

From Queen's park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Skyrocketing hydro rates are a concern at Queen's Park

March 26, the Wynne government announced that the average hydro bill is expected to again increase by an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016.

This newest increase in hydro rates is to help pay for the Ontario Electricity Support Program. To add more fuel to the fire, this government also announced they plan to eliminate the Clean Energy Benefit. Everyone understands that we need to help low income families when energy costs are out of control, but this government forgets that the problem is energy prices are too expensive for everyone. It is wrong to implement a social safety net program that pits neighbour against neighbour. This will only lead to resentment and frustration.

We continue to see energy rates rise year after year because of this government's record of mismanagement and spending problems. Whether it is the billion dollar decision to cancel the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants, or the two billion dollar flawed Smart Meter Program, or the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act, all of these have led to rising energy rates in Ontario. To make matters worse, since 2002 Ontarians have paid \$11.5 billion toward the debt retirement charge, in which .7 cents per kilowatt hour is added to all hydro bills to pay down the stranded residual debt. In the 2011 annual report, the Auditor General highlighted that the government had raised enough money through the debt retirement charge to pay off the stranded residual debt, yet there is still a balance owing.

The soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs. I hear it time and time again that Ontario's unaffordable energy rates have led to businesses moving to other jurisdictions that have lower and stable energy rates. We need to be attractive to businesses, instead of pushing them out of the province.

At this year's Lions Home and Garden Show in Orangeville, the rising cost of hydro was the number one issue I heard from people visiting my booth. I have prepared a petition calling for an end to the rising hydro rates, and begin bringing forward policies that will result in affordable hydro for all. This petition allows me to remind this government regularly that their decisions impact the everyday lives of Ontarians.

If you are interested in reviewing my petition and signing it please visit www.sylviajonesmpp.ca

It is important that we tell the government that their decisions have consequences to all Ontarians

