Kevin C. Christenson, City Clerk

January 11, 2008

77 James Street North, Suite 220
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8R 2K3

To the Mayor and Members of Council
City of Hamilton

Dear Mayor Eisenberger & Members of City Council:

Hamiltonians for Progressive Development is deeply concerned about the very long and ongoing delay of the city in following up on the dramatic and serious implications of peak oil and an energy constrained future for Hamilton and surrounding communities. This issue was first raised with the then Mayor and Council in early June 2005 by Jack Santa-Barbara and HPD. Later that month, council agreed to commission a report on this very important issue and Richard Gilbert was subsequently contracted to produce that report.

In late April 2006, Dr. Gilbert presented his very extensive report “Hamilton: The Electric City” to Committee of the Whole and the public. This very detailed report explained the likelihood of steeply rising fossil fuel prices and predicted that gasoline prices stand a good chance of quadrupling by 2018. He suggested that the city adopt an “energy first” approach in all its planning.

Mr Gilbert specifically recommended to council that it should commission a more thorough follow-up report. Committee of the Whole responded by asking “that staff consider a Terms of Reference and cost analysis for a follow-up report and report back at the G.R.I.D.S. Committee of the Whole meeting.”

That GRIDS meeting took place three weeks later, but the staff report was not presented, and the instruction from council seems to have gotten lost. Consequently, Committee of the Whole again made the request at its February 12, 2007 meeting.

The request has been on the Committee of the Whole agenda since that time. In the interim, the world price of oil has recently peaked to over $100 a barrel and the concept of “peak oil” has become much more mainstream, drawing commentary in the Hamilton Spectator, the Wall Street Journal and many other publications.
In light of city initiatives regarding public transit and plans to move ahead with the proposed AEGD which is anchored by an entity so heavily dependant on fossil fuels, we believe it is imperative that further study be conducted and HPD urges you to quickly take action on this very important issue.

For a period of time, Hamilton was a Canadian leader in examining the threat posed by peak oil. The city needs to re-establish that leadership.

Respectfully,

Michael Desnoyers
Chair
Hamiltonians for Progressive Development

Cc
Mayor Fred Eisenberger

Councilors McHattie, Bratina, Morelli, Merulla, Collins, Jackson, Duvall, Whitehead, Clark, Pearson, Mitchell, Ferguson, Powers, Pasuta and McCarthy

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