

For Immediate Release
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ONTARIO CALLS ON U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY TO PROTECT AIR QUALITY

Second Set of Comments in 18 Months Aimed at Reducing Air Pollution and Protecting Health

TORONTO – Ontario Environment Minister Laurel Broten and Attorney General Michael Bryant today filed comments with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) detailing the Ontario government's concerns with the U.S. government agency's proposed supplemental rule that would allow for higher emissions from large coal-fired power plants.

"Air pollution from U.S. coal-fired power plants continues to harm the health, environment and economy of Ontario," Broten said. "I call on the EPA to drop these proposed changes and instead consider the health and environment of the people of North America."

This is the second time Ontario has filed comments with the U.S. EPA about the New Source Review rules. On February 17, 2006, the province submitted comments outlining concerns with previous proposed changes to the NSR program. As well, on May 10 2006, the Province of Ontario participated as an *amicus* in the Seventh Circuit proceedings in the *U.S. v. Cinergy Corp.* proceedings, and the court agreed with the government's position in the case against six Indiana and Ohio coal plants.

"The McGuinty government has always said that we will work with our neighbours to find shared solutions to the shared problem of air pollution," said Bryant. "When we are unable to do so, or when other levels of government make decisions that will negatively impact Ontario, we will take appropriate legal action and file comments to protect our citizens."

Changes to the EPA's New Source Review program as part of the agency's May 8th Supplemental Rule would allow coal-burning power plants to operate for longer hours and pollute more each year.

The proposed rule change would ease emissions regulation for many coal-fired plants, including those in the Midwestern states upwind of Ontario. This would lead to an increase in the amount of air pollution coming from the U.S. and lead to increased smog problems in the province.

More than half of certain types of air pollution in Ontario originate in the United States, in particular from the electricity production sector. At some Ontario locations, including Sarnia and Windsor, more than 90 per cent of smog-causing air pollution, particularly ozone, can come from U.S. sources. A June 2005 provincial study, *Transboundary Air Pollution in Ontario*, showed that air pollution causes nearly \$10 billion in total damages to Ontario, including \$6.6 billion in health costs.

Transboundary air pollution has a significant and adverse impact on Ontario's economy and its citizens' health. In 2005, Ontario had its worst year on record for smog advisories. There were a record 15 smog advisories covering 53 days in the province. So far this year the Province has issued 33 days of smog advisories.

A copy of the government's comments to the EPA, the 2005 Transboundary Air Pollution in Ontario report and other transboundary air materials can be found at: www.sharedair.ca.

-30-

For information on Ontario's clean air and climate change actions, please see the attached Backgrounder: *The Government of Ontario's Environmental Accomplishments and Commitments*.

Please also see the attached Backgrounders: *Support for Ontario Filing Comments with the United States Environmental Protection Agency* and *Members of the Advisory Committee on Transboundary Science Supporting Ontario's Comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*.

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