

## NEWS RELEASE

### Toronto Medical Officer of Health Issues Revised Opinion on Metrolinx Study

TORONTO (September 16, 2009) – Metrolinx is pleased to announce that Dr. McKeown, the Toronto Medical Officer of Health, has today revised his opinion on the Metrolinx study of the Georgetown South Service Expansion and Union-Pearson Rail Link project. This amended opinion responds to the supplementary document provided by Metrolinx to the Minister of the Environment addressing the methodology used for the Environmental Project Report. In his subsequent correspondence to Minister Gerretsen, Dr. McKeown has requested that his comments be taken into consideration in the view of additional technical information provided. The two new documents are available at [www.metrolinx.com](http://www.metrolinx.com).

Highlights from Dr. McKeown’s revised opinion to the Minister include:

- “There is no increased leukemia risk associated with the proposed project.”
- Metrolinx did not underestimate the projected increase of local air concentrations of several contaminants due to the proposed rail expansion;
- Metrolinx did not underestimate the predicted increase in acute health risks; and
- As an alternative to electrification, other mitigation measures proposed by Metrolinx may, subject to demonstration, be acceptable.

“We are pleased that Dr. McKeown has withdrawn his earlier claim that our project would increase the risk of leukemia for children and other residents. He has also acknowledged that we did not underestimate air quality impacts or health risks in our study. This confirms the scientific strength and rigour of our Environmental Project Report analysis and results,” said Rob Prichard, President and CEO of Metrolinx. “We have been working constructively and productively with Dr. McKeown and his colleagues to advance public health and we look forward to further strengthening this partnership.”

The Metrolinx team of technical experts used internationally recognized methods to show that this transit expansion can be operated safely without posing a risk to human health on most days. Metrolinx has committed to a mitigation plan to manage exceptional situations when extreme weather conditions plus high traffic volumes could combine to create bad air days. Metrolinx is also studying the electrification of its entire GO Transit rail system over the longer term.

According to a 2004 Toronto Public Health report, approximately 1,700 premature deaths each year in the GTA can be attributed to the adverse effects of air pollution. The report identifies cars and trucks as a significant source of pollutants in the region’s air. In a 2007 report, Toronto Public health found that 440 of these deaths are directly related to traffic pollution. In 2008, the entire GO network removed about 50 million vehicle trips off our roads.



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Since January 2009, Metrolinx has hosted an extensive public engagement process, with 18 Open Houses and over 20 community meetings, with almost 2,000 people in attendance. Metrolinx also hosted a 24/7 Virtual Open House, accessible throughout the entire consultation process. In response to the tremendous amount of feedback and suggestions, a number of significant amendments and refinements to the Georgetown South Service Expansion and Union-Pearson Rail Link proposal were incorporated into the final report.

On September 1, 2009, the 35 day review period began for the Minister of the Environment to consider the findings of the Environmental Project Report and make a decision on the project.

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