

Briefing: Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan

June 9, 2016

1. Introduction

Using clean and renewable electricity to power industry, as well as our cars, trucks, buses and trains, keep our food fresh and our homes warm is how we will cut the pollution causing climate change. We have an opportunity to protect families, communities and our economy from the risks of an unbalanced climate while making our lives more comfortable and our economies more sustainable. This dream of a safer and thriving world for our children and grandchildren is what Premier Kathleen Wynne said motivated Ontario to release on June 8, 2016 its new climate plan. We believe that Ontario's plan, while not perfect, is a model New Brunswick should look to as it develops its own climate plan expected to be released in fall 2016.

The world-wide transition to a 100% clean energy future is accelerating, with investment and job creation breaking [new records](#) every month. Expanding the use of solar, wind, bioenergy, hydro and technologies like geothermal will create local jobs and keep the money we do spend on energy circulating in our own economy, while generating business expertise and products that we can export. Smaller energy systems, generating the power we need in our homes, communities and businesses also makes us more resilient in the face of storms like hurricane Arthur.

Ontario's climate plan is designed to ensure the province reaches its greenhouse gas reduction target of 15 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and its 37 per cent reduction target by 2030. New Brunswick also needs a climate plan that ensures we meet our goal of 10 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 and a 35-45 percent reduction target by 2030.

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick (CCNB) has a [climate action proposal](#) for New Brunswick and like Ontario it requires the province to clean up its electricity (burn less coal now and soon no coal or oil at all) and to add more renewable energy to power electric transportation and industry. The Ontario plan includes actions that CCNB believes are important to lay the foundation for a 100% renewable energy system for New Brunswick, our region, Canada and the world. The program in Ontario will be financed using money raised from putting a price on carbon pollution just like we did in the 1980s when we added a fee to leaded gasoline so that unleaded gasoline was cheaper. Adding a price to pollution helps us all make the right choices as consumers. More expensive leaded gasoline encouraged us to switch to unleaded gasoline that kept dangerous pollution affecting brain development in children out of the air. Now we need to do the same to cut our carbon pollution.

2. Highlights of Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan

The province of Ontario will spend up to \$8.3 billion in the next five years on accelerating the transition to a clean energy future. [Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan](#) is being funded through the selling of emission credits when Ontario joins a cap-and-trade market with Quebec and California in January 2017. The cap-and-trade proceeds will help firms invest and create jobs in the clean energy sector.

Here are some highlights of Ontario's 2016 Climate Change Action Plan worth noting.

Homes and buildings

- ✓ Establish a green bank to assist homeowners and businesses in accessing and financing energy-efficient technologies that reduce greenhouse gas pollution from their buildings.
- ✓ Provide incentives to homeowners to purchase and install energy-efficient technology such as solar water heating, geothermal heat pumps, adaptive thermostats and lighting retrofits.
- ✓ Provide households with assistance to secure flexible low-interest financing to help pay for greenhouse gas-reducing energy improvements in their homes (with special provisions to support low- and modest income households).
- ✓ Establish a fund to help hospitals, universities and colleges retrofit their facilities with energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies, including building automation systems, energy-efficient windows, solar thermal and geothermal systems.
- ✓ Help retire older wood stoves.
- ✓ Introduce a renewable content requirement for natural gas and provide support to encourage the use of cleaner, renewable natural gas in the industrial, transportation and buildings sectors.
- ✓ Require energy audits before a new or existing single-family home can be listed for sale.
- ✓ Require energy reporting and benchmarking for multi-unit residential buildings, large commercial and some industrial buildings to help owners manage for energy conservation.

Electric vehicles

- ✓ Help get older and less fuel-efficient, gasoline-powered vehicles off the roads and replaced with new or used electric vehicles or a plug-in hybrid by offering a rebate to low- and moderate-income households.
- ✓ Extend the rebate program to 2020 for leasing or buying an eligible electric vehicle (up to \$14,000).
- ✓ Extend rebates for the purchase and installation of home charging stations (up to \$1,000 per station).
- ✓ Add more public charging stations to workplaces, city centres, apartments and condos, and highways.
- ✓ Require, as of 2018, all newly built commercial office buildings and appropriate workplaces provide charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- ✓ Work with the federal government to explore ways to provide full-HST relief to purchasers of new battery electric vehicles by 2018.
- ✓ Require new homes and townhomes with garages to be constructed with a 50-amp, 240-volt plug in the garage for the purpose of charging an electric vehicle by 2018.
- ✓ Establish a four-year free overnight electric vehicle-charging program for residential and multi-unit residential customers starting in 2017.
- ✓ Increase availability and use of lower carbon fuel, such as propane, liquefied gas and gasoline that has been mixed with renewable fuel content such as ethanol.
- ✓ Install electric charging stations for employees at all government locations, including government offices.
- ✓ Remove regulatory barriers to the adoption of alternative-fuel vehicles such as trucks powered by hydrogen fuel cells, and new technologies that improve fuel efficiency.

Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry & Waste Management

- ✓ Ensure the sustainable management of natural, agricultural and forested lands that includes the removal and storage of carbon from the atmosphere.
- ✓ Work with Ontario's waste sector on technologies that removes greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and waste.
- ✓ Develop a policy on forest carbon management and/or carbon offset projects for the forestry sector while exploring potential benefits with Indigenous peoples.
- ✓ Develop and implement the Ontario Grasslands Stewardship Initiative to promote and support grasslands that help store carbon.

Industry and Business

- ✓ Support significant emissions reductions by large emitters and small and medium firms by providing funds to offset the cost of low-carbon technologies.
- ✓ Support research and development, clean technology clusters and commercialization and deployment of low-carbon technologies.
- ✓ Provide transitional allowances to industry to help them transition to lower carbon technology while they reduce greenhouse gas pollution.
- ✓ Help the food and beverage-processing sector expand the use of innovative technologies and practices to reduce emissions.
- ✓ Support the transition to low-carbon, indoor agricultural facilities, such as greenhouses and grain dryers, through retrofits to existing structures.

Land Use Planning

Consult with cities and propose amendments that:

- ✓ Require electric vehicle charging in surface lots.
- ✓ Eliminate minimum parking requirements.
- ✓ Reduce single-passenger vehicle trips.

Research and Development

- ✓ Encourage the development and growth of its clean-tech sector by supporting research in low-carbon technologies.
- ✓ Developing low-carbon clean technology accelerators and clusters in sectors where Ontario has a competitive advantage.
- ✓ Support proof-of-concept projects for low-carbon technologies.
- ✓ Help emerging low-carbon companies increase scale.

Partnerships

- ✓ Work with First Nations and Métis communities to address climate change in ways guided by Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- ✓ Build capacity in First Nations and Métis communities to participate in economic opportunities.

Read Ontario's five-year Climate Change Action Plan [here](#).

3. Conclusions

The air that we breathe is an atmosphere just 17 kilometres high. It is beautiful and delicate and every year people around the world through living their day-to-day lives fueled by oil, coal and natural gas pour billions of tonnes of pollution into it changing our climate. Scientists can calculate exactly how much new pollution can go into our air before we reach a tipping point where global temperatures increase too much making our climate more extreme putting our children and communities at risk. To have the greatest chance of keeping us all safe, the world needs to phase out the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) and phase in renewable energy over the next 15 years with most of that change happening in the next five to 10 years.

Ontario's climate action plan will need updating and strengthening as will the plans for all provinces. New Brunswick has a lot of catching up to do if it is going to be a competitive player in the global transition to clean energy and economies. We believe New Brunswick is up to the challenge and that New Brunswickers know that doing our fair share is just the right thing to do.

Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan expresses a positive vision for a low-carbon future and that's important because big change requires a big vision. CCNB encourages New Brunswickers to study Ontario's plan carefully as well as the Conservation Council's [climate action proposal](#) as part of our effort to develop and implement a comprehensive climate action plan for our province.

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