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NEWS RELEASE

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Canada's new Clean Air Act is a good step in the right direction, says the Power Workers' Union

(Toronto) The Government of Canada's approach towards tackling air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, set out in the new *Clean Air Act*, is a move in the right direction, says the Power Workers' Union, Ontario's largest union, representing 16,000 workers in the electricity field.

The *Clean Air Act* proposes a set of integrated national emission standards which define the requirements industry must meet.

"Setting clear, fixed, air pollution targets allows industry to decide the best way to invest their resources to achieve compliance with new environmental standards. The new *Act* is a good first step by the federal Government, and we hope the Prime Minister's leadership will be followed by the Province of Ontario," says Don MacKinnon, Power Workers' Union (PWU) President. "Unfortunately over the past three years the Government of Ontario has been pursuing an unrealistic policy of coal plant closures instead of investing in clean coal technology to lower emissions from our coal-fuelled electricity plants.

"We are pleased that the Minister of Natural Resources is looking at existing and new technologies to meet the new federal pollution targets. The PWU has argued that shutting down Ontario's coal-fuelled stations, and removing 20 percent of the province's electricity supply, doesn't make sense when proven and affordable clean coal technologies are readily available," comments Mr. MacKinnon.

Proven clean coal technology can reduce sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by more than 96 percent, and mercury emissions by up to 90 percent. Some Ontario electricity plants were cleaned up in the 1990s and in 2003. An independent analysis shows that retrofitting the remaining coal plant units would cost \$11 billion less than switching the plants to higher cost natural gas.

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POWER WORKERS' UNION

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“We’re also pleased that the new *Clean Air Act* will be targeting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by setting both short-term and long-term targets. We look forward to reviewing the regulations to implement these targets,” said Mr. MacKinnon. “In Ontario we should be mixing biomass (wood and plant waste) with coal to reduce green house gases. Denmark’s experience shows that by using biomass at a coal plant, greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by up to 30 percent. Accelerating the timeline on new nuclear plants, and exploring new carbon sequestration and coal gasification technologies would all have a huge impact on lowering greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario.”

The Power Workers’ Union believes that Ontarians require an energy supply that derives electricity from diverse sources, including clean coal, hydroelectric and nuclear, along with other economical renewable options. The PWU’s better energy plan – www.abetterenergyplan.ca – also includes a review of the province’s natural gas strategy, investment in green power and the promotion of energy efficiency.

The Power Workers' Union is the largest electricity union in Ontario, representing employees in electricity generation, transmission, distribution, regulations, and research and development.

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