



# Low-Income Energy Network

**For immediate release:**

**March 28, 2006**

## **Ontario Power Authority/Conservation Bureau on right track with launch of low-income conservation program**

(Toronto) The Low Income Energy Network (LIEN) welcomed the announcement by the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) of the launch of its "Low-Income Conservation and Demand Management Program". Energy Minister Donna Cansfield and Peter Love, the province's Chief Energy Conservation Officer, made the announcement today at the Energy Matters conference in Brampton.

"Low-income consumers are the most vulnerable to energy and electricity price increases, and supporting a program in the social housing sector is a good first step," said Theresa McClenaghan, counsel with the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

Low-income energy consumers face challenging barriers to participating in a conservation culture in Ontario without the type of systematic assistance that the OPA announced today. The OPA was responding to a directive from the Minister of Energy asking it to provide 100 MW of electricity savings in low-income and social housing conservation and demand management programs.

Barriers for low-income consumers include lack of access to capital to pay for building improvements and efficient appliance replacement, and lack of control over major factors affecting energy consumption in the case of low-income tenants.

"Inability to pay for energy costs is a leading cause of homelessness in Ontario. It is essential that a low-income conservation and demand management program address the real issues that Ontario low-income consumers are facing, regardless of whether they own their own homes, are tenants in social housing, or are tenants in the private rental market," stated Mary Todorow, policy analyst with the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario. "We look forward to quick development and expansion of the OPA's low-income conservation program beyond the social housing sector later this spring as promised by the Chief Conservation Officer."

LIEN will continue to monitor and participate in development of low-income energy programs assisting Ontario's vulnerable energy consumers to ensure that they are not left on the sidelines as Ontario develops a robust conservation culture.

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LIEN is a project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and supported by ACTO and Legal Aid Ontario