

Statement of Environmental Values  
Ministry of Housing

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993 (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; and
- 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; and
- 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 provides that the Minister of each prescribed ministry shall prepare a Statement of Environmental Values (SEV). The prescribed ministries and their SEVs are listed on the Environmental Registry of Ontario at <https://ero.ontario.ca>.

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.

The ministry will examine the SEV on a periodic basis to ensure it is current.

## 2. MINISTRY VISION, MANDATE AND BUSINESS

The ministry's vision is to:

- Lead the government's efforts to ensure everyone in Ontario has an affordable and suitable home.

The ministry's mandate is implemented in the following areas:

- Affordable Housing
- Social Housing
- Ending Homelessness
- Market Housing

Specific details on the responsibilities of the Ministry of Housing can be found on the ministry website: [www.mah.gov.on.ca](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca).

### 3. APPLICATION OF THE SEV

The Ministry of Housing is committed to applying the purposes of the EBR when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment. As it develops acts, regulations, policies and programs, the ministry will consider the following environmental principles and implementation strategies.

#### Environmental Principles:

- The Ministry of Housing will promote environmental responsibility and sustainability in its programs wherever possible. This may include promoting the use of brownfields sites for affordable housing initiatives; supporting intensification and more efficient use of existing social housing sites; working to include energy efficiency as part of new housing development programs, and for renovation, retrofit and redevelopment programs; and
- The Ministry of Housing will promote and support greenhouse gas emissions reduction and energy efficiency measures in social and affordable housing and working with MOECC within the Climate Change Action Plan.

#### Implementation Principles:

To support the implementation of its environmental principles and Statement of Environmental Values, the ministry will:

- Work to educate ministry staff on environmental issues, and assist them in incorporating consideration of environmental impacts into policy and program development;
- Work with its Service Manager partners, housing sector stakeholders, other ministries and levels of government to ensure that the environmental principles and general environmental considerations contribute to the ministry's housing outcomes;

- Encourage investments that will result in environmental improvements and innovation within the housing sector;
- Work to seek out and foster partnerships which can assist in furthering the ministry's program outcomes;
- Incorporate environmental principles into its risk-based analysis in support of evidence-based decision making; and
- Engage with partner ministries on initiatives of shared interest, and in support of Ontario's overall climate change goals.

#### 4. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Ministry of Housing will take into account social, environmental, economic and other considerations; these will be integrated with the purposes of the EBR when decisions that might significantly affect the environment need to be made.

The Ministry of Housing will support initiatives of other ministries, including growth management, source water protection, infrastructure investment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy supply and stronger rural communities.

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

#### 5. MONITORING USE OF THE SEV

The Ministry of Housing will monitor and assess changes in its activities, and will review and report on its progress in implementing the SEV.

The ministry will document how the SEV was considered each time a decision on an Act, regulation or policy is posted on the Environmental Registry.

The ministry will ensure that staff involved in decisions that may significantly affect the environment are aware of the Ministry's EBR obligations and appropriately document the considerations.

The Ministry of Housing will provide EBR training to ministry staff and information resources on EBR.

## 6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Housing 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.

The ministry remains deeply committed to the EBR and the ministry's statutory obligations contained therein. The ministry recognizes the EBR's value in improving public engagement and government performance on environmental stewardship. The ministry will ensure its responsibilities under the EBR are implemented and will strive to ensure that its use of the Environmental Registry continues to allow the public to exercise its public participation and information rights provided for by the EBR and its regulations. The Ministry of Housing will:

- Continue to place great importance on the proper use of the Environmental Registry;
- Recognize the importance of communicating significant environmental decisions with the public through the Environmental Registry, and will continue to use the Environmental Registry as one of its primary public consultation tools;
- Work to manage all outdated decision and proposal notices in a timely manner;
- Acknowledge the importance of responding to Applications for Review within statutory timelines, while recognizing that some EBR applications raise complex matters requiring an integrated, multi-faceted response by government; and
- Continue to apply its Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) in environmentally significant decisions.

## 7. CLIMATE CHANGE

The Ministry of Housing believes that the public interest requires a broad effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the challenges posed by a changing climate in order 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, Métis and Inuit communities in the ultimate goal of fostering a prosperous low-carbon economy and society in Ontario.

The ministry will also work with partner ministries such as the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to consider climate change mitigation and adaptation as part of the government decision-making process.

## 8. CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' INTERESTS

The ministry recognizes the special relationship that Indigenous peoples have with the environment and their deep connection, spiritually and culturally, to the land, water, air, plants and animals. When making decisions that may affect the environment, the ministry will identify opportunities to work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples. The ministry will consider the cultural, social, economic and environmental perspectives of Indigenous peoples. This will include considering Traditional Knowledge, if offered by Indigenous peoples, and the unique perspectives of elders, women and youth. The ministry will encourage municipalities and service delivery partners to involve Indigenous peoples when making decisions within their jurisdiction.

## 9. CONSULTATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Ontario uses the term Indigenous instead of Aboriginal when referencing Indigenous peoples, as it is generally preferred by Indigenous partners. The term Aboriginal continues to be used when referencing constitutionally protected rights.

The ministry respects Aboriginal and treaty rights and is committed to meeting the province's constitutional obligations to Aboriginal peoples. The ministry will implement the SEV in a manner that is consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

The EBR provides Aboriginal communities with the opportunity to provide comments and is an additional mechanism to solicit input and is not intended to alter or detract from any constitutional obligation Ontario may have to consult with Aboriginal peoples.

## 10. GREENING OF INTERNAL OPERATIONS

The Ministry of Housing believes in the wise use and conservation of natural resources.

The ministry will continue to implement Government of Ontario initiatives to reduce emissions and energy costs across government and to conserve energy and water in its own operations, and to wisely use our air and land resources in order to generate environmental, health and economic benefits for present and future generations.

The ministry will also work with partner ministries such as the Treasury Board Secretariat to consider additional ways in which MHO can green its internal operations.

The ministry will continue to identify and adopt ways to conserve both energy and resources in its own operations. Options include minimizing paper use, encouraging office lights be turned off when possible, explicitly considering the environmental impact of various options when decisions on acquiring goods and services are made, and promoting environmentally respectful office practices such as teleconferencing, “green” meetings and “paperless” education and training practices. The ministry will also continue to educate and encourage staff on the 3Rs – reduction, reuse and recycling – to divert materials from disposal.