



Power Workers' Union: Position on Greenhouse Gases December 2009

For over 63 years, the Power Workers' Union (PWU) has been representing the interests of the more than 15,000 men and women who help operate Ontario's electricity system. Our goal is to ensure Ontarians receive clean, affordable, reliable, environmentally responsible and secure electricity. It is a fundamental foundation block required for a healthy society.

Heightened public concerns about greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are evident. Clearly, Canada needs to do its part to reduce its emissions. However, poor policy can negatively impact the reliability and affordability of electricity, and Ontario's economic competitiveness without achieving any environmental advantage. The PWU believes policy responses should be commensurate with our GHGs emissions and strike a balance between protecting the environment and ensuring a strong economy.

In Ontario, nuclear and hydroelectric generation supply over 70 percent of the province's electricity creating one of the lowest cost and lowest carbon systems in the world. In spite of this substantial advantage, Ontario is pursuing several initiatives intended to further reduce this carbon footprint. These include: closing the province's coal generating stations by 2014 and replacing them with natural gas generation; adding more renewable generation; and investing in more conservation. Recently, Ontario decided to delay building new nuclear reactors.

Based on the union's experience and analyses prepared by internationally recognized experts, the PWU believes Ontario's policies expose the province to unnecessary reliability risks and will significantly drive up the cost of electricity for Ontarians, while delivering marginal environmental benefits, if any.

The PWU believes there are better, more effective ways to reduce GHG while protecting and stimulating the economy. The PWU recommends that:

- Ontario coal stations should not be closed – instead Ontario should invest in equipment upgrades that achieve efficiency improvements, including ways to use waste heat and continue the retrofitting these of stations, with proven, readily available abatement technologies. Existing infrastructure is recycled, existing transmission connections are maximized and established relationships with the host communities are recognized.
- Ontario should make investments in supply infrastructure to secure large-scale, carbon neutral biomass wastes from the province's agricultural and forestry sectors. This "Grown in Ontario" fuel would be used in Ontario's coal and natural gas-fuelled generating stations. Besides reducing GHG, this would provide reliable, renewable generation, create jobs and increase Ontario's energy security.

- Ontario should participate in Canada's world-class Carbon Capture and Storage research program. This would build on the province's existing coal generation expertise and keep the province positioned to benefit in the future from Canada's vast coal supplies.
- Ontario must act now to build proven and improved, "Made in Ontario" CANDU reactors. As the centre of Canada's annual \$6.6 Billion nuclear industry, Ontario has much to gain. This includes: securing tens of thousands of existing high-pay, high-skill jobs; creating tens of thousands of new jobs; expanding R&D investments at our universities and colleges; and generating billions in government revenues. Ontario also receives reliable, low-cost, greenhouse gas emission free, base-load electricity to power our economy and to export to our energy hungry neighbours, which in turn can displace high GHG generation in these jurisdictions. Other potential benefits include: spin-offs from international reactor sales; technology linkages to oil sands extraction; electric vehicles, and seawater desalination. Any delay in building the new Darlington reactors means more CO₂ emissions will come from fossil fuel generation much of which will be imported from U.S. coal plants.
- Ontario should continue its participation in all relevant North American carbon cap and trade scheme (CCT) discussions. Ultimately, the United States (U.S.) will have the biggest influence on the final continental framework. As the largest economic region in Canada, and a major trading partner with the U.S., it is essential that Ontario negotiate a CCT scheme that is fair and open as well as compatible with the CCT programs of our trade partners. Otherwise, Ontario will be at a significant economic disadvantage and its ability to meet emissions targets, and those of the electricity sector, in particular will be compromised.
- Ontario should provide open, transparent information to both taxpayers and ratepayers about the real costs and environmental benefits of investments in renewable distributed generation and conservation. Future investments should be based on clear, demonstrated benefits.

For additional information please see: Background: PWU Position on Greenhouse Gases.