

Update to Winter WRAFT Report – April 2006

- A few weeks ago the Ombudsman issued his scathing report on the assessment procedures at MPAC. For details of the report go to www.ombudsman.on.ca/english.asp. WRAFT put out a press release following the issue of the report calling for the shelving of the 2005 assessment. It is posted on our website. While, as expected, the Ombudsman's report does not deal with the underlying inequities in the present property tax system, it does seriously discredit the whole assessment methodology, providing yet more ammunition for an overhaul of the basis for distributing property taxes in Ontario.
- In the winter WRAFT report, we described PC Finance Critic Tim Hudak's private member's bill to cap assessment increases. On April 13, this bill gets second reading. **There will be a press conference at 10:00 am at Queen's Park and the bill will be debated in the House at 11:00 am. We encourage representatives of members to attend both of these events. Please let us know if you can attend. (wraft@sympatico.ca)** WRAFT supports the Hudak bill which limits future assessment increases to 5% per year.
- We keep asking our members to write their MPPs, and many have done so. Whether you have or have not sent a letter or email, please follow up with email to the Finance Minister with copies to Tim Hudak and to WRAFT. The pressure for reform is building. You can do your part to help.
- Most municipalities set their tax rates based on financial needs. If total assessments in the municipality are up, then the municipal tax rate should decline accordingly. The education tax rate has already been reduced to offset the provincial assessment increase. If your municipality is taking advantage of higher assessment to simply hold the tax rate rather than lower it, you should take action locally. Also, please let us know, because it is further ammunition in our fight for capping assessment increases.