



# What is Toronto and Ontario's Energy Future?

**A Panel Discussion with Sustainable Energy Experts  
Ralph Torrie, and Dr. Keith Stewart.**

**Invited to take part: Ontario Minister of Energy Dwight Duncan**

**Wednesday, November 1,  
Ralph Thornton Centre, 7 pm**



**Peter Tabuns**  
MPP Toronto-Danforth  
NDP Environment Critic

Commitments the present Liberal government made in 2003 around closing down coal-fired plants, not building new nuclear, seizing the potential of renewables and employing real conservation and efficiency have not been followed through with. This past Spring, the McGuinty cabinet, including the Minister of Environment, secretly passed a regulation to exempt their mega nuclear plan from an environmental assessment that would give proper scrutiny to the serious environmental and economic implications of nuclear power, and assess the viable alternatives to such a course of action.

The McGuinty government initially rejected the Portlands Energy Centre in May 2005 after a sustained community campaign in opposition to it. Then, this past February, the McGuinty government, behind closed doors, approved putting a mega plant on Toronto's Waterfront despite the City and others arguing that conservation and renewables should be pursued instead. Toronto's conservation programs, rolled out on a limited basis, are already proving effective in reducing electricity demand. While the rest of the province increased its electricity consumption on hot days this past summer, Toronto's electricity demand went down.

To examine the direction Toronto and Ontario's energy future is going, and needs to go, I am convening a public panel of sustainable energy experts and have invited the Ontario Minister of Energy, Dwight Duncan. Confirmed panelists are:

## **Ralph Torrie**

Ralph Torrie, Vice-president of ICF International, is an expert in the field of energy and environment with 30 years of entrepreneurial and consulting experience. He is a recipient of the Canadian Environment Silver Award for his work on the climate change issue.

## **Keith Stewart**

Keith Stewart recently joined the WWF-Canada's climate change team after six years as the Toronto Environmental Alliance's Smog and Climate Change Campaigner. He is the co-author of *Hydro: The Decline and Fall of Ontario's Electric Empire*, along with numerous articles and reports on environmental and energy politics.

**For more information, please contact my office at  
(416) 325-3250, or (416) 461-0223.**

# REALITY CHECK ON PORTLANDS ENERGY CENTRE

*An abbreviated version of an Op-ed by Peter Tabuns, MPP Toronto-Danforth*

*We are doing this to keep the lights on, to prevent rotating blackouts and brownouts in Toronto.* - Donna Cansfield, February 10, 2006

## Reality Check -

Demand for electricity in Toronto, and Ontario, spikes predictably on hot, humid summer days that fuel air conditioner use. The 550 mega watt Portlands Energy Centre is suppose to supply Toronto electricity at such "peak" times, when demand for and cost of power is the highest. According to the Independent Electricity Operator, the City's existing transmission lines may not have the capacity to carry in additional electricity in upcoming years.

Studies and moreover, real life experience shows there are more cost effective, and environmentally sustainable alternatives to keep the lights on, and Torontians cool, THAN reindustrializing and further polluting the waterfront with a mega power plant:

- California climbed its way out of blackout territory in 2001 through conservation, not mega power plants.

- Instead of spending 730 million of tax dollars to build a mega plant, the Minister of Energy should invest in less expensive programs that reduce electricity use at peak times. In New York City, such programs shaved off 660 megawatts of power from being used at peak times this past summer when a prolonged heat wave gripped the city. [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060719/ap\\_on\\_bi\\_ge/feeding\\_the\\_grid.1](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060719/ap_on_bi_ge/feeding_the_grid.1)

Toronto's efforts to reduce electricity use are already working, and are projected to save more electricity than generated by PEC. Recognized internationally for its environmental policies, the City of Toronto, which is opposed to having the Portlands Energy Centre on its waterfront, is developing and implementing a sustainable energy plan that has a conservation first approach. By the end of this year, the City's current conservation programs will have reduced electricity demand by 200 MW, and by the end of 2007, 320 MW. Toronto has plans to follow that up with cutting another 300 MW. In total, Toronto's conservation program will save 620 MW over the next four years, surpassing the 550 MW PEC is suppose to be generating by 2010. Research also points to there being untapped potential for conservation in this city. A recent report commissioned Pollution Probe ([http://www.pollutionprobe.org/reports/elec\\_supplydemandICF.pdf](http://www.pollutionprobe.org/reports/elec_supplydemandICF.pdf)) has found that retrofitting lighting in downtown Toronto alone would reduce electricity use by 384 MW at peak times. In contrast, the first phase of PEC is 300 MW.

And while the rest of the province increased its electricity consumption on hot days this past summer, Toronto's electricity demand went down. Toronto Hydro's Peak Saver programs, rolled out on a limited scale this past summer, succeeded at moderating electricity use at peak times. With substantial, increased provincial backing, Toronto's Peak Saver program could expand and yield more energy savings. I have been putting the pressure on the Minister of Energy to make demand response programs mandatory, with targets, across the province, and to roll out funding to implement them at the scale needed.

- Deploying alternative forms of cooling:

There are a number of options available to replace air conditioning as a source of cooling in downtown Toronto. But the McGuinty Liberals have failed to introduce programs that would facilitate this turnover. When I was on City Council, I helped to make Enwave's Deep Lake Water Cooling Program a reality. This initiative, which uses cold water from Lake Ontario to cool buildings, will be servicing 46 downtown buildings by the end of next year, saving 61 MW of power. With the central pipe infrastructure now in place, Enwave has the capacity to cool 100 buildings by 2008. To capitalize on this very real potential, the McGuinty government should be introducing measures like changes to the Condominium Act that would facilitate the switch to deep lake water cooling, and a buildings retrofit program that would make it feasible for older buildings to connect with this cooling system.

Geothermal pumps, regarded to be one of the cheapest and most reliable ways to cool homes and buildings today, are not part of the Liberals' energy strategy, while building more mega plants is. Geothermal pumps take heat from dwellings and funnel it underground. I have recently filed a legislative motion calling for the creation of a program that gets geothermal pumps into homes.

- *"The Portlands Energy Centre completed a rigorous two year environment assessment process...before gaining provincial government approval to proceed with construction"* - Portlands Energy Centre

## Reality Check -

The Portlands Energy Centre did not undergo a full environmental assessment that considered alternatives like the impact of current conservation programs and peak demand programs; alternative sources of cooling and heating like geothermal pumps and deep lake water cooling; the construction of an underground supply cable that would carry hydro electric power from Niagara Falls to Toronto.

Furthermore, the Minister of Energy in Summer of 2005, after rejecting Portlands Energy Centre earlier that Spring, said that there would be a Request for Proposals process for energy projects in Toronto. The promised RFP was abandoned. An authentic RFP process would have given consideration to less costly, greener and faster options like demand response programs, and renewables.

- *"Even with substantial conservation and efficiency efforts, we can not meet energy needs"* - Donna Cansfield, February 10, 2006

## Reality Check -

The Liberals are marginalizing, not capitalizing on conservation and efficiency, confirm energy efficiency experts and environmentalists. Comprehensive studies demonstrate how Ontario can reduce its electricity use by 40% over the next decade, shutting down the coal fired plants and preventing a provincial blackout in the process.

<http://www.greenpeace.ca/e/resource/publications/climate/Smart-GreenEnergy.pdf>

The Pembina Institute for Sustainable Development, the David Suzuki Foundation echo that the McGuinty Liberal's proposed conservation target low balls what is achievable.

The Liberals continue to undersell conservation and efficiency to justify underinvesting in it. To succeed with their plans to privatize electricity, Liberals need to ensure investors there is growing demand.

- *"The fuel efficient design will reduce air emissions. Air quality studies were reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Environment. Toronto Public Health participated in the process"* - Portlands Energy Centre

## Reality Check -

Toronto's Medical Officer of Health will ask the Minister of the Environment (MOE) to review the environmental approvals given to the Port Lands Energy Centre (PEC), thanks to a motion passed at the City's Board of Health.

Last spring, the Medical Officer of Health recommended that prior to issuing a Certificate of Approval for PEC, the Minister of the Environment consider the cumulative emissions in the area. South Riverdale is recognized as being a compromised airshed. But the MOE applied Point of Impingement standards to the PEC, which consider emissions from the PEC in isolation. This approach does not capture the true level of air pollution residents are exposed to, and the impact the PEC will have.

When existing pollution is taken into account, emissions from the Port Lands Energy Centre will increase the level of nitrogen oxides (NOx) to the limit, a ceiling that needs to be updated based on the latest science, and particulate matter well beyond the limits prescribed by Health Canada.

## Next Steps:

- I will be filing a request for review on the Portlands Energy Centre decision under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights in the coming weeks. I will be asking for it to be reconsidered on the basis that peak demand programs potential was not taken into consideration by the McGuinty Liberals.

- As predicted, a new gas pipeline has to be constructed for Portlands Energy Centre. The pipeline will be subject to environmental review and public consultations, providing the community and the City another opportunity to argue for a reassessment of the entire undertaking. I am calling on Portlands Energy Centre to provide the community intervener funding so it can hire technical experts to review documents and studies prepared by proponent. An authentic consultation process ensures there are resources given to the public so they can gather and analyze information. Otherwise, the process is just reduced to a public relations exercise for the proponent.

- I encourage residents to adopt a lawn sign. The sign campaign initiated by the Toronto Energy Coalition is getting traction. <http://www.stoptheplant.ca>. Also, continue sending letters to the Premier's office. A sample letter is available on my website: [www.petertabuns.ca/issues](http://www.petertabuns.ca/issues)