

Thursday, January 16, 2025

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

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

On behalf of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to provide input on the Ontario government's consultation regarding the continued role of natural gas in our energy portfolio. As representatives of Hamilton's business community, we are deeply committed to supporting Ontario's transition to a net-zero economy through a balanced, practical, and reliable energy strategy.

We recognize that natural gas plays a pivotal role in Ontario's energy mix, contributing to affordability, reliability, and economic growth. With electricity demand forecasted to rise by 75% by 2050, ensuring a diverse and resilient energy system is crucial to meeting the needs of businesses, residents, and municipalities.

The Chamber firmly believes that a balanced approach, which includes natural gas alongside renewable and low-carbon energy sources, is essential for a sustainable and prosperous future. Natural gas provides unique advantages as a bridge to a lower-carbon future, offering reliable support during peak demand, enhancing grid resilience, and facilitating the integration of renewable energy sources like hydrogen and renewable natural gas.

Key considerations for the Chamber include:

1. **Reliability and Resilience:** Hamilton's industries and residents rely on an energy system that is dependable even under extreme conditions. Natural gas's underground infrastructure ensures stability, particularly during adverse weather, and provides a cost-effective alternative to electrification.
2. **Economic Growth and Housing:** To support Hamilton's rapid growth, the energy system must accommodate increased demand. Natural gas's scalable infrastructure and affordability are critical for attracting investment, supporting high-growth municipalities, and addressing Ontario's housing needs.

.../2

3. **Affordability:** Energy costs are a major factor for both businesses and residents. Natural gas remains a cost-effective solution, with the capacity to deliver four to five times the energy of electricity at a fraction of the cost. Maintaining an affordable energy mix will protect Ontario's competitive advantage and minimize energy poverty.
4. **Path to Decarbonization:** We support the integration of lower-carbon alternatives, including renewable natural gas and hydrogen, into Ontario's energy network. This evolution aligns with the Chamber's commitment to sustainability while leveraging the existing natural gas infrastructure for a more seamless transition.

Ontario's energy future depends on a pragmatic and forward-thinking policy framework. We encourage the province to ensure that this policy supports a diverse energy portfolio, maintains affordability and reliability, and fosters innovation in clean energy technologies. The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce is eager to collaborate with the government to achieve these objectives and to position Ontario as a leader in sustainable energy solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion. Should you require additional input or wish to discuss our perspectives further, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GD' followed by a stylized flourish.

Greg Dunnett
President & CEO
Hamilton Chamber of Commerce