



Ministry of Energy  
Environmental Bill of Rights Registration # 012-8840  
ltep@ontario.ca

Dear Minister,

I am writing today on behalf of **TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative** and the **Federation of Community Power Co-operatives**. Renewable Energy Co-operatives (RE Co-ops) have allowed everyday people in Ontario to directly benefit from community ownership of energy projects, participate in co-op decision making, and learn about the positive environmental impacts of renewable energy and energy conservation.

In just 5 years, Ontario RE Co-ops have grown to 8,000 members and invested over \$85M in local Community Power projects. That figure is expected to triple in the next 18 months.

For more benefits, see our **Power of Community** report: [trec.on.ca/report/the-power-of-community/](http://trec.on.ca/report/the-power-of-community/)

Our members have invested thousands of hours of their time and put their RRSP savings to work into real projects to affect climate change. They are community activists and are very supportive of the government's initiatives on Climate Change.

We operate under the 7 guiding principles of co-operatives, to build an enduring democratic civil society. Please accept this as our contribution to the 2017 Long Term Energy Plan. We wish for a positive and collaborative outcome to solving together the challenges ahead.

**We believe that Ontario MUST transition to 100% Renewable Energy by 2050.**

To meet that goal, we need to recruit every citizen, business, organization, public institution and local community to work collaboratively toward that common objective. We need an **Energy Transition Plan** that lays out the What & When across all sectors:

- Buildings
- Transport
- Electricity
- Agriculture
- Waste Management

We think the Long Term Energy Plan should be the comprehensive blueprint for that transition.

**We can mobilize Community Capital to invest in local Energy Projects.**

Rapid technology developments in Distributed Energy Resources are reshaping the energy landscape everywhere. Thousands of smaller local generation projects of today are displacing the massive

centralized bulk energy system generators of yesterday. This opens the door to local ownership of those projects – and our members are ready to take up the challenge.

Whether those investments are in Conservation, Generation, Fuel Switching or Storage, the motivation is the same – invest in local projects, under local control, which creates local jobs and retains profits in the community.

The Long Term Energy Plan should facilitate the mobilization of that willing capital.

**We think Partnerships with local Municipal Governments are the key to rapid adoption.**

Since the financial crisis of 2008, the key to each economic stimulus program (whether Federal or Provincial) has been ‘shovel-ready’ projects that are sponsored and/or endorsed by local Municipal Councils. But Energy Projects are different – they are not familiar and well understood projects like roads, bridges, sewers and water treatment facilities. There is a clear need for capacity building at the local level – and our members can help.

Each of the RE Co-ops across the Province has learned how to tap into the expertise and skills of their membership. We draw upon willing capable volunteers to identify promising projects, to mobilize community capital, to marshal technical resources. We have proven our capabilities to develop, construct and maintain successful projects. We know how to work cooperatively and collaboratively. We make good partners.

The Long Term Energy Plan should foster partnerships between Municipalities and RE Co-ops to co-invest in local energy projects of all types.

**We are convinced that this transition must put Conservation first.**

To fight climate change and reduce our environmental footprint, Ontario’s next energy plan must make conservation and efficiency the first priority for all energy decisions. This principle has to apply to our buildings, institutions, industries and transportation systems.

The “Achievable Potential Study” submitted to the IESO in June 2016, showed we have the potential to cost-effectively reduce electricity demand by 30% by 2035. I think the government should pursue and promote all cost-effective conservation measures.

We have asked for the Renewable Energy Co-operative definition to be changed from “electricity” to “energy”. Our established RE Co-ops are a natural fit to provide community based financing of energy efficiency retrofits, district heating and conservation.

**We want to see local communities take control of their energy futures.**

We believe the Long Term Energy Plan must open the door to **Community Power**. The Ontario Energy Board will unleash massive new private investments through a simple regulatory change to mandate **Virtual Net-metering** across the Province. Existing RE Co-ops will be able to scale up by an order of

magnitude if allowed to supply our local Municipalities under long-term Power Purchase Agreements. And there will be a surge in new start-up RE Co-ops everywhere but especially in the smaller rural townships.

The Long Term Energy Plan needs to consider the scale and scope of the impending surge in local energy autonomy. This momentum, spurred by outspoken leaders such as Oxford County and County of Brant, cannot be stopped. If ignored, the outdated centralized system will face escalating stranded assets and an enraged public for decades.

**We ask that the government wean Ontario off of nuclear over the next 15-20 years.**

The world is embracing Distributed Energy Resources, in contrast with the centralized model of the 1960s. The good news is that good jobs will migrate to the local communities alongside the adoption of local energy projects.

The Long Term Energy Plan is the ideal place to build a compelling foundation for that transition

- a. From 2016 supply mix to 100% RE mix
- b. From Centralized Grid systems to fully distributed microgrid systems
- c. From external energy dependencies to resilient communities
- d. From monopoly supply chains to local jobs and local ownership

We cannot allow the current system to collapse – but we need the majority of our efforts and investments to be put into the new systems.

**We are committed to help change the tone of the public discourse around the energy file.**

The public has to be involved – not in ‘conversations’ but in actions, projects, investments, innovations, outcomes. There is a groundswell of public support as evidenced by the surge in RE Co-ops across the Province, in terms of memberships and dollars invested. We want to accelerate the public engagement in the transition.

There are huge climate challenges ahead – our Governments cannot ‘do it’ alone. But they can dictate the Transition in terms of outcomes and timelines. We need to focus our energies on building the new future TOGETHER. Our members have proven that they can be a potent catalyst for change – we can help if you will let us.

I’m happy to meet with you in person to further discuss how RE Co-ops can play a key role in strengthening our energy system.

Co-operatively yours,

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