

Questionnaire Response – Ontario Environmental Priorities

Will your party commit to improving public transit by:

- Investing in immediate service improvements and bring provincial funding for operations back to 50% of costs?
- Fully integrating transit and urban planning to ensure strong transit connections within and between communities across Ontario, including using development charges to fund transit expansion?

Investing in public transit:

The Ontario Liberal Party has always been committed to improving the convenience and availability of public transit. Since 2003, the Ontario Liberal government has invested more than \$19.3 billion to support public transit across the province, including approximately \$9.1 billion towards GO Transit.

In addition, more than \$2.7 billion in gas tax funding has been provided to municipalities to support transit operations. In 2013, we legislated the practice of giving 2 cents per litre of the gas tax to municipalities for public transit, through the *Dedicated Funding for Public Transportation Act*.

Our budget – which we are committed to re-introducing if given another mandate - pledged a total of \$28.9 billion over 10 years for dedicated funding in public transit and transportation, with \$15 billion dedicated to transit projects in the GTHA. We are planning on making public transit greener and more accessible by electrifying GO Train service across the network, allowing for 15 minute GO Train service across all lines.

Outside the GTHA, public transit projects that are eligible for the additional \$14 billion fund include GO service expansion in Brantford, Niagara region and Dufferin County, high-speed rail to southwestern Ontario, and the next phase of the Ottawa LRT and Waterloo Region LRT.

In addition to public transit investments, Ontario Liberals are committed to providing more safe cycling options. We will invest \$25 million over the next three years to help municipalities build cycling lanes and cycling infrastructure, and create more paved shoulders outside urban areas. Our Cycle ON strategy aims to build 400 km of additional bike lands.



Integrating transit and urban planning:

Yes, we will integrate transit and urban planning and allow development charges to fund transit. Ontario Liberals have been taking significant steps to integrate land use planning and transportation by developing data banks such as iCorridor. The Ministries of Transportation and Infrastructure (Ontario Growth Secretariat) have been placed under one Minister to facilitate better planning and maximization of potential municipal tax revenues.

The Places To Grow Act, Growth Plan, and Metrolinx's Big Move all helped better integrate land use planning and transportation. If given another mandate, an Ontario Liberal government will remove the 10 per cent discount on transit development charges and work with municipalities to determine a progressive, forward-looking formula for calculating transit development charges. We will also encourage and work with municipalities to mandate area-rating to incentivize development in key areas such as transit corridors.

Will your party act to protect the natural biodiversity of our province by:

- Repealing exemptions to the Endangered Species Act?
- Meeting the 2020 target date for protecting 17% of Southern Ontario's land base through protected areas and conservation stewardship arrangements as called for in the province's Biodiversity Strategy?

Endangered Species:

In 2007, we introduced the *Endangered Species Act*, the first law of its kind in the province and one of the strongest measures to protect endangered species in North America.

Under our Act, species like the peregrine falcon and the piping plover have recovered. If given another mandate, we commit to working with scientists, environmental organizations, and industry to identify a science-based approach to applying the ESA to logging activities in advance of the expiration of the exemption in 2018.

Biodiversity Strategy:

Our Biodiversity Strategy and other measures will allow us to protect Ontario's land base and to achieve the target of 17 per cent land base protection by 2020.

Our government developed Ontario's first Biodiversity Strategy in 2005 (renewed in 2011) and established the Ontario Biodiversity Council. Ontario has the most current biodiversity strategy of any Canadian jurisdiction, and is the first province to align our Biodiversity Strategy with the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity's Aichi Targets, adopted at the global biodiversity conference in 2010.

In support of our Biodiversity Strategy, our government introduced, passed, and is now implementing strong legislation to enhance protection of biodiversity in Ontario, including the *Far North Act*, the *Greenbelt Act and Plan*, the *Provincial Park and Conservation Reserves Act*, the *Endangered Species Act* and the *Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act*.

If given another mandate to govern, Ontario Liberals will take additional steps to protect biodiversity, including:

- Expanding the Greenbelt and ensuring the Greenbelt Act and the three plans (Niagara Escarpment, Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine) are effectively meeting the goal of protecting ecologically-sensitive and agriculture lands when reviewed in 2015.
- Create a Farms Forever Program to help land owners protect prime agricultural land close to major urban centres, we will create a Farms Forever Program which will support the establishment of agricultural easements. This will help support the local sourcing of food and strengthen Ontario's strong agri-food sector.
- Protecting the Great Lakes so we can tackle algae problems in the Great Lakes. By continuing to work with agricultural sector, we will develop financial incentives to reduce nutrient runoff.
- We will work with municipalities to improve sewage and stormwater management. We will also work with Ontario Parks to make Great Lakes beaches cleaner and safer. We will also re-introduce a strong Great Lakes Protection Act.

- Funding the Ottawa River Action Plan so we can contribute the provincial share of funding required to ensure the Ottawa River is clean and its beaches are safe for swimming.
- Promote urban forestry so we can work with municipalities and our other partners to promote urban forestry and plant one million trees, as part of our commitment to plant 50 million trees province-wide.
- Municipal Park Plans require municipalities to work with school boards to develop Park Plans to protect green space in growing communities.

These measures will further help protect greenspace, aquatic ecosystems, and biodiversity.

Will your party help to reduce energy costs by:

- Closing the high-cost and risky Pickering Nuclear Station by 2015 and requiring a full review of the cost of nuclear refurbishment projects by the province's new Financial Accountability Office or the Ontario Energy Board?
- Fully implement the province's new Conservation Framework to help homeowners and businesses save money by improving energy efficiency?

Nuclear energy:

We have taken a conservation first approach with respect to our electricity needs. Through our Long-Term Energy Plan, we have also recognized the need to maintain nuclear as a source of base load power, though we expect the proportion of our electricity needs to be served by nuclear to decrease.

We believe nuclear refurbishment must proceed with caution to ensure both flexibility and ongoing value for Ontario ratepayers and will take into account future demand levels. For that reason, we have adopted the following principles that we believe the nuclear refurbishment process must adhere to:

- 1) Minimize commercial risk on the part of ratepayers and government;

- 2) Mitigated reliability risks by developing contingency plans that include alternative supply options if contract and other objects are at risk of non-fulfillment;
- 3) Entrench appropriate off-ramps and scoping;
- 4) Hold private sector operator accountable to the nuclear refurbishment schedule and price;
- 5) Require OPG to hold its contractors accountable to the nuclear refurbishment schedule and price;
- 6) Make site, project management, regulatory requirements & supply chain considerations, and cost and risk containment, the primary factors in developing the implementation plan; and
- 7) Take smaller initial steps to ensure there is opportunity to incorporate lessons learned from refurbishment including collaboration by operators.

Darlington and Bruce will each begin refurbishing one unit each. Final commitments on subsequent refurbishments will take into account the performance of the initial refurbishments with respect to budget and schedule by establishing appropriate off-ramps.

Our Long-Term Energy Plan indicates that while the continued operation of Pickering facilitates the refurbishment of the first units at Darlington and Bruce, an earlier shutdown of the Pickering units may be possible depending on projected demand, the progress of the fleet refurbishment program, and the timely completion of the Clarington Transformer Station.

If given another mandate, Ontario Liberals will remain committed to providing greater transparency around energy planning. The Annual Energy Reports will provide detailed information on electricity demand and supply by region, as well as updated demand forecasting and information relating to transmission capacity. This data will help inform discussions between government, agencies, and stakeholders regarding the potential for an earlier closure of Pickering.



We will request that the Ontario Power Authority provide its Stakeholder Advisory Committee with an update on the status of Pickering annually beginning in 2014. This will provide a forum for increased transparency and public dialogue about the possible early closure of Pickering.

Conservation First

If given another mandate, we will implement our Conservation First framework. As we plan for Ontario's electricity needs for the next 20 years, conservation will be the first resource considered. It is the cleanest and most cost-effective energy resource, and it offers consumers a way to reduce their electricity bills. We intend to ensure that conservation will be considered before building new generation and transmission facilities, and will be the preferred choice wherever cost effective.

Our new six-year Conservation First Framework is a long-term commitment to conservation that builds on the success of current programs and supports the development of new electricity conservation programs to meet local needs and offer more choice for consumers. The Conservation First Framework will provide Local Distribution Companies (LDCs) with long-term stable funding and budgets to deliver province-wide and local conservation programs through streamlined contractual arrangements with the Ontario Power Authority.

The Ontario Liberal government directed the Ontario Energy Board to develop a new natural gas conservation plan, and to align natural gas and electricity conservation measures as far as is appropriate. In addition, we directed the OEB to take the appropriate steps toward implementing the conservation first policy in planning processes at the regional and local levels, where cost effective, by January 1, 2015. If given another mandate, we will ensure this happens.

Our long-term conservation target of 30 TWh in 2032 represents a 16 per cent reduction in forecast gross demand for electricity — the equivalent to more than all the power used by the City of Toronto in 2012. We would also aim to use Demand Response (DR) to meet 10 per cent of peak demand by 2025, equivalent to approximately 2,400 megawatts (MW) under current forecasts.

We are also committed to offering on-bill financing for energy efficiency retrofits starting in 2015. On-bill financing assists consumers with the upfront costs of making energy efficiency investments with repayment on the utility bill.

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We will continue the social benchmarking pilot program that is currently under way it's testing different approaches that enable consumers to compare their energy consumption with other similar consumers. Pending the success of the pilot program, we will explore expanding social benchmarking and including other sectors.

Will your party help to address the climate change crisis that is leading to higher and higher costs due to extreme weather by:

- Developing a carbon pricing system for large carbon emitters?
- Enhance and procure living green infrastructure, like urban forests and green roofs that reduce flooding, provide natural cooling and increase climate resilience.

Large emitters:

Before the opposition precipitated the election, the Ministry of Environment was in the midst of consultations on developing a GHG reduction program.

If given another mandate, our government will complete consultations with industry, environmental groups, and interested stakeholders to ensure that Ontario adopts an effective GHG emissions reduction program that strikes the right balance for affected sectors.

In addition, Ontario Liberals are the only party to speak to climate change, and commit to meeting our climate change targets in our plan this election. See our complete commitment on these issues below.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

In the absence of meaningful action at the federal level, Ontario will continue to take the lead, building on our historic closure of dirty coal-fired power plants. We will meet our 2014 and 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emission targets through a variety of measures, including:

- **Better transit:** Our 10-year, \$29 billion transportation and transit build-out will relieve gridlock, so cars aren't stuck in traffic, unnecessarily emitting greenhouse gases (GHGs).

- **Better buildings:** Our conservation-first agenda will provide tools for homeowners and building owners to reduce their energy needs, including natural gas. We will also make sure new buildings are as energy efficient as possible.
- **Closing the gap:** In 2015, we will review progress toward meeting our 2020 target and develop a clear plan to get there.
- **Cleaner fuels:** We are reducing greenhouse gas emissions from trucks, trains and other diesel-powered vehicles with new rules for clean bio-diesel that are the toughest in Canada.
- **More coal reductions:** New alternative fuels rules will help Ontario's big, energy-intensive industries reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These industries are the largest burners of GHG-heavy coal in Ontario, now that the Province has shut down the last coal-fired power plant. Closing the power plants was the largest climate change action ever taken in North America.

Climate resilience:

Yes, a Wynne government will continue to build climate change resilience planning into our programs.

Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy includes undertaking regional climate modeling for Great Lakes community decision-makers, conducting vulnerability assessments on water infrastructure, and working with partners to promote adaptive management tools for Great Lakes communities.

Source water protection plans – a response to the Walkerton contaminated drinking water tragedy of 1999 – integrates climate change adaptation to ensure the sources of our drinking water are sustainable in the face of climate change.

If given another mandate, we will invest in water technology solutions that can minimize the need for costly infrastructure, such as green infrastructure options.

We are also requiring planning authorities to consider the impacts of climate change. We have commissioned a municipal climate change risk assessment Guide and Workbook, designed for use by small and medium sized municipalities.

If given another mandate, we will promote urban forestry by planting 1 million urban trees as part of our 50 Million Tree Program. We will also require municipalities to develop parks plans and act on requests from municipalities to add urban river valleys to the Greenbelt, both of which can provide more green space to reduce stormwater runoff.

If given another mandate, we will work with municipalities and stakeholders to identify the steps needed to better integrate climate resiliency into infrastructure plans.

Will you stop costly urban sprawl and create more liveable communities by:

- Amending the *Development Charges Act, 1997* to ensure that new development pays the full cost of growth. These changes must include ending counterproductive discounts and exemptions from municipal service charges, and reflect future demands for increased services -- from schools to libraries -- through full lifecycle costing.
- Rewarding developers through development charge discounts when they increase density, create infill development, build energy and water efficient developments, and accommodate urban agriculture, community gardens and food retailers?

Yes. Ontario Liberals recognize the key concerns that municipalities have in regards to growth related costs. We are committed to making the Development Charges Act responsive to the changing needs of Ontario residents, and recently undertook a review of the Development Charges system to make sure it is still responsive to the changing needs of our communities.

Ontario Liberals are committed to removing the 10 per cent deduction of development charges for transit and developing a forward looking model for calculating transit services. We will work with interested parties, including land-use planners, municipalities, and developers to assess the discounts and models for calculating other Development Charges to ensure they better reflect the future demands for services.

In order to stop costly urban sprawl and create more liveable communities, Ontario Liberals will give the government regulation making authority to discount Development Charges in specified areas. These areas could include Urban Growth Centres or Transit Corridors. This would reward developers who are building in areas that growth makes the most sense.

Ontario Liberals are committed to supporting the development of complete communities. That's why we introduced and expanded the Greenbelt and developed the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Will you ensure resource development in the Ring of Fire does not irreparably damage one of the world's most important natural areas by:

- Establishing a Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment Planning process to develop a "big picture" vision and community consensus around the future of the region rather than relying on fragmented and largely uncoordinated conventional planning approaches?
- Create a coordinated infrastructure plan that protects the ecological integrity of the region rather than building roads and transmission lines in response to individual project demands?

Ontario Liberals support smart, sustainable, and collaborative development in the Ring of Fire. We recognize that development in this environmentally-sensitive region must be protective of the environment and done in full consultation with the affected Aboriginal communities and the public.

Our government recently announced that an agreement on the regional framework was signed by all nine Chiefs of the Matawa-member First Nation communities. It consists of the principles, objectives, implementation considerations, and general provisions that will serve to guide future discussions.

This regional process will specifically address regional infrastructure needs supporting communities, in addition to regional long-term environmental monitoring, socio-economic supports, resource revenue sharing, and enhancements to participation in environmental assessment processes.



The Ontario Liberal party is committed to immediately commencing detailed discussions on enhancements to environmental assessment participation through the community-based regional process.

Ontario Liberals are the only party committed to maintaining and implementing the Far North Act; meanwhile the NDP and PCs have both said they would repeal it. The objectives of the Act include:

1. A significant role for First Nations in the planning.
2. The protection of areas of cultural value in the Far North and the protection of ecological systems in the Far North by including at least 225,000 square kilometres of the Far North in an interconnected network of protected areas designated in community based land use plans.
3. The maintenance of biological diversity, ecological processes and ecological functions, including the storage and sequestration of carbon in the Far North.
4. Enabling sustainable economic development that benefits the First Nations

The Wynne government announced last November the creation of a development corporation. It will bring together private and public partners, including key mining companies, First Nations, and the provincial government, to lead the strategic infrastructure development for the Ring of Fire region. The planning of this infrastructure will consider measures needed to protect the ecological functions of the region and maintain clean, abundant water.

Will you act to stop the alarming decline of critical plant pollinators, particularly bees, by:

- Restricting the sale and commercial use of neonicotinoids and ban neonicotinoid seed treatments through changes to the Tables in sections 4 and 98 of Ontario Regulation 6/09 of the Ontario *Pesticides Act*?
- Investing in the protection and restoration of habitats for pollinators, which contribute hundreds of millions of dollars in pollination services to Ontario each year.

Pollinator health is a significant issue for the agricultural sector and for the ongoing environmental and economic strength of the province.



Ontario Liberals are very concerned about the indiscriminate and blanket use of neonicotinoid-treated seed and the potential implications for the environment and pollinator health. If given another mandate, we will work with the agricultural and beekeeping sectors to (1) ensure full and equitable access to non-neonicotinoid treated seed for growers, and (2) establish a system that allows for targeted use of neonicotinoids only in production areas or production circumstances where these pesticides are actually shown to be required. In addition, we will implement an insurance program to help provincial beekeepers recover acute bee losses.

By moving away from the application of neonicotinoid-treated seed as the default for planting in Ontario, and instead allowing targeted use, we will be able to build common ground between the interests of grain growers and beekeepers in the province.

In addition, as we look for solutions that are specific to Ontario, it is also necessary that we ensure that the federal government shows leadership on this issue. That is why as Minister of Agriculture and Food, the Premier wrote to Federal Health Minister Aglukkaq and Federal Agriculture Minister Ritz last year to express concern regarding the impact of neonicotinoids on pollinators and to urge that the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency expedite their studies on the issue so that answers could be made available earlier than the current target date of 2018.

Our government has provided \$1.2 million to support research initiatives on bee health and best management practices in planting that would mitigate the impact on pollinators. Moving forward, we are committed to working with affected stakeholders through a broad pollinator working group to develop a roadmap for a provincial pollinator health strategy.

Before the NDP forced an election, the Wynne government enacted changes to the schedule of noxious weeds under the Weed Control Act to help support another pollinator, the monarch butterfly. Amendments have been made to remove milkweed from the schedule and add two invasive plants -- dog-strangling vine and black dog-strangling vine.

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Removing milkweed from the schedule of noxious weeds will help ensure that this important habitat and food source for the monarch butterfly is allowed to thrive. Adding dog-strangling vine and black dog-strangling vine to the list is also important – they are aggressive, invasive plants that can interrupt the monarch butterfly's life cycle and harm biodiversity.

Further amendments were also slated to be brought forward to remove the following three plants from the schedule of noxious weeds: goat's beard, scotch thistle and wild carrot. These species represent sources of food for pollinators, including bees. If given another mandate, we will enact these changes.

If given another mandate to govern, we will also work to expand the Greenbelt and require municipalities to establish parks plans, both of which can provide additional habitat protection for pollinators.

Will your party address rising cancer rates by:

- Requiring labelling on products that contain carcinogens, with requirements for listing and labelling based on evidence from internationally recognized health authorities, such as Health Canada or the International Agency for Research on Cancer?
- Closing the "fragrance" loophole by requiring full ingredient disclosure for cosmetics rather than allowing broad category descriptions such as "fragrance"?

Reducing the production and use of carcinogens is a key preventative measure in our efforts to address cancer rates. Our *Toxics Reduction Act* outlines the requirements that owners and operators of facilities must meet in accordance with our government's focus on protecting the environment and human health.

Toxic substance accounting, reporting, and planning are important components of this Act and we have worked with Cancer Care Ontario to identify carcinogens widely used. Twenty-four carcinogens were identified and prioritized for monitoring to ensure a reduction in their creation and disclosure to the public when used. We have committed funding to supporting these industries meet the requirements of the Act.



If given another mandate, we will work with business and industry to find ways to provide Ontarians with better information about chemicals linked with cancer, and identify ways to support industry to ensure children's products on Ontario shelves are as safe as products in the US and European Union. As part of this effort, we will explore whether Ontario should enact section 50.(1)(o.2) regarding providing notice to the public if a product contains a substance deemed toxic.

Ontario Liberals introduced all those bills in the last Legislature because we believe that they are needed to restore and protect the environment. The PCs filibustered several of these bills, and when we sought help from the NDP to get them moving more quickly through the Legislative process, they refused to help. It is our intention to re-introduce these bills and seek passage of them in the new Legislature.

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