

Consultation on the future of natural gas expansion and home heating affordability

ERO (Environmental Registry of Ontario) number	019-7506
Notice type	Bulletin
Posted by	Ministry of Energy
Bulletin posted	August 17, 2023
Last updated	August 25, 2023

This notice is for informational purposes only. There is no requirement to consult on this initiative on the Environmental Registry of Ontario. Learn more about the [types of notices \(/page/glossary#section-4\)](/page/glossary#section-4) on the registry.

Please note that the duration of this consultation has been extended to provide more time for municipalities to respond. The new deadline for all stakeholders to submit their responses and supplementary information to the contact provided in this notice is December 15, 2023.

Bulletin summary

We want to hear from all stakeholders on how best to support rural, northern and Indigenous communities on options to reduce heating costs.

Why consultation isn't required

The Ministry of Energy is seeking input from the public through this voluntary Information Notice on the future of Ontario Natural Gas Expansion Program (NGEP). The feedback collected through this notice will be used to inform the government's next steps to tackle higher than average home heating costs in rural and northern Ontario and Indigenous communities. The ministry is not contemplating any changes to the existing Phases 1 and 2 of NGEP (Natural Gas Expansion Program), which have committed funding to support the construction of a defined set of natural gas expansion projects up to 2026.

Bulletin details

What is Natural Gas Expansion Program?

Ontario launched its first program to help expand natural gas into communities that were underserved, through the Natural Gas Access Loan and the Natural Gas Economic Development Grant in 2015. This policy was continued in 2019 when the government launched the Natural Gas Expansion Program (NGEP) because we recognize the difficulty faced by many rural, northern and Indigenous communities in affording the up-front costs to extend the critical infrastructure to their communities on their own. Expanding natural gas can make life more affordable for families and businesses in these communities. It could also make local communities more attractive to job creation and investment.

NGEP (Natural Gas Expansion Program) enables funds to allow natural gas distribution system expansion where it would not otherwise occur without government support. For these projects, the cost of building the infrastructure exceeds the projected revenue that will be generated from customers using that infrastructure.

NGEP (Natural Gas Expansion Program) fills the funding gap to make these projects possible. This funding comes from a \$1/month charge on natural gas bills of existing customers, which was authorized by the Legislature through amendments to the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* and *O. Reg. 24/19* (Expansion of Natural Gas Distribution Systems) under that Act.

Through Phases 1 and 2 of Ontario's NGEP (Natural Gas Expansion Program), more than 17,000 families and businesses from 59 communities will be given the choice to switch to natural gas. The construction of some expansion

projects has been completed, while others are in different stages of planning, design and regulatory approvals processes.

Why do we want to hear from you?

The Ontario government is committed to continue supporting rural, northern and Indigenous communities in Ontario. Our goal is to enable affordable heating and energy options for these communities. In doing so, we recognize that energy needs and preferences of each community are unique, and that heating technologies continue to evolve. We are therefore looking to hear from all stakeholders and get up-to-date information on the best opportunities to support the energy needs of homes and businesses today and into the future. We will then use this input to make decisions on how best to continue these efforts beyond the existing phases of NGEP (Natural Gas Expansion Program).

To facilitate this consultation, the Ministry of Energy has drafted a discussion paper that can be accessed under the “Supporting Materials” heading below. All stakeholders seeking to provide feedback on the future of NGEP (Natural Gas Expansion Program) are invited to review this discussion paper and answer the discussion questions outlined within.

Feedback

We welcome information and feedback from you on the themes in the discussion paper and any other related topics.

The information we receive will help us develop the most effective approach to continue supporting rural, northern and Indigenous communities to reduce their heating costs.

Responses and supplementary information should be submitted to the contact provided in this notice by no later than 5 p.m. on December 15, 2023.

Related files

[“Future of Natural Gas Expansion and Home Heating Affordability” - Discussion paper \(https://prod-environmental-registry.s3.amazonaws.com/2023-08/Future of Natural Gas](https://prod-environmental-registry.s3.amazonaws.com/2023-08/Future of Natural Gas Affordability)

Supporting
materials

[Expansion Final pdf 0.pdf](#)

pdf.(Portable Document Format file) 273.52 KB

Related links

[O. Reg 24/19 \(https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/190024\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/190024)

[O. Reg 451/21 \(https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r21451\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r21451)

[Natural Gas Expansion Program \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/natural-gas-expansion-program\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/natural-gas-expansion-program)

[News Release: Ontario Expands Access to Natural Gas in Rural, Northern and Indi...](#)

[\(https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000298/ontario-expands-access-to-natural-gas-in-rural-northern-and-indigenous-communities\)](https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000298/ontario-expands-access-to-natural-gas-in-rural-northern-and-indigenous-communities)

[ERO posting on Electricity Energy Efficiency Programming Post 2024](#)
 [\(https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-7401\)](https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-7401)

Related ERO (Environmental Registry of Ontario) notices

[Electricity Energy Efficiency Programming Post 2024 \(/notice/019-7401\)](/notice/019-7401)

View materials in person

Some supporting materials may not be available online. If this is the case, you can request to view the materials in person.

Get in touch with the office listed below to find out if materials are available.

Connect with
US

Contact

Ahmet Erdem

 Ahmet.Erdem@ontario.ca

