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Full name

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We have seen the impacts of human-induced climate change already affecting Ontario communities, including London. These impacts include flooding of homes and increased air pollution from forest fires. Significant reductions in emissions need to start now and not in 10 or 20 years from now. Climate Change policy will be a significant issue in the upcoming Provincial Election. As a result I urge that the following areas be given priority in the upcoming Ontario budget.

1. Meeting Greenhouse Gas emission targets

- Invest in more public transit initiatives in the GTA and throughout the province. Cancel Hwy 413 and the Bradford bypass and do not put any money into these projects. It is a well established concept that induced demand on new highways would not relieve congestion over time. These projects would pave over existing Greenbelt, eliminate Class 1 and Class 2 farmland and increase emissions.
- No more incentives for any gas-fired appliances, including high efficiency furnaces.

2. Housing Affordability

- For qualifying low income households, provide grants to cover the upfront costs for new heat pump installations. From a financial perspective this would decrease future payments relating to the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). Also, create a zero down payment, zero interest finance program for heat pump installation in those homes already heating with electricity. This will reduce electricity demand, lower emissions and address energy justice issues.
- Create matching rebates to the Federal Natural Resource Canada retrofit program. In particular, establish substantial rebates for insulation, windows & 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 emissions and partially addresses the need to expand electricity supply in the future.

3. Nature Based Solutions

- 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 as a result of Climate Change, these areas play a critical role in protecting communities against flooding and erosion.
- Plant more trees and accelerate the saving of 30% of land based nature by 2030, providing extra incentives for nature based solutions in heavily populated areas like southwestern Ontario.