



April 28, 2017

The Honourable Glenn Thibeault
Minister of Energy
4th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2E1
Via: energy@ontario.ca

Re: Supporting Oxford County in the next Long-Term Energy Plan

Dear Minister Thibeault,

We write to ask you to recognize and support Oxford County's commitment to fight climate change by going 100% renewable in the next Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP).

Specifically, we ask you instruct the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and Hydro-One to support Oxford County's proposed Virtual Net Metering (VNM) demonstration project in the LTEP and affirm your intention to move forward with VNM and third party ownership within the province's net metering regulation.

Oxford County Council has approved investing up to \$ 2.5 million in solar installations in its 2017 Business Plan and Budget. On April 12th 2017, Council supported in principle the development of VNM in Oxford County at its landfill facility. The proposed 0.9 MW solar facility would offset demand from municipally-owned facilities at other locations. It would be a step towards Oxford County's goal of going 100% renewable to fight climate change.

With the end of the Feed-In Tariff (FIT) and microFIT programs in 2017, we feel supporting and expediting Oxford County's municipal VNM demonstration project is vital to ensuring the sustainability of the solar industry and community power in Ontario. In our view, community investment and participation in our energy system is essential for Ontario to successfully transition to a low-carbon society. As witnessed in many American states, VNM has enabled the growth of community-owned solar facilities.

However, despite the end of the FIT program and the success of VNM spurring community-owned solar in the United States, Ontario has yet to establish the appropriate regulations to enable Oxford County to proceed with its VNM demonstration project. This is why we request you instruct government agencies to support Oxford County's project as a demonstration project in the next LTEP.

As you know, Oxford County is the first Ontario community to join the global movement of countries, communities and corporations committed to going 100% renewable by mid-century to fight climate change.

A growing number of civil society groups want Ontario to follow Oxford County's lead. To date, over 100 groups have endorsed the *100% Renewable Ontario Declaration*, which calls for your government to establish policies that enable the shift to a renewables-based energy system. You'll find a copy of the Declaration attached.

We hope you agree that we need communities like Oxford County to succeed if we are to successfully fight climate change.

That's why we ask you to ensure the government both recognizes and empowers Oxford County's commitment to go 100% renewable in the next LTEP.

More tangibly, we ask that you support Oxford County as an incubator for demonstrating and testing new regulatory models. For this reason, we urge you to instruct the Independent OEB and Hydro-One to support Oxford County's proposed VNM demonstration project in the LTEP.

Thank you for your attention. Please let us know if you require any clarifications.

Sincerely,



Keith Brooks
Programs Director
Environmental Defence



David Cork
Managing Director
TREC Renewable Energy Co-op



Gideon Forman
Climate Change and Transportation Policy
Analyst
David Suzuki Foundation



Theresa McClenaghan
Executive Director
Canadian Environmental Law Association



Nicole Risse
Executive Director
Ontario Sustainable Energy Association



Shawn-Patrick Stensil
Senior Energy Analyst
Greenpeace Canada

CC:

Premier Kathleen Wynne
Glen Murray, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change



THE FUTURE IS RENEWABLE

SWITCH ONTARIO TO

100%

RENEWABLE ENERGY

PHOTO CREDIT: GREENPEACE

IT IS TIME FOR ONTARIO TO JOIN THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT TOWARD 100 % RENEWABLE ENERGY:

More than 1,000 cities around the world, including Vancouver and Oxford County in Ontario, have already committed to transition their communities to 100% renewable energy by 2050. We want the Ontario government's next energy plan to ensure citizens and communities are empowered to make the shift to 100% renewables.

Meeting Ontario's electricity, heating, and transportation energy needs with sustainable renewable energy is achievable. We currently produce more than a quarter of our electricity with renewable sources like water, wind, solar and biogas, and with costs falling and technologies improving we can quickly add more.

A 100% renewable future will eliminate the damage being done by our current dirty energy system. Ontario's fossil plants contribute to climate change and air and water pollution at a time when the province is committed to reducing carbon pollution and showing leadership on climate change. Our nuclear plants produce long-lived radioactive waste and put our communities and the Great Lakes – the source of drinking water for tens of millions of people - at risk of a nuclear accident. Nuclear is expensive and dangerous – which is why plans for nuclear power are being mothballed around the globe.

The Ontario government needs to remove barriers to the fast adoption of renewable energy while also helping us make the best use of this clean green energy, through enhanced efforts to increase efficiency, conservation, storage, district heating and electric mobility.

SWITCHING TO 100% RENEWABLES MEANS:

PUTTING CONSERVATION FIRST - Efficiency and conservation are the cheapest source of energy and have the lowest impact on the environment. They also help to ensure the green energy we produce goes further. According to government studies, we have the technical potential to cut our electricity demand by half before 2040.

EMPOWERING ONTARIANS – A switch to renewable energy will also mean a switch to a more decentralized energy system where everyone from citizens, co-ops and schools to municipalities, small businesses and Indigenous communities can become energy producers. A more localized system, with opportunities for community-ownership and participation, will also increase public support for renewables, and provide more jobs – and more importantly, local jobs in communities across Ontario.

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES - Climate scientists predict increasingly erratic weather in the coming decades – everything from ice storms and flooding to severe heat. We need to strengthen our local power production and distribution systems and rely less on a small handful of giant power plants in order to reliably keep the lights on. To do that, we need to give communities the tools they need to go 100% renewable.

SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES - The cost of renewable energy and smart grid technologies is declining rapidly. Ontario’s energy plan needs to ensure we are ready to take advantage of innovation in the clean energy sector to lower our energy bills, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen system resilience and increase the number of Ontario citizens, businesses and communities who benefit from generating zero emissions energy.

KEEPING THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR RISKS AND COSTS – The biggest barrier to making the switch to 100% renewable energy is the government’s plan to spend billions to keep Ontario’s aging nuclear reactors operating. To ensure Ontario can make the switch to safer 100% renewables and take advantage of innovation in the clean-tech sector, we need to replace reactors with renewable energy. To do that, we need a full and fair comparison of the total costs of nuclear with alternatives and an opportunity for the public to have a say about which approach they prefer.

LESS POLLUTION: Communities fought big gas plants for good reason – they pollute. We need cleaner air in our communities, and renewable power can provide it.

CUTTING CARBON: Ontario has shown leadership by getting rid of coal – and we’re all better off because of it. Now - as the province gets serious about climate change - is no time to turn back, and increase our reliance on natural gas instead. Gas is better than coal, but no matter how you slice it, gas is a fossil fuel and it contributes to climate change. Renewables don't.

ENDORISING PARTNERS:



For more information or if your organization would like to endorse this statement, please visit 100REOntario.org