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David Lea, OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF | Jul 21, 2010 - 2:42 PM | 1

Ontario Green Party supports C4CA

The Oakville Generating Station has been advertised as a clean energy facility, but for Ontario's Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner it's not clean enough to justify where the government wants to put it.

Schreiner blasted plans to build a 900-megawatt gas-fired power plant on the Ford-owned lands of 1500 Royal Windsor Dr. Tuesday after taking a tour of the area surrounding the proposed site with members of the Oakville residents' association Citizens for Clean Air (C4CA).

"It's totally outrageous," said Schreiner.

"It's so clear this is the wrong plant with the wrong technology in the wrong location. We need a better process for how the government makes these kinds of decisions that

engages local communities in that decision-making process and we absolutely need regulations around the kind of buffer zones we are going to create around any kind of power plant."

Schreiner said he was particularly struck by how close the Chisholm Education Centre is to the proposed power plant site, a point that has been brought up by many residents who fear what would happen if an industrial accident were to take place.

Around 1,500 students use the centre's services over the course of the school year.

"I was told it was very close, but that message really hits you personally when you're standing there (at the Chisholm Education Centre) and you're looking right at where the plant site is," said Schreiner.

"It and the fact that we just walked right over here (to the plant site) makes you realize how close 300 metres really is."

Standing at a fence separating a business on Cornwall Road from the CN rail tracks and the proposed power plant site, currently occupied by a closed 10-megawatt gas-fired power plant, Schreiner also voiced concerns about the future plant's proximity to local businesses, area homes and the CN tracks themselves.

A fast moving GO train that passed within metres of where the power plant will be did little to calm these concerns.

TransCanada, the company hoping to build and operate the Oakville Generating Station, has previously stated that it has operated gas-fired power plants in Ontario and across North America for more than 20 years without any kind of serious incident taking place.

Schreiner also said the Green Party of Ontario is not against gas plants, just the way the government is bringing these plants to Ontario.

"Gas is better than coal. We understand that if we are going to phase coal out there probably will be some need for gas generation, but it has to be regulated in a way that it is not 300 metres away from a school and from people's homes," said Schreiner.

C4CA's Nancy Robertson pointed out that while provincial regulations would prevent a 10-megawatt wind turbine from being built on the Royal Windsor Drive site, as it is less than 550 metres from a residential area, there are no provincial regulations limiting where a gas-fired power plant can be built.

"That means that any community in this province could get one of these plopped down into their neighbourhood," said Robertson.

"I believe we are really fighting on behalf of the province. If we are successful with this fight, regulations will be put in place for gas-fired power plants across the province. This is not a NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) issue."

Schreiner agreed stating it's not right to label residents NIMBYs when they are actually trying to advance the interests of all Ontarians by getting some regulations in place regarding where gas-fired power plants are located.



Ontario Green Party supports C4CA. ON LOCATION: Ontario Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner chats with C4CA's Nancy Robertson on Tuesday morning with the site of the proposed gas-fueled power plant behind them. Nikki Wesley / Oakville Beaver

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In an effort to help this process along C4CA and Schreiner are discussing the possibility of the Green Party of Ontario launching a province-wide campaign aimed at getting citizens from all over Ontario to speak out on the power plant regulation issue.

A Green Party campaign is currently underway to protest a smaller gas-fired power plant in the North York Region.

Both Schreiner and C4CA are calling on Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty to tour the proposed power plant site in Oakville with C4CA stating McGuinty has not attended despite numerous past invitations.

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NDP condemns billion dollar gas plant



Frog
Jul 22, 2010 9:12 AM

PRESS RELEASE September 30, 2009 NDP Energy and Environment Critic Peter Tabuns is condemning today's decision by the McGuinty government to go ahead with a \$1.2-billion gas plant in Oakville as economically irresponsible and environmentally reckless. "Last week, the McGuinty government promised not to build a single wind turbine closer than 550 meters to residences. Today, they show they are happy to build a massively-polluting gas plant less than 400 metres from homes in an already over-polluted air shed." ... "The OPA continues to overestimate energy demand in the province and gives priority to large-scale polluting plants. Perhaps that is not surprising given that the OPA chair (John Beck) also leads one of the largest power plant construction companies in North America," noted Tabuns. In 2007, New Democrats were sharply critical of the McGuinty government when it first appointed Beck, given his role as CEO of Aecon Construction.

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