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My account of 2015

The year end is a time that many of us reflect on the past year and look ahead to the future. As I take a moment to reflect on the past year, I can say it has been a very busy one for me at Queen's Park and in the riding. Two of my private member's bills, Bill 56 ? the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act and Bill 36 ? the Respecting Private Property Act have had parts incorporated into government legislation. I am happy that parts of my private member's bills are now law or in the process of becoming law, that will help improve our province and Ontarians.

Another significant event that took place this year was the selection of the new Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. On May 9th Patrick Brown was selected as the new Leader and during the summer he won the Simcoe-North by-election to replace my former PC colleague Garfield Dunlop to become their new MPP. As the Legislature resumed in the fall I was appointed Deputy Leader of the PC Caucus along with MPP Steve Clark and I was asked to serve as the Critic for Children and Youth Services.

Even with all this good news at Queen's Park there were some troubling events that took place as well. On February 19th Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa found Liberal operative Gerry Lougheed Jr. and the Premier's Deputy Chief of Staff Pat Sorbara in contravention of the Elections Act for allegedly attempting to bribe former Liberal candidate Andrew Olivier to not run as their candidate in the Sudbury by-election. After an extensive investigation, on September 24th the OPP charged Gerry Lougheed Jr. for one count of counselling an offense not committed and one count of unlawfully influencing or negotiating appointments. Even though Pat Sorbara has not been criminally charged, she still may face charges for allegedly contravening the Elections Act.

This is not the only OPP investigation surrounding the Liberal government. On December 17th former Chief of Staff David Livingston and Deputy Chief of Staff Laura Miller were charged by the OPP with one count of breach of trust, one count of mischief in relation to data and one count of misuse of a computer system to commit the offense of mischief, for their roles in the deletion of emails related to the cancellation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants that cost Ontarians $1.1 billion.

The New Year will bring further scrutiny against the Liberals for their actions at Queen's Park. I am proud to be part of the Official Opposition who kept the pressure on to try to unearth the actions that lead to these three charges being laid by the OPP. It is quite an indictment of the Liberals that in 2015 an unprecedented three charges have been laid. Not the type of historic government anyone expected when Kathleen Wynne was sworn in as the Premier.

My work in the riding was filled with many new businesses opening up Dufferin-Caledon and celebrating milestones such as the completion of the trail around Island Lake. It constantly amazes me how volunteers throughout Dufferin-Caledon give so much to improve the lives of others. Whether it is fundraising and building trails around Island Lake, or offering to be a volunteer driver for HomeJames, we are blessed to live in such a giving community. I am so proud to have the honour to represent Dufferin-Caledon at Queen's Park and throughout Ontario.

By Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon