

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Share with me your hydro stories



The Provincial government announced changes as part of their Sept. 12 Throne Speech, to lower the cost of hydro by removing the provincial portion of the HST from hydro bills.

The fact of the matter is the government's proposal is a band-aid solution to a much larger problem. If the government believes that an eight per cent rebate is going to solve the problem, it's clear they don't understand the impact the hydro increases have had on our community.

I had the opportunity to respond to the Throne Speech in the Legislature and highlighted numerous examples of residents and businesses in Dufferin-Caledon that are being driven into energy poverty. The cost of hydro continues to be the number one issue I hear from residents and businesses and they are fed up paying exorbitant prices for hydro.

Everywhere across Ontario, families and business are having difficulty affording the rising price for hydro. Last year, there were 567,000 residential electricity customers in energy arrears. That is nearly 100,000 more than there were in 2013. For years, my colleagues and I have warned about the need to lower hydro rates for businesses and families before they become too much to bear. It was only after another by-election loss that the government finally realized the need to make changes to lower the cost of hydro. Now their idea to help lower hydro bills is to remove the provincial portion of the HST from hydro bills, which will save the average family approximately \$150 a year. While short-term relief for Ontario families is desperately needed, this announcement will do nothing to stop hydro rates from increasing ? and they are set to rise again Nov. 1.

I want to continue sharing real stories to make this government understand the hardship their decisions have caused and I urge individuals and businesses to share with me how much their hydro bills have increase and the impact it has had on them and their families. Your hydro story can be sent to sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org or by calling 1-800-265-1603. If people or businesses are sending copies of their hydro bills they can black out the name and/or address for privacy. In addition I encourage individuals to visit my website at www.sylviajonesmpp.ca and sign my petition calling on the government to lower the cost of hydro.

It's time for the government to take this issue seriously and provide a real plan to help families and businesses deal with the cost of hydro.