

Ontario Environmental Priorities Election Questionnaire

Canadian Physicians for the Environment • Citizens Environment Alliance • Canadian Environmental Law Association • CPAWS Wildlands League • David Suzuki Foundation • Earthroots • Ecojustice • Environment North • Environmental Defence • Ontario Nature • Greenpeace • LEAF • Local Food Plus • Ontario Clean Air Alliance • Ontario Sustainable Energy Association • Pembina Institute • Sierra Club Ontario • Toronto Environmental Alliance • Sustain Ontario • Wildlife Preservation Canada

The following policy questionnaire is being submitted on behalf of the Ontario Priorities Initiative, a joint undertaking of 20 of Ontario's leading environmental organizations. These questions are based on a set of joint policy priorities developed by our organizations and available at GreenProsperity.ca. We believe that a healthy environment is the cornerstone of a strong economy and a high quality of life for all Ontarians. We look forward to receiving your party's responses on these critical issues.

Please return completed questionnaire to Brad Cundiff – brad@glcommunications.ca Any questions or requests for clarifications can also be directed to Brad at 416-535-0205.

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?***

The Ontario NDP is committed to improving public transit across Ontario by kick-starting transit relief and service improvements. Liberal and PC governments have downloaded operating costs onto municipalities and reduced public operating subsidies, forcing riders and local communities to pay more. It's time to tackle this problem and restore fairness to transit funding.

We will start by restoring provincial funding for new buses in cities and towns throughout the province. As Transportation Minister, Kathleen Wynne delivered a huge blow to all municipalities by eliminating the Ontario Bus Replacement Program and forcing municipalities to swallow the costs of new buses. It was the wrong decision – and it must be reversed. An Ontario NDP government will provide \$60 million in annual support to 127 municipalities across Ontario for the purchase of replacement buses, freeing up gas tax transfer funds to support transit operations. New buses make sense. They will increase reliable transit service, reduce wait times, and increase fuel efficiency in all Ontario communities.

We will also boost transit service with \$250 million in annual investment, on top of our dedicated funding for new projects. We are the only party making this commitment to support quick initiatives that can deliver immediate results for riders.

Priority transit and transportation projects across the province will receive dedicated funding of \$29 billion over 10 years. The NDP is the only party that will deliver clean trains on the air-rail link. We will also fund transit relief in Scarborough and with the Downtown Relief Line, and expand the GO network with two-way all-day trains to Kitchener-Waterloo and year-round daily service to Niagara Falls. We also

strongly support projects like the Hamilton and Mississauga LRTs, and the next phase of Brampton rapid transit.

An NDP government will also help communities create bike networks and make roads safer for everyone. With \$5 million in new annual funding, we will invest in bike lanes, expanded cycling networks, and complete street design.

- ***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?***

The Ontario NDP understands that transit works when it forms regional networks. Smart transit planning means strengthening those links and providing reliable service to meet people's needs. Our priority projects will strengthen transit connections between economic hubs. For instance, under an Ontario NDP government all-day, two way GO train service will link Kitchener-Waterloo to downtown Toronto and Brampton, a crucial connection that will help create over 33,000 new jobs.

An NDP government will integrate transit and urban planning, and conduct further work on the potential use of development charges to fund transit expansion. We will also strengthen local democratic authority over land use planning. We think democratic accountable institutions can best make these decisions using existing planning tools, especially municipal official plans. Rosario Marchese, the NDP critic for Urban Transportation and our candidate in Trinity-Spadina, is the leading voice at Queen's Park for reigning in the unaccountable Ontario Municipal Board. His private member's bill would have freed Toronto from the OMB, which currently has the unprecedented power to overturn decisions made by local governments. Restoring democratic accountability makes sense.

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

- ***Repealing exemptions to the Endangered Species Act?***

The Ontario NDP supported the *Endangered Species Act* in 2007 and we continue to support the Act. We are opposed to exemptions that threaten to undermine protections for endangered and threatened species.

- ***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?***

The Ontario NDP supported the province's Biodiversity Strategy and we are committed to reaching our environmental protection targets.

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?***

The Ontario NDP strongly supports bringing clean, renewable energy online, and we support the shut-down of the Pickering Nuclear Station. We will ensure the full costs of nuclear refurbishments are known to the public – through complete and transparent business cases – before any further approvals are granted. The NDP succeeded in forcing the Liberals to promise to set up an independent Financial Accountability Office, but the Liberals have not followed through. An NDP government will hire a Financial Accountability Officer, who will have the authority to fully review government spending plans, including the cost of nuclear refurbishment projects. We will also ensure that the Ontario Energy Board fully reviews these plans.

- ***Fully implement the province's new Conservation Framework to help homeowners and businesses save money by improving energy efficiency?***

The Ontario NDP believes strongly that the government should do more to promote energy conservation and make green choices more affordable. An Ontario NDP government will help families cut their energy costs by installing solar panels and making energy efficient retrofits to their homes. We will create a \$50 million revolving retrofit fund to provide low-interest loans to Ontario property owners, including apartment landlords, who are making energy-efficient retrofits to their homes and apartments.

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?***

There is no question that climate change is an immediate concern. Failure to act will jeopardize Ontario's future. Unfortunately, the Liberals admit they won't meet the government's own emissions reduction targets in 2020. It's time for a cap-and-trade plan to tackle climate change, promote energy conservation, and reduce emissions. Working in conjunction with other jurisdictions, an NDP government will take action to implement a cap-and-trade program. Within our first year in government, we will develop a complete plan for Ontario to meet our reduction targets. We have clearly stated our opposition to a carbon tax.

Enhance and procure living green infrastructure, like urban forests and green roofs that reduce flooding, provide natural cooling and increase climate resilience.

Previous governments have done little to address Ontario's aging infrastructure. An NDP government will work with municipalities to determine and address high priority infrastructure needs, and prepare for the impact that severe weather can have on our communities. We will work collaboratively to develop incentives to pursue green infrastructure options and promote urban forestry. An Ontario NDP government will also work to make going green affordable for Ontarians. We will help families install

solar panels and energy efficient retrofits by providing loans that are repaid through energy savings. This program will help families consume less energy, save money, and help the environment.

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.***

An Ontario NDP government will work to stop urban sprawl and support municipalities. The Development Charges Act should ensure that growth pays for growth, and an NDP government will follow through with necessary amendments. We will make these changes in full consultation with Ontarians, and we will build on work that has already been done.

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?

Rewarding smart design and good choices makes sense. The Ontario NDP will work with municipalities to determine appropriate incentives for environmentally efficient design. An NDP government will ensure that good urban planning, energy efficiency, and all efforts to build strong communities are rewarded.

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?***

Sustainable development of the Ring of Fire is a key priority for the Ontario NDP. We recognize that thorough assessments with full community involvement are necessary to properly plan this project.

We support a comprehensive Environmental Assessment planning process that has the authority to look at the cumulative effects of mining and infrastructure in the Ring of Fire and that incorporates full participation of First Nations and other interested stakeholders. We will follow through with the agreement between the province and Matawa-member First Nations to negotiate an approach for development in their traditional territories that will help ensure that First Nations participate in, and benefit from, Ring of Fire developments, including by seeking their participation in long-term environmental monitoring.

The Ontario NDP supports robust environmental monitoring and opposed the large cuts to the Ministry of Natural Resources that, according to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, have left the Far

North with no formal environmental monitoring program in the face of intensive mineral exploration and development.

- ***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?***

A coordinated infrastructure plan that protects the ecological integrity of the region is a crucial part of ensuring the proper development of the Ring of Fire.

In addition, Northern communities and First Nations must have more say into how resource development occurs. An Ontario NDP government will develop a planning system in the North that brings local communities and First Nations to the table in a respectful way as equal partners in the conversation, and ensures broad support for the process and the infrastructure plan.

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?***

New Democrats are deeply concerned for the health of pollinators. We are encouraged by actions to promote the use of non-neonicotinoid pesticide-treated seeds and to promote the use of other products and deflectors, but we recognize that these actions may not be sufficient. Rather than pinning the health of Ontario's bee population on the Federal Government with their poor record on the environment, as the Liberals have done, the Ontario NDP will use science-based evidence to devise a course of action that makes sense for Ontario. We will take precautionary steps to protect pollinators, and work to implement international best practices that limit or eliminate the use of neonicotinoids.

- ***Investing in the protection and restoration of habitats for pollinators, which contribute hundreds of millions of dollars in pollination services to Ontario each year.***

Yes, an NDP government will invest in the protection and restoration of pollinator habitat.

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?***

In 2006 and 2008, NDP MPP Peter Tabuns put forward a Private Members Bill, *Community Right to Know Act* (Disclosure of Toxins and Pollutants). This Bill sought to protect consumers, workers and the general public by requiring labelling of products that contain carcinogens, requiring that workplaces maintain an inventory of products used by their workers, and requiring that the government maintain a comprehensive pollution inventory. Our efforts led the government to introduce a similar bill; however

their regulations have not been effective. It's time to strengthen labelling so that all Ontarians know when they are accessing products that contain carcinogens.

- ***Closing the "fragrance" loophole by requiring full ingredient disclosure for cosmetics rather than allowing broad category descriptions such as "fragrance"?***

We will look at measures to reduce cancer risks and to ensure toxin disclosures in accordance with Ontarians' full rights to know.

Will your party act quickly to reintroduce legislation based on these bills that were left unfinished by the election call: (please indicate which you support):

- ***Bill 6, Great Lakes Protection Act***
- ***Bill 83, Protection of Public Participation Act***
- ***Bill 91, Waste Reduction Act***
- ***Bill 138, Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act***
- ***Bill 167, Invasive Species Act***

The Ontario NDP has worked collaboratively to strengthen Ontario's environmental legislation. We are deeply concerned that the Liberals are, in the words of the independent Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, "*deliberately dismantling environmental protection that's been built up over the past decades*". We were also troubled by the Liberals' slow pace of legislative progress on key pieces of environmental protection legislation in recent years. An Ontario NDP government will introduce legislation to protect the Great Lakes, the health of which impacts millions of Ontarians' drinking water and livelihoods, and ensure Ontario has a robust framework to tackle aquatic invasive species. We support legislative measures to eliminate SLAPP lawsuits and protect free speech; in fact, Andrea Horwath was the first MPP to introduce a bill to protect the public from SLAPP lawsuits back in 2008. We also supported the initiative to eliminate coal generating stations to protect Ontario's clean air, and we will work to implement the legislative solutions necessary to ensure polluters pay for the waste and toxins they create.