

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

---

# STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION 2005

1<sup>st</sup> Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament  
54 Elizabeth II

**The National Library of Canada has catalogued this publication as follows:**

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs  
Pre-budget consultation [electronic resource]

Annual.

Issued also in French under title: Consultations prébudgétaires.

Began with 2005 issue.

Mode of access: World Wide Web.

Issued also in printed form.

ISSN 1496-9203= Pre-budget consultation – Ontario. Legislative Assembly. Standing  
Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs (Online)

1. Budget--Ontario--Periodicals. 2. Finance, Public--Ontario--Periodicals. 3. Fiscal policy--  
Ontario--Periodicals. 4. Ontario--Economic policy--Periodicals. I. Title

HJ2056.O5O57

354.7130072'223

C2005-964001-4

The Honourable Alvin Curling, MPP,  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Sir,

Your Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs has the honour to present its Report on its Pre-budget Consultation 2005 and commends it to the House.

Pat Hoy, MPP,  
Chair

Queen's Park  
March 2005

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS\***

1st Session, 38th Parliament

**PAT HOY**  
Chair

**Phil Mcneely**  
Vice-Chair

TOBY BARRETT

CAROL MITCHELL

MIKE COLLE

JOHN O'TOOLE

PAT HOY

MICHAEL PRUE

JUDY MARSALES

JOHN WILKINSON

PHIL MCNEELY

---

TREVOR DAY  
Clerk of the Committee

LARRY JOHNSTON AND ANNE MARZALIK  
Research Officers

\*Jim Flaherty served as an ongoing substitution.

**SUBSTITUTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS  
WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATIONS**

WAYNE ARTHURS

DEB MATTHEWS

JIM FLAHERTY

DAVID ORAZIETTI

PETER FONSECA

LOU RINALDI

CAM JACKSON

ROBERT RUNCIMAN

LINDA JEFFREY

MARIA VAN BOMMEL

SHELLEY MARTEL

DAVID ZIMMER

---

---

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE ECONOMY	2
ECONOMIC OUTLOOK	2
FISCAL SITUATION	2
FISCAL POLICY	3
Balanced Budgets and Debt Reduction	3
Government Spending and Revenue	4
II. MINISTRY OF FINANCE	4
Tax Issues	4
Taxes on Business	4
Taxes on Individuals	5
Property Taxes	5
Consumption Taxes	6
Tax Credit Programs	7
Non-Tax Issues	7
III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER MINISTRIES	7
AGRICULTURE	7
ATTORNEY GENERAL	8
CHILDREN'S SERVICES	8
Child Care	8
Child Welfare	9
CITIZENSHIP	9
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES	10
Community Living	10
Social Assistance	10
Social Housing	11
Social Service Agencies	11
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES	11
CONSUMER AND BUSINESS SERVICES	11
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE	12
Investment Incentives	12
Commercialization of Research	13
Life Sciences	13
Auto Industry	14
Other	14
EDUCATION	14
Administration	14
Funding	15
Teaching and Curriculum	16

---

Policy Directions	16
ENERGY	17
Generation and Supply	17
Electricity Market	18
Regulatory Framework	18
ENVIRONMENT	19
HEALTH AND LONG TERM CARE	19
Accountability	19
Direction	20
Programs	20
Hospital Funding	21
Mental Health	21
Health Care Professionals	22
Other Programs	23
Primary Care Reform	23
Long Term Care	23
LABOUR	24
MANAGEMENT BOARD SECRETARIAT	24
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING	24
Land Use Planning and Development	24
Municipal Funding	25
Local Services Realignment (LSR)	26
Housing	27
NATIVE AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT	27
NATURAL RESOURCES	28
NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND MINES	28
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL	29
TOURISM	29
TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	29
Access	29
Directions	30
Funding	30
Other Issues	31
Research	31
Student Financial Aid	31
Tuition / Fees	32
Training	32
TRANSPORTATION	32
Urban Transit	34
RECOMMENDATIONS	35
APPENDIX A: WITNESSES AND SUBMISSIONS	37

APPENDIX B: DISSENTING OPINION OF THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

APPENDIX C: DISSENTING OPINION OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs conducted extensive pre-budget consultations in December 2004 and January 2005 in Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Ottawa, Kingston, London, and Whitby. Witnesses included the Minister of Finance; experts invited by the Committee to present economic and financial forecasts; representatives from various associations, organizations, and other stakeholder groups; and individuals. The Committee heard from 158 witnesses appearing in person, and received 82 written submissions from others who did not appear before the Committee.

The pre-budget consultation provides an essential forum for citizens and organizations to discuss their social, economic and financial concerns with elected representatives. The submissions constitute a vital part of the political process by which governments are held accountable for their decision-making by the people they represent.

This report is an overview of the main issues raised by presenters during the provincial consultation. Details of submissions by witnesses, questions by Committee Members, and responses from witnesses can be found in the Committee proceedings in *Hansard*. A list of witnesses, including web links to *Hansard* record of their presentation, as well as the names of organizations and individuals from whom written briefs were received, appears at the end of the report.

## **I. THE ECONOMY**

### **ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**

Ontario's economy has rebounded from the setbacks and accompanying low growth rates experienced in 2003. The Ministry of Finance is forecasting real GDP growth of 2.3% in 2004, an improvement over the 2003 rate of 1.6%. Full time employment was up 2.3% in the first eleven months of 2004, an increase of 116,200 full time jobs. The unemployment rate was 6.5% in September 2004, down from 7.1% in March.

The most significant economic development in 2004 was the rise of the Canadian dollar, which climbed past 85 cents in November before moderating somewhat. Private sector forecasters suggest that the Canadian dollar is not overvalued at 85 cents.

As a consequence, both government and private sector forecasters are reconsidering growth estimates for 2005 and beyond. Currently, the Ministry of Finance's real GDP growth forecast for 2005 is 3.2%, but higher oil costs and the exchange rate impact may have a dampening effect. The rising Canadian exchange rate will hit Ontario harder than other areas of the country because of its impact on the manufacturing sector, which dominates provincial exports. This means that Canada's economic growth will likely exceed that of Ontario.

Interest rates remain low by historical standards – the three-month treasury bill rate is projected to be 2.2% in 2004 by private sector forecasters. The Bank of Canada increased the Bank Rate during 2004 as the economy began to improve, but the Ministry of Finance predicts that further changes will be modest, because inflation is under control. The average private sector forecast for Ontario's inflation rate in 2004 is 1.8%.

### **FISCAL SITUATION**

According to the Ministry of Finance, by the end of the third fiscal quarter, the province was on track to meet the 2004 Budget projection of a \$2.2 billion deficit. The government has committed to balancing its books before the end of its mandate in 2007-08. It intends to eliminate the structural deficit with a combination of revenue generation and cost containment measures. The Ministry has identified \$350 million in savings as part of a line-by-line program review; this is nearly half the target of \$750 million in savings set by the government to be realized by 2007-08.

The revenue forecast of \$79 billion in 2004-05 contained in *Ontario's Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, 2004* represents an increase of \$10.6 billion over 2003-04. The increase includes \$3.9 billion from the elimination of the liability associated with non-utility generator power purchase agreements, with the balance attributable to tax revenue from increased economic growth and the new

health premium. Currently, the government's revenue forecast for 2005-06 is \$81.1 billion.

The *Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, 2004* projects expenditures of \$80.2 billion for 2004-05, an increase of \$6.9 billion over 2003-04. According to the Ministry of Finance, about 80% of the government's program and capital budget of \$70.1 billion is in the form of transfer payments to hospitals, colleges, universities, school boards and others. Increases in spending were focused on health care, post-secondary education, education and social services. In its *Ontario Budget, 2004* the government noted that 45% of the provincial program spending is on health and long-term care, up from 40% a decade ago. The government is concerned that this rate of growth is not sustainable and that in the future it could make funding other priorities difficult.

According to the Ministry of Finance, in fiscal 2004-05, Ontario is making a net contribution to Confederation of \$23 billion. This means that Ontarians pay \$23 billion more in revenues to Ottawa per year than they receive in program spending, transfer payments, and in paying their share of federal debt interest. The Ministry is concerned that this large net outflow is seriously harming Ontario's fiscal capacity to invest in core government services such as health, education, and infrastructure. Ontario is Canada's economic engine – the scope of this outflow threatens not only Ontario's ability to generate new wealth but Canada's as well.

Total provincial debt is expected to be \$156.7 billion (net debt of \$142.4 billion) in 2004-05. Comparable figures for 2005-06 are \$163.8 billion (net debt of \$145.4 billion). Net debt as a proportion of GDP was 28.3% in 2003-04 and 27.7% in 2004-05.

## **FISCAL POLICY**

### *Balanced Budgets and Debt Reduction*

Many witnesses agreed with the government's plan to balance the budget in the short term, although some cautioned against a dogmatic approach to achieving this goal. Debt reduction was also mentioned, although less frequently than deficit elimination: one proposed target was a ratio of debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) of 15%, the 1989-90 level.

Among those advising balanced budgets, there was less consensus about how to achieve this objective. Some favour an expanded role for the private sector in health care and energy; others recommended privatizing enterprises such as the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO). However, there was a clear division of viewpoints on the value of privatising assets or services and of pursuing so-called P3s (public-private partnerships – see further discussion within).

---

## *Government Spending and Revenue*

Advice on government spending reflected stakeholders' positions in the economy. From the private sector, requests for targeted spending increases were often accompanied by suggestions to reallocate existing spending, or to spend smarter by eliminating waste or by outsourcing. Among the priorities identified were strategic infrastructure investment, brownfield development, health, energy, and transportation infrastructure.

Business groups and organizations generally oppose tax increases, arguing instead for lower rates, with the caveat that the government's budget be in a surplus position. Suggestions to reduce the tax burden included elimination of the capital tax, and reconsideration of the cancellation of tax incentive zones. Expenditure reduction advice included reducing excessive public sector compensation premiums, including wages and non-wage benefits, and health premiums paid by the government for civil servants; as well as reviewing the size of the public service.

Public sector organizations and groups seeking government spending increases endorsed the conclusion of the *Ontario Alternative Budget, 2005 (OAB)*; namely, that the government has more spending flexibility than its forecasts indicate. In 2006-07, the OAB projects surpluses of \$3 billion for 2006-07 and \$5 billion for 2007-08, compared to the Ministry of Finance's projections of a \$1.5 billion deficit in 2006-07 and a balanced budget in 2007-08. The OAB methodology challenges some of the assumptions used in the government's forecasts, and concludes that additional revenue is available on the basis of revenue underestimates, downward adjustments in public debt interest costs, and a lower reserve allowance.

In addition, the OAB recommends increasing corporate tax rates to 2000 levels, increasing personal income tax rates for individuals earning over \$100,000, and closing corporate tax loopholes, with special focus on the Employer Health Tax (EHT). The government was also urged to protect those who are economically marginalized from the burden of extra user fees.

## **II. MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

### **TAX ISSUES**

Positions on tax issues were divided between those seeking relief from the burden of specific tax measures and those identifying these policy instruments as legitimate levers for increasing government revenue.

#### *Taxes on Business*

Seeking a more favourable capital recovery regime, manufacturing and processing (M&P) industries recommended expanding the existing 30% Ontario current cost adjustment (CCA) that applies to pollution control spending to include M&P equipment; and granting a two-year write-off through the existing CCA system.

---

The *Ontario Budget, 2004* announced that capital taxes would be phased out by 2012. Stakeholders from agriculture, manufacturing, and renewable energy were among those who regard the capital tax as a disincentive to investment, and urged the government to phase it out quickly.

Public sector unions favoured increasing corporate income tax (CIT) rates to the level they were at in 2000, while those paying CIT lobbied for lower rates in order to remain competitive with U.S. states. One proposal was to lower general corporate rates from 14% to 12.5% and the M&P rate from 12% to 11%.

Those seeking reinvestment in social services, education and health care seconded the OAB recommendation to eliminate exemptions from the Employer Health Tax (EHT). Retailers asked that the EHT be eliminated on the first \$400,000, and the threshold increased to \$600,000 of payroll.

### *Taxes on Individuals*

Business, labour, and social welfare groups were united in calling for the elimination of the Ontario Health Premium, preferring alternatives such as enhanced federal funding, greater efficiencies in health care delivery, or other tax measures such as those proposed in the OAB.

A proposal to increase fairness in the personal income tax system would harmonize federal and provincial personal income taxes by replacing the current surtaxes of 20% and 56% on provincial income tax payable with two new high tax thresholds on income above \$61,000 and \$72,000, respectively. Allowing retired couples the option of combining their retirement income was also suggested.

### *Property Taxes*

Fairness and rate caps dominated discussions of property tax. Businesses urged a fairer distribution of the tax burden across property tax classes, meaning, in some cases, a reduction in commercial property tax ratios. Legislation mandating municipalities to be within the prescribed ranges of fairness by 2006 was recommended. Businesses favor maintaining tax caps on commercial property and made specific mention of the hard caps in Bill 140, the *Continued Protection for Property Taxpayers Act, 2000*. On the other hand, public sector unions argued for removal of the cap on commercial property taxes to allow municipalities to spread necessary tax increases across all taxpayers.

Some presenters would replace the current value assessment with a unit-based system that would eliminate reassessment and include tax caps. Others want the government to recommit to achieving a full current value assessment system by December 2010. In recognition of the complexity of property tax issues, a property tax review panel was proposed similar to the Business Tax Review Panel created in 2000.

Business groups argued for a uniform provincial business education tax rate, or, for elimination of the tax. Downtown commercial revitalization was one goal of

those seeking education property tax equalization. A northern municipality with stagnant or declining assessment levels recommended lower education tax rates, as well as a Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) presence in Northern Ontario. Rural municipalities drew attention to the potential for the cap on property assessment for wind turbines to seriously harm their revenue base.

Improved support for land trusts was proposed by allocating a portion of the land transfer tax to a green fund for conservation-minded initiatives, and through changes to MPAC's treatment of easements and the conservation land tax.

Ontario farmers also sought property tax changes, such as eliminating the land transfer tax on farm successions; implementing realistic property tax assessments; defining "farm" and "farming operation" for property assessment purposes; and extending the exemption from the Land Transfer Tax to include farms in farm corporations and estate trusts.

One municipality requested annual adjustment of the power dam grants, at the rate of inflation, confirmation of the status of the grant program, and a long-term commitment to this funding.

### *Consumption Taxes*

A list of presenters seeking full or partial provincial sales tax (PST) exemptions includes municipal and regional governments, makers of home insulation products, the natural gas vehicle alliance, hotels (re: destination marketing fees), and real estate companies (re: parking lots). Other stakeholders suggested replacing the PST with a value-added tax (VAT) through harmonization with the federal goods and services tax (GST), or provincial VAT legislation, or some combination of the two. Other, unspecified harmonization of provincial and federal taxes was also supported.

While municipalities generally praised the government for following through on its promise to deliver gasoline tax revenue, northern and smaller communities took issue with administrative aspects, including the focus on transit. Revisions to the formula were proposed to allow a portion of the gas tax to be transferred to all municipalities, regardless of transit ridership, as well as the ability to direct any funding to other infrastructure needs, such as roads and bridges.

Representatives of the retail industry proposed incentives to enhance energy conservation; the development of product stewardship programs; changes to how software is taxed; a new approach to treating natural health products, and harmonization with federal taxes on bottled water. The government was urged to reject municipal requests to levy a hotel room tax.

A smokers' rights group opposed further tobacco tax hikes, and advised using tobacco tax revenue to help smokers quit; on the other hand, tobacco control advocates lobbied the government to close the loophole for loose tobacco.

### *Tax Credit Programs*

Several witnesses sought improvements to existing tax credit programs. The film industry expressed its satisfaction with recently announced increases to the Ontario film and television tax credits. Animators suggested the Ontario computer animation and special effects tax credit (OCASE) could be improved by eliminating residency requirements on eligible labour costs, and by increasing the wage cap on labour.

Research and innovation industries want the Ontario Innovation Tax Credit rate adjusted to be competitive with other provinces' programs. Continuation of the Transit Incentive for Alternative Fuelled Buses, begun in 2003, was encouraged, and the service and retail industries asked that the Training Tax Credit be extended to their sector.

### **NON-TAX ISSUES**

The Committee heard that the proposed elimination of the system of neutral assessment centres (for auto insurance) will have a negative impact on the provincial treasury and burden an already strained legal system. Home insulation manufacturers brought proposals for enhanced building code requirements to improve energy efficiency, in conjunction with subsidies to offset the initial costs of compliance. Other recommendations included support for a national securities regulator to replace the current passport system; enhancement of budget transparency by publishing a complete list of service fees and how they are derived; and a coordinated campaign against the underground economy. Building contractors want the government to work with their industry to encourage consumers to use legitimate renovators and builders.

## **III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER MINISTRIES**

### **AGRICULTURE**

Ontario's agriculture sector has undergone a prolonged period of economic challenges. Concern about ongoing sustainability informed proposals to establish a task force to report and make recommendations on the viability of agriculture in Ontario; and to strike the review committee for the Agricultural Policy Framework. Immediate support for farmers was the object of suggestions to strengthen the *Farming and Food Production Protection Act* to enhance farmers' ability to carry out best management practices; bolster the *Trespass to Property Act* by adding stiffer fines and higher damage awards in order to protect crops and livestock; and uphold the *Line Fences Act*.

Farmers are concerned about costs relating to source water protection. They suggested limiting spending on nutrient management to situations where a net improvement will result, and that it be supported by direct funding and/or taxation measures. Policies to support specific farming categories would be welcome, an example being benefits to Niagara grape farmers from changes to Ontario grape

---

content in the *Wine Content Act*, and more shelf space at LCBO for Ontario VQA wines.

Corn producers want support for their Association's plan, which would provide direct assistance to new ethanol production projects based on their purchases of source-verified Ontario corn. Tobacco producers face unique problems associated with a declining industry. To mitigate the economic impact, the government was asked to regulate the domestic content of tobacco in Canada and fulfil its promise to provide immediate help to those leaving the industry.

#### Ontario Farm Income Safety Net

Ontario's farmers regard support programs as essential to their operations. Grain and oilseed producers suggested the replacement for the Market Revenue Insurance program, due to be phased out, be modelled on Alberta's Revenue Assurance Program. Producers also asked for a replacement for the Self-Directed Risk Management Program, and elimination of the deposit requirement for CAIS (the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program). Adequate definition of the environmental, food safety, research and renewal aspects of the Agricultural Policy Framework was requested.

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL**

The Committee was told of the need to hire more Justices of the Peace, and to strengthen Legal Aid Ontario's Youth Court Action Planning project, which diverts youth from the criminal justice system. Incentives were proposed to attract legal aid lawyers to under-serviced areas such as Northern Ontario, as well as a refundable tax credit for small firms hiring articling students.

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### *Child Care*

Child care advocates urged the Ministry of Children's Services to develop a multi-year policy framework and action plan for transforming childcare from a targeted, subsidy-based program to a non-profit, high quality system of universal, affordable access for every child. More direct funding for regulated childcare was requested, dedicated to not-for-profit services. Quebec's system, with its multi-year phase-in of direct funding to provide universal entitlement to services was presented as a model for implementation, beginning with the upcoming Budget. Targets for before- and after-school services for children aged 6 to 12 years should be included.

The Ministry was asked to use available federal government dollars from the Early Child Development Initiative and the Multi-lateral Framework Agreement to fund expansion, as well as restore direct provincial funding that was lost between 1995 and 2001. The Committee was told that the province should work with other governments to create a national childcare program; that federal funding should not substitute for or diminish provincial investments in early

learning and care; and that municipal cost-sharing should be replaced with 100% provincial funding. One municipality suggested allowing the flow-through of federal childcare funding without requiring municipal cost-sharing.

Various recommendations addressed the remuneration, training, and working conditions of child care workers, including funding for retroactive payments to honour pay equity commitments, and for wage enhancement grants.

Program service providers sought resources for children with special needs in Ontario Early Years Centres as well as meaningful support to research, planning and program evaluation. Investing in *Families and Schools Together* was recommended as a best-practice best-start program.

### *Child Welfare*

Pointing to a gap between their mandated services and the funding to which they are entitled, child welfare agencies called for a comprehensive review of their funding formula, including updated salary and workload benchmarks; increases for adoption support services, travel, and legal fees; and more realistic payments to foster parents. Long-term solutions were sought for the impact on expenditures of actions taken by other Ministries; full funding for current Children's Aid Society deficits was requested.

The Ministry was urged to develop and maintain a longer-term sustainable plan to tackle children's mental health, including the provision of additional base funding for community-based treatment, and core funding to support parents. Gaps in funding services for developmentally delayed children were identified, as were the challenges of providing services in Northern Ontario.

Other recommendations for this Ministry included creating a strong provincial network of youth centres using existing centres, service models and established community partnerships; and establishing a trust fund for every young person to use to obtain an education or start a business or career. The Ministry was asked to commit annual funding to sustain Early Intervention Services (EIS) for blind and visually impaired children.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

Anticipating the passage of Bill 118 (the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2004*), municipal leaders asked the government to balance the needs of citizens with the ability of municipalities to pay for improvements. Those who work with new Ontarians suggested increasing the budget for the Newcomer Settlement Program, and invited the province to negotiate with the federal government to increase funds for settlement services through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, including a portion for ESL education and support. Capital funding over a five-year period was requested for a new venue dedicated to promoting social cohesion.

---

## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Faith-based social justice groups urged the government to rebuild the social services sector by ensuring there is sufficient fiscal capacity, even if this means raising additional tax revenue. Municipal representatives suggested financing income support programs from income taxes rather than property taxes that burden those on fixed or low incomes.

### *Community Living*

Recognizing that the government faces fiscal constraints, representatives of transfer payment agencies requested a sustained increase be provided in the government's long-term fiscal framework. More immediately, they asked for a base budget increase of 3%, and drew attention to cost pressures beyond their control, such as WSIB premium increases, new legislative and regulatory requirements, and salary and benefits increases. Eventually, the salaries of full-time front line counsellors should be brought to levels comparable with the salaries for similar positions elsewhere. Individual agencies made specific requests for one-time and/or ongoing assistance, including support for professional intervention services for the deaf-blind.

### *Social Assistance*

#### Ontario Works Reform

Many witnesses proposed reform of Ontario Works. Suggestions ranged from replacing the cumbersome and unnecessarily complex computer system; to introducing transitional benefits (and/or improving the earnings exemptions) in order to remove the disincentive to remain on or return to social assistance; to improving the placement service program elements; to implementing all of the recommendations of the Matthews Report. The abolition of workfare and review of the private-public partnership with Accenture were proposed, and one municipality requested information, for budgetary purposes, about the ongoing impact of any welfare reforms. The government was invited to consider providing economic compensation for women who perform valuable work at home.

#### Rates

Various witnesses acknowledged the government's 3% rate increase, first announced in the 2004 Budget, but also suggested this is insufficient to provide an adequate standard of living for those dealing with an employment or family crisis or health emergency. One approach would restore the cuts made in the mid-1990s and adjust for subsequent inflation; another would increase social assistance benefits to meet recipients' actual shelter costs and basic needs, and index these benefits to the annual inflation rate. A more specific proposal was to increase ODSP benefits to a level at or above the defined 'poverty line,' subject to automatic indexation, and maintained throughout an individual's efforts to obtain employment.

### National Child Benefit Supplement

In 2004, the government allowed the flow-through of the July increase to the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS). Many presenters urged it to take the next step and stop the clawback of the NCBS entirely from families living on social assistance or disability pensions.

### *Social Housing*

Reinvestment in social housing was addressed by several witnesses, calling for measures (such as a capital reserves endowment fund) to maintain existing stock over time, and to re-build Ontario's housing programs. A common plea was for the government to honour commitments to match federal dollars under the Affordable Housing Program. To enhance affordability, a program of provincially-funded rent supplements was recommended, as well as the provision of incentives for not-for-profit alternatives such as cooperative housing and municipal non-profits. Other suggestions included a comprehensive review of the *Social Housing Reform Act*; increasing per diems paid to municipalities for homeless shelters; and adopting a comprehensive energy poverty and conservation policy for low-income households.

### *Social Service Agencies*

Workers in non-profit social service agencies suggested meeting with agency and ministry representatives to identify and implement funding models and commitments that would attract and maintain a highly qualified and stable workforce, improve the ability to match programs to growing community needs, and plan for long-term development and sustainability. Specific requests touched upon increased counseling services for low-income, vulnerable families, and expanding 211 service from Toronto to the remaining GTA.

### Emergency Shelters

The government was urged to restore all funding cut from women's first stage emergency shelters in 1995, and from second stage housing programs in 1996, and to reimburse shelters for pay equity payments made since 1999. An immediate, comprehensive and timely review of funding for women's emergency shelters, as recommended in the May and Hadley inquests, was requested.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

Volunteer emergency response teams asked the Ministry to match municipal funding and provide base funding of one cent per Ontario resident to support provincial-wide response initiatives.

## **CONSUMER AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

Recommendations for this Ministry were basically concerned with the consumption of alcohol and tobacco.

The Committee was asked to support a true wholesale pricing regime for liquor sales licensees, and was told that a transparent and accountable system for beer pricing in Ontario would foster more competition, and thereby provide more selection and purchasing options for the licensee community. Representatives of the hospitality industry asked that the government take a staged approach to compliance with the *Liquor License Act* that includes a range of options and sanctions, and separation of the enforcement/prosecution function from the adjudicative function of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) when addressing disciplinary actions against liquor licensees.

The hospitality industry also addressed the negative impact of anti-smoking legislation on their business, and asked the government to remain open to sensible solutions that allow small companies to stay in business. One suggestion was a phase-out strategy specific to the hospitality industry, similar to cessation programs for individuals wanting to quit smoking. As well, compensation was proposed for the more than 700 operators who have invested in municipally approved, designated smoking rooms. This could take the form of accelerated depreciation schedules, a one-time lump sum payment, or opportunities for more revenue generation.

On the other side of this issue, tobacco control advocates requested a total of \$90 million for a fully funded, comprehensive program to dramatically reduce the number of people who smoke. The government was urged to carry through with the complete ban on retail displays of tobacco products, as provided for in Bill 164, without making exemptions by means of regulations. A further \$50 million in community transition funds was suggested as part of the comprehensive tobacco control strategy.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE**

### *Investment Incentives*

Investment is a key driver of GDP growth and measures that will create a favorable investment climate are viewed as important by all stakeholders.

A tax credit of 30% was proposed for individual angel investors in eligible companies. A program similar to the federal government's Community Investment Support Program (CISP), with annual funding of \$17 million, was recommended to develop the tools to attract, retain and expand foreign direct investment into Ontario. Witnesses also suggested that reducing tax rates and increasing access to capital through grants or low-interest loans would fuel growth in the manufacturing industry.

The Committee was told that regulatory reform and skills development will promote innovation, and that modernizing regulations provides an attractive investment climate for businesses operating in global markets. Education programs geared to industry, and the formation of centers of excellence for skills training were recommended. The government was urged to foster competition by

---

working with the federal government to remove obstacles that hinder innovation, including red tape and profit-insensitive levies, and to develop Ontario's competitive advantages, particularly with respect to health care, education and R&D.

### *Commercialization of Research*

Presenters argued that commercialization of research in areas such as health and technology must be facilitated by the government through spending initiatives and co-operation with institutions such as Queen's University. Maintaining programs such as the Ontario Research Fund, and the Ontario Centers of Excellence can encourage new discoveries in universities and hospitals. The Committee was told that there is a need for clarification of the rules and conditions for the Ontario Commercialization Investment Fund and that incentives are needed to attract matching private sector funding.

A network of community-based, innovation and technology transfer support centers was proposed to make university and college research accessible to Canadian companies, by providing specialized services in areas critical to the growth and expansion of emerging innovators. The province was urged to conduct a joint review in 2005, with the federal government, of the Scientific Research and Experimental Development program, and implement the resulting recommendations in the 2006 federal and provincial budgets.

### *Life Sciences*

Representatives from life sciences, a growing industry that deals with the development of drugs and health solutions, called on the government to leverage the potential R&D investment of the pharmaceutical industry, and contribute to the economic prosperity of Ontario. Policies that ensure the optimal use and rapid reimbursement of drugs will ensure that patients can benefit from advancements; that long-term savings to the health system are realized; and that other pressures on the health system, such as wait times, can be reduced. To ensure that innovation is fairly valued, the government was urged to eliminate the price freeze that keeps drug prices at 1993 levels, and to implement patient health management programs focusing on diseases that comprise a large proportion of Ministry of Health expenditures and affect a large number of Ontarians.

Witnesses called for development of a national biopharmaceutical manufacturing strategy, and research and training capacity to develop new training infrastructure and programming to support a regionally distributed learning network. The Committee heard also of the need to develop regulatory capacity, and the ability to foresee regulatory challenges and respond within an international framework. Specific funding request of \$60-\$70 million over four years was requested in the form of infrastructure grants and a training network in the Ottawa and Greater Toronto Area (GTA) for a Canadian bio-processing initiative.

Ontario, it was suggested, with the development of biotechnology innovation clusters, could become a global leader in R&D and the manufacturing of bio-

products. The province was asked to create a globally competitive environment for the regulation, protection and enforcement of intellectual property.

### *Auto Industry*

The auto industry is central to Ontario's economy, and a key generator of provincial gross domestic product (GDP). Witnesses support the development of a competitive, provincial auto industry strategy that would address immediate needs for innovation, skills and infrastructure, to help retain existing plants, and attract future investment and jobs. Further, it was noted, support needs to be extended to public-private sector partnerships such as the Initiative for Automotive Innovation. An attractive investment climate for original equipment manufacturers (OEM) is viewed as necessary to ensure the continued presence of assembly plants and parts manufacturers in the province. A specific funding request was made to assist tier 1 and tier 2 auto suppliers with grants or low-interest loans, ranging from \$1-\$5 million. The government was urged to take a lead role and work with Ottawa, through the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council, on a broader Canadian automotive strategy.

### *Other*

Witnesses urged the government to consider broadband as part of infrastructure program investments, and to facilitate expansion of this technology to urban, rural and remote areas by setting aggressive goals for broadband access and wireless 3G (third generation wireless service) implementation. Representatives from Eastern Ontario indicated that their region should be considered more often when funds are allocated for development initiatives.

## **EDUCATION**

A number of stakeholders addressed elementary and secondary education with concerns about administration, funding, and pedagogical issues such as testing and curriculum.

### *Administration*

Witnesses questioned the flexibility that school boards have to allocate funds from a specific funding grant to other, unrelated purposes. School boards asked for better pupil accommodation guidelines, an end to the moratorium on school closures, and further information about the previously announced \$200 million grant for school renewal projects. A more streamlined administrative process for special education grants and individual plans continues to be a goal, as well as an equitable allocation of resources that recognizes the diversity of needs among boards. Other administrative suggestions were about annual monitoring and reporting of class sizes in elementary grades, review of policy and procedures governing School Community Councils, and review of the roles and remuneration of trustees and directors.

---

## Funding

Many comments concerning funding were prefaced by remarks congratulating the government for its investments in education to date, acknowledging attention to recommendations brought before the Committee in previous years. Nonetheless, specific concerns were raised regularly about overall funding levels, and about the amounts dedicated to specific purposes.

School boards suggested that education funding should be based on four essential principles: equity, adequacy, autonomy/flexibility and accountability. Concerned citizens suggested funding should be truly needs-based, and provided at levels that obviate the need for parent fund-raising.

## Benchmarks

Teacher unions and parental groups insist that the government has not fully met the main recommendation of the Rozanski Report; namely, to update fully the benchmark costs for all components of the funding formula. The issue for some stakeholders is the *ad hoc* nature of the enhancements to the funding formula made by the current and previous governments: Dr. Rozanski's recommendation that a mechanism be established for a regular review of the formula benchmarks has yet to be realized. At the very least, some groups argued, a realistic annual adjustment for inflation should be built into the formula benchmarks.

## Specific Program Grants

Changes to the formula were proposed in order to fund adult education at the same rate as secondary students in regular day school, to ensure realization of the primary class size cap while guaranteeing the integrity of class size in the junior and intermediate divisions, to provide funding for 200 minutes of elementary teacher preparation time, to address deferred maintenance, to provide long-term funding for schools affected by the closing moratorium, and to provide for any future increases in electricity rates.

School boards and parent representatives recommended changes to the declining enrolment grant, and more generally asked that the effect of declining enrolment on the funding model be reviewed. An appeal for more flexibility in board use of special education funding accompanied requests for additional resources to support learning disabled students.

Elementary teachers asked for elimination of the gap between the per pupil elementary and secondary Foundation Grants; secondary teachers asked for elimination of the gap between the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) for elementary and secondary pupils.

## ESL / FSL

Both educators and social service providers spoke about protecting and improving language instruction for immigrant, allophone and aboriginal individuals facing linguistic barriers. They suggested that funding should be based on levels of proficiency rather than rules based on place of birth, and protected from diversion to other purposes. The use of community organizations for programme delivery was also advocated.

### Staffing and Compensation

School boards and teachers asked that boards be fully funded for their labour contracts. Dedicated funding was requested to ensure adequate levels of staffing to meet the office, clerical, technical and plant support needs of schools, and to allow boards to meet pay equity obligations. Various presenters spoke to the value of specialist teachers in the areas of physical education, music, art, and drama, and about the importance of providing adequate student supports by increasing staffing levels of teacher-librarians and guidance counsellors. In order to recruit and retain new teachers, various changes to the Teacher Compensation Grant were proposed, including shortening the instructional salary matrix, adjusting experience factors, abolishing the formula clawback, and removing the 7.5 average credit cap.

Outside the funding formula, occasional teachers sought stronger support, concerned citizens requested specific allocations for maintenance and administration to ensure the health and safety of staff and students, and school boards requested compensation for costs resulting from other government policies such as protection of heritage properties and improving access for citizens with disabilities.

### *Teaching and Curriculum*

Non-educators who work with immigrants suggested that mandatory training in ESL and other immigration issues be given to all teachers, principals, and other front-line staff. Elementary teachers asked for reinstatement of the five lost professional development days, and for a cap on supervision time. Secondary school teachers suggested the EQAO be abolished, along with the tests it administers, with the resulting savings re-invested in schools; elementary teachers suggested replacing province-wide testing of grades 3 and 6 pupils with random sample testing.

Provincial business representatives called for strong and sustainable technological education programs in Ontario's curriculum, as well as for earmarked funding for teacher training in technological education, support for the Technological Education Renewal Initiative, and clarification of the government's commitments in this area.

### *Policy Directions*

Policy directions suggested to the government included creation of a cabinet-level advisory council to coordinate children and youth services; review of the *Safe Schools Act* and resources for children or youth that have been suspended or expelled; and creation of a curriculum council with broad stakeholder representation. Presentations were received calling for the end of public funding of Roman Catholic school boards. The government was also urged to keep contract negotiations local, rather than move to province-wide bargaining.

---

## ENERGY

The context for presentations concerning the energy portfolio continues to be provided by ongoing reform of the province's role in the provision and regulation of electricity. This process was begun under the previous government and continues under the current administration with the recent passage of the *Electricity Restructuring Act*. Early in its term, the government confirmed its commitment to close, for environmental reasons, Ontario's coal-fired plants by 2007. The matter of how this capacity is replaced intersects with other important issues within the energy portfolio such as long-term supply capacity, the role of the market in delivering new supply and in setting prices, conservation strategies, and the future of specific types of generation, including nuclear power and renewable sources. Most of the presenters addressing these topics spoke on behalf of commerce and industry, with a primary concern about the long-term provision of stable, affordable power. The Committee also heard that the infrastructure of the electricity system, namely, the grid interconnect system, should be reviewed to avoid brown- and black-outs.

### *Generation and Supply*

The government has acknowledged that it faces challenges in providing an adequate supply of electricity, assuming closure of the coal-fired plants and given that some nuclear plants are nearing the end of their operational lives. Policy initiatives have included requests for proposals for clean electricity, for new electricity supply, and for demand management (i.e., conservation) projects.

### Coal-Fired Power

Industry representatives support closing the coal-fired plants only if cost-effective alternatives are available; a thorough, analytical reassessment of the current and alternative strategies was advised, as well as additional incentives for biomass and co-generation. Business representatives suggested retrofitting coal-fired facilities with new emissions-reducing technology, where it is economically beneficial to do so. This, it was argued, will ensure competitively priced electricity, maximize electricity supply, and allow coal plants to meet cleaner air targets.

### Hydro

Among the alternative energy solutions encouraged was importing hydroelectricity from other provinces, including Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

### Nuclear

It was suggested that inactive nuclear reactors be refurbished, where it is economically beneficial to do so, but that otherwise new development projects should be left to the private sector.

### Renewable Energy

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) was encouraged to develop a long-term strategy regarding new generating capacity from sources such as natural gas, nuclear, and garbage incineration in addition to the promotion of conservation. Wind energy associates recommended that the government purchase more renewable energy

contracts, and provide incentives such as exempting renewable energy sources from the capital tax (the large corporations tax). Other advice included reducing bureaucracy and politics around electricity generation, and promoting “out-of-the-box” thinking around electricity management.

### Conservation

Demand side activities envisioned under the *Electricity Restructuring Act*, such as setting targets for conservation, renewable energy, and the overall supply mix were endorsed, as were conservation programs for business and the public, such as employing OPG and local electricity companies to educate local businesses about conservation.

### *Electricity Market*

Having affirmed the policy direction that opens Ontario’s supply market to private electricity generators, the government was urged to move quickly to implement a market pricing system that reflects the true cost of electricity. As an interim step, a limited term rebate program could alleviate consumer concerns over price escalation. The government was encouraged to remove the rate cap, to encourage peak time shifting of use, and to move to time-of-day rates. Government, business and residential home sectors need to appreciate that a fair-priced, stable electrical market is crucial to Ontario’s business outlook, and the government was advised to open up supply and demand issues for debate on potential solutions, including the recommendations from the OPG Review and the Manley Report.

### *Regulatory Framework*

Business representatives encouraged the government to follow through on the regulatory changes set out in the *Electricity Restructuring Act*, including creating the Ontario Power Authority, mandated to ensure an adequate, long-term supply of electricity; establishing a Conservation Bureau with a Chief Energy Conservation Officer; and redefining the role of the Independent Electricity Systems Operator (formerly the Independent Electricity Market Operator).

### Energy Efficient Vehicles

Energy efficient vehicles are in the development stage and promoters sought incentives to further this technology, such as the Ontario Energy Board developing “rate-base friendly” initiatives for natural gas vehicles. The government was encouraged to use alternative fuels in school buses, airport vehicles, all municipal vehicles, and high mileage Province of Ontario cars and trucks. Procurement of alternative-fuel vehicles at the municipal level should be tied to provincial funding programs, such as building into any transportation funding a requirement that the cleanest, proven, commercially-available technologies be employed. This could be accomplished by a continuation of the Transit Incentive for Alternative Fuelled Transit Buses, or a rebate of the gasoline fuel tax.

---

## ENVIRONMENT

### Brownfields

Municipalities and business requested supportive policies for brownfields development, including amendments to relevant legislation, including the *Environmental Protection Act*; the establishment of a brownfields registry; and broadened liability protection.

### Safe Drinking Water

Ontario's drinking water infrastructure and testing has been an ongoing concern since the Walkerton tragedy. Business representatives called for a drinking water infrastructure program that will provide one-third of the funding of capital upgrade expenditures of Ontario municipalities. A number of recommendations were made concerning water testing (including an on-line/fax registration system) and oversight (including random Ministry audits, immediate notification of adverse test results, and appointment of a primary drinking water officer in each health region). Support was expressed for the Walkerton Inquiry recommendation (No. 84) concerning reducing the cost of providing safe drinking water in trailer parks.

### Environmental Protection Act (Bill 133)

Witnesses from the business and forestry sectors expressed concerns about Bill 133, the *Environmental Protection Act*, and offered to consult in consideration of alternatives to this legislation. Forestry representatives seek a solution that will address what they see as the problems of too many spills and compensation delays, without the negative consequences of Bill 133.

### Waste Diversion

The hospitality industry asked for a standard municipal waste diversion model that specifies the types of materials collected, the costs and revenues associated with each, as well as a standard reporting model to assure stewards that remitted funds are directed to approved costs and expenditures. It was suggested that municipalities should be compelled to implement cost containment strategies using this model.

## HEALTH AND LONG TERM CARE

The Committee received more presentations concerning this policy sector than any other, which is consistent with this Ministry's place within the Province's expenditure budget. Constructive suggestions about directions for future reform were balanced with concerns raised about policy directions taken in the past few years.

### *Accountability*

The government was commended for Bill 8, the *Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2003*, but three areas were highlighted where additional accountability is required: (a) preventing erosion through increased for-profit delivery and P3s, (b) ensuring that the process of appointing members of the

Ontario Health Quality Council is transparent and democratic, and (c) requiring accountability of government to providers and to the public. For one stakeholder, replacing Order-in-Council appointments to health care organizations with independent third party selection would increase accountability, for another, it would involve developing performance measures that would allow funding to be directed to the most cost-effective treatments provided by the most cost-effective practitioners.

### *Direction*

#### Cost Containment

A broad range of advice was offered concerning efforts to contain health care costs. The government was advised not to allow health care to continue to crowd out other public services and programs, and to hold the line on funding for acute care in hospitals and for nurses and doctors. Others, though, urged caution. Chiropractors suggested no further changes be made to OHIP-covered services without a public consultation process focused on assessing the impact on access, cost and the quality of those services. Drug manufacturers expressed concern that cost-centric approaches to managing innovation will diminish patient outcomes and unnecessarily increase overall costs; others urged holding the line on the increasing cost of for-profit components of the system, such as drugs. Health care workers suggested economies of scale could be realized by implementing a jointly-trusted benefits plan with Ontario hospitals, and sought protection of the lowest paid workers in the health care system, and of local health care services. Public-private partnerships (P3s) were criticized. The government was invited to rethink its cost-cutting demands on hospitals, and nursing representatives expressed disappointment that the Ministry accepted recent hospital budget-cutting exercises that will eliminate nursing positions.

#### Reinvestment

Many suggestions focused on possible investments or re-investments. Nurses and other health care workers called for increasing the level of program expenditures to 15% of GDP, bringing back de-listed services, reinvesting in proven programs for frail and isolated seniors, and ceasing to ration healthcare services. The recommendations of the Ontario Alternative Budget were endorsed as a strategy to increase the province's fiscal capacity and provide resources for health care programs, along with greater use of environmental taxes. Institutions called for investment in information technology that would help them be more efficient and deliver better patient outcomes.

### *Programs*

#### Cancer Care

Cancer researchers suggested the government allocate less funding to non-integrated approaches, and provide full support instead to the Ontario Cancer Plan. This would entail incremental increases in three areas: volume investments for new cases, transformational investments for regional services and rapid access strategies, and capital investments for new treatment facilities and equipment. A

comprehensive strategy for recognizing and treating ovarian cancer was also presented to the Committee.

### Community Health

A number of groups stressed the important role of community health services, making specific requests for increases in operating funds, capital grants, and base funding. Revisions to the model of remuneration for physicians and nurses, it was suggested, would facilitate attracting these professionals. A reminder was made of the commitment to ensure that seniors have access to the services of neighbourhood support agencies.

### Home Care

Health care workers requested an end to compulsory competitive bidding for home care services; Manitoba's system was proposed as a model. Home care, it was argued, should be provided on an "as needed" basis.

### *Hospital Funding*

Many hospital representatives appeared with advice, concerns, and requests. The provincial association suggested that the current 3-year plan is inadequate, and requested that transitional funding be provided until community-based health care options are put into place. Other hospital funding requests included changing the funding and budgeting processes so that institutions receive Ministry information sooner, new accounting procedures to allow amortizing capital expenditures over a facility's life cycle, flowing funding for approved capital projects, investing in infrastructure, and addressing particular institutions' specific needs and situations.

The Committee heard about the unique challenges faced by northern hospitals, and the needs of multi-site, rural hospitals. The Ministry was urged to provide funding to Ontario's academic hospitals that will allow them to build world-class research facilities, retain top scientists, and provide high quality health care services; one proposal was to match outstanding CFI (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) grants from the federal government.

### *Mental Health*

Stakeholders spoke of the need to support an integrated mental health system operating across a continuum of care and service that addresses health prevention and promotion, early intervention, and crisis management. Providing adequate operating support, including long-term funding stability for addiction services, would help identify mental health as a priority of the government, which is encouraged to build on the commitments it has already made. Institutional representatives suggested that attention to the community infrastructure is necessary for the mental health service delivery team to work well, examples of particular need being affordable housing and the conditions of poverty endured by many with severe mental illness. Strategies for dealing with homelessness included the provision of more supportive housing, safe houses and crisis beds, access to case management services, shared care teams in emergency shelters and drop-ins, and the availability of withdrawal management and addiction treatment services, especially for women and aboriginal people. Members were asked to

recognize the needs of diverse, rural and remote communities. Representatives from the business community suggested the formation of an Ontario workplace mental health strategy.

### *Health Care Professionals*

#### *Audiology*

Audiologists offered to replace doctors as the gatekeepers for those individuals seeking care for audiology issues, and sought reversal of the decision made in 2001 to de-list their services under OHIP.

#### *Chiropractic Care*

A number of chiropractic practices and individual practitioners urged the government to re-list chiropractic services, arguing that this would allow significant overall health system cost reductions to be realized. For the same reason, they argued that chiropractors should be able to order x-rays and other tests, such as CAT scans, with the costs being covered under OHIP.

#### *Neurosurgical Services*

The Ministry was asked to re-establish and extend support for neurosurgical services in southwestern Ontario.

#### *Nursing*

Registered practical nurses invited the government to require all publicly funded health care facilities to utilize both registered nurses and registered practical nurses.

#### *Optometric Services*

Ontario's optometrists brought three requests: to increase the fees paid for eye examinations provided under OHIP to levels reflecting the increase in eye care costs over the past sixteen years; to fund secondary AVF (automated visual field) assessments on a par with payment to ophthalmologists, or, to allow optometrists to bill patients directly for the service; and, to allow optometrists to prescribe TPAs (therapeutic pharmaceutical agents).

#### *Physician Shortages*

The College of Physicians and Surgeons presented recommendations to address physician shortages, including financial support for assessing and training international medical graduates, increasing post-graduate training capacity, increasing enrolment at Ontario medical schools, new rules for Canadian residents studying at international medical schools, and the creation of a health human resources planning body. They also suggested considering potential collaborative care models. Business community representatives echoed recommendations concerning foreign-trained doctors and increasing Ontario's medical school enrolment.

#### *Physiotherapy Services*

Ontario physiotherapists sought funding for their services provided in home care, in long-term care facilities, in hospital out-patient physiotherapy clinics and in other non-institutional settings. They also suggested the government ensure

funding earmarked for physiotherapy is not lost in hospitals' global budgets. Schedule 5 physiotherapists asked that the delisting of their facilities be suspended pending a thorough analysis and a three-year transition period.

### *Other Programs*

In addition to the requests by health practitioners, the Committee received submissions from health care consumers. The Ministry was asked to consider upgrading the level of assistance given to approved Ontario Hepatitis C Assistance Plan (OHCAP) clients who can no longer work and have had to pay high medical bills over the years. Ontario was urged to provide a provincial pharmacare program.

### *Primary Care Reform*

A diverse range of presenters supported plans for primary care reform. Physiotherapists expressed support for multidisciplinary primary care delivery and funding models; a municipality concerned about investment in the rural health care infrastructure urged that work on health teams continue and be expanded; a group health centre advocated implementing Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) in such a way that local communities have control over resources; and public sector health workers asked that LHINs not be a vehicle for privatization of health services. Business community representatives called for an end to the gate-keeping role of doctors, permitting instead greater input from nurses, psychologists, occupational physiotherapists and others in primary care teams delivering health care services.

## **LONG TERM CARE**

### **Funding**

The Committee heard that there is a serious disparity between what has been indicated as Ministry funding to meet new standards and what is actually being provided. Stakeholders called for an increase in the per diem operating grant to meet this shortfall, and asked for an end to the imbalance between nursing homes and homes for the aged. A common refrain was the need to establish and maintain a long-term care continuum, with special emphasis on expanding the range of offerings in the community. The Committee heard that supportive housing for seniors is a logical, cost-effective alternative to the premature admission of seniors to nursing homes and to the inappropriate admission (and stay) of seniors in acute care hospitals. In the institutional sector, serious capital renewal needs were identified, in particular ongoing maintenance and renewal of B and C homes.

A full set of recommendations was presented concerning homes for those with special needs, addressing funding, standards and their enforcement, and ministerial responsibility. The provincial association requested priority attention to quality of life issues, including enhanced activity programming and volunteer coordination; social work, chaplaincy and palliative care services; dietician services; and physiotherapy services.

## Standards and Enforcement

Public sector workers called upon the Ministry to follow through on commitments made to address problems, including enforcement of tougher standards and increasing staffing levels. Among the priority areas underlined were a guaranteed minimum amount of daily resident care, monitoring standards for baths and lifts, transparent funding reporting mechanisms, and whistle-blower protection. It was suggested that each municipality should be required to operate a long term care facility and provided with the resources to do so. The Ministry was asked to review the supportive housing system so that standards are applied consistently in that part of the long term continuum.

## LABOUR

Continued support and funding for the certification, licensing, and accreditation of internationally trained professionals and trades people was recommended, along with their integration into Canada's business sector. The Ministry was urged to negotiate a Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) with the Federal Government.

Advocates on behalf of the working poor asked that the minimum wage be increased to \$10 per hour and indexed annually to the rate of inflation. The creation and funding of a taskforce to examine a minimum wage that permits Ontario workers to live above the poverty line was also proposed.

Other recommended measures included changes to the *Labour Relations Act* regarding municipalities and construction unions, restoration of the card system for certification, and rules for the certification of healthcare workers. An *Employment Agencies Act*, with a Ministry office responsible for effective enforcement mechanisms was proposed, as well as stronger enforcement of existing labour laws by the Employment Standards Branch. Several presenters raised the matter of ongoing funding to enable employers to fulfil their pay equity obligations.

## MANAGEMENT BOARD SECRETARIAT

The Committee received a submission noting the lack of any commitment to build a new home for the provincial archives, and recommending that steps be taken to ensure that proper facilities are maintained with suitable atmospheric and working conditions for storing and retrieving Ontario's important records and information.

## MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

### *Land Use Planning and Development*

Developers called for a study of the economic impact of the Greenbelt in Ontario and a review of all fiscal and regulatory policies that could promote intensification. They proposed legislation to ensure user fees are based on a

reasonable, direct cost recovery system that allows for appeal of municipal decisions. The building permit system is viewed as an irritant and the government was urged to re-examine whether this policy is consistent with its stated objectives.

Business representatives asked the government to commit to “priority urban centres” and “provincial growth areas” through the allocation of provincial infrastructure funding for the revitalization of downtown cores. As well, they asked that municipalities be allowed to establish “city specific” intensification goals through their official plans, considering historic density patterns. Finally, it was recommended that municipalities be allowed to designate sufficient land for future growth (outside the proposed Greenbelt), to accommodate employment and residential needs to at least 2031.

The Committee heard that a minimum twenty-year planning horizon is necessary for municipal plans, and that municipalities should be able to set their own timetable beyond twenty years for the duration of their plans. One recommendation was to modify the Provincial Policy Statement to recognize the importance of long-term planning, and to properly empower municipalities to accommodate strategic planning exercises.

Homebuilders continue to support an independent OMB with checks and balances outside of the political process, and advised the province to articulate its interest through the Provincial Policy Statement.

### *Municipal Funding*

Municipal funding levels are an issue of interest to all levels of government. The province was urged to provide Ontario’s municipalities with more support, including joint programs with Ottawa to ease municipal capital costs. Long-term, sustainable funding for municipal infrastructure is viewed as critical, taking into account factors such as the age of the municipality, the ability to leverage rates and taxes, and environmental challenges. The Committee was told that the value of the Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority should be re-assessed, particularly as to whether this organization saves municipalities money when compared to conventional bank financing. One presentation proposed a moratorium on legislation, regulations and standards that drive up municipal costs.

Realtors suggested the City of Toronto be required to benchmark its budget against national peers, and to make this information public. The Ministry was urged to introduce a modernized *City of Toronto Act* by the end of 2005, to consult with public stakeholders during the joint Ontario – City of Toronto Task Force Review, and include in the new Act the provision of additional revenue sources more appropriate for funding the types of services Toronto must provide.

Public sector workers, municipalities and others urged the government to work with federal and municipal counterparts on a new deal that enables municipalities

to achieve long-term sustainability, such that their power to tax matches their level of responsibility for service delivery. The Committee was advised that federal fuel tax money should be treated as a net new source of funds for municipalities, not to be clawed back or offset by further downloading.

Municipal officials requested changes to the *Development Charges Act, 1997* to ensure that development is not the only beneficiary of new sources of revenue provided by the Province to help support municipalities. On the other hand, Ontario hospitals raised their concern over abuses of development charges and urged the government not to add hospital infrastructure during the 2005 review of the Act.

A recommendation was made to increase the rate for grants-in-lieu of taxes to at least \$100 per unit, instead of \$75, and provide for annual inflationary increases.

#### *Local Services Realignment (LSR)*

Concerns continue to be expressed about the adequacy of funding for services downloaded to municipalities. The Committee heard that it is time for all three levels of government to embrace a “who pays for what” review that would more fairly match government revenue sources to program funding responsibilities.

Emergency medical services (EMS) were the subject of recommendations advising the government to conduct a review of the funding formula; upload responsibility for EMS in the Northern Ontario; change regulations concerning municipal user fees for land ambulance; fund 50% of land ambulance services; provide ambulance user fees to the service provider rather than the hospital; and raise the fee to discourage nuisance calls. Rural municipalities asked that LSR be structured to recognize and promote volunteerism.

#### Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF)

Northern municipalities argued that the community reinvestment fund (CRF) formula needs adjusting, and cautioned the government that its initiative to cap or eliminate this grant would have devastating impacts in regions such as Northern Ontario. The Committee heard also that a new formula should be transparent, equitable and predictable, and maintain the principle of revenue neutrality through continued reconciliation of the fund. Another suggestion was to base the CRF on actual costs, indexed to inflation, with administrative caps removed, and add back as costs for 2003 and subsequent years’ reconciliation the original savings targets imposed upon municipalities. Mention was made of the need to reconcile the CRF on special tax classes relevant to rural municipalities, such as agricultural land and managed forests; this has not happened for five or six years.

#### Uploading

The uploading of social housing, public health, long-term care and income-based services was recommended. A similar proposal asked the government to assume a greater share of funding for income-based support programs, and to ensure that original cost-sharing agreements reflect the current level of local administrative expenditures in delivering these programs.

Ontario realty companies proposed transferring control of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to an authority owned by all three levels of government; privatising parts of the TTC, such as low ridership bus routes and the Harbourfront streetcar; and providing bus-on-demand service.

## **HOUSING**

Presentations in this area focused almost exclusively on affordable housing. The government was urged to act on affordable housing commitments, and ensure that supportive housing announcements continue to build on initial progress. Tenants argued that the Provincial Policy Statement under the *Planning Act* should be amended to highlight the need for a full range of housing options, both rental and ownership. Approval and release of capital and rent subsidy commitments for new affordable housing units was also recommended.

Proposals targeting developers of affordable housing included giving priority to those developers by making land available at market rates, and giving agencies in charge of selling surplus land the flexibility to accept one year conditional offers. These concessions would be based on criteria such as approvals for zoning and financing. More flexibility was recommended in the deposit amount required from builders of affordable homes.

Maintenance of the existing, limited stock of affordable housing was the focus of suggestions from tenants proposing the reintroduction of rent regulation, the legislation of municipal control over demolition and conversion, and provincial legislation to allow secondary suites in all municipalities. On the other hand, realtors and developers urged the government to reconsider the imposition of rent controls and to support the *Tenant Protection Act*, arguing that to repeal the Act would have devastating consequences for the rental construction industry.

## **NATIVE AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT**

The Committee heard from a representative of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), bringing recommendations to help the government live up to its commitments in the “Four Point Agreement” of July 7, 2004 concerning Métis harvesting. These included reviewing legislation and regulations to ensure Métis are treated fairly and equitably with First Nations in Ontario; developing, with the government of Canada, plans to provide adequate resources to the Métis Nation to manage and represent its interests; providing for the future financial needs of the Métis Nation through a special allocation of funds or through appropriate licensing for the Métis Nation in any plan to expand gaming in Ontario; establishing a chair of Métis studies at an Ontario university; and start talks with the MNO on emerging economic development projects to support the goal of self-sufficiency.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Several conservation authorities, as well as the provincial association, appeared before the Committee to outline the services that they are mandated to provide, and to request a funding increase to address their budgetary shortfalls.

The forestry industry asked that MNR review its practices and guidelines with respect to fibre supply; work with the industry to rationalize wood flow; and consider a series of recommendations concerning the stumpage system, including keeping it market-based, rather than treating it as a source of general revenue. Aboriginal leaders brought requests regarding the go-ahead of the Whitefeather Forest Initiative, a First-Nations led business development involving natural resource revenue sharing. Another association asked the government to support their promotion of the use of wood in non-residential construction.

Conservation authorities and recreational groups requested a careful review of the recommendations from the forthcoming trail strategy, and a budget allocation directed to addressing infrastructure requirements for improving the provision of recreational lands. Those promoting the use of trails asked the government to consider legislation to remove third party liability for operators.

## **NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND MINES**

Representatives of northern regions sought an enhanced role for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, including a larger budget, to promote this region of the province. A specific recommendation was to boost the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund by \$280 million. The renewed focus of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, namely, to work with private sector companies, especially those focused on new enterprises, young entrepreneurs and emerging technologies, was welcomed by a spokesperson from the music, film and television industry. This stakeholder proposed a loan equity package for film and television producers on projects that increase the profile of northern Ontario, create jobs in the region, and provide mentorship and training opportunities to its residents.

Job creation is a top priority in Northern Ontario, and witnesses requested immediate implementation of the Northern Prosperity Plan. The government was also asked to work with northern municipal leaders in 2005 to develop and implement a northern growth strategy, similar to the one developed for the Golden Horseshoe in 2004. Specific recommendations included re-establishing the headquarters of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation in Sault Ste. Marie, and developing a policy that would direct manufacturing facilities requiring large amounts of land to the north.

Continued support was expressed for both the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Program, which generates investment loans for small and medium-sized businesses, and the Go North Program, designed to attract investors from outside northern Ontario.

---

## **PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL**

The government was requested to act promptly on promised partnerships with Ontario municipalities in the allocation of monies toward vital municipal infrastructure and transportation projects, and for repairs and essential improvements.

Presenters from Eastern Ontario reminded the government to consider all areas of the province when implementing infrastructure programs. One municipality argued that infrastructure programs require longer-term commitments (i.e., more than five years) from both senior levels of government. As well, these programs need to be more closely matched to the municipal capital spending timetable, and allow more local control. Public sector unions oppose the redirection of infrastructure resources to more expensive, for-profit schemes by means of P3 deals. Northern municipalities want increased funding for the Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF); another presenter suggested the government should re-examine the extension of COMRIF funding to municipalities with a population of up to 250,000.

## **TOURISM**

Stakeholders in the tourism sector indicated that a full recovery has not yet been achieved from the SARs outbreak, the rising value of the Canadian dollar, and other factors depressing the tourism market. The government was urged to make a permanent increase in annual funding to the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation; to support Tourism Recovery Program (TRP) initiatives targeting U.S. travellers; and to protect the viability of the Destination Marketing Fee (DMF).

## **TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

A common theme of the 2005 Pre-Budget hearings was the need to reinvest in postsecondary education in order to keep Ontario's workforce among the most skilled, attract cutting-edge research and development, foster innovation, and make Ontario's economy a global leader in efficiency, growth, and quality of life. Presenters from all walks of life – educators, students, union leaders, business stakeholders, municipal representatives, and others – agreed that Ontario must increase its spending in this sector. Many, anticipating that the Rae Review would make recommendations in this direction, called upon the government to give the Rae Review report its full support and quick implementation. Goals mentioned by many presenters included improving the quality, accessibility and accountability of Ontario's postsecondary system.

### *Access*

Recognition of the economic benefits of a postsecondary education highlights calls for the government to make higher education truly accessible to every citizen of Ontario, no matter what their socio-economic background. Community college

representatives called for a higher target of postsecondary completion among 25 to 34 year olds; northern colleges for a commitment to bring northern Ontario participation rates up to the average of southern Ontario; and faculty associations for the creation of 33,000 new undergraduate spaces. Special attention was sought for measures to improve accessibility for aboriginal and francophone students, and to make all campuses fully open to students with disabilities.

#### Graduate Enrolment

Several institutions called for a lifting of the cap on graduate programmes, accompanied by the operating and capital funding necessary to double enrolment by 2013.

#### *Directions*

The themes of institutional autonomy, and differentiated roles and missions for universities, were linked to improving accountability measures. Student associations and public sector unions cautioned against privatization and management-defined performance indicators. On the other hand, business representatives suggested a suite of tax credits and tax deductions to facilitate greater private sector investment in postsecondary institutions. The province was called upon to lobby the federal government for a dedicated postsecondary education transfer to the provinces. Some stakeholders suggested that tax increases in order to increase funding for higher education are in order and would be found acceptable. One administrator argued that investments should target quality rather than simply aiming at enrolment growth.

#### *Funding*

Stakeholders in both the colleges and universities sectors recommended increasing operating grants to at least the national average and protecting them against inflation. The unique needs of small, rural and northern community colleges and of northern universities were brought to the Committee's attention.

Community colleges sought implementation of a corridor-style funding distribution model in order to provide long-term stability and sustainability, and urged the government to reconsider the five-year phase-in of increases in operational funding. Universities asked for a multi-year funding environment in order to support long term investments in their institutions.

Colleges and universities made specific mention of the need to fund deferred maintenance, particularly to provide quality facilities for students and faculty, and to maintain their research capacity. Both sets of institutions also asked for a capital funding programme for new facilities, and spoke about the importance of investing in recruitment and professional development for qualified staff. University faculties requested specific library funding for acquisitions and new technologies.

Requests were also made to support specific projects such as the Ontario Mineral Industry Cluster Council, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, the Co-

operative Freshwater Ecology Unit, and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

### *Other Issues*

The issue of transferability of credits from one postsecondary institution to another continues to bring calls for reform, made all the more critical by the trend towards specialization, coordination and collaboration within and between institutions. One suggestion was the creation of a new transfer agency.

University faculty associations asked the government to eliminate mandatory retirement and thereby help institutions meet teaching demand amid growing enrolment; one university's administrators suggested there be a transition period of up to five years in the implementation of changes to mandatory retirement, to allow time to deal with the complex issues involved.

### *Research*

University stakeholders and Ontario business representatives called for enhanced research funding so that postsecondary institutions might create new technologies and knowledge. The importance of funding both basic and applied university research was underlined, as well as of matching current investments in science and technology with support for research in the social sciences, humanities and professional programs of business, law, and education. Business representatives suggested the province move ahead with the new provincial research and commercialization framework to support program partnerships between postsecondary institutions and private business; this would expedite the commercialization of technologies developed in universities and colleges.

### *Student Financial Aid*

All groups addressing this issue agreed that OSAP, at present, does not adequately meet Ontario postsecondary students' needs. Suggestions for improvement included further harmonization with the federal system, better integration with university programs, increasing financial caps, extending eligibility to part-time students, re-instating a system of needs-based grants, improving loan forgiveness criteria, and increasing targeted assistance for students with dependents with special needs.

The government was also advised to re-institute the Ontario Student Opportunity Trust Fund (OSOTF) scholarship program, to provide better support for graduate studies by continuing the OGS and OGSST programs, to extend the length of time institutions receive grant funding for doctoral students to better reflect the normal time to completion, and to provide additional doctoral scholarship funding for students at the dissertation stage. Business representatives sought increases in the amounts and conditions of the Cooperative Education Tax Credit, and assistance in the form of a one-time contribution for parents using a Registered Education Saving Plan.

In addition to financial aid, it was recommended that students have access to affordable housing and child care throughout their course of study.

### *Tuition / Fees*

Proposals concerning tuition covered a broad range of options. Students and labour organizations called for the eventual elimination of tuition for all Ontario post-secondary students. University faculty associations urged the government to maintain the tuition freeze, and eventually reduce tuition by 10%. One university advocated regulated tuition increases consistent with inflation, combined with a full financial aid system of grants, scholarships, bursaries and loans. Yet another university advised the government to endorse institutional self-regulation of tuition fees within a framework holding institutions accountable for ensuring accessibility for all students. Business representatives also called for full deregulation of tuition, and suggested examining the British model of flexible tuition matched by special grants and tuition subsidies for lower income students, with income-contingent loan repayment options. Student associations were critical of proposals for income-contingent repayment schemes.

## **TRAINING**

A major concern for business organizations is the lack of apprenticeships in Canada. Canadian manufacturers recommended the government develop a coordinated long-term comprehensive strategy for the training and retraining of skilled workers to meet the demands of the marketplace. Business representatives agreed, calling for an effort to enhance the image of the skilled trades, re-direction and targeting of funds for technical education in Ontario schools, and encouraging business to offer experiential learning opportunities for co-op education students (high school and postsecondary). Homebuilders suggested programs to bring high school and college students onto work sites for hands-on experience in construction and safety practices. Other suggestions included providing flexible learning formats that allow employees easy access to skill upgrading at any point in their career, and encouraging differentiation and specialization based on the core strengths of each post-secondary institution.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Border Crossings**

Border crossings are critical to the viability of the province's trade with the United States, and therefore to the entire provincial economy. Business and industry advised the government to invest, with the federal government, in transportation infrastructure and seamless cross border operations, in order to enhance traffic flow into and across key border areas. Correcting infrastructure deficiencies could allow use of alternative routes such as Sault Ste. Marie, rather than forcing all traffic through southern Ontario crossings.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce requested a meeting with provincial representatives to facilitate the immediate flow of funds to previously announced infrastructure commitments; and a meeting with federal government representatives, for the same purpose. The province was invited to initiate a

broad public awareness campaign around trade facilitation programs such as NEXUS and FAST.

The Windsor Detroit border crossing was the subject of numerous suggestions requiring immediate attention. The broad objective of recommendations is to develop an immediate transportation solution to ease the capacity and efficiency problems, and increase the reliability for commercial traffic. Stakeholders want government investment directed to improving the current capacity by reducing congestion, and enhancing or facilitating the infrastructure. On a broader level, cooperation on both sides of the border was given high priority, and would include state, provincial and federal levels of government.

### Roads

As the primary means of moving goods and people, roads are an essential component of the province's economic infrastructure. Recommendations to the Committee covered issues such as strategic planning, regional development, and proposals for improvements to specific highways.

Business representatives called for a Goods Movement Study in the Golden Horseshoe region, as a necessary first step in creating a Goods Movement Master Plan; such a study would ideally be coordinated with related work currently being done by the Ministry of Transportation, and in consultation with the federal Ministry of Transport.

Northern Ontario mayors spoke of the importance of good roads to value-added manufacturing in their region, and want approval processes for federal and provincial programs such as COMRIF to reflect the fact that they have identified roads as their top priority.

Specific highway projects were mentioned in several recommendations, including the approved alternative Highway 7 alignment in Canada's Technology Triangle region, the four-laning of Highway 69 south between Sudbury and Parry Sound, and completion of four-laning on Highway 11.

The importance of the mid-peninsula transportation corridor (MPC) was underscored in the suggestions made to the Committee. Witnesses want the government to support the Niagara Peninsula Transportation Needs Assessment Study, including the need for a multi-lane mid-peninsula highway from Niagara to Halton and Waterloo-Wellington. Several recommendations addressed the MPC, including implementing global positioning and information system management technologies in the planning and design; ensuring compatibility and connectivity with U.S. "smart highways"; appointing a blue-ribbon panel of federal, provincial, and municipal representatives, business leaders and environmentalists (similar to the Smart Growth Panel) to guide the MPC planning, design and construction process; and adopting a multi-track planning and design process in order to minimize delays in the construction of the MPC. The need to expedite the environmental assessment process for the MPC was also pointed out.

The rail industry suggested that highway financing policies should be revisited, with an emphasis on full cost accounting and user pay options.

#### Urban Transit

As population density increases, and the province attempts to promote Smart Growth, urban transit takes on growing importance. Groups told the Committee that they support plans to establish a Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, but want the government to consult with GTA regional boards of trade, chambers of commerce, federal and local governments, and members of the private sector on all aspects of the Authority. Legislation and funding for the Authority should be developed as soon as possible.

Presentations focusing on transit funding mentioned the need for flexible terms, such as allowing the Toronto Transit Commission to apply its funding, including gas tax revenues, to its priority areas, whether operating or capital in nature. The province was urged to restore its direct contribution to public transit funding. Regional representatives sought implementation of the Golden Horseshoe Transit Improvement Plan application for GO Transit Rail Service to Waterloo Region, and government investment in the Central Transit Corridor for Waterloo Region.

#### Energy Efficient Vehicles

As Ontario grows, the number of vehicles on the road increases, along with greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficient vehicles offer the advantage of lessening the environmental impact of transportation. Incentives to encourage their use were the focus of two recommendations: to allow access to high-occupancy vehicle lanes for natural gas and hydrogen vehicles; and, to develop no-charge vehicle registration for natural gas and hydrogen vehicles.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that:

1. The Minister of Finance include funding for enhanced film tax credits in the upcoming budget.
2. The Minister of Finance provide an update on the new assessment tax on recreational vehicles.
3. The Minister of Finance respond to the government's election promise to uphold the hard cap and work with small business on the property tax situation.
4. The government restore the provincial sales tax rebate for Energy Star appliances (i.e., energy efficient fridges, freezers, washers and dryers).
5. The Minister of Finance consider the elimination of provincial sales tax on building materials that improve energy efficiency and conservation, including insulation and windows and furnaces that meet Natural Resources Canada energy efficiency standards.
6. The government not privatise important public assets such as the LCBO, OPG or TVO to deal with a short-term deficit.
7. The government keep its promise to establish a community transition fund to help farmers move away from growing tobacco, and announce specific funding levels.
8. The Finance Minister increase funding for agriculture in the 2005-06 budget.
9. The Ministry of Community and Social Services investigate permanent funding for early intervention services for children with visual disabilities, and review the deaf-blind intervener program.
10. The government exempt low-emission, alternatively fuelled vehicles from the Drive Clean program.
11. The Ministers of Finance and of Health and Long-Term Care consider providing in the budget specific funding (including a growth adjustment) for multi-site hospitals, as well as specific and separate funding for the teaching programs offered in affiliation with the University of Toronto School of Medicine at Lakeridge Health Port Perry.

12. The Minister of Health review the regulations affecting the scope of practice of audiologists, and implement their plan re: requiring a physician's referral prior to an audiologist's examination.
13. The Minister of Health work with the federal drug therapeutics committee to streamline the drug approval process, thereby enhancing access to new drugs, while eliminating duplication and improving patient outcomes.
14. The government consider changing the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and optometrists' scope of practice so that they might prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, otherwise known as TPAs.
15. The Minister of Finance include in the budget funds for a province-wide Better Buildings Partnership program, based on the program in place in Toronto for the past eight years.
16. The government continue in its 2005-06 budget to freeze all regulated and de-regulated college and university programs as well as ensure that funding is sufficient to compensate for the tuition freeze and to implement the Rae Commission's recommendations for 2005-06.
17. The government consider the Durham College and University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) request for special capital infrastructure funding.

**APPENDIX A**  
**WITNESSES AND SUBMISSIONS**

## WITNESSES AND SUBMISSIONS

The following organizations and individuals made written and/or oral presentations to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs during its 2005 pre-Budget consultations.

		Hansard URL of Testimony
Abbott Laboratories Limited		Written submission
Sandy Acchione		Written submission
Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA558">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA558</a>
Ajax Pickering Board of Trade	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA727">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA727</a>
Algoma Chiropractic Association	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA318">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA318</a>
Algoma Community Legal Clinic		Written submission
Algoma University College	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA190">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA190</a>
Algonquin College	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA75">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA75</a>
Magda Allen		Written submission
Alliance to End Homelessness		Written submission
Anglican Church of Canada, Toronto Diocese	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA464">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA464</a>
Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA384">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA384</a>
Association of Designated Assessment Centres	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA421">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA421</a>
Association of Municipalities of Ontario	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA761">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA761</a>
Bain & Company		Written submission
Baldwin Street Chiropractic Clinic	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA766">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA766</a>
Bayer Inc.		Written submission
Cambrian College	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA368">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA368</a>

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
Cambrian College Students' Administrative Council	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA333">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA333</a>
Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus-Georgian Bay Chapter		Written submission
Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA939">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA939</a>
Canadian Association for the Fifty-Plus		Written submission
Canadian Bankers Association		Written submission
Canadian Federation of Independent Business	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA341">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA341</a>
Canadian Federation of Students		Written submission
Canadian Federation of University Women – Ontario Council		Written submission
Canadian Institute of Public and Private Real Estate Companies	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA801">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA801</a>
Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association		Written submission
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporter		Written submission
Canadian Mental Health Association, Toronto Branch		Written submission
Canadian Mental Health Ontario		Written submission
Canadian National Institute for the Blind	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA224">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA224</a>
Canadian Natural Gas Vehicle Alliance	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA882">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA882</a>
Canadian Pensioners Concerned		Written submission
Canadian Taxpayers Federation	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA112">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA112</a>
Canadian Union of Public Employees, Ontario Division	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA214">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA214</a>
Canadian Urban Transit Association		Written submission
Canadian Wind Energy Association	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA333">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA333</a>
Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA210">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA210</a>
Cataraqui Trail Management Board – A Committee of the Cataraqui Management Authority		Written submission

		Hansard URL of Testimony
Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario		Written submission
Centre 507		Written submission
Centre de Santé Communautaire de Sudbury	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA297">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA297</a>
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health / Canadian Mental Health Association / Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA37">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA37</a>
Centre for Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA393">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA393</a>
Certified Management Accountants of Ontario		Written submission
Child Care Action Network of Ottawa	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA439">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA439</a>
Child Care Resources	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA396">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA396</a>
Citizen Advocates for Public Education	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA612">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA612</a>
City of Greater Sudbury	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA78">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA78</a>
City of Kingston	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm-#PARA32">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm-#PARA32</a>
City of London	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA39">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA39</a>
City of Pickering	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA636">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA636</a>
City of Sault Ste. Marie	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA144">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA144</a>
City of Timmins		Written submission
Civil Rights in Public Education		Written submission
CLT Canada		Written submission
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA630">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA630</a>
College Student Alliance		Written submission
Conservation Ontario	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA811">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA811</a>

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada – Ontario Region	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA829">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA829</a>
Core Animation	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA416">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA416</a>
Howard Coultrup		Written submission
Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA130">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA130</a>
County of Middlesex	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA598">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA598</a>
Courtland Industrial Sales		Written submission
Credit Valley Conservation		Written submission
Dieticians of Canada		Written submission
Disabled and Proud	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA744">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA744</a>
Don Drummond, TD Bank	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA517">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA517</a>
Driving School Association of Ontario		Written submission
Dufferin Capital Corporation	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA164">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA164</a>
Durham College and University of Ontario Institute of Technology	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA818">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA818</a>
Education Quality in Ontario		Written submission
Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, Durham Local	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA1067">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA1067</a>
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA914">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA914</a>
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Algoma	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA53">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA53</a>
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Limestone	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA585">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA585</a>
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Thames Valley	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA725">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA725</a>
Employment Standards Working Group and Toronto Organizing for Fair Employment		Written submission

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
Fair Air Association	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA641">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA641</a>
Family Service Ontario		Written submission
Family Services a la famille Ottawa	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA792">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA792</a>
Fanshawe College	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA213">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA213</a>
Faskin Martineau		Written submission
Film Ontario	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA747">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA747</a>
Irene Fuksa	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA292">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA292</a>
Maurice Gabay – President OPSEU, LOCL 599		Written submission
Harold Geltman		Written submission
Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA85">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA85</a>
Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA1025">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA1025</a>
Greater Toronto Hotel Association	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA186">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA186</a>
Group Health Centre	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA379">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA379</a>
GTA/905 Healthcare Alliance	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA493">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA493</a>
Hummingbird Centre	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA539">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA539</a>
Huron Superior Catholic District School Board		Written submission
Nadir Husani		Written submission
Income Security Advocacy Centre	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA914">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA914</a>
Insurance Bureau of Canada		Written submission
A. Bradley Jutzi		Written submission

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
Ira Kagan / Greenspace Consulting	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA123">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA123</a>
Stanley Korchuk	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA180">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA180</a>
Lakeridge Health	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA598">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA598</a>
LaSalle Audiology Clinic	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA453">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA453</a>
Laurentian University	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA506">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA506</a>
Legal Aid Ontario		Written submission
Lennox and Addington Addiction Services	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA620">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA620</a>
London Health Coalition	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA374">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA374</a>
London Health Sciences Centre/St. Joseph's Health Centre	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA509">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA509</a>
Ron Lyon	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA178">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA178</a>
Hugh Mackenzie, Ontario Alternative Budget	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA561">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA561</a>
Kevin McAllister	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA74">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA74</a>
McMaster University	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA892">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA892</a>
Merck Frosst	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA429">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA429</a>
Métis Nation of Ontario	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA496">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA496</a>
Jack Mintz, C.D. Howe Institute	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA546">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA546</a>
Music Film and Motion	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA254">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA254</a>

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
My Choice	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA470">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA470</a>
National Cancer Leadership Forum	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA804">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA804</a>
Niagara Social Assistance Reform Committee Network		Written submission
Nickel District Conservation Authority	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA45">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA45</a>
North American Insulation Manufacturers Association Canada	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA579">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA579</a>
Northwoods Cottage Association	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA273">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA273</a>
Ongwanada		Written submission
Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA277">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA277</a>
Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA855">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA855</a>
Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Centres		Written submission
Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres		Written submission
Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses		Written submission
Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA446">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA446</a>
Ontario Association of Optometrists	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA674">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA674</a>
Ontario Campaign 2000	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA713">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA713</a>
Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA832">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA832</a>
Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association		Written submission
Ontario Cattlemen's Association		Written submission
Ontario Chamber of Commerce		Written submission
Ontario Chiropractic Association	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA163">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA163</a>

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
Ontario Chiropractic Association	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA676">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA676</a>
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA209">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA209</a>
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA950">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA950</a>
Ontario Coalition for Social Justice		Written submission
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA93">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA93</a>
Ontario Corn Producers' Association	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA665">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA665</a>
Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association		Written submission
Ontario Federation of Agriculture	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA456">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA456</a>
Ontario Federation of Labour	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA68">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA68</a>
Ontario Finnish Resthome Association	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA279">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA279</a>
Ontario Flue-cured Tobacco Growers' Marketing Board	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA313">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA313</a>
Ontario Forest Industry Association		Written submission
Ontario Forestry Association	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA495">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA495</a>
Ontario Health Coalition	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA992">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA992</a>
Ontario Home Builders Association		Written submission
Ontario Homes for Special Needs Association	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA423">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA423</a>
Ontario Homes for Special Needs Association	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA482">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA482</a>
Ontario Hospital Association	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA377">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA377</a>

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
Ontario Land Trust Alliance	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA710">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA710</a>
Ontario Long Term Care Association	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA340">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA340</a>
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA700">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA700</a>
Ontario Nurses' Association		Written submission
Ontario Physiotherapy Association	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA598">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA598</a>
Ontario Public School Boards' Association	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA762">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA762</a>
Ontario Public Sector Employees Union, College Support Staff Division	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA996">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA996</a>
Ontario Public Service Employees Union	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA223">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA223</a>
Ontario Public Service Employees Union – Colleges of Applied Arts & Technology Division	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA108">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA108</a>
Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Central Employee Relations Committee	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA526">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA526</a>
Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Local 348	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA395">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA395</a>
Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA879">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA879</a>
Ontario School Counsellors' Association		Written submission
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA300">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA300</a>
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation – District 11, Thames Valley	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA140">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA140</a>
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation – District 27	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA323">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA323</a>
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation – Ottawa-Carleton District 25	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA219">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA219</a>
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation District 13	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA335">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA335</a>

		Hansard URL of Testimony
Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association		Written submission
Ontario Social Housing Network		Written submission
Ontario Trails Council	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA393">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA393</a>
Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance		Written submission
Ontario Volunteer Emergency Response Team	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA865">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA865</a>
Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario		Written submission
Ottawa and District Labour Council	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA253">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA253</a>
Ottawa Carleton Elementary Occasional Teachers' Association	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA327">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA327</a>
Ottawa Carleton Elementary Teachers' Federation	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA353">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA353</a>
Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA178">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA178</a>
Ottawa Child Care Association	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA844">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA844</a>
Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization	12-jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA650">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA650</a>
Ottawa Hospital	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA138">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA138</a>
Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board		Written submission
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board		Written submission
Rick Pereira		Written submission
Pickering Ajax Citizens Together for the Environment	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA905">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA905</a>
John Pickett		Written submission
Sandi Pniauskas	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA566">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA566</a>
Douglas Pooley	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA561">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA561</a>
Provincial Council of Women of Ontario		Written submission

		Hansard URL of Testimony
C.A. Rahn		Written submission
Railway Association of Canada		Written submission
Registered Nurses Association of Ontario	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA75">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA75</a>
Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario		Written submission
Retail Council of Canada	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA785">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA785</a>
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA32">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA32</a>
Royal Ottawa Health Care Group	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA119">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA119</a>
Sault Area Hospital	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA107">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA107</a>
Sault College	10-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA236">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F034.htm#PARA236</a>
Schedule Five Physiotherapy Clinics Association		Written submission
Sherbourne Health Centre		Written submission
Sherwood Manor	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA239">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA239</a>
Sisters of Charity Health Service	12-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA534">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F036.htm#PARA534</a>
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA482">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA482</a>
St. Lawrence College	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA133">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA133</a>
St. Stephen's Community House		Written submission
St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA1015">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA1015</a>
Susan Smith	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA975">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA975</a>
Thames Valley District School Board		Written submission
Together in Education	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA853">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA853</a>

		<b>Hansard URL of Testimony</b>
Toronto Board of Trade	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA955">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA955</a>
Toronto Disaster Relief Committee	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA739">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA739</a>
Toronto Office Coalition		Written submission
Toronto Parent Network	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA33">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA33</a>
Town of Whitby	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA942">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA942</a>
Township of Frontenac Islands	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA355">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA355</a>
United Steelworkers of America	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA281">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA281</a>
United Ways of the Greater Toronto Area	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA1024">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA1024</a>
University of Toronto	19-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA877">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F040.htm#PARA877</a>
University of Western Ontario / Council of Ontario Universities	17-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA251">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F038.htm#PARA251</a>
Valuing Independence Through Active Lives	13-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA62">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F037.htm#PARA62</a>
Waterfront Ratepayers after Fair Taxation		Written submission
Westminster Historical Society		Written submission
Whitby Chamber of Commerce	20-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA689">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F041.htm#PARA689</a>
Whitefeather Forest Corporation – Pikangikum First Nation		Written submission
Wine Council of Ontario		Written submission
Wood Works	11-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA123">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F035.htm#PARA123</a>
Wyeth Canada		Written submission
York Central Hospital		Written submission
York University	18-Jan-05	<a href="http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA172">http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session1/finance/F039.htm#PARA172</a>

**APPENDIX B**

**DISSENTING OPINION OF THE  
PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

*Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs*

**LIBERAL CHANGE: UNFAIR, UNBALANCED AND UNPLANNED**  
**Regaining Trust, Fairness and a Strong Economic Plan for Ontario**

*2005 Pre-Budget Consultation  
Progressive Conservative (Official Opposition)  
Dissenting Report*

*Official Opposition Committee Members:*

Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant PC)  
John O'Toole (Durham PC)

*Official Opposition Substitute / Participating Members:*

Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax PC)  
Cam Jackson (Burlington PC)  
Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka PC)  
Bob Runciman (Leeds-Grenville PC)  
Jerry Ouellette (Oshawa PC)

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A Province in Decline .....</b>	<b>6</b>
a) Ontario's Competitiveness.....	6
b) Reckless Spending and the Growing Liberal Deficit .....	8
<i>Wage Pressures</i> .....	9
<i>Spending Out Of Control</i> .....	11
<b>Investments in Vital Services .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The Fight for Equality From Ottawa.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Consultation Process .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Additional Recommendations .....</b>	<b>20</b>

## **Executive Summary:**

The Liberal government entitled their 2004 Budget '*The Plan for Change*', but in fact, this document marked the point at which the Liberals officially changed their plan. Instead of providing fair tax policy, a balanced budget and keeping their promises, the Liberal government slapped hard-working Ontarians with a \$2.6 billion regressive health tax, committed to adding \$10 billion to the provincial debt and threw away any plans for a sustainable economic future for our province.

Unfortunately, the outlook for the upcoming 2005 Ontario Budget is no better for the people of Ontario.

The Liberal government has done nothing to control spending across government, and a record \$7 billion in increased taxes over the past year has resulted in stagnating economic growth and thousands of lost jobs. Recent reports show that employment has plummeted by 212,000 since the implementation of the regressive health tax in July 2004, and economic experts indicate that the government's current agenda will in fact see over \$38 billion added to the provincial debt by 2010.

In addition, our most cherished public services are facing an epic crisis at the hands of this government. Teachers are voting in favour of strike action across the province, 8,500 front-line health care workers will lose their jobs in the coming year, our agricultural sector is teetering on the verge of bankruptcy and Ontario's doctors are resorting to unprecedented labour action.

Ontario cannot afford this brand of Liberal change any longer.

The Official Opposition is calling upon the government to take immediate action to ensure that the viability of our economic future is restored, and that vital services that all Ontarians rely upon are preserved for generations to come.

The Official Opposition demand that the Minister of Finance respect the following principles during the preparation of the 2005 Ontario Budget:

- The Liberal government must create a realistic, attainable plan to balance the budget as quickly as possible.
- The Liberal government must respect the financial circumstances of low and middle income Ontarians and must cease their regressive taxation measures, including the Ontario Health Premium.
- The Liberal government must adhere to the principles of the Canada Health Act and ensure fair and equal access for all Ontarians to vital health care services.
- The Liberal government must immediately cease its aggression toward our valued health care workers and negotiate a sustainable, long-term deal with Ontario doctors.
- The Liberal government must ensure that vital front-line health services in our hospitals are not compromised by their inability to negotiate with hospitals and stop the lay-off of 8,500 nurses and staff.
- In all areas, the Liberal government must start governing in an open, honest and accountable manner.

Starting today, the Liberal government must put aside its reckless agenda and start working to regaining trust, fairness and develop a strong economic plan for the Province of Ontario.

**Introduction:**

At the outset of this dissenting report, it should be noted that the current fiscal situation in Ontario does not come as a surprise to members of the Official Opposition. Following the pre-budget consultations for the 2004 Ontario Budget, the Dissenting Report from the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario warned the Liberal government that increasing taxes would not have the desired effect. Ontario would see a decline in services, lost jobs and stagnant economic growth – not to mention a decline in our attractiveness to foreign investment. The 2004 Dissenting Report of the Official Opposition stated:

*The fiscal agenda of this government is one that will eliminate Ontario’s competitive advantage, and one that will drive business investment and jobs into neighbouring jurisdictions that offer lower tax rates and a more attractive business environment.*

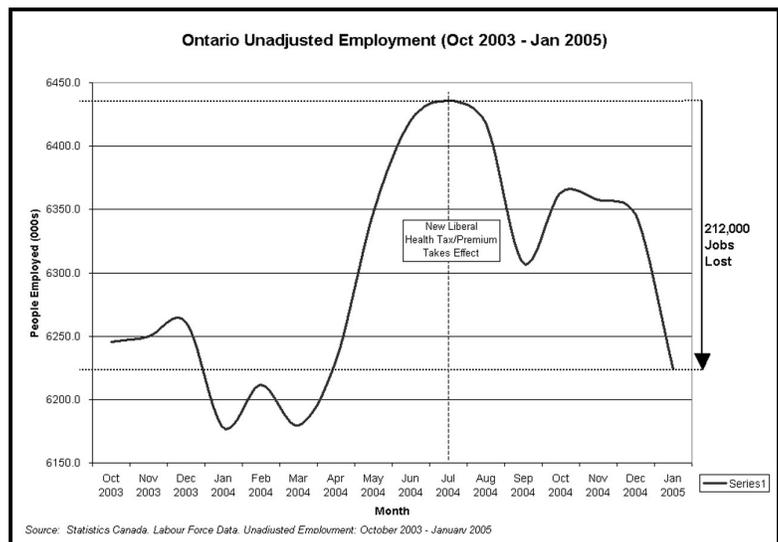
*The tax system being created by the Liberal government will create a significant barrier to investments, and erode our ability to improve productivity and adopt new technologies. Rather than adopting policies that create a competitive advantage, the Liberal government is pursuing tax policies that create disincentives for investment.*

*The Liberal government will argue that higher taxes help pay for some important public services, but the inevitable loss of jobs and investment will far outweigh any short-term advantage gained through these reckless tax policies...*

*Our standard of living will be significantly compromised in this decade if the Liberals continue to press forward with their reckless tax hike agenda. Ontario cannot afford to veer from a course of tax reductions in the near future. Instead, the position of the Official Opposition is that the upcoming budget should introduce new tax reduction measures that would improve our productivity, competitiveness and incomes measurably.*

*The Official Opposition dissents completely with any taxation measure that increases the burden on our employers, our workers, our families, or our economy.<sup>1</sup>*

Despite these concerns being expressed, the Liberals chose to increase taxes in Ontario by \$7 billion during their first year in office. Of course the highlight of the new Liberal taxation regime is the \$2.6 billion regressive health tax that was levied on all hard working Ontarians starting in July 2004. It is more than coincidence that since the time this punishing tax started to be collected, employment has plummeted by 212,000. This is just one of the economic indicators that illustrate the detrimental impact the Liberal government’s fiscal agenda is having on the Ontario economy.



<sup>1</sup> 'Maintaining the Ontario Advantage', 2004 Official Opposition Pre-Budget Dissenting Report

During the past year we have seen housing starts decline, more single-employable people entering the welfare system, and the provincial debt grow at a rate of \$100 each and every second. As a result, Ontario has entered into a period of economic decline and concerns are being voiced that a recession could strike Ontario in the near future if there are not some dramatic changes to our economic conditions.

## Bad Economic Indicators

*The Liberals have already raised taxes by \$7-billion and Ontario is starting to pay the price for their reckless tax and spend agenda.*

The province has lost over 25,000 jobs since the Liberals took office in October 2003.  
*(Source: StatsCan Labour Force Survey, Unadjusted Employment Data – Oct. 2003 & Jan. 2005)*

The number of single, employable people on welfare has increased by 4% since the Liberals took office.  
*(Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ontario Works Caseload Stats – December 2004)*

Housing starts are projected to drop by almost 20,000 units by 2007.  
*(Source: Conference Board of Canada, Ontario Economic Indicators – Dec. 13, 2004)*

The Liberal government is adding \$100.00 per second to the provincial debt.  
*(Source: 2004 Ontario Budget)*

## **A Province in Decline**

The fiscal imbalance heading into the 2005 Budget should be of great concern to all Ontarians. The Liberal government took office in October 2003 on the back of an election platform that promised balanced budgets, no new taxes, and a strong economic climate that would allow for investments in vital public services and attract new investments to our province. As this government approaches its second budget, taxes are up by \$7 billion, the provincial deficit is approaching \$6 billion for the current year, the debt is ballooning at a rate of \$100 per second, thousands of jobs have been lost and our health care system is in total chaos.

The Liberal government has failed to live up to the commitments it made to the people of Ontario during the fall of 2003, and in doing so, it has managed to destroy any faith or trust that people had in their elected officials. This is no more evident than in recent polling data regarding Premier McGuinty's public image. When asked what people like about the current Premier, 22.6% of people stated they liked nothing about Mr. McGuinty. When asked what they dislike, 41% of those asked responded, 'he lied.'

Without question the Liberal government is struggling to make ends meet after setting expectations for program spending at a level unattainable by any government. In the 2004 Pre-Budget Dissenting Report from the Official Opposition, concerns were raised that the Liberal government was suppressing a 60-page document that outlined the projected costs of their election promises.

In September 2004, the Official Opposition was finally granted access to this document by the Ontario Information and Privacy Commissions despite the Liberal government's efforts to have this document suppressed through the Freedom of Information process. The document shows that the Liberals made in excess of \$11 billion in promises to the people of Ontario during the 2003 election.

The public's lack of trust and the government's proven inability to manage the finances of the province, have led the Liberals to yet another crossroad. The 2005 Budget will not be about repairing the damage that has been done, it will be an attempt to limit the ongoing damage that this government is intent to inflict upon our once strong economy.

### ***a) Ontario's Competitiveness***

It is not only the opinion of the Official Opposition that Ontario is less competitive today, under the watch of the Liberal government. There was clearly consensus among the economists brought forward by all three parties during the pre-budget consultations, that productivity in Ontario is in decline and the marginal tax rates in our province have destroyed our competitive advantage.

Information presented to the Committee by both Don Drummond, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist for TD Bank Financial Group, and Jack Mintz, President and CEO of the C.D. Howe Institute, show that Ontario's marginal effective tax burden is almost double that seen in the United States.

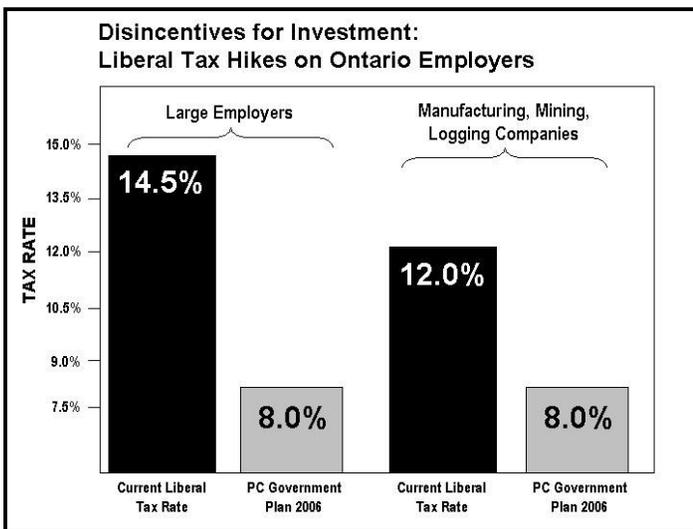
It is clear that the Liberal tax hike agenda renders Ontario at a competitive disadvantage. As pointed out by the Official Opposition and expert witnesses one-year ago, raising taxes cripples our ability to attract

and create jobs. It also means a loss in foreign investment and much needed capital for expansion of business in Ontario.

The Official Opposition, once again, calls upon the government to reduce the tax burden on both individuals and their employers in order to make Ontario more competitive. Furthermore, the government should live up to its renewed pledge from the Premier and the Minister of Finance to not raise taxes or implement any new taxation measures in the 2005 Budget.

Mr. Mintz agrees: “If Ontario were a low tax jurisdiction in North America, tax increases would be sensible to consider. But, Ontario is not fiscally competitive at all...Ontario has little room to increase taxes with out impairing its economic prospects further. If anything, further cuts to taxes to improve the climate for investments is warranted if Ontario is to enjoy better economic growth in the future.”<sup>2</sup>

The previous Progressive Conservative government left Ontario’s economic foundation strong – businesses were more competitive than ever before, inflation was in check, and after-tax incomes were rising. Ontario had a strong and resilient economy that would have ensured that Ontario remained the best place in the world to live, work, invest and raise a family.



Since then, the Liberals have turned back the clock and made Ontario the one of the most heavily taxed jurisdictions in North America. One has only to look at where tax rates for Ontario’s job creators would be today under the previous government’s agenda, and compare them to the current rates following the Liberal government’s punishing tax hikes.

The situation is equally as bleak for hard-working, middle-income earners in Ontario. These are the very people who have felt the greatest wrath of the regressive health tax implemented by the Liberal government in the 2004 Budget. An individual earning between

\$30,000 and \$45,000 per year, will see as much as 80-cents of each incremental dollar they earn go directly to the government in the form of income taxes.

Mr. Drummond goes further to point out that in some instances, this situation can mean “*that work brings an effective loss in the standard of living.*”<sup>3</sup> This is the environment that the Liberals have created for the hard working people of our province, and the Official Opposition dissents completely with any measure that creates a disincentive for Ontarians to work.

It must not be forgotten that it takes a strong and growing economy to sustain and improve public services over time. To create jobs, to raise incomes and to provide the tax base necessary to fund first-class public services, Canadian and foreign investors must be convinced that this is a great place to build

<sup>2</sup> Jack Mintz, ‘Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Ontario’s Budget Making Reality’ – January 18, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Don Drummond, Hansard - 2005 Ontario Pre-Budget Hearings – January 18, 2005

and expand enterprises. Without a thriving economy as the foundation, all of our dreams of social progress will not be realized.

In developing their fiscal framework, the Liberal government has failed to recognize that in order to have a competitive economy that will attract business investment and jobs, one must look beyond simple income tax rates and explore solutions to other tax disadvantages in our province, such as lower depreciation allowances than are provided south of the border; lower inventory cost deductions; higher capital taxes; sales taxes on capital inputs; and higher labour costs such as health care subsidies, payroll taxes and workers compensation benefits.<sup>4</sup> All of these issues of taxation collectively contribute to the effective tax rate.

Obviously, the fiscal agenda of this government is one that will eliminate Ontario's competitive advantage, and one that will drive business investment and jobs into neighbouring jurisdictions that offer lower tax rates and a more attractive business environment.

Again, the Official Opposition dissents completely with any taxation measure that increases the burden on our employers, our workers, our families, or our economy.

### ***b) Reckless Spending and the Growing Liberal Deficit***

The Official Opposition remains extremely concerned with the reckless fiscal agenda that has been set by this government. The 2004 Budget marked the point at which the Liberal government effectively changed the plan they laid out to voters prior to the 2003 election. Gone were the promises to hold the line on taxes, to balance the budget and to not add to the debt. Welcomed into the fold were the regressive health tax, deficits for 4-consecutive years and \$10 billion in new provincial debt under the Liberal watch.

As a result of this cavalier attitude, the Liberal government has created a gross fiscal imbalance that will be impossible to correct over the short-term so long as the Premier and other government leaders refuse to show any leadership and make tough financial decisions.

The 2004 Budget forecasted an annual increase in expenditures of only 1.9 percent over the next three years. However, the inflation and population growth are rising at a combined rate of approximately 3 percent over that same time frame. The result is a fiscal imbalance that will require the government to abandon any intention it claims to have to balance the budget during the next three years.

In recent weeks it has been indicated in the media that the government is in fact preparing to forgo any effort to resolve this imbalance and abandon its attempts to level the books of the province. While the Official Opposition refuses to advocate any position that increases the financial burden that the government wishes to place on the backs of our children and grandchildren, it should also be noted that this recent revelation is due to the Liberal government being caught in the midst of an accounting trick.

---

<sup>4</sup> Jack Mintz, CEO, CD Howe Institute, *Assessing Ontario's Fiscal Competitiveness*: p. 2.

The 2004 Budget claimed that the government would be in receipt of \$3.9 billion in revenue by virtue of the elimination of a liability for non-utility generator power purchase agreements in 2004-05. The Official Opposition has always questioned the appropriateness of the accounting treatment the Liberal government has proposed for this transaction, and is not surprised to discover that a \$4 billion crater has been drilled into the provincial books.

According to Douglas R. Smith, in his article entitled *Accounting and the Law, Part Two: Ten Common Ways Financial Statements Are Manipulated*, “Revenue should only be booked when a bona fide sale has been made and payment has been received or a legitimate receivable is due.”<sup>5</sup> Clearly, the elimination of a liability does not fall into this definition. This point is further exasperated by the fact that any revenue that may be generated by the government by virtue of this policy will not be completely received until the year 2048.

TD Bank also questions the Liberal government’s use of accounting trickery to book \$3.9 billion of phantom revenue: “while Ontario is expected to beat its deficit target of \$2.2 billion by only a small margin – that is, provided that a one-time \$3.9 billion revenue windfall that was booked in the current fiscal year, and which is currently being looked at by the provincial auditor, goes through.”<sup>6</sup>

The Official Opposition opposes the Liberal government’s use of this accounting trickery in an effort to disguise the fact that the provincial debt is in fact increasing exponentially under the Liberal watch.

Further to the issues surrounding the \$3.9 billion slight-of-hand being attempted by the Liberal government, economists have also noted the fiscal imbalance that has been created through reckless economic policy. Jack Mintz notes “it is hard to see how spending increases beyond 2 percent can be accommodated without giving up on a fiscal plan to balance the budget by 2007.”<sup>7</sup>

This reality has been recognized by economists at the TD Bank, whose recent projections show that the Liberal government’s current agenda will add \$37.8 billion to the provincial debt by the year 2010 if no significant policy action is taken. That is approximately \$30 billion more than the combined debt of all other Canadian provinces and territories over that same time frame.

### **Wage Pressures:**

The frightening reality is that the Liberal government is aware of this gross imbalance, yet it continues to refuse to address some of the significant cost pressures that exist on the horizon. For example, as recently as the 2004 Fall Economic Statement, the Liberal government acknowledged that there exist significant wage pressures in Ontario that must be resolved in the coming months.

The Liberal government has no plan to address the pressures that these wage settlements will create for the provincial finances. Instead, they have chosen wage war with Ontario’s doctors and nurses and forced Ontario’s teachers to launch virtually unanimous strike votes across the province.

---

<sup>5</sup> Douglas R. Smith, ‘Accounting and the Law, Part Two: Ten Common Ways Financial Statements Are Manipulated’ – Centre for Continuing Education

<sup>6</sup> TD Economics, ‘5-Year Fiscal Outlook for Canadian Governments’ – February 18, 2005

<sup>7</sup> Jack Mintz, ‘Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Ontario’s Budget Making Reality’ – January 18, 2005

Sector	Cost of 1% salary increase	Size of Sector
OHIP Payments to Physicians	\$58 million*	Over 21,000 physicians in Ontario, comprising 10,000 family doctors and 11,000 specialists.
Hospital Nurses	\$34 million*	Over 40,000 nurses in hospitals.
Elementary and Secondary School Staff	\$119 million**	Over 180,000 staff including teachers, principals, administrators, support and maintenance staff.
Ontario Public Service	\$45 million*	Over 60,000 public servants.

\* Based on 2003-04.  
\*\* One per cent increase to salary benchmarks in Grants for Student Needs based on 2004-05 school year.

**(Source: 2004 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review)**

The Official Opposition condemns the Liberal governments attitude towards our valued public sector employees. We recognize that government must continue to find ways of offering services that the people of Ontario depend on and deliver these services in an efficient and effective manner.

This job cannot be accomplished without the partnership of the professionals and experts who work for the government’s public service partners. Whether they be doctors, nurses, teachers or one of the thousands of dedicated individuals working in the Ontario Public Service, these are the individuals who ensure that the delivery of government service is effective, efficient and in the best interest of the average Ontarian.

It is the responsibility for elected officials to work hand-in-hand with the public service, and make them willing partners in the government’s efforts to deliver core services to Ontarians who need them the most. The Premier himself has recognized that this is matter of grave concern. “To protect and improve public services, to protect existing jobs and add more jobs, we are asking our public-sector partners to be reasonable and responsible at the bargaining table. We've got to do more than just increase wages. We've got to be able to find a way to hire more nurses, more doctors, more teachers and create more training opportunities for skilled trades people.”<sup>8</sup>

As the government moves forward, it must ensure that any investments made into programs such as health care, education and social services, are targeted directly at the delivery of these services and not to over-inflated salaries and governance. This does not mean that our public service partners must go without reasonable increases to their wages and benefits, but our province cannot afford increases that are not kept in line with the rate at which our financial base is growing.

As in the Dissenting Report from the 2004 Pre-Budget process, the Official Opposition recommends that the Minister of Finance, as part of the 2005 Ontario Budget, limit all future salary awards with the government public sector partners to a maximum of the rate of inflation. This would ensure fair and equitable wage increases for all of our partners, while at the same time, ensure that adequate funding is available to increase the level of service being provided to Ontarians.

---

<sup>8</sup> Dalton McGuinty, *Canadian Press*, February 11, 2004.

Jack Mintz also presents this as an option for the government to assist in controlling expenditures in the 2005 Budget: “Holding the line on salary increases and transfers to public bodies a 2 percent could be one strategy.”<sup>9</sup>

This is just a single example of how the Liberal government has failed to develop a sound plan for the future of the Ontario economy. Despite their recognition of various financial pressures, the Liberal government has identified no means by which to accommodate them.

Spending Out of Control:

Despite the existence of these pressures and the acknowledgement of the Liberal government that some sort of fiscal restraint is required, provincial spending has continued to skyrocket.

Following their election in 2003, the Liberals spent a massive amount of political capital to create a notional deficit as a means to tar the reputation of the previous government. Despite the claims of the Liberal government that their hands were tied by a fiscal and structural deficit, they proceeded to make \$4 billion worth of spending announcements in the six short months leading up to the 2004 budget.

This absolute lack of fiscal restraint has characterized the Liberal government’s entire tenure in office. The 2004 Budget contained a fiscal agenda that included four consecutive deficits for the province of Ontario. The Liberal government told Ontario taxpayers that this was due to the situation they were handed when they took office, but the harsh reality is that these deficits exist because the Liberals are desperate to find a means to satisfy even a small portion of the \$11 billion worth of campaign promises that they made.

By casting aside the notion of balanced budgets and fiscal accountability, the Liberal government has set the stage for a return to the tax-and-spend fiscal policies that characterized the previous administrations of Bob Rae and David Peterson through the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Fortunately, in recent weeks the veil has started to come off the Liberal government’s political agenda and Ontarians are getting a true glimpse of the impact this incompetence is having on the province’s economy.

By the end of the third quarter of the 2004/05 fiscal year, the Liberal government had already exceeded its spending expectations by over \$600 million. This despite slowed economic growth and a reduction in the forecast amount of taxation revenue received by the province.

The Official Opposition condemns the lack of fiscal accountability displayed by the Liberal government. We continue to call upon the Premier and the Minister of Finance to assume responsibility for the fiscal situation they find themselves in, and begin to make some of the tough decisions necessary to achieve a balanced budget and provide the vital services Ontarians require most.

---

<sup>9</sup> Jack Mintz, *‘Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Ontario’s Budget Making Reality’* – January 18, 2005

## **Investments in Vital Services**

While the Official Opposition recognizes that the current state of Ontario's health care system is unsustainable over the long-term, and the need to work towards fundamental reforms, we completely dissent with the irresponsible measure that have been undertaken by the Liberal government.

The previous Progressive Conservative government understood that Ontarians need the security of knowing that when their family members require health care, it will be available when and where they need it.

Universal access to excellent health care is one of the most important measures of the quality of people's lives, and the most essential service government can provide is a world-class, publicly-funded health care system. That's why after 1995, we increased annual funding for health care by \$10 billion, despite the continuing lack of fair health care funding from the federal Liberals.

In 2003, the former government invested \$28 billion into health care, almost half the total provincial budget, to meet the needs of our growing and aging population, and the demands for new and more expensive drugs and medical technologies.

Clearly, the Liberal government does not share these principles. The 2004 Budget brought forward by the Liberal government removed public funding for vital health services such as physiotherapy, eye exams and chiropractic care. These health care programs are vital to the health and well being of thousands of Ontarians, but are now inaccessible for many.

In exchange for eliminating access to these vital health care services, the Liberal government has also begun to charge hard working Ontarians an omnibus health tax under the guise of improving the system for one and all. The reality is that health care in Ontario today is worse than when the Liberals first took control of the system only a year and a half ago.

### ***Health Premium a one-time boost to revenue***

An analysis of the structure of the new Health Premium indicates that, because it is only partially indexed to the growth in public health-care expenditures, it represents a onetime raising of the floor for base revenue that will not keep up with trends in health-care costs and, thus, will only delay the inevitable non-sustainability of health-care financing under the current public model.

*(Source: "Paying More, Getting Less", Fraser Institute- July 2004)*

The Liberal government has spent the bulk of their time in office creating an atmosphere of fear and anxiety within the Ontario health care system. They have declared war with Ontario's doctors, nurses and hospitals, instead of forging the valuable partnerships that are required to guide health care into the future.

The current Liberal agenda will see 757 nurses receive pink-slip before the end of the year, and according to the Ontario Hospital Association, another 8,700 positions will be cut in 2005/06 because the Liberal government refuses to provide sufficient funding for our hospitals.

Ontario's doctors are also being punished by the Liberal government and continue to work without a contract. This confrontation resulted in the first doctor labour stoppage time in close to 20 years. A group of doctors recently took job action, holding a one-day meeting and forcing hundreds of elective surgeries to be cancelled across Ontario. The action comes as a result of little movement in negotiations with the government and continued uncertainty across the health care sector. In fact, the

government has said it will carry on imposing its poorly planned changes without the support of doctors, hospitals, and nurses. The question is, where does this leave patients?

Meanwhile, more than two months have passed since the Legislature adjourned for Christmas, and the hospital funding crisis remains. Despite submitting balanced budget plans in October, hospitals around the province still do not have final funding figures for this fiscal year - which is a little over one month from now. Nurses are being laid off, service and bed cuts are already underway, and our emergency rooms are full and in chaos.

As already stated, the Official Opposition understands that there are significant challenges in managing Ontario's health care sector. That is why during the pre-budget consultation process, we moved a motion for the government to strike an all-party committee to develop options for our ailing hospitals:

*I move that the Premier, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health review the funding of hospitals. Our Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, in our pre-budget consultations heard from hospitals across the province. They have called for multi-year funding as promised by the government. Hospitals told us the mandatory balanced budget process will mean thousands of job cuts to staff in our hospitals. The recent \$200 million one-time funding is not a solution.*

*We request that:*

- (1) the government set up an all-party committee to review hospitals' operating and capital budgets and examine options; and*
- (2) the government and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care introduce their plan for stable, multi-year funding of hospitals for a full, non-partisan debate in the Legislature.<sup>10</sup>*

This motion was defeated by the Liberal members of the Committee, clearly sending the message that the Liberal government will continue to diverge from its promise for a more open, accountable government.

The restructuring of Ontario's health care system is an issue that will have significant impact on our children, our grandchildren, and for generations to come. It is not an issue that should be taken lightly, or subject to the overt political whims of the Liberal government. The Official Opposition believes that an all-party committee, provided with the appropriate resources, can develop a long-term sustainable plan for the future of health care – and in particular, Ontario's hospitals.

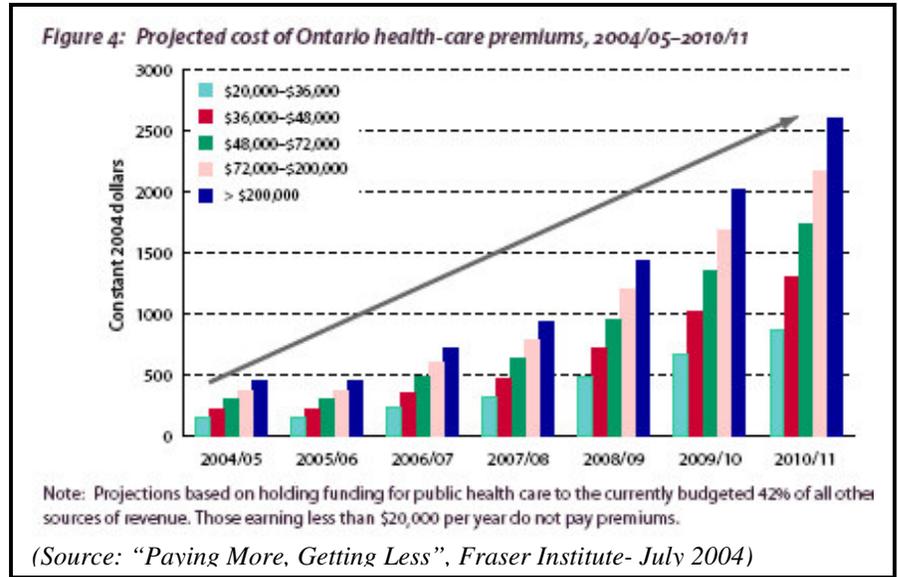
The Official Opposition renews its call for the Liberal government to strike such a Select Committee, and to rescind its declaration of war against the very people and institutions that deliver the vital health care services that all Ontarians need and want.

The answer to Ontario's health care crisis does not lie in an omnibus health tax that is used to pay for new sewer systems, or in open conflict with our doctors and nurses. The answer can only be found through an open, accountable debate with all those who have a vested interest in the future of health care in this province.

---

<sup>10</sup> Official Opposition Motion, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs – January 18, 2005

The Liberal health care agenda is unsustainable. The health tax introduced as a solution to the funding woes in the health sector will not achieve the desired end. In order for the Liberals to sustain their current health care agenda, the health premium will need to increase by more than 500% by the year 2010. As such, the Official Opposition also renews its call for the Liberal government to rescind this punishing, regressive taxation measure and work with the opposition parties to collectively develop a sustainable solution for the future funding of health care.



Agriculture

In addition to the current crisis in our health care system, farmers in Ontario have been under attack from the Liberal government for the past year. The 2004 Budget saw funding for the Ministry of Agriculture budget slashed by almost \$130 million, including massive cuts to safety net programs. According to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the "industry of farming is in serious trouble. Farm incomes have been devastated by the BSE crisis, poor crop conditions, a strengthening dollar and US trade action on hogs, grain and oilseed prices at 25 year lows, rising costs for energy and other inputs and a crushing regulatory burden on farmers that shows little net benefit."<sup>11</sup>

The Official Opposition recognizes the vital contribution that farmers and the entire agricultural sector make to the provincial economy. That is why the Official Opposition recommends that the Liberal government immediately respond to the request of the OFA for a meeting to deal head on with the immediate issues and to agree on solutions to sustain the industry in the short term. In their recent correspondence the OFA has raised several recommendations that must be discussed and considered by the Liberal government during the drafting of the 2005 Budget in order to ensure the future viability of the Ontario farm. These recommendations include:

- An immediate cash payment to grains and oilseeds farmers of \$300 million for the 2004 crop price disaster, to prevent farm closures;
- A workable Production Insurance program for horticulture;
- Immediate payment of the \$121 million promised by both levels of government to tobacco growers to start rationalizing the industry;
- A CAIS program that delivers real income support on a timely basis;
- Delay of the Nutrient Management Act to enable workable changes and realistic funding levels;
- Elimination of water taking permit fees for agricultural use;
- Postponement of Greenbelt Protection Act to enable a review of farming viability factors; and

<sup>11</sup> Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Letter to Membership – February 1, 2005

## **The Fight for Equality from Ottawa**

Ontario and Alberta are the only provinces who currently do not receive equalization payments from the federal government. It is estimated that approximately 44% of federal revenue is generated by taxpayers in the province of Ontario. That means that under the current equalization agreement with Ottawa and the other 12 provincial and territorial governments, \$700 from each and every Ontario taxpayer is used to subsidize programs outside of our province. The end result is an approximately \$23 billion gap between what Ontarians contribute to the federal government in tax dollars, and what they receive in return in the form of government services.

The Official Opposition agrees that Ontario should obtain a better deal with respect to equalization and the sharing of surplus federal revenue. However, we also believe that fairness extends beyond the Liberal government's current demands for a one-time share of the existing federal surplus. A \$5 billion injection today may stem the bleeding caused by the government's failed fiscal agenda, but it will not assist in the future development of programs or address long-term funding pressures.

Any agreement reached by the government with respect to a share of the current federal surplus must see those funds directed to existing funding pressures and payments towards the debt. Using a one-time cash infusion such as this from the federal government to fund new programs will only serve to create even greater funding gaps in the provinces' core service areas such as health care and education.

If the Liberal government is genuine in its desire to protect the long term viability of health care and post-secondary education in our province, Premier McGuinty would start working with the First Minister's in order to reconstruct the equalization program to ensure the utmost fairness for all Ontarians and Canadians.

The Leader of the PC Party of Ontario, John Tory, recently wrote Premier McGuinty and expressed his long-held belief that the existing equalization program in Canada is in desperate need of reform:

*I have been talking consistently for the past two years about the need for broader reform of overall federal-provincial financial arrangements. Many of these have evolved as governments have changed and as the country itself has changed, but we have not taken a thoughtful, deliberate overall look at the entire picture and whether it is presently working in the best interests of all Canadians.*

*I have been making the case over the two-year period that the current regime is not working for all Canadians. To take one simple example, taxpayers (of which there is only one group) must wonder how a huge surplus of their money could arise at one level of government while other levels of government are struggling to provide services to those very same taxpayers.*

*Consequently, I support the notion that Ontarians and other provinces are in need of new, more equitable and realistic arrangements with respect to the country's overall finances, but I fail to see how your confrontational approach will reap the desired rewards.*

*Premier, if your recent comments toward the federal government are genuine and not just politics of diversion, I urge you to start working with the First Ministers in order to reform and*

*review federal-provincial finances to ensure the utmost fairness for all Ontarians and Canadians.*

*That is why I am calling on you Premier, to immediately request a meeting of the Council of the Federation. This meeting must be called in order to begin the process of re-building and strengthening our Federation and to ensure that taxes paid by Ontarians and for that matter by residents of other provinces make it to the level of government, whether it be federal, provincial or municipal, which is required to deliver services to Canadians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>12</sup>*

The Official Opposition has been consistent for the past 9-years with respect to this issue. During the time in which the PC Party was in government, there were repeated requests for the federal government to recognize the contribution made by the hard-working people of Ontario, and to ensure that sufficient funds were returned to our province to maintain vital public services.

Upon reflection back to April 2000, in a resolution moved by the Honourable Michael D. Harris, the Premier of the day, expressing many of the same concerns brought forward recently by Premier McGuinty, it is interesting to note the number of current members of the Liberal government that voted against increased fairness for Ontario taxpayers. The people voting against the motion to have \$4 billion in federal funding re-instated for health care services included Mr. McGuinty himself. In addition, David Levac, David Caplan, Monte Kwinter, Michael Bryant, Gerard Kennedy, David Ramsay, Gerry Phillips, Richard Patten, Leona Dombrowsky, Mike Colle, and Jean-Marc Lalonde – all members of the current Liberal caucus – voted against that resolution.

Due to the long-held belief that Ontario is treated in an inequitable fashion by the federal government, the Official Opposition recently supported a motion calling for the existing funding gap to be narrowed. However, in supporting this motion, the Leader of the Official Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, Bob Runciman, MPP (Leeds-Grenville), questioned the motives of the Liberal government for showing such aggression towards the federal government at a time when many other hot-button issues have been dominating the political agenda. He expressed concern that the Liberal government is involved in ‘politics of deflection’ and that this new found contempt for the federal-provincial fiscal relationship is only a mean by which to distract attention from the very serious issues that are facing the government, especially in the health care sector.

*We've seen a range of diversionary tactics over the past year or so, whether it's pit bull legislation, sushi, bring-your-own-wine or film censorship. We have to wonder what the motivation is behind all of these initiatives in their attempts to distract the attention of Ontarians away from the very serious challenges we're facing, primarily in the health care sector, at a time when the hospitals are laying off people and closing down beds. We just heard about St. Joe's in London closing its emergency ward for specific hours -- Humber, Peterborough: Those are significant concerns that the government doesn't want to address or is trying to distract attention from by a variety of initiatives. One has to wonder about the resolution here today, whether indeed it is real.<sup>13</sup>*

Regardless of the motivation behind the Premiers recent actions, the Official Opposition continues to support the call for a more equitable equalization arrangement for Ontario. In this regard, the Official

---

<sup>12</sup> John Tory, *Open Letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty – February 16, 2005*

<sup>13</sup> Bob Runciman, *Ontario Hansard – February 16, 2005*

Opposition is calling on Premier McGuinty to immediately request a meeting of the Council of the Federation. This meeting must be called in order to begin the process of re-building our Confederation and to ensure that the people of Ontario – now and into the future – will always receive a fair and equitable portion of this country's wealth.

The Premier has noted that a review panel will soon be announced by the Council with an appointed representative from each province to look at the equalization system. With respect to all those who are appointed to this panel by various government leaders, this is a matter that requires direct leadership from our elected representatives, and one that Premier McGuinty (who also serves as the current Chair of the Council of the Federation) should take seriously enough to dedicate his personal attention to.

Ontario has long been the driver of the Canadian economy, and while we accept that as Canadians we will always be required to make a contribution towards the overall prosperity of our country, we must also ensure that there is a viable, long-term agreement that balances our contribution with protecting the stability of our own economic future.

It is time that Ontario re-assert itself as a leader in Canada, and assume a prominent role in ensuring equity and fairness for Ontarians and for people across the entire nation. If Premier McGuinty truly believes in his recent words, he will take this opportunity to launch Ontario to the head of this debate.

The Conference Board of Canada has recently released a paper on the future of equalization in Canada and made 5-key recommendations on how to begin restoring this program to what is enshrined in our Constitution. These recommendations could act as the starting point from which the Council begins its deliberations.

*Ottawa and the provinces should:*

- 1. Re-confirm that the purpose of equalization is to provide a more consistent level of basic public services in each province and territory.*
- 2. Set the equalization budget at a reasonable amount (for example, the announced \$10.9 billion budget for 2005–06), with fixed growth rates (such as the planned 3.5 per cent per year).*
- 3. Commit to make any and all additional offset payments from within that fiscal envelope. No more equalization-related payments above and beyond the equalization budget.*
- 4. Clarify the formula for determining equalization entitlement, to increase transparency for the taxpaying public.*
- 5. Base annual equalization payments on a rolling average of the entitlements of the three previous years, thereby smoothing out fluctuations and minimizing fiscal shocks for all parties.*

*Last October, Ottawa promised to adopt points 2 and 5. This represents a good start, but only a start. To complete the reform package, all the points above must be addressed. Equalization needs to be clarified, simplified and based on greater budgetary certainty—and not just for the recipient provinces. The federal government, and Canada's taxpayers, need to know what they are paying for, who they are paying it to, and that the amounts paid are reasonable and within fixed budgets. We'll know this has been achieved when a prime minister is able to explain equalization to a national television audience in a few minutes.<sup>14</sup>*

---

<sup>14</sup> Conference Board of Canada, 'Equalization: Fix it Permanently' – February 2005

## **Consultation Process:**

The 2005 Pre-Budget process was greeted with far less fanfare than the previous year by the Liberal government. In 2004, the Liberals went to great lengths to appear that the budget process was open to all Ontarians and that public consultation would in fact have a significant influence on the construction of the government's financial agenda.

The Liberals retained a private consulting company, at a cost in excess of \$250,000 to orchestrate a Citizen's Dialogue process, held town hall meetings in several ridings across Ontario and sent the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to tour the province for three full weeks. However, despite this widespread consultation, the 2004 Budget did not reflect the wishes of working class Ontarians. In the end, the budget was written behind closed doors, and contained measures such as the regressive health premium and the de-listing of critical health care services, than no Ontarian desired.

These concerns were brought forward by the Finance Critic for the Official Opposition, Jim Flaherty, MPP (Whitby-Ajax), in an open letter to the Minister of Finance at the outset of this year's consultations:

*This time last year, you spoke at great length about your government's willingness to listen to the desires of Ontarians in drafting your first budget. However, what resulted was anything but what Ontarians told you were their priorities. Ontarians did not ask for a regressive \$2.6 Billion tax hike. In fact, you repeated your election promise that you wouldn't raise taxes in your government's opening remarks on the first day of pre-budget hearings last year. Similarly, Ontarians did not ask for vital health services to be privatized: physiotherapy, chiropractic services and eye exams were unceremoniously de-listed from OHIP in your first budget.<sup>15</sup>*

This year, the Liberal government decided to scale down its consultations considerably and drop the charade of open accountable government and take the budget writing process directly into the boardroom. The only public consultations held this year were eight-days of hearing by the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee.

The Official Opposition expressed concern that many Ontarians with opinions, and ideas, regarding the fiscal policies of this government, were not being given an opportunity to have their concerns heard prior to the drafting of the budget. This is in spite of the fact that the Liberals specifically committed to more public consultation on all matters of provincial interest during the 2003 election campaign.

In this regard, Mr. Flaherty attempted to have the consultations extended for one week in January to allow more of these interested citizens the opportunity to have their voice heard:

*During the past week and a half of committee hearings, it has become clear that many hard working Ontarians are concerned about the content of the 2005 Budget and wish to have their voices heard.*

---

<sup>15</sup> Jim Flaherty, *Open Letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty – January 9, 2005*

*This is highlighted by the fact that 121 individuals, associations and interested parties applied for one of only 42 presentation spots in Toronto. As such, 2/3 of those Ontarians who wished to be represented will be unable to be heard by the Committee...*

*Therefore, I propose that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs sit for an additional 2-3 days in Toronto during the week of January 24-28, 2005, in order to accommodate all those presenters who were designated as alternates by all three parties...*

*I believe that this is a motion that should be supported by all members of this Committee. When we as parliamentarians are presented with an opportunity to hear directly from those individuals who we represent, it is our responsibility to do so.<sup>16</sup>*

This motion was subsequently defeated by the Liberal members of the Standing Committee.

The Official Opposition regrets that more Ontarians were not given the opportunity to be heard during the pre-budget consultation process. This is not keeping with the spirit of the government's promise of a more open and accountable government, and denies access to the very people whom this government promised to bring to the table during the election.

As such, it is the hope of the Official Opposition that this Dissenting Report captures many of the concerns of those who were denied access to the consultation process by the Liberals, and will be seriously considered by the government as it drafts the 2005 Budget behind closed doors.

---

<sup>16</sup> Jim Flaherty, Ontario Hansard – January 18, 2005

### **Additional Recommendations:**

Further to the content above, the Official Opposition moved several motions during the pre-budget consultation process in support of various sectors, organizations and individuals. As such, the Official Opposition would like to make the following additional recommendations to the Minister of Finance in preparation of the 2005 Ontario Budget.

Given the release by the TD Bank (authored by Don Drummond, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist) on January 19, 2005, blaming debt and taxes for 15 years of take-home pay stagnation, in addition to findings substantiated by the work of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the Official Opposition recommends that the Liberal government:

1. Eliminate the provincial health tax and hold the line on all other taxes;
2. Improve tax fairness;
3. Stop running deficits; and
4. Not increase spending until it completes a review of departmental spending;

The Minister of Finance must respond to their election promise to uphold the hard cap on business property taxes and work with small business to fix current property tax inequities. The shifting of the property tax burden that exists today, is a detriment to small businesses across Ontario.

The Minister of Finance should consider the elimination of Retail Sales Tax on building materials that improve energy efficiency and conservation. This would include insulation and other building materials, such as windows and furnaces that meet NRCAN and other industry energy efficiency standards.

Given that during the 2004 pre-budget consultations, the Standing Committee of Finance and Economic Affairs unanimously voted in favour of a motion to support the Liberal government's commitment of \$50 million transition fund for tobacco farmers, the Minister of Finance should ensure that this funding is contained in the 2005 Ontario Budget and that funds begin to flow to farmers immediately.

As the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs has heard from many farmers across Ontario that are have great difficulty in keeping their agricultural businesses viable, the government should immediately strike an all-party task force to examine the viability of our agricultural sector and make specific recommendations to the government to preserve the industry for future generations.

The Minister of Finance must ensure, and make the necessary document available to the public to provide evidence that not a single penny of the \$2.6 billion, regressive health tax be used to fund severance agreements related to the termination of front-line health care workers in Ontario hospitals.

The Liberal government must immediately strike an all-party committee to review operating and capital budgets of Ontario hospitals, and to provide recommendations to the government with respect to the future viability of our hospital sector.

## **LIBERAL CHANGE: UNFAIR, UNBALANCED AND UNPLANNED**

Regaining Trust, Fairness and a Strong Economic Plan

---

The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health should ensure that the 2005 Budget include specific funding for multi-site hospitals, such as Lakeridge Health, as well as provide an adequate growth adjustment. In addition, teaching programs at Lakeridge Health Port Perry in affiliation with the University of Toronto School of Medicine, should be provided with specific and separate funding envelopes.

Following testimony from the Ontario Chiropractic Association, the Liberal government should review the 2004 Budget decision to de-list chiropractic services from OHIP and determine how best to incorporate chiropractic care into the health care system to help meet it's health care goals, including reduced system costs and improved collaboration and coordination of primary care.

The Minister of Health immediately begin working with the federal drug therapeutics committee to streamline the drug approval process. This would enhance access to more recent drugs while eliminating duplication between the federal and provincial drug approval, adding drugs to the Ontario drug formulary and improving patient outcomes.

The Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance seriously consider changing the RHPA and scope of practice of optometrists in order to allow them to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents known as TPAs. This change would eliminate duplication and improve access.

**APPENDIX C**

**DISSENTING OPINION OF THE  
NEW DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE**

# **The NDP Caucus**

## **Recommendations and Supporting Arguments**

### **For the Finance Minister On Pre-Budget Consultations**

**2005**

**Submitted to the  
Standing Committee on  
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Feb.22, 2005

## **1. Ontario's "revenue deficit"**

Many witnesses stated quite explicitly that the real deficit that Ontario must remedy is its revenue deficit. During the Harris Eves era, a broad range of tax cuts implemented by cost the Ontario treasury \$14 billion. To put things in perspective, the revenue package the outlined below is less than one-quarter of that.

### ***A "fair share" revenue package***

A regressive tax like the Ontario Health Tax is not the way to go. What Ontario needs is a "fair share" revenue package that addresses Ontario's revenue deficit by asking those who benefited most from the Harris-Eves tax cuts to pay a little more.

Well before the 2003 election campaign, the Liberals were aware that Ontario was running a significant deficit and yet they signed the Canadian Taxpayers Federation pledge to neither raise taxes nor run a deficit. In order to restore public services as promised, the government must deal with Ontario's "revenue deficit" in a way that respects the principle of tax fairness and the "ability to pay". High-income earners and large corporations received a disproportionate share of the tax breaks during the Harris-Eves and now its time for them to pay their fair share.

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government introduce, in its 2005-6 budget, a \$3.5 billion "fair share" revenue package consisting of the following measures:

- At least \$1.5 billion in taxes from imposing higher tax rates on individual income over \$100,000;
- At least \$1 billion from returning corporate tax rates (excluding small business) to the 2000 rate;
- At least \$750 million from closing loopholes in the Employer Health Tax benefiting large corporations.
- At least \$250 million from increasing Tobacco Taxes by \$5.00/carton.

## **2. Health**

### ***Hospitals***

The NDP strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government use the budget to affirm its belief in universal medicare system and end P3 hospitals.

The NDP also recommends that the Minister of Finance acknowledge that in the foreseeable future hospitals will require funding increases between 6%-8%. Therefore, the Ministers should ensure that the funding increase to hospitals in the 2005 budget reflects this reality.

### ***Long-term Care***

Many witnesses expressed dismay at the declining standards of care in our long-term care facilities. Put, bluntly the NDP believes that our parents and grandparents deserve better.

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends that the government, in its FY 2005-6 budget, completely reverse the Conservative's 15% increase in long-term care rates and take significant steps to bring Ontario's per capita funding for long-term care up to the national average. This would constitute a meaningful first step in implementing promises made in the Liberal 2003 election platform to reverse the Conservatives 15% increase in long-term care rates and to improve standards of care for long-term care residents. This would cost approximately \$200 million.

### ***Nurses***

*"We will hire 8,000 new nurses. Our strategy will include the creation of more nursing school spaces and recruitment of nurses who have left the profession or left the province under Harris-Eves." – Liberal Election Platform*

Nurses are the backbone of our health care system.

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate sufficient funds to hire a minimum of 3,000 new nurses in its FY 2005-6 budget. This would cost approximately \$150 million and would constitute a meaningful first step in implementing the Liberal 2003 election promise to hire 8,000 new nurses.

### **3. Education**

*“Education has never been more important for young Ontarians and for our province’s prosperity. Yet our schools have never been more threatened and our students more at risk”. – Liberal Election Platform*

#### ***Financing***

The gap in educational financing was a major theme of the important 2002 Rozanski report on education financing. Rozanski recommended: increases in funding to bring benchmarks up-to-date; annual reviews of benchmarks to ensure that they reflect current costs; new investments to address areas in which the funding formula was clearly inadequate; and periodic (every five years) reviews of the appropriateness of the benchmarks themselves.

The Rozanski education report established the bottom line for adequate funding of our public education system. In 2002, Rozanski called for \$2.1 billion (over 3 years) in funding plus inflation/enrollment benchmarks of about \$375 million/year over the same three years. This would require approximately \$1 billion for the 2005-6 fiscal year.

Given this background, the NDP was extremely disappointed that its resolution to allocate \$1 billion in new educational funding in the FY 2005-6 budget was defeated by the Liberal majority on Committee.

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that he allocate \$1 billion in new education financing in the 2005-6 budget. This would constitute a meaningful first step in implementing the Liberal 2003 election education promises (including Dr. Rozanski’s education financing recommendations) which would cost approximately \$3.2 billion over four years.

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends that the Liberal government implement ideas from the NDP’s “School to Work” program including: an expansion of technical programs in high schools; a doubling of apprentices; a review of the Applied stream curriculum; and course-based alternatives to the current Grade 10 literacy test.

### **4. Assistance for Ontario’s most vulnerable**

#### ***Ending the National Child Benefit Clawback and Increasing Ontario Works and ODSP benefits***

Many presenters to the committee report called for increases in social assistance rates on a regional basis. The government was also repeatedly urged to eliminate the

clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) from social assistance recipients.

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends that the government eliminate the National Child Benefit clawback and ensure, at a minimum, a 3% increase in both the basic Ontario Works allowance and ODSP. This would constitute a meaningful first step in implementing promises made in the Liberal 2003 election platform and in opposition to end the clawback. This would cost approximately \$300 million.

## **5. Child Care**

A number of witnesses called for the government to invest more in the childcare system and to work towards a system of universal, affordable access for every child.

As a modest first step, the NDP strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate at least \$100 million in new provincial money to expand Ontario's regulated, non-profit childcare system in its FY 2005-6 budget. This would constitute a meaningful first step in implementing promises made in the Liberal 2003 election platform to invest \$300 million in childcare and to extend childcare assistance to 330,000 children.

## **6. Public Transit**

*"We will give 2 cents/litre of the existing provincial gasoline tax to municipalities for public transit. Fully implemented, this will generate an initial \$312 million per year (2003-4), an amount that will grow with the economy" - Liberal Election Platform*

For far too long, Ontario transit riders have paid too much out of their own pockets for public transit that is often slow and inconvenient. Ontario transit systems must have access to a reliable and stable provincial funding source on which they can base their long-term planning and service improvements. The Gas Tax is the ideal source of such revenue.

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate the full two cents of the Gas Tax to municipalities for public transit in its FY 2005-6 budget. This would cost approximately \$160 million and would honour the Liberal 2003 election promise to allocate two cents of the Gas Tax to Ontario's municipalities for badly needed public transit.

## **7. Housing**

*"We will match federal support to create almost 20,000 affordable housing units". – Liberal election platform*

It's been almost 10 years since the government got out of the housing business and now there is a serious crisis in affordable housing in Ontario. Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends to the Minister of Finance that the government allocate sufficient funds in its FY 2005-6 budget to build 7,000 new affordable non-profit housing units. 12,000 new rent supplements. This would cost approximately \$250 million.

## **8. Hydro**

The NDP strongly believes that Ontario must have a publicly owned and managed energy system run on a "power at cost basis".

Therefore, the NDP strongly recommends that the government base its energy policy on the following:

- The closure of the private, "spot" market and its replacement with producer "power at cost" contracts.
- The use of OPG as the primary provider of "conventional" energy supplies; and
- The implementation of an aggressive green, energy conservation strategy.