



# **MARIA VAN BOMMEL**      **PRESS RELEASE**

**M.P.P. Lambton-Kent-Middlesex**

## ***VAN BOMMEL'S GROUND CURRENT POLLUTION ACT RECEIVES UNANIMOUS SUPPORT***

October 19, 2006

**Queen's Park** – Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Maria Van Bommel today proudly rose in the Legislature to move 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of her Private Member's Bill 143, An Act Respecting Ground Current Pollution in Ontario. The bill received unanimous approval from all 3 parties and was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy for further consideration.

"As a farmer, I've been long aware of this issue for probably well over 30 years, but it wasn't until I met a constituent whose life was completely changed and affected by ground current pollution that I started to really understand the impact that it has on all Ontarians," said Van Bommel. "Many people refer to this phenomenon as stray voltage, transient voltage or tingle voltage. Regardless of what we call it, the impact on farms, manufacturing and humans is demonstrable."

Stray voltage is man-made electromagnetic energy. The laws of electric engineering require that electrons flowing from a substation transformer must return to that transformer in order to complete the circuit. This is done by the use of neutral wire that exists on the distribution and transmission systems. With less than perfect grounding, however, this current gives rise to stray voltage. Because of increased load on these neutral wires, more and more of the current completing the circuit is now completing the circuit via other routes, including the earth and equipment.

"Cows are the most susceptible animal and therefore are often the first to show signs of problems with ground current pollution," said Van Bommel. "Cows take quick drinks of water because the water bowl gives them a shock every time they go to drink, or they get a shock from leaning against the metal stanchions or from the milking equipment."

"The purpose of this bill is to define objectionable current flow and to establish a timeframe for power providers to respond to complaints by consumers, including investigation and remediation of the problem," advised Van Bommel.

Bill 143 will require consumers who feel that they are subject to ground current pollution to make their complaint in writing, the local utility provider will be required to respond, investigate and take steps to remedy the problem within six months. The bill will make it an offence to not remedy the problem as well as requiring the Ministry of Government Services to develop and implement a plan to eliminate ground current pollution in this province within 10 years.

"I am pleased to have unanimous support today for this initiative," said Van Bommel. "I am hopeful that the Bill will proceed through committee in a timely manner."