

Statement of Environmental Values

Ministry of Long-Term Care

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 healthy 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;
- 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 <https://ero.ontario.ca/page/glossary#section-15>.

SEVs are 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* will be applied when decisions that might significantly affect the environment are made in the ministry; and
- how consideration of the purposes of the *EBR* will 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 every five-year interval to ensure the Statements are current.

2. MINISTRY VISION, MANDATE AND BUSINESS

The Ministry of Long-Term Care is working to building a stronger, resident-centred, long-term care system, focused on the quality of care and life and meeting the needs of our growing population of seniors.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care is committed to:

- Delivering better-coordinated care in the community and closer to home by improving the quality of life in long-term care homes.
- Ensuring Ontario's healthcare system is ready to seamlessly transition seniors through various levels of care.
- Working with the Ministry of Health and our partners to reduce long-term care waitlists across the province and end hallway healthcare.

It is a priority of the ministry to ensure Ontarians receive access to the quality long-term care they deserve, in a safe, home-like environment when and where they need it.

More details on the responsibilities of the Ministry of Long-Term Care can be found on the ministry website <http://www.health.gov.on.ca>.

3. APPLICATION OF THE SEV

The Ministry of Long-Term Care is committed to applying the purposes of the EBR when decisions that might significantly affect the environment are made in the ministry as it develops Acts, regulations and policies concerning the health of Ontario's ageing population, seniors and its vital frontline workers.

The ministry recognizes that this SEV applies only to the Ministry of Long-Term Care itself, and nothing in the SEV affects in any way the legal or fiscal responsibility of long-term care homes to practice environmentally responsible behaviour similar to that set out in this SEV.

4. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Ministry of Long-Term Care will integrate the purposes of the EBR with social, economic and other considerations when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment. The ministry will endeavour to ensure that environmental values are integrated into strategic planning, priority setting and policy development activities.

In reviewing policies for a significant effect on the environment, the ministry will consider all proposals specifically in the light of section 2(2) 1-5 of the Act. In addition, the ministry will consider:

- The extent and nature of the measures that might be required to reduce or prevent any harm to the environment that could result from the decision.
- The geographic extent (local, regional or provincial) of any harm to the environment that could result from the decision.
- The nature of the private and public interests, including government interests, involved in the decision.
- Any other matter that the minister considers relevant.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care will also encourage energy conservation where it provides policy direction or programs.

5. MONITORING USE OF THE SEV

The Ministry of Long-Term Care is committed to applying its SEV when making policy decisions that might significantly affect the environment and the health of Ontarians. Proposals will be reviewed at the initial stage to ensure they do not have a negative impact on the environment and that they support the ministry's SEV. The ministry will document how the SEV was considered each time a decision is posted on the Environmental Registry.

The ministry will provide communication, advice and training to ministry staff in the implementation and application of the purposes of the Environmental Bill of Rights.

6. CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Long-Term Care 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 influence of the environment on health issues will require the ministry's involvement with other ministries and jurisdictions whether working with inter-ministerial advisory groups or as the lead ministry. The ministry will contribute to a collaborative process to recognize the need for society to become a conservator of diminishing non-renewable natural resources and to reverse trends and practices whose final disposition has been harmful to the natural environment.

7. CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The Ministry of Long-Term Care 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.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE

The Ministry of Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Long-Term Care 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 Metis communities in the goal of fostering a high-productivity low-carbon economy and society in Ontario.

The ministry will also work with partner ministries, such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks, towards this goal.

9. GREENING OF INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

The Ministry of Long-Term Care believes in the wise use and conservation of natural resources. The ministry will support the Government of Ontario initiatives to conserve energy and water in its 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 continue to encourage energy conservation and resource conservation in its operations by, for example, ensuring that office lights are turned off when possible and office equipment is turned off when not in use, and explicitly considering the environmental performance of the various options when equipment leases or purchase decisions are made. The ministry will also continue to educate and encourage staff on the 3Rs – reduction, reuse and recycling – to divert materials from disposal.