

Knocking Out Coal by 2010

BECAUSE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE CAN'T WAIT



THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT HAS SET A REGULATED DEADLINE OF 2014 to fully phase out the province's dirty coal plants. But given the enormous climate impact of burning coal, the government's own commitment to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and our international climate treaty obligations, we need to do everything in our power to advance this phase-out date. Fortunately, Ontario can be coal free as early as 2010 according to the government's own projections.



As of October 2007, for example, the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) had contracted for 10,636 megawatts (MW) of new electricity supply. This amount is equivalent to 165% of Ontario's current coal-fired generation capacity (6,434 MW). Given that the vast majority of this new supply will be online in the next two to three years, these figures show that we will be able to phase out coal in 2010 and still have plenty of power to keep the lights on.

Unfortunately, however, the OPA is recommending that we should continue to operate our dirty coal plants until Dec. 31, 2014 to meet some of our domestic needs and to make electricity exports to the U.S. This unnecessary four-year delay will be costly for our climate and our health.

THE ONE-TWO PUNCH TO KNOCK OUT COAL

That's why the Ontario Clean Air Alliance is asking Ontario's Energy Minister, Gerry Phillips, to take the following steps to phase out coal by 2010.

- 1 Ban non-emergency coal-fired electricity exports to the United States:** We should only export or import coal-fired electricity if it is essential to keep the lights on in the U.S. or Ontario. Dirty power exports that ignore the heavy health and climate costs of burning coal are a bad deal for both us and our neighbours. Currently, however, the OPA is recommending that in 2010, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) should export 50% of its coal-fired generation to the U.S.
- 2 Use cleaner generation before firing up dirty coal-fired generators:** Despite the fact that the OPA has contracted for 10,636 MW of new supply, the OPA is recommending that Ontario should continue to operate its dirty coal plants in 2010. Once again, the OPA's recommended actions will protect OPG's profits at the expense of reducing smog and fighting dangerous climate change. Energy Minister Phillips needs to direct OPG to cease operating its dirty coal plants when all our needs can be met by cleaner sources (e.g., wind, water, solar, biomass and natural gas-fired power plants).

If Minister Phillips takes these actions, Ontario's electricity rates could rise by up to 3.3% in 2010; but this is a small price to pay to obtain major public health and environmental benefits:

- a) save close to 700 lives in Ontario alone;
- b) prevent more than 300,000 asthma attacks per year; and
- c) provide 50-80% of the total greenhouse gas emission reductions that Ontario needs to achieve compliance with its Kyoto Protocol greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2010.



KEEPING COAL DOWN FOR THE COUNT

The OPA's forecast that we *can* phase-out coal-fired generation by 2010 is based on its assumption that Ontario's nuclear power plants will be able to operate at full power for at least 80% of the year. Based on the performance record of Ontario's nuclear fleet, many experts consider this assumption to be overly optimistic. In fact, as a result of the past poor performance of Ontario's nuclear fleet, OPG was forced to increase the output of its dirty coal plants by 120% between 1995 and 2003 to keep the lights on.

Therefore to guarantee that we can phase-out our dirty coal plants by 2010, Energy Minister Phillips should also direct the OPA to:

- 1** Set a target to reduce Ontario's peak day demand in 2010 by at least 5% relative to the 2007 peak of 25,737 MW. This can be accomplished through a combination of demand response (encouraging customers to shift use to off-peak periods) and energy conservation programs at a lower cost than building new generation sources. Given that peak demand fell 5% in 2007 compared to 2006, a further 5% reduction by 2010 is achievable.
- 2** Secure at least another 3,000 MW of renewable and natural gas-fired combined heat and power by 2010 in addition to what the OPA has already contracted for as of October 2007. This target is also achievable given that the OPA, which was created in 2004, has already entered into contracts for 3,294 MW of renewable and natural gas-fired combined heat and power generation.
- 3** Squeeze the most energy as possible from new natural gas plants by ensuring they are combined cycle or better in efficiency.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please contact Energy Minister Phillips and ask him to take the necessary steps to ensure that we can phase-out our dirty coal plants by 2010.

Contact information: The Honourable Gerry Phillips, Minister of Energy, Hearst Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto M7A 2E1; Phone: 416-327-6758; Fax: 416-327-0033; Email: gphillips.mpp@liberal.ola.org.

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION**

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE: www.cleanairalliance.org and download our report: *The Ontario Power Authority's Coal Phase-Out Strategy: A Critical Review* (September 2007).