

Extract from March 18, 2024 Council Agenda

13.1 Councillor Schaefer advised of her Notice of Motion, seconded by Councillor Asselstine, to be considered at the March 18, 2024, Meeting of Council

Re: Support for the Ontario Energy Board's December 20, 2023, Decision: Ending the subsidy for new gas pipelines

Moved by Councillor Schaefer

Seconded by Councillor Asselstine

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 over the long term compared to gas heating; and

WHEREAS natural gas is methane gas, which is a fossil fuel that causes approximately one-third of Ontario's Greenhouse Gas ("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 residential 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 and cooling 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 will result in higher carbon emissions, higher energy bills, higher future decarbonization retrofit costs to get off fossil fuel heating, and a continued financial drain as dollars leave the province to pay for fossil fuels extracted in other jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS the Township of King declared a climate emergency in July 2019; and

WHEREAS the Township of King is continuing to demonstrate leadership in building and renovating its own buildings to reduce its GHG emissions. In 2018, the new King Township Municipal Centre was built with geothermal; in 2022, the Schomberg Community Hall was renovated to incorporate air sourced heat pump infrastructure; and in 2024, the new Township-Wide Recreation Centre has been certified as having a net carbon zero design featuring all electric building systems including air sourced heat pumps so that GHG emissions have been effectively eliminated as there is minimal dependence on gas-fired equipment; and

WHEREAS King is in the process of modifying its Green Building Standards to encourage all builders of new structures to improve energy efficiency and to implement alternate energy systems to reduce GHG emissions;

NOW THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The Township of King expresses its support for the decision of the Ontario Energy Board to end the gas pipeline subsidy and requests that the Ontario Government allow the decision to stand; and
- b) This resolution be circulated to Colin Best, President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Premier of Ontario, Todd Smith, Minister of Energy, Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance, Andrea Khanjin, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Stephen Lecce, MPP, King-Vaughan, Caroline Mulroney, MPP York-Simcoe, Scot Davidson, MP, York – Simcoe, all local municipalities in York Region, and the Regions of York and Durham.