

# TRINITY - ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH



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June 14, 2021

Mr. Chuck Farmer

Senior Director, Power System Planning

Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO)

Toronto, Ontario

Dear Mr. Farmer:

## **Re: Phasing-Out Ontario's Gas-Fired Power Plants**

We are members of the Climate Justice Group of Trinity St. Paul's United Church in Toronto. In 2009 our congregation designated the climate crisis and climate justice as key foci of our public witness. We first of all worked to educate ourselves, then others, about the dire future for our climate and our globe. Following numerous community-based actions to address issues in our heritage building and to connect with the broader Toronto community, we joined the movement to divest our trust funds from fossil fuels. Following our early 2014 unanimous congregational vote to support this action, we learned that we were the first faith community in Canada to do so. That led us to help build a cross-Canada "Fossil-free Faith Network", as well as a cross-country network of United Churches to encourage our national church, the United Church of Canada, to take the same step. It did so in August 2015. Since then, our trust funds have avoided fossil fuels and have invested in sustainable energy resources, joining a very wide global network of faith communities committed to "living with respect in Creation", as our United Church Creed declares.

We have cooperated with many organizations with the same end goal—**to get to net zero carbon emissions sooner than our government's current plan** (by 2050).

It is out of this commitment that we write to you, as we also wrote to our City of Toronto Council earlier in the year asking them to send a message to our provincial government that our City supports a phase-out of our provincial dependence on natural gas plants. We are very pleased that Toronto City Council strongly supported this initiative.

We are also pleased to read the materials from the IESO seeking input into your study and assessment of how Ontario can phase out its gas-fired power plants.

We know that 29 Ontario municipalities, as well as many organizations and individuals in this province are very concerned that this study provide a comprehensive, fact-based and unbiased technical basis for subsequent policy decisions. For this purpose the assessment should consider how a gas phase-out can contribute to climate action objectives by:

- reducing the gas plants' GHG emissions immediately to at or below 2017 levels; and
- completing a phase-out of all gas-fired power plants by 2030.

We agree with these municipalities and organizations that this assessment should also address the following approaches to replacing existing gas generation capacity:

1. Renewable energy (wind, solar, etc.);
2. Quebec Hydro (in depth engagement with Hydro Quebec on supply and storage);
3. Conservation and demand management;
4. Vehicle-to-grid integration and other emerging storage options; and
5. Curtailing gas fired electricity exports to the U.S.

We are at a crossroads in this province—one that looks back and cannot and will not foresee the future, and the other that looks forward and figures out how to make a rapid and critical adjustment to our power sources that will enable us to contribute to a green and prosperous future for Ontario, Canada, and the globe. We believe we must work faster than the current goals indicate.

We look forward to your report and wish you strength, clarity, and compassion for the planet and all its inhabitants in your work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Colin Phillips, Chair, Trinity St. Paul's (TSP) United Church Board

Jeanne Moffat, Lorna Niebergall, Robert Fugere, Roger Townshend, Linda Padfield, Janet Haddock, John Olthuis, Lois Kunkel, Ralf Staebler, Ann Russell, Jeanne Rowles, Gail Allan --Members of the TSP Climate Justice Group

The Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, Minister