

December 3, 2025

Infrastructure and Environment Committee
Toronto City Hall

Regarding items:

[IE26.3](#) TransformTO Net Zero Strategy: Action Plan (2026-2030).

[IE26.14](#) Electricity and Toronto's Climate Commitments

Dear Honourable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you today. I am a medical student at Queen's University and student member of Canadian Associations of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE). Before medical school I completed my PhD at the University of Toronto at SickKids Hospital in Respiratory Physiology with a Collaborative Specialization in Public Health policy from the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. My dissertation researched how our environment affects lung development. Prevention is the best medicine, and clean air is essential for healthy development of children's lungs and preventing catastrophic events in individuals with respiratory disease.

I am writing to underscore that Toronto's climate plan cannot succeed without **Building Emissions Performance Standards (BEPS)** and **phasing out the Portlands Energy Centre**. Buildings produce 56% of Toronto's emissions, mainly from burning fossil gas for heating. Without BEPS, TransformTO will fail at its aims. At the same time, the province's electricity plan relies on gas and nuclear, ignoring Council's commitment to phase out the Portlands Energy Centre, Toronto's largest source of nitric oxide and greenhouse gases. These pollutants cause asthma in children and contribute to heart disease, stroke, dementia, and diabetes.

I respectfully ask the Committee:

1. **No more delays on BEPS.** BEPS would set limits on pollution in larger buildings over time, as part of a long-term plan. This will set us on a pathway to reduced emissions, safer, climate-ready buildings and growing a green economy. Fuel-switching from gas to electric heat pumps will reduce rates of asthma development in Toronto's children and respiratory health of their families.
2. **Reject the province's pro-gas plan.** Reaffirm Council's commitment to **phase out the Portlands gas plant by 2035** and ramp up local renewable energy. The province's electricity plan (Interregional resource plan, IRRP) for Toronto is based on building up gas and nuclear, rather than renewable energy. It does not include a plan to phase out the Portland Energy Centre and it is fundamentally incompatible with Toronto's TransformTO climate plan.

Communities living near gas plants face higher exposure to harmful pollutants, including nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particulate matter, which are linked to asthma, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses. The Portlands Energy Centre sits on Toronto's waterfront, a space where families gather and children play. This means that emissions from the plant are not just an abstract problem, they directly affect the air quality in areas where our most vulnerable residents spend time outdoors. Children are especially at risk because their lungs are still developing, and they breathe more air per body weight than adults. Proximity to gas plants has been associated with increased rates of respiratory illness and hospital visits. Keeping this plant operational undermines public health and exposes families to unnecessary harm in one of Toronto's most cherished recreational spaces.

Phasing out the Portlands Energy Centre is necessary if Toronto is to do its part to reduce dangerous planet-warming emissions and meet its climate goals. The Portlands gas plant is Toronto's largest single source of nitreous oxides and greenhouse gas emissions driving the climate crisis. It is also the main reason why our emissions are going up, not down. Council has already voted twice to phase out Portlands gas plant and this ignores that commitment. The province has just abandoned its climate plan and targets, we must not let it effectively eliminate Toronto's plan.

3. **Request an Auditor General report.** Assess the health impacts and economic costs of Portlands emissions and the province's electricity plan. We need transparent data to protect Toronto's residents. Especially children and vulnerable communities.

As a future pediatrician, I urge you: choose prevention over cure. Clean air and bold climate action are non-negotiable for our children's health and Toronto's future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Maria Medeleanu PhD, MD Candidate