

Dear Councillors,

At the Kingston City Council meeting taking place on January 23 you will be faced with a critical decision about our shared future. **We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, call on you to act with the courage this moment demands and increase Kingston's community-wide and corporate 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals from 30% to 50%.**

2023 was the hottest year on record by a huge margin. The unprecedented temperatures, driven by record GHG emissions, supercharged extreme heat, floods and wildfires, harming lives and livelihoods across the world.¹ Scientists predict that we may soon pass the 1.5 °C threshold set by countries in Paris in 2015. We urgently need to transition away from fossil fuels.

We commend the City of Kingston for the essential work that has been done thus far to develop climate initiatives and goals, as laid out in the 2021 Climate Leadership Plan and the inclusion of climate initiatives in the 2023-2026 strategic plans.

However, it is disappointing and concerning that the target of 15% reduction in GHG emissions by 2022 was not achieved. It is clear that the city must redouble its efforts, and allocate the necessary funds and resources to contribute our fair share towards a safe climate future. There is no time to delay.

Our recommendation that you **increase Kingston's community-wide and corporate goals from 30% to 50% GHG emissions reduction by 2030** is grounded in climate science. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s 2023 report made it clear that, if we are to secure a liveable future, we can and must halve GHG emissions by 2030.²

Our recommendation is also grounded in the precedent set by hundreds of other municipalities. More than 700 cities globally have committed to 50% by 2030.³ And, a number of communities across Ontario have GHG emissions reductions commitments that are considerably more ambitious than the City of Kingston.⁴ For example, the city of Guelph, of comparable size to Kingston, has committed to a 63% GHG emissions reduction by 2030 (with a base year 2018). Kingston has positioned itself as a climate leader since the climate emergency declaration in March 2019, but clearly more must be done.

We call on the City of Kingston, working with other municipalities, to continue to pressure the Ontario government to expand renewable energy infrastructure and resources, particularly solar, hydro and wind – all of which are lower-cost alternatives to nuclear power.

Continued reliance on natural gas also remains an obstacle to addressing global warming. On December 21, 2023, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) eliminated the gas hookup subsidy to connect a new home to the gas grid. The OEB noted that if developers install electric heat

¹ [CBC](#) and [The Guardian](#)

² [IPCC](#)

³ [C40 Cities](#) and [C40 Knowledge Hub](#)

⁴ [50 by 2030 Kingston](#)

pumps, that would be a win for homebuyers and developers, to keep costs down.⁵ The OEB ruling was in response to Enbridge's plan for a multibillion-dollar gas grid expansion, saying that the plan does not account for the energy transition and increases the risk of stranded or underutilised assets.⁶ The Provincial government has pledged to reverse the OEB decision.

We urge the city of Kingston along with other municipalities to call on the Provincial government to respect and uphold the OEB decision.

Responding to the climate crisis we face is challenging, complex and unprecedented in human history. Climate breakdown impacts all aspects of our lives. Many citizens of Kingston are anxious. Many, especially the more vulnerable – the elderly, children, the unhoused and precariously housed – are already feeling the impacts of climate breakdown, suffering negative health and mental health outcomes.

Many citizens of Kingston are also active in various ways to address the climate crisis; in groups such as 350 Kingston, Seniors for Climate Action Now (SCAN!), Queen's Backing Action on the Climate Crisis (QBACC), Just Recovery Kingston and many others. There is tremendous knowledge and expertise in local Indigenous communities, universities and colleges, organisations and citizen groups. We call on the city of Kingston to enlist, support and fund citizen action so that we can all work together to address the climate crisis. We would welcome a climate change awareness campaign together with citizen action groups and the development of youth climate corps initiatives.

The current provincial government is not demonstrating climate leadership. But the City of Kingston can – and must. We strongly encourage you to increase your 2030 GHG reduction targets on January 23.

Thank you,

Nancy Nicol, Professor Emerita, York University; Seniors for Climate Action Now (SCAN!)
Gavin Hutchison, Founding Member of 350 Kingston

Co-Signing Organizations (alphabetized)

350 Canada
350 Kingston
Green Party of Canada and Ontario — Kingston
Just Recovery Kingston
Kingston Youth Climate Action (KYCA)
La Salle Secondary School Earth Club
Main Street Urban Farm
No Clearcuts Kingston
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
Seniors for Climate Action Now (SCAN!)
Queen's Backing Action on the Climate Crisis (QBACC)
Surf's Up! Laundry & Dry Cleaning

⁵ [Ontario Energy Board](#)

⁶ [National Observer](#)