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Ontario government plans to triple greenhouse gas pollution from electricity sector

July 16, 2020

After years of progress cleaning up Ontario's electricity sector, the Ford government is throwing the system into reverse with a plan to increase climate-damaging emissions by more than 300%, 29 groups including Windsor's Citizens Environment Alliance charged today.

The plan to ramp up use of electricity generated by burning fossil fuel at some 30 gas-fired plants will lead a tripling of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the next five years, with emissions more than quadrupling by 2040, the groups said.

"The Province is frittering away much of the progress the electricity sector has made in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to almost zero. Suddenly, Ontario's electricity system is a problem for the climate," said Jack Gibbons, Chair of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance.

This planned increase in climate change pollution would make it impossible for the province to meet its already weak greenhouse gas emission targets. The plan would instead toss into the garbage heap one-third of the GHG reductions achieved by previous PC and Liberal governments who shut down coal-fired electricity plants.

The 29 groups from across Ontario are demanding that the government re-think its plan to increase climate-damaging pollution and instead follow a cleaner path.

"There is no need for Ontarians to contribute to destabilizing our planet's climate every time they turn on the lights. We have a number of better electricity supply options," said Derek Coronado, of the Citizens Environment Alliance in Windsor.

More responsible electricity supply options for Ontario include:

- Quebec has a large surplus of GHG-free water power that it is willing to sell to Ontario at half the price of nuclear.

"We can have all the GHG-free, affordable electricity we need from our neighbours in Quebec. Hydro Quebec has a huge surplus of clean, water power electricity it would be happy to sell to us for half the price of nuclear power," said Emilie Grenier at Ecology Ottawa.



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- Solar and wind power are now inexpensive technologies, and Quebec water power would be in place to provide power when the sun isn't shining nor the wind blowing.

"The price of expanding renewable electricity production from sun and wind has come down dramatically in recent years. Ontario should take advantage of this affordable, pollution-free opportunity as a way to create meaningful, local jobs that will support a long-term build back better plan" said Yannick Beaudoin of the David Suzuki Foundation.

- Energy efficiency retrofits are the cheapest and lowest impact way to meet our electricity needs.

"Energy efficiency reduces overall demand on the electricity system and lowers hydro bills for families and businesses. Energy efficiency is an inexpensive and quick-to-deploy way to address our power needs - and all the Ford Government has to do is reverse its cuts to programs mandated by the Province for decades," said Jeremy Milloy, Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul.

For further information:

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Link here to the letter signed by 29 groups: <https://www.cleanairalliance.org/gas-letter/>