

Sept 12 Thorold City Council – Proposed Gas Plant

Agenda

- Introduction / Climate Change
- Ontario's Current Energy Plan
- A Better Way to Meet Ontario's Electricity Needs
- Fossil Gas Pollution / The Truth about RNG Offsets
- Canada's Climate Change Accountability
- Summary / Request

Introduction / Climate Change

The Niagara Region Strategic Plan places a priority on a:

- **“Green & Resilient Region”**, with a guiding principle to **“Keeping climate change in mind when making decisions”**

Climate-related news over the past couple of months in Canada and around the world has highlighted:

- The hottest-ever recorded average temperatures on land and sea, along with record low levels of Antarctic Sea ice
- **Unusual heat waves, destructive storms, heavy rainfall & flooding, wildfires & air quality warnings**

The frequency and severity of these events is unequivocally a result of climate change and directly linked to greenhouse gases produced from the extraction, processing, transportation and burning of fossil fuels, including fossil gas (cleverly marketed as “natural” gas).

UN IPCC Special Report on Global Warming: “Every bit of warming matters, every year matters, every choice matters”

We must urgently wean ourselves off fossil fuels in order to secure a livable future for ourselves / generations to come

Ontario's Current Energy Plan

The proposed Thorold Gas Plant is part of an ill-conceived plan that will:

- Cost \$4B plan, due to multi-year guaranteed contracts to pay for energy that may never be produced
- Increase the portion of gas-fired power generation in Ontario from 4% in 2017 to over 25% by 2043
 - Decreasing the attractiveness of the province to businesses looking to reduce their GHG emissions
- Increase greenhouse gas pollution from gas-fired power generation by more than 300% by 2030 and over 700% by 2040
 - Taking us in the opposite direction of:
 - Canada's objective of a zero-carbon electricity grid by 2035
 - The world's objective of reducing global greenhouse gases by up to 50% by 2030
- Increase the cost of living for Ontarians, as renewable energy like solar & wind are more cost-effective in generating electricity than burning fossil gas

Gas-burning 'peaker' plants used <5% of the time is an extremely wasteful and expensive solution to our energy needs

A Better Way to Meet Ontario's Electricity Needs

Ontario can cost-effectively avoid the need for new gas-fired 'peaker' plants by:

- Implementing demand response measures / energy efficiency programs
 - Shifting electricity demand from peak to off-peak can reduce peak requirements
- Investing in renewable energy and clean energy storage

Furthermore, the province can obtain additional electricity with increased energy security, and decreased costs by:

- Procuring hydropower from Quebec
- Allowing producers of renewable energy to provide electricity to the grid during peak demand

The IEA's advice to energy decision-makers around the world includes "The key is to avoid spending on infrastructure that would either lock in heavy emissions for years to come or quickly turn into stranded assets."

Fossil Gas Pollution / The Truth about RNG

Once in the pipes, so-called RNG (refined Biogas) = Fossil Gas = Methane = NOT a clean source of energy

- Biogas/Fossil Gas frequently leaks methane, 'volatile organic compounds' (VOCs) and hydrogen sulphide into the air
- **Leaked methane is a powerful GHG that warms the atmosphere >80 times more than CO2!** The warming effect leads to more frequent wildfires, which results in more particulate matter (pollution) in the air.
- Methane's presence in the atmosphere also leads to the formation of ozone (one of the main components of smog)
- Burning methane results in climate pollution (CO2) as well as **black carbon, nitrogen oxides and more VOCs**

The pollution from leaked / burned methane has been linked to severe health problems, with increased risks to those people living near wells and production facilities suffering additional respiratory illnesses and cancers

Other Considerations for RNG

- Biogas is extremely costly and will increase the cost of electricity generation in Ontario
- Like all types of 'carbon offset' schemes, Biogas/RNG accounting and regulations are immature and untrustworthy
- Rather than burning pollution for energy, we should be utilizing existing solutions to minimize agricultural, industrial, commercial and household waste

Canada's Climate Change Accountability

Cumulative CO2 emission reports list Canada as directly responsible for around 2% of global emissions, however...

- That places Canada in the top 10 of the most climate polluting countries in the world
 - If only the top polluters were to reduce emissions, we would still be left with over 40% of global annual CO2
- Everybody must do their share if people are to have a chance of a livable future - **Canada is no exception!**

Canada is the 4th largest oil producer and 3rd largest oil exporter in the world

- If exported emissions were included, **Canada would rank in the top 5 of worst climate polluting countries on Earth!**

Canada is struggling to reduce GHG emissions to mitigate climate change

- **Canadians rank in the top 3 of most climate polluting people in the world** (per capita emissions with countries with pop. >10M)
- Canada is the only G7 country whose CO2 emissions have dramatically increased since 1990
 - **Canada's emissions are up >20%, while the UK and Germany's are down >40% and 35% respectively**

It is reasonable to conclude that Canada must take immediate action to catch-up with the rest of the world!

Summary / Request

As per the experts, climate change is a serious threat to a livable future, is happening now, and will get a whole lot worse if we don't stop burning fossil fuels, including fossil (so-called natural) gas.

- Canada is a major contributor to the climate crisis
 - Responsible action must be taken NOW to stop our runaway emissions

Ontario's current plan will unnecessarily increase GHGs while practically throwing away \$4B. An additional gas plant in Thorold will increase local air pollution along with an increased risk of health problems for Thorold residents.

- RNG offsets does not change this reality

Thorold would be better served by supporting "green initiatives" that provide long-term employment and invest in a green electricity grid that will continue to attract businesses to the Niagara Region

I want to live in a community that is working towards mitigating Climate Change by reducing the country's GHG emissions, not be part of a horrible plan that will make the problem worse

Please - Pass a resolution to oppose this gas plant expansion project