To: The Mayor and Councilors of the City of Hamilton

Re: Motion by Councilor B. Clark Concerning a Moratorium on the Construction of any New Power Plants within the Municipal Boundaries of the City of Hamilton

I write in opposition to this motion by Councilor Brad Clark. While his motivation in putting forth this motion appears to be concern for the environment, adopting the motion may well have the opposite effect. The Nanticoke Generating Station currently generates up to 4,000 MW of electricity, which is about 15% of Ontario's entire supply and provides a great deal of wealth for the local economy, with 600 jobs in the energy industry. Due to the Ontario government's decision to phase out coal power plants, the Nanticoke Generating Station may eventually have to be replaced with some form of base-load electrical power generation and the logical place to locate this replacement is near the current station, since the electricity transmission infrastructure is already in place. If nuclear power is omitted as one of the options, this leaves only natural gas as a replacement base-load solution. While burning natural gas is cleaner than burning coal:

- it will still produce about 15 million tonnes annually of greenhouse gases (more than 2% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions),
- electricity production costs will be higher and very unpredictable because of the variability in the price of natural gas,
- and hundreds of local jobs will be lost, since gas-fired stations do not require many people to operate them.

A nuclear power plant, by contrast, would emit:

- zero tonnes of greenhouse gases and
- would provide safe and secure jobs for more people than are currently employed at the Nanticoke station.

The motion set forth by councilor Clark contains many misleading statements that seem to be copied directly from pages of several anti-nuclear web sites, which are known to publish unfounded Armageddonist factoids. For example, the reported number of cancer incidents and likely deaths from the Chernobyl accident in the (then) Soviet Union is over 20 times higher than that reported in a United Nations study that was led by a respected independent body, the World Health Organization. Greenpeace has never offered any credible scientific basis for its exaggerated claims. It is also worth noting that the Soviet designed reactor at Chernobyl could not have been licensed outside the former USSR - it was an unforgiving design with serious known flaws. Amongst other things it had no containment structure like all CANDUs have. The motion neglects to mention that there has not been a single fatality within Canada as a result of radiation from nuclear reactors in over 50 years of operation, making it the safest industry to work in and the safest industry to live near. Indeed, McMaster University has safely operated a nuclear research reactor in the middle of the city of Hamilton for 48 years and continues to do so with no harm to the environment. Its Nuclear Engineering School is one of
the finest in North America and a nuclear plant near the Nanticoke site would give its graduates the opportunity to live and work locally.

Germany and Belgium are identified as examples for Ontario to emulate, because they voted to phase out nuclear energy in favour of so-called “green energy” options, largely wind power. However, Germany plans to replace the nuclear units with coal and gas-fired stations, which will only increase greenhouse gas emissions. To date they have not been able to shut down any fossil fired stations, because doing so would risk job losses in industry. It is also worth noting that countries such as France and Sweden have amongst the lowest per-capita greenhouse gas emissions in the industrialized world (more than 40% less than Germany) largely because they rely on Nuclear Power (80% in France and 50% in Sweden) for much of their electricity generation. They also have amongst the lowest electricity rates in Europe. In the early 1980s, Swedes voted by referendum to phase out nuclear power plants by 2010. However, the most recent polls show that over 80% of Swedes now favour maintaining or increasing nuclear power in their country, and for obvious reasons. If we are looking for successful countries on which to model real greenhouse gas reduction solutions, we suggest that countries like France and Sweden would be better examples for Ontario.

Many of us design, build and maintain Canadian nuclear power reactors. We do so because we care for the environment. We want clean air and we are concerned about global warming and its potential impact on our and future generations. This is why we work in the nuclear industry. Before you cast your vote on this proposed motion we encourage you to get informed and make a decision based on the facts - not based on fear and misinformation.

Yours truly,

E. Clarke Miller