



Legislative Assembly

JOHN YAKABUSKI, MPP
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NEWS RELEASE

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Yakabuski: Provincial Gas Tax Should Be Shared with Rural Ontario

Queen's Park, Toronto -- John Yakabuski, MPP Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, once again introduced a Private Member's Bill to the Ontario Legislature today, pressing the provincial government to provide a share of the gasoline tax to rural municipalities and not just to large urban municipalities as is currently done.

Yakabuski said, "This bill, if passed, would compel the provincial government to treat municipalities in the same fair way that the federal government is treating them by sharing gas tax revenue with all municipalities, regardless of whether or not they have a public transportation system." He continued, that it is most unfair that rural taxpayers support urban public transportation systems, such as rapid transit, with their hard earned tax dollars, but receive nothing in return to assist with their local roads, highways and bridges.

This is the third time that Yakabuski has introduced this Bill. His first attempt was blocked when the government prorogued the legislature in the spring of 2005. He re-introduced the Bill later that year, however, and it was debated and approved by the legislative assembly in December of 2005. From the floor of the legislature the Bill proceeded to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy where it unfortunately languished, never being called forward for consideration by the Liberal-dominated committee. Even though it had advanced so far in the system with the support of MPPs from all three parties, it too was abandoned when the government dissolved for the provincial election in October 2007.

The Bill, *The Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Amendment Act (Assistance to Municipalities)*, 2008 will ensure that if the Minister of Transportation enters into an agreement with a municipality to provide a rebate of tax under the Gasoline Tax Act to any municipality for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating a rapid transit or public transportation system, the Minister could not refuse to enter into an agreement to provide a rebate of tax under that act on the same per capita basis to any municipality for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating highways in that municipality.