

Ontario: Building new by building green

**FINISH THE JOB
ON KEY
COMMITMENTS**

DELIVER LOCAL FOOD
that is good for people
and the planet

SLAP DOWN LAWSUITS
designed to silence
public voices

GET POLLUTION OUT
of our Great Lakes and
keep the water in



PROVIDE family friendly homes
in walkable, transit-accessible
neighbourhoods

PLAN for ecosystem protection
before mining Ontario's
northern boreal region

POWER UP Ontario's full clean,
green energy potential
for cleaner air and
lower costs



**STRENGTHEN
OUR PROSPERITY
FOUNDATION**

**MAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION WORK
FOR ONTARIO!**

GIVE endangered
species the help they need

REWARD transit riders for
doing the right thing

EXPAND the success of
our world-recognized
Greenbelt

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Building Ontario together

Twenty of Ontario's leading environmental organizations have come together to create this list of policy action priorities for the province. Our goal is to help create a province that prospers as the world shifts toward more sustainable sources of food and energy, and embraces the need for more responsible approaches to resource development and climate.

Ontario has taken many important steps toward tapping into the massive potential of this new economy: from its groundbreaking feed-in tariff program for green energy to its globally recognized Greenbelt, which is helping to protect valuable foodlands while encouraging more efficient urban development in our fastest growing urban region.

Now we need to finish the job on things like protecting the Great Lakes — the world's largest source of fresh water — and citizens' right to speak out about safeguarding the places they love and the values they treasure. We need to improve practices in areas like protecting endangered species and rewarding transit use. And we need to continue building a strong prosperity foundation by building better communities and planning for the long-term protection of some of the world's most important wild places.



Deliver local food that is good for people and the planet

Getting our food locally is kinder to our climate and our environment, especially if that food is grown using the best ecological practices. Passage of a Local Food Act can help make resources available to improve the supply of a wide variety of local foods – from apples to okra – but we need to also make it easier for Ontario farmers to cut down on chemical use and transition to healthier ways of growing.

- Set local food procurement targets for government and institutional buyers and create a province-wide strategy for increasing local food supplies, markets, and infrastructure.
- Shift provincial supports toward organic and ecologically grown foods where demand is quickly growing.
- Assist with securing financing for on-farm food processing ventures that encourage local food protection and new businesses.
- Recognize the importance of protecting waterways, fisheries and forests as an important source of local food, particularly for northern communities.



Putting more local food on our plates — everywhere from schools and hospitals to homes — will help reduce the side dish of climate destabilizing emissions that come with long-distance food imports. It will also help improve our local food security by strengthening local farms and food processors. And it simply tastes great.

Get pollution out of our Great Lakes and keep the water in

Ontario embraces four of the five Great Lakes, so keeping these “Sweetwater Seas” healthy is vital to our province. The Great Lakes hold 20% of the world’s fresh water and supply 80% of Ontario’s drinking water, but with the lakes struggling with the effects of everything from invasive species and climate change to increasing water use and sewage from growing populations, the time to pass the Great Lakes Protection Act is now.

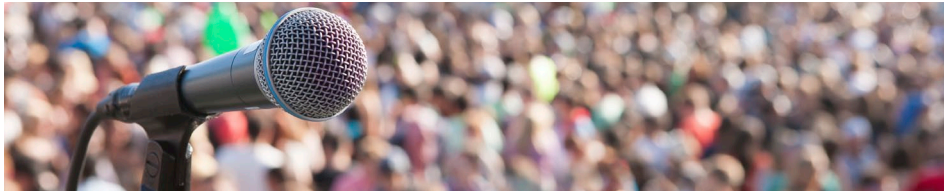
- Pass a Great Lakes Protection Act that sets clear targets for lake restoration and protection efforts and increases coordination for all ministries and agencies with an interest in the lakes.
- Create regulations and incentives to get industries to switch to non-toxic alternatives for everything from flame retardants to cosmetics in order to stop these chemicals from continuing to build up in the lakes.
- Help municipalities improve sewage treatment to reduce nutrients that create algae “slime” and dead zones in the lakes.
- Work with the agricultural sector to reduce reliance on pesticides and herbicides and to better control and filter farm run off.
- Address the huge holes blown in lakes protection by the federal government’s changes to the Fisheries Act and Navigable Waters Act.
- Take the necessary steps (such as establishing conservation targets and intra-basin transfer regulations) to bring the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement into force as other Great Lakes states and provinces have done in order to protect the Great Lakes from bulk water transfers and diversions.



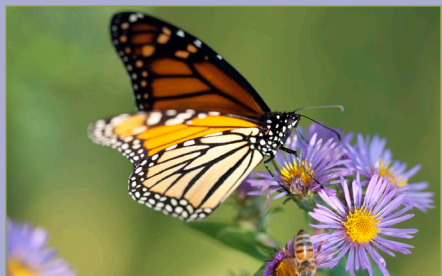
Slap down lawsuits designed to silence public voices

Lawsuits that silence citizens who wish to participate in public decision-making processes have no place in a democracy. Quebec has already banned such “gag” suits. Ontario has said it will follow suit and an expert panel has already given the government advice on how to proceed. Citizens need protection from powerful interests that want to simply silence criticism. Ontario needs to pass an anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) law now!

- Provide protection to communications and conduct in the public interest so that the public can speak freely and fairly.
- Establish an expedited procedure to allow the SLAPP defendant to seek to have the case dismissed by the court.
- Award full indemnity costs to the SLAPP defendant if the case is dismissed.



These measures will cause corporations and other interests to think twice before trying to muzzle opponents through baseless lawsuits, and will give concerned citizens the protections they need to feel secure in speaking out.

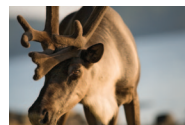


These actions will ensure a workable act that achieves the goal of bringing endangered species back from the brink without stifling economic development. They will also reduce costs and conflict for project developers by providing clear rules and expectations and the flexibility to accommodate species needs. And they will protect Ontario's reputation as a green economy leader.

Give endangered species the help they need

Ontario's Endangered Species Act has been carefully designed to provide some of our most vulnerable wild species with strong protections while still meeting the need for everything from new highways to resource development. Let's focus on making the law work for species like polar bears and monarch butterflies rather than watering down key protections.

- Maintain key protections like the "overall benefit" test and continue to recognize that habitat protection is critical to species survival.
- Develop a "Safe Harbour" mechanism that makes voluntary habitat creation risk-free for private landowners.
- Promote stewardship through robust education, outreach and incentive programs.
- Create a "user pay" system for permits so that costs are borne by those who will directly benefit from development proposals that damage or destroy endangered species habitat.



Reward transit riders for doing the right thing

Taking transit to work shouldn't mean making a financial sacrifice. Yet every year, transit fares keep climbing in most Ontario cities. While the provincial government used to make a substantial contribution to transit operating costs, it now puts almost nothing in the operations fare box. The province must ensure that long-overdue transit expansion gets rolling, but it is also time for the province to once again pay its fair share of operating costs and stop penalizing transit riders for doing the right thing.

- Contribute provincial funds to cover roughly 50% of transit operating costs, focusing on new transit funding mechanisms being explored by Metrolinx.
- Recognize that transit benefits everyone, through improved air quality and reduced congestion, by restoring broadly based support for transit operations.
- Work with local transit providers to ensure new provincial funds lead to better services and more accountable transit systems for transit users across the province.



Traffic congestion is costing Ontario billions of dollars in lost productivity, fuel costs and pollution. Meanwhile, more and more people are looking to do the right thing by leaving the car at home. We need to support this choice by recognizing the wide economic benefits of increased transit use and put the brakes on rising fares.



The Greenbelt has been a huge success and is now recognized as a great place to visit a farm or market, go for a hike, or buy local products. It provides millions of dollars of natural services annually like water and air filtration and has helped avoid significant pollution and other costs linked to unchecked urban sprawl. Growing the Greenbelt means growing success for smart development in one of Canada's fastest expanding urban regions.

Expand the success of our world-recognized Greenbelt

Ontario's Greenbelt has been recognized as smart urban planning around the world for the important job it does in curbing wasteful sprawl, protecting foodlands, safeguarding source water areas, and conserving natural habitat. But there are important natural corridors and green spaces that can be added to the existing Greenbelt to make it even better — and greener. Ontario needs to work closely with municipalities to make some sensible additions to our crown of green.

- Work with communities to expand the Greenbelt by identifying environmentally sensitive and food-producing lands as areas suitable for Greenbelt expansion in municipal official plans.
- Create stronger barriers to “leapfrog” development that leads to expensive-to-service and environmentally costly development away from existing urban centres.



Plan for ecosystem protection before mining Ontario's northern boreal region

Ontario's northern boreal ecosystem is on the cusp of a major mining boom. The Ring of Fire — a new potential mining district located approximately 500 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay — has generated a lot of attention. But these proposed mines will be located in one of the world's ecological treasures: a globally important climate-control system, a last stronghold for endangered species like caribou, and a nursery where millions of colourful songbirds raise their young. We cannot afford to rush ahead with development here without plans in place for protecting the ultra valuable ecological services of this region.

- Undertake a comprehensive regional environmental assessment in the Ring of Fire area before approving mine development to protect ecosystems and examine the cumulative effects of all proposed projects.
- Prevent the fragmentation of large habitat areas needed by species like caribou by carefully planning roads and access corridors to ensure minimal disturbance.
- Respect First Nations' rights in development decision making and ensure local communities see real long-term benefits from development.
- Ensure mining proceeds only with stringent environmental controls and adequate financial security for site clean-up and restoration.



The potential mineral wealth in areas like the Ring of Fire could be large, but so is the economic value of intact ecosystems that control our climate, clean our water and purify our air. We need to avoid piecemeal development planning that cuts this region into a thousand pieces and look at what is at stake here through a wider lens in order to ensure a proper balance between resource development and a healthy environment.



Allowing more people to “live where they go” with homes developed with an eye to commute times, full service communities, and environmental sustainability will make life better for all Ontarians by reducing stress on both families and our environment.

Provide family-friendly homes in walkable, transit-accessible neighbourhoods

Urban sprawl has left thousands of Ontarians stewing in traffic every day. It also increases air pollution, paves over natural areas and foodlands, and reduces quality of life for many frustrated commuters. Yet many of our planning rules and home purchase approaches continue to encourage exactly the kind of development that is only going to make things worse and that will price most homebuyers out of living closer to where they work and play. We need to change some basic rules to reward smart “location efficient” development that provides options for Ontarians to live in walkable, transit-friendly communities.

- Charge developers for the actual costs of servicing new development using a zoned approach, and amend the Development Charges Act so municipalities can get more money for a broader range of services (such as improved transit).
- Under the Metrolinx Act, use transit funding to support location efficiency — for example, by requiring areas around mobility hubs to be pre-zoned to support density before funding is approved.

Power up Ontario's full clean, green energy potential for cleaner air and lower costs

Ontario has made great strides to expand green energy through the Green Energy and Economy Act and its Feed-in-Tariff program. But with other major economies investing massively in renewables since the Fukushima disaster and the impacts of climate change becoming clearer by the day, we need to accelerate this clean energy transition — not stop it. Today, however, Ontario has extremely limited renewable energy targets compared to international clean energy leaders. That's why we need to work with communities to fully develop their renewable energy and energy efficiency potential instead of wasting tens of billions of dollars on risky, high-cost nuclear technology. Energy efficiency and renewables can lower our energy bills and create important new economic opportunities for our province.

- Invest in the energy of tomorrow by allowing green energy and efficiency to replace aging nuclear stations and don't let expensive nuclear plants block the growth of green energy jobs.
- Protect electricity consumers by telling Ontario Power Generation and Bruce Power that they cannot pass on cost overruns from any future nuclear projects onto the province's electricity consumers or taxpayers.



Ontario lags behind many of its competitors when it comes to energy efficiency and the province's renewable energy leadership could be wasted if funds are diverted to more costly and inefficient nuclear projects. The world needs efficient green energy now more than ever and Ontario needs to build on its green energy advantage.

For further information on these priorities, environmental news, and links to issue experts, please visit:

GreenProsperity.ca

