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Terence Young, Guest Columnist | Apr 22, 2010 - 3:15 PM | 2

## The power of history

The proposed power plant is the biggest issue in Oakville. Having lived here 24 years, I believe it is the biggest issue in Oakville's history. Led by the best organized and funded local interest group I have ever seen — Citizens for Clean Air — 2,000 Oakvillians recently dropped what they were doing to protest on the lawn of Queen's Park. This is unprecedented and should have never been necessary.

People should have a right to feel safe in their community, not only from criminals, but from inappropriate development that diminishes their quality of life. In the past, I have worked towards that end in community policing, for the Glen Abbey Residents' Association, on Crime Stoppers and as MPP for north Oakville. For most, their residential property is not only where their heart is, and their family, but their work and their major asset for planned retirement. That is all under serious threat in east Oakville — from our own provincial government.

The source is a huge carbon-fuelled power plant proposed to be built just a few hundred yards from a residential neighbourhood. It would spew out a large invisible cloud of pollutants in gaseous and particulate matter form to settle on an entire community in Oakville. The Ontario government reports the air shed is already "taxed." Translation: the air is already poisonous for many people. The main reason Halton children end up in hospitals is respiratory disease. On many summer days, scores of people simply can't go outside. Yet Dalton McGuinty defers all entreaties and official letters from myself and our mayor to the Ontario Power Authority and ignores his own Liberal caucus member MPP Kevin Flynn.

McGuinty could put an end to this unhealthy plan for Oakville with the stroke of a pen and should do so immediately. To do otherwise is to abandon common sense, the people of Oakville and Mr. Flynn. In 2002, Dalton McGuinty promised to close, by 2007, the four remaining Ontario coal-fired plants not already ordered closed. They are all still smoking away. So Oakvillians' health must be sacrificed now in an attempt to keep an eight-year-old election promise?

This plant should be in Nanticoke where it is wanted and would be away from homes and schools. The McGuinty government is spending \$32.5 billion on infrastructure projects to get Ontario out of recession. The additional cost of transmission from Nanticoke could easily be considered one additional project. If McGuinty refuses to retreat on this plan, I will go to the wall with the federal powers under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to stop the plant, but the federal power is limited to a "review" of the project on its impact regarding federal jurisdiction — for example the rail line and the water in Lake Ontario. The outcome is uncertain and should be a last resort.

To help convince Premier McGuinty to reverse this unhealthy decision, send an e-mail today to [dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org).

*Terence Young is the Oakville MP.*

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