



Toronto's hospitals and extended care facilities cannot operate at full capacity during a blackout for two reasons. First, the capacity of their emergency diesel generators is significantly lower than their peak electricity demand. Second, in the event of a prolonged blackout they may not be able to obtain a continuous supply of diesel fuel.

On the other hand, the Kingston General Hospital, Ottawa's Queensway-Carleton Hospital and the Sudbury Regional Hospital have on-site combined heat and power (CHP) plants that allow them to continue to operate at full capacity during a blackout. CHP plants use the same molecules of natural gas to simultaneously produce heat and electricity rather than just heat alone. The University of Toronto, the Senator David Croll Apartments (at Bloor and Huron Streets) and the Pearson Airport also have CHP plants.

As well as increasing the security of Toronto's health care facilities, small-scale, high-efficiency CHP plants can help avoid the need for the expensive and disruptive East Toronto Transmission Line. By installing 300 megawatts (MW) of small-scale, distributed generation in central and downtown Toronto, we can avoid the need to spend hundreds of millions of dollars for a new high-voltage transmission line into the city.

A number of Toronto hospitals have indicated that they would be willing to install CHP systems if they could obtain electricity supply contracts from the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) which would pay them to produce electricity. Toronto Community Housing Corporation would also like to enter into electricity supply contracts with the OPA to facilitate the installation of CHP plants at Regent Park, Lower St. James Town, Moss Park and numerous other locations.

It is important to note that paying Toronto's hospitals and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation to produce electricity will benefit all Ontario electricity consumers since small-scale CHP plants can meet our electricity needs at a lower cost and more reliably than new nuclear reactors. These highly efficient and low emission CHP units can also help to eliminate the need for dirty coal power.

Recommendation: The Ontario Power Authority should create a standard offer program for electricity produced by combined heat and power plants similar to its highly successful feed-in tariff program for renewable power sources. Such a program would recognize the health, environmental and cost benefits of small-scale distributed generation in downtown Toronto.

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