



Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers  
32 Seneca Road  
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OGVG.com

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## **RE: Municipal Support for Great Northern Hydroponics Energy Plant Expansion**

The Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) represent over 220 greenhouse vegetable producers accounting for more than 3,700 acres of fresh, nutritious tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers grown annually. Generating farmgate sales exceeding \$1 Billion in 2019, 2020 and 2021, the greenhouse vegetable sector is prepared to grow further at a rate of 5% per year over the next 5 years as well as significantly contribute to not only Ontario's post-pandemic economic recovery, but Canada's as well.

The implementation of innovative technologies, such as robotics, artificial intelligence applications, and highly advanced lighting systems are making greenhouse vegetable farms state-of-the-art food production facilities, aiding in Canada's development of a resilient, domestic food supply system. Employing over 18,000 individuals, we anticipate thousands more career and upskilling opportunities in the next 5 years.

Winter vegetable production is increasingly feasible due to the affordability and efficiency of lighting techniques, specifically Light Emitting Diode (LED) and High-Pressure Sodium (HPS) lighting systems. Enabling the expansion and execution of energy projects like those recently announced in Ontario, we are positioned to not only grow sustainable, nutritious, and affordable food year-round, but also participate in clean, net-zero electricity generation for the provincial grid to offset immediate and anticipated energy shortages.

The ability for greenhouse farms to be primary producers of electricity to support a constrained electrical grid is an activity well-known to the sector. Maintaining current energy contracts distributing nearly 40 Megawatts (MW) through the CHP1 and CHPSOP 2 programs, we are well-positioned to take part in the opportunity to deploy projects assisting in contributing to meeting the energy needs of Ontario and Canada. The use of CHP units provides a sustainable means of generating heat and CO<sub>2</sub> necessary for greenhouse agriculture with the added benefit of providing much needed electricity to an over-subscribed community.

The importance of on-farm electrical generation's role in supporting and supplementing critical infrastructure necessary to achieve national housing targets and growth imperatives that would assist key mandates of the federal government should also be considered. Leveraging assets that



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are under utilized and new assets that can be commissioned will strengthen regional electricity grids, allowing urban development, sectoral growth, and assist other emerging sectors to participate in Canada's leadership position of not just agriculture, but the electric automotive industry.

As it relates to the opportunity for Great Northern Hydroponics, they propose utilizing an existing combined heat and power generation facility to participate in the same technology upgrade stream procurement. Ultimately if all projects were successful, this would raise Great Northern Hydroponics energy production capacity to 37 MWs. Benefits for the Town of Kingsville would be tremendous, including but not limited to:

- Doubling our CHP asset would provide 12 MW for growing agricultural energy demand in Kingsville-Leamington area:
  - Directly supporting opportunity for ~100 acres of new greenhouse development
  - Creating grid resilience in Windsor-Essex county and facility economic growth within the region (Windsor EV-plant, bridge, Mega hospital, etc.
  - Contributing to the **creation of hundreds of permanent new jobs** in the region by 2025 and beyond
- Beyond supporting local power needs, doubling our CHP asset would allow Great Northern Hydroponics to expand our greenhouse facility by 20 acres:
  - Includes investment of \$35M, increase annual sales by \$11M
  - **Create 30 construction jobs** for 12-to-18-month development
  - **50 new permanent employment positions**
- Would further reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emission by 5,200 metric tonnes annually, totalling over 30,000 tonnes through remainder of existing contracting. With the help of CHP our greenhouse at least doubles our already negative carbon footprint.

It is vital to the success of the application, as well as the spin-off benefits, that we receive Municipal Support. For further information and discussion, please feel free to phone or email me at your convenience.

Thanks,

Aaron Coristine

Manager of Science, Government Relations, and Regulatory Affairs