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David Argue
Senior Policy Advisor,
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Integrated Environmental Planning Divisions
Ministry of the Environment
135 St. Clair Avenue West, 4th Floor
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

Dear Mr. Argue,

I am pleased to provide comments on the recent posting on EBR entitled *Implementation of Coal Emissions Reductions* (EBR Registry Number 010-3530).

Toronto's Board of Health recently expressed concern that the planned coal phase-out was being slowed because Ontario is exporting excess power to the United States (a copy of a letter written to the Minister of the Environment can be viewed at http://www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/pdf/export_ban.pdf).

I am pleased to learn that Ontario is proposing to limit emissions of CO₂ from its four coal-fired power generating stations to 11.5 megatonnes by 2011. This represents about a 50 percent reduction of CO₂ emissions over 2006 levels – an important decrease.

I support aggressive interim targets for CO₂ reduction from Ontario's four coal-fired power plants. Greenhouse gas emissions are an urgent health issue for Toronto. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency of very hot days in the City, leading to more heat-related illness and mortality. Climate change is also expected to increase the burden of illness due to smog, as higher temperatures boost ozone production. In Toronto, air pollution is already linked to 1700 premature deaths and 6000 hospitalizations per year. The proposed targets are legally binding and will ensure that real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are achieved. As well, reductions in CO₂ emissions from coal plants will likely have significant co-benefits for reducing air pollution emissions.

I encourage the Government to take steps to achieve the quickest possible reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power. If surpassing the targets becomes feasible, benefits will emerge even sooner.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Dr. David McKeown

David McKeown, MDCM, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health