



Legislative Assembly

JOHN YAKABUSKI, MPP
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NEWS RELEASE

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Yakabuski Bill Demands Fair Share of Gas Tax Rebates for Rural Ontario

(**Toronto**) John Yakabuski, MPP for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, re-introduced his Private Members Bill, *The Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act (Assistance to Municipalities), 2005* in the Ontario Legislature today. This bill, if passed by the provincial parliament will provide a share of the gasoline tax rebates to all municipalities on a per capita basis. Given the government's decision to prorogue the legislature, most bills died on the order paper last month and now require a re-introduction before they can be debated further. Yakabuski commented that had the government valued the intent of his bill and the positive repercussions it will have, they would have pushed it forward before the house adjourned last summer. Yakabuski noted that re-introducing this bill today, on the first day the legislature reconvenes was a priority for him, given the valuable implications it will have for all rural Ontarians.

Currently, *The Gasoline Tax Act* only provides a gas tax rebate to municipalities that have a rapid transit or public transportation system. Today, in his remarks, Yakabuski noted that local roads, highways and bridges are the public transportation system in rural Ontario. "The present system is unfair to rural residents whose tax dollars go to support the public transportation systems in the big cities, while rural municipalities struggle to keep their local roads and bridges safe for travel," Yakabuski said. "Furthermore, rural Ontarians contribute a larger percentage of the gas taxes because you cannot go anywhere in rural Ontario without getting into a private vehicle."

The Private Members' Bill known as *The Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Amendment Act (Assistance to Municipalities), 2005* says that if a Minister enters into an agreement with a municipality to provide a rebate of tax under *The Gasoline Tax Act* to a municipality for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating a rapid transit or public transportation system, the Minister shall not refuse to enter into an agreement to provide a rebate of tax under the Act, on the same per capita basis, to any other municipality for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating public highways in that municipality.

“The McGuinty Government has a record of ignoring rural Ontario,” said Yakabuski. “They promised a gasoline tax rebate of up to 2 cents per litre 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 has been earmarked solely for those municipalities with public transportation. This is a slap in the face to rural Ontario and the hard working individuals who live there.