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Media Release

There Has Never Been a Better Time Not to Buy a Reactor

Groups ask McGuinty to delay buying new reactor and instead replace aging reactors with green power

Jun 03 2009

Conditions have changed and the McGuinty government should support its own *Green Energy Act* by deciding against buying new nuclear reactors this summer, say thirteen prominent environmental organizations in an open letter to the Premier.

The groups say there has never been a better time not to buy a nuclear reactor, and they urge the Premier to forgo spending billions on new nuclear and instead put his *Green Energy Act* to work by replacing the aging Pickering B nuclear station with green energy.

"Nuclear costs are increasing, electricity demand is falling and the province has put in place the conditions for green power to play an increased role in Ontario's electricity sector," said Cherise Burda, Policy Director for the Pembina Institute. "It's a perfect storm in favour of green power rather than nuclear."

The groups say that the Premier should delay the decision to buy new reactors until the province's plan for electricity is reviewed again in three years. Groups signing the letter include the [Canadian Environmental Law Association](#), [Council of Canadians](#), [Ecojustice](#), [Environmental Defence](#), [Great Lakes United](#), [Greenpeace](#), [Low-Income Energy Network](#), [Ontario Clean Air Alliance](#), [Ontario Sustainable Energy Association](#), [Pembina Institute](#), [Sierra Club Ontario](#), [Toronto Environmental Alliance](#) and [WWF-Canada](#).

"Investments in green energy and nuclear power are competing for limited space on the electricity grid of the future," added Keith Stewart, Climate Change Campaign Manager for WWF-Canada. "The *Green Energy Act* points us toward a sustainable energy future, but to get there we now need to make more space for green power within the province's electricity plan."

The province's current electricity plan caps the long-term development of new renewable power by reserving at least 50 per cent of the electricity grid for nuclear generation. For the *Green Energy Act* to be successful, say the groups, the government must remove the long-term cap on green power development.

The next and best opportunity to do this would be a decision to replace the Pickering B nuclear station with green energy when it reaches the end of its operational life beginning in 2013. The government is expected to decide Pickering B's fate later this summer.

"New reactors are neither needed nor economical today. What is needed, however, is more space on the electricity grid for *Green Energy Act* to be put to work. Committing to replace Pickering with green power is the next positive step the government must take toward expanding green energy and jobs," said Shawn-Patrick Stensil, Energy and Climate Campaigner for Greenpeace.

The groups highlighted the assumptions used by the Ontario Power Authority in 2005 to limit green energy and plan for the expansion of nuclear generation that are no longer valid in 2009. The expansion of nuclear power should be reconsidered because:

- Electricity demand has continued to fall since 2005, eliminating the need for additional reactors.
- Nuclear costs are more than double what they were estimated to be in 2005 and nuclear vendors are unwilling to assume the risks of cost overruns.

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Collection of materials on achieving a renewable energy future for Ontario
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Collection of materials related to CELA's position in support of nuclear phase-out in Canada

- The Independent Electricity System Operator has warned that excess and inflexible nuclear supply is a threat to system stability.

- The passage of the Green Energy Act creates the conditions for green power to thrive if green power is provided additional space on the electricity grid.

Last September, Minister Smitherman directed the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to revise its targets for green power and conservation. The OPA is expected to submit its revised plan later this summer, after assessing the impact of the Green Energy Act.

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