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Board Secretary

Ontario Energy Board

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Continued increases in population and the building of more homes (which are larger than ever before) are the root cause of our energy, peak oil and greenhouse gas emission problems.

In a report from CIBC World Markets Inc, November 2007, economist Jeffrey Rubin described an "efficiency paradox" in which "technological improvements drive greater energy efficiency, but those savings are lost to increased overall consumption." Mr. Rubin recognized that total energy usage has risen by more than 40 per cent, as a result of rising population and greater consumption of energy-using products. He stated "Governments have advanced energy efficient programs in an effort to rein in consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The problem is that energy efficiency is not the final objective - reducing total energy consumption must be the final objective to both challenges of conventional oil depletion and greenhouse gas emissions." Mr. Rubin also noted that "The efficiency of air conditioners has risen 17 per cent since 1990, but the number of units has climbed 36 per cent."

Another point made by Mr. Rubin: "One reason why energy usage has grown so much faster than efficiency is the never ending trend toward larger and larger homes with larger and larger heating and cooling requirements."

It is important to understand that continued increases in population and the building of more homes and subdivisions are the root cause of our energy and greenhouse gas emission problems. How can subdivisions continue to be built if we do not have enough electricity to power them?

If there is such a growing concern to preserve oil supplies, then shouldn't building and development be limited? And developers charged higher fees for destroying the environment?

How much oil is used to build a subdivision? How much greenhouse gasses are emitted during the building process? From the materials that are products of oil and use oil to be made, to the vehicles that deliver these materials to the building site. Oil and gas is used by the vehicles to prepare the building site as well. Various tradesmen drive back and forth to and from the building site. New roads in these subdivisions have to be built and maintained - using more fuel and

emitting more greenhouse gasses. Finally, homeowners use up more oil and other forms of energy to maintain their homes on a day to day basis. Considering the staggering number of new subdivisions that have been built in recent years across Ontario, it is no wonder that we have such high greenhouse gas emissions and concerns about continued oil supply.

Residents in Ontario are told to conserve electricity and natural gas use - yet these efforts are completely counterbalanced as more subdivisions are built. Every new house - no matter how energy efficient - will use up more electricity and natural gas. Especially since many new homes are larger than ever before. An entire subdivision multiplies this amount. Some go to great lengths to conserve energy (freezing in the winter, suffering the oppressing heat of the summer). Unfortunately, some nursing homes go without air conditioning in the summer, which is a great hardship to residents. All these efforts and sacrifices are completely useless if the population continues to escalate and new subdivisions are built.

Current solutions do not really address the root of the problem and are a great financial burden for many people. The electricity that might be saved replacing light bulbs with more expensive CFL lights will be nothing compared to the extra electricity needed to power new subdivisions - as building continues at an alarming rate.

Smart Meters

My concern with "smart" meters is that on-peak hours include 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., which is the very time when busy parents come home from work and cook supper. Children need to use their computers to complete homework. The on-peak rate is nearly double the current rate. Even the mid-peak rate is nearly 150% more than the current rate. "Smart" meters will cause extreme hardship for many people - not only financially, but as people are forced to do their laundry and cook in the middle of the night, their health and well-being will suffer as well. Imagine children doing their homework in the middle of the night? Still, furnaces, water heaters and air conditioners need to be on throughout the day. These items use up the most electricity. Many people have already adjusted the thermostat to conserve energy or save money on their utility bills. Therefore the extra financial increase from "smart" meters will cause great hardship, not only for poor people on fixed incomes, but for middle-income people as well - whose salaries have not increased enough to compensate for the various price increases they face in many areas (ie. property tax, water rate increases, hydro, food, gas, real estate, etc.).

It would be more reasonable to consider peak time 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., but 7a.m.-10p.m. is the entire day! Those who are wealthy and use up more electricity in their larger homes will not need to make an effort to conserve, since they can easily afford to pay more. It is the poor and middle-income who are hurt

by "smart" meters; they have already made an effort to conserve because their hydro bills are already too much for them.

Recommendations

First of all, I would recommend that the building of new homes be limited to replace older homes that are run-down and infested with pests, etc.

Also, I believe wealthy homeowners should pay more - considering that they consume much more energy than poor or middle-class people who live in smaller homes. Every house that is over 2,500 square feet should pay more for electricity - and those that are more than 3,500 sq. ft should pay substantially more. During peak hours, these large homes require a furnace or air conditioner to heat or cool more living space, which uses up more energy than a smaller home. It's amazing the number of new homes that have been built throughout Ontario that are more than 4,000 square feet (Guelph, Waterloo, etc.).

I have not yet mentioned businesses and commercial buildings. They probably cause the most burden on energy consumption. In the sweltering heat of the summer, many office buildings have their air conditioners turned up so high that many have to wear sweaters! When office buildings leave their lights on throughout the night, this too is a terrible waste of electricity. Throughout the night many computers are turned off (hopefully) but still plugged in, creating "phantom load" which is another subtle burden on the electrical system.

There are other solutions besides charging poor and hard-working middle class people more money or banning light-bulbs, to tackle this issue.

There would be a lot more energy available today, had there not been so much population growth and urban expansion over the last two decades.

It doesn't make sense to continue building more houses that use up more electricity. We are just paying more money and inconveniencing ourselves to conserve electricity only to make greedy developers and new home builders more wealthy. If urban expansion continues, perhaps someday we will be forced to conserve to the point where we might as well light candles and live a medieval lifestyle without the convenient electricity that we now enjoy. Of course, I do agree that it is wrong for homeowners to waste electricity unnecessarily and some conservation tips are helpful.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this lengthy email.

Sincerely

Monica Smith