

# Backgrounder Document d'information



Ministry of  
the Environment

Ministère de  
l'Environnement

August 8, 2007

## **SUPPORT FOR ONTARIO FILING COMMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

“Air pollution from coal-fired power plants is a problem that is of great concern to me. The health effects of smog and other air pollutants take a severe toll on the people of Ontario. In addition, when we have smog advisories, people are forced to reduce or stop outdoor physical activities, leading to less healthy lifestyles.

I commend the Minister of the Environment and the Attorney General for filing these comments with the U.S. EPA in an effort to protect the health of all Ontarians affected by poor air quality.”

*Dr. George Pasut*  
*(A) Chief Medical Officer of Health (for Ontario)*

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“By furthering the overall regulatory approach proposed in October, 2005, the supplemental proposals will, in our opinion, result in a continuation of the air pollution damages that are currently occurring in Ontario as a result of the emission of these pollutants (or pollutant precursors) from sources in the United States. In addition, the burning of fossil fuels to generate electricity will continue to release large amounts of greenhouse gases which will contribute substantively to the ever-increasing problem of climate change.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee on Transboundary Science strongly supports the submission of Comments from the Government of Ontario to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Committee would like to add its voice to urge the EPA to abandon the proposed changes to NSR III. Enforcement of the current NSR program would have a far reaching impact on the improvement of air quality for the citizens of Ontario, as well as our downwind neighboring Provinces and ultimately some of the eastern states in the U.S.”

*David Balsillie, Ph..D., R.P.F. (Hon)*  
*Chair, Advisory Committee on Transboundary Science*  
*Toronto, Ontario*  
*(Excerpt from a letter of support included in the province's comments.)*

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“The Province of Ontario should be commended for their intervention in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New Source Review Program proposal. Air quality is one of the predominant environmental challenges facing governments today, as air pollution causes widespread adverse health effects, leading to extensive hospital admissions and premature deaths. The EPA needs to seriously consider comments submitted by the Province of Ontario, to ensure that the people of Ontario and other surrounding jurisdictions are protected from the effects of transboundary air pollution.”

*Dr. Ted Boadway*

*Physician and Chair of the Advisory Committee on Transboundary Air Pollution  
(Retired) Executive Director of Health Policy – Ontario Medical Association  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“Like it or not, we humans share our air with our neighbours. It is the ultimate common property.

In the case of Ontario, the air pollution we breathe comes primarily from two sources: Ontario itself and the United States. Both need to be addressed.

I believe Ontario is now demonstrating leadership and commitment to reduce its own air pollution with a series of challenging but achievable programs, backed by legislation.

It therefore has the credibility to comment on what its neighbour is doing to improve its own air quality, especially since it must suffer some of the consequences.

Ontario has clearly identified the flawed “hourly emission rate limit” approach being proposed by the EPA, an approach which runs the risk of actually increasing the amount of pollution in the Ontario-U.S. air shed. Its comments to the EPA deserve to be taken very seriously.”

*Marc Garneau*

*Consultant and Former Canadian Astronaut*

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“Clean air is important to the health and well-being of everyone. Smog and dirty air affects all Torontonians and we owe it to our citizens to ensure that we look to clean up all sources of air pollution, even from sources outside of Ontario.

Toronto Public Health joins Minister Broten and Attorney General Bryant in calling on the EPA to reconsider its proposed rules changes and instead look at ways of keeping our shared air clean for everyone.”

*Dr. David McKeown*

*Medical Officer of Health  
Toronto Public Health*

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“The Ontario Lung Association wishes to express its support of your [Minister Broten] government’s efforts to reduce the health impacts of transboundary air pollution in Ontario. Your conciliatory approach of reaching out to individual U.S. states to work together to improve air quality in our shared air shed demonstrates that by working together, both Canada and the United States can achieve positive results. We therefore share your concern with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s plans to adopt a regulation which, according to your government’s analysis, will lead to increased smog pollutants from coal plants flowing into Ontario.”

*Cindy Shcherban*  
*Interim President & CEO, The Ontario Lung Association*  
*Toronto, Ontario*  
*(Excerpt from a letter of support included in the province’s comments.)*

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“Pollution Probe supports Ontario's intervention. Transboundary air pollution is a significant portion of Ontario's air quality problem. The U.S. contribution will become proportionally greater as Ontario takes measures to close down its coal plants.”

*Ken Ogilvie*  
*Executive Director, Pollution Probe*  
*Toronto, Ontario*

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“Once again the Province of Ontario is demonstrating leadership and putting the health of its citizens first by challenging the latest effort to weaken US air quality safeguards. Because more than half of Ontario’s air pollution often originates in the States, it is crucial that Ontario challenge efforts to further weaken US air quality standards. Coupled with its ambitious energy agenda, including deployment of solar, Ontario is leading by example and deserves high praise.”

*John Stanton*  
*VP, Government Affairs, Solar Energy Industries Association*  
*Washington, D.C.*

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“Again congratulations to Ontario's Environment Minister Laurel Broten on today's submission to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with respect to its proposal to roll back almost thirty years of air pollution control laws.

New Brunswick and Ontario have joined together often in the past to fight for tougher air pollution and acid rain laws in the United States. Our citizens, after all, both sit at the end of North America's tailpipe.”

*David Coon, Policy Director*  
*Conservation Council of New Brunswick*  
*Fredericton, New Brunswick*

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“We applaud Ontario's initiative and good neighbor role in opposing the Bush administration's attack on clean air laws that protect the health of Americans and Canadians alike.

With over half of southern Ontario's air pollution coming from the U.S., much of that from dirty coal-burning power plants, Minister Broten and Attorney General Bryant are helping not just Ontario's citizens but all Americans by taking a stance against the U.S. EPA's effort to exempt power plants from important clean-up requirements.”

*John D. Walke*

*Director, Clean Air Program, Natural Resources Defense Council  
Washington, D.C.*

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“Ontario has listed a wide range of pollution reduction measures which are and will continue to be applied to sources in the Province. However, these measures alone can not bring about the required improvements in Ontario air quality, because of the dominating effect of transboundary transport of pollutants emitted in the United States.

It is imperative that pollution control in the US be strengthened, not weakened. In particular, allowing an hourly emission rate test in new source review is a backward step, since there is nothing to stop sources maintaining their current hourly emission rates but significantly increasing their number of hours of operation per year, thereby significantly increasing their total annual emissions. We must remember that strengthening emission controls in the US will also benefit a very large number of US citizens.”

*Neville Reid, B.Sc.Hons (Natal), Ph.D.(Cantab)*

*President and Chief Scientist, Smeraldo Environmental  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) welcomes the Government of Ontario's submission to the US Environmental Protection Agency on further changes to the New Source Review Program in the May 8, 2007 Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

CIELAP fully shares the Ontario government's concerns that the proposed changes will result in unacceptably high levels of transboundary air pollution from US coal-fired power plants. The air pollution from these plants threatens the health of people in both Ontario and the US, and negatively impacts the water quality of the Great Lakes.”

*Anne Mitchell, Executive Director*

*Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“Windsor and Southwestern Ontario is the area of the province most affected by air pollution from coal-fired plants in the United States Midwest, with up to 90 per cent of air pollution in the region coming from across the border. I commend Ministers Broten and Bryant for continuing to apply pressure to our neighbours in an effort to improve our air quality and protect the health and environment for all.”

*Derek Coronado*

*Research and Policy Coordinator, Citizens Environment Alliance of southwestern Ontario  
Windsor, ON*

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“Transborder air contamination must be dealt with by *all* the parties that produce it since we all suffer collectively if no action is taken. This report cited above (*the Ontario comments*) is an extremely thorough and accurate representation of the issue of transborder air contamination and of the efforts that have been taken in Ontario to reduce our own emissions. Every effort must be made by individuals, municipalities, provinces, states and national governments to reduce our dependence of fossil fuels and in particular fuels whose consumption produce the most environmental contamination.

The report makes it clear that Ontario is a leader in these efforts, and that other jurisdictions must work hard to reach acceptable targets. The per-capita analysis provided in the report is perhaps the most compelling component for it shows how each of us is contributing to the problem and the attendant solutions.

I urge the United States Environmental Protection Agency to read this document thoroughly and do its best to achieve effective reductions in emissions across the United States but most particularly in the northeast where vast amounts of contamination continue to infiltrate our atmosphere with materials that are unhealthy.

A future habitable continent of North America will be based on the rules of Ecology, or it will not exist at all. The sooner we all recognize this, the better and the cheaper the future will be.”

*Dr. Doug W. Larson*

*Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph  
Guelph, Ontario*

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“Our research supports the modelling results that have been presented in the Comments on the New Source Review document. We agree with the conclusions expressed in those Comments and encourage Ontario to continue its opposition to the proposed changes in the New Source Review program.”

*Dr. James J. Sloan*

*Professor of Earth Sciences, Physics and Chemistry and  
Director, Waterloo Centre for Atmospheric Sciences  
University of Waterloo*

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“We support this submission by the government of Ontario and hope that other government leaders follow this example by ensuring that any future rulemaking puts human health and the environment before all other interests.”

*Dr. Rick Smith  
Executive Director, Environmental Defence  
Toronto, ON*

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