

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed to read the January 27th Toronto Star article which grossly understated the serious consequences of the proposed gas fired generating station in Oakville. Overshadowing the other power plant projects mentioned, its sheer scale and completely inappropriate location on the Ford Plant property makes it entirely different. Ontario does need to develop alternative energy solutions but the infrastructure should clearly not be built in heavily populated areas and never in those surrounded by residential properties with over a dozen schools in its shadows. As director of one of these schools I am angered to think that the health of Ontario's young people is negotiable. As we all try to teach children the importance of responsible environmental stewardship this project defies explanation. The proposed Oakville plant would be gargantuan in scale (at 900 megawatts one of the largest anywhere) and if built, would further tax an air shed already overburdened by pollutants (14% above the national average). Clearly, the impact on human health would be far less if it were built in a less populated or more rural setting. This is a transparent and highly irresponsible case. It's based on a sweet land deal. \$50 million for Ford and a guaranteed return for its builders, Trans Canada Energy... all at the expense of taxpayers who are furious at the prospect. Greed and opportunism over health and common sense. Clearly it would cost more to build elsewhere but for an issue this important, that expense would be warranted. Ford, TCE and the provincial government should do the right thing. Listen to the municipality, its people and most importantly listen to reason. This is a shocking story of blatant disregard for human health. It deserves far more investigation and serious journalism than the Star has provided to date. There's nothing trivial about this story and unlike what's been suggested, it is not merely a "Not In My Backyard" scenario. Adding highly dangerous fine particulate matter to the air we breathe is a serious issue in any neighborhood. Thumbing your nose at countless petitions, letters, community rallies, student marches and the genuine concerns of an entire community might seem insignificant to some. For Oakville residents however, this is literally a fight for our health and that of our children as well as countless other readers of your paper. All Ontario residents should hold our Premier and his advisors accountable. Developing greener energy is a noble pursuit and something we all want, Premier McGuinty... provided common sense isn't lost in the equation. -G.P.

