



Protect Ontario

Speech from the Throne | Government of Ontario



Tuesday, April 15, 2025

ADDRESS OF

**The Honourable
Edith Dumont**

Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Speech from the Throne to
Open the First Session of the
44th Parliament of Ontario



Protect
Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Speaker of the House, Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen, people of Ontario:

As we meet here today, it is important to recognize that we are on the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples, whose enduring stewardship continues to shape Ontario. Toronto has historically been a significant gathering place for various Indigenous nations, including the Anishinabeg, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, and the Métis peoples. This area is covered by Treaty 13, also known as the Toronto Purchase, and I pay my respects to the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We deeply respect Indigenous knowledge and stewardship. As we move forward, we are committed to working together in partnership, fostering collaboration and mutual respect to build a better future for all.

As the representative of His Majesty, King Charles III, I have the honour and pleasure of opening this first session of the 44th Parliament of Ontario.

I would like to first congratulate all the newly elected and re-elected members of this provincial parliament. As the people of Ontario's representatives, you have been entrusted to give voice to the people's interests in this, their House.

Your role is rooted in a rich history of harnessing change and overcoming challenge.

In fact, the first legislative assembly of what is now the province of Ontario met more than two centuries ago, in a tiny village on the south shore of Lake Ontario.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

The members of that first assembly were Loyalists, men who fled north from the turmoil of the American Revolution to build a new home here, in Canada.

These new Canadians confronted the question of how to protect their new homeland. They had come to a land of enormous potential but faced the immediate and urgent risk of invasion and annexation by their American neighbours.

In the years to come, Ontario and Canada's proximity to the United States would lead first to conflict, then to one of the most productive, prosperous and peaceful partnerships in the history of the world.

Today's legislature looks very different from that first assembly.

It better reflects the diversity of our province, including the Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of these lands.

It reflects our linguistic diversity, including our province's rich Francophone heritage, a community that has for centuries helped define and strengthen Ontario's social, cultural and political institutions.

It reflects the incredible growth and change this province has experienced since that first assembly met, two hundred and thirty-three years ago.

Yet the challenges you face today as members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario are once again shaped by Ontario and Canada's partnership and proximity to the United States.

South of the border, President Donald Trump is openly taking aim at Ontario's economy and our national sovereignty. He has even threatened to use economic force to break our country.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

This, of course, will never happen.

Because Canada is not for sale. Canada will never be the 51st state.

Your government is united in its determination to protect Ontario and to protect Canada, no matter what.

We must be prepared for the challenge ahead.

Over the last seven years, our province has come so far.

Ontario has welcomed nearly \$70 billion of investment in key sectors, helping to create more than one million new jobs since 2018.

These investments did not happen by chance. They are the result of your government's relentless focus on reducing costs for businesses and creating the conditions for them to grow, hire and thrive.

Now, as the rest of the world joins Ontario and Canada in confronting President Trump's tariffs, this progress is under urgent threat.

As President Trump's tariffs reach maximum impact, goods and services that once flowed freely across our border are grinding to a halt, causing chaos and uncertainty.

Business owners once planning to expand are now worried about making payroll.

Workers owed a hard-earned promotion are now worried about next week's paycheque.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Parents dreaming of the limitless potential of their children's future are now worried what the future holds.

These are the concerns that are driving your government to act. These are the concerns that are driving your government to deliver on its promise to protect Ontario, for today and for generations to come.

Protect Ontario from Economic Uncertainty

President Trump's approach to tariffs has been, in a word, chaotic.

He has at times pursued them with unrelenting determination, only to pull back, narrow the scope or offer full-scale exemptions. The president is taking uneven aim at specific sectors of our economy over others, often offering opposing or contradictory targets and timelines.

The consequence: widespread economic uncertainty.

Your government is taking action to help workers, businesses and communities weather the storm.

As a first step in helping Ontario's workers and businesses, the province is providing \$11 billion in urgent relief, helping to provide the fiscal flexibility necessary to adapt and confront the growing challenge of economic uncertainty.

With President Trump's tariffs taking aim at Ontario's auto sector, it has never been more important to provide the tens of thousands of autoworkers across the province an unyielding commitment.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Your government will continue to stand firmly behind and maintain its financial contributions to the electric vehicle and battery auto pact that attracted \$46 billion in new investments. Your government's expectation, and the expectation of every autoworker in Ontario, is that whichever party forms the next federal government will do the same.

Your government will continue to monitor the impact of President Trump's tariffs and stands ready to support those sectors most impacted.

The federal government needs to do the same. Every cent of revenues raised through Canada's reciprocal tariffs needs to be shared with workers and businesses as quickly as possible. Paycheques and livelihoods are depending on it.

Plan to Protect Ontario

While President Trump's tariffs represent the most immediate threat to Ontario's economy, they are a symptom of a much larger challenge.

For decades, Ontario and Canada have relied on free trade with the United States to deliver unprecedented economic growth and prosperity.

The last few months, however, have taught us that we can no longer assume the benefits of our economic partnership with the United States. The strength of Ontario's economy and the social programs it funds can no longer depend on a partner that has proven itself to be fundamentally unreliable.

Instead, your government will build an economy that is more competitive, more resilient and more self-reliant.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

To be clear: your government will continue to engage with American lawmakers in good-faith discussions to make the case that we are stronger when we work together in common cause as allies and partners. Economic realities make doing so a necessity.

At the same time, your government will go to extraordinary lengths to make sure our province and country can stand on its own.

Doing so will require making tough decisions. We can no longer accept a status quo that stifles growth and slows down progress.

Instead, your government will take a radically different approach to the way things have been done as it moves forward with its ambitious plan to protect Ontario.

As it does, the people of this province can be proud that they are served by the most effective and efficient public service in Canada. Your government has driven excellence through the introduction of Lean methodologies as it has worked with Ontario Public Service leadership to streamline and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape.

Delivering on your government's plan will require further innovation. A relentless pursuit of excellence is and will remain at the heart of the work of Ontario's public service.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy

Your government's plan to protect Ontario starts with unleashing the province's enormous economic potential. It starts with transforming Ontario's economy into the most competitive place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business.

First, we need to tear down internal trade barriers within Canada.

Internal trade barriers are no different than President Trump's tariffs: they increase costs, slow growth and hurt every-day, hard-working people. They stop Ontario's economy from reaching its full potential.

In fact, internal trade barriers cost Canada's economy \$200 billion every year and increase what families and businesses pay for goods and services by nearly 15 per cent.

They make life more expensive and restrict Canadians' ability to buy and sell from each other. They divide our country and hold us back.

That is why as its first order of business your government will introduce legislation to protect Ontario through free trade within Canada.

Goods produced and services provided in other provinces and territories will be treated the same in Ontario, provided other provinces and territories do the same.

Hard-earned credentials from other provinces and territories will be recognized automatically, ensuring highly skilled workers from elsewhere in Canada can get on the job faster, fill key gaps in Ontario's labour force and help grow our economy.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

No restrictions, no red tape: just free trade within Canada.

The province will also be a leading voice in the federation for new railways, highways, airports and seaports. Your government will champion new pipelines eastward, westward, north and south, connecting Alberta oil to new refineries, new tidewater, and beyond it, new markets.

Much like the Canadian Pacific Railway tied our young country together 150 years ago, new nation-building infrastructure will reduce our reliance on the United States and help open up new markets for Canadian products overseas.

This includes Ontario's vast supply of critical minerals.

The frontline in Canada's battle against President Trump's economic threats rests in the Ring of Fire.

Covering approximately 5,000 square kilometers, the Ring of Fire contains the most promising mineral development opportunities in the world, representing billions in economic potential. The region includes reserves of chromite, copper, cobalt, nickel, platinum and every other mineral necessary for the growth of advanced economies.

As Ontario and Canada confront the challenge of President Trump's economic disruption, there's no better point of leverage on the world stage.

Simply put, Ontario has the minerals the world needs.

To effectively seize this opportunity, however, we need to get our critical minerals out of the ground, processed and shipped to the factory floors building for the future.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

For decades, Ontario's critical minerals have remained trapped, locked and held back by red tape and duplicative federal approval processes that together can take up to 15 years to complete.

At a time when Ontario is fighting for the future of its economy, uncertainty in timelines and approvals is no longer acceptable. What we used to do in decades we must now do in months.

As its second order of business, your government will introduce bold new legislation to unlock the Ring of Fire.

Once passed, this new legislation will provide the government the authority to designate regions where multiple critical mineral deposits are present or likely to be present, including the Ring of Fire, as regions of strategic importance to the province's economy and security interests.

Within the boundaries of these regions, proponents that meet high operating, safety and environmental standards will benefit from significantly streamlined permitting and approvals, alongside an uninterrupted commitment to meeting duty to consult requirements. Roads, highways and the infrastructure necessary to unlock Ontario's critical minerals will also benefit from these streamlined approvals.

Your government will ensure that northern communities reap the benefits of critical mineral development, including for First Nations communities through equity partnerships that offer generational economic opportunities.

Alongside bold action to unleash the economic potential of Ontario's abundant supply of critical minerals, your government will restore sense and sanity to a labyrinth of rules and regulations that bring development in the province to a standstill.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Over the course of its mandate, your government will further streamline the province's environmental assessment process and bring common-sense conservation principles to the role of Conservation Authorities and species-at-risk requirements.

As Ontario eliminates red tape, the federal government must do the same. Faced with an existential threat to Canada's economy, the federal government can no longer adhere to failed policies that do nothing more than delay and destroy new resource projects.

As your government helps get Ontario's critical minerals out of the ground, it is also preparing historic investments to support critical mineral processing capacity here at home. Instead of being ripped and shipped overseas, minerals mined in Ontario will be refined in Ontario, creating new opportunities for workers in northern hubs like Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and Timmins.

This is an ambitious plan. It will require an extraordinary amount of energy to succeed: over the next 25 years, demand for electricity in Ontario is projected to grow by at least 75 per cent, the equivalent of adding four and a half cities the size of Toronto.

Ontario's energy policy will determine the success of our province's economy, today and for a generation to come.

It's why for the last seven years your government has been hard at work restoring the promise of Ontario's energy advantage. Now, today, the province boasts one of the cleanest grids in North America, with a steady and reliable supply of affordable electricity powering Ontario's growing economy.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Next, your government will invest unprecedented amounts in new energy production, transmission and storage to transform our province into a global clean energy superpower, able to export clean energy and technology across the continent and beyond.

This includes the first small modular nuclear reactors in the G7 at Darlington nuclear site, alongside upgrades to existing nuclear facilities at the Darlington, Pickering and Bruce nuclear generating stations to extend their lifespans and expand their generating capacity.

Your government is also working with interested municipalities and First Nations to dramatically expand Ontario's energy generating capacity, including exploring building the first new large-scale nuclear power plants in the province in more than 30 years in Bruce County and Port Hope.

Ontario's energy policy proves it's possible to grow the economy, create jobs, lower costs and provide a continental solution to reduce emissions, without ever punishing families and businesses with a costly carbon tax.

Protect Ontario by Building

In the face of economic uncertainty, your government will double down on its plan to build.

With President Trump's tariffs taking direct aim at Ontario, this historic infrastructure plan will get shovels in the ground sooner and keep thousands of workers on the job.

The growing cost of gridlock to Ontario's economy makes doing so an economic imperative, as well.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Each year, gridlock costs the province more than \$56 billion. If we do not act, the cost is projected to grow to \$108 billion annually in less than 20 years.

Your government is acting.

Ontario will invest over \$200 billion in its plan to build, the largest investment of its kind in Canadian history, including new and upgraded roads and highways in every part of the province.

This includes building a new tunnel expressway and transitway under Highway 401 to get people, products and services moving along the busiest highway in all of North America.

At the same time, your government will bring common sense back to bike lanes, moving them off of our busiest streets and onto secondary roads.

Your government will also continue to invest in and build out the largest expansion of public transit in North America, including expanding subway service by more than 50 per cent.

This mandate, service will once again resume for the Northlander passenger train, connecting northern communities like Cochrane, Timmins, North Bay and the Muskoka region directly to Union Station in Toronto.

Your government will also continue to improve GO train passenger service across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, bringing more frequent GO train service to Kitchener and Niagara, while extending GO train service to Bowmanville. Your government will begin working with rail, municipal and federal partners to build GO 2.0, a transformational expansion of GO train service that will make Ontario the most connected and convenient place to travel by transit on the continent.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Your government will also continue to make historic investments to build the local infrastructure needed to unlock new homes.

Following the example of leaders like Mayor Steven Del Duca of Vaughan and Mayor Carolyn Parrish of Mississauga, the province will leverage these growing investments to work with municipalities to lower their costly local development fees that add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost of a new home for Ontario families.

At the same time, your government will standardize and bring more transparency to the cost and timelines of building homes, including for local development charges, study requirements and Building Code permit approvals.

As your government delivers on its ambitious \$200 billion plan to build, it will promote and prioritize made-in-Ontario and made-in-Canada products, including making Ontario and Canadian steel, cement, forestry and other construction materials mandatory for government-funded infrastructure projects.

Protect Ontario Workers

Since 2018, your government has partnered with unions to train workers for rewarding and in-demand careers in the skilled trades.

The result: \$1.5 billion invested in skills development and a million more people working today at a better job taking home a bigger paycheck.

With economic uncertainty all around, Ontario will do whatever it takes to protect our province's greatest competitive advantage: our highly skilled, world-class workforce.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Your government will expand its investments in training and skills development so more people can benefit from the dignity of a hard-earned paycheque.

Your government will also continue to ensure students today are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.

It begins in the classroom, with a back-to-basics approach that's helping students gain the foundational skills they need in reading, writing and math.

Your government is also providing new opportunities for students to learn critical life skills like personal finance. It is increasing access to career coaching to connect the next generation with the jobs of the future.

As Ontario continues its record investments in public education, your government will ensure that these and all investments are directed to students in the classroom, instead of increasing the size of school board administration.

Your government will also continue to support Ontario's colleges and universities, including with increased funding for training capacity and programs designed to fill critical gaps in the province's workforce.

Protect Ontario by Keeping Costs Down

Ontario families, like families across Canada, have faced a generational cost-of-living crisis, first because of inflation and then because of the punishing interest rate hikes that followed fast and frequent.

Now, families across Ontario face the threat of higher costs because of tariffs, raising the price of the everyday essentials that people rely on.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

People need relief.

It's why Ontario led the fight against the federal carbon tax.

It's why your government has put thousands of dollars back into peoples' pockets.

And it's why this mandate, your government will do more to lower costs for hard-working families.

Taxpayer dollars belong to taxpayers, not government. Now more than ever, you deserve to keep more of what's yours.

Protect Ontario Borders and Communities

Your government will deliver on its duty to protect Ontario communities, both from growing economic threats and the dangerous criminals and illegal drugs menacing our streets and crossing our borders.

Starting at our borders, Operation Deterrence is already producing results.

Launched in January this year, Operation Deterrence is enhancing security at Ontario's borders to crack down on the flow of illegal guns, drugs and border crossings.

Your government is determined to crack down on crime in our communities, too.

That's why Ontario has successfully transitioned nine drug injection sites near schools and daycares into recovery-oriented hubs, with another 19 expected to open in communities across the province in the coming weeks and months.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

And it's why Ontario will re-introduce legislation to provide municipalities the enhanced tools they need to end encampments and clean up our parks and public spaces. Your government stands firm in its commitment to do whatever is necessary, and to use whatever legal tools might be required, to help municipalities get the job done.

As Ontario steps up, the federal government needs to do its part. Your government will continue to press Ottawa to finally fix its broken bail system, ending the catch-and-release policies that let violent, repeat offenders loose and make our communities less safe.

At the provincial level, your government will appoint tough-on-crime judges and justices of the peace that put the interests of victims ahead of criminals.

Your government will also continue to invest in and build new and expanded jails to make sure that these criminals stay behind bars.

Protect Ontario Health Care

The foundation of every single social program this and any government funds is a strong economy. Our economy provides the necessary revenues to invest in education, supportive housing and health care.

In turn, President Trump's threats against our economy are also a threat against the world-class health care system Ontario families depend on. Your government's plan to protect Ontario's economy is a plan to protect health care.

Your government has never hesitated to reach across the political aisle for good ideas.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Jane Philpott's Primary Care Action Team and supported by a transformational investment of more than \$1.8 billion, your government is delivering on its promise to connect every person in the province to a family doctor and primary care within the next four years.

Ontario's plan to provide more connected and convenient care includes the largest expansion of medical education in more than a decade, new programs to pay for school and supplies for family doctors and new community and diagnostic surgical centres.

Ontario's plan is leveraging the skills and expertise of pharmacists and other highly trained health care professionals and is making a historic 10-year, \$50 billion investment to build and upgrade more than 50 hospitals across the province. For the first time in generations, communities in every corner of Ontario are seeing shovels in the ground on new and expanded hospitals.

Your government is also investing \$6.4 billion to build and upgrade 58,000 long-term care beds, with tremendous progress being made.

As your government continues to make unprecedented investments into the health care system, it will continue to prioritize patients and their health above a dogmatic ideology that seeks to protect and preserve an outdated status quo. It will bring the principles of Lean methodologies to deliver care in emergency departments and surgical centres more efficiently, saving you precious time and further shortening wait lists.

As it does, your government will ensure people in Ontario are able to access health care services with their OHIP card, never their credit card.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

Ready to Protect Ontario

This is your government's vision. This is your government's mission and the mandate the people of this great province have endorsed.

The challenges Ontario faces today are profound. At their most extreme, these challenges pose existential risks to our province's economy and to Canada's national sovereignty.

Our province and country have faced down serious challenges before. Each time, we've emerged stronger and more united.

Just a few short years after our first legislative assembly met more than 230 years ago, Ontario faced invasion and annexation by the United States during the War of 1812.

As the war began, the former American president Thomas Jefferson predicted:

"The acquisition of Canada ... will be a mere matter of marching."

Much like the current occupant of the White House, President Jefferson greatly underestimated the strength and resilience of the Canadian people. Two years and eight months later, American soldiers marched home, defeated.

In the centuries since, the strength and resilience of the Ontario and Canadian people has shown itself time and time again.



Protect Ontario

44th
Parliament
of Ontario
April 15,
2025

During world wars and on the battlefields of Korea and Afghanistan, where our soldiers fought and died in defence of democracy and freedom.

More recently, during a global pandemic, when the people of this province came together and sacrificed so much to support those who were most vulnerable.

As we face this latest challenge, that same strength and resilience, that same sense of unity and purpose will guide us forward.

Peace and prosperity. Incredible diversity. Awe-inspiring natural beauty, stretching from the Great Lakes to Hudson Bay.

This is our land: the true north, strong and free.

Today, tomorrow and every day to come, your government will do whatever it takes to protect Ontario, the best province in the best country on Earth.

It cannot do so alone.

We can only succeed together, united with the support of workers, businesses, union leaders and municipalities, working side-by-side with First Nations and Indigenous partners.

So together, let's be bold. Let's be ambitious. Let's be fearless.

Together, let's protect Ontario.

Meegwetch. Thank you. Merci.