



York Region Detailed Comments – Made in Ontario Environmental Plan Proposal – ERO 013-4208

Overall, York Region staff support actions outlined in the Plan and provide the following for further consideration. Detailed comments have been split into five key sections to simplify review by Ministry staff:

1. Protecting Air, Lakes, Rivers
2. Addressing climate change
3. Reducing litter and waste
4. Conserving land and greenspace
5. Other engagement opportunities

1. Protecting Air, Lakes, Rivers

Proposed Plan Action	York Region Recommendations	Rationale
Redesign the emissions testing program for heavy-duty vehicles (e.g. commercial transport trucks) and strengthen on-road enforcement of emissions standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign emissions testing program for heavy vehicles. See also comments from York Region submitted to Ministry on October 26, 2018 [ERO 013-3867]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in heavy vehicle performance will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. • Effective testing programs offer a significant opportunity to mitigate greenhouse gases from this source.
Enhance how we manage water takings to ensure we have sustainable water resources in the face of a changing climate and continued population growth. We will do this by examining approaches to assessing and managing multiple water takings, establishing priorities for different water uses, and preparing and responding to drought conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing <i>Clean Water Act</i> efforts identified in Source Protection Plans to prioritize municipal drinking water during droughts and inform water management programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage substantial investment in science-based approaches to identify wellhead protection areas based on quality and quantity needs for municipal systems. • Maintain continued success of Source Protection Programs across Ontario.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sustainable financing for the Low Water Response Program to assist Conservation Authorities and others with monitoring efforts to predict and adapt to drought conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities are best positioned to monitor watershed conditions, and can effectively leverage existing tools and resources to support municipal drinking water systems with an early warning system. In the past, this program was financially supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources. At times of extreme drought, reduced water taking was mandated based on evidence based monitoring data. Without sustainable funding, the program is at risk.
Increase transparency through real-time monitoring of sewage overflows from municipal wastewater systems into Ontario’s lakes and rivers. Work with municipalities to ensure that proper monitoring occurs, and that the public is aware of overflow incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus real time monitoring of sewage overflows where systems have combined sewage systems and storm sewers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness of watershed conditions is important, particularly in those areas where municipal systems have combined sewers (sewers that convey sewage as well as stormwater). However, for high performing plants like the Duffin Creek WPCP this would represent a significant cost for no benefit. Our Duffin Creak Plant has no by-pass capability and the upstream system has no combined sewers. Implementation of these requirements should be on a risk-basis to ensure efficient use of tax and rate dollars.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing Spills Action Centre data and consolidate real time monitoring at the Provincial level, rather than through individual municipal efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spills Action Centre has a well-established reporting mechanism for reporting spills for the wastewater industry. • By consolidating the process at the Provincial level within one system, information technology software costs are reduced and can be customized to report information based on

<p>Encourage targeted investment and innovation in managing wastewater that overflows into our lakes and rivers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus investment to reduce nutrient loading on non-point sources through a watershed approach for more cost effective solutions. 	<p>different user needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive scientific research continues to demonstrate that non-point sources like urban and agricultural runoff now represent the vast majority of nutrient loading to the Great Lakes that lead to nuisance algal blooms. Greater nutrient reductions can be achieved through targeting non-point sources, which is also more cost effective for the ratepayer. A study undertaken by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) identified the cost to reduce phosphorus from agriculture ranged from \$4-270 per kg, while the cost to reduce the same amount from point sources \$5,000-8,000 per kg for small systems and up to \$45,000 per kg for advanced systems. Addressing agricultural and stormwater runoff result in orders of magnitude higher phosphorus reductions per dollar spent. A multi-pronged approach where plant optimization is combined with watershed strategies to reduce phosphorus from other high contributing non-point sources represents an evidence based and cost effective for environmental action targeted investment approach.
<p>Update policies related to municipal wastewater and stormwater to make them easier to understand. We will consider how wastewater and stormwater financing could be updated to improve investment and support new and innovative technologies and practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement water quality trading programs. Trading programs are an equitable and effective way to fund phosphorus reduction and enable innovative approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As outlined in the previous comment, there is an opportunity to maximize phosphorus reductions per dollar spent by enacting water quality trading programs. Providing the flexibility to achieve phosphorus reductions by funding lower-cost solutions for non-point sources maximizes the phosphorus reduction per dollar spent.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase in low impact development standards for effective sustainable stormwater solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low impact development standards enable local solutions for increased infiltration and better water quality, improve community resiliency and reduce the need for land-consumptive storm ponds. Move ahead with draft standards and guidelines to provide better clarity on where LID solutions would be feasible.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address impacts of increased storm severity due to climate change by focusing funds on inflow and infiltration in wastewater systems and watershed based storm water management plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sewage overflows in combined systems can result from inadequate wet weather flow management, exasperated by climate change, aging infrastructure and failing storm ponds. Solutions to fix these problems are costly and need a comprehensive watershed approach to maximize the limited dollars available to fix. Expand work already undertaken to develop watershed based stormwater plans as outlined in Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan.
<p>Build on the ministry’s monitoring and drinking water source protection activities to ensure that environmental impacts from road salt use are minimized. Work with municipalities,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote road salt best practices to private land owners, ensuring that education materials address the liability concerns and how to balance the protection of drinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal liability remains a barrier for many land owners to adopt new approaches to maintain safe walkways and roads during winter.

conservation authorities, the private sector and other partners to promote best management practices, certification and road salt alternatives	water and environment and safety of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appropriate application of road salt and other alternatives can meet both safety and environmental objectives.
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2. Addressing Climate Change

Proposed Plan Action	York Region Recommendations	Rationale
Undertake a provincial impact assessment to identify where and how climate change is likely to impact Ontario's communities, critical infrastructure, economies and natural environment. The assessment would provide risk-based evidence to government, municipalities, businesses, Indigenous communities and Ontarians and guide future decision making.	2.1. Build on existing work by health units to include a human health vulnerability assessment in the Province-wide risk assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds on available local knowledge and information.
	2.2. Provincial impact and risk assessment should be performed at regional scales and include an adaptive capacity assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the considerable variability of climate, landscape and unique character of impacts, a Regional scale assessment will deliver more meaningful assessments for municipalities. Consideration of Regional adaptive capacity is crucial to prioritize climate change actions for local implementation.
Work closely with climate science modelling experts, researchers, Indigenous communities, and existing climate service providers to identify and create adaptation solutions	2.3. Include municipalities and conservation authorities as key stakeholders as the Province establishes a one window source for climate projection data and adaptation information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities and Conservation Authorities have valuable experience related to climate change monitoring/management. In addition, both of these groups will be responsible for responding to many of the impacts of climate change at the local/watershed level. Impacts to municipal infrastructure related to climate change are anticipated to be severe, it will be critical that these groups be involved in developing of the tools to ensure they are useful at the ground level.
Work in collaboration with municipalities and stakeholders to ensure that conservation authorities focus and deliver on their core mandate of protecting people and property from flooding and other natural hazards, and conserving natural resources.	2.4. Allocate provincial funding for extensive flood modelling for more frequent storm events to better understand the interdependencies of vital services that enable the movement of people, goods and services during emergency events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the mapping mandate for Conservation Authorities beyond the Regional storm event to enable emergency planning for more frequent and problematic storms. This will enable a better understanding of vulnerable roads susceptible to washouts or overland flow that could restrict the movement of people, goods and services during an emergency.
Develop a user-friendly online tool that makes practical climate change impact information available for the public and private sectors. This tool will help developers, planners, educators, homeowner and others understand the potential impacts of climate change in their communities.	2.5. Provide public information on health benefits of climate action, practical mitigation and adaptation measures and actions to be taken for Ontarians to reduce individual and corporate carbon emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a more action based education approach that citizens can understand and be inspired to take individual actions locally.
Modernize the Building Code to better equip homes and buildings to be better able to withstand extreme weather events. This could include affordable adaptation measures such as requiring backwater valves in new homes that are at risk of backflow, which would significantly reduce the impacts of basement flooding.	2.6. Move ahead with modernizing the Building Code to mandate backwater valves and other resiliency measures in newly constructed and renovated homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernization keeps legislation consistent with best practices and ensures implementation, reduces significant future costs from re-work and disaster recovery.
Review land use planning policies and laws to update policy direction on climate resilience. This will help make the way our communities are planned and designed more responsive and adaptive to changing weather conditions, such as improving the	2.7. Provide municipalities with authority to implement strategies to support healthier built environments and climate change mitigation and adaptation by retaining polices in Provincial Plans, Act, policies (i.e. Planning Act,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direction provided in the Provincial Policy Statements, <i>Planning Act</i>, and Provincial Plans has elevated the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate adaptation.

way that stormwater is managed.	PPS Growth Plan).	
Ontario will reduce its emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030	2.8. Consult with municipalities on establishment of 2050 emission targets and preserve in legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long range targets are needed to keep the momentum on innovation and investment on mitigation measures.
Increase the renewable content requirement (e.g. ethanol) in gasoline to 15% as early as 2025 through the Greener Gasoline regulation, and reduce emissions without increasing the price at the pump, based on current ethanol and gasoline prices.	2.9. Provide support under this plan for utilities to work with municipalities to leverage renewable natural gas options generated by wastewater and waste operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wastewater and waste management approaches can create renewable natural gas during the normal course of operations. This resource should be leveraged by utilities to make better use of these renewable resources and create a closed carbon energy loop in the Province and provide an alternative revenue stream to support municipal operations.
Improve rules and remove regulatory barriers that block private investors from deploying low-carbon refueling infrastructure that will help increase the uptake of electric, hydrogen, propane, autonomous and other low-carbon vehicles without government subsidies.	2.10. Develop a low carbon vehicle strategy that considers supporting charging infrastructure locations, ownership and asset management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A plan is needed to ensure readily available charging infrastructure and local energy supply to support low carbon vehicles, especially for users of the Provincial highway system.
Create an emission reduction fund to support and encourage investments across the province for initiatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The fund will leverage an initial investment from the government (\$350 million) to attract funds from the private sector in order to drive investment in clean technologies.	2.11. Consult with municipalities on the Ontario Carbon Trust approach and review lessons learned from the Australian carbon-trust fund.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned from the Australian carbon-trust fund could provide valuable insight in effective execution of an Ontario Carbon Trust. Greater clarity is required on how municipalities can leverage funds for local implementation measures
Encourage the use of heat pumps for space and water heating where it makes sense, as well as innovative community-based systems like district energy.	2.12. Encourage all types of alternative heating, not just heat pumps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options beyond heat pump technology may be more beneficial to the environment when consideration is given to local context.
Work with municipalities to develop climate and energy plans and initiatives to support building climate resilience and transformation to the low-carbon future.	2.13. Reinstate sustainable funding for Municipal Energy Plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Energy Plans enable municipalities to take a holistic approach to adaptation and mitigation measures at a community level. Funding these Plans provides province wide forms an evidence based approach for effective action
Develop a plan to upload the responsibility for Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) subway infrastructure from the City of Toronto to Ontario. An upload would enable the province to implement a more efficient regional transit system, and build transit faster. Moreover, this would allow the province to fund and deliver new transit projects sooner.	2.14. Expand the study scope of Toronto Transit Commission upload to include subway extensions identified in the Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of the scope would more effectively consider an upland plan for the full Greater Toronto Area, thereby allowing for a more consistent and integrated approach for planning, building and operating subway infrastructure.

3. Reducing litter and waste in our communities and keeping our land and soil clean

Proposed Plan Action	York Region Recommendations	Rationale
Reduce and divert food and organic waste from households and businesses; Reduce Plastic waste; and Increase opportunities of Ontarians to participate in waste reduction efforts	3.1. Engage the Municipal 3R Collaborative (M3RC) to help provide direction on effective waste actions, including food waste ban from landfills, incentives such as tax credits to farmers who use processed organic waste to increase their crop productivity, expansion of green bin programs for multi residential systems, increase reduction of plastic waste and ban the use of unnecessary plastic packaging complimented with province-wide public waste education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal governments have led efforts towards comprehensive strategies to address food waste reduction, increase food waste diversion, litter, and plastic waste. Leveraging municipal expertise to drive this change in reducing organic and plastic waste is key to ensure successful implementation of this action plan.

	programs.	
Increase opportunities of Ontarians to participate in waste reduction efforts	3.2. Establish ambitious and measureable performance targets and timelines for all packaging materials under the <i>Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act</i> . Ensure data and reporting requirements are robust and enforced to track performance against targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory performance targets on problematic materials such as single use packaging enables enforcement of producer commitments to environmental performance and drives innovation through accountability.
Move Ontario’s existing waste diversion programs to the producer responsibility model. This will provide relief for taxpayers and make producers of packaging and products more efficient by better connecting them with the markets that recycle what they produce.	3.3. Prioritize the shift to full producer responsibility to reduce the burden on taxpayers for management of problematic materials. Initiate transition process to start with a wind-up letter early in 2019 allowing for adequate time for robust planning and consultation on the regulations required to support transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing responsibility for the full lifecycle of packaging on manufacturers will incent innovation in design, capture, processing, marketing and recovery of packaging materials. Producers must also communicate directly with consumers about how their products can be recycled, reducing confusion at the household level.
Expand green bin or similar collection systems in large cities and to relevant businesses.	3.4. Work with Industrial Commercial and Institutional generators, including school boards and businesses to implement mandatory reduction and diversion programs with targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste diversion in the Industrial Commercial and Institutional sector underperforms relative to the residential sector. Policy and regulations with defined diversion targets are needed to drive innovation to reduce food waste and address challenges that impact diversion in this sector.
Seek federal commitment to implement national standards that address recyclability and labelling for plastic products and packaging to reduce the cost of recycling in Ontario.	3.5. Establish ‘Green Bin compatible’ compostable labelling standards and designate these materials for full producer responsibility. Updated standards must be complimented with assistance for municipal organic processing facilities to process these materials if required. Assistance can be achieved through producer responsibility requirements to ensure these producers are responsible for the end-of-life costs for their products and packaging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Green Bin compatible’ labelling standards are needed to provide clarity for product manufacturers and the public on what can go in the green bin. Designating compostable packaging types under full producer responsibility would incent packaging and processing innovation in the private sector.
Investigate options to recover resources from waste, such as chemical recycling or thermal treatment, which have an important role – along with reduction, reuse and recycling – in ensuring that the valuable resources in waste do not end up in landfills.	3.6. Consider ways to elevate the economic value of organic waste materials as feedstock for renewable natural gas and nutrient soil amendment products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic waste is one of the most costly municipal waste diversion programs. Enabling financial recovery through alternative revenue streams could offset costs and place less pressure on the taxpayer for these services.

4. Conserving land and greenspace

Proposed Plan Action	York Region Recommendations	Rationale
Improve the resilience of natural ecosystems	4.1. Include strategic actions in the Plan for expansion of tree canopy and forests. These could include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for public land securement as a tool to establish new forest cover (afforestation) and protect and conserve natural areas Provide funding for tree planting/afforestation Maintain/renew the Provincial role in tree seed management to support afforestation Provide science and policy support for assisted migration of trees and other forest species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan has a significant gap in recognizing the value and importance of forests for sequestering carbon and mitigating climate change. Urban forests play an important role in reducing urban heat islands that impact localized climatic conditions. Expansion of forested public lands in urban areas is a challenge for municipalities due to the increasing market value for those lands.

	4.2. Expand the Managed Forest Tax Incentive program to make program available to more owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives encourage landowners to expand forest canopy in areas beyond municipal control.
	4.3. Maintain the '50 million trees' program to support municipal urban forest canopy expansion and forest management as viable mitigation and adaption mechanism for sustainable long term mitigation of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests Ontario has an outstanding track record for delivering cost effective programs to private landowners and others. • It leverages partnerships and extends public money for on the ground local investment. • Given the added socio economic and environmental value of forests, the return on investment for the 50 million tree program is good value for money.

5. Other engagement opportunities

Proposed Plan Action	York Region Recommendations	Rationale
Continue to consult with the public and engage with Indigenous communities	5.1. Consult on the plan to upload the responsibility for Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) subway infrastructure from the City of Toronto to Ontario with affected stakeholders and providers of public transit services (including TTC, York Region, other local public transit agencies), as well as municipalities and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid unintended consequences when considering the upload that may impact directly or indirectly stakeholders beyond the City of Toronto and the TTC.
Establish an advisory panel on climate change	5.2. Consider establishing a Municipal Advisory Group to provide significant insight into the local challenges and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This practitioner's group will be helpful for the Province as the sounding board and to tap into local context and real examples of innovation. This will help ensure practical and implementable solutions are developed.
Measure and report on progress	5.3. Retain the independent oversight and reporting of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent oversight is essential to maintain transparency in monitoring and reporting of environmental programs and measures across all ministries. As the office of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario consolidates under the Office of the Auditor General, consider on how best to preserve the value of this important environmental function.

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