



January 15, 2025

Nik Spohr
Ministry of Energy and Electrification
77 Grenville Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C1

To Whom It May Concern,

Subject: ERO 019-9501- Consultation to support the important role for natural gas in Ontario's energy system and economy

We are writing today to provide input on the consultation to support the important role for natural gas in Ontario's energy system and economy. South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation is a not-for-profit municipally owned economic development corporation. We consist of 5 counties, 28 municipalities and approximately 680,000 residents.

Natural gas is an essential energy source for many sectors in our region. The manufacturing sector, which includes food processing and light industry, relies on natural gas for many of its processes and equipment, all of which require stable, affordable energy to remain competitive. Similarly, the agricultural sector uses natural gas for drying crops, greenhouse heating, and other critical activities that are essential for the viability of farming operations. In addition, the energy needs of the concrete sector are quite demanding; this sector is also integral to achieving our housing goals. These industries are unlikely to withstand an abrupt change in energy provision. Agriculture in particular, is extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in energy costs.

We support the provincial goal of reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to sustainable energy sources, but we advise systematic planning in the implementation of this policy. We hope that any policy changes be accompanied by thorough impact assessments including those specific to rural communities and industries that rely on natural gas. This will ensure that any policy shifts take into account the potential economic impacts and support industries in a smooth transition. A well-planned, gradual transition, with a focus on supporting local industries, is critical to ensuring that both environmental and economic goals are met.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this important issue and look forward to ongoing discussions about how to best balance environmental sustainability with the economic realities of rural communities.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Amy Martin'.

Amy Martin
SCOR EDC
Chair of the Board of Directors