

PRESS RELEASE

Coal Plant Closures Leave Economy Hostage

Dwight Duncan's closure of Ontario's remaining coal-fired stations leaves our economy hostage to the natural gas industry. Higher cost natural gas generation supported by some renewables will negatively impact Ontario's economic competitiveness, small businesses—our major job creators, those on fixed incomes, and our farmers, hospitals and schools.

- Consumers will face skyrocketing electricity prices driven by contracts that give private power-producers a guaranteed profit. We'll pay for the billions of dollars of additional cost for :
 - the new natural gas generating plants;
 - the pipelines needed to supply these plants;
 - new transmission lines to connect them to the grid; and,
 - a fuel that costs twice as much as coal.
- Ontarians will get a double whammy as these new gas plants will drive natural gas prices higher. The government knows that experts across North America are forecasting natural gas supply shortages and increased price volatility. Natural gas consumption will increase by 30% to fuel these new plants—that's equivalent to what 2.4 million Ontario consumers use each year for things like home heating.
- Controversial and conflicting statistical modelling studies on air pollution and human health are being used to justify the plan. Our government knows who the real pollution culprits are—US sources and Ontario's transportation sector.

There is a viable alternative. Bringing Ontario's mothballed nuclear reactors back on line, in addition to retrofitting the coal plants, is cheaper, better for the economy and improves the environment too. Applying proven best-available control technology to all Ontario coal-fired units would reduce air quality emissions by at least 90%. Retaining cleaner coal, while reducing its proportional contribution to the provincial power grid by bringing back the laid-up nuclear units, will reduce greenhouse emissions by over 20 megatonnes. That's as good as replacing all of Ontario's coal stations with natural gas at significantly less cost and it's considerably more reliable than switching to alternatives, which are only available a fraction of the time.

Our neighbours and competitors—like New York and environmental leaders like Denmark and Germany aren't shutting down their coal plants. What do they know that we don't?

The switch to natural gas has been decided by the McGuinty government without a full public review. It's time we had a full open debate about our energy mix before Ontario is sold out to the gas industry.

Don MacKinnon
President



