

The Toronto Environmental Alliance's position on the proposed Portlands Energy Centre



The Toronto Environmental Alliance believes that Ontario must develop a balanced portfolio of green electricity solutions that stop wasting energy, while developing local, renewable, publicly-owned and democratically accountable energy supplies to increase energy security (see the reverse side of this page for specific policy proposals on making this transition).

Consuming less and using the energy we truly need as efficiently as possible are the cleanest 'sources' of energy. The remainder of our energy needs can be met by using clean, green renewable resources like wind, solar and micro-hydro power or by capturing methane gas from composters and landfills.

High efficiency, combined cycle natural gas plants which are part of districting heating and cooling systems may have a role to play in the transition to a green energy future, as we phase out the coal and nuclear plants which currently provide 73 percent of Ontario's electricity.

If constructed, the Portlands Energy Centre would be a 550 megawatt combined cycle, gas-fired electricity generating plant with the potential for being connected to a district heating system. **TEA believes that this proposal needs to be assessed as part of a transitional strategy to green power and would support its construction only on the following conditions:**

1. That the Portlands Energy Centre (PEC) be explicitly linked to a strategy to reduce demand for electricity in the City of Toronto by 15 percent by 2007 and to provide 10 percent of the City's electricity need from low-impact renewable energy by 2010;
2. That the granting of an environmental Certificate of Approval for the operation of the PEC be explicitly linked to the scheduled 2005 shut-down of the 1100 megawatt Lakeview coal-fired electricity generating station (i.e. the PEC can't come on-line if Lakeview is still operating, ensuring that there is a net environmental benefit);
3. That the PEC use the cleanest available technologies for electricity generation from natural gas;
4. That the new plant be part of a district heating and cooling system, connection to which will be mandatory for new developments on Toronto's Waterfront;
5. That there be an open, inclusive process for the design and approval of the PEC and the generating station, if built, be 100 percent publicly owned and part of a democratically accountable energy system.

The Environmental Alternative: A Clean Energy Path

The Clean Energy Path for Ontario is a suite of policies to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. It will save consumers money, provide security and jobs, and leave a heritage of clean air, clean water and freedom from dangerous climate change through:

Energy Conservation and Efficiency

- A **public benefits charge** collecting a 0.3 cent per kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge on electricity, equivalent to about \$2.20 per month for a typical household. It would be used to develop and deliver programs for energy efficiency, renewable energy, research and development, and low-income customer protection.
- **Improved efficiency standards:** Minimum efficiency standards for electric appliances, electronic devices and buildings would be raised to the highest technically feasible levels.
- **Tax incentives** would promote efficiency improvements for buildings and equipment beyond minimum standards.
- **Combined heat and power:** Incentives would be provided and regulatory barriers removed for power plants that produce both electricity and useful heat at high efficiencies.
- **Industrial energy efficiency measures:** Industry would improve its efficiency by 1 to 2 percent per year through incentives or national standards.

Green Power

- A **renewable portfolio standard** requiring utilities to increase green, renewable energy from about 0.5 percent today to 10 percent by 2010 and 20 percent by 2020.
- **Production tax credits** of 2 cents/kWh and **consumer tax credits** of 3 cents per kWh for renewable energy, helping to level the playing fields with fossil fuel and nuclear generation subsidies.
- **Net metering** to treat fairly those consumer who generate their own electricity with renewable energy systems by allowing them to feed surplus electricity back to the grid and spin their meters backward.
- **Research and development** spending on renewable energy and efficiency.

TEA is opposed to the provincial government's plan for electricity privatization and de-regulation because we believe that it will simply create new problems rather than solving the existing environmental and social problems associated with fossil-fuel and nuclear plants.

For more detail on electricity privatization and the Clean Energy Path alternative, please see our report *Greening Public Power: Protecting the Public Interest in Electricity Restructuring* available at www.torontoenvironment.org/greenpower.