



## MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTREACH COORDINATOR WATCHING OUR 'WASTE' LINES AS WE GREEN OUR HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS

While we all fret about our waistlines around holiday time, we need to also watch our 'waste' lines. As we prepare for, attend and host seasonal activities, let's keep the planet in mind.

When packing gifts, try some of these green wrapping ideas:

- Reuse items such as hair bows, ornaments, shoe laces or toys
- Stencil or paste pictures from holiday cards on to plain brown paper bags or boxes
- Cut up last year's holiday cards for gift tags
- Use old neckties and scarves rather than purchasing ribbon
- Opt for reusable bags instead of wrapping paper
- When mailing, use biodegradable starch packing peanuts or packing peanuts from previous gifts (unwanted peanuts, if they are clean, are accepted by many shipping stores for reuse) or use crumpled glossy newspaper. (The ink on glossy paper won't smear)

Decorating the house/table doesn't have to mean buying new ornaments. Try some of these:

- Scrap fabric, lace, yarn, rickrack and fringe
- Edible cookie ornaments: use gingerbread or sugar cookie dough; poke a hole at the top using a drinking straw; decorate and bake; thread a ribbon through hole; tie ribbon in a large loop and hang on bough of tree
- Popcorn and cranberry garlands (can be put outside for the birds after the holidays).
- Spices from the kitchen instead of commercially prepared and packaged products or aerosols (for example, stud oranges with whole cloves to create decorations that look and smell good)

These suggestions can really reduce the amount you have to throw away after a party:

- Use reusable tableware; if you don't have enough, borrow from friends or family
- Rent dishes, napkins, cups, tablecloths and glasses instead of using disposable
- Cut up last year's holiday cards and use as place cards
- Place easily identifiable recycling containers at your celebration so guests can recycle their pop cans, bottles, etc.
- Mention the ways your party demonstrates waste reduction and recycling, and SPREAD THE WORD

The above are easy ways for children to learn about conserving while participating in festive family activities. And don't forget when thinking of gifts, to make them "Stuff-less" so that you can continue not just to SHOP but to LIVE Like the Planet's Watching.

**Best holiday wishes,  
Fiona Wood**

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## ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION FUNDS YREA'S INDUSTRIAL HEMP PROJECT

The York Region Environmental Alliance gratefully acknowledges one year funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation so we may initiate research to launch industrial hemp agriculture in the Northern six municipalities of York Region.



*The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario*

The goal of our ambitious, three-year and long range strategy is to establish industrial hemp farming, processing and local, end product fabrication and assembly, thereby securing enduring economic health of York Region communities. We also wish to enhance the long-term sustainability of YREA by seeking partners to participate in a joint venture, social enterprise industrial hemp demonstration farm which would employ local youth and be open to the public.



Our initial focus will be on hemp flour, hemp stalk usage and bio-fuel. We will seek out marginal wastelands so that unlike corn, hemp grown for fuel would potentially not need to displace food land. Not only could farmers utilize the fuel, but so could York Region maintenance vehicles and buses. The possibilities are endless.



## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A SANER SIMCOE

By John Stillich, Executive Director, SUDA

The Sustainable Urban Development Association (SUDA) has expressed its concern about Amendment #1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). The amendment focuses on how an additional 240,000 residents and jobs are to be accommodated in Simcoe County over the next 20 years.

For most of the rural townships in Simcoe, the amendment sets targets for growth - in existing built-up areas and densities for the suburbanization of rural lands - that are much lower than those set for the Regional Municipalities of Halton, Peel, York and Durham in the Greater Toronto Area. Both of these sets of targets are being reviewed as part of the amendment process.



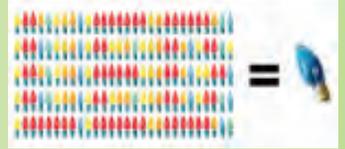
*Sprawl eats up food land*

SUDA has put forward a number of considerations and recommendations:

- Decisions made on growth today will have permanent effects on people, and therefore must respect the risks and the conditions of the 21st century that are likely to be faced, including significant probabilities of energy shortages for transportation and other uses, environmental instability, and food security risks.
- Agricultural lands in the Golden Horseshoe, in Simcoe County and elsewhere, should be protected as a strategic reserve against potential long term threats to the food supplies of the region's 9,000,000 people – threats which will include global and regional population pressures, climate destabilization, the energy costs of importing foods, and energy costs of production.
- For rural townships, only 20% of new residential units, and no new jobs, are required to be accommodated in existing built-up areas (intensification). SUDA suggests that this blanket percentage does not reflect the potential that exists, and that intensification that is designed well can not only create highly pleasant environments, but provide a better mix of housing choices and access to daily services that is more convenient.
- For most local areas in Simcoe, the Amendment proposes that greenfield development (urban development that is currently- agricultural and rural land) be at 32 residents and jobs per gross hectare. This is far too low to be considered sustainable development, and will not support basic efficiencies in energy, public services, water, and land preservation.

- The housing mix in Simcoe, firmly dominated by single detached homes, needs to catch up with changing demographics and lifestyles. People who are elderly, young single people or couples just starting out on their own, working families of lower income, and people who are not able or wanting to maintain residential properties, would benefit from compact housing forms in pleasant walkable environments.
- An alternative to scattering growth across the County, a few highly-efficient and family-friendly new towns can be created that demonstrate sustainability and are adjacent to planned employment centres. SUDA suggests using adaptations of older European towns where housing is varied yet compact, and where virtually all daily needs can be accessed by walking. An example of very compact greenfield development is SUDA's Newburg model, which includes 135 residents and jobs per gross square kilometre in a very pleasant manner. This density – more than twice as high as the provincial minimum target for the GTA – is applicable in any area of the GGH. (Newburg can be accessed at <http://www.suda.ca/newburgx.html>).
- Higher density would preserve larger areas of intact agricultural lands which could be safeguarded in perpetuity through farmland trust conservation easements, benefiting farmers with charitable tax receipts based on per acre value.

Contact John Stillich for further discussions regarding sustainable development at 416-400-0553 or via [mail@suda.ca](mailto:mail@suda.ca).



## Brighten your holidays with energy efficient seasonal lighting

Holiday lighting can be used to create a wide range of effects and advances in technology over the past few years have dramatically improved the latest available selections. Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights offer many advantages over the traditional incandescent lights, including:

- Energy savings up to 80%
- Lifespan up to 20 times longer
- Cool to the touch and increased durability
- Ability to connect more strands together on one outlet or extension cord



*Example of seasonal solar lights*



*Example of seasonal LED lighting display*

New lighting examples include colour changing LED lights and strands that illuminate in different directions or patterns for an amazing light show. These LED lights are available in icicle style, mini-white, mini-coloured and icicle style-coloured varieties and can be set as steady on or flashing.

Solar lights are another new entry for holiday outdoor lighting. They turn on automatically at dusk and charge during the day, even in cloudy conditions.

Automatic light timers should be used to turn lights on and off at specific times of the day.

## HEATING AND COOLING INCENTIVE

Winter has arrived and heating season is upon us. Did you know there is an incentive available for replacing your old central heating system?

- With the saveONenergy HEATING & COOLING INCENTIVE you can receive up to \$650 when replacing your old central heating & cooling systems
- Plus, once your installation is complete you can save up to \$325 a year on energy costs
- Up to 60% of your yearly electricity costs can go towards heating & cooling your home

**To learn more about this program visit our website at [www.powerstream.ca/conservation](http://www.powerstream.ca/conservation)**

PowerStream extends their best wishes to all YREA family and friends for a safe and happy holiday season!



# GREENWORKS



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## ONTARIO CLEAN AIR ALLIANCE presents A SIX POINT PLAN TO LOWER ENERGY BILLS AND CREATE A STRONG ECONOMY

### **1. Put our money-losing coal plants on standby reserve and only operate them if they are absolutely needed to keep the lights on.**

Since January 2009 the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation (an agency of the Government of Ontario) has paid Ontario Power Generation \$865 million to compensate it for the operating losses of its coal plants. Ontario's coal-free generation capacity now exceeds our forecast peak demand in the summer of 2012 by 29%. Coal plants have provided less than 3% of Ontario's electricity in the last nine months.

### **2. Direct the Ontario Energy Board and the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to eliminate their red tape and perverse financial incentives that are limiting the ability – and motivation – for our electric and gas utilities to promote energy conservation and efficiency.**

Utility-driven home energy retrofit financial incentives, equipment rental programs and on-bill financing can reduce consumers' bills and create jobs at no cost to Ontario's taxpayers. Utilities are the most trusted source of energy advice for consumers, but are hamstrung by OEB rules that severely limit their activities. To meet Ontario's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, we must give utilities greater flexibility and stronger incentives to deliver efficiency assistance to consumers and businesses.

### **3. Direct the OPA to pay large commercial and industrial customers up to the same price to save energy as they pay electricity generating companies to produce electricity.**

Currently, the OPA's payments for saving electricity are 76-94% less than the cost of electricity from new nuclear units. We must stop underpaying for efficiency and overpaying for nuclear.

### **4. Direct the OPA to negotiate a long-term contract with Hydro Quebec for low-cost water power imports.**

In 2010 Vermont signed a 26 year deal with Hydro Quebec to import water power for 5.8 cents per kWh. Quebec hydro is an excellent fit for Ontario's summer peaking demand and a flexible and clean source of back-up power for intermittent sources like wind.

### **5. Mandate that all new natural gas-fired electricity supply must be combined heat and power (CHP) to squeeze every drop of energy out of the natural gas we use.**

CHP plants use the same molecules of natural gas to simultaneously produce heat and electricity. As a result they can have energy efficiencies of 80-90% versus the approximately 50% efficiencies of the cancelled Oakville and Mississauga projects and the approximately 30% efficiency of the proposed Nanticoke conversion project. There are numerous small-scale CHP plants located across Ontario (e.g., University of Toronto, Pearson Airport, Kingston General Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre, Sudbury Regional Hospital, Queensway-Carleton Hospital). These distributed systems also reduce pressure on the electricity grid and can supply emergency power to critical facilities. In the face of climate change, we can no longer justify wasting half the energy in the natural gas we consume in large gas plants.

### **6. Require Ontario Power Generation to obtain all-in fixed price contracts from a third party (e.g., Candu Energy Inc., Areva, General Electric) to extend the service life of its Pickering Nuclear Station and re-build its Darlington Nuclear Station.**

Ontario's nuclear industry has a tradition of low balling its cost estimates for nuclear projects in order to obtain political approval to proceed. However, every nuclear project in the province's history has gone massively over budget – on average by 2.5 times. The cost overruns are passed on to Ontario's electricity consumers and taxpayers. It is time to protect consumers and taxpayers from future nuclear bailouts by requiring "all-in fixed price" contracts that are already the norm for all other types of generation.

**For more information, please download the following reports from [www.CleanAirAlliance.org](http://www.CleanAirAlliance.org):**

1. Finishing the coal phase out: An historic opportunity for climate leadership;
2. An Energy Efficiency Strategy For Ontario's Homes, Buildings and Industries;
3. The Darlington Re-Build Consumer Protection Plan;
4. Higher Profits and Lower Bills: A New Electricity Strategy for Hydro Quebec.



# GREENWORKS



## BECOME A YREA MEMBER/SUPPORTER

An annual membership to the York Region Environmental Alliance is \$20. By contributing to YREA with a membership or a larger donation, your vital support will help us achieve our goals.



If you prefer, enclose this form with your donation and mail to: YREA, 225 Lakeland Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON L4E 3A5

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Please note the amount of your donation enclosed:

Guardian \$2000 & up	<input type="checkbox"/>	Protector \$1000-\$1999	<input type="checkbox"/>
Custodian \$500-\$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steward \$200-\$499	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeper \$100-\$199	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friend \$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please note: YREA does not exchange the personal information of our members/supporters with other organizations or groups.  
Registered charity - #84559 0553 RR0001

## YREA THANKS THESE KIND DONORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

Together, we can work wonders!

PROTECTOR – Marilyn Isaac- Stewart, Anonymous

STEWARD – Diana Bennett & Spencer Lanthier, Diane Keating, Susan Sigrist

KEEPER – Justin Keating & Angela Marsh, Joyce McClelland

FRIEND – Sharon & Jim Bradley, Stephen Cockle, Susan Sheard, Sue Sherban

## THANK YOU THIS TIME AROUND TO THESE VALUED YREA VOLUNTEERS

Stephen Cockle

Sheila Cording

Patty Ella

Donna Hu

Anita Komorowski

Sara Mathew

Rudra Ramdial

Melloney Syrotiuk





## BISPHENOL A (BPA) IN RECYCLED PAPER

By Rudra Ramdial, YREA Volunteer

When we think of BPA, we associate it with plastics, baby bottles, and switching to BPA free options, but did you know that recycled paper contains BPA as well?

This is due to the recycling of thermal paper, such as cash register receipts, prescriptions, airline and lottery tickets, which use BPA as a colour developer. BPA has been found in recycled toilet paper, paper towels, pizza boxes, cartons and corrugated boxes. The BPA levels in some recycled paper products are sometimes in higher amounts than non-recycled paper, plastics and cans.

Although retailers have been switching to non-BPA paper, 40% of receipts collected for a study by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) <http://www.ewg.org/> contained BPA which is easily released, absorbed on contact, and transferred onto currency notes through handling. BPA can also pass onto fingers, then to food, and ingested, and can also be absorbed by the skin to a depth where it cannot be washed off.

How can you tell whether paper (recycled or new) contains BPA? The EWG recommends rubbing paper with a coin to find out if it has been thermally treated. Thermally treated paper discolours with friction.



The Environmental Working Group suggest the following to minimize exposure to BPA:

- Minimize receipt collection by declining receipts at gas pumps, ATMs and other machines when possible. Choose paperless billing. Do not print emails and other forms that can be submitted online. Take advantage of store services that email or archive paperless purchase records.
  - Store receipts separately in an envelope in a wallet or purse.
  - Never give a child a receipt to hold, put in its mouth or play with.
  - After handling a receipt, wash hands, especially before preparing and eating food.
  - Do not use alcohol-based hand cleaners after handling receipts. A recent study showed that these products can increase the skin's BPA absorption. (Biedermann 2010).
  - Do not recycle receipts and other thermal paper. BPA residues from receipts will contaminate recycled paper. If you are unsure, check whether paper is thermally treated by rubbing it with a coin.
  - Recently, the largest manufacturer of thermal paper has made it easier to see when the paper is BPA-free by adding small red fibres in the paper.
  - Reduce consumption of all paper products whenever possible.
  - Use and bring your own food and drink containers when going to restaurants, getting take-out, or for use when out and about.
- Ask manufacturers and retailers about any recycled paper products they use so you can choose how to handle them (or not).
  - Contact local recycling programs and legislators about removing BPA-tainted thermal paper from the paper recycling process.

*Editor's Note – BPA is an endocrine disruptor and may contribute to many negative health effects. Early development appears to be a period of greatest sensitivity and some studies link prenatal exposure to later neurological difficulties. In 2010 Canada became the first country to declare BPA a toxic substance.*



## GROWING HEALTHIER NEIGHBOURHOODS THROUGH COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL GARDENS

*By Lynne Koss, Project Manager, Seeds for Change*

Seeds For Change is a grass-roots organization which sprouted in 2010. We have realized two community gardens within York Region. It has been a remarkably fruitful year for our team, as within these garden projects, we have fed and taught participants to eat more nutritious, organically-grown food, be more physically active, reconnect to nature and become responsible environmental stewards.

Due to the tenacity and commitment of our dedicated volunteers, partners and local businesses we have:

- Donated over 170 lbs. of vegetables to participants and community members in need.
- Provided workshops at the condominium and firehall gardens about growing seedlings, the 'Three Sisters' method of planting, square foot and container gardening, double digging, garlic planting and cooking and will close with a multicultural holiday extravaganza.
- Held weekly volunteer days with multicultural and intergenerational participants working together, tending, harvesting and cooking.
- Introduced our Chef Program with a harvesting and cooking demonstration by Executive Chef Chris Brown, followed by a food tasting.
- Created the York Region Community Gardening Network (YRCGN) launching it at our first Deepening Our Roots Symposium in April 2011.
- Developed our website: [www.seedsforchangegardens.org](http://www.seedsforchangegardens.org), created the SFC BLOG, Facebook page, newsletter and have Twitter and LinkedIn followers.
- Met with various School Boards to implement our first school garden, two synagogues for potential gardens, one interfaith garden with the Mosaic Group, Heart & Stroke Foundation, York Region Food Network, Healthyork and United Way to create a Food Charter and School and Community Garden Policies in York Region.
- Hosted the first of a series of Garden Hops showcasing 3 gardens in Thornhill/Richmond Hill. The second Garden Hop is scheduled for July 28th, 2012 in Markham.
- Garnered support of key stakeholders including Markham, Vaughan, local and regional Councillors.
- Lynne Koss, Seeds For Change Founder, has been appointed to the Markham Agricultural Advisory Committee by Markham's Mayor Frank Scarpitti.
- Worked with the Carrville Community Garden, Kavanah, Foodshare, Master Gardeners of Ontario and the Backyard Urban Farm Company.
- Hired a part-time Garden Coordinator and trained a student intern.



Through collaboration, cooperation and a highly skilled, enthusiastic group of staff and volunteers, we plan to add an additional three gardens and plan to coordinate two community kitchen projects in 2012.

*We would like to thank: Earth Day Canada/Sobeys, Town of Markham, City of Vaughan, Carrot Cache, Heart & Stroke Foundation, Longo's, TD Friends of the Environment, Shell Environmental Fund and Home Depot for their financial support. In-kind donations from: Enviro World, Sears, Sheridan Nurseries, Garden Import, Cowpots, Loblaws, No Frills, Michaelangelo's and Bernardin. We couldn't have done it without your support!*