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Energy Professionals welcome Pickering Nuclear life extension announcement

Pickering refurbishment will protect jobs, keep energy cost low and help Ontario reach net-zero goals

Toronto - The Society of United Professionals welcomes the government's announcement to pursue the refurbishment of the Pickering B Nuclear Generating Station (PNGS). PNGS, and the thousands of high-quality union jobs that the plant supports, are a vital piece of the province's economy and net-zero emissions strategy.

The Society has, for over ten years, been making the case for the lifecycle extension of the Pickering plant in order to meet Ontario's net-zero emission goals.

"Today's announcement protects good union jobs, and will help our province produce low-cost, emissions-free power as we electrify our economy into the future," said Michelle Johnston, President of the Society of United Professionals, the union for more than 9,000 Ontario professional energy sector workers. "We're glad to see the government choosing to refurbish our CANDU reactors, which support a strong, unionized, made-in-Canada supply chain."

Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) estimates that in order to meet the province's net-zero targets by 2050, Ontario will need to triple the installed capacity of nuclear power. Currently, approximately 93% of Ontario's energy output comes from nuclear, hydro, and renewables. The end of operations at the PNGS would have reduced the province's baseload energy capacity by 3,100 megawatts, a deficit that would have had to be replaced by natural gas. Demand projections show that, if the province is forced to rely on natural gas for baseload generation, Ontario's carbon emissions from electricity generation will nearly triple over the next two decades, returning to levels equivalent to when the Nanticoke coal plant was still in operation.

The Society has been pleased to see the recent announcements regarding the expansion of Ontario's nuclear fleet. With the planned expansions of the Bruce Power and Darlington nuclear sites, extending the life of the PNGS brings the province significantly closer to reaching our net-zero goals.

"In order to tackle climate change, provincially, nationally, and globally, we need to take bold action to avert catastrophic consequences. Today's announcement of the refurbishment of the PNGS is a big step in the right direction," said President Johnston.

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About the Society of United Professionals

Founded more than 70 years ago by engineers who wanted better working conditions, the Society of United Professionals now has members in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Among the organizations United Professionals' members work for are Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, Bruce Power, Independent Electricity System Operator, Legal Aid Ontario, NWMO, Toronto Hydro, Electrical Safety Authority, Ontario Energy Board, National Judicial Institute, Aboriginal Legal Services, TSSA and Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic.

The Society of United Professionals is Local 160 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, and is affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress, Ontario Federation of Labour and many local labour councils.