

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REGION OF YORK, December 1, 2004

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Regional Staff and Members of Committee

My name is Sue Fusco, and act as Director of the S.T.O.P. Committee and offer this deputation on behalf of our membership of approximately 3,000 people. Residents have been opposing the Hydro One Proposal for York Region since last April.

STOP has actively opposed the proposed alternatives of this project to advocate a more responsible, reliable way for delivering power due to the impacts imposed upon the public. Hydro One has involved us all in a process, in my opinion it was process which has lacked merit, integrity or meaningful consultation with the public. This project developed to meet the York Region's power needs was carried out under a Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities. However, the proposed undertaking is unlike those categorized as a general class of undertaking as the effects are major and not minor. It has engaged the affected communities in wasting resources on an extensively flawed process.

Hydro One has offered continual denial, deflection and disregard to the concerns raised by the affected stakeholders. They have ignored The Regional Council of York resolution passed on June 24 that also recommended Hydro One undertake a number of detailed evaluations of alternatives giving greater consideration to environmental, social and economic impacts on existing and future urban areas, residential communities, and schools and a lesser consideration on capital cost. The Public Advisory Group initiated by Hydro One intended to provide a forum for constructive two way communication but was cancelled when stakeholders demanded all reasonable alternatives be explored in a defensible and traceable manner.

Hydro One has successfully made a complete mockery of the Environmental Assessment Process and ignored significant environmental concerns related to the project. The draft ESR has failed to mitigate concerns raised by the general public, Municipal, Regional Councils and the York Catholic District School Board's concerns and not complied with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. The need for and purpose of the undertaking and alternatives to this project have not been assessed. In particular, the potential of conservation, efficiency and renewable

energy service needs and how these would affect the need date have not been seriously assessed. Hydro One has not fully documented identification of all possible routes and options. They have especially not evaluated the use of transportation corridors, undergrounding of systems, nor adequately explored the multiple technical alternatives presented to them. A full environmental inventory on effects to wildlife, habitat affected by the construction operations has not been fully detailed. Even the potential for ground water to be contaminated is an unacceptable risk that is casually eluded to in the ESR.

Hydro One has failed to respect the precautionary principle in assessing the potential impacts of EMF radiation on public health, particularly on rights-of-ways that are much narrower than the standard, and which travel through built up residential neighbourhoods and schools. The precautionary Principle and legislation exists to safeguard property owners from increased exposure levels of EMF worldwide specifically in California, Connecticut, Illinois, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain. The scientific community has abundant evidence that EMF's cause biological effects in all living things. We consider the lack of regulation to be unconscionable since there is no conclusive evidence to support the position that EMF's are NOT a health hazard. Hydro One callously disregarded the increased health risks to the students and staff of St. Monica Catholic School which will trespass an invisible electro pollutant onto the adjacent property and force a viable school community to close. No effort has been made to conduct a real estate study and detrimental effect to the overall market values in the community.

Hydro One has arrogantly disregarded and contradicted their own EMF position statement and millions of dollars of peer reviewed studies funded by Ontario Hydro in 2000. The recommendations put forth by their own studies was to "exercise prudent avoidance to reduce exposure to higher fields." Hydro One has admittedly confirmed that the proposed undertaking increases the EMF field at the Right of way of the corridor but they have not carried out a health impact study considering cancer and leukemia risk grows in proportion to the strength of the EMF fields . They quote Health Canada's standards which do not relate to these above typical exposures in everyday life such as what would be experienced living in such close proximity to a high EMF source. The York Region Medical Officer of Health also agreed, "that the last place you would want to put these lines is in a residential area."

Throughout this process the onus has rested heavily on the public and we have acted to the best of our abilities to raise awareness and participate in the process and this has cost residents ongoing stress and for some financial hardship regardless of the final outcome. Hydro One has not notified and dealt with the public properly, they have failed to define a study area and conduct consultations within affected areas, they have not considered all alternatives with unbiased criteria. The residents of Richmond Hill were completely overlooked in consultation. More importantly, Hydro One at the final notification stage still had unresolved, health, environmental and economic impacts and refused to defer filing the draft ESR. In fact they had prematurely determined long before that a resolution was not possible. Hydro One carelessly disclosed that this was their preferred choice in a Newmarket meeting negligently proving their decision was predetermined. They consistently referred to an energy crisis of brown outs and blackouts without any mitigating measures for this fabricated threat. The only true crisis is the one we are experiencing in our own communities as a result of this proposal.

We have further documented our experiences and comments in our response to Hydro One's Environment Study Report which we will submit with the request for a Full Environmental Assessment to the Minister of Environment. We reserve the right to do so without claiming any legitimacy to the flawed process. In addition, the fact that this process was allowed to continue warrants a full Inquiry into the provincial proceedings conducted with the absence of transparency and accountability.

In closing, an integrated system plan would include a combination of conservation, supply, and transmission alternatives of these options for meeting the region's energy service needs. It is only on this basis that the need for additional transmission capacity in York Region could be established. An invitation for this was made from STOP through their legal counsel to the local distribution companies to take part in this initiative as a constructive and important first step.

Therefore, we respectfully request the Region of York's jurisdiction and support in also offering their disapproval to Hydro One's concept of extensive public consultation and for involving the people of York Region's Municipalities in such a meaningless pursuit. Part of good planning involves understanding the science related to the issues at hand. A co-operative, responsible effort with York Region will allow for sustainable development to be maintained and a request for a full EA will address that alternatives to this project will be revisited and evaluated

legitimately. We ask your consideration to also request the Minister of Environment for a Full EA to reach a solution in an environmentally sound, responsible manner on behalf of all the people the Region serves.