

## An Ambitious Plan for Climate and a Clean Economy

As leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, Nate Erskine-Smith will deliver the most ambitious climate action and environmental protection plan in North America.

The Climate and Clean Economy Plan will create jobs, lower bills, improve our health, and protect the planet for our kids, by:

- Reducing Ontario's emissions by 50% by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2040, including by building a net zero electricity grid by 2030;
- Establishing Ontario as a responsible global leader in critical minerals, clean manufacturing and clean technologies, and delivering economic reconciliation in partnership with Indigenous communities;
- Rapidly accelerating the deployment of zero emission vehicles, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and green retrofits for homes, small businesses, and public buildings;
- Building Ontario's resilience to climate change, including by investing in adaptation and green infrastructure, establishing a world-class forest management and wildfire team, and creating the position of Ontario's Chief Heat Officer to implement emergency and long-term heat risk reduction and cooling projects;
- Protecting 30% of Ontario's nature by 2030, including by protecting and expanding the Greenbelt, creating new networks of natural areas to provide nature access for millions of Ontarians, and delivering greater protection of the Great Lakes and clean freshwater; and
- Enacting accountability legislation that sets strong interim targets, and establishes an independent body to hold the government accountable for its progress.

As we work towards these ambitious goals, we will make sure our work advances in partnership with Indigenous communities and meets the needs of northern and rural Ontario.

### **Create Good Jobs**

#### A clear industrial plan

#### **Invest in homegrown tech:**

- Fund broad-based cleantech tax credits, with bonuses for projects that meet prevailing wage standards and/or are in regions with lower economic development.

- Create a moonshot fund (seed and early stage capital) to galvanize investment in innovative Ontario cleantech, financed by proceeds from Ontario's industrial carbon-pricing system.

**Develop an Ontario sustainable jobs plan** in consultation with labour leaders, industry, Indigenous representatives, and local community advocates.

**Conduct skills mapping and a workforce needs assessment** to identify skills and labour shortages in clean industries and work with educational institutions to make the province a centre for clean-jobs training (ex. energy auditors, heat pump installers, EV mechanics, etc.).

**Develop (re)training and up-skilling programs** in partnership with labour unions in order to support workers from sectors impacted by the global clean-energy transformation into clean-energy sectors.

**Support transition for emissions-intensive industries** including cement and steel.

**Use government procurement to drive change** and ensure that all procurement aligns with net zero and circular economy goals.

#### Strategic investments in battery storage and long-term energy storage solutions

**Accelerate project development** by creating an inventory of serviced, shovel-ready industrial land in close proximity to laboursheds and production networks, prioritizing battery supply-chain activities on this land, and promoting this inventory to investors.

**Build homegrown cell manufacturing capacity** by ensuring technology and skills transfer are part of foreign investment efforts.

**Support Canadian companies in becoming global leaders by:** helping them develop, commercialize, and scale up innovations in battery chemistry, design, and manufacturing; and advancing intellectual property protection strategies.

#### A responsible approach to critical materials

The provincial government can play a pivotal role in seizing the economic opportunity of critical minerals as part of the clean energy transition, with respect for the environment and Indigenous sovereignty. Unfortunately, the Conservative government's approach to building mines [sets up a direct conflict with Indigenous communities](#), and it will slow down our ability to build.

**Expedite permitting and regulatory approvals in partnership with Indigenous Peoples**, through the co-creation of standards that respect UNDRIP principles, create certainty for industry, invite

more investment, protect the environment, and get our mines built in a way that delivers economic reconciliation and benefits local communities.

**Invest in R&D to unlock cleaner and more efficient mining extraction and processing** with pilot projects to test new techniques that drive down emissions, improve competitiveness, and minimize the impacts of mining on the natural environment.

**Develop world-leading IESG standards** in collaboration with First Nations, local communities, labour leaders, and mining firms, to make Ontario a destination of choice for responsible global mining operations.

**Support advancement of recycling solutions for critical minerals** both to reduce waste and to relieve pressure on primary supply.

#### Creation of a Youth Climate Corps

**To address the climate emergency and meet the growing labour demand** in climate mitigation and adaptation, we'll create a Youth Climate Corps in partnership with industry and post-secondary institutions. The program will provide youth apprenticeship opportunities, especially for marginalized youth.

#### Deliver economic reconciliation

**Strengthening the Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program** to enable Indigenous communities to better develop and acquire equity stakes in energy projects. The program can be improved by increasing overall funding, increasing guarantees above \$50 million, covering up to 100% of equity investments, and broadening the program to include critical mineral projects. "Fast-track" permitting should be set for clean-energy projects that have set community benefit agreements with host communities and/or projects that are at least 25% Indigenous-owned.

### ***Build Healthy and Resilient Communities***

#### Making clean transportation affordable and attainable

[Ontario lags other provinces on ZEV uptake](#). 20% of new vehicles in BC are ZEVs; that figure is 14% in Quebec. Ontario sits far behind at only 6% of new vehicles being ZEVs.

**Make EVs more affordable through a budget-neutral rebate program** that provides a means-tested grant for new and used zero-emission vehicles where it is a primary vehicle and not a luxury car. In Northern and rural communities, the grant should also be available for pickup trucks & heavy-duty vehicles.

**Accelerate building (public) fast EV charging stations** and ensure fair access for all communities, whether it's the drive from Sault Ste. Marie to Thunder Bay, or overnight charging

in a high-rise. The EV charging network must be coordinated so that EVs can become a resource for grid stability and flexibility, and chargers for heavy duty vehicles must be part of the plan. This would include requiring any new gas station to allocate space for charging stations.

**Implement an Ontario ZEV Supply Mandate** so that the EVs that Ontarians make are available for Ontarians to buy. Despite the coming federal ZEV mandate, Ontario risks losing benefits to BC and Quebec, as car manufacturers are focused on meeting those provinces' mandates.

**Deliver a zero-emission public transit fleet**, by requiring school boards and public transit agencies to move from polluting diesel to clean electric buses, following Quebec's model, alongside an increase in funding to further assist efforts to decarbonize public transit fleets.

**Invest in reliable and affordable public transit and active transportation** and support municipal efforts to improve transportation service quality and create healthier communities.

#### Achieve a net zero grid by 2030

Wind and solar with battery storage is already cheaper than fossil fuels. Having cancelled 750 green energy contracts, the Conservative government is investing in new gas plants and expanding gas plants in communities that are choosing other options. Ford's lack of competence in energy planning is undermining our clean energy advantage.

We will prioritize renewable and clean energy procurement. As we introduce renewables to the grid, we will phase out gas for electricity generation use, except for redundancy in the case of emergency.

**Ontario made renewable energy procurement** that emulates the success of other provinces by establishing long-term energy planning and procurement of low carbon energy resources and support industry in maximizing the value of federal tax credits.

**Review the Great Lakes Offshore Wind Moratorium** and work with willing communities to harness wind power for affordable local energy, with the potential to create thousands of well-paying jobs, all with minimal impact to aquatic ecosystems.

**Reduce red-tape for solar and storage** and support community solar projects. [Alberta](#), BC, Quebec, and PEI are all surging ahead with installation of solar power, while Ontario solar-panel manufacturers and installers are left behind.

**Bring Efficiency Requirements Back** by requiring the OEB, IESO, and utilities to find electricity demand efficiencies of at least 1% per year for the next 20 years, and by doubling the Conservation and Demand Side Management budgets for electricity and home heating. [Ontario shouldn't rank behind Arkansas for electricity savings.](#)

**Invest in Distributed Energy Resources** to reduce strain on our grid and enhance community clean energy solutions (ex. rooftop solar). These investments will be particularly important for northern and rural Ontario.

**Continue to support nuclear energy** in a manner that is transparent, cost effective, and includes an assessment of the role small modular reactors can play.

#### Investing in a more resilient economy

**Reverse Ford's cuts to conservation authorities** and restore their original mandates that were narrowed by the Ford government.

**Commission a province-wide climate-risk assessment** to map out what regions are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and better inform efforts to build a more climate-resilient province.

**Increase support for forest firefighting budget** to safeguard against wildfires, and establish a world class forest management and wildfire team that can respond domestically and globally to wildfires.

**Create the position of Ontario's Chief Heat Officer** to implement emergency and long-term heat risk reduction and cooling projects (eg. cooling centres, expanded tree canopy cover, more access to clean swimmable fresh water and public swimming pools).

**Support agricultural solutions**, in partnership and collaboration with farmers, to limit emissions from livestock and fertilizers, improve alternative proteins, develop climate-resilient crops and livestock, and protect soil and water resources.

**Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure** and support municipalities in their own climate adaptation efforts, including by mandating it as a factor in decision-making processes. Flood risk can be reduced by specific infrastructure investments with the potential to [create tens of thousands of jobs by 2030](#).

**Reduce flood risks further** by mandating that realtors include flood risk information on listings and share flood risk information with prospective buyers, and by mandating that all new builds integrate flood risk reduction standards.

**Incorporate Indigenous traditional knowledge** into adaptation policy decision-making and respect core principles of environmental stewardship.

**Strengthen recycling and waste reduction efforts** with a focus on excessive packaging, harmonization as between municipalities, and food waste.

## ***Make Life More Affordable***

### Greening our buildings

Buildings are one of the largest sources of emissions in Ontario and we need an ambitious plan to reduce emissions through new net-zero builds and retrofit programs for residential and commercial buildings.

**Utilizing geothermal & geo exchange systems:** We know that in our urban centres, ~70% of ghg emissions come from buildings. That's why we will mandate commercial/residential developers in technically feasible areas to utilize geothermal & geo exchange systems. Utilizing this natural heat source will also help lower costs for residents.

**Make home and small business retrofits affordable** through grants and no-interest loans for energy efficiency measures, including smart thermostats, heating and cooling systems (ex. heat pumps), insulation, and windows. The provincial Clean Home Heating Program should be accelerated on an ambitious schedule.

**Build Net-Zero and High Efficiency New Homes** through robust Green Development Standards that require high efficiency for new buildings, with consideration for the unique circumstances for rural and northern Ontario.

**Existing Building Performance Standards** to address emissions from existing commercial, industrial and multi-residential buildings (while protecting against renovictions for multi-residential). We should follow the lead of many municipalities in the United States and the City of Vancouver.

**Invest in retrofits to public buildings** and support municipalities, universities, school boards, and hospitals with much needed green infrastructure upgrades.

### Fairness in electricity pricing

Lower-income households spend a higher proportion of their incomes and total expenditure on electricity compared to higher-income households. To address this issue and make prices more equitable, we will explore **introducing variable rates based on income levels**.

## ***Protect Nature and Ensure Climate Accountability***

The Conservative government is developing the Greenbelt while failing to protect Ontario's land. We will stand up for our natural assets to support stronger, more resilient communities.

**Protect more nature and expand the Greenbelt** especially in Southwestern Ontario. It is critical that we protect our greenspace, our biodiversity, and our vital farmland.

**Protect Ontario's Freshwater** through policies and funding to protect major bodies of water, phosphorus remediation, aquatic cleanup, shoreline mitigation, sewage-system retrofits, and watershed-based management, in partnership with all local levels.

**Expand Ontario's protected areas** with a goal of getting to 30% of land as protected areas by 2030 through the creation of more provincial parks, including in urban areas, and in partnership with local and Indigenous communities.

**Enact net-zero accountability legislation** that includes strong interim targets on the path to 2040, and establishes an independent body to hold the government accountable for its progress.

**Create an Ontario Ravine Strategy** linking existing strategies, protecting and connecting ravines and natural infrastructure across the province, improving human health and protecting natural ecosystems.

Climate change is an existential threat to future generations, and Ontario must reclaim a leading role in tackling this crisis. Under Nate's leadership, we will have the strongest climate policy in North America. Serious climate action isn't just about saving the planet for our kids. It will also create well-paying jobs, lower energy bills, and build a healthier society.

**Let's get to work. Visit [www.meetnate.ca](http://www.meetnate.ca) to show your support.**