



Ontario Public Health Association  
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario  
Established/Établi 1949

The mission of OPHA is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

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Association of Ontario  
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Community Health Nurses' Initiatives  
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Health Promotion Ontario:  
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Ontario Association of Public Health  
Dentistry

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Ontario Society of Nutrition  
Professionals in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education  
and Development (PHRED)  
Program

Charitable Registration  
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

February 12, 2003

The Honourable John Manley  
Minister of Finance

Dear Minister:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), a non-profit, volunteer organization that represents many of the staff working in public health units across Ontario. Our members include the physicians, environmental health managers, epidemiologists, nurses, toxicologists, researchers, and policy analysts responsible for maintaining public health in their communities.

We want to express our appreciation for your role in Canada's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Our members are deeply concerned about global climate change and the impact it could have on public health and the environment in the coming years. We do not believe that Canada's commitment to Kyoto has bankrupted us. In fact, we believe that this commitment can be used to encourage a shift in our economy towards sustainability, urban renewal, development of local economies, and clean air.

In November 2002, the OPHA published a report, "[Beyond Coal: Power, Public Health and the Environment](#)", which called for the phase-out of coal-fired power plants as one important step towards achieving our Kyoto commitment. The greenhouse gases emitted from Ontario's five coal-fired power plants represent 78% of emissions that Ontario would need to cut in order to achieve the 6% reduction envisioned by the Kyoto Protocol. This phase-out would simultaneously result in significant reductions of air emissions that lead to smog, acid rain and mercury contamination of fish in inland waters.

OPHA believes that this phase-out could be achieved by 2010 with policies and programs that: 1) aggressively and creatively promote energy efficiency measures among individuals, institutions, companies and governments; and 2) that aggressively promote the development of renewable energy technologies. We believe that these policies and programs could be designed in a way that stimulates the Canadian economy and creates jobs in communities across the country.

In our report, the OPHA recommended that the Federal government:

1. Ratify and implement the Kyoto Protocol as currently written, recognizing that it is only the first step towards the 60 to 80% reduction in greenhouse gases that will be required to retard global climate change;
2. Provide municipalities with stable funding, that is not dependent upon participation by the province, with which to promote energy efficiency projects within their communities;
3. Establish a schedule of ambitious and increasing renewable energy targets to guide the development of energy policies, environmental regulations, and budgetary commitments at the federal level for the coming years;
4. Provide financial support to renewable technologies that is equal to that traditionally provided to conventional energy sources; and
5. Establish regulations under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) that encourage the phase-out of coal-fired power plants by 2010.

We also believe that the federal government should establish a greenhouse gas emissions trading system that would encourage Ontario Power Generation and other operators of coal-fired power plants, to phase-out coal by 2010 or sooner.

We encourage you to: act on these recommendations; recognize global climate change as the "slow motion crisis" it is; and establish a budget that reflects the interests of future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jack Lee,  
Executive Director