

## Consultation Response (ERO: 019-9501)

- **What principles should the government provide to the OEB to help inform the Board's ongoing development of natural gas connection policies?**

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) recommends that government prioritize energy affordability, reliability, and environmental sustainability as guiding principles in energy policies. Recognizing both the growing energy demands across Ontario and the importance of the energy transition, the OCC underscores the importance of a balanced and diversified energy strategy. Natural gas remains a critical component of Ontario's energy mix, providing needed stability during the province's transition to a low-carbon future.

In addition, natural gas continues to play an important role in supporting growth in key, energy-intensive economic sectors, including manufacturing and agriculture. Industries that require high-temperature heat, such as steel and cement production, have energy needs that may be impractical to achieve with electricity alone. Access to this affordable and reliable energy source therefore provides an alternative to higher-emission fuels, while enabling these sectors to remain competitive.

- **What role should natural gas play in supporting power system security and resiliency?**

The OCC has consistently supported an "all of the above" energy strategy that integrates nuclear, hydroelectric, solar, wind, and natural gas. This approach reflects the need for immediate and dependable energy sources, especially as electricity consumption in Ontario is projected to nearly double by 2050 due to increasing adoption of electric vehicles, home heating electrification, housing developments, and critical mineral production. Natural gas, in this context, provides an essential backstop to ensure grid reliability and cost-effectiveness during peak demand periods. It creates a stable and affordable energy supply to help industries expand, create skilled jobs, and drive local investments in Ontario.

- **What are the challenges and opportunities for enhanced energy efficiency, adoption of clean fuels (e.g., RNG, Hydrogen) and emission reduction methods (e.g., carbon capture and storage) to lower emissions in the natural gas system?**

The OCC has also cautioned against regulatory measures that might compromise energy affordability and system reliability. That is why OCC recommends leveraging natural gas alongside existing assets such as hydroelectricity and nuclear, while supporting the steady integration of innovative technologies such as hydrogen and small modular reactors to lower emissions in line with Canada's targets. This balanced approach reflects the OCC's commitment to advancing Ontario's economic and environmental objectives simultaneously.

**Background - OCC Policy Positions:**

1. [OCC Letter on Clean Electricity Regulations \(2024\)](#)
2. [Submission to the Ministry of Energy on "Pathways to Decarbonization" \(2023\)](#)