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Published plans and annual reports 2023-2024: Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks

Plans for 2023-2024, and results and outcomes of all provincial programs delivered by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks in 2022-2023.

Ministry Overview

Ministry's Vision

- Maintaining core work that provides strong environmental protections to safeguard our air, land, water, species at risk 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 priorities

Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) is responsible for monitoring and protecting our air, land and water, species at risk and their habitat and addressing climate change while helping communities prepare for its impacts, reducing litter and waste, and managing Ontario's provincial parks and conservation reserves now and for future generations of Ontarians.

The ministry is implementing the most effective and affordable evidence-based solutions to protect our environment, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.

In 2023-24, we will continue to work to find practical, sensible and affordable solutions to some of our most pressing environmental concerns, including climate change, which meet the needs of our diverse communities while encouraging all Ontarians to take meaningful action to protect and preserve our natural environment. We will support the plan to build Ontario in a responsible and sustainable way that will continue to ensure Ontario's strong environmental protections are maintained and improved.

Ministry divisions and programs

We are taking action to protect and conserve our environment and address climate change. The programs and services listed below showcase the creative and innovative ways the ministry is rising to the challenges and opportunities we face.

Climate Change and Resiliency Division

This division leads the government's efforts to lower greenhouse gas emissions to meet our 2030 target, and to help communities prepare for the impacts of climate change.

We will:

- develop an approach for the use of proceeds collected under the Emissions Performance Standard program that supports the reduction of emissions from industrial sources and helps build the competitiveness of Ontario industry.
- work with our partners at the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and industry stakeholders to promote and support green industrial investment that leverages Ontario's clean electricity grid into a competitive advantage.
- continue to work with communities around the Great Lakes to promote the use of adaptive management tools and to identify best practices to enhance their resilience to climate change impacts, as well as increasing their ability to implement these tools.

Land and Water Division

This division protects the diversity of resources in Ontario, including species at risk, provincial parks and conservation reserves, Ontario's source water and the Great Lakes and inland waters, supporting conservation efforts and preserving Ontario's

rich biodiversity.

We will:

- continue exploring the creation of the first new operating provincial park in 40 years. The new park would provide visitors with more camping and other overnight accommodations, as well as a variety of improved recreational opportunities.
- explore the creation of a new urban provincial park in the Township of Uxbridge.
- continue to invest in Ontario Parks infrastructure to help meet growing demand and improve the visitor experience.
- continue to expand the advance daily vehicle permit service to 20 additional provincial parks across the province, giving visitors greater certainty when planning park visits by offering guaranteed access to those parks.
- provide up to \$4.5 million in funding through the Species at Risk Stewardship Program to support non-profit organizations, Indigenous communities and other stakeholder groups who are working to help protect and recover species at risk and their habitat through local projects.
- invest \$5 million per year for four years in external partnerships that advance caribou conservation and continue the implementation of the Canada-Ontario Conservation Agreement.
- invest \$29 million to support on-the-ground habitat restoration, protection and other conservation activities, including monitoring, science and research of self-sustaining local populations of boreal caribou in Ontario, as part of the conservation agreement for boreal caribou.
- develop an online system to speed up and digitize the *Endangered Species Act*, 2007 permit applications and authorization process.
- support additional wetland enhancement and restoration projects in priority areas of Ontario through the Wetlands Conservation Partner Program with new partners, as part of a \$30 million investment over 5 years.
- expand the Greenlands Conservation Partnership by investing an additional \$14 million in 2023–24. The investment will allow conservation partners to raise matching private-sector contributions to secure new, privately owned natural areas, such as wetlands, grasslands and forests, and ensure they are protected

and managed for the future.

- continue implementing the 2021 Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (COA) with a focus on building climate resilience, managing nutrients, reducing plastic pollution and excess road salt, improving wastewater and stormwater management, strengthening First Nations and Métis engagement in implementation, and completing all environmental clean-up actions in six degraded Areas of Concern.
- support and fund a small number of First Nations to use the ministry's online Best Practices guide, which will help communities enhance their knowledge of local drinking water systems, source waters and water quality risks, and identify ways to address those risks.
- continue to support and fund source protection authorities to enable them to deliver on their responsibilities under the *Clean Water Act, 2006* to protect local sources of drinking water from contamination and depletion and ensure source protection plans are implemented and maintained.
- facilitate and co-chair the seventh Great Lakes Guardians' Council (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/great-lakes-guardians-council>) meeting to encourage collaboration and coordination among Great Lakes partners and identify priorities for actions, share information and develop initiatives.
- launch projects under the Lake Simcoe Program workplan that implement actions in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.
- continue to invest in a Lake Simcoe phosphorous reduction project, which will help reduce phosphorus discharges from the Holland River into Lake Simcoe.

Drinking Water and Environmental Compliance Division

This division works to protect and support clean air, land and water, including safe drinking water, through provincial oversight and the delivery of compliance and enforcement programs.

We are working to strengthen the province's compliance and enforcement program to hold polluters accountable and ensure compliance with environmental laws. We will:

- continue to plan and carry out risk-based compliance and enforcement programs for the protection of the environment and human health, including taking action to address non-compliance and providing transparency through mandatory

public reporting.

- continue work on compliance initiatives, including proposed expansion of administrative penalties (with possible further stakeholder engagement) and proposed modernization of the ministry's compliance policy.
- continue to provide 24/7 hotline for the reporting of spills and pollution incidents through the Spills Action Centre.
- continue to safeguard drinking water through the enforcement of the *Safe Drinking Water Act*.

We will:

- invest \$18.7 million to sustain Ontario's wastewater surveillance initiative by continuing wastewater testing to detect COVID-19 in wastewater in communities across the province.
- in collaboration with the Walkerton Clean Water Centre and the Ontario Clean Water Agency, continue to provide First Nations communities, at their request, with access to training and provincial expertise related to their water and wastewater systems. This includes providing the Walkerton Clean Water Centre with \$1.88 million to enhance the capacity of First Nation communities to work toward the resolution of long-term drinking water advisories on reserves and improve the long-term sustainability of their water infrastructure.
- update the Operations Manual for air quality monitoring in Ontario, which provides technical guidance to emitters and operators responsible for air monitoring in Ontario, providing a framework for consistent air contaminant monitoring across the province, and reflecting the most recent advances in science and technology.
- reinvest in the Ontario Community Environment Fund by making available more than \$1.5 million in funds collected from environmental penalties to support projects that improve the environment and give people opportunities to experience nature, such as tree planting or increasing naturalized areas for habitat improvement.

Environmental Assessment and Permissions Division

This division leads the transformation of Ontario's environmental permissions using a risk-based, client-centred, electronic service delivery model, balancing strong

environmental oversight with modernizing review processes, ensuring priority projects are built faster.

We will:

- propose to expand the types of activities that are regulated through permit-by-rule, allowing more entities that currently need an environmental compliance approval, permit to take water, record of site condition, or renewable energy approval to commence operation immediately upon self-registration without the need for ministry review.
- continue our efforts to exempt low-impact projects from the environmental assessment (EA) process and reduce duplication with other approvals processes, including evaluating the EA requirements for municipal infrastructure and amending the remaining Class EAs.
- move to a project-list approach for environmental assessment with only the largest projects requiring a comprehensive EA and allow more projects to follow a streamlined EA process.
- cut overall timelines for the comprehensive EA process by improving guidance and developing sector-based terms of reference.

Environmental Sciences and Standards Division

This division is responsible for providing scientific, technical and laboratory expertise to support policy and operational decision making and also for monitoring and reporting on the state of Ontario's environment.

To protect our air, land and water, and maintain strong environmental standards, we will:

- invest in state-of-the-art monitoring and analytical equipment to support policy and operational efforts.
- publish the next Air Quality in Ontario Report (2021 data).
- continue working with industry, First Nations and other partners to complete the Sarnia Area Environment Health Project and help address concerns of local communities about air pollution in the Sarnia area.
- update the Air Contaminants Benchmark List for evaluation of contaminants

released to air, to be implemented April 1, 2023.

- update the approach for modelling open flares to allow regulated facilities to better consider the unique properties and behavior of flares.
- update air dispersion models under O. Reg. 419/05 – The Local Air Quality Regulation, to align with changes made by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).
- continue scientific and technical analyses and develop tools to enable delivery of ministry policy and programming and support infrastructure and land development.
- continue to support conservation and environmental planning by collecting information on greenhouse gas emissions and carbon storage in the Hudson Bay Lowlands, a globally significant wetland and carbon store.
- continue partnerships with District Municipality of Muskoka and Federation of Cottagers' Associations to support citizen science for inland lakes monitoring.
- continue to work with Conservation Authorities and Environment and Climate Change Canada to monitor water quality along the western Lake Ontario shoreline and evaluate changes in this growing urban area.
- Improve understanding of environmental impacts to vulnerable inland lakes from stressors such as road salt application and climate change.

Environmental Policy Division

This division leads the development of policy that protects air, land and water, including operational policy and program development and implementation.

We will:

- work with producers and the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority to ensure smooth implementation of Ontario's new extended producer responsibility framework, including the transition of the blue box program to producer responsibility which starts on July 1, 2023
- work with the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority to help reduce burden for businesses while continuing to protect consumers and the environment

- continue to promote and educate, through the Provincial Day of Action on Litter, the impacts of litter and waste in the natural environment
 - continue our work with the public, municipalities, Indigenous communities, environmental groups, and industry to drive strategies that better protect air quality and address unique challenges in communities by creating tailored solutions
 - continue implementing enhancements to Ontario's water taking program to help improve water quantity management in Ontario.
 - lead intergovernmental and Indigenous relations for the ministry to build and maintain effective, meaningful relationships to advance Ontario's priorities
 - continue to administer the Environmental Bill of Rights, ensuring the public's ability to participate in environmentally significant decision-making
 - oversee Ontario's Drinking Water and Wastewater Certification Program
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2023-24 strategic 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, smarter 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, increase resiliency to climate change and protect the environment.

The ministry's 2023-24 Strategic Plan focuses on three main objectives:

- continuing to take action to protect, restore and enhance our environment
- maintaining a sustainable long-term multi-year plan
- making sure Ontario Parks has the business tools it needs to deliver a world class experience.

The ministry will also continue to work on modernizing and transforming programs,

such as streamlining permissions for projects and activities where environmental risks are low and/or well understood. 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 and to encourage opportunities for innovation.

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 2023-24

Item	Amount (\$M)
MECP operating	358.9
MECP capital	55.5
MECP total	414.4
Ontario Clean Water Agency	257.9
Special purpose account for Ontario Parks	126.0
Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation	(1.3)
Consolidated total	782.6

Item	Amount (\$M)
General real estate portfolio	(14 . 5)
Consolidated total	782 . 6

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

Detailed financial information

Table 2: Combined operating and capital summary by vote

Operating expense						
Votes/Programs	Estimates 2023-2024 \$	Change from estimates 2022-23 \$	% ****	Estimates 2022-23 [1] \$	Interim actuals 2022-23 [1] \$	Actuals 2021-22 [1] \$
Ministry administration program	63 , 278 , 20 0	9 , 01 0 , 00 0	16 . 6	54 , 268 , 20 0	61 , 790 , 10 0	55 , 613 , 97 5

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2023-24 \$	Change from estimates 2022-23 \$	%	Estimates 2022-23 [1] \$	Interim actuals 2022-23 [1] \$	Actuals 2021-22 [1] \$
Environmental policy	22,180,900	(3,951,500)	(15.1)	26,132,400	24,157,400	41,685,301
Environmental sciences and standards	43,150,200	731,800	1.7	42,418,400	39,908,600	40,600,641
Environmental compliance and operations	115,031,200	(2,542,400)	(2.2)	117,573,600	107,950,600	92,560,722
Environmental assessment and permissions	30,114,700	117,100	0.4	29,997,600	30,936,200	28,570,010
Climate change and resiliency	14,618,500	(230,400)	(1.6)	14,848,900	12,842,000	12,723,528

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2023-2024 \$	Change from estimates 2022-23 \$	% ****	Estimates 2022-23 [1] \$	Interim actuals 2022-23 [1] \$	Actuals 2021-22 [1] \$
Land and water	70,429,400	10,221,600	17.0	60,207,800	61,521,500	64,768,576
Emissions Performance Standards Program	1,000	1,000	N/A	0	0	0
Total operating expense to be voted	358,804,100	13,357,200	3.9	345,446,900	339,106,400	336,522,753
Statutory appropriations	70,314	2,000	2.9	68,314	133,214	148,293
Ministry total operating expense	358,874,414	13,359,200	3.9	345,515,214	339,239,614	336,671,046

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2023-24 \$	Change from estimates 2022-23 \$	% ****	Estimates 2022-23 [1] \$	Interim actuals 2022-23 [1] \$	Actuals 2021-22 [1] \$
Consolidation adjustments — Ontario Clean Water Agency	253,027,000	19,265,600	8.2	233,761,400	233,761,400	224,604,438
Consolidation Adjustment - Health Sciences North	0	0	N/A	0	0	(852,998)
Consolidation Adjustment - Colleges	0	0	N/A	0	0	(3,162)
Consolidation adjustment — special purpose account for Ontario Parks	126,031,700	10,001,300	8.6	116,030,400	129,795,000	108,730,764

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2023-24 \$	Change from estimates 2022-23 \$	% ****	Estimates 2022-23 [1] \$	Interim actuals 2022-23 [1] \$	Actuals 2021-22 [1] \$
Consolidation adjustment — Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation	(1,266,700)	(24,800)	N/A *****	(1,241,900)	(1,241,900)	(787,087)
Consolidation Adjustment — Algonquin Forest Authority	0	0	N/A *****	0	0	(7,973)
Consolidation adjustment — general real estate portfolio	(14,452,900)	(310,300)	N/A *****	(14,142,600)	(11,828,200)	(10,812,695)
Total including consolidation & other adjustments	722,213,514	42,291,000	6.2	679,922,514	689,725,914	657,542,333

Operating assets

Votes/Pr ograms	Esti mat es 202 3-2 4 \$	Chang e from estima tes 2022-2 3 \$	% ****	Esti mat es 202 2-2 3 [1] \$	Inter im actu als 2022 -23 [1] \$	Act ual s 202 1-2 2 [1] \$
Ministry administr ation program	2,0 00, 000	1,999, 000	199 ,90 0.0	1,0 00	232, 800	0
Total operating assets to be voted	2,0 00, 000	1,999, 000	199 ,90 0.0	1,0 00	232, 800	0
Ministry total operating assets	2,0 00, 000	1,999, 000	199 ,90 0.0	1,0 00	232, 800	0

Capital expense

Votes/Progr ams	Esti ma tes 202	Chang e from estim	% ****	Esti ma tes 202	Inte rim actu als	Act ual s 202
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	3-2 4 \$	ates 2022- 23 \$		2-2 3 [1] \$	2022 -23 [1] \$	1-2 2 [1] \$
Ministry Administrati on Program	1,0 00	0	0	1,0 00	1,0 00	0
Environment al policy	0	(1,00 0)	(1 00)	1,0 00	1,0 00	0
Environment al sciences and standards	4,6 34, 000	2,998 ,000	18 3	1,6 36, 000	1,6 36, 000	1, 87 4, 15 9
Environment al compliance and operations	7,0 00	(485, 000)	(9 8. 6)	492 ,00 0	735 ,00 0	1, 21 0, 22 9
Environment al assessment and permissions	1,1 59, 800	358,3 00	44 .7	801 ,50 0	443 ,20 0	24 1, 31 3
Climate Change and Resiliency	1,0 00	0	0	1,0 00	1,0 00	0

Land and water	35, 357 ,70 0	1,094 ,800	3. 2	34, 262 ,90 0	32, 262 ,90 0	28 ,6 06 ,8 88
Emissions Performance Standards Program	1,0 00	1,000	N/ ***** A ***	0	0	0
Total capital expense to be voted	41, 161 ,50 0	3,966 ,100	10 .7	37, 195 ,40 0	35, 080 ,10 0	31 ,9 32 ,5 89
Statutory appropriations	14, 350 ,30 0	362,0 00	2. 6	13, 988 ,30 0	12, 336 ,00 0	11 ,7 98 ,9 59
Ministry total capital expense	55, 511 ,80 0	4,328 ,100	8. 5	51, 183 ,70 0	47, 416 ,10 0	43 ,7 31 ,5 48

Consolidation adjustments — Ontario Clean Water Agency	4,882,900	216,100	4.6	4,666,800	4,666,800	1,817,043
Consolidation Adjustment - Algonquin Forest Authority	0	0	N/A	0	0	(90,400)
Consolidation adjustments — general real estate portfolio	0	0	N/A	0	0	(100,798)
Total including consolidation & other adjustments	60,394,700	4,544,200	8.1	55,850,500	52,082,900	45,357,393

Capital assets

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2023-2	Change from estimates 2022-2	%	Estimates 2022-2	Interim actuals 2022	Actuals 2021-2
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	4 \$	3 \$		3 [1] \$	-23 [1] \$	2 [1] \$
Ministry Administra tion Program	876 ,00 0	372,0 00	73 .8	504 ,00 0	504, 000	0
Environme ntal sciences and standards	11, 363 ,00 0	(2,00 0)	(0)	11, 365 ,00 0	1,11 5,00 0	89 9, 43 7
Environme ntal compliance and operations	1,0 00	(450, 000)	(9 9. 8)	451 ,00 0	451, 000	13 ,9 08
Environme ntal assessment and permission s	1,0 00	0	0	1,0 00	1,00 0	0
Land and water	16, 406 ,70 0	(145, 100)	(0 .9)	16, 551 ,80 0	15,1 44,6 00	6, 05 7, 12 6

Emissions Performanc e Standards Program	1,0 00	1,000	N/ A ...	0	0	0
Total capital assets to be voted	28, 648 ,70 0	(224, 100)	(0 .8)	28, 872 ,80 0	17,2 15,6 00	6, 97 0, 47 1
Statutory Appropriati ons	1,0 00	1,000	N/ A ...	0	0	0
Ministry total capital assets	28, 649 ,70 0	(223, 100)	(0 .8)	28, 872 ,80 0	17,2 15,6 00	6, 97 0, 47 1

Ministry total

Votes/Programs	Esti ma tes 202 3-2 4 \$	Chan ge from esti mat es 2022 -23 \$	% ****	Esti ma tes 202 2-2 3 [1] \$	Int eri m act ual s 202 2-2 3 [1] \$	Ac tu als 20 21 -2 2 [1] \$
Ministry total operating and capital including consolidation and other adjustments (not including assets)	782 , 60 8, 2 14	46, 8 35, 2 00	6 . 4	735 , 77 3, 0 14	741 , 80 8, 8 14	70 2, 89 9, 72 6

Historic trend analysis data

Historic trend table

Historic trend analysis data	Actu als 2020 -21 [2]	Actu als 2021 -22 [2]	Esti mat es 2022 -23 [2]	Esti mat es 2023 -24

Historic trend analysis data	Actuals 2020-21 [2]	Actuals 2021-22 [2]	Estimates 2022-23 [2]	Estimates 2023-24
Ministry total operating and capital including consolidation and other adjustments (not including assets)	\$635,300,339	\$702,899,726	\$735,773,014	\$782,608,214
Percent change (%)	N/A *****	11	5	6

For additional financial information, see:

- Expenditure Estimates (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates>)
- Public Accounts of Ontario: past editions (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/public-accounts-ontario-past-editions>)
- 2023 Ontario Budget (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2023/index.html>)

Agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs)

Agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs) *****				
Agencies, boards and commissio	Description	Estimates	Interim act	Actuals 20

ns		20 23- 24 \$	uals 202 2-2 3 \$	21 -2 2 \$
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.	15 , 0 00	6 , 0 20	6 , 36 8
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 , 0 00	6 , 0 96	21 , 6 23
Lake Simcoe Science & Coordinati ng Committee s	Provide advice on issues related to the Lake Simcoe watershed, and implementation of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.	7 , 00 0	0	1 , 97 5
Ontario Parks Board of Directors	Provides advice to the Minister about planning, managing and developing the provincial park and conservation reserves system.	3 , 00 0	1 , 1 37	0

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.	6,000	0	0
York Region Wastewater r Advisory Panel	Provides confidential advice to the Government on options to address wastewater servicing capacity needs in the upper parts of York Region, for a period not exceeding twelve (12) months.	0	366,095 ^[3]	108,775 ^[3]

Note: Detailed financial information for Ontario Clean Water Agency and Walkerton Clean Water Centre is provided in their Business Plans.

Note: The Species Conservation Action Agency (also known as the Species at Risk Conservation Trust) is in early operations; financial estimates forthcoming in their annual business case expected in 2024.

Key performance indicators and achievements

Key performance indicators and achievements						
Key performance indicators	Target	2018-19 Status /Ac	2019-20 Status /Ac	2020-21 Status /Ac	2021-22 Status /Ac	2022-23 Status /Ac

		hie ve me nt	hie ve me nt	hie ve me nt	hie ve me nt	hie ve me nt
Achieveme nt of greenhous e gas emissions targets^[4]	30% below 2005 baseline year — by 2030	18% bel ow 200 5 (bas ed on 201 8 dat a fro m 202 2 NIR) *****	19% bel ow 200 5 (bas ed on 201 9 dat a fro m 202 2 NIR) *****	27% bel ow 200 5 (bas ed on 202 0 dat a fro m 202 2 NIR) *****	Dat a not ava ilab le at tim e of pu blic ati on	Dat a not ava ilab le at tim e of pub lica tion
Decreased amount of waste disposed per capita^[5]	Decrease in amount of waste disposed per capita each year	594 kg of was te per per son in Ont ario [6]	586 kg of was te per per son in Ont ario [6]	587 kg of was te per per son in Ont ario [6]	Dat a not ava ilab le at tim e of pu blic ati	Dat a not ava ilab le at tim e of pub lica tion

					on	
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 matter and sulphur dioxide	104 %	100 %	101 % ^[7]	101 % ^[7]	Data not available at time of publication
Improved ecological health of Lake Simcoe	Minimum 7 mg/L of dissolved oxygen in Lake Simcoe at end of summer in	6.5 mg/L	6.2 mg/L	5.9 mg/L	4.0 mg/L	5.1 mg/L ^[8]

	each year					
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	99.87%	99.85%	99.87%	99.86%	Data not available at time of publication
Great Lakes Protection : Increase Restored Beneficial	Restore 137 Beneficial Uses that have been identified	79	81	84	86	88

Uses in Great Lakes Areas of Concern	as impaired across 17 Areas of Concern (AOC). ***** By 2025-2026, complete key actions to re-designate 20 Beneficial Uses from 'impaired' to 'not impaired'.					
Modernize d requirements to increase efficiencie s for businesses [9][10]	Increasing efficiencies for businesses by modernizin g and reducing unnecessa ry or duplicative requireme nts by at least 1% annually, and 25% reduction	N/A *****	5%	7%	6%	Dat a not ava ilab le at tim e of pub lica tion [11]

	in the longer term					
Cost savings for businesses [9][10]	\$400M savi ngs across all ministries by March 31, 2022	3.4 M ***	31.4 M ***	46.6 M ***	15. 1M ***	Dat a not ava ilab le at tim e of pub lica tion [11]
Increasing administr ative efficiencie s	A target value of 26% for Other Direct Operating Expense (ODOE) spending based on 2017-18; ODOE spending is steady each year and can be attributed to internal	N/A *****	25.7 4%	23.3 5%	19. 90 %	Dat a not ava ilab le at tim e of pub lica tion

	controls put in place to minimize discretionary spending					
Annual visits to Ontario Parks	A target value of 10.98M ^{...} visitors by end of 2022, representing one million increase in visits compared to 2017	10.7 5M ^{...}	10.7 7M ^{...}	11.1 5M ^{...}	12. 44 M ^{...}	12. 10 M ^{...}
Improved decision timelines for higher-risk environmental compliance approval applications^{[12][13]}	For higher-risk environmental compliance approval applications received by the ministry after January 1, 2018, 85% of reviews	N/A ^{.....}	95%	92%	89 %	86 %

	will be completed within a one-year time period					
Area of Ontario's land regulated as a provincial park or conservation reserve	9,794,641.41 ha of land regulated as a provincial park or conservation reserve by March 2022	9,793,553.41	9,793,553.41	9,793,553.41	9,794,641.85	9,794,631.52
The ministry is prepared to respond to emergencies in support of provincial operations under provincial response plans and for order in council	100% completion of meeting all annual requirements defined by EMO and requirements under the EMCPA. Report is a met/did not meet requirements	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

responsibilities	nts					
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Legislation administered by the ministry

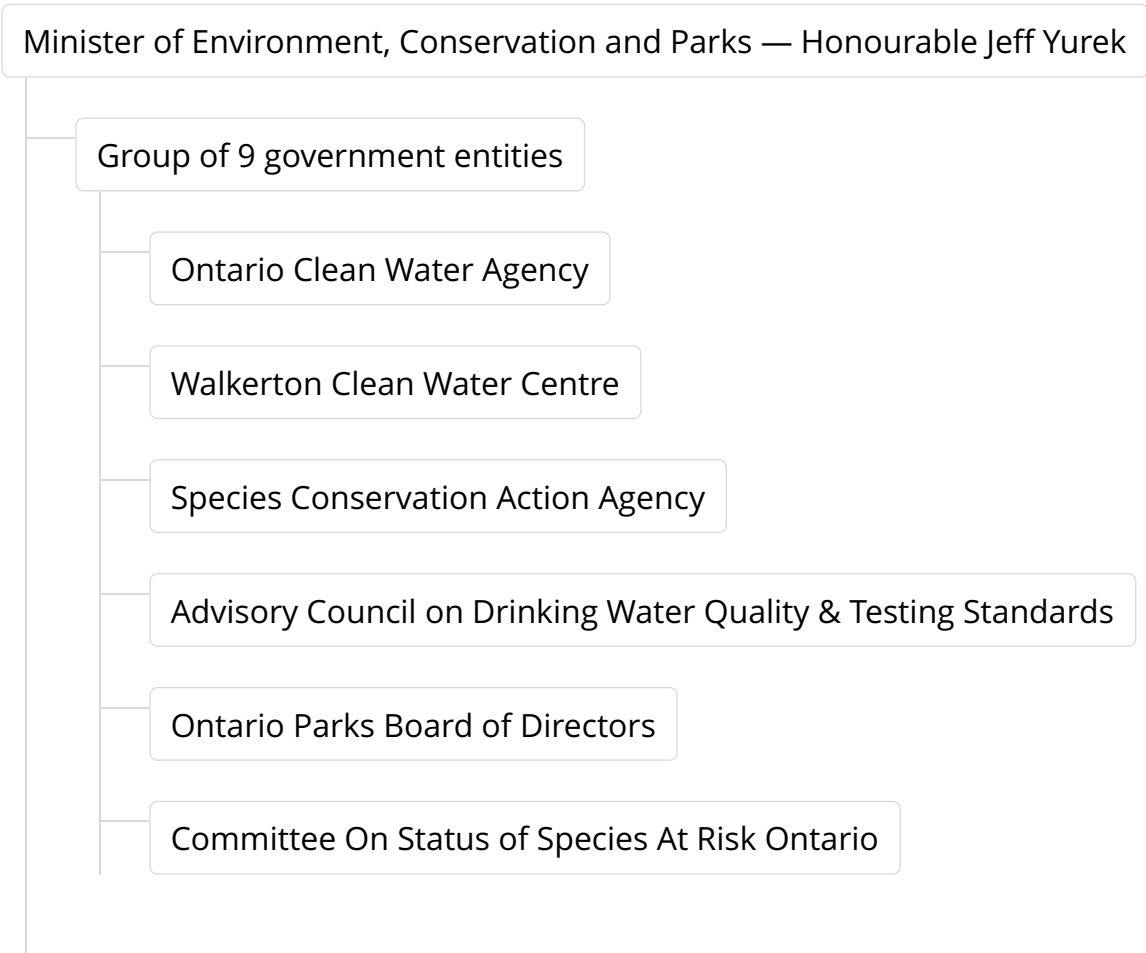
- Adams Mine Lake Act, 2004*
- Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018*
- Capital Investment Plan Act, 1993 (Part IV re: Ontario Clean Water Agency only)*
- Clean Water Act, 2006*
- Endangered Species Act, 2007*
- English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017*
- Environmental Assessment Act*
- Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*
- Environmental Protection Act*
- Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015*
- Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park Act, 2003*
- Keeping Polystyrene out of Ontario's Lakes and Rivers Act, 2021*
- 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*

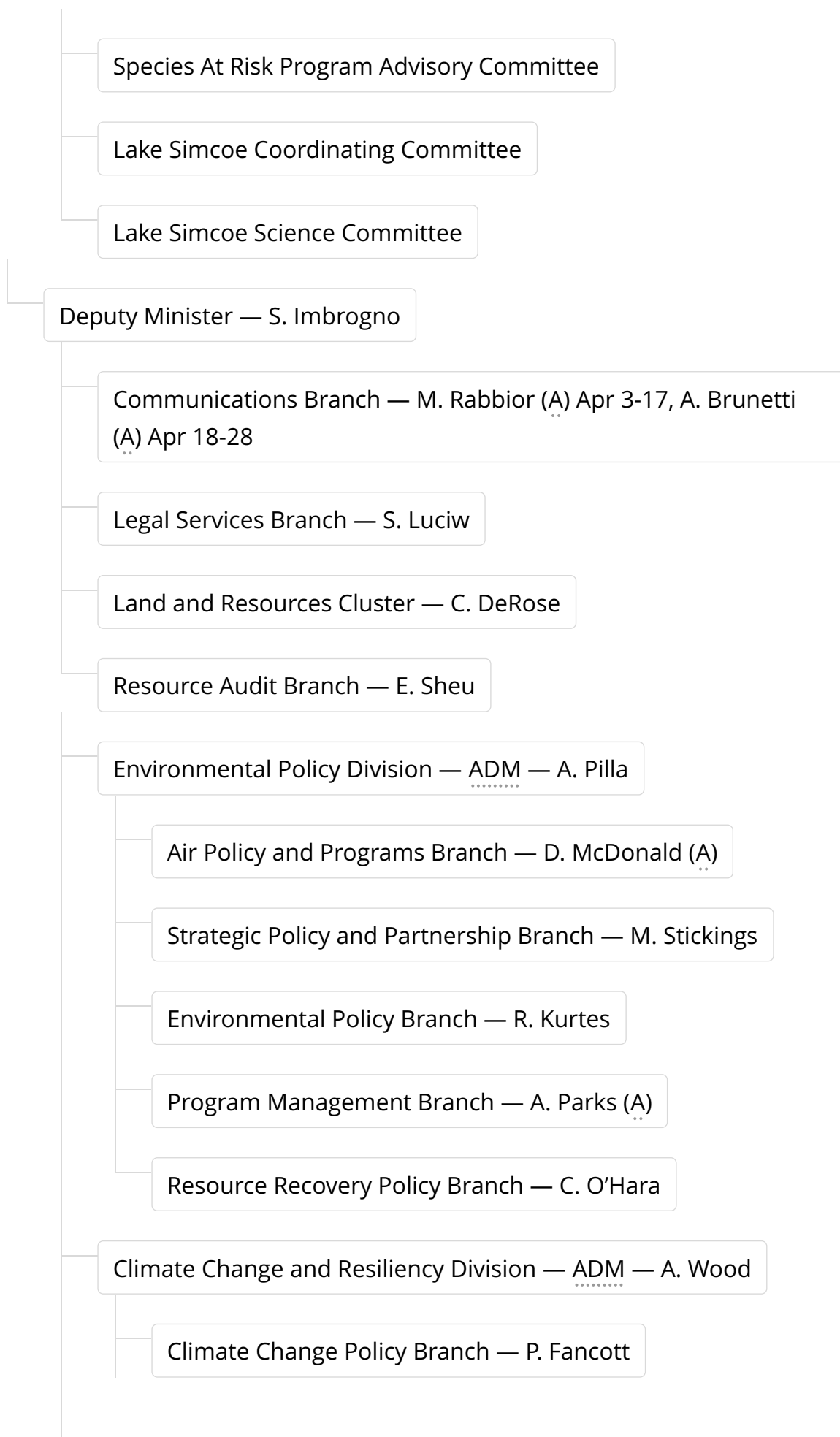
- Provincial Day of Action on Litter Act, 2019*
 - Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*
 - Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016*
 - Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*
 - Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022*
 - Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016*
 - Water Opportunities Act, 2010 (except for Part II)*
-

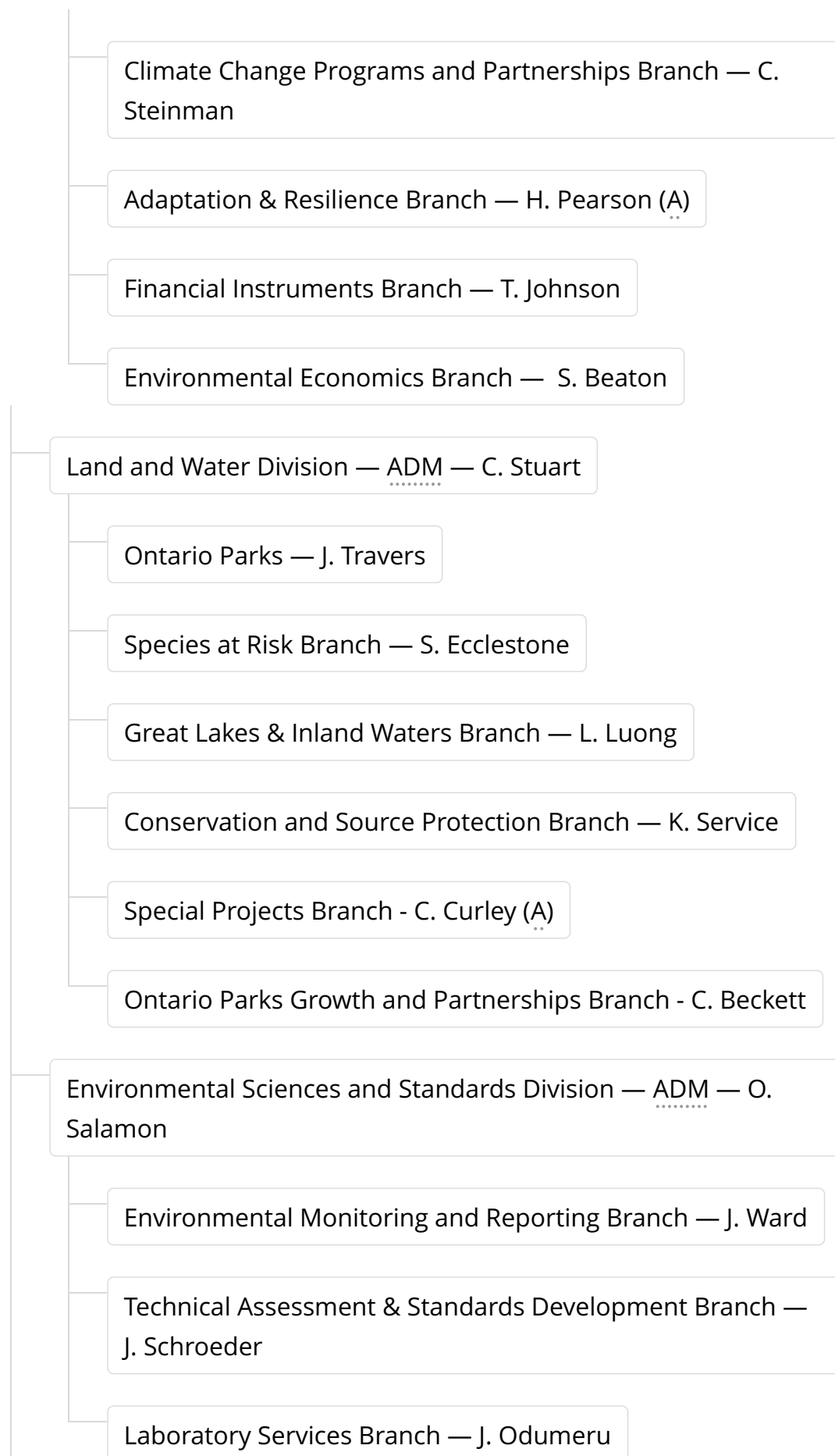
Ministry organization chart

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks — September 6, 2022.

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







Environmental Assessment and Permissions Division — ADM — L. Trevisan (A)

Client Services & Permissions Branch — H. Malcolmson (A)

Environmental Permissions Branch — T. Gebrezghi (A)

Environmental Assessment Branch — K. O' Neill

York and Durham Regions Wastewater Project - T. North (A)

Environmental Assessment Modernization Branch — A. Cross (A)

Drinking Water & Environmental Compliance Division — ADM / Chief Drinking Water Inspector — S. Carrasco

Divisional Compliance Branch — J. Hudebine

Environmental Investigations and Enforcement Branch — M. Evers

Strategic Delivery Branch — K. Puhlmann (A)

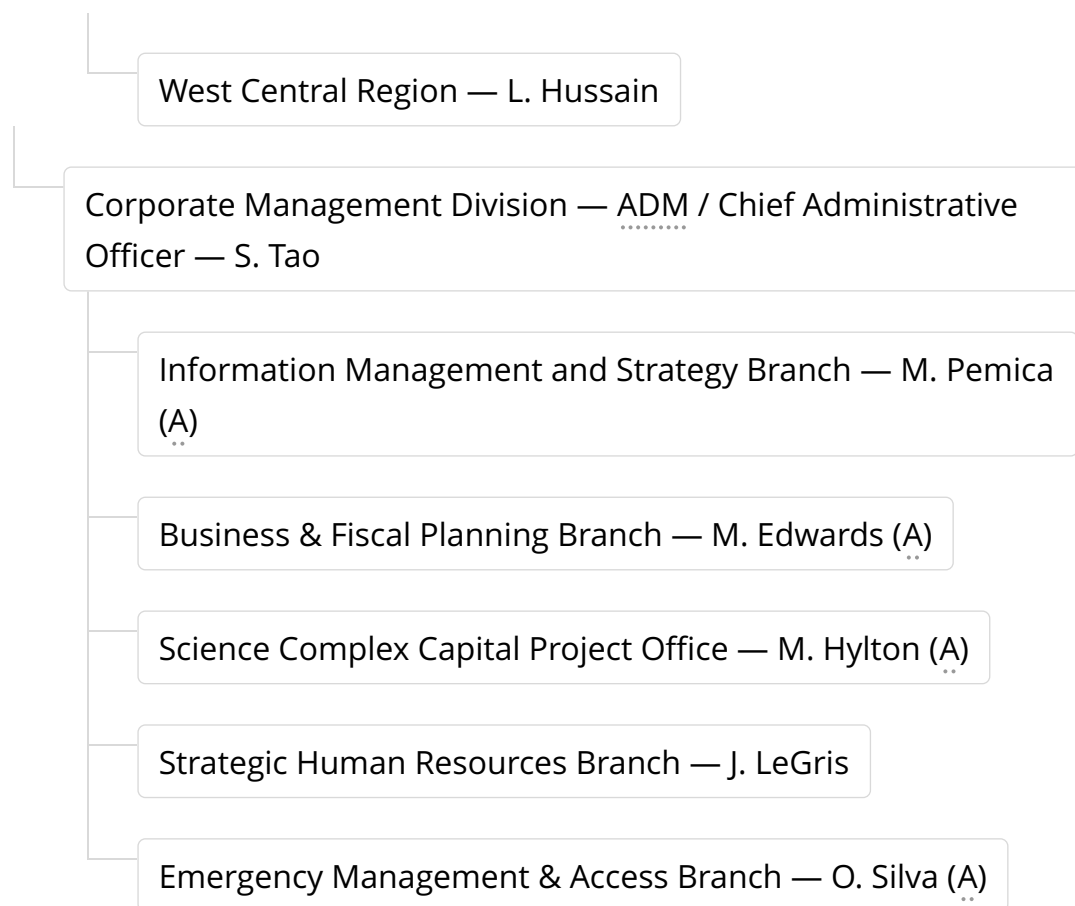
Waste Water Surveillance Initiative — B. Aminvaziri (A)

Central Region — R. Fletcher (A)

Eastern Region — P. Taylor (A)

Northern Region — J. Williamson

Southwest Region — S. Sumbal



Appendix: 2022–2023 Annual report

2022–23 Results

Ontario is a leader in clean, green growth in Canada and around the world. We are protecting our land, air and water, and ensuring a safe, healthy, and clean environment right now and for future generations, all while driving innovation and supporting families and businesses.

In 2022, our government has worked towards protecting and conserving our environment, addressing climate change and ensuring that Ontario's natural beauty could be enjoyed for generations to come. As a result of new opportunities and challenges, as well as new innovations and technologies we continued to evolve our plan to address the environmental priorities of Ontarians as new information, ideas and innovations emerge.

In working with our partners, communities, organizations and industry, we have been

able to achieve significant progress on our priority initiatives and risen to meet new challenges. We remain focused on balancing a healthy economy and healthy environment and keeping Ontario clean for years to come.

Progress to date

With the support of our community organizations, industry and other partners, we have made considerable progress on our commitments. The actions below illustrate how our accomplishments over the past year have contributed towards addressing our environmental priorities.

Climate Change and Resiliency Division

We have:

- launched Ontario's Emissions Performance Standards for 2022-2030 to ensure large, industrial emitters are accountable for their greenhouse gas emissions.
- worked with industries to support their efforts to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by reducing and phasing out the use of coal in their operations. For example, together with our partners at the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the province committed to investing up to \$500 million in ArcelorMittal Dofasco to help the company replace its coal-fed coke ovens and blast furnaces with Ontario's first low-emission hydrogen-ready Direct Reduced Iron-fed and Electric Arc Furnace. This will result in significant CO₂ emission reductions; about three million tonnes a year – the same as taking almost 1 million cars off the road.
- worked with the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry and Ministry of Energy to secure a major investment in clean steelmaking technology in Sault Ste. Marie, which will lead to substantial reduction in greenhouse gases – removing an additional three million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.
- changed Ontario's alternative low-carbon fuels regulation to simplify the approvals process for manufacturers of cement, lime, iron and steel, to make it easier to substitute the use of coal and petroleum coke with fuels derived from materials that would otherwise be disposed in landfills.
- as part of the 2021 Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health, committed to working with communities around the Great

Lakes to promote the use of adaptive management tools and to identify best practices to enhance their resilience to climate change impacts, as well as increasing their ability to implement these tools.

- are reviewing the results of Ontario's first-ever provincial level, multi-sector climate change impact assessment to identify where the province is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- provided secretariat support for an advisory panel on climate change that provided the Minister with expert advice on the implementation of the province's climate change actions, especially on how Ontario can prepare for the costs and impacts of climate change.
- issued \$11.95 billion in green bonds to help finance public transit initiatives, extreme-weather resistant infrastructure, and energy efficiency and conservation projects.

Land and Water Division

We have:

- provided free day use entry to provincial parks across the province on July 15, 2022, encouraging Ontarians to get outdoors and enjoy nature to mark Health Parks Healthy People Celebration Day.
- expanded the advance daily vehicle permit service to 16 additional provincial parks across the province, giving visitors greater certainty when planning park visits by offering guaranteed access to those parks.
- expanded provincial parks and conserved land, including additions to Short Hills Provincial Park, Puzzle Lake Provincial Park and Murphy's Point Provincial Park, to help protect the province's biodiversity and provide new opportunities for Ontarians to enjoy the great outdoors.
- entered into a new agreement with the newly formed Mississagi Park Foundation, comprised of the City of Elliot Lake, Serpent River First Nation and Mississauga First Nation, to maintain and operate Mississagi Provincial Park.
- continued to promote and grow the reach of the Ontario Parks online store, including rolling out a successful 2022 holiday line.
- contributed an additional \$4 million to the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Hastings Wildlife Junction project, through the Greenlands Conservation

Partnership program, to protect nearly 25,000 acres (10,000 hectares) of significant forest and wetlands near Bancroft, Ontario.

- provided nearly \$4.5 million in funding through the Species at Risk Stewardship Program to support non-profit organizations, Indigenous communities and other stakeholder groups who are working to help protect and recover species at risk and their habitat through local projects.
- signed the Canada-Ontario Conservation Agreement on Boreal Caribou, a five-year agreement to advance the protection and recovery of caribou and invested more than \$9 million in its implementation in 2022-23 (including contributions from MNRF, MINES and the federal government). Announced \$29.4 million to support its implementation from 2023-24 to 2026-2027.
- invested \$15 million over two years to support municipalities to improve the management of Lake Ontario wastewater and stormwater discharges.
- invested nearly \$10 million over two years in wastewater monitoring and public reporting to improve transparency around monitoring and public reporting of sewage overflows and bypasses from municipal systems in the Great Lakes.
- continued to protect inland waters and vulnerable lakes, rivers and streams:
 - invested approximately \$650,000 in 19 multi-year funding projects underway to improve our understanding of the complex stressors facing the Lake Simcoe watershed, and improve the ecological health of the lake, including approximately \$190,000 in four new projects by the end of 2022-23.
 - as part of the Muskoka Watershed Initiative, invested approximately \$5 million to further protect the health of the Muskoka River Watershed (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/protecting-muskoka-river-watershed>), including support for 19 projects that will help safeguard the region from new pressures such as increased development and flooding.
 - continued partnerships with District Municipality of Muskoka and Federation of Cottagers' Associations to support citizen science for inland lakes monitoring.
- invested in actions that will help protect and restore the Great Lakes:
 - committed approximately \$6M towards 30 multi-year Great Lakes funding projects run by conservation authorities, communities, organizations, universities and Indigenous peoples that are working to address

commitments in the 2021 Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (COA), Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy and the *Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015*.

- awarded \$1.8 million to 36 projects under the second round of the Great Lakes Local Action Fund that demonstrate environmental benefits to the Great Lakes and their communities.
- continued federal-provincial collaboration in areas such as protecting and restoring the Great Lakes and Ontario's inland waterways:
 - continued working with Canada to implement the binational Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement through the 2021 Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem. Ontario contributed expertise on numerous commitments including supporting Lake-wide Action and Management Plans helping to facilitate information sharing, set priorities and coordinate binational environmental protection and restoration work.
 - made progress on the Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan by working with municipalities to better manage wastewater and stormwater impacts, working with the agriculture sector on reducing phosphorus run-off, supporting wetland restoration in the Lake Erie watershed, and continuing to monitor and improve science.
- continued actions to protect source water, including:
 - continued implementing source protection plans under the *Clean Water Act, 2006* by integrating source protection into other provincial programs, such as spills response, permits and approvals, and working groups addressing the impact of road salt.
 - approved locally initiated amendments to source protection plans to keep them current and further protect sources of drinking water.
 - funded two First Nations to use the ministry's online Best Practices guide, which will help communities enhance their knowledge of local drinking water systems, source waters, and water quality risks, and identify ways to address those risks.

Drinking Water and Environmental Compliance Division

We have continued to protect and support clear air, land and water, including safe

drinking water, through provincial oversight and the delivery of compliance and enforcement programs:

- The 2021-22 Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report confirmed that Ontario's drinking water systems continue to provide high-quality drinking water. The 2021-22 data shows that 99.9 per cent of more than half a million drinking water tests from municipal residential drinking water systems met Ontario's strict, health-based drinking water standards.
- In 2022-23:
 - Responded to over 8,000 spills, over 6,000 pollution incident reports and almost 3,000 Adverse Water Quality Incidents.
 - Continued to apply compliance and enforcement response and tools with voluntary abatement practices in over 2,500 instances, almost 100 orders and over 70 tickets issued.
 - Investigations resulted in over 80 convictions with over \$5M in fines for environmental offences.
- Issued environmental penalties to encourage companies to prevent spills from happening and to clean them up quickly if they occur. In 2022-23, Ontario issued seven environmental penalty orders for eight violations, which total \$292,788.50.
- Updated the flushing and sampling for lead website (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/flushing-and-sampling-lead>) to include more information for the regulated community. This included a new section for parents and guardians.
- The ministry and its agencies, the Walkerton Clean Water Centre and the Ontario Clean Water Agency, continued to provide First Nation communities across Ontario with access to provincial technical expertise and training upon request.
 - The Ontario Clean Water Agency moved forward with the formation of a First Nation Advisory Circle to help government better understand the needs and priorities of First Nations communities.
 - To date, the Walkerton Clean Water Centre has trained 211 First Nation operators with their Entry-Level Course for Drinking Water Operators for First Nations; as well as 164 Chiefs, band councilors and leaders on their responsibilities in managing those systems.
- trained more than 300 MECP officers to support compliance programs under the

Endangered Species Act.

- completed a program evaluation to inform long-term delivery options for wastewater surveillance and continued to work with academic labs to analyze COVID-19 and other health threats at strategic community sampling locations.
- continued to implement a strategy to address industrial emissions (such as the Sarnia Air Action Plan and the Hamilton Air Action Plan) which includes enhanced oversight of industrial facilities, including:
 - enhanced inspections
 - reactive incident response
 - enhanced air monitoring
 - communication with local stakeholders.
- participated on the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Panel with Indigenous governments to make funding decisions associated with pre-remediation and scientific assessment work to inform future remediation related to the mercury contamination in the English and Wabigoon Rivers. Funds are distributed from the \$85 million trust that was established under the *English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017*. As of March 31, 2023, the Panel has approved \$38.2 million in funding, and of this, \$29.2 million has been disbursed from the trust. This \$29.2 million includes \$12.8 million for panel participation and capacity building, \$15.4 million for pre-remediation scientific assessment and \$950,000 for other remediation-related activities.
- continued to work towards the implementation of the engineering and design plan to remediate contaminated sediments in the St. Clair River.

Environmental Assessment and Permissions Division

To modernize our review processes and reduce red tape, while ensuring that strong environmental oversight is maintained, we have:

- proposed changes to the *Environmental Assessment Act* that would provide the Minister with authority, on a project-specific basis, to make an order to waive or alter the 30-day waiting period following completion of a class environmental assessment process.
- finalized changes to better align assessment requirements with potential

environmental impact, including conditional exemptions for certain low-risk municipal infrastructure projects such as installing new municipal traffic lights. These exemptions will reduce duplication and streamline the process for low-risk municipal infrastructure projects, while maintaining strong environmental oversight and protection.

- proposed changes that allow more projects with well-understood impacts to follow a streamlined environmental assessment process. The proposed changes will better align Ontario with other jurisdictions across Canada, including the federal government, who use project lists to determine the types of projects that must complete a comprehensive environmental assessment.
- posted a proposal to evaluate the requirements for municipal road, water and wastewater projects that are currently subject to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Municipal Class EA) that may also include other legislation.
- published a bulletin about a number of key initiatives the ministry is planning such as developing sector-based terms of reference and updated guidance that will help make it easier to complete a comprehensive environmental assessment while maintaining environmental oversight and opportunities for consultation.
- implemented the Municipal Consolidated Linear Infrastructure approach for municipal sewage collection and stormwater systems, which streamlines the application process for developers who are transferring ownership to the municipality at the completion of their development project.
- consulted on the environmental assessment requirements for advanced recycling facilities under the *Environmental Assessment Act* to better support the use of innovative processes which reduces the need to use new natural resources and diverts waste from landfill.
- finalized 53 risk assessments so that high risk contaminated sites could be cleaned up and put back to economic use, after thorough reviews to help ensure the sites will be redeveloped in a manner that is protective of human health and the environment.
- filed 531 Record of Site Conditions to the Brownfields Environmental Site Registry to support brownfields redevelopment.
- increased transparency of how Ontario manages water resources by releasing daily and annual amounts of water taken by permit to take water holders in

Ontario from January 2019 to December 2020 on the Open Data Catalogue.

- introduced changes that reduce regulatory burden for regulated industrial wastewater facilities, while maintaining the strong current level of oversight of the release of wastewater from these facilities to Ontario's waterways. The changes provide these facilities with greater flexibility to make operational improvements by transferring regulatory requirements into existing Environmental Compliance Approvals to remove duplication and overlap.

Environmental Sciences and Standards Division

We have:

- released the 2020 Air Quality Report, which marked 50 years of reporting on air quality in Ontario
- continued with the Sarnia Area Environmental Health Project (<https://www.cleanairsarniaandarea.com/sarnia-area-environmental-health-project.aspx>) to help address community concerns about air pollution and other environmental stressors in the Sarnia area, including meeting with partners and local stakeholders to share updates and seek input on the project.
- worked with Michigan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Canadian government on a collaborative study to improve our understanding of ozone formation (a key ingredient in smog) in southern Ontario and the transboundary flow of ozone from the United States into Ontario (and vice versa).
- continued to deliver our Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) with Environment and Climate Change Canada through a network of 38 ambient air quality monitoring stations across the province to measure and track common air pollutants and provide the public with real-time air pollutant data through Air Quality Ontario. As of January 2023, the ministry increased the number of pollutants tracked at all air quality monitoring stations.
- continued to operate a roadside 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.
- continued to support conservation and environmental planning by collecting information on greenhouse gas emissions and carbon storage in the Hudson Bay Lowlands, a globally significant wetland and carbon store.

- continued to work with Conservation Authorities and Environment and Climate Change Canada to collect year-round water quality samples at the mouths of western Lake Ontario rivers to better understand water quality and nutrient levels in the rivers and along the shoreline that can be used as a benchmark to evaluate future change over this growing urban area.

Environmental Policy Division

We made the following progress on the transition to the producer responsibility model:

- repealed out-of-date regulations associated with soft drink containers to ensure ensure producers are following a consistent approach to recycling soft drink containers and diverting these materials from landfills, as required under the current blue box regulation.
- amended regulations to remove producer's requirements to provide promotion and education on visible fees for electrical and electronic equipment, batteries, tires, and hazardous and special products. These amendments would help respond to businesses' concerns and ensure that producer responsibility regulations are low burden, low cost, and consistent for both producers and consumers.
- finalized amendments to existing producer responsibility regulations for tires, batteries and electrical and electronic equipment to reduce burden and make administrative changes.

We have also:

- amended the hazardous waste regulation that transitioned the delivery of hazardous waste digital reporting services to the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority effective January 1, 2023. These changes make reporting easier and faster for the regulated community, while providing more timely, accurate information to the ministry, which will hold polluters accountable for the wastes they generate.
- continued to work with other provinces, territories, and the federal government on the development of an action plan to implement a Canada-wide plastics strategy, including single-use plastic waste.
- raised awareness about the impacts of litter and waste in our neighbourhoods, waterways and green spaces and encouraged participation in safe cleanups

during the Day of Action on Litter with members in the household.

- continued to take action to reduce industrial benzene emissions with the implementation of best available technology and practices in the Petroleum Refining and Petrochemical technical standards. The technical standards aim to reduce health and environmental risks and exposure to emissions in local communities by requiring registered facilities to implement best available technologies and practices to reduce benzene air emissions and improve air quality over time.
- posted proposals on the environmental registry of Ontario for six facilities to apply for the Asphalt Mix Industry Standard.

To strengthen enforcement tools to hold polluters accountable to protect and preserve our air, land and water, we have:

- expanded the use of administrative penalties to ensure that producers and other parties that are involved in collecting and managing tires, batteries, electrical and electronic equipment, hazardous and special products and Blue Box materials comply with collection requirements and manage their end-of-life materials.
- implemented measures to limit emissions from commercial trucks and buses through the Ministry of Transportation's DriveOn vehicle safety and emissions inspection program for heavy diesel vehicles, which will reduce criteria air contaminants by tightening emissions standards (opacity), on-board diagnostic inspections, and expanding on-road enforcement to eliminate tampering of emission components on heavy diesel vehicles

**Table 3: Ministry interim actual expenditures
2022-23**

Item	Amount ^[14]
Operating	689.7 \$M *****
Capital	52.1 \$M *****

Item	Amount ^[14]
Staff strength — MECP (as of March 31, 2023) ^[15]	2,057.0
Staff strength — Ontario Clean Water Agency ^[15]	938.61

Updated: December 19, 2023
Published: December 15, 2023

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 2023 Ontario Budget.
- [2] ^ Estimates and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure.
- [3] ^ The ministry was directed to manage panel expenses from within its existing allocation
- [4] ^ Calculated as a per cent change in provincial GHG emissions in a given year relative to baseline levels. All annual provincial emission values are taken from the 2022 National Inventory Report (NIR), 1990–2020, which provides historical GHG emissions from 1990 to 2020. Note that historical estimates are subject to change due to methodological improvements and revisions.
- [5] ^ Statistics Canada non-residential data is only available up to 2018 - data for 2020 expected to be released in 2023/2024. Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority residential data is available up to 2020 and 2021.
- [6] ^ The stated per capita waste generation for any 2 year period is based on Statistics Canada data and Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority

data from the first year of that period.

- [7] ^ The exceedance of the air quality KPI is largely due to a more stringent federal CAAQS for ozone that came into effect in 2020 for better environmental and human health protection and is not necessarily an indication that the air quality has worsened. There has been a decrease in maximum ozone concentrations and the duration of elevated ozone events over time.
- [8] ^ Oxygen levels in Lake Simcoe continue to be below the 7 mg/L target; some interannual variation in dissolved oxygen is normal and does not necessarily indicate the start of a decreasing trend. This is one environmental indicator of lake water quality which has generally improved. A number of factors that vary among years can influence dissolved oxygen, such as wind and oxygen depletion rates.
- [9] ^ Rolled up into their respective reducing red tape and burden reduction KPIs reported at enterprise level.
- [10] ^ Stated saving amounts are MECP only.
- [11] ^ Q4 2022-23 Burden Reduction savings and Regulatory Compliance Requirements data expected later in the year
- [12] ^ Data includes only the decisions that were issued for higher-risk ECAs for files that were received by the ministry after January 1, 2018 (i.e., does not include all ECAs received by the ministry nor all decisions issued for ECAs by the ministry in a given period of time)
- [13] ^ The data points for 2019-20 and 2020-21 have been updated to the correct running percentage KPI calculation. The data points reported previously were non-cumulative percentages of decisions made within each fiscal year.
- [14] ^ Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the *2023 Ontario Budget*.
- [15] ^ Ontario Public Service Full-Time Equivalent positions.