

# DRAFT

## Statement of Environmental Values: Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) was proclaimed in February 1994. The founding principles of the EBR are stated in its Preamble:

- The people of Ontario recognize the inherent value of the natural environment.
- The people of Ontario have a right to a healthful environment.
- The people of Ontario have as a common goal the protection, conservation and restoration of the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

While the government has the primary responsibility for achieving this goal, Ontarians should have the means to ensure that it is achieved in an effective, timely, open and fair manner.

The purposes of the Act are:

- To protect, conserve, and where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment by the means provided in the Act;
- To provide sustainability of the environment by the means provided in the Act; and
- To protect the right to a healthful environment by the means provided in the Act.

These purposes include the following:

- The prevention, reduction and elimination of the use, generation and release of pollutants that are an unreasonable threat to the integrity of the environment.
- The protection and conservation of biological, ecological and genetic diversity.
- The protection and conservation of natural resources, including plant life, animal life and ecological systems.
- The encouragement of the wise management of our natural resources, including plant life, animal life and ecological systems.
- The identification, protection and conservation of ecologically sensitive areas or processes.

To assist in fulfilling these purposes, the Act provides:

- The means by which Ontarians may participate in the making of environmentally significant decisions by the Government of Ontario;

- Increased accountability of the Government of Ontario for its environmental decision-making;
- Increased access to the courts by residents of Ontario for the protection of the environment; and
- Enhanced protection for employees who take action in respect of environmental harm.

The EBR requires a Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) from all prescribed ministries. The prescribed ministries are listed at:

[http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/content/index2.jsp?f0=aboutTheRegistry.statement&f1=aboutTheRegistry.statement.value&menuIndex=0\\_3](http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/content/index2.jsp?f0=aboutTheRegistry.statement&f1=aboutTheRegistry.statement.value&menuIndex=0_3)

The SEV is a means for prescribed government ministries to record their commitment to the environment and be accountable for ensuring consideration of the environment in their decisions. A SEV explains:

- How the purposes of the EBR are to be applied when decisions that might significantly affect the environment are made in the Ministry; and
- How consideration of the purposes of the EBR should be integrated with other considerations, including social, economic and scientific considerations that are part of decision-making in the Ministry.

It is each Minister's responsibility to take every reasonable step to ensure that the SEV is considered whenever decisions that might significantly affect the environment are made in the Ministry.

Every five years the Minister will review the SEV and make any necessary amendments.

## 2. MINISTRY VISION, MANDATE AND BUSINESS

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's vision is an Ontario with clean and safe air, land and water that contributes to healthy communities, a resilient, low-carbon economy, ecological protection, and environmentally sustainable development for present and future generations.

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change develops and implements environmental legislation, regulations, standards, policies, guidelines and programs. The Ministry's research, monitoring, inspection, investigations and enforcement activities are integral to achieving Ontario's environmental and climate change goals.

Specific details on the responsibilities of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change can be found on the Ministry website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-ministry-environment-and-climate-change>.

### 3. APPLICATION OF THE SEV

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change is committed to applying the purposes of the EBR when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment ~~are made in the Ministry~~. As it develops Acts, regulations, ~~and~~ policies **and instruments**, the Ministry ~~will~~ **applies** the following principles:

- The Ministry adopts an ecosystem approach to environmental protection and resource management. This approach views the ecosystem as composed of air, land, water and living organisms, including humans, and the interactions among them.
- The Ministry considers the cumulative effects on the environment; the interdependence of air, land, water and living organisms; and the relationships among the environment, the economy and society.
- The Ministry considers the effects of its decisions on current and future generations, consistent with sustainable development principles.
- The Ministry uses a precautionary, science-based approach in its decision-making to protect human health and the environment.
- The Ministry's environmental protection strategy will place priority on preventing pollution and minimizing the creation of pollutants that can adversely affect the environment.
- The Ministry endeavours to have the perpetrator of pollution pay for the cost of clean-up and rehabilitation consistent with the polluter pays principle.
- In the event that significant environmental harm is caused, the Ministry will work to ensure that the environment is rehabilitated to the extent feasible.
- Planning and management for environmental protection should strive for continuous improvement and effectiveness through adaptive management.
- The Ministry supports and promotes a range of tools that encourage environmental protection and sustainability (e.g. stewardship, outreach, education).
- The Ministry will encourage increased transparency, timely reporting and enhanced ongoing engagement with the public as part of environmental decision making.

Decisions on proposed Acts, regulations, ~~and~~ policies **and instruments** reflect the above principles. The Ministry works to protect, restore and enhance the natural environment by:

- Developing policies, legislation, regulations and standards to protect the environment and human health,
- Using science and research to support policy development, environmental solutions and reporting,
- Ensuring that planning, which aims to identify and evaluate environmental benefits and risks, takes place at the earliest stages in the decision- making process;
- Undertaking compliance and enforcement actions to ensure consistency with environmental laws, and

- Environmental monitoring and reporting to track progress over time and inform the public on environmental quality.

In addition, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change uses a range of innovative programs and initiatives, including strong partnerships, public engagement, strategic knowledge management, and economic incentives and disincentives to carry out its responsibilities.

#### **4. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will take into account social, economic and other considerations; these will be integrated with the purposes of the EBR when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment. ~~need to be made~~. In making decisions, the Ministry will use the best science available. It will support scientific research, the development and application of technologies, processes and services.

The Ministry will encourage energy conservation in those sectors where it provides policy direction or programs.

#### **5. MONITORING USE OF THE SEV**

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will document how the SEV was considered each time a decision on an Act, regulation, or policy or instrument is posted on the Environmental Registry. The Ministry will ensure that staff involved in decisions that might significantly affect the environment is aware of the Ministry's Environmental Bill of Rights obligations.

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change monitors and assesses changes in the environment. The Ministry reviews and reports, both internally and to the Environmental Commissioner's Office, on its progress in implementing the SEV.

#### **6. CONSULTATION**

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change believes that public consultation is vital to sound environmental decision-making. The Ministry will provide opportunities for an open and consultative process when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment.

#### **7. CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change believes that the public interest requires a broad effort to reduce greenhouse gases and to build a cleaner and more resilient province. The Ministry will continue to involve and engage individuals, businesses, communities, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and First Nation and Métis communities in the ultimate goal of fostering a high-productivity, resilient, low-carbon economy and society in Ontario.

## **8. CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change recognizes the value that Indigenous people place on the environment. When making decisions that might significantly affect the environment, the Ministry will provide opportunities for involvement of Indigenous people whose interests may be affected by such decisions so that Indigenous interests can be appropriately considered. This commitment is not intended to alter or detract from any constitutional obligation the province may have to consult with Indigenous people.

## **9. GREENING INTERNAL OPERATIONS**

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change believes in the wise use and conservation of natural resources. The Ministry will support Government of Ontario initiatives to conserve energy and water, and to wisely use our air, water and land resources in order to generate sustainable environmental, health and economic benefits for present and future generations.

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change is committed to reducing its environmental footprint by greening its internal operations, and supporting environmentally sustainable practices for its partners, stakeholders and suppliers. A range of activities is being undertaken to reduce the Ministry's air emissions, energy use, water consumption, and waste generation. These include: monitoring and reducing the Ministry's carbon footprint, promoting energy and water conservation in ministry outreach and educational activities, and supporting government-wide greening and sustainability initiatives.