

PRESS RELEASE

**Frank Valeriote, M.P.
Guelph**



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For Immediate Release

Government is blind to economic crisis in southern Ontario, says Valeriote

The Conservative government is oblivious to the economic despair that is hitting communities across southern Ontario, says Frank Valeriote, Member of Parliament for Guelph and Liberal Critic for the Southern Ontario Development Agency.

Seven months have passed since the government announcement of the Southern Ontario Development Agency (FedDev Ontario) to help small and medium businesses withstand the economic crisis. In spite of the depth and urgency of the need, not one penny of the billion dollars promised by the Prime Minister and the Minister of State (Science and Technology) has actually been spent to help those businesses survive. Today in the House of Commons, Valeriote demanded the Conservative government take immediate action to address the needs of Southern Ontario businesses and deliver on its commitments.

“Over 269,000 jobs have been lost in southern Ontario since this economic crisis began. Industries, communities and households have been devastated.,” Valeriote said. “Months later, there are still no criteria for funding for the Southern Ontario Development Agency, and no application forms available to the public. It’s as if this agency exists only in fairytale Conservative land where press releases and broken promises flow freely but cheques are never delivered.”

Valeriote raised these issues in the House of Commons after consulting extensively with stakeholders in southern Ontario. He urged the Minister to listen to the concerns and fears of citizens in the hard-hit regions.

“This Conservative government needs to start listening to southern Ontario. The communities have lost thousands of jobs and they’re afraid they’re never coming back. Promises from this government are not paying the mortgages and putting food on the table—that’s why this money needs to get out the door,” said Valeriote. “I have spoken to Community Futures organizations in Wellington, Waterloo, Simcoe, Bruce, Collingwood, Orillia, Welland, Niagara and more. They were unanimous in their disappointment and concern with the lack of action on the Southern Ontario Development Agency. They are playing a waiting game and the communities are losing jobs and hope with every passing day.”

“Southern Ontario used to be the lifeblood of the Ontario and Canadian economy — the Liberal Opposition is working hard on behalf of the people of these communities. Where is the Conservative government?” said Valeriote.

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