

# Backgrounder Document d'information



Ministry of  
the Environment

Ministère de  
l'Environnement

August 8, 2007

## THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO'S ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

The Ontario government is building on four years of action on climate change and clean air with an ambitious plan to reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution. Since 2003, coal plant emissions have been reduced by one-third, the government has protected 1.8 million acres with its Greenbelt Plan and worked with Ontarians to conserve energy.

December 16, 2003

The Greenbelt Protection Act is introduced and receives first reading.

September 20, 2004

Measures are introduced to help Ontario homes and businesses cut growth in peak electricity demand by at least five per cent by 2007.

October 28, 2004

The Greenbelt Protection Act passes, protecting 1.8-million acres of parks, forests and other greenspace that help clean our air and provide a place for healthy outdoor activities.

November 26, 2004

Regulations are introduced requiring an annual average of five per cent ethanol in gasoline beginning in 2007, which will reduce 800,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

April 30, 2005

Lakeview Generating Station, a coal-burning power plant near Toronto, was closed.

May 19, 2005

Government buildings at Queen's Park will receive their cooling from Enwave's deep lake cooling system, cutting energy demand for cooling by 90 per cent.

June 13, 2005

The Places to Grow Act encourages smart, sustainable urban development in high-growth areas across the province.

The first Shared Air Summit brings together government, corporate, scientific and non-governmental leaders from Canada and the United States to discuss strategies to reduce transboundary air pollution, smog and climate change.

August 29, 2005

New standards for 40 air pollutants will now protect Ontario communities from the impacts of air pollution, the largest update in over 25 years.

August 29, 2005

Tough regulations and limits are set for the largest industrial sources of smog-causing emissions. Limits will become even more stringent in 2010 and 2015.

October 6, 2005

The Ontario Power Authority provides financial support for the Social Housing Services Corporation's Social Housing Green Light Initiative, a provincewide initiative to help social housing providers take action to reduce energy use in their buildings through upgrades of lighting and appliances.

October 25, 2005

A new regulation allows net metering, which provides credit to customers who generate their own power from renewable sources for any excess electricity they put back into the grid.

November 21, 2005

690 new wind turbines are up and running or in the works, up from just 10 in 2003.

December 6, 2005

The government commits to reduce its own electricity use by at least 10 per cent by 2007.

February 17, 2006

The Minister of Environment and Attorney General file comments with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to call for a reduction in transboundary air pollution.

March 10, 2006

The Ontario Power Authority initiates programs with the Builder Owners and Managers Association for 150 MW of electricity reduction, and with the City of Toronto and Toronto Hydro for an additional 90 MW each. (In March 2007, the program is launched and directs funds to eligible participants towards the capital cost of demand-reducing and energy-saving initiatives in their buildings).

March 21, 2006

A Renewable Standard Offer provides a guaranteed price for electricity produced by small-scale wind, biomass or small hydroelectric projects. Over 10 years, this could add up to 1,000 MW of renewable energy to Ontario's electricity supply — enough to power 250,000 homes. (As of July 2007, 78 Standard Offer Contracts have been executed by the OPA, representing over 400 megawatts of renewable energy).

March 23, 2006 (Ontario Budget)

\$838 million is invested in GTA public transit to help reduce gridlock, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Doubling the maximum rebate for qualified hybrid vehicles to \$2,000 helps car owners reduce their greenhouse gases.

May 10, 2006

The government of Ontario joins legal case in the United States against coal plants to protect the province's air quality.

June 21, 2006

The Ministry of the Environment creates Executive Committee on Transboundary Air Pollution and Advisory Committee on Transboundary Science.

June 26, 2006

The second Shared Air Summit is held and Ontario signs agreements with Quebec to reduce transboundary air pollution, smog and climate change.

Targets are set that will help reduce demand by 6,300 megawatts (MW) of electricity, through conservation, by 2025.

Targets are set that will double the installed capacity of renewable energy sources to 15,700 MW by 2025. (As of July 2007, over 1,300 MW of renewable energy sources have been arranged and more are being pursued.)

September 22, 2006

The Energy Conservation Responsibility Act — the first law of its kind in Canada — is created.

October 6, 2006

Ontario signs agreements with Northeast U.S. states to reduce transboundary air pollution, smog and climate change.

October 16, 2006

The government contracts for over 400 MW of combined heat and power projects. (On June 14, 2007, announced a second CHP procurement.)

December 31, 2006

Ontario's 2006 Building Code introduces energy-efficiency requirements that, over the next seven years, will save enough energy to power 380,000 homes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about five megatonnes, the equivalent of taking 250,000 cars off the road.

Emissions from Ontario's coal plants are cut by almost a third between 2003 and 2006.

February 6, 2007

A regulation is proposed banning the burning of used oil in space heaters in southern Ontario, which would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support better air quality and public health.

February 20, 2007

To increase the supply of hydroelectric power, construction begins to provide an additional 1.6 billion kilowatt hours of clean, renewable electricity per year from Niagara Falls. New transmission lines will also carry more clean energy from Quebec.

A joint \$3.7 million program with the federal government and the Ontario Power Authority will encourage the use of energy efficient products in the construction of new housing built under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program.

March 20, 2007

Protection for species at risk is strengthened with legislation that is among the toughest in North America.

April 1, 2007

The Ministry of the Environment's headquarters switches to Bullfrog Power so that all the building's electricity comes from renewable, low-emission sources.

April 18, 2007

Inefficient incandescent light bulbs are banned, beginning in 2012. When fully implemented, this could save up to six million MWh of electricity.

Five innovative energy conservation programs are launched for summer 2007, providing tools to save energy, money and the environment:

- Every Kilowatt Counts
- Summer Savings
- Great Refrigerator Roundup
- Residential Load Control
- Cool Savings

April 22, 2007

\$2 million is provided to the Trees Ontario Foundation, which intends to plant 1.8 million new trees on the Greenbelt by 2010.

April 26, 2007

A new solar energy farm is approved near Sarnia, which will be one of the largest in the world.

April 27, 2007

A commitment is made to provide homeowners with rebates of up to \$150 to help pay for home energy audits.

May 8, 2007

The government moves to phase out the use of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons in industrial, commercial and institutional refrigeration and air conditioning units and chillers. These changes could also save up to 50 MW of electricity.

May 9, 2007

A voluntary agreement with grocery stores is announced that will cut the use of plastic bags by 50 per cent over five years.

May 28, 2007

The new PowerWise campaign encourages Ontarians to use energy more efficiently.

May 30, 2007

Ontario and California sign an agreement to fight global warming by coordinating policies on fuel standards. Ontario will require producers to reduce carbon emissions from transportation fuels by 10 per cent by 2020 — the equivalent of removing 700,000 cars from the roads.

June 11, 2007

Funding is doubled to support not-for-profit organizations delivering innovative conservation initiatives in their communities through the \$1.5 million Community Conservation Initiatives program. (Last year, the program supported 24 community-based conservation projects across Ontario.) In total the government is enabling up to \$2 billion in new investments in conservation across Ontario.

June 13, 2007

The Municipal Eco Challenge Fund is announced — a three-year, \$220 million loan and grant program to help municipalities reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

June 14, 2007

North America's first clean-energy Standard Offer program is introduced.

June 15, 2007

A multi-year \$17.5 billion rapid transit action plan is launched for the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton, delivering jobs and investment by reducing congestion.

The Ontario Power Authority's Industrial Demand Response Program will reward companies for reducing their on-grid electricity consumption during periods of high provincial electricity demand. The Ontario Power Authority is planning to introduce additional demand response programs for summer 2007. (The program reduced Ontario peak demand by as much as 182 MW during summer 2006 peaks, and reduced consumption by more than 9,000 MWh.)

June 18, 2007

Premier McGuinty sets ambitious but realistic targets to reduce greenhouse gases below 1990 levels — six per cent by 2014, 15 per cent by 2020 and an 80 per cent reduction by 2050.

The third Shared Air Summit brings together more than 400 international leaders to focus on taking tough action to fight climate change and improve air quality.

Ontario signs an agreement with New Brunswick to reduce transboundary air pollution, smog and climate change.

June 19, 2007

Government invests \$650 million in Next Generation Jobs Funds for companies looking to invest in the development of clean and green technology such as clean cars, clean fuels, and clean technologies and products in Ontario.

June 20, 2007

Invested \$150 million in Ontario's Home Energy Retrofit Program and solar power initiative to help Ontario homeowners fight climate change, conserve energy and adopt green technologies to ensure the province meets its greenhouse gas emissions targets through loans, tax rebates and other incentives.

July 12, 2007

Government posts on the Environmental Registry proposed regulation under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) to ensure that coal is not used to generate electricity at the Atikokan, Lambton, Nanticoke and Thunder Bay coal generating facilities after December 31, 2014.

July 19, 2007

Government appoints Dr. Ian Burton and Dr. David Pearson as co-chairs for a new Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation.

July 26, 2007

Unveiled new \$9 million Ontario Biogas Systems Financial Assistance Program to turn greenhouse gases from farms into clean energy.

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