



ONTARIO  
CLEAN AIR  
ALLIANCE

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March 16, 2023

BY EMAIL: [President@McMaster.ca](mailto:President@McMaster.ca) and [boardofgovernors@mcmaster.ca](mailto:boardofgovernors@mcmaster.ca)

President David Farrar and Board of Governors  
McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario

Dear President Farrar and Board of Governors:

We are writing to request McMaster University to cancel its plans to build a new polluting gas power plant to meet its electricity needs on hot summer days when our air-conditioners are running full-out. [Ontario has cleaner and lower cost options to meet its electricity needs.](#)

Universities are supposed to be hubs for creative thinking, innovation, and new ideas. A university that invests millions of dollars in a new polluting gas-fired power plant in 2023 is a university that is out of touch with the world's need to reduce its greenhouse gas pollution by 50% by 2030 to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

According to Catherine McKenna and the United Nations' High-Level Expert Group on the Net-Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities: "[New fossil fuel-based electricity generation should not be permitted.](#)"

Moreover, McMaster's proposal to build new gas-fired power plants is inconsistent with the [City of Hamilton's call for the phase-out of gas-fired electricity generation in Ontario by 2030.](#)

If any institution should be leading the way toward better decision making and the implementation of new renewable technologies, it is McMaster, one of Ontario's largest post-secondary institutions that prides itself on "cutting-edge research".

It is beyond puzzling how an academic institution cannot see the many ways in which this initiative undermines its own future and the future of its students. By embracing outdated fossil fuel technology, the university is telling its faculty, students, and alumni that it is trapped in the

past. By endorsing an increase of the institution's climate impact, it is saying that it doesn't care about the world its students will face upon graduating. And by failing to embrace the many, many options for addressing its energy needs in a far more sustainable way – from renewable energy and storage to high intelligence building efficiency – the university demonstrates a dismal lack of understanding of the current exciting energy landscape and possibilities for innovation and learning.

McMaster's blinkered approach of embracing polluting conventional technology and then siting this on environmentally sensitive lands is certainly not going to enhance its reputation. Instead, it tells the world that this institution is out of touch and uncaring. Justifying this with claims that revenue is needed to fund other sustainability initiatives is a canard and not worthy of a reputable academic institution. If that represents the best of McMaster's thinking, students may want to turn elsewhere for thought leadership.

The students and staff at McMaster University deserve far better, as do the residents of Hamilton and the rest of Ontario. Please cancel McMaster's proposed new gas-fired power plant and invest in the [energy efficiency and the renewable energy options](#) that can move McMaster and Ontario to a zero-carbon electricity system by 2030.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abischoff'.

Angela Bischoff  
Ontario Clean Air Alliance