



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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July 5, 2016

Kirsten Walli, Board Secretary
Ontario Energy Board
P.O. Box 2319
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

RE: ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD PROCEEDING EB-2016-0004

Dear Ms. Walli:

As MPP for Leeds-Grenville, I'm writing with regard to the above referenced proceeding to encourage the Ontario Energy Board to ensure Ontario has the regulatory flexibility necessary to give more Ontarians access to natural gas.

For several years I have been working with natural gas utilities on this issue on behalf of municipal leaders, homeowners and businesses in my riding eager to see natural gas services expanded. Indeed, natural gas expansion was recently identified by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville as a priority item they will bring forward at the upcoming Association of Municipalities of Ontario annual conference.

That this is a priority for me and local mayors and councillors is hardly surprising as, under the current regulatory framework, natural gas expansion projects and even individual connections remain on the shelf because they are simply too cost prohibitive.

Enclosed please find a letter to me from David Murray, one of many constituents who have contacted me in the past year for assistance in connecting to natural gas. Mr. Murray's experience in learning that the cost of connecting was simply unaffordable, is one my office has encountered repeatedly.

Mr. Murray and other homeowners like him cannot not afford to pay tens of thousands of dollars to connect to natural gas, which is now required under guidelines that demand utilities get a full cost recovery from new connections.

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This situation is leaving an increasing number of rural Ontarians at risk of energy poverty due to the sky-rocketing increases in electricity rates.

That is why, in my view, expanding natural gas access in rural ridings like Leeds-Grenville is absolutely critical. Natural gas is an affordable option for homeowners and businesses, as it is 68 per cent less costly than electricity and nearly 60 per cent cheaper than home heating oil.

In terms of the environment and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, the advantage of natural gas over other home heating options has been clearly established.

Dozens of expansion projects – and the economic and environmental benefits they would bring – have been identified today and many more will be added to that list in the future. But for them to become a reality, the OEB must allow some of these projects to be exempted from existing economic feasibility guidelines.

I look forward to the OEB acting to bring more flexibility to the existing regulatory framework and thank you for the opportunity to provide input on behalf of those I was elected to represent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Clark', with a stylized, cursive script.

Steve Clark, MPP,
Leeds-Grenville

David Murray
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June 24th, 2016

**Mr Steve Clark MPP
Leeds- Grenville**

As a constituent in your riding, and having contacted you in the past about the high cost of connecting natural gas to my home I am now doing a follow up by this letter to you for your support and a letter to the Ontario Energy Board .

The main gas line on my road passes in front of my house ,but the high cost of the connecting fees to my house certainly is out of reach and not affordable for myself and I am sure for many other seniors or home owners in general. Natural gas is a affordable fuel which is less than half the cost of home heating oil and electricity if I had access to it in my home.

I would like to ask you and your fellow MPP,s to give serious consideration to supporting natural gas expansion and contacting the Ontario Energy Board while it is considering application # EB-2016-0004 currently a proposal that will revise rules and review the mechanism to recover the cost of natural gas expansion and will make obtaining access to natural gas more accessible as I understand it, to home owners and your constituents.

All of the materials documents and evidence associated with the EB-2016-0004 proceeding can be accessed through the OEB website by searching under EB-2016-0004 (www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/ notice)

Letters should be addressed to Board Secretary

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Ref - #EB-2016-0004

David Murray

