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DURHAM - In one week gas prices jumped almost fourteen cents. Consumers have been warned for days prior to the increase. No one took it seriously until on Thursday everyone woke up to the reality of the increase. Gas price analyst announced

that consumer should not have to worry as soon the prices will go down by as much as five cents. This still is no comfort as the prices are still extremely high for many to afford. But what drove the gas prices up 14 cents a litre to an average of 179.9 cents in southern

GAS PRICE JUMP - MANY WORRIED

Ontario on Thursday in the first place? The switchover to summer blend, which is more expensive to produce than winter gas, is the main culprit. With the switchover, the spot market in the U.S. jumped to \$2.83 per gallon from \$2.50. The spot market is the wholesale market, which impacts what gas stations pay refineries for fuel. That increase equates to 14 cents a litre (12.4 cents plus HST), on the Canadian side. The 33 cent a gallon increase was driven by higher blending costs, particularly by the cost of alkylate is a component used more heavily in the summer blend fuel mixture. Many see this explanation as nothing more than an excuse to hit consumer hard and increase profits. How is it that in previous years, consumer never endured such a harsh increase? What is summer blend? First off, winter blend contains more butane. Butane evapo-

rates easily, can lead to vapour lock in an engine on hot days and contributes to ozone and smog pollution. It's also volatile, which is why it's not used in summer. But it combusts easily, helping your engine to run properly in cold temperatures. Why are prices going down Friday? Prices were expected to drop by 5 cents a litre Friday to an average of 174.9 cents per litre in southern Ontario. Energy traders don't anticipate a big risk premium in the Middle East, which had been a concern, and are generally concerned about the health of the global economy, all of which is pushing oil prices down. At the local pump, many citizens are scared. This being so as grocery stores are already taking advantage of this fuel increase to justify increasing food prices. Already, high food prices will make some foods out of reach for many consumer already

struggling financially. Doug Ford first aimed his frustration at oil companies, wondering if tanks at the gas station are drained of winter gas overnight or if consumers are being gouged.

"I have my opinion that it's not physically possible to drain every single gas station and put the fresh stuff in, so either you're putting the fresh stuff in last month or you're gouging the people right now."

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