

Caledon selected for Phase 2 of Natural Gas Expansion program

By Rob Paul

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones recently announced that approximately 100 homes and businesses in Caledon, in the area of Humber Station Road, will be able to connect to natural gas for the first time thanks to the province's Natural Gas Expansion Program.

Under Phase 2 of the program, Ontario will allocate \$5,048,975 to support new connections to the natural gas distribution system and help make life more affordable in Dufferin-Caledon.

"Our government is making good on its promise to deliver affordable energy and expand natural gas pipelines to more communities," said Jones. "Access to natural gas will help more families and businesses find energy savings, while promoting economic development and job creation across Dufferin-Caledon."

In Ontario, 3.6 million homes and 160,000 businesses use natural gas, and the province is expanding its reach because it's more affordable than other sources like electricity, oil, and propane. The program encourages communities like Caledon to partner with gas distributors on expansion projects that wouldn't be built without additional financial support.

"This announcement is welcome news for residents in this part of Caledon," said Mayor Allan Thompson. "We have long advocated for investments in rural infrastructure such as natural gas expansion and I am happy to see that once again this provincial government is listening and taking action."

The Ontario government is expanding access to natural gas across the province to help keep the cost of energy low for families, businesses and farmers. Phase 2 of the Natural Gas Expansion Program will allocate more than \$234 million to support approximately 8750 connections in 43 rural, northern and Indigenous communities.

"As part of our government's plan to make life more affordable, we prioritized broad distribution across Ontario to help as many homes and businesses keep the cost of energy low, support jobs and attract new investment," said Bill Walker, Associate Minister of Energy. "With Phase 2 of the Natural Gas Expansion program, we're putting people first and ensuring Ontario remains open for business. This will be a game-changer for these 43 communities."

The average household could save between \$250 to \$1,500 per year in energy costs by switching to natural gas from costlier fuel sources. Businesses are expected to save up to 30 per cent per year on energy costs.

"We're thrilled that through Ontario's Natural Gas Expansion Program, Enbridge Gas will bring much needed and wanted natural gas in the most affordable way to more communities across Ontario, including this one," said Cynthia Hansen, Executive Vice President & President, Gas Distribution & Storage, Enbridge Inc. "Natural gas is the most economic way to heat buildings and water, and we are excited to work with local officials and the community to move this project forward, so residents can benefit from the cost savings, and local businesses can be more competitive."

Phase 1 of the program supported the construction of six expansion projects. These projects are forecasted to connect 9,000 customers in 16 communities over the next ten years and save customers an estimated \$250 to \$1,500 per year.

Phase 2 includes funding 28 projects and the projects that were selected were prioritized because they will connect the greatest number of customers as broadly as possible across Ontario, in the most economic and feasible way. Some of the Phase 2 projects will start as early as Summer 2021, with other start dates extending to 2025.