



## *Message from Queen's Park*



**Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski**

**September 2006**

After a busy summer of travel with our Leader John Tory, committee hearings, and constituency work, I will be returning to the Legislature for the fall sitting on September 25th. This will be the last session of Parliament before the next provincial election set for October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007. That is over one year away but it is clear by the recent actions of the liberal government that the campaign has already begun.

Over the last couple of months the McGuinty liberals have embarked upon a mission of trying to position themselves on the right side of some issues, burying some others until after the election, and buying the electorates favour on others. This of course is done with your money.

It began with the announcement that property assessments would be frozen for two years while the government studies the system to see how it might be reformed. This is simply ducking the issue so that they can avoid the fact that they have failed to deal with it.

At the Association of Municipalities of Ontario they made the announcement that they would begin an 18 month study on the contentious issue of who does what and who pays for it with regard to services provided by the Provincial and Municipal levels of government. The math clearly shows that 18 months goes well beyond the next provincial election.

John Tory called for just such a review at the 2005 AMO Conference. Had the government headed his call this review would already be completed. It is clear that the relationship between all three levels of government needs to be reassessed (no pun intended) and that this should have been done by now. What the McGuinty government has done is to try to take these issues out of play so they don't have to face them during the campaign.

Just a couple of weeks ago the Premier announced that by February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 all liquor bottles would have to be subject to a deposit return system. It is a good idea but he has not thought out many of the challenges surrounding it. There is no question that we have to do a better job at managing waste in Ontario and he knows that his position will be a popular one. It remains to be seen however how well this will work. When asked questions Mr. McGuinty could not answer them because he made this announcement on a weekend without even talking to his Environment Minister. Some unanswered questions. Why would the largely foreign owned Beer store be granted an untendered contract to serve as a collection depot.

Why would we not look into establishing a return system at the LCBO where most of the product is purchased. What about the sorting and storage costs before recycling. As you know most beer bottles are uniform in size and shape and the same type and colour of glass. Crown Royal bottles and Canadian Club bottles are not. Will someone who is not a beer drinker return the bottle from a \$40 bottle of whiskey for a 40¢ deposit if it means a special trip to the beer store for them to return it.

Mr. McGuinty was able to draw up a plan for liquor bottles over the weekend on the back of an envelope but needs months, even years to address others. Seems funny, doesn't it? Politics perhaps?

Bill 43 is another that the Liberals want to roll out because they know it will be very well received in Toronto. The fact is that it will be harmful in huge measure to rural Ontario. They don't care. They are counting votes. I have already spoken and written much on this particular issue and will continue to stand for my constituents on this one.

I just returned from the Ontario Energy Associations Annual Conference where Energy Minister Dwight Duncan spoke to delegates delivering a most partisan speech full of inaccuracies and half truths, totally ignoring the liberal flip flops on energy issues, basically saying that they have everything under control. I'm looking forward to debating their record. As I said earlier the campaign has already begun, game on.

On another note I want to remind people to get their votes in for Muriel Verch for country woman of the year as nominated by her daughter April, one of the Valley's leading musicians. She is the only Canadian nominated for this award and it would be wonderful to see Valley pride show itself in support of Muriel.

The voting deadline is October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and you can vote on-line at [www.countrywomanmagazine.com](http://www.countrywomanmagazine.com) or you can send a postcard stating that **"I vote for No.3"** and mail to "Country Woman of the Year" contest, Country Woman, 5925 Country Lane, Greendale WI 53129.

The grand prize winner will be announced in the Jan/Feb 2007 issue of Country Woman.

John Yakabuski, MPP  
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

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Office Contact Information:

Constituency Office  
84 Isabella St.  
Pembroke, ON  
K8A 5S5

Queen's Park Office  
Room 202 N.W., Legislative Building  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1A8

[john\\_yakabuski@ontla.ola.org](mailto:john_yakabuski@ontla.ola.org)

