

Jones speaks out on potential gas tax hike

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones came out swinging recently against the Liberal government's latest tax and spend idea of raising the gas tax by five to 10 cents to fund transit expansion in Toronto.

"The Liberal government is out of ideas so, as per usual, their only solution is to raise taxes on hard working Ontarians," said Jones.

"A large portion of Dufferin-Caledon residents commute to work every day. They have to sit in gridlock, and they have to pay to fuel their vehicles. Raising the gas tax will make it more expensive for them just to get to work."

Jones went on to point out that, unlike urban areas like Toronto and Mississauga, many Dufferin-Caledon families don't have an alternative to using their vehicle. Additionally, some rural communities already lose out on the provincial portion of the current gas tax, since municipalities with transit systems get all of the tax's revenue.

In September, Premier Kathleen Wynne appointed Anne Golden to head a new advisory panel to review Metrolinx's investment strategy, and come up with a series of recommendations to fund transit expansion in the City of Toronto. The Golden Report was released Dec. 12, and one of the central recommendations was raising the gasoline tax by five to 10 cents per litre. If the recommendation is implemented, it would result in a tax increase from 14.7 cents to 19.7 to 24.7 cents per litre – a rise of as much as 70 per cent.

The report also suggested that an increase in the gasoline tax could be paired with a 0.5 per cent increase in the HST.

"This is yet another example of the Liberals' tax and spend agenda," said Jones. "The Liberal government doesn't have a revenue problem – they have a spending problem. We can't forget that this is the same Liberal government that just wasted \$1.1 billion to cancel two gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga."

Jones is concerned that at the end of the day, an increase in the gasoline tax will do damage to a still uncertain Ontario economy.

"Many Ontario families are already struggling to make ends meet. An anemic Liberal economy has led to job losses and stagnant wages, and people are feeling the pinch," Jones said. "Families are worried about their hydro bill, their worried about their mortgage, they're trying to make ends meet, but Kathleen Wynne keeps dumping more and more costs on their shoulders. Does the Premier honestly think that Ontarians can afford to pay more Liberal taxes?"

Jones concluded by pointing to the Progressive Conservative white paper, *Paths to Prosperity: Building Great Cities*, as an alternative to the government's taxation-heavy approach. *Building Great Cities* was released recently and Jones called it a credible plan for investing in Ontario's cities with the substantial amount of money Ontarians already pay in taxes.