

## Ontario Premier Wynne Mandates Environmental and Energy Priorities

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*Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne released mandate letters to her cabinet ministers on September 25, 2014, outlining key priorities for each ministry. Premier Wynne's marching orders include many environmental and energy priorities. Key environmental priorities relate to climate change, waste diversion and reduction, pollution prevention, drinking water quality for First Nations and invasive species. Notable among the Premier's energy priorities are protecting Ontario's interests in pipelines and advancing renewable energy policies.*

### Environmental Priorities

- ♦ **Climate Change** – the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) will lead the development of a new long-term climate change strategy for the province in 2015 that will look forward to 2050 and contain an action plan to achieve greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets for 2020. MOECC will work with other key ministries such as the Energy, Transportation and Natural Resources and Forestry, amongst others to implement the strategy and achieve targets. Other climate change efforts identified in the mandate letter include public and stakeholder engagement on climate change, developing a Canadian Energy Strategy that includes coordinated GHG emission reduction efforts, and developing new alternative fuel rules later this year to help energy-intensive industries reduce GHG emissions.
- ♦ **Pollution Prevention and Responsibility** – the MOECC will place greater emphasis on pollution prevention and the “polluter pays” principle, focusing first on contaminated sites. Premier Wynne also encourages the MOECC to review the legislative framework to ensure a comprehensive approach to hold polluters responsible for decisions affecting the environment.
- ♦ **Waste Diversion** – Premier Wynne directs the MOECC to build on Ontario's Waste Reduction Strategy and work with industry, municipalities and other stakeholders to reintroduce waste reduction legislation.
- ♦ **Drinking Water Quality for First Nations** – Premier Wynne tasks MOECC and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to improve drinking water on reserves, focusing on remote communities. These ministries will work with the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs and the federal government to achieve measurable, achievable targets and substantive progress.

- ♦ **Invasive Species** – the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry will prepare the Invasive Species Act for reintroduction and continue addressing concerns about prevention, early detection and eradication of and rapid response to invasive species.
- ♦ **Ring of Fire Development** – Premier Wynne tasks a number of ministries with supporting project development in the Ring of Fire region in northern Ontario. In particular, various ministries will progress the next phase of negotiations under the Ring of Fire Regional Framework Agreement. MOECC will also work with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to make decisions about environmental assessments, cumulative and regional environmental impacts, and long-term monitoring in the region. Premier Wynne also asks the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to work with key mining companies, First Nations and other parties to establish a Ring of Fire development corporation to construct, finance, operate and maintain infrastructure to support access to strategic resources in the region.

### Energy Priorities

- ♦ **Long-Term Energy Plan Implementation (LTEP) and the “Conservation First” Approach** – the Ministry of Energy will continue to implement Ontario’s 2013 LTEP. This includes implementing a Conservation First approach to energy planning, approval and procurement. The Ministry of Energy will work with the Ontario Power Authority, Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board to prioritize the Conservation First approach.
- ♦ **Renewable Energy** – Premier Wynne tasks Ontario’s Energy Minister with advancing the province’s policies on renewable energy, including wind, solar, bioenergy and hydro power. Ontario aims to have 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy online by 2025. The Ministry of Energy will work with its agencies to implement a new competitive procurement process for renewable energy projects larger than 500 kilowatts and take into account local considerations. It will also work with its agencies and municipalities to ensure that municipalities are able to participate meaningfully and effectively in decision-making to place renewable energy projects.
- ♦ **Pipelines** – the Ministry of Energy will protect Ontario’s interests by continuing intervention in regulatory hearings about major pipeline projects that directly affect the province.

Additional environment and energy measures (amongst others) identified by Premier Wynne in her mandate letters include

- ♦ implementing the *Endangered Species Act* to protect and promote the recovery of species at risk in Ontario
- ♦ safeguarding Ontarians from toxics
- ♦ developing a Canadian Energy Strategy with other provinces and territories
- ♦ developing clean technologies
- ♦ developing and implementing smart grid technologies
- ♦ consulting with Aboriginal communities on and supporting Aboriginal participation in energy activities and projects, and

- ♦ developing a Far North Land Use Strategy for community-based land-use plans, as required under the *Far North Act*.

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