SENIORS for CLIMATE ACTION NOW

SCAN! gains momentum

SCAN! signed on

Portlands

Because the Portlands gas plant affects more than the people living in the GTA, and because of the push to stop new fossil gas plants across the province, SCAN! signed on to a letter from the Toronto East Residents for Renewable Energy (TERRE).

Written to Ākuna Power, it states that "Ākuna Power's public consultation process and subsequent Draft Screening Report (DSR) has failed to provide key information about their proposal which has direct and immediate impacts on the community"...

Ontario Nature

SCAN! sent a letter to Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Andrew Kharpin, following up on the letter we signed for Ontario Nature in 2023, urging the province to implement the key recommendations from the Auditor General's value-for-money audit and climate change report, prepared for the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks in 2021.

IESO

Read Gail Griner's letter to the the Independent Electricity System Operator. SCAN! recommended that the province procurement by the IESO be increased to three times the current renewable capacity of Ontario's electricity system by 2035.

Marie-Lynn Hammond sings for the planet

Watch this video about Marie-Lynn Hammond and her musical support to save the planet. We will learn the song once the recording is completed and sing our hearts out at demonstrations.

In the news

The Sierra Club Canada picked up the story of the release of the adaptation reports written for the Ontario government. The release was provoked by the dogged diligence of SCAN! members.

In the Lindsay Advocate:

Seniors for Climate Action Now! – Kawartha (SCAN) delivered a letter to Lindsay's mayor and council, urging the municipality to instead ask the OEB to make the best decision in light of the necessary energy transition.

SCAN! Pension Divestment Working Group Update

The PDWG thanks SCAN! members and supporters who took part in the December Canada Pension Plan postcard mailing campaign. Almost all the cards have been distributed.

Don't forget to mail the cards that you have. Now is a good time to send off those cards to CPPIB. Since Canadians of all ages have an investment in the Canada Pension Plan, CPPIB will be receiving cards from all ages. The PDWG encourages you to remind recipients to put their home address or municipality on the card.

Thank you for your efforts. We are working to send photos of people mailing the post cards to: scandivestment@gmail.com

For questions or to order more postcards, email Magdalene at: magdalene.winterhoff@bell.net

SCAN!'s website

There have been many additions to the website in the past month, including a Glossary which you can find here. The intent is to serve as a quick vocabulary reference when talking with people about climate issues.

We also drafted a carbon tax one-pager. You can use this as a handout or a crib sheet.

Advocacy

Please sign on. The message in a nutshell:

The government wants to reverse the Ontario Energy Board's (OEB) decision to phase out fossil gas and is extending gas service to new residential developments. Continuing to subsidize more fossil gas use in the midst of a climate crisis is simply "lunacy".

Our regional groups are going strong

Kingston

Kingston SCAN! continues to meet monthly. They formalized their structure and set up three standing committees: municipal work, outreach and education, and provincial work. They hosted a SCAN! information table at the 2024 Climate Change Symposium, put on by Sustainable Kingston.

Their recent municipal work has focused on working with the Kingston Climate Emergency Coalition to pressure the city of to raise GHG emissions reduction goals to a 50% reduction by 2030, in line with the 2023 IPCC recommendation for developed countries.

Kingston declared a climate emergency in 2019, but progress has stalled. In its 2021 'Climate Leadership plan' they committed to a 15% reduction in GHG emissions by 2023 and to 30% reduction by 2030. But they failed to meet its 2022 GHG target and is not on track to meet the 2030 target. The city is now considering changing its 2030 GHG target in 2022, to consider raising the GHG emissions reduction goal to 40-50% by 2030. Unfortunately, a report to council in January called for a further delay.

Seniors for Climate Action Now! and 350 Kingston wrote an Open Letter to city council, signed by 178 people and 12 organizations and sent it to city council and the mayor. The letter called for the city to increase its 2030 GHG target for emissions reductions by 2030. It urged the city to continue to pressure the Provincial government on climate policy and to uphold the OEB decision on Enbridge. It also called on the city to enlist, support and fund citizen action to address the climate crisis.

They drafted a motion to council, calling for a 50% reduction by 2030. They met with councillors and their staff members, to talk with them about the climate emergency and to urge them to take the motion forward. They mobilized supporters to call and email their councillors and to come to the upcoming council meeting.

40 people filled the council chambers that day, wearing masks with the words: "Later is too Late". Five people spoke as delegates to council.

Unfortunately, council voted to wait until 2025 to consider more aggressive greenhouse gas emissions goals. But they feel they have made progress. City council was put on notice and engaged in a serious discussion.

Moreover, the coalition they have built over the past year remains strong. They have a dedicated group of folks in action and enthusiastic to continue the pressure on the city. They were on the front page of the Kingston Whig Standard (see photo). The media reports alerted residents to come to the public gallery the city's budget to build a 'promenade' out into the harbour. Many residents spoke out and stood alone in the water in the midst of a climate emergency.

Kawartha Lakes

They have held some meetings with municipal councillors keeping in mind how to move forward with the Healthy Environment Plan. They are also keeping an eye on the active transportation action plan.

Also see Moya Beall's article in the Lindsay Standard above.

Cobourg

Their take on municipal plans for the coming period: all talk and no action.

Toronto

The budget committee group analyzed the municipal budget which dropped January 10. Working with the Toronto Climate Action Network (TCAN) they attended workshops to prepare for individual deputations, as well as writing a collaborative deputation. They had 10 people present to the Budget Committee. These efforts resulted in getting climate on the Toronto Council table.

The Toronto Star reported that climate was in the top five issues raised by deputants.

Number 5: Climate change

During the budget committee's review and cross-examination of city agencies last week, it was clear Toronto is not on track to meet its goals to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

Emmay Mah, executive director of the Toronto Environmental Alliance, said climate strategy "cannot be treated as a special project the city can sweep up with piecemeal funding."

Given the tragedies of the B.C. heat dome in 2021, Mah said the city cannot let that happen in Toronto.

Sara Udow, a new mother, said she's terrified of climate change's effect on her kids' future. While Udow said she makes environmentally conscious choices, she urged the city, and other governments, to budget for all our futures.

Our allies deputed, as did we, as well as sending in individual deputations.

Here is SCAN! Toronto's official deputation

Toronto East

SCAN! Toronto is very active with the Toronto East End Residents for Renewable Energy (TERRE) to address the Portlands gas plant capacity expansion. Other players are Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) and Ecojustice Alliance (ECJA). SCAN! Toronto signed on to a letter giving our rebuttal to Ākuna Power's draft plan to expand the gas plant (see above). SCAN! was one of 18 group signatories.

Individual SCAN! members also contributed to the 133 letters submitted using the TERRE writing tool in response to Ākuna's draft environmental screening report.

The Portlands gas plant is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Toronto according to Environmental Defence and the largest emitter of nitrogen oxides in Toronto.

While Ākuna does not propose to expand the physical facility, they do propose a significant capacity expansion.

SCAN! members will be kept informed of follow-up to the provincial and federal petitions signed by participants at the rally held in November 2023 – and future rallies to increase community awareness of the health and environmental harms resulting from the Portlands plant.

Ottawa

They are working with For Our Kids on Find Fossil Fuel Funders.

They also planned two more Climate Conversations, with two more members getting training and another three getting social media training.

A Climate Legacy Round Table took place in January with two SCAN! members attending. The focus is a project to involve seniors in cross-Canada climate action.

London

They held a Climate Conversation with twelve people at the Kiwanis Seniors' Centre. Eleven seniors and the Men's Group Leader attended. There was a eighty-minute conversation included SCAN!'s call for action and a presentation of some of the good climate news in Ontario, Canada, and around the world.

There will be a Climate Conversation with a mixed seniors' group in March, with about 18 people expected.

There are also plans for a SCAN! table at a 50+ Centre's Health and Active Living Fair, where they will promote SCAN! and encourage people to join SCAN! London. Last year's event attracted over 200 seniors.

Barrie

A small group met in November with Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Andrea Khanjin, who is an MPP in Barrie. They wanted to discuss Ontario's increasing use of gas-fired power plants and nuclear expansion to deal with the growing need to expand Ontario's electricity grid.

Their presentation to Ms. Khanjin focused on why an increase in solar, wind and hydro would be a smarter and cheaper approach. They also urged her to support energy grid, as well as a climate forward one, since it would be reducing our reliance on fossil fuels to provide electricity. She did listen to the rationale - but that was about all.

Although she agreed that climate change was an urgent and pressing problem, she argued that her government is much more concerned about affordability, and renewable energy is not important in their plan. She did not seem to like the suggestion that her government had basically been lotting the province's future to the oil and gas sector. She did not like the suggestion that a climate forward plan would be a way of increasing renewable energy was their push to take action on climate. She did not like the suggestion that they should try to coincide with the Global Action to Stop Fossil Fuels.

They have been approaching local councillors - and did meet with one - to discuss Barrie's Climate Emergency declaration. They have been trying to get more action as a result of this declaration. "Inspiring Climate Action in Barrie". This is an excellent document outlining a thorough plan to address climate change. The declaration was actually followed two closely since 2021. SCAN! Barrie asked to be given a summary of where the plan stands now regarding meeting targets on emissions reductions as well as all other targets laid out in the plan. As a result, City staff will make a presentation to Barrie council sometime in March.

In May, they will join forces with the group, Stop The 413 Highway.

Facebook and Twitter (X)

Because of restrictions imposed by Facebook on publishing Canadian news, we are publishing the main issues of articles and referring people to the source material and then encouraging them to SCAN! via the link. We encourage you to follow @Seniors_CAN on Twitter.

Readers of this newsletter who are not yet members are welcome to join as members any time. Go to the web site and click on 'Become a member'.
Questions? email us: info@seniorsforclimateactionnow.org