcing many into a state of energy poverty.

Whether it is our Province's ever growing debt or skyrocketing hydro rates, it's clear businesses and individuals can no longer afford to carry the burden of this government's mismanagement of our economy and energy sector. We need to allow individuals and business to plan and predict energy costs, and that starts coming up with credible energy policies.

I will continue to voice these concerns at the Ontario Legislature and pressure the government to make necessary changes. I encourage you to visit my website at www.sylviajonesmpp.ca and sign my petition calling on the government to implement policies ensuring families, farmers and businesses have affordable and reliable hydro.

