




DID THE COAL PHASE-OUT REDUCE ONTARIO AIR POLLUTION

by Ross McKittrick and Elmira Aliakbari

In 2005, Ontario began phasing out its coal-fired power plants, specifically the ones in Lambton and Nanticoke in southern Ontario. This was done out of the assumed benefits that would come from improved health outcomes, estimated to be around \$3 billion. However, that analysis along with a second one done by the province reported that the coal phase-out would have limited effects on improving Ontario's air quality as electric power generation was a small contributor to air pollution at the time. Furthermore, the expected cost

savings for the health care system was based on assuming very large health effects being correlated with very small changes in air pollution. Overall, this study finds that the coal-phase out did not lead to large-scale improvements in air quality but rather small improvements in localized areas. In other areas that are considering coal phase-outs, such as Alberta, these implications need to be understood before undertaking a similar project like the one done in Ontario. 

Read the study here [»](#)

