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Published plans and annual reports 2020-2021: Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks

Plans for 2020-2021, and results and outcomes of all provincial programs delivered by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks in 2019-2020.

Ministry overview

Ministry's vision

- Maintaining core work that provides strong environmental protections to safeguard our air, land, water and climate for all Ontarians today and in the future, while finding efficiencies and building a sustainable and modern ministry.
- Building a service-focused organization that engages with Ontario residents and businesses in a modern and efficient way without impacting core ministry activities.

Purpose and contribution to priority outcomes

Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) is responsible for protecting Ontario's air, land, water, species at risk and their habitat, tackling climate change and managing Ontario's parks and conservation reserves now and for future generations of Ontarians.

The ministry is also committed to balancing a healthy environment with a healthy economy, providing more digital solutions and reducing unnecessary burden and duplication while maintaining our strong environmental protections, creating jobs and respecting taxpayers.

We accomplish this by:

- using the best available science and research to develop and deliver policies, legislation, regulations, standards, programs and services
- enforcing compliance with environmental laws
- with partner ministries, other governments, Indigenous partners and organizations, industry, stakeholders and the public
- monitoring and reporting to track environmental progress
- taking a people-centred, digital first approach to government services such as issuing Permits to Take Water electronically that enables simpler and faster service delivery

COVID-19 response

Nothing is more important than protecting the health and wellbeing of Ontarians. Since first learning of

COVID-19, Ontario has taken decisive action to contain the spread of this new virus.

To support government actions to keep Ontarians safe during this time and ensure continuity of critical operations, the ministry quickly responded with temporary measures, including:

- closing Ontario's provincial parks and conservation reserves, including car camping, backcountry camping, roofed accommodations, access points and all public buildings. On May 11, we re-opened Ontario Parks for limited, self-guided recreational activities
- exempting public consultation requirements on the Environmental Registry for urgent actions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak
- suspending emissions testing for heavy duty commercial vehicles from March 23, 2020 to May 18, 2020
- providing flexibility to Ontario's drinking water and wastewater system owners and operators so they can address staffing issues if, and when they arise

These temporary actions were taken to support physical distancing and ensure operations can continue and goods and services can be delivered to the people of Ontario, without compromising health, safety or the environment.

The ministry is committed to full transparency on all decision making and will continue to address urgent needs on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the regulated community, Indigenous communities, the public and other government ministries as appropriate.

Ministry programs

On November 29, 2018, Ontario released its Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan to help protect our air, land and water, address litter and reduce waste, support Ontarians to continue to do their share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help communities and families prepare for climate change.

The plan, [Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4208) (<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4208>), was posted on the Environmental Registry for a 60-day consultation period. The ministry received more than 1,400 comments.

Building more resilient communities to climate change impacts and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Ontario's Environment Plan aims to build resilience to climate change and do our part to continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through affordable, effective, practical and cost-effective means. The plan reflects Ontario's commitment to addressing climate change in a way that considers the province's specific priorities and region-based challenges and opportunities.

The Environment Plan proposes to address climate change by focusing on six areas:

1. Lowering greenhouse gas emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030, a target that aligns with the federal government's Paris commitments.
2. Increasing the resilience of Ontario communities to the impacts of climate change.
3. Making polluters accountable for their greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Activating the private sector to unlock private capital to give Ontario businesses and residents new and more affordable ways to invest in energy efficiency and clean technologies that save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Using energy and resources wisely by developing climate solutions that will save energy and money and improve waste and resource management.

6. Doing our part by supporting effective climate leadership across the provincial government and Ontario's local governments, businesses, organizations and communities.

Our Environment Plan will continue to evolve as a living document to address the environmental priorities of Ontarians as new information, ideas and innovations emerge.

Protecting our air, lakes and rivers

Clean water

The ministry's Environment Plan outlines actions that Ontario will take to protect and conserve the province's water, manage its water resources, and keep our beaches clean for swimming, recreation, enjoyment and traditional use.

The actions and commitments in our plan include:

Continuing work to restore and protect our Great Lakes

- Building on previous successes and continuing efforts to protect water quality and ecosystems of the Great Lakes through partnerships with the federal government under agreements and plans such as the Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement (COA) and the Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan.
- Negotiating a new [COA](#).
- Reviewing and updating Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy to continue to protect fish, parks, beaches, coastal wetlands and water by reducing plastic litter, excess algae and contaminants along our shorelines, and reducing salt entering waterways to protect our aquatic ecosystems.
- Working with the federal and other provincial and territorial governments through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to implement phase one of the Canada-wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste and to support the ongoing development of the second phase. The second phase of the action plan focuses on preventing plastic pollution in oceans, inland lakes and waterways, including the Great Lakes, advancing science to monitor the impacts of plastics pollution within the environment, building consumer awareness, launching clean-ups, and taking global action.

Continuing to protect and identify vulnerable waterways and inland waters

- Continuing implementation of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan to protect and restore important natural areas and features of the lake.
- Protecting the quality of Lake of the Woods by continuing to work with partners on reducing phosphorus.
- Working with communities to identify issues and stresses facing the region, and to promote effective watershed management and protection.
- Working with Indigenous communities and stakeholders on the remediation of mercury-contaminated sediments in the St. Clair and English and Wabigoon Rivers.
- Reducing and preventing excess algae and contaminants along our shorelines, and plastic litter and excess road salt in the Great Lakes and other inland waters by supporting community efforts and working with other levels of government and jurisdictions on joint action plans.
- Completing an Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) review for Muskrat Lake, including an assessment of the need for new or updated environmental policies and tools to address phosphorus loadings, algae growth and other nutrient issues in the lake.

Ensuring sustainable water use, improving municipal wastewater and stormwater management and reporting, and helping people conserve water

- Updating approvals related to municipal wastewater and stormwater to make the rules easier to understand.
- Increasing transparency through real-time monitoring of sewage overflows from municipal wastewater systems into Ontario's lakes and rivers and ensuring the people of Ontario are aware of overflow incidents.
- Considering how wastewater and stormwater financing could be updated to improve investment and support new and innovative technologies and practices.
- Promoting sustainable water use and water security for future generations by enhancing how we manage water takings with good processes and decisions based on solid science and evidence to help ensure we have sustainable water resources in the face of a changing climate and continued population growth.
- Continuing to engage the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities for input on how we manage provincial water takings to ensure safe, secure, and reliable sources of water, including potential enhancements to assess and manage multiple water takings, establish priorities for different water uses, and prepare and respond to drought conditions.

Protecting Ontario's drinking water

Ontario is a North American leader in water protection and innovation aimed at sustaining water resources for future generations. We will continue to protect water resources by:

- keeping Ontario's drinking water among the best protected in the world through robust and comprehensive legislation, rules and standards, source protection, annual monitoring and implementing reporting requirements
- working collaboratively with First Nations and the federal government to support the resolution of long-term drinking water advisories (LTDWAs) and to support the long-term sustainability of each community's water infrastructure
- collaborating with Walkerton Clean Water Centre and their First Nation partners to provide support for drinking water operator training and certification
- conducting long-term monitoring of source water and treated drinking water for non-regulated and emerging contaminants at multiple locations in Ontario, including four First Nations communities
- working together to ensure that the science that supports source protection remains relevant and up-to-date and is integrated into ministry decision making
- building on the ministry's monitoring and drinking water source protection activities to help ensure that environmental impacts from road salt use are minimized

Clean air

Although Ontario's air quality has improved significantly, some areas of the province still experience poorer air quality due to pollution. In the Environment Plan, Ontario committed to continuously working to ensure cleaner air.

Ongoing actions to improve Ontario's air include:

- operating a network of 39 ambient air monitoring stations across the province to measure and track common air pollutants and provide the public with real-time air pollutant data
- operating a road side air monitoring network to better understand traffic-related air pollution in highly urbanized environments
- reducing harmful smog-causing vehicle emissions through an enhanced heavy diesel commercial motor vehicle emissions inspection program for the biggest polluters on our roads, such as commercial trucks and buses, complemented by strengthened on-road enforcement under a new Vehicle Emissions

Regulation (457/19), which came into effect on January 1, 2020

- continuing to deliver tailored compliance approaches based on risk to target heavy diesel commercial vehicles, fleets and garages that promote tampering with emissions systems which present the greatest threat to air quality
- partnering with the Ministry of Transportation to integrate the emissions inspection program with the Ministry of Transportation's annual Motor Vehicle Inspection Station program in 2021, which will save taxpayers' money and modernize services for drivers and businesses
- developing and implementing comprehensive health-based standards, and technology-based site-specific standards and technical standards for industrial sectors
- working in partnership with municipalities, industry, public health units, community stakeholders and Indigenous communities to create unique solutions to local air quality concerns
- working with the federal government and other provinces and territories to develop Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards
- continuing to enforce Ontario's local air quality regulations by conducting risk-based proactive inspections, responding to incidents, issuing orders and notices, and undertaking investigations, as needed
- reaching out to neighbouring states to understand the impact of transboundary air pollution on the province
- formalizing a notification protocol between the ministry and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to share timely communication when a pollution event or spill may be a risk to the neighbouring jurisdiction
- continuing to implement the multi-year Sarnia Air Action Plan to address air quality concerns, improve local ministry programs, and reduce the ambient concentrations of priority air contaminants. This includes moving forward with the Sarnia Area Environmental Health Project, a commitment in the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, to improve our understanding of the links between the environment and health in the community
- continuing to work collaboratively with industry, the Hamilton Air Monitoring Network, and Clean Air Hamilton to drive improvements in Hamilton's air quality through actions and initiatives, communication and public education, and providing transparent and timely public access to government and industry air monitoring data

Reducing litter and waste in our communities

In 2019, building on the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, the ministry released the Reducing Litter and Waste in Our Communities: Discussion Paper for public consultation on the Environmental Registry. Feedback on the discussion paper will help the province move forward with a clear, comprehensive and outcome-based approach to reducing litter and waste in our communities by supporting a number of actions, including:

- proclaiming an official Day of Action on Litter in Ontario on the second Tuesday of May each year
- finalizing regulation for a new producer-led battery recycling program in Ontario and continuing the wind up of existing waste diversion programs for electronic products, hazardous and special wastes, and the Blue Box program. These regulations will establish new rules making producers responsible for their products and packaging in a cost effective and efficient manner
- seeking commitments from the federal government to support increased diversion of waste plastic

Following extensive public consultation, the ministry has finalized the new "On-Site and Excess Soil Management Regulation" (Excess Soil Regulation) which is being phased in, as well as associated Brownfields-related regulatory amendments to the Record of Site Condition Regulation. The Excess Soils Regulation recognizes properly reused excess soil as a resource instead of waste. It sets clear reuse rules that are protective of human health and the environment and sets clear reuse planning requirements for sites

generating excess soil. Clarified rules will support greater reuse of excess soil which can save proponents soil management costs and reduce the amount of soil ending up in landfill.

The ministry is supporting implementation of the Excess Soil Regulation and associated consequential amendments with guidance and outreach and will be developing a registry to support implementation of provisions that come into effect in January 2022.

The ministry is committed to improving the existing environmental permissions processes for organic waste facilities to make it easier for proponents to obtain approvals. These improvements meet the commitments in the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan and the Discussion Paper on Reducing Litter and Waste in Our Communities to modernize organic waste permissions and support competitive and sustainable end markets.

Conserving land and greenspace

The ministry provides leadership and delivery in the management and protection of natural heritage areas in Ontario through Ontario Parks.

Ontario Parks continues to protect and enhance our natural areas, support conservation efforts, and promote the importance of healthy natural spaces by:

- supporting the creation of new trails across the province
- providing Ontario families with more opportunities to enjoy provincial parks and increase the number of Ontarians taking advantage of parks by 10% (approximately one million more visitors) while protecting the natural environment
- reviewing the management of provincial parks and conservation reserves to ensure effectiveness

Protect species at risk

Ontario is home to more than 30,000 species of plants, insects, fish and wildlife. The *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA) provides for the protection and recovery of species and their habitats that are at risk of disappearing from Ontario.

Ontario is taking the following actions to ensure that species at risk and their environments are protected:

- continuing to implement the Ontario Species at Risk Stewardship Program (SARSP), which provides funding to support local projects by non-profit organizations, Indigenous communities and other stakeholder groups that assist in the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitats
- continuing to deliver on recovery products required by the ESA. These legislatively required products include:
 - recovery strategies that identify threats and specific habitat needs of the species. Recovery strategies are typically prepared by experts, external to government, providing best available, science-based advice (s.11 ESA)
 - government response statements that outline the actions the government intends to take directly, as well as the actions partners are supported to take in the collaborative effort to protect and recover the species (s.12.1 ESA)
 - reviews on the progress of implementing actions identified for a specific species at risk. (s.12.2 ESA)
- continuing to implement the ESA by issuing permits and authorizations to enable Ontario's businesses and residents to prosper while protecting and recovering species at risk

Conservation authorities

Ontario made a commitment in its Environment Plan to work in collaboration with municipalities and stakeholders to ensure that conservation authorities can focus and deliver on their core mandate of protecting people and property from natural hazards such as flooding, managing CA lands and drinking water source protection, while using taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively.

On June 6, 2019, our government passed the *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019*, which updated the *Conservation Authorities Act* to improve public transparency, consistency, and accountability in conservation authority operations. These changes (un-proclaimed) define conservation authority mandatory programs and services as those related to the risk of natural hazards, managing conservation authority-owned land, and drinking water source protection and will update how conservation authorities are authorized to use municipal levies to give municipalities greater control and the ability to enter into agreement with CAs to fund non-mandatory programs and services, if they choose.

The ministry also undertook a review of all the relevant legislation and regulations that govern Ontario's conservation authorities with the aim of further improving overall governance, oversight and accountability of conservation authorities.

The ministry wanted to provide opportunities for everyone who is interested in the stewardship of our lands was heard before moving forward with any further changes to legislation and regulations.

Over the past year and a half, the ministry has been having conversations with key stakeholders and continues to engage municipalities, development, agricultural, landowner, environmental and conservation organizations, Indigenous communities and the general public, as well as conservation authorities, about conservation authority roles and operations to help ensure the authorities are best serving the interests of the people of Ontario.

Strong enforcement and transparency

Ontario remains committed to providing transparency and access to government information. In line with this government commitment, we will be providing information about spills and incidents occurring in communities. To help address the most serious environmental challenges in a responsible, effective, measurable and balanced way, we will continue to:

- hold polluters accountable with strong enforcement and tougher penalties for breaking environmental laws. In 2019, legislative changes were made via Bill 108 (*More Homes, More Choices Act, 2019*) and Bill 132 (*Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2019*) to provide for stronger and more efficient enforcement, including expanding the authority to issue administrative monetary penalties under several acts. Before these changes, we could only use penalties with approximately 140 facilities in Ontario. As a result of our changes, this framework will cover approximately 150,000 regulated entities. Administrative monetary penalties will be applied to an expanded list of violations such as illegal sewage discharges into waterways, selling pesticides without a license, failing to have a certified drinking water operator, or violating terms of a permit to take water. Once regulations are developed in 2020-21, this will strengthen enforcement tools available to front-line provincial officers and to enable penalties to remove the economic benefit of breaking environmental laws
- use the administrative monetary penalties paid by those who break environmental laws to support activities that will help protect and preserve our air, land, water and parks, such as tree planting, and litter clean-up
- providing front-line environmental compliance officers with better tools and information to ensure a risk-based focus on the most serious violators and high-risk polluters
- ensure strong enforcement, with real consequences, through investigations and prosecutions of high-consequence events and repeat offenders

Modernizing Ontario's environmental assessment program

The ministry is bringing the province's outdated environmental assessment process into the 21st century in order to build safer and stronger communities. The ministry is committed to building a strong environmental assessment program that considers the input of local communities and ensures we focus on projects that have the highest impact to the environment, while eliminating duplicative processes, streamlining processes, and improving service standards to reduce delays.

Transforming environmental permissions and reducing timelines

The ministry promotes high-quality submissions with enhanced screening for application completeness, to ensure a responsive timeline for proponents and the public. We want to ensure we're providing clear instructions on how to properly prepare applications so we can reduce delays and get it back to proponents faster.

The ministry is streamlining permissions for projects and activities where environmental impacts are low and/or well understood and to encourage opportunities for innovation.

Through collaboration with other ministries and proponents, we are exploring other activities that may be suitable for a streamlined permissions approach. To date these, include:

- assessing additional candidates for self-registration and/or exemptions instead of completing a more complex environmental compliance approval process. For example, Permits to Take Water and Combined Heat and Power Systems
- modernizing sewage and stormwater environmental compliance approvals through a consolidated linear infrastructure permissions approach with updated, clearer conditions
- exploring how to expand operational flexibility to other sectors to further reduce burden, e.g., organic waste

To enable digital service delivery of environmental permissions, the ministry has created the Permissions Enterprise Platform. The ministry continues to move paper-based permissions to the platform and expand the environmental activity and site registry.

The ministry has been collecting environmental compliance approval fees since 1992. The ministry is planning to review the existing fee structure to increase cost recovery.

We continue to look for opportunities to improve the regulation of both new and existing renewable energy facilities, with attention to noise compliance.

We are also reviewing the Brownfields program to evaluate overall efficiency of its framework, with the goal of reducing burden to businesses, increasing Ontario's housing supply and streamlining development approvals. This will help reduce time and costs for certain revitalization projects while also ensuring protection of human health and the environment.

Effective monitoring, compliance and enforcement

The ministry's research, monitoring, inspection, audits, investigations and enforcement activities are helping to ensure the ongoing protection of Ontario's air, land and water. The ministry will continue to support this goal by:

- conducting monitoring programs to understand the impacts of human activities on our environment

- identifying emerging environmental concerns and tracking progress on solving problems
- analyzing and testing water, air, vegetation and soil samples in the ministry's laboratories
- collecting fish samples from around the province, analyzing them for toxic substances such as mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls and dioxins and providing easy-to-use information about the types and amounts of fish that are safe to eat
- undertaking environmental monitoring in the Far North, inviting local First Nation communities to be involved, and providing them with the results
- undertaking monitoring of pesticides in the environment in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- carrying out compliance promotion, inspections, audits, investigations and prosecutions to support compliance through risk-based regulatory programs that consider official directives issued during the COVID-19 provincial outbreak and legal requirements, as well as emerging issues. The ministry's compliance program uses a comprehensive suite of compliance tools, to protect the environment and human health from regulatory non-compliance, pollution incidents and spills. Provincial offences officers will provide support through the course of their normal duties to enforce certain orders under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, as appropriate, to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the public
- inspecting municipal residential drinking water systems on an annual basis, and inspecting labs licensed to carry out drinking water testing at least twice a year
- working with industry, stakeholders and the public to ensure compliance with environmental standards

Reducing burden and supporting Ontario businesses

The ministry continues to make substantial contributions to making Ontario more competitive while still ensuring strong environment protections, by eliminating unnecessary duplication and administrative burden and improving regulatory and legislative requirements. The ministry has completed many of its own red tape reduction initiatives, as well as contributed to three burden reduction bills and red tape packages. The ministry is committed to:

- reviewing environmental legislation impacting businesses to ensure that it is as flexible and nimble as possible so that it is responsive to the needs of Ontarians
- reducing regulatory burden and unnecessary costs to businesses while still maintaining strong environmental protections
- making Ontario open for business by supporting growth within the province, while ensuring protection of the environment and human health
- developing and integrating innovative, risk-informed approaches in order to achieve greater efficiency in how we deliver programs

Ministry administration

Ministry administration supports ministry operation by providing strategic advice including financial management, controllership, human resource management, legal services, communications, French language services and administrative services in support of all business areas.

The ministry implements the Environmental Bill of Rights, provides educational programs about this Act to the public, and supports the Environmental Registry, which enables citizen participation in government decisions and provides information to the public on environmental initiatives. On April 1, 2020, O. Reg. 115/20 under the Environmental Bill of Rights came into effect as part of the province's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. It temporarily exempts environmental proposals from public consultation requirements for time-sensitive proposals to allow quick decision making and ensure goods and services continue to be delivered to people in Ontario during this unprecedented time. Ministries are expected to

continue posting information notices on the Environmental Registry to maintain public transparency during the temporary exemption.

The ministry is also addressing requests under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The ministry will continue to closely monitor and report on continuing and emerging high-priority initiatives, consistent with a new approach to evidence-based decision making and refresh of key performance indicators.

COVID-19 response

To support government actions to keep Ontarians safe during this time and ensure continuity of critical operations, the ministry quickly responded with the following temporary measures:

Closing Ontario provincial parks

In order to assist the province with its efforts to keep Ontarians safe and do its part to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the ministry closed all provincial parks to the public on March 19, 2020. This included car camping, backcountry camping, roofed accommodations, day use opportunities and all public buildings.

On May 15, 2020, under the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, all parks reopened to the public for limited recreational activities like walking, hiking and biking. More recreational activities and facilities will become available when it is safe to do so.

Exempting public consultation requirements on the Environmental Registry

The ministry is temporarily exempting ministries from the requirement to post proposals for acts, regulations, policies and instruments to the Environmental Registry for up to 30 days after Ontario's Declaration of Emergency is lifted.

This will ensure our government is able to quickly respond to the time-sensitive needs of regulated businesses that may be experiencing impacts due to COVID-19 so they can continue operations and ensure that goods and services can be delivered.

This recognizes the impact the outbreak has had on the regulated community and supports the necessary steps to ensure the health of all Ontarians while ensuring continuity of important operations and the protection of the environment.

We are also committed to continuing public transparency on environmental decision making during this temporary measure and will continue to post information notices on the Environmental Registry.

Suspending emissions testing for heavy duty commercial vehicles

On March 23, 2020, to help promote physical distancing and stop the spread of COVID-19, Ontario temporarily suspended the Heavy Diesel Commercial Motor Vehicle Emissions Testing Program for heavy diesel commercial vehicles. This helps to protect Ontario drivers, vehicle owners, staff and other users of emissions testing facilities and ServiceOntario locations.

Vehicle emissions inspection facilities resumed conducting heavy diesel vehicle emissions testing on May 19, 2020.

The ministry has also extended the date for the implementation of the mandatory electronic emissions test (on-board diagnostic test) for applicable vehicles from July 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020.

Providing flexibility to Ontario's drinking water and wastewater system owners

Through a temporary emergency order, the ministry is providing flexibility to Ontario's drinking water and wastewater system owners and operators so they can address staffing issues if, and when they arise.

This flexibility provides the ability to redeploy and employ operators as needed to address staff shortages, reschedule operator hours and use operators whose certificates and licenses have expired recently.

These temporary changes will ensure the continued operation of our water systems so that clean, safe drinking water is available to the public and that the environment continues to be protected.

Enabling electronic environmental permissions

The ministry continues to receive and review environmental permission submissions for approval during the COVID-19 outbreak. The ministry has made changes to its processes to enable businesses and municipalities to submit their applications to the ministry for review.

These changes include:

- updates to the ministry's website encouraging applicants to submit their applications and associated fees online through the ministry's Permissions Enterprise Platform
- enabling applicants who have mailed their application and associated fee payments to the ministry to resubmit their application electronically through a dedicated email address
- continued ongoing access and support for their inquiries through our contact centre

Enabling remote committee/agency meetings to protect species at risk

To help support physical distancing requirements and keep Ontarians safe during the COVID-19 outbreak, the ministry has changed face-to-face meetings with committees and agencies that are part of the ESA regime to online meetings. This includes agencies such as the Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee (SARPAC) that makes recommendations to the minister about the species at risk program, as well as the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO), which is comprised of an independent team of experts that assesses and classifies species at risk.

2020-21 strategic plan

Through commitments in the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is taking action to ensure the right balance between a healthy environment and a healthy economy and looking at new, more smart solutions and modern ways to support communities and businesses.

Our efforts align with the government's ongoing work to restore sustainability to the province's finances and make programs and services more effective and efficient, while maintaining Ontario's high standards to keep people safe and healthy and protect the environment.

The ministry's 2020-21 strategic plan focuses on three main objectives:

1. continuing to protect, restore and enhance our environment based on the actions and commitments in our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan
2. maintaining a sustainable long-term multi-year plan
3. making sure Ontario Parks have the business tools they need to deliver a world class experience

The ministry will also continue to work on transformation and program modernization which includes streamlining permissions for projects and activities where environmental risks are low and/or well understood and to encourage opportunities for innovation. Through collaboration with our colleagues and our clients, the ministry continues to explore other sectors and activities that may be suitable for a streamlined permissions approach.

In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on implementing our transformation plan and finding efficiencies that leverage technology and streamline processes while maintaining core business that ensures strong environmental protection to safeguard the province's air, land, water and climate.

Table 1: Ministry planned expenditures 2020-21 (\$M)

Item	Amount
COVID-19 approvals	n/a
Other MECP operating	\$330,700,000
MECP capital	\$26,000,000
MECP total	\$356,700,000
Ontario Clean Water Agency operating	\$214,800,000
Special purpose account for Ontario Parks	\$97,100,000
Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation	(\$1,200,000)
General real estate portfolio	(\$15,100,000)
Ontario Clean Water Agency capital	\$4,700,000
Consolidated total	\$656,900,000

Note: Including statutory appropriations, consolidation and other adjustments (not including assets). Numbers may not add due to rounding.

2020-21 estimates

Ministry budget by program: operating and capital (\$ millions)

Environmental compliance and operations

\$110,500,000 (31.0%)

Ministry administration

\$63,200,000 (17.7%)

Land and water

\$47,200,000 (13.2%)

Environmental sciences and standards

\$44,800,000 (12.6%)

Environmental policy

\$30,800,000 (8.6%)

Environmental assessment and permissions

\$27,200,000 (7.6%)

Climate change and resiliency

\$20,800,000 (5.8%)

Statutory appropriations

\$12,100,000 (3.4%)

Total ministry budget

\$356,700,000

Note: Excludes assets and consolidation. Total may not add due to rounding.

Ministry budget by standard account: operating and capital (\$ millions)

Salaries and wages

\$247,500,000 (69.4%)

Benefits

\$33,500,000 (9.4%)

Transfer payments

\$31,900,000 (9.0%)

Other direct operating expenses

\$17,700,000 (5.0%)

Capital

\$13,900,000 (3.9%)

Statutory appropriations

\$12,100,000 (3.4%)

Total ministry budget

\$356,700,000**Note:** Excludes assets and consolidation. Total may not add due to rounding.

Detailed financial information

Table 2: Combined operating and capital summary by vote

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2020-21 \$	Change from estimates 2019-20 \$	%	Estimates 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Interim actuals 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Actuals 2018-19 ^[1] \$
Operating expense						
Ministry administration program	63,194,000	(8,083,900)	(11.3)	71,277,900	80,124,200	82,684,118
Environmental policy	30,064,800	2,359,000	8.5	27,705,800	30,634,500	76,605,156
Environmental sciences and standards	43,327,500	2,528,800	6.2	40,798,700	43,632,800	50,047,927
Environmental compliance and operations	110,521,300	2,622,200	2.4	107,899,100	104,719,500	116,169,958
Environmental assessment and permissions	27,241,500	1,253,100	4.8	25,988,400	28,016,400	28,673,832
Climate change and resiliency	20,813,200	1,928,100	10.2	18,885,100	17,458,400	3,863,003
Land and water	35,477,400	1,608,900	4.8	33,868,500	30,819,600	35,104,147
Total operating expense to be voted	330,639,700	4,216,200	1.3	326,423,500	335,405,400	393,148,141
Statutory appropriations	68,314	n/a	n/a	68,314	68,314	381,577,989
Ministry total operating expense	330,708,014	4,216,200	1.3	326,491,814	335,473,714	774,726,130
Consolidation & other adjustments - Ontario Clean Water Agency	214,756,700	17,054,100	8.6	197,702,600	201,184,200	190,567,671
Consolidation adjustment - special purpose account for Ontario Parks	97,093,500	5,010,500	5.4	92,083,000	95,991,800	88,880,965
Consolidation adjustment - Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation	(1,193,700)	13,600	n/a	(1,207,300)	(1,207,300)	(3,765,449)
Consolidation adjustment - independent electricity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	(8,402,442)

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2020-21 \$	Change from estimates 2019-20 \$	%	Estimates 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Interim actuals 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Actuals 2018-19 ^[1] \$
system operator						
Consolidation adjustment - general real estate portfolio	(15,078,100)	8,761,500	n/a	(23,839,600)	(23,839,600)	(24,376,722)
Consolidation adjustment - GreenOn	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	(189,396,897)
Operating expense adjustment – cap and trade wind down account reclassification	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,211,400	223,057,201
Operating expense designated purpose account adjustment – cap and trade wind down account reclassification	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	(381,393,301)
Total including consolidation & other adjustments	626,286,414	35,055,900	5.9	591,230,514	610,814,214	669,897,156
Operating assets						
Ministry administration program	1,000	n/a	n/a	1,000	1,000	7,693,000
Total operating assets to be voted	1,000	n/a	n/a	1,000	1,000	7,693,000
Ministry total operating assets	1,000	n/a	n/a	1,000	1,000	7,693,000
Capital expense						
Environmental policy	750,000	750,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Environmental sciences and standards	1,451,000	80,000	5.8	1,371,000	1,684,100	1,958,590
Environmental compliance and operations	3,000	n/a	n/a	3,000	3,000	n/a
Environmental assessment and permissions	1,000	n/a	n/a	1,000	1,000	n/a
Land and water	11,742,700	9,275,000	375.9	2,467,700	2,467,700	5,819,488

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2020-21 \$	Change from estimates 2019-20 \$	%	Estimates 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Interim actuals 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Actuals 2018-19 ^[1] \$
Total capital expense to be voted	13,947,700	10,105,000	263.0	3,842,700	4,155,800	7,778,078
Statutory appropriations	12,064,700	662,200	5.8	11,402,500	10,498,200	642,249,562
Ministry total capital expense	26,012,400	10,767,200	70.6	15,245,200	14,654,000	650,027,640
Consolidation & other adjustments - Ontario Clean Water Agency	4,650,600	1,320,800	39.7	3,329,800	3,340,100	2,362,415
Capital expense adjustment - general real estate portfolio	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	(3,533,370)
Capital expense designated purpose account - cap and trade wind down account reclassification	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	(631,573,083)
Total including consolidation & other adjustments	30,663,000	12,088,000	65.1	18,575,000	17,994,100	17,283,602
Capital assets						
Environmental sciences and standards	14,244,700	(35,932,600)	(71.6)	50,177,300	1,630,000	1,270,216
Environmental compliance and operations	5,409,300	242,200	4.7	5,167,100	3,820,000	5,250
Environmental assessment and permissions	1,000	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	1,000	1,000	<u>n/a</u>
Land and water	13,484,500	(1,308,900)	(8.8)	14,793,400	6,155,500	4,513,120
Total capital assets to be voted	33,139,500	(36,999,300)	(52.8)	70,138,800	11,606,500	5,788,586
Statutory appropriations	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>
Ministry total capital assets	33,139,500	(36,999,300)	(52.8)	70,138,800	11,606,500	5,788,586
Ministry total operating and capital including consolidation and other adjustments (not	656,949,414	47,143,900	7.7	609,805,514	628,808,314	687,180,758

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2020-21 \$	Change from estimates 2019-20 \$	%	Estimates 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Interim actuals 2019-20 ^[1] \$	Actuals 2018-19 ^[1] \$
including assets)						

Historic trend analysis data

Ministry total operating and capital including consolidation and other adjustments
(not including assets)

Actuals 2017-18 ^[2]	Actuals 2018-19 ^[2]	Estimates 2019-20 ^[2]	Estimates 2020-21
\$850,864,867 (-19%)	\$687,180,758 (-11%)	\$609,805,514 (+8%)	\$656,949,414

For additional financial information, see:

- [Expenditure Estimates \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates)
- [Public Accounts \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/public-accounts-101-guide\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/public-accounts-101-guide)
- [Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19 \(https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/marchupdate/index.html\)](https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/marchupdate/index.html)

Agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs)

Agencies, boards and commissions	Description	Estimates 2020-21	Interim actuals 2019-20	Actuals 2018-19
Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards	Provides technical and scientific advice and recommendations related to standards for drinking-water quality and testing.	\$42,000	\$43,731	\$49,103
Committee on the Status of Species at Risk	An independent committee of experts considers which plants and animals should be listed as at risk.	\$30,370-\$52,000 ^[3]	\$5,498	\$16,068
Lake Simcoe Science & Coordinating Committees	Co-ordinate implementation of Lake Simcoe Protection Plan; identify and resolve issues; advise on issues related to the Lake Simcoe watershed.	\$11,300	\$0	\$3,054
Ontario Parks Board of Directors	Provides advice to the Minister about planning, managing and developing the provincial park and conservation reserves system.	\$1,000	\$0	\$825
Ontario Pesticides Advisory Committee	Annually reviews the <i>Pesticides Act</i> , recommends changes/amendments; reviews related publications and pest control products prior to use in Ontario.	\$0	\$33,348	\$51,449

Agencies, boards and commissions	Description	Estimates 2020-21	Interim actuals 2019-20	Actuals 2018-19
Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee	The Committee makes recommendations to the Minister on matters that relate to the implementation of the province's species at risk program.	\$13,000 [3]	\$873	\$1,979

Note: Detailed financial information for Ontario Clean Water Agency, Ontario Climate Change Solutions Deployment Corporation, and Walkerton Clean Water Centre is provided in their business plans.

Note: The Ontario Pesticides Advisory Committee was dissolved effective May 1, 2020.

Key performance indicators and achievements

Key performance indicators	Target	2015-16 Status/ Achievement	2016-17 Status/ Achievement	2017-18 Status/ Achievement	2018-19 Status/ Achievement	2019-20 Status/ Achievement
Achievement of greenhouse gas emission targets [4]	30% below 2005 baseline year - by 2030	19% below 2005 (based on 2015 data from 2019 NIR)	21% below 2005 (based on 2016 data from 2019 NIR)	22% below 2005 (based on 2017 data from 2019 NIR)	19% below 2005 (based on 2018 data from 2020 NIR)	Data not available at time of publication
Decreased amount of waste disposed per capita [5]	Decrease in amount of waste disposed per capita each year	597 kg of waste per person in Ontario	581 kg of waste per person in Ontario	567 kg of waste per person in Ontario [6]	Data not available at time of publication	Data not available at time of publication
Improved ambient air quality	A value of 100% or less by March 31, 2021, which means that ambient pollutant levels in Ontario are equal to or lower than the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for ozone, fine particulate	101%	103%	104%	104%	100%

Key performance indicators	Target	2015-16 Status/ Achievement	2016-17 Status/ Achievement	2017-18 Status/ Achievement	2018-19 Status/ Achievement	2019-20 Status/ Achievement
	matter and sulphur dioxide.					
Improved ecological health of the Great Lakes and Lake Simcoe	Minimum 7 mg/L of dissolved oxygen in Lake Simcoe at end of summer in each year	5 mg/L	6 mg/L	5.5 mg/L	6.5 mg/L	6.2 mg/L
Ensuring high quality drinking water. Maintaining or increasing the percentage of drinking water test results from municipal residential systems that meet the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards (O.Reg. 169/03).	The KPI target value is 99.75%, on par with the 2004-05 baseline value of 99.74%, to ensure that the Ministry continues to maintain Ontario's high standards for drinking water quality to protect human health.	99.84%	99.84%	99.84%	99.87%	Data not available at time of publication

Legislation administered by the ministry

- *Adams Mine Lake Act, 2004*
- *Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018*
- *Capital Investment Plan Act, 1993 (Part IV re: Ontario Clean Water Agency only)*
- *Clean Water Act, 2006*
- *Conservation Authorities Act (together with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry)*
- *Consolidated Hearings Act*
- *Endangered Species Act, 2007*
- *English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017*
- *Environmental Assessment Act*
- *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*
- *Environmental Protection Act*
- *Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015*

- *Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park Act, 2003*
- *Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008*
- *Ministry of the Environment Act*
- *Ministry of Natural Resources Act (together with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry)*
- *Municipal Water and Sewage Transfer Act, 1997*
- *Nutrient Management Act, 2002 (together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs)*
- *Ontario Water Resources Act*
- *Pesticides Act*
- *Provincial Day of Action on Litter Act, 2019*
- *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*
- *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016*
- *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*
- *Toxics Reduction Act, 2009*
- *Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016*
- *Water Opportunities Act, 2010 (except for Part II)*

Ministry organization chart

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks – May 26, 2020

The chart shows the following hierarchical structure with the top level assigned to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

- Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks - Honourable Jeff Yurek
 - Group of 8 government entities
 - Ontario Clean Water Agency
 - Walkerton Clean Water Centre
 - Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality & Testing Standards
 - Lake Simcoe Coordinating Committee
 - Lake Simcoe Science Committee
 - Committee On Status of Species At Risk Ontario
 - Species At Risk Advisory Board
 - Ontario Parks Board of Directors
 - Deputy Minister – S. Imbrogno
 - Communications Branch – C. Beckett
 - Legal Services Branch – T. McKinlay
 - Land and Resources Cluster – R. Passero
 - Audit Cluster – R. Masse
 - Environmental Policy Division – ADM – A. Pilla
 - Corporate Policy Branch - M. Stickings ([A](#))
 - Environmental Policy Branch - R. Kurtes
 - Environmental Intergovernmental And Indigenous Affairs Branch - M. Stickings
 - Program Management Branch – S. Carrasco
 - Resource Recovery Policy Branch - C. O'Hara ([A](#))
 - Climate Change and Resiliency Division – ADM – A. Wood
 - Climate Change Policy Branch – K. Moore ([A](#))
 - Climate Change Programs and Partnerships Branch – T. North ([A](#))
 - Adaptation & Resilience Branch - H. Pearson ([A](#))
 - Financial Instruments Branch - T. Johnson
 - Environmental Economics Branch – C. Golding ([A](#))
 - Land and Water Division – ADM – C. Stuart ([A](#))

- Ontario Parks - J. Travers
 - Species at Risk Branch - S. Ecclestone ([A](#))
 - Great Lakes & Inland Waters Branch - L. Mark
 - Source Protection Programs Branch - K. Katona ([A](#))
- Environmental Sciences and Standards Division – [ADM](#) – O. Salamon
 - Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Branch – K. McKague
 - Technical Assessment & Standards Development Branch – J. Schroeder ([A](#))
 - Laboratory Services Branch – J. Odumeru
- Environmental Assessment and Permissions Division – [ADM](#) – S. Paul
 - Client Services & Permissions Branch - I. Scovino ([A](#))
 - Environmental Permissions Branch - H. Malcolmson ([A](#))
 - Environmental Assessment Branch - A. Cross ([A](#))
- Drinking Water & Environmental Compliance Division – [ADM](#) / Chief Drinking Water Inspector / Chief Compliance Officer – M. Thomson
 - Southwest Region – L. Orphan
 - Divisional Compliance Branch - M. Dunn ([A](#))
 - Strategic Delivery Branch - K. Puhlmann ([A](#))
 - West Central Region – L. Trevisan ([A](#))
 - Northern Region – F. Miklas
 - Indigenous Drinking Water Projects Office – I. Prashad
 - Environmental Investigations and Enforcement Branch - M. Evers
 - Central Region – L. Trevisan
 - Eastern Region – P. Taylor ([A](#))
- Corporate Management Division – [ADM](#)
Chief Administrative Officer – G. Wootton
 - Information Management and Access Branch – G. Gladly
 - Business & Fiscal Planning Branch – S. Tao ([A](#))
 - Multi-Year Planning - B. Gildner ([A](#))
 - Strategic Human Resources Branch – J. LeGris

Appendix: 2019-20 annual report

2019-20 results

Building more resilient communities to climate change impacts and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

On November 29, 2018, Ontario released for consultation its Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan that will help protect our air, land and water, address litter and reduce waste, support Ontarians to continue to do their share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help communities and families prepare for climate change.

Key climate change accomplishments for 2019-20 include:

GHG reporting requirements

The ministry amended the greenhouse gas reporting regulation Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Quantification, Reporting and Verification regulation ([O. Reg. 390/18](#)) to remove reporting requirements for petroleum product suppliers and natural gas distributors and to streamline reporting requirements for other large emitters to reduce unnecessary costs and regulatory burden. Emissions related to fuel suppliers and natural gas distributors are already being tracked through the federal National Inventory Report and can be accessed by the province.

The ministry also finalized changes that harmonize Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions reporting requirements with the federal government. These changes eliminate duplication and reduce unnecessary cost and regulatory burden for facilities, saving them an estimated total of almost \$25 million over the next several years.

Reducing regulatory burden while maintaining strong environmental protection is part of the government's commitment to balancing a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

Implementing climate change action under the Environment Plan

Affirming our commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

One of the key ways we are defining our vision for climate action in Ontario is by setting a greenhouse gas reduction target. This will help us focus our efforts and provide a benchmark for our province to assess its progress on the climate change mitigation components of the Environment Plan.

The Environment Plan commits to reducing Ontario's emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. This target aligns Ontario with Canada's 2030 target under the Paris Agreement.

Emissions performance standards

Following extensive industry consultations, Ontario developed its emissions performance standards (EPS) program to be a Made-in-Ontario solution as an alternative to the federal output-based performance system (OBPS). The EPS recognizes the unique circumstances of Ontario's economy and considers specific industry and facility conditions while allowing for economic growth.

These standards will ensure polluters are accountable for their greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to Ontario's share of Canada's 2030 reduction target, and for their actions with a system that is tough but fair, cost-effective and flexible to the needs and circumstances of our province.

Ontario is committed to working with the federal government to recognize our Made-in-Ontario EPS program instead of the federal OBPS.

To avoid double regulation and burden on facilities, only the registration and record keeping requirements of the EPS program apply at this time. Other EPS provisions, including compliance obligations will not apply until the federal government removes Ontario from the federal OBPS.

Renewable content in gasoline

Ontario continues to consult with all stakeholders and review feedback on its proposal to increase the renewable content in gasoline in the coming years, encouraging the uptake of lower carbon fuels and helping to reduce emissions from the transportation sector.

By increasing use of renewable content, like ethanol in gasoline, we expect to reduce greenhouse gas emissions without raising the price at the pump, based on current ethanol and gasoline prices and experience in other jurisdictions with renewable fuel policies.

Challenging the federal government's carbon tax

Ontario is challenging the constitutionality of the federal government's imposition of the federal carbon tax on provinces that do not have a carbon pricing mechanism in place. The province continues to take action to

challenge the constitutionality of the federal government's costly carbon pricing policy that is a burden on families and businesses.

Provincial climate change impact assessment

To improve our understanding of how climate change will impact the province, Ontario has posted a request for bids for a third-party expert to undertake the first-ever broad, multi-sector provincial climate change impact assessment. This will identify where the province may be vulnerable to climate change. It will help decision makers better understand the impacts so they can protect communities and the environment.

The contract will be awarded in 2020 and the assessment will take place over two years. The release of the final impact assessment is slated for 2022.

Ontario will access the best science and information to determine where and how climate change is likely to affect communities, critical infrastructure, economies and the natural environment. The assessment will help the province better understand where it may be vulnerable to the effects of climate change and will provide information to communities to help them undertake a more strategic approach to adaptation planning and infrastructure investments to prevent and mitigate climate change risks.

Advisory panel on climate change

The government established an advisory panel on climate change on November 28, 2019, to provide expert advice on the implementation of the province's climate change actions - especially how Ontarians can prepare for the costs and impacts of climate change.

The advisory panel consists of experts on climate change resiliency who have experience in a variety of sectors, including the not-for-profit, agriculture and insurance sectors.

The ministry continues to chair the Climate Change Leadership Team (CCLT). The CCLT has a broad membership of 12 ministries and meets on a bi-monthly basis. As outlined in the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, CCLT is developing an approach for considering climate change in government decision making, including how to establish climate change directions and guidance for ministries.

Provincial, national and international climate partnerships

In 2019-20, Ontario continued to share its knowledge and experience on climate change mitigation, adaptation and climate science with other ministries, jurisdictions and stakeholders. For example:

- Ontario continued as a member of the Pan-Canadian Framework (PCF) – a joint federal, provincial, territorial plan to set Canada's path to achieve its international commitments on climate change. Ontario continues to participate in a number of related PCF multilateral working groups and initiatives.
- As a signatory to the PCF agreement, Ontario continues to implement PCF commitments, including participating in the annual reporting process. The third Annual PCF Synthesis Report has been compiled and is currently undergoing its final stage of approvals. The report showcases Ontario's accomplishments and highlights how Ontario is contributing to achieving its PCF goals and actions.
- At its 2019 Annual Meeting in Québec City, QC, the Great Lakes Commission (Commission) considered and discussed a proposed resolution relating to climate change in the Great Lakes Basin. As a result of those discussions, the Commission recognized a need to think broadly about climate resilience and take concrete action to assess and address the need. The Commission and its chair created a Special Committee on Climate Resilience, with representation from all eight US states and two provinces (Ontario and Quebec) that border the Great Lakes Basin. The committee explored

options and developed recommendations for consensus-based actions on climate resilience.

- In 2019, Ontario was part of the Metrics & Indicators Project Team that developed a list of additional mitigation indicators for inclusion in the 2019 PCF Synthesis Report. These indicators allow jurisdictions, including Ontario, to better monitor its progress in achieving PCF targets.
- Ontario supported several universities (e.g., York University, University of Toronto) in the development of Ontario-specific local scale climate projections for the entire province and is making this information available to the public through the Ontario Climate Data Portal.

Protecting Ontario's water

Drinking water

Ontario's drinking water remains among the best protected in the world. From strict health-based drinking water standards to comprehensive legislation designed to protect water from source to tap, Ontario provides a regulatory Drinking Water Protection Framework that helps ensure the quality and safety of Ontarians' drinking water. The eight components of the Framework provide a multi-barrier approach to drinking water protection and include:

- source-to-tap focus
- strong laws and regulations
- health-based standards for drinking water
- regular and reliable testing
- swift, strong action on adverse water quality incidents
- mandatory licensing of municipal drinking water systems and laboratories, operator certification and training requirements
- a multifaceted compliance improvement toolkit
- partnership transparency and public engagement

The 2018-19 Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report was released in December 2019 and confirmed that Ontario's drinking water systems continue to provide high-quality drinking water.

The 2018-19 data shows that 99.9% of more than 522,000 drinking water tests from municipal residential drinking water systems met Ontario's strict, health-based drinking water standards.

In line with the government's commitment to transparency and Open Government, new and historical drinking water data continue to be made available on Ontario's Open Data Catalogue and is updated on a regular basis.

In 2019-20, Ontario continued to work with its partners on implementing source protection plans under the *Clean Water Act, 2006* taking provincial actions to ensure measures are in place to protect municipal drinking water sources and integrating source protection into other provincial programs. For example, Ontario ensures that permits and approvals adequately protect vulnerable drinking water sources. Ontario has also been including consideration of drinking water protection zones in the environmental assessment process, the aggregate licensing process, management of excess soil, and working groups that address the impacts of road salt. The province also engaged municipalities and key stakeholders on proposed updates to keep the science underlying source protection plans relevant and up to date, such as including new methods for identifying the risks from road salt.

Ontario continued to invest in building local capacity at the source protection authority (conservation authority) level through funding and guidance to support the implementation of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Locally developed source protection plans continued to help municipalities ensure their sources of drinking

water are resilient and sustainable for future generations.

Ontario continued to support municipalities in meeting their obligations under the source protection plans by providing training to appointed risk management officials and inspectors.

The ministry continued to update and improve the online Source Protection Information Atlas, which provides the provincewide view of the more than 1,100 wellhead protection areas and intake protection zones within the source protection areas, including the addition of new data layers on climate change and water quality. The Atlas enables the public to conduct customized searches and supports the broader implementation of plans.

For 2019, source protection authorities provided annual progress reports for all 38 source protection areas and indicated that overall, plan implementation was progressing well and on target towards achieving its objectives. The ministry is continuing to work with local source protection authorities to ensure plan implementation and reporting on progress continues. As per the Minister's orders, source protection authorities have developed work plans outlining how they will review and update their local source protection plans to ensure the plans remain up-to-date and relevant. In 2019, the final three work plans were submitted to the ministry.

All municipal system owners are required to have a drinking water license that includes:

- a drinking water works permit
- a permit to take water (if required)
- a financial plan
- an operational plan that documents the quality management system for the operating authority
- mandatory accreditation of the operating authority through a third-party accrediting body

First Nations drinking water

The ministry worked with First Nations communities to assess water and wastewater infrastructure against Ontario's standards off-reserve, provided support on drinking water operator training and certification, and offered guidance and advice related to source water protection planning, upon request. As of March 31, 2019, 63 water and 17 wastewater assessments have been conducted at 59 First Nations communities.

As of March 12, 2020, Indigenous Services Canada is monitoring 61 Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories (LTDWAs) in 40 First Nations communities across Canada. Over half of these communities are in Ontario.

In Ontario, as of March 12, 2020, there were 46 LTDWAs in 26 First Nations communities, with 35 LTDWAs resolved since 2015.

Great Lakes and inland waters

The Great Lakes and inland waters are a vital ecological, economic and recreational resource to the people of Ontario for our drinking water, quality of life and prosperity, but there is still more work to be done.

Actions in 2019-20 to protect and preserve Ontario's Great Lakes and inland waters include:

- continued province-wide monitoring programs to track the quality of inland lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater while undertaking special studies to better understand emerging issues that can affect water quality
- contributed to the assessment of a suite of indicators of ecosystem health for the binational State of the Great Lakes report

- convened a Great Lakes Guardians' Council meeting on April 23, 2019. The Great Lakes Guardians' Council is a forum to improve collaboration and co-ordination among Ontario's Great Lakes partners
- continued implementing Ontario's *Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015*, the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health, the Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan, and Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy
- began the review and update of Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy including reporting on progress, as required by the *Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015*
- began negotiating a draft new Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement (COA). Posted a draft new Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement for public comment. Continued negotiations towards a final Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement for the 2020-2025 timeframe. This work included a focus on newer Great Lakes issues of concern such as plastic pollution and excess road salt
- established the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group to collaborate with and support the ministry in the development and implementation of the Muskoka Watershed Conservation and Management Initiative. The ministry is currently supporting the advisory group in the development of their interim advice to the Minister
- published the 2017 Minister's Annual Report on Lake Simcoe in February 2019. The report details how the province and public are taking action to protect and restore Lake Simcoe and ensure that it can continue to sustain one of Ontario's fastest-growing regions. The province supported innovative approaches to improve conditions in the Lake Simcoe watershed. In 2019-20, the ministry:
 - continued to monitor and respond to ongoing and emerging threats to water quality
 - worked with local stakeholders to implement programs to reduce the amount of road salt entering Lake Simcoe from melting ice and snow, and reduce erosion associated with construction and other activities
 - supported efforts to limit the phosphorous in runoff coming from new housing developments
 - this work will continue into 2020-21 and beyond
- continued to participate in the work of the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Panel to fund remediation activities from a trust that was established with \$85 million under the *English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017*. The Remediation Panel directs how the funds from the Trust are distributed to fund remediation activities
- initiated field work to inform the detailed engineering plan to remediate three priority areas of historic contaminated sediment in the St. Clair River. Public, Indigenous communities and stakeholders were informed of the project plan and timeline to develop the detailed engineering plan
- continued to participate and support the Randle Reef Sediment Remediation project, with the ministry contributing \$14.61 million in funding for 2019-20
- completed a water management plan for the Thames River (Deshkan Zibi) Shared Waters Approach to Water Quality and Quantity. The 20-year plan was developed by the Thames River Clear Water Revival partnership, which includes representatives from a number of Indigenous communities, various levels of government and their agencies, and local conservation authorities

Ensure sustainable water use and water security for future generations

Ontarians can be confident that our water resources are protected by good processes and decisions based on solid science and evidence. In the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, the ministry committed to thoroughly reviewing the province's water-taking policies, programs, and science tools to ensure that vital water resources are adequately protected and sustainably used. The government is committed to protecting our lakes, waterways and groundwater supply, now and for future generations.

Actions the ministry took in 2019-20 to protect groundwater resources include:

- extending the moratorium on new and expanded water takings by bottling companies until October 1, 2020
- completing scientific research to improve our understanding of water resources and reviewing rules

governing water quantity management and groundwater use for water-bottling, in light of climate change and increasing population and demand for water

- continuing regulatory charge of \$500 per million litres of groundwater taken by water bottlers, to help recover the province's costs of managing groundwater taken by water bottlers, including supporting scientific research, policies, outreach and compliance

Taking action to protect species at risk

The Ontario government has taken significant steps to protect species and habitat across the province, including:

- completing a 10-year review of the [ESA](#). Amendments to the [ESA](#) as a result of the review were made and became effective on July 1, 2019
- finalizing species-specific recovery policies (government response statements) for 9 species at risk, science-based recovery strategies for 17 species at risk, and reviews of progress towards the protection and recovery for 16 species at risk under the [ESA](#)
- delivering \$4 million in funding through the Species at Risk Stewardship Program for 85 projects by non-profit organizations, Indigenous communities and other stakeholder groups across the province that help protect species at risk and their habitats

Throughout 2019-20, and during the outbreak of COVID-19, the government continued to issue permits and authorizations under the [ESA](#) to ensure that Ontario's businesses and residents continue to prosper while protecting and recovering species at risk and their habitats.

Conserving land and greenspace

- In 2019-20, Ontario's system of parks and conservation reserves remained stable at 9.8 million hectares or about 9% of the province's terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- To give Ontario families more opportunities to enjoy our province's natural spaces, the camping season was extended at five provincial parks.
- The ministry honoured past and present members of the Canadian Armed Forces by making it easier for them to spend more time in nature and green spaces at Ontario Parks through free weekday day-use entry to any provincial park.
- The ministry continued the Ontario Parks' Healthy Parks Healthy People initiative by holding a public consultation about how to ensure the health benefits of nature are fully realized for all Ontarians.
- In 2019, Ontario's provincial parks received more than 10.7 million visits from people around the world, which supported local economies across the province.
- Ontario Parks continues to fund the majority of annual operating expenditures via revenue from park user fees, with revenues to the Ontario Parks Special Purpose Account of over \$94 million in the 2019 season.
- The award winning Learn to Camp program was delivered to over 3,200 participants with 96% of participants indicating they are likely to go on a future camping trip.

Resource recovery and waste diversion

Ontario generates nearly a tonne of waste per person each year and the overall diversion rate has stalled at 30% over the past 15 years. This means that 70% of waste materials continue to end up in landfills. About 60% of Ontario's food waste is being sent to landfill and is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.

Ontario's current waste diversion programs only account for about 14% of the waste stream. If no new

landfills are established or expanded, there is approximately 10 to 20 years of landfill capacity left in Ontario.

Over the past year, Ontario has undertaken a number of actions aimed at reducing litter and waste in our communities including:

- establishing the Provincial Day of Action on Litter as the second Tuesday of May each year. To mark the first official Day of Action in 2020, we focussed on raising awareness of the impacts of waste in the environment, and what actions each and every Ontarian can do to prevent, reduce and divert waste, right at home. The Provincial Day of Action on Litter encourages everyone to help make their communities clean and beautiful. While the centrepiece of the day will be litter cleanups, Day of Action on Litter is also about encouraging all Ontarians to think about, and take responsibility for, the waste we create in our daily lives by taking action to prevent, reduce, and divert that waste, 365 days a year
- in August 2019, Ontario announced the next steps for improving the Blue Box program and transitioning the costs away from municipal taxpayers to make the producers of products and packaging responsible starting in 2023. This will help reduce the amount of valuable materials that end up in landfill. The first group of Blue Box programs will transfer responsibility to producers starting January 1, 2023. By December 31, 2025, producers will be fully responsible for providing Blue Box services province-wide. In preparation of transitioning the Blue Box program, ministry staff have held a series of stakeholder meetings that started in November 2019 and will continue using teleconferencing and video conferencing into spring 2020. The ministry expects to consult on a draft regulation for Blue Box materials in summer 2020
- initiated the wind up of the existing Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste (MHSW) programs to a producer responsibility framework. The single-use battery portion of the MHSW program will cease operation on June 30, 2020 and the program for the other eight materials will cease operation on June 30, 2021. The producer responsibility regulation for batteries was filed on February 27, 2020 and will come into effect on July 1, 2020. The ministry is currently in the process of developing regulations under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act* to for the other MHSW materials and expects to consult in the coming months. By transitioning these programs to a producer responsibility framework we are transitioning the costs away from municipal taxpayers to make the producers responsible for the end of life of their products and packaging
- Ontario Electronic Stewardship was directed that the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment program would cease operation on December 31, 2020. To replace the current program after December 31, 2020, a new producer responsibility regulation will be necessary to ensure producers set up free collection networks for consumers and ensure the recycling and reuse of collected waste. On May 9, 2019, a draft regulation was posted to the Environmental and Regulatory Registries after in-person consultation was conducted earlier in the year. The regulation for electrical and electronic equipment is still being updated as a result of consultation – it will be posted on the Environmental Registry once finalized
- over the summer of 2019, Ontario established the Food and Organic Waste Steering Committee and multiple working groups to discuss actions to reduce food and organic waste, including implementation of the Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement, safe rescue and donation of surplus food; the modernization of organic waste permissions and effective management of compostable products and packaging

Improving air quality

Overall, air quality in Ontario has improved significantly over the past 10 years due to substantial decrease in harmful pollutants such as fine particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide.

New and updated air standards for 69 contaminants have been introduced since 2005. And since 2015, the

ministry has issued only four smog advisories.

Protecting and enhancing air quality requires co-operation and collaboration by many jurisdictions and organizations. Ontario continues to work on implementing a national Air Quality Management System as proposed by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and continues to work with border states to address transboundary air pollution.

In 2019-20, the province continued to operate a network of 39 ambient air monitoring stations across the province to measure and track common air pollutants and provide the public with real-time air pollutant data.

Continued to operate a road side air monitoring network in Toronto in partnership with the University of Toronto and Environment and Climate Change Canada to better understand traffic-related air pollution in highly urbanized environments.

The ministry continued to deliver the new Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) program in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada for air quality messaging. The AQHI is a health-based scale that assesses air pollution and cumulative health impacts. Real-time air quality measurements and air quality forecasts are provided in a way that is easy to understand.

The ministry is working collaboratively with industry and the Clean Air Sarnia and Area (CASA) advisory panel to enhance the Clean Air Sarnia and Area website that provides transparent and timely public access to government and industry air monitoring data. In 2019, the ministry installed two temporary air monitoring stations at locations where elevated concentrations of priority contaminants are anticipated.

Under the Sarnia Air Action Plan, specific actions were undertaken in 2019-20 to drive improvements in Sarnia air quality through strong enforcement, enhanced air monitoring, and increased communications. Some of the actions included the issuance of the first Environmental Penalties under O.Reg. 530/18 for sulphur dioxide discharges due to acid gas flaring from petroleum refineries, a significant increase in local air monitoring capabilities and improved communications with local communities and First Nations. The ministry also continued to work with partners to start implementing the Sarnia Area Environmental Health Project to help address local air quality concerns, by retaining a consultant to start an air exposure review, a key part of the project.

Inspections at industrial facilities continue to be focused on emissions of primary contaminants of concern, including benzene and sulphur dioxide. With the introduction of new property line monitoring surrounding large emitters, the ministry continues to ensure that companies undertake immediate action where high pollutant concentrations are identified. The Sarnia Air Action Plan continues to use a risk-based approach to focus activities, including inspections and incident response, where there is the greatest potential to reduce the emissions of contaminants of concern, specifically benzene, 1, 3 butadiene and sulphur compounds, into the Sarnia airshed.

The ministry began implementing a new regulation, Air Pollution – Discharge of Sulphur Dioxide from Petroleum Facilities. The goal of the regulation is to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions from Ontario petroleum facilities through improved management of acid gas combustion events, giving the ministry the ability to issue environmental penalties and increase monitoring requirements. Environmental penalties have been issued to the regulated facilities for contraventions that occurred in 2019.

The ministry enforced Ontario's local air quality regulations by conducting risk-based proactive inspections, responding to incidents, issuing orders and notices as needed, and working in partnership with municipalities, industry, public health units, community stakeholders and Indigenous communities to create unique solutions to local air quality concerns.

The ministry also worked collaboratively with industry, the Hamilton Air Monitoring Network, and Clean Air Hamilton to drive improvements in Hamilton's air quality through actions and initiatives, communication and public education, and providing transparent and timely public access to government and industry air monitoring data.

On April 1, 2019, the ministry cancelled the outdated and ineffective Drive Clean program for light duty passenger vehicles, saving taxpayers up to \$40 million a year and removed the requirement for light passenger vehicles to get an emissions test. Drive Clean was effective at reducing vehicle pollution; however industry standards have significantly improved since the program was created in 1999. This resulted in a steady decrease of passenger cars that failed the emissions test.

In 2019-20, the ministry also began implementation of an enhanced annual emissions inspection program for heavy diesel commercial motor vehicles, the biggest polluters on our roads, through a new Vehicle Emissions Regulation (457/19) which came into effect on January 1, 2020. The new regulation includes stronger emissions standards and strengthened requirements against vehicle emissions tampering. Intelligence gathered from on-road enforcement will also help identify non-compliant heavy diesel fleets and garages that promote tampering with emission control systems.

To support the proposed integration of the emissions inspection program with the annual safety Motor Vehicle Inspection Station program administered by the Ministry of Transportation, the ministry made legislative changes to transfer the provisions related to vehicle emissions in the *Environmental Protection Act* to the *Highway Traffic Act*. These changes are expected to roll out in 2021. Integration of the two programs will save taxpayers' money and modernize services for drivers and businesses.

On March 23, 2020, to help promote physical distancing and stop the spread of COVID-19, Ontario temporarily suspended the Heavy Diesel Commercial Motor Vehicle Emissions Testing Program for heavy diesel commercial vehicles. This helped protect Ontario drivers, vehicle owners, staff and other users of emissions testing facilities and ServiceOntario locations.

Vehicle emissions inspection facilities resumed conducting heavy diesel vehicle emissions testing on May 19, 2020.

The ministry has also extended the date for the implementation of the mandatory electronic emissions test (on-board diagnostic test) for applicable vehicles from July 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020 to allow facilities and vehicle owners sufficient time to prepare for the new test.

Contaminated sites

The ministry participates in a coordinated, government-wide approach to identify, manage and update liabilities pertaining to contaminated sites as required under the Public Sector Accounting Board Standard 3260, which includes several sites under the ministry's oversight. The ministry identifies potential sites through the Properties of Environmental Concern program.

The Deloro site cleanup project is protecting our lakes and rivers, by cleaning up contaminated waste from the abandoned mine and industrial site in eastern Ontario. As of 2019-20, the ministry has contained approximately 75% of all contaminated wastes and impacted soils and sediments within secured disposal areas at the site. Cleanup work is fully complete in the Tailings Area, as well as in the Industrial and Mine Area. A pilot project was completed in 2018-19 in the Young's Creek area to help evaluate the cleanup plan for the final phase of work. The ministry remains committed to completing the final phase of the cleanup project and to the long-term operation of the site. The cleanup work to date has resulted in improved water quality and environmental conditions at the site and in the Moira River.

Modernizing Ontario's environmental assessment program

The ministry has implemented process improvements to the Part II Order request review process for all Class Environmental Assessments. Since these measures were implemented in 2017, timelines on decisions have decreased from an average of 288 days (2012-2017) to 241 days (2017-2019).

Through Bill 108, *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019*, approximately 350 well-understood, low-impact projects were exempted from the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

Transforming permissions and reducing timelines

The ministry continued to make progress to reduce regulatory barriers to make it easier for businesses to obtain environmental approvals, while maintaining high standards for environmental protection.

Actions supporting ongoing modernization included:

- continuing to meet the one-year service standard for higher-risk or complex environmental compliance approvals by issuing decisions in less than a year
- expanding digital service delivery for paper-based application processes which included adding Permits to Take Water that would make the process faster and easier for applicants
- streamlining permissions for projects and activities where environmental risks are low and/or well understood
- working with General Motors to develop the first flexible multimedia environmental compliance approval for its Ingersoll facility which provides operational flexibility to plan and make changes to their manufacturing facility and reduce delays while ensuring they maintain environmental protections. The single approval will reduce reporting requirements, and provide the facility with more flexibility, like increasing the recycling of materials or making minor modifications to sewage works and equipment, without having to seek amendments from the ministry each time
- amending the Record of Site Condition Regulation to remove barriers to the redevelopment of Brownfield properties while helping to ensure protection of the environment, based on input from stakeholders

Effective monitoring, compliance and enforcement

The ministry conducts environmental monitoring across the province to provide sound scientific data to track the state of the environment for the purposes of policy development, program tracking and to support the ministry's compliance, enforcement, and emergency response programs.

Province-wide environmental monitoring continued including air, streams, rivers, inland lakes, Great Lakes, groundwater and contaminants in fish and vegetation; and of issues related to algal blooms, road salt, microplastics, baseline conditions in the Ring of Fire and recovery of legacy contaminated sites. In addition, the ministry undertook a number of site-specific monitoring projects to assess known or suspected sources of pollution to the environment and inform decision making on local issues.

The ministry employs the tools and practices of a modern regulator to ensure compliance program delivery is designed to prevent and mitigate environmental concerns. This includes approaches to risk-based inspections and investigations that address high risks and repeat non-compliance.

In 2019-20, the ministry's front-line compliance staff conducted over 8,400 proactive and responsive inspections. Additionally, the ministry recorded over 22,000 incidents, including spills, pollution incident reports, adverse water quality reports (including lead exceedances) and municipal sewage bypass reports.

This included responding to environmental spills and high-risk incidents during the COVID-19 outbreak to help ensure the environment and human health were protected.

In 2019-20, 72 ministry prosecutions resulted in convictions with fines imposed totalling \$2.57 million. The ministry opened 174 new investigations and 86 prosecutions were commenced.

In 2019, legislative changes were made via Bill 108 (*More Homes, More Choices Act, 2019*) and Bill 132 (*Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2019*) to provide for stronger and more efficient enforcement, including introducing, expanding or clarifying authority to issue administrative monetary penalties under several acts (i.e. *Environmental Protection Act, Nutrient Management Act, Ontario Water Resources Act, Pesticides Act, and Safe Drinking Water Act*).

The administrative monetary penalties collected will be used to support environmental improvement activities and will be made available to eligible organizations. The program, which will be modelled on the Ontario Community Environment Fund program, will be launched in 2020 to better support activities that implement the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan (e.g. litter clean up, tree planting, habitat restoration, and flood prevention).

Table 3: Ministry interim actual expenditures 2019-20 ^[7]

Item	Amount
COVID-19 approvals	0
Other operating (\$M)	610.8
Capital (\$M)	18.0
Staff strength - MECP (as of March 31, 2020) ^[8]	2,152.6
Staff strength - Ontario Clean Water Agency (as of March 31, 2020) ^[8]	807.0

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Footnotes

- [1] [^] Estimates, Interim Actuals and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure. Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update.
- [2] [^] Estimates and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure.
- [3] [^] Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, face to face meetings have been re-scheduled to virtual meetings (Skype) and these estimates have been adjusted.
- [4] [^] Calculated as a per cent change in historical emission estimates in a given year relative to baseline levels. All trend values are based on the 2019 National Inventory Report (NIR), which is the latest available and provides historical emission estimates up to 2017. Note that historical estimates are subject to change due to methodological improvements and revisions.
- [5] [^] Statistics Canada data is only available up to 2016 - data for 2018 likely to be released in fall 2020. Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority data is only available up to 2018 - data for 2019 is expected to be released in December 2020.
- [6] [^] The stated per capita waste generation for 2017-2018 is comprised of Statistics Canada data from 2016 and Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority data from 2018.
- [7] [^] Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update.

- [8] [^] [Ontario Public Service Full-Time Equivalent positions.](#)