

NDP Caucus News

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Winter is Coming: Government Must Make Home Heating More Affordable

NDP MHA Sheilagh O'Leary (St. John's East-Quidi Vidi) is calling on government to reduce the cost of heating your home for people across the island.

For years, New Democrats in Newfoundland and Labrador have been pushing for the government of the day to remove the HST from all forms of home heating, spanning from electricity, oil, to firewood. O'Leary says that the Liberals refused to make this change, but the PCs have a chance to make a difference and keep money in people's pockets.

"We are experiencing a warm summer now, so many people aren't thinking about the winter – but we know that it's coming," said O'Leary. "Before we know it, people will be receiving their bills in the mail and seeing that price for keeping their house warm. People across the province are already facing an affordability crisis, living paycheck to paycheck, and they want to know how this government plans on changing that. So far, we haven't seen it."

O'Leary states that while the PC government announced that they directed NL Hydro to apply a \$45 million credit to offset the planned rate increase on July 1, that will not make bills cheaper than they were last year. She says that to reduce people's bills, they have to take a stronger stance and recognize people need relief now.

"Ensuring that the July 1 increase wasn't more than 2.25% was a good first step, but that still means bills will be more or less the same as last year. That means people will still be facing the uphill battle they faced last winter," said O'Leary. "The PCs tout their change in the amount you can claim in personal income tax, but people won't see that until the Spring. What do they tell people who are already concerned about winter? What about in 2030 when rate mitigation runs out?"

"This is an immediate measure that would help people this winter, but we know that more work needs to be done so people can afford to pay the bill. We hear whatever government of the day discuss that our rates are some of the lowest, but that doesn't matter when seniors are freezing cold in their homes, or families living in one room because that's all they can afford to heat. That is the reality many of my constituents are living in."

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