

Memorandum to Council

Office of the Town Clerk



To: Mayor and Members of Council

CC: R. Saunders, Commissioner, Planning and Development
S. Klein, Director, Strategic Initiatives
C. Harris, Town Clerk
K. Narraway, Sr. Manager, Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk

From: H. Ellis, Council and Committee Coordinator

Date: February 12, 2024

File #: n/a

Subject: Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee
Re: Request that Council Support the Ontario Energy Board's Decision to End the Gas Pipeline Subsidy

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell,
Chief Administrative Officer**

During their meeting held on February 7, 2024, the Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee passed the following motion:

That the Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee recommends that the Town of Whitby Council pass the following resolution:

Whereas residents are struggling with energy bill increases and need relief; and,

Whereas natural gas is no longer the cheapest way to heat homes because electric heat pumps are now much more efficient, can provide all heating needs even in the cold climates, and result in far lower energy bills compared to gas heating; and,

Whereas natural gas is methane gas, which is a fossil fuel that causes approximately one-third of Ontario's GHG emissions, and must be phased out because it is inconsistent with all climate targets, while heat pumps

result in the lowest GHG emissions and are consistent with a zero-carbon future; and,

Whereas the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) decided to end a subsidy for methane gas pipelines to be built in new construction developments, effective 2025, finding that this would lower energy bills for existing gas customers and improve affordability for new homebuyers, but this decision is at risk of being overturned by the provincial government; and,

Whereas the OEB decision will help lower energy bills and encourage heating systems that are consistent with climate targets and plans; and,

Whereas the construction of new methane gas pipelines, which have 60-year lifetimes, should not be subsidized because they are inconsistent with the Town's climate targets and will result in higher carbon emissions, higher energy bills, higher future decarbonization retrofit costs to phase out fossil fuel heating, and a continued financial drain as dollars leave the province to pay for fossil fuels extracted in other jurisdictions.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Town of Whitby expresses its support for the decision of the Ontario Energy Board to end the gas pipeline subsidy and ask the Ontario Government to allow the decision to stand; and,*
- 2. That this resolution be circulated to the President of AMO, Colin Best, Premier Doug Ford, the Minister of Energy, Todd Smith, The Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy, the Region of Durham, and all local municipalities in Durham requesting support of the proposed changes.*

The above Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee recommendation is being provided to Council due to the fact that carrying out the recommendation requires action from Council. In accordance with the Procedure By-law, Councillor Leahy has requested that this memorandum be pulled from the Council Information Index and placed on the March 4, 2024 Committee of the Whole agenda for consideration.