

Statement of Environmental Values:

Ministry of Infrastructure

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.
- 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 *EBR* are:

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

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 EBR 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 and their SEVs can be found 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 Minister will endeavour to review the SEV every five years and will make any amendments that the Minister determines to be necessary following public consultation in accordance with the EBR.

2. MINISTRY VISION, MANDATE AND BUSINESS

The role of the Ministry of Infrastructure is to make smart, targeted infrastructure investments to make our roads safer, commutes easier and communities healthier – protecting what matters most to people for future generations. The Ministry is committed to building better infrastructure for the people, making smarter infrastructure investments for the province, municipalities, Indigenous communities, the broader public sector and non-profit organizations across Ontario, creating jobs and growing our economy. Modernizing public infrastructure is the key to strengthening our economy and ensuring that every region across the province can grow and prosper.

Our priorities in fulfilling the Ministry's mandate include:

- Leading the province's infrastructure plan to deliver effective and resilient infrastructure, while protecting the things that matter most to people.
- Implementing the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015*.
- Supporting the expansion of broadband and cellular connectivity across the province by implementing the province's five-year Broadband and Cellular Action Plan.
- Working with the Federal Government to deliver the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), which will leverage \$11.8 billion in federal funding for investments in public transit, green infrastructure, infrastructure for community, culture, and recreation and infrastructure in rural and northern communities.
- Promoting the effective management of public infrastructure by:
 - Working with partner ministries to ensure decisions concerning provincial assets are integrated, timely and based on the best available evidence, including data analytics.
 - Implementing the requirements of O. Reg. 588/17, *Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure*. This includes providing municipalities with guidance as well as tools and supports to help them manage their assets in a more standardized and consistent manner.
 - The regulation requires Ontario municipalities to consider opportunities to undertake adaptation and mitigation measures to address the impacts of climate change on infrastructure.
- Developing policies and initiatives by working with Infrastructure Ontario to enhance infrastructure delivery including through public-private partnerships (P3) and other programs.

The Ministry of Infrastructure will promote an innovative, competitive economy supported by modern infrastructure and maintain oversight of Infrastructure Ontario, in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and supports the Province's commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Specific details on the Ministry of Infrastructure's activities and goals can be found on the Ministry website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-infrastructure>

3. APPLICATION OF THE SEV

The Ministry of Infrastructure is committed to applying the purposes of the EBR when decisions that might significantly affect the environment are being made within the Ministry, and as it develops Acts, regulations and policies.

4. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Ministry will take into account social, economic and other considerations and integrate these with the purposes of the EBR when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment. To assist the government in considering the environmental impact of infrastructure decisions, the Ministry of Infrastructure developed a Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA) Resource Guide. This Guide provides an overview of LCA and describes how ministries could use the information from the assessment to make climate-informed decisions about a project.

LCA is a tool that measures the environmental impacts of an infrastructure investment over its full lifecycle, from production of building materials, through the construction and operations, to the decommissioning of the asset. Using LCA can help identify ways to minimize environmental impacts while balancing costs. For example, LCA can be used to identify cost-effective design and materials choices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The government is committed to reducing Ontario's GHG emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. To support this commitment, the plan proposes to have tools to help decision makers understand the climate impacts of government activities. LCA is an example of a tool that ministries could use to make choices that result in emissions reductions.

5. MONITORING USE OF THE SEV

The Ministry of Infrastructure will document how the SEV was considered each time a decision related to an Act, regulation or policy 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.

6. CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Infrastructure believes that public consultation is vital to sound environmental decision-making. The Ministry will endeavour to provide opportunities for appropriate consultations, including with municipalities/municipal organizations, affected industries, and technical and environmental experts, when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE

The ministry will work to advance the province's core climate change priorities, as outlined in the Environment Plan by:

- Ensuring policies and programs consider the impacts of a changing climate and promote opportunities to build resilience;
- Build partnerships across government, the broader public sector and with our external stakeholders to consider climate change mitigation and resilience as part of the government decision-making process.

The Ministry has demonstrated its commitment to these objectives through its work on ICIP and the municipal asset management planning regulation.

- Funding under the Green stream of ICIP is being leveraged to support climate change mitigation projects, including public transit projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The regulation, which applies to all 444 Ontario municipalities, requires municipalities to consider opportunities to undertake adaptation and mitigation measures to address the impacts of climate change on infrastructure.

8. CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Ministry of Infrastructure 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 Aboriginal peoples.

9. GREENING OF INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

The Ministry of Infrastructure believes in the wise use and conservation of natural resources and is committed to reducing its environmental footprint by greening its internal operations, for example through in-office recycling programs, as well as waste reduction and energy conservation practices such as minimizing paper use and using energy savings options for idle office equipment.

The Ministry will also continue to work with other partner ministries, stakeholders and suppliers in support of Government of Ontario initiatives to reduce emissions, conserve energy and water, and to wisely use our air and land resources in order to generate environmental, health and economic benefits for present and future generations.