



Ontario Federation of Agriculture



WOWC
Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

EOWC
Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

November 2, 2016

Hon. Glenn Thibeault, Minister
Ministry of Energy
4th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 2E1

Dear Minister Thibeault:

We are inspired to write by the attached excerpt from the Discussion Guide to Ontario's Long-term Energy Plan consultation currently underway.

Our partnership represents the interests of the farming and rural communities across Ontario. We have been seeking a real public investment in natural gas infrastructure since before your government announced the \$200 million Natural Gas Access Loan program and the \$30 million Natural Gas Economic Development Grant.

We appreciate that these programs acknowledge that installing natural gas in rural Ontario is important and worth pursuing. Likewise, the LTEP discussion guide provides very sound reasons why natural gas would be a tremendous stimulus for our rural economy. As the discussion paper indicates natural gas is less costly, will attract new industry and will make commercial transportation more affordable.

The discussion paper goes on to note that: *"In the 2013 LTEP, Ontario committed to working with natural gas distributors and municipalities to pursue options for expanding natural gas pipelines to more communities in rural and northern Ontario."*

Minister, because of the tremendous advantages of natural gas access, it is now time to realize on this commitment and make a real investment in natural gas for our farms, rural businesses and communities.

To be blunt, rural Ontario is not interested in loans to try to secure vital infrastructure. That program, now three years in design, is simply inadequate. The action we seek is for a real public investment in rural Ontario to enable access to natural gas. Realistically, this will be a long-term project, as was the electrification of rural Ontario a century ago. We cannot overemphasize that it is equally as important.



Minister, we would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to discuss further how Ontario will prosper with a rural natural gas infrastructure and how we can best arrive at that successful outcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don McCabe'.

Don McCabe
OFA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Hope'.

Randy Hope
WOWC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Emon'.

Peter Emon
EOWC

cc: Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Hon Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Hon. Bob Chiarelli, Minister of Infrastructure

Excerpt from Ontario's Long-Term Energy Plan Discussion Guide:

Natural gas expansion

Access to natural gas especially helps smaller communities in Ontario. It can stimulate their economies by attracting new industry and providing less-costly energy to consumers. Natural gas can also make commercial transportation more affordable, and allow agricultural producers to use less-costly natural gas to dry their crops and heat their buildings.

In the 2013 LTEP, Ontario committed to working with natural gas distributors and municipalities to pursue options for expanding natural gas pipelines to more communities in rural and northern Ontario. These commitments were reinforced in the most recent Ontario Budget when the government announced it would offer loans and grants to help communities work with their utilities to acquire natural gas service.

With support from the Ministries of Energy; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and Infrastructure; the Ontario government is establishing two programs:

- A \$200 million Natural Gas Access Loan program to help communities work with utilities to get access to natural gas; and
- A \$30 million Natural Gas Economic Development Grant to accelerate projects that have a clear potential for economic development.

In June 2016, the OEB reviewed how it can facilitate the expansion of natural gas pipelines in the province. The OEB held hearings and received numerous submissions from interested parties. Its decision is expected in the early fall of 2016.

For consideration

- What are the significant challenges facing utilities and what can the government do to meet them?
- What are the most important benefits of a modern grid? Increased reliability? Greater information on your energy usage?
- What additional policies should the government consider to expand access to natural gas?