

Response to Ontario's Environmental Commissioner's Final Report

On March 27th, 2019 Diane Saxe, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner (ECO) delivered her last report [A Healthy, Happy, Prosperous Ontario- Why we need more energy conservation](#), highlighting how "Ontario is heading in the wrong direction on the environment".

The Government of Ontario announced last fall the elimination of the Office of the Environmental Commissioner and decided to merge its functions with the Auditor General. The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) called the government to reverse this decision, as OSPE values the importance of an independent office that reports on government progress on climate change, energy, and other environmental issues.

In this detailed report, the ECO recommends that the government of Ontario follow these evidence based best practices:

1. Significantly reduce Ontario's bill for importing fossil fuels through energy conservation and fuel switching. Set targets for reducing Ontario's use of each fossil fuel, track and report progress.
2. Deliver its 3.2 megatonnes of greenhouse gas reductions from conservation programs.
3. Slash the energy needed in older homes by improving more building envelopes during planned renovations.
4. Provide homes and jobs for the growing population, without locking them into sprawl, congestion and gridlock.

OSPE supports these 4 key recommendations.

OSPE believes in the importance of accurately measuring and valuing greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. As the transportation sector accounts for 35% of the provincial GHG inventory, it is imperative to ensure the deeper decarbonization of the transportation sector in Ontario. It is also imperative that the government establish a lifecycle assessment approach, where emissions are measured throughout the entire process across the fuel's production, delivery and use stages.

As the Environment Commissioner's report points out, Ontario's current low-carbon electricity system is a critical reality that must be leveraged through additional policy considerations. OSPE's research has revealed that Ontario's current electricity system produces significant amounts of surplus emission-free electricity that is exported and later curtailed. Unfortunately, Ontarians do not have the possibility to purchase this surplus electricity at the same wholesale price as other jurisdictions. OSPE recommends that the government of Ontario reform its retail electricity price plans with the opportunity of reducing consumer energy bills, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.

OSPE stresses the conclusion of the Environment Commissioner's final report that "if the government follows evidence based best practices and takes appropriate action, energy

conservation can help Ontarians save money, reduce climate damage and increase their health and well-being".

Engineers can provide the government with the expertise required to develop long-term, comprehensive climate change policies to protect the environment. Engineers understand the requirements for innovative, sustainable and efficient building designs, effective energy policy decisions and the impact climate change has on our natural environment and communities.

OSPE will continue to provide the Government of Ontario with sound evidence-based recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Hack', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Hack, P.Eng
President and Chair
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandro Perruzza', written in a cursive style.

Sandro Perruzza
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers