

March 26, 2025

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2N2

RE: 2025.EX21.2 - Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to United States Tariffs

Dear Members of Toronto City Council,

Toronto Environmental Alliance is pleased to see the inclusion of local green economic solutions in this report. These include accelerating electrification and locally generated renewable energy, supporting local procurement, and more. These solutions can help respond to tariffs by reducing reliance on U.S. energy, more importantly, building a stronger and more resilient local economy. Toronto's environmental and climate strategies are some of the most powerful ways to counter the economic uncertainty caused by Trump's tariffs.

We are calling on City Council to back these recommendations by supporting the following additions to this item:

- Include in the July Executive implementation update on the Mayor's Economic Action Plan a review of how the City's Circular Procurement Framework can support the City's proposed actions to address the United States-Canada trade related economic uncertainties.
- Report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on how the city can increase local renewable energy generation (eg rooftop solar, geothermal, wind), energy storage, and customer electrification to reduce dependence on U.S. and any other fossil fuels.

There are many economic benefits of supporting green, circular economies which are critical in the current economic context and beyond. Actions like retrofitting buildings and generating our own solar power from Toronto's rooftops ultimately hire far more local people, are less sensitive to supply chain problems because they use fewer new resources. Putting green solutions front and centre also provide more climate resilience and local energy security during emergencies.

Accelerating Toronto's local, circular, and low-carbon economy will make Toronto more resilient to global geopolitical shocks like the ones we are facing now. It will also put Toronto in a better position to face new potential shocks in the future while making Toronto firms more attractive in markets that have higher environmental standards such as the European Union and the U.K.

As part of the City of Toronto's continuing tariff response process to build resiliency and to reduce over-dependence on the United States, the Toronto Environmental Alliance suggests including the following priorities moving forward based on the motions above:

1) Expanding Toronto's Circular Procurement Framework

We need to think of an economy as circular. In nature, waste isn't treated as garbage to be burned or thrown away in someone else's backyard — it's converted into food and raw materials for others. Simply following Toronto's Circular Procurement Framework and expanding its principles across the City would make Toronto much less reliant on erratic supply chains. A study — notably from the US Environmental Protection Agency — estimates that a reuse economy could create almost *50 times* more jobs than a throw-away economy.

2) Accelerating electrification and opportunities to capture and store local renewable energy

The Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to U.S. Tariffs correctly states that "the Toronto region currently relies on imported US oil and natural gas to fuel our economy." Reducing carbon emissions from *all* sources will make Toronto more resilient, create more local jobs, and make made-in-Toronto products more competitive in markets like the EU and the UK, which are already implementing border carbon fees on high emission products.

Over 50% of Toronto's community carbon emissions comes from fossil gas burned in buildings. And most of that climate-warming fossil gas is imported from the U.S. Instead of forcing Torontonians to buy fuel every time they want to heat a building, we need to make it easier

for residents to heat buildings with modern technologies like heat pumps, and to power them by capturing and storing the sunlight and renewable energy that falls on our buildings free of charge. We also need to make it easier to capture renewable energy in Toronto, and to store that energy in modern batteries for buildings that can also double as emergency backups for vital services like elevators... without the diesel fumes coming from antiquated generators.

Cities like New York, Washington DC, and Vancouver — as well as the entire European Union — have set or are setting Building Performance Standards in their jurisdictions. Toronto must follow suit by implementing our own Building Emissions Performance Standards (BEPS), which City staff are currently working to design. According to the City's own numbers, decarbonizing existing buildings will create over 18,000 jobs over the next 30 years.

For decades, groups like TEA have been advocating for solutions that protect our environment and safeguard human health while supporting good, green jobs that make the world a safer, fairer, more affordable place for all. We strongly encourage Toronto City Council to implement these recommendations and to maintain Toronto's dedication to strong environmental action that makes us more resilient against the kinds of global shocks that we are seeing today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'How-Sen Chong', with a stylized, flowing script.

How-Sen Chong
Climate Campaigner
Toronto Environmental Alliance