

Jones presents petition against high hydro rates

By Bill Rea

Rising hydro rates are a big concern for many, and Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones wants answers.

Jones recently presented a petition in the legislature, which drew more than 100 signatures the weekend she had it at her booth at the Orangeville Lions Home and Garden Show. She also said that was the major concern she heard from constituents she talked to at the show.

"Lots of people wanted to talk to me about the high cost of electricity in Ontario," she remarked.

The preamble of the petition stated that household electricity bills have increased by 56 per cent and electricity rates have tripled "as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector." It also cited other instances of government waste, including the cancellation of gas plants, wasteful spending at Ontario Power Generation and unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act. Jones charged all of this will result in electricity bills increasing by another 35 per cent by 2017 and 45 per cent by 2020. The petition also mentioned the recent announcement of the Ontario Electricity Support program, which she said will drive average household hydro bills up another \$137 annually, starting in 2016.

"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," the petition stated.

The petition called upon the legislature to implement policies that will ensure Ontario's power consumers have reliable and affordable electricity.

"This government needs to be reminded that Ontarians are already paying exorbitant rates for Hydro," Jones observed. "Hydro rates are a major concern for the people of Dufferin-Caledon."

Jones said she's confident this petition will have some impact on the government.

"It's really about reminding them about what their decisions and policies are doing to people," she commented. "These are real people who are trying to pay their bills."

She also pointed out that her petition is now within the legislative process, meaning the impacted ministry must respond to it.

"So there will be written reply," Jones said.

The petition is at Jones' website at www.sylviajonesmpp.ca