

Submitted on Tue, 01/25/2022 - 19:26

Application ID: 54801

Bill or item of business: **2022 Pre-Budget Consultations**

Full name

Dr Marianne Larsen

Paste submission

25 January 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an Ontario citizen writing to provide input in the 2022 provincial budget. I am a parent who is deeply concerned about the state of our environment. To that end, I would like to focus on items in the budget that have bearing on the health and well-being of our environment, especially in light of the fact that human-induced climate change is already contributing to many extreme weather events in every region across the globe. Significant reductions in emissions need to start now; not in 10 or 20 years from now. Policies that address the climate crisis will be a significant issue in the upcoming Provincial Election. This is an opportunity for the provincial government to show that the environment is a priority. Thus, I urge that the following areas be given priority in the upcoming Ontario budget.

- Invest in public transit initiatives in the GTA and throughout the province. As I live in London, Ontario, it would be great to have a highspeed rail line connecting cities through southwest. To that end, I would call upon the government to cancel the Highway 413 and the Bradford bypass and not fund these initiatives as they would pave over existing Greenbelt, eliminate Class 1 and Class 2 farmland and increase carbon emissions.
- Re-establish provincial rebates for the purchase of new and used electric vehicles (EVs). Simply providing EV owners with an opportunity to drive in the dedicated highway lanes is not a sufficient incentive to encourage Ontarians to shift to driving EVs. Ontario can model their EV incentive program after the existing rebates available in Quebec. If the manufacturer's suggested retail price is less than \$60,000 then rebates up to \$8,000 are available.
- Create a zero down payment, zero interest finance program for heat pump installation in those homes already heating with electricity. For qualifying low-income households provide additional grants to cover the upfront costs. This will reduce electricity demand, lower emissions and address energy justice issues. From a financial perspective this would decrease future payments relating to the Low-income Energy Assistance Program.
- Create matching rebates to the Federal Natural Resource Canada retrofit program. In particular, establish substantial rebates for insulation, windows and doors, heat pumps and renewable energy systems. Ensure that only ground or air heat pumps qualify for the rebates and that heating systems that continue to use gas (methane) do NOT qualify for rebates. Most of the buildings that will be around in 2050 already exist today. As a result, it is important to immediately start the process of energy conservation through retrofits. Lower electricity use saves money for individuals, lower carbon emissions and partially addresses the need to expand electricity supply in the future.
- Increase funding to the Ministry of the Environment so that additional staff can be hired to environmental inspections and enforcement for hazardous spills.
- Increase funding to conservation authorities so that they can fulfill their critical roles in protecting

natural habitats and local watersheds. Allow conservation authorities to fully manage and protect these areas. As we experience more frequent and severe weather events, these areas play a critical role in protecting communities against flooding and erosion.

Thank you for considering my input into the provincial budget process for 2022.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marianne A. Larsen