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**REGION OF YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE**
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Mr. Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am a family physician in York Region and have involved myself in health considerations arising from the proposed 400 megawatt peaking power plant to be located in this region or in Bradford West Gwillimbury.

The Ontario Medical Association has released an estimate of 590 premature deaths in York Region attributable to air pollution in 2008. The bulk of this mortality is from exposure to fine particulates, also known as particulate matter 2.5.

As I recently indicated in a letter to Minister of Energy and Infrastructure George Smitherman, in a 2005 cost benefit analysis* for the Ontario Ministry of Energy, the levelized annual health damages arising from natural gas-fueled power plants were estimated at \$15 per megawatt hour. For coal-fired facilities the cost was put at \$113 per megawatt hour. For a 400 megawatt natural gas generator running 14% of the year or 1200 hours, the attendant health damages would be \$7.2 million yearly.

In May 2008 the California Environmental Protection Agency** proposed a new relative risk of premature death at 10% for each 10 micrograms per cubic metre of increased fine particulate matter exposure. This is an increase of two-thirds compared to mortality statistics used in the 2005 report to the Ministry of Energy.

The actual cost of health damages from natural gas electrical generation would therefore be much greater now than previously estimated.

The health risk assessments put forth in the Environmental Review Reports by the proponents for the proposed sites all describe adverse health effects as either insignificant or nonexistent.

Assuming the methodology for the 2005 report was sound ---and one would certainly hope so as I believe it was one of the principal documents which the provincial government relied on to initiate planning to close the coal power plants--- then I think it of enormous importance that the discrepancy between the recent proponents' findings and the previously determined "external cost" of health damages from natural gas power plants be critically examined.

Contrary to a recent memorandum for Regional Council I would most strongly recommend against relying solely on any health risk assessment funded by the proponents. This is particularly important in light of the fact that in recent years there has never been an elevation to an individual Environmental Assessment granted for any gas power plant in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. P. Strawbridge

*Cost Benefit Analysis: Replacing Ontario's Coal-Fired Electricity Generation April, 2005 (p.29)

**Methodology for Estimating Premature Deaths Associated with Long-term Exposures to Fine Airborne Particulate Matter in California May 22, 2008