

Public Health Workers Call for a Sustainable Energy Future

March 18, 2004

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) expressed its support for an energy future based on renewable and sustainable resources in a letter sent to Ontario's Minister of Energy today.

"While the OPHA acknowledges that nuclear energy may serve an important role as a transitional technology in Ontario" explains David MacKinnon, Executive Director of the OPHA, "we feel strongly that the province should devote most of its resources to aggressively promote energy efficiency and renewable energies".

The OPHA released a report in November 2001 entitled, "Beyond Coal: Power, Public Health and the Environment" in which it called for the phase-out of coal-fired power plants because of the significant health and environmental impacts associated with them. In that report, the OPHA called on the province to aggressively promote energy efficiency and renewable energies to address the province's energy needs.

According to MacKinnon, renewable energies and energy efficiency have proven that they have tremendous potential to address our energy needs. "Germany has developed 8,000 MW of wind-powered electrical capacity; that is enough to replace coal-fired power plants in Ontario," he explains, "and California has used energy efficiency programs to displace 10,000 MW of electricity demand; that is enough to displace nuclear plants in Ontario".

The OPHA is a voluntary, charitable association that provides leadership on issues affecting the public's health and represents individuals who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

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