

Jones asks Minister to act on wind power transmission line

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones is concerned that Dufferin Wind Power has ignored the concerns of local municipalities by installing a transmission line, and she recently asked Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli to explain why that was allowed.

Jones and interim Progressive Conservative Leader Jim Wilson toured the transmission line route for the industrial wind project in Dufferin County last month, and she said they both expressed concern with the company's decision to ignore the concerns raised during consultation.

‘Both my leader and I have continuously raised concerns that the Green Energy Act stripped local municipalities of their planning power and has allowed companies to ignore municipal representatives’ and local residents’ input on the installation of wind turbines and transmission lines,’ Jones observed. ‘Municipalities have consistently raised serious issues with the placement of this line.’

‘In Melancthon there are some utility poles that are so close to the road, the Mayor has told me they are not going to be able to safely plow the road,’ Jones said in Question Period. ‘The municipality knew this would be a problem, raised it during the consultation in the spring, raised it with the Premier and your ministers through numerous letters, and you still allowed the company to ignore their concerns.’

She also told Chiarelli there are concerns that if the poles aren’t moved, Melancthon may be forced to re-design the road to ensure safety and allow winter maintenance.

‘The PC plan was to cancel existing contracts,’ Chiarelli replied, according to Hansard. ‘They introduced legislation which would give the Minister of Energy the right to cancel existing contracts. Our calculations would show that that would expose the provincial government to liability to the extent of about \$20 billion to cancel power purchase contracts.’

‘This is about public safety, and that is your job,’ Jones shot back.

‘The Minister of Energy or the Minister of Transportation could direct that these transmission lines be moved, so that Melancthon residents are not forced to pay the additional costs of redesigning the road,’ she added. ‘Will you do it?’

‘The member knows that there’s an environmental process,’ Chiarelli responded, repeating the warning about the cost of cancelling an project.