

ONTARIO CLIMATE CHANGE LAB

Solutions for Ontario's Climate Challenge

Executive Summary
August 2014



To meet Ontario's carbon reduction targets, Ontario will need both cap-and-trade and a suite of complementary policies and programs. This report focuses on what those complementary climate action policies and programs might look like.

Ontarians support climate action. And they have good ideas about how we can reduce our emissions in a way that cleans our air, creates new opportunities for businesses and creates jobs. Recently, 150 Ontarians spent a day at the Ontario Climate Change Lab lending their expertise to solving Ontario's climate challenge, which resulted in this report and recommendations.

Hosted by the Clean Economy Alliance, the Climate Change Lab brought together representatives from businesses, industry associations, labour unions, agricultural groups, health charities, environmental organizations, First Nations, academics and policymakers to discuss and provide input into Ontario's climate strategy.

The Climate Change Lab drew on the expertise of Ontarians and, through facilitated panel discussions, produced a series of actionable recommendations for the provincial government to include in its climate change strategy. The panels included: Decarbonisation of Ontario's electricity sector; Reducing emissions from buildings; Transportation and Land Use; Business and Industry; The Role of Cities; Building Capacity for Climate Action; Clean Tech & Innovation; Health Impacts of Climate Change.

Each session concluded with participants voting for the one recommendation they thought most important for inclusion in the strategy. Recommendations that received the most votes from participants are included in this report, intended for government decision-makers as they draft Ontario's climate strategy.

The diversity of the stakeholders and the open and participatory process yielded high quality recommendations that will help Ontario in its efforts to reduce greenhouse gases while building an inclusive, competitive, clean economy. We hope Ontario gives this report the attention it deserves.

All of the recommendations discussed during the Climate Change Lab are listed in the report. But for simplicity's sake, here are the recommendations that received the most votes during the Ontario Climate Change Lab.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

DECARBONIZATION OF ONTARIO'S ELECTRICITY SECTOR

	VOTES
Incent residents and businesses to transition to a distributed electricity system that allows renewable power to be produced and consumed individually and locally	9
Invest a portion of cap-and-trade revenues in solar power, energy storage, and a distributed grid	8
Achieve all cost-effective energy conservation by fully implementing Ontario's Conservation First policy and framework	8
Pursue pragmatism, rather than perfectionism, in designing Ontario's cap-and-trade system and climate change strategy in order to make it politically palatable and durable	8

EMISSIONS FROM BUILDINGS

	VOTES
Mandate energy reporting and benchmarking for large buildings and energy audits and report cards for homes	22
Create novel financing mechanisms, such as Local Improvement Charges and the Property Assessed Clean Energy model, that make efficiency retrofits in the buildings sector more accessible and affordable	8
Improve building energy codes by switching to a performance-based code system (as opposed to prescriptive codes for design/materials), implementing green development standards (i.e. Toronto Green Standard), and phasing in a net-zero mandate for new residential/commercial buildings	7

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

	VOTES
Apply a carbon lens to all decision-making that considers the complete lifecycle assessments of products, including upstream, operations and downstream	18
Require all Ontario regulated pension funds to disclose their carbon footprints (as France requires) and all large companies to disclose their carbon profiles (as the UK requires). Government can help establish the methodology	12
Companies should develop plans to keep warming under 2°C, with a 5 per cent carbon productivity improvement per year as a good place to start to show alignment with the 2°C or less scenario	8

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

VOTES

Encourage more people to get out of their cars by putting a price on congestion, building and maintaining HOV and HOT lanes, incentivizing employers to offer more flexible work arrangements (flex hours, telecommuting), and building safer cycling infrastructure

11

Align provincial climate change policy and municipal land use policy by mandating GHG reduction targets in official plans and requiring municipalities to measure and monitor progress toward targets and estimate the impact of GHG emissions from all new developments

9

Locate new development along existing and future transit lines by setting intensification targets along transit lines, tying transit funding to meeting those targets, and building transit where growth is occurring and is expected to occur

6

Maximize and prioritize investment in public transportation to improve service and increase accessibility

6

THE ROLE OF CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

VOTES

Establish a mandate—supported by the provincial government—for regions and municipalities to set targets for energy use and GHG emissions; develop customized, locally-appropriate energy and carbon reduction strategies, energy plans, and climate change adaptation plans by 2020; report on progress; and incur (meaningful) penalties for non-compliance

15

Facilitate access to appropriate financing needed for municipalities to reduce emissions. (e.g. Infrastructure Ontario for development of district energy and distributed energy)

7

Build capacity among city hall staff and more broadly across economic sectors to understand and implement solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation

7

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE ACTION

VOTES

Job creation must be an integral part of the climate strategy, including targets, government investments, and policy mechanisms to grow low-carbon industry

10

Encourage Ontarians to work with/learn from First Nations to address climate and environment concerns

5

The climate strategy must include appropriations for low-income groups, tailor approaches for Ontario, build on and expand existing programs, and deliver community benefits

4

CLEAN TECH AND INNOVATION

	VOTES
Enact Ontario Building Code changes to support conservation and efficiency, using California's Title 24 as a model	6
Require government procurement to foster innovation and connect procurement to GHG targets	4
Support innovation, using both carrots and sticks, that creates the conditions for innovation to flourish, including regulatory change, credit enhancement, and streamlining the process from research and development to commercialization	4

HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

	VOTES
Frame climate change as a health issue by better modelling and accounting for the direct/indirect costs of energy and communicate human health impacts as central to climate change. Like the coal phase-out, climate policy is health policy	5
Ensure the climate strategy is applied across all levels of government ministries	5
Ensure principles of environmental justice are captured in the climate strategy	3
Mandate changes in urban design to ensure low-carbon, healthy, livable communities	3

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