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ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE and TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

For Immediate Release: February 19, 2013

Environmental groups urge the Ontario Energy Board to put energy conservation first in hearings into Toronto Hydro's Bremner transformer station

Reducing energy use creates jobs, cuts pollution and is the cheapest energy option

Toronto, ON – At today's Ontario Energy Board (OEB) hearings into Toronto Hydro's application to build a new \$272 million transformer station downtown, Environmental Defence will provide expert evidence that energy efficiency and local energy generation are a cheaper option for consumers and the best environmental choice. "

We understand Toronto faces rising energy demand as the city's density increases, but we want to ensure the solution picked will be the most affordable and environmentally friendly option," said Gillian McEachern of Environmental Defence. "Reducing energy use not only saves people and businesses money, and creates jobs, it's also the cheapest form of new energy supply."

Toronto consumes 56 per cent more electricity per person than New York City.

"Toronto has tried to put into place more effective programs to reduce electricity use and generate more electricity within its boundaries," said Franz Hartmann of the Toronto Environmental Alliance. "But the city's efforts have been blocked by decisions of the Ontario Power Authority and the OEB."

As a result, downtown Toronto's electricity demand may exceed its supply capacity in the near future. Toronto Hydro is proposing to build a new \$272 million transformer station, near the CN Tower, to supply more electricity to downtown office buildings and condos on hot summer days when their air conditioners are running full.

"This proposal doesn't make sense. Toronto's electricity needs can be met at a lower cost and more securely by a combination of energy conservation and local power generation," said Jack Gibbons, expert consultant to Environmental Defence and Chair of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance. "We want the Ontario Power Authority and Toronto Hydro to work together to lower our electricity bills and avoid the need for a \$272 million transformer station by pursuing cost-effective, feasible and reliable energy conservation and local power generation options in downtown Toronto."

Toronto Hydro and the Ontario Power Authority are currently working on a Toronto Regional Electricity Supply Plan, which will examine all the options to meet the city's electricity needs, including energy conservation and distributed generation. This creates the opportunity to develop a smart plan to lower our energy bills and move Toronto to a clean, green and reliable energy future.

About ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE (www.environmentaldefence.ca): Environmental Defence is Canada's most effective environmental action organization. We challenge, and inspire

change in government, business and people to ensure a greener, healthier and prosperous life for all.

About TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE (www.torontoenvironment.org): Since 1988, the Toronto Environmental Alliance has campaigned locally to find solutions that build a greener city for all.

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