

**Re: MM6.13 - A Clean Energy Future for Toronto**

Dear Deputy Mayor and Council,

**Toronto City Council [passed a resolution in 2021](#) calling for a phase-out of Ontario's gas-fired power plants by 2030**, along with dozens of other municipalities. The Ontario government decided to move in the opposite direction and expand gas-fired power plants instead. As a result, emissions from electricity in Toronto have been rising ever since, jeopardizing Toronto's net-zero by 2040 target. Electricity emissions need to be going down, not up.

TEA supports the motion for City Council to oppose any new power generation proposal involving an increase in burning fossil fuels in Toronto, and instead ask that the province invest in alternatives like energy efficiency, conservation, and renewables. This builds on Council's previous resolution and aligns with the commitments in Toronto's climate plan.

The Ontario government's plan to ramp up natural gas-fired electricity is likely to drive an increase in local air pollution and carbon emissions from the Portlands Energy Centre, which is the largest current greenhouse gas emitter in Toronto. Expanding the plant, extending its contract, or using it at greater capacity will dramatically increase its emissions and make it nearly impossible to meet Toronto's climate plan targets to reduce emissions 45% by 2025, 65% by 2030, and net-zero by 2040.

**Toronto City Council will have an opportunity to approve or deny any local gas plant expansion proposal if it comes forward.** New gas projects, including expansions to existing plants, require municipal council support in order to secure a contract with the IESO. Municipal councils therefore have an opportunity to make decisions which align with their climate and clean energy commitments. This is a unique opportunity for Toronto to choose a clean energy future in line with TransformTO.

Expanding the Portlands gas plant will also have local health impacts from an increase in toxic air pollution. Gas plants emit nitrogen oxides, which adds to smog and brings negative health impacts on adjacent and downwind residents. The Portlands gas plant is the largest emitter of nitrogen oxides in Toronto, and negative local health impacts would increase with any expansion of the plant. Prevailing winds from the southwest mean that residents in East York and Scarborough would bear much of the downwind pollution from any increased gas activity.

While demand for electricity is growing, gas plants are not the only option to provide the extra generation. Ontario has a range of clean and affordable alternatives to address electricity needs right away and in the near future. A [recent report from The Atmospheric Fund](#) noted that **it is not only completely possible, but also more affordable to meet rising electricity demand through a mix of energy efficiency, solar, wind and storage, than it is to ramp up natural gas.**



The requirement for municipal support for gas plant expansion opens the door for Toronto to stand by its resolution and choose cleaner local energy alternatives which align with our climate change plan. This can be achieved if Council members vote against local gas expansion projects, and support this motion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Buchanan".

Sarah Buchanan  
Campaigns Director  
Toronto Environmental Alliance