



Legislative Assembly

JOHN YAKABUSKI, MPP
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

NEWS RELEASE

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Yakabuski Brings Private Members Bill Forward and Demands Fairness for Rural Municipalities

(**Toronto**) This coming Thursday, December 15th, 05 at 10 am Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP, John Yakabuski will again bring forward his private members bill, Bill 3, ***The Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act (Assistance to Municipalities), 2005***. This bill, which Mr. Yakabuski reintroduced on October 13th aims to provide a share of the gasoline tax rebate to all municipalities on a per capita basis. Currently, *The Gasoline Tax Act* only provides a gas tax rebate to municipalities that have a rapid transit or public transportation system for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating that system. Mr. Yakabuski commented that if Bill 3 is passed, all municipalities will be able to seek the same rebate for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating a public highway within that municipality.

“Bill 3 is about fairness, equality and ensuring that all municipalities can afford the costs associated with keeping local roads, bridges and highways safe for travel,” Yakabuski said. I find it unfair that rural taxpayers support urban public transportation systems with their hard earned tax dollars and see nothing in return to support their own public transportation systems which in rural Ontario, are the local roads and highways.” Yakabuski went on to say that he hopes all members of the legislature, regardless of party affiliation will recognize the importance of this bill and vote to ensure its passage on second reading this Thursday.

In his comments Yakabuski noted that rural Ontario has been ignored by the McGuinty government as the current system reflects. Originally, the government promised up to 2 cents per litre gasoline tax rebate to all municipalities, then announced a plan to have a one cent per litre of gas tax go to municipal governments, increasing to 1.5 cents in 2005 and 2 cents in 2006; however, the government then stated that this rebate was earmarked solely for those municipalities with public transportation systems. Yakabuski commented that the governments reversal on their commitment to municipalities is unfair, discriminatory and a deliberate insult to all rural Ontarians.

