

Friday, May 14, 2010

Premier Dalton McGuinty
Legislative Building, Queen's Park,
Toronto ON
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty,

Forging ahead with an antiquated and ill-thought energy strategy makes no sense from an environmental, economical or political perspective. While Ontarians are aligned with the goals of your energy policy at the highest levels (i.e., cleaner air), the strategy for achieving these goals must be reviewed and recalibrated given the changing industrial landscape in Ontario, the cost/benefit of your proposed strategy and the serious and irreversible impacts to the environment and the health and safety of people in areas that have been chosen for fossil fuel fired power plants.

I live with my family and extended family in the Clarkson Airshed - Oakville and Mississauga. The Clarkson airshed, as you know, is already more polluted than the average airshed in Ontario. My son and wife both suffer from asthma as do thousands of other Oakville and Mississauga residents. The proposed plant will emit thousands of tons of pollutants into the airshed each and every year. As the levels of pollution increase so do the health risks to people especially those with asthma, diabetes, lung and heart ailments. It's a proven fact that air pollution causes **premature deaths**. In the Clarkson airshed, premature deaths due to air pollution have increased from 536 in 2005 to 1030 in 2008.

Not only would this plant increase premature deaths but the proposed location is in such close proximity to residential communities that the consequences of an industrial accident would be unprecedented in Ontario. This 975MW plant, the largest of its kind in Ontario and possibly Canada, will be constructed on a small sliver of land bounded by a major roadway and a railway line with a maximum buffer of 15 metres from each. The plant will be less than 100 metres from the nearest business, 300 metres from the nearest school and within 400 metres of homes. **Industrial accidents do happen**. Several people were killed in the Middletown, Connecticut when an explosion at a gas fired power plant occurred during routine maintenance procedures. A dozen people were killed on the Oil Rig in the Gulf of Mexico only a couple of weeks ago. Memories of the Mississauga train

derailment were re-surfaced with the recent CN derailment in Pickering and the propane plant explosion in Toronto last year.

If the power is in fact required, there are alternatives which provide a far safer and more environmentally friendly solution. The OPA has stated that a gas fired power plant in Nanticoke could provide the power in a reliable manner at the same economic cost. An alternative that protects the health and safety of hundreds of thousands of people in the Clarkson airshed must be re-assessed and should in fact be the primary alternative. Refusal to re-assess the need and location of this plant given the known consequences and risks is simply irresponsible and quite possibly negligent.

Will you accept accountability for the consequences of an industrial accident in Oakville?

Are residential, community-based power plants really necessary? For decades, Ontario Hydro provided reliable and relatively cheap power based using a robust transmission grid and large, remotely located power plants. These plants were located on huge tracts of land in areas that were sparsely populated to minimize the impacts of pollution and accidents. Your energy strategy which is ostensibly "green" is bringing pollution and safety hazards to the front doors of people in Oakville, Mississauga, Toronto, Brampton, Halton Hills and other communities. How can you possibly reconcile these impacts with a strategy that is supposed to protect the environment and the people that live in it? How can you possibly dismiss our legitimate concerns for the health and safety of our families as NIMBYism?

It's not too late to step back and re-assess. As a minimum I would ask that you support MPP Kevin Flynn's Bill 8 requiring appropriate setbacks for power plants, direct the Ministry of the Environment to initiate an Individual Environmental Assessment of the proposed Oakville plant, direct the OPA to review the Nanticoke alternative and the Ontario Energy Board to conduct an independent review of the final proposal. This is a billion dollar decision that has significant and irreversible economic, environmental and health implications for Ontario and hundreds of thousands of people in the Clarkson airshed.

To avoid similar issues in future, I would also ask that you direct the OPA to update the Integrated Power System Plan to more accurately reflect demand requirements and supply

options; require a full review of the revised IPSP by the Ontario Energy Board with appropriate public engagement and consultation and for all new power plants, implement a requirement for Individual Environmental Assessments.

...and by the way, don't be misled by Adam Radwanski's "elitist" characterization of Oakville. All residents of Oakville and Mississauga regardless of economic class, age, religion, ethnic background or other demographic categorization are completely and wholly opposed to a power plant in the Clarkson airshed. Your constituents, their MPP's and local leaders and politicians are trying to communicate with you; please listen.

I trust you will do the right thing for Ontario and the residents within the Clarkson airshed. I anxiously await your reply.

Michael O.

cc. MPP Kevin Flynn
Mayor Rob Burton
Clearview Community Association