

Push is on for improved rail service

Having known Jim Flaherty for about 13 years, I know that he can sometimes take you by surprise.

He was first elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1995, when our caucus almost quadrupled in numbers and we formed the provincial government. Very soon he was recognized as a leading voice in our party's right wing and, after a short time on the backbenches, he was appointed to Mike Harris' cabinet. Eventually he was appointed Minister of Finance for the Province of Ontario.

When an opportunity arose in federal politics, Jim Flaherty seized it. I was in the chair, as acting Speaker, and accepted his resignation from the Legislature when he decided to run for a seat in the House of Commons. After being elected as an MP in 2006, he was appointed Canada's Minister of Finance, arguably the second most powerful position in the federal government.

Just days ago, Jim Flaherty surprised us again. He was quoted in the *Guelph Mercury* as saying that "the money is available" for GO Transit improvements in Guelph.

On July 17, I had written Jim Flaherty a comprehensive letter outlining my strong support for extending transit service from Georgetown through Acton to Guelph and Kitchener-Waterloo. I believe that improved rail service through Wellington-Halton Hills would significantly improve the quality of life for all of the people in our area. Not surprisingly, I was very encouraged by his comments in Guelph.

In my letter, I emphasized that Wellington-Halton Hills is home to a large and growing population of commuters who routinely travel to the Greater Toronto Area and would benefit from an expansion of GO Transit service in and beyond Georgetown. I also highlighted environmental concerns, worsening traffic congestion and high gasoline prices, as reasons for moving forward on improved GO Transit service.

Ted Arnott



I intend to continue raising this issue. Enhanced rail services must be a priority of the federal government working in partnership with the provinces.

I'm continuing to receive excellent feedback on my petition for gas tax fairness. As you may be aware, on every litre of gasoline, drivers pay a tax of 14.7 cents to the provincial government. This adds up to \$2.3 billion collected by the McGuinty government every year.

The problem is that the Liberals are sharing this gas tax unfairly. Cities that operate municipal transit systems are receiving two cents of the gas tax. Small towns and rural communities are not receiving stable and predictable funding for their infrastructure needs. I strongly object to the Liberals' policy of denying Wellington-Halton Hills communities a fair share of the gas tax.

If you agree, I hope you will sign the petition I am circulating. The petition is available at the Town of Halton Hills Civic Centre.

Hope you and your family enjoy the rest of the summer!

I can be reached at 1-800-265-2366, or by email at ted.arnott@pc.ola.org. My website is www.tedarnottmpp.com.

—Ted Arnott is the MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills

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