

# Local business community presses NDP for action on gaming, skilled-trades shortage



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The rising cost of energy, problems plaguing the horse racing industry and the skilled trades shortage were among the issues the local business community raised Thursday during an hour-long meeting with NDP leader Andrea Horwath.

“We raised some of our concerns (and) it was a good exchange of ideas,” Matt Marchand, president and CEO of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, said following the closed-door meeting.

Horwath said the Liberal government has “made a complete mess of not only the gaming file but horse racing file. It’s devastating for communities and has created a situation of chaos and upheaval. The industry is falling apart at the seams.”

She said any efforts by the government to rectify the situation may be “too little too late.”

She said the New Democrats are calling for a freeze of the removal-of-slots at race tracks program to ensure the industry is able to survive.

Horwath also said she was awaiting Premier Kathleen Wynne’s response to her party’s latest list of budget demands before deciding whether to vote down the budget, thereby triggering an election.

“The ball is in her court,” said Horwath. “I’m waiting for the premier to make a final decision in terms of including accountability items in the budget. If she’s prepared to do that, then we’ll be able to have a discussion about whether that’s enough to give us the confidence this government will change its ways.”