



PRESS RELEASE FROM THE  
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## **Why isn't the NS Government using the interrupter clause to help Nova Scotians at the gas pumps?**

**Halifax, N.S.** - "It is very disappointing and disheartening to see our Provincial Government take such a wait and see approach when it comes to using the interrupter clause to benefit the consumer by lowering gas prices; while they seem to be able to react almost immediately, using the clause to jump prices at the pumps," a Labour spokesperson said today.

Rick Clarke, President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, pointed out that under our regulated system, the price of gas in Nova Scotia is set every Thursday at midnight, based on monitored market trends. However, the province can use the so-called interrupter clause at any time to raise or drop the price, based on rapid swings in market conditions.

"When Hurricane Ike threatened oil refineries in Texas and market prices jumped, the MacDonald Government responded quickly through the interrupter clause, resulting in prices jumping by more than 12 cents a litre to more than \$1.44 Saturday morning," Clarke said. "But what is taking them so long to invoke the Interrupter clause to benefit consumers, by bringing down pump prices as being seen in other jurisdictions.

"Ike did not cause as much damage as expected to oil production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico; thus the price of a barrel of oil dropped, currently below \$92 US a barrel, while prices at the pump remain at over \$1.43 a litre.

"The wait and see approach by government before they decide to invoke the interrupter clause to bring prices down is not fair or reasonable and is creating an undue hardship for consumers.

In 2006, Jamie Muir was the Minister in charge of gas regulation and the provincial government stepped in to lower the price of gas from \$1.21 to \$1.12 using the interrupter clause in a one-day period. Muir's reasoning was "'In a free market, at some point there are going to be sharp increases or sharp decreases, and I guess, really, why should the consumer be paying more than a fair price," said Jamie Muir, minister of Service Nova Scotia.

"This week, Government responded quickly following trends that saw our pump prices jump and it is only natural for consumers to expect to be treated the same when it comes to dropping the price at the pump, to be treated fairly -- they deserve no less," Clarke said in conclusion.

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