

IMMEDIATE CLIMATE ACTION: POLICY BACKGROUNDER

Climate change is an existential threat that demands decisive action today. For decades, Ontario Liberals took leadership to reduce carbon emissions, protect nature and prime agricultural land, incentivize clean energy development, and grow green jobs and investments. This is a legacy of which we Liberals are incredibly proud of and must urgently return to.

Our climate, environment and biodiversity are under threat from record-breaking heat, wildfires, floods and natural disasters. Yet since being elected, Doug Ford and the Conservatives have systematically wiped out the decades of climate action that led to declining greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario. For years, they cancelled renewable and energy-efficiency projects, encouraged sprawl, and undermined conservation and environmental protection. As a result, electricity costs are on the rise, wetlands are being paved over, pollution is spreading, and the threat of brownouts and black outs hang over the province.

Under my leadership, Ontario Liberals will prioritize environmental protection, resilience, clean growth and immediate carbon emissions reductions. By decarbonizing and creating green jobs, we'll make Ontario a climate leader, grow a resilient economy and protect our cherished natural landscapes. We will do this in meaningful partnership with Indigenous communities, respecting their knowledge, and fostering a shared vision for environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

In conjunction with our [Greenbelt and nature](#), [housing](#), economy, and [agriculture platforms](#), here are some key priorities to return Ontario to a leadership role in the fight against climate change:

1. Achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050

- Collaborate with municipal and federal partners and businesses for a whole-of-government approach to transform Ontario into a net-zero emissions province by 2050.
- Transform the provincial public sector into a net-zero emissions entity by 2040.
- Prioritize affordability and avoid placing a disproportionate financial burden on vulnerable communities while transitioning to a net-zero emissions province.

2. Transform Ontario's electricity grid

- Expedite the integration of clean, renewable, and cost-effective energy sources such as solar, wind, and nuclear, leveraging the latest innovations in grid management and storage.
- Strategically transition natural gas to be an emergency backup for peak demand, while supporting demand-side conservation and exploring grid-balancing technologies.
- Incentivize R&D and pilot cutting-edge grid technologies that enhance efficiency, reduce transmission losses, and facilitate decentralized energy production for a reliable, resilient and clean electricity grid by 2035.

3. Protect Ontario's rich biodiversity

- Preserve, restore and regenerate Ontario's unique ecosystems, including wetlands, forests and the Greenbelt aiming to protect 30% of Ontario's land and water by 2030.

- Collaborate with Indigenous communities to recognize, establish and manage Indigenous Protected Areas, honoring both ecological and cultural significance.
- Read more in our [Greenbelt and nature](#) platform.

4. Empower Conservation Authorities

- Restore and enhance the original mandates of Conservation Authorities, and provide them with the tools and resources they need to:
 - prevent flooding, and protect green spaces, natural heritage, farmland, drinking water and species at risk;
 - support homeowners and municipalities to mitigate the effect of climate change and avoid damage to property and physical assets; and
 - work more closely with Indigenous communities.

5. Support zero-emission driving

- Partner with the public and private sectors to accelerate the widespread rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in public spaces and support the national goal of all new vehicles being sold to be electric or zero-emissions vehicles by 2035.
- Reinstate incentives on the purchase or lease of a non-luxury electric vehicle and installation of an EV-charging station.

6. Help homeowners save on utility bills and make their homes emission-free

- Match the incentives from the Canada Greener Homes Initiative, enabling homeowners to make energy improvements, such as installing geothermal heat pumps, to make their homes energy efficient, climate resilient, and lower their electricity and home heating bills.
- Offer tax credits, rebates and other incentives to ensure that purpose-built rental housing owners, condominium boards, social housing providers and commercial building owners have access to enough capital to upgrade their buildings to improve energy efficiency and adopt low-carbon heating and cooling technologies.
- Update the Ontario Building Code to improve climate resilience of buildings in our communities to provide residents with comfort, affordable operating costs, and protection from extreme heat, flood and air-quality risks. Introduce a building performance standard for existing buildings that protects residents, cuts pollution and bolsters community resilience.

7. Support alternative fuels

- Champion the development of alternative low-carbon fuels, for hard to abate industries such as aviation.
- Establish standards to facilitate broader adoption, which includes advancing industrial decarbonization, and the use of blue and green hydrogen.

8. Reduce waste and support a circular economy

- Improve Ontario's waste diversion rate – currently stuck around 30% – and double it in 10 years.

- Overhaul waste-management standards to support the development of the circular economy, particularly in the industrial, commercial, and institutional sectors which produce 60% of the province's waste.
- Enforce stricter producer responsibility for residential waste and collaborate with federal counterparts to combat plastic pollution, adopt natural alternatives and develop markets for recovered materials.

9. Create good clean, local jobs

- Attract new investment and support start-ups and scale-ups in the clean technology sector by providing grants, flexible-term loans, interest-free loans, loan guarantees, and tax credits to stimulate innovation, and create good-paying, local and clean jobs across the province.
- Prioritize procurement from sustainable sources to stimulate Ontario's clean tech sector through Supply Ontario.
- Invest in training, apprenticeships, reskilling and upskilling programs to develop a dynamic workforce ready to support the growth of the clean-tech industry while earning a better income.
- Adequately fund research, development and commercialization of innovative, clean technology solutions, particularly those that facilitate industrial decarbonization and support decarbonization efforts in hard-to-abate sectors.

10. Invest in energy storage, and carbon capture and utilization technologies

- Invest in pioneering energy-storage solutions, emphasizing advancements in battery recycling and the exploration of hydrogen fuel's potential.
- In collaboration with industry leaders, drive the implementation of Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS) projects, particularly for hard-to-abate sectors, as well as the development of carbon storage hubs.

11. Build and support public transit

- Ramp up capital and operational funding for public transit to maintain, refurbish, upgrade, and expand infrastructure to transform public transit services into the preferred mode of transportation and commuting.
- Support regional and local transit agencies as well as school-bus operators to switch to zero-emission fleets.
- Partner with municipalities to champion sustainable urban and land-use planning, and add new protected bike lanes, parks, trails and green spaces.

12. Support industrial decarbonization

- Maintain competitiveness of Ontario's businesses and prevent carbon leakage by assisting trade-exposed industries to transition to low-carbon or zero-emission alternatives, and adopt innovative and tailored decarbonization solutions.
- Provide matching grants to encourage trade-exposed industries to perform feasibility studies to identify potential pathways toward decarbonization, procure technology-ready alternatives, and adopt innovative solutions.

13. Protect farmlands and enhance food security



- Protect prime farmlands from being paved over to ensure food security, boost the supply of locally grown fruits, crops and vegetables, and reduce the emissions that result from shipping food from distant locations.
- Introduce right-to-repair legislation to allow farmers to use and conveniently repair at their local shop cutting-edge tools that are energy efficient and deliver better crop yield.

Do you have ideas to help rebuild our Party and province? Email us at info@bonnieforleader.ca