



## Coal must go ► *Ontario needs real solutions, not expensive band-aids*

Ontario Power Generation (OPG, formerly Ontario Hydro) runs four coal-fired generating stations: Nanticoke (Lake Erie), Lambton (near Sarnia), Thunder Bay and Atikokan (Northwestern Ontario). The Nanticoke plant is the largest coal-fired electricity generating station in North America.

### What is the problem with coal power?

According to the Ontario Medical Association, air pollution is “a public health crisis” in Ontario.

While improvements have been made to the pollution performance of Ontario’s coal-fired power plants, OPG’s coal plants remain a significant source of air pollution:

- each year they produce as much air pollution as 5.6 million cars
- the emissions from the Nanticoke and Lambton coal plants kill 668 Ontarians per year
- Nanticoke is Canada’s single largest air polluter
- Lambton is Ontario’s second largest air polluter (after Nanticoke)
- they produce approximately 20% of Ontario’s total carbon dioxide emissions, which cause dangerous climate change
- they emit 27% of Ontario’s sulphur dioxide emissions which cause smog and lead to the formation of small particulate matter that gets deep into our lungs and causes asthma attacks, heart and lung diseases, strokes and premature death
- they produce 39% of Ontario’s airborne mercury emissions. Mercury is a neurotoxin that can permanently damage the brain and kidneys and is particularly harmful to children and developing fetuses. Over 98% of the fish consumption advisories for Ontario’s inland lakes are due to mercury poisoning
- they emit 14% of Ontario’s smog-causing nitrogen oxides emissions
- they emit lead (a neurotoxin) and cancer-causing emissions (arsenic, cadmium, chromium)

OPG’s coal-fired electricity emissions increased by 100% between 1995 and 2005.

### What are the alternatives?

The Ontario Clean Air Alliance’s (OCAA’s) goal is to achieve a phase-out of our dirty coal plants and move Ontario towards a 100% renewable electricity system. However, currently Ontario obtains approximately 19% of its electricity from coal power, which means we cannot move to a 100% renewable electricity system overnight. Therefore the OCAA is proposing a three-pronged strategy to phase-out coal and keep the lights on:

- Energy conservation and efficiency;
- New renewables; and
- High-efficiency natural gas fired generation as a transition option.

### What are the pollution-prevention advantages of switching to natural gas?

Building new high-efficiency, combined-cycle natural gas power plants to displace the output of our dirty coal plants will dramatically reduce or eliminate all of their toxic emissions:

“The air-quality problem is a health crisis. We’re at red alert now. We can’t delay action on the coal phase-out any further.”  
Gideon Forman, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

- carbon dioxide emissions that cause climate change will be reduced by 72%;
- smog-causing nitrogen oxides emissions will be reduced by 80%;
- smog-causing sulphur dioxide emissions will be reduced by 99.5%;
- mercury, lead and cancer-causing (arsenic, cadmium and chromium) emissions will be reduced by 100%.

Replacing all of our coal plants with natural gas power plants would provide Ontario with 50% of the emission reductions the entire province needs to achieve compliance with its Kyoto Protocol climate change target for 2010.

## The Power Workers Union's \$3 billion half-percent solution

According to the Power Workers' Union (PWU), instead of phasing-out coal OPG should install end-of-pipe pollution control technologies on its coal plants to reduce their emissions. In fact, the PWU's plan would reduce the coal plants' *total* emissions by only one-half of 1% at a cost of over \$3 billion. This is a band-aid solution that Ontario cannot afford, especially when you consider that the PWU's plan would do absolutely nothing to reduce the enormous emissions of carbon dioxide from coal plants, which are feeding dangerous climate change. To dramatically reduce air pollution and meet our Kyoto Protocol climate change obligations, Ontario must phase-out coal.

## What you can do

Please contact Premier Dalton McGuinty, Opposition Leader John Tory and NDP Leader Howard Hampton and tell them that you support a complete coal phase-out by 2009.

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