

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:

- Guiding Ontario's long-term infrastructure planning and informing the prioritization of safe, modern and reliable infrastructure based on data and evidence, to benefit the people of Ontario for generations to come.
- Implementing the Infrastructure for *Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015*.
- Supporting the expansion of broadband and cellular connectivity by developing and delivering policies and programs that enable access to high-speed internet across the Province.
- Working with the Federal Government, provincial partners, municipalities, First Nations, and community partners to deliver cost-shared infrastructure programs in areas such as, public transit, green infrastructure, infrastructure for community, culture, and recreation, infrastructure for training and skills development, and infrastructure in rural and northern communities.
- Working with the Federal Government to explore opportunities for the next generation of federal-provincial-territorial infrastructure programming to protect, support and build communities across Ontario.
- Addressing critical infrastructure needs through implementing the Housing-Enabling Water System Fund to protect communities and enable new housing opportunities.
- 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 encourages 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.
- Delivering high quality office realty services, including optimizing office real estate, and driving workplace modernization, transformation and continuous improvement by building collaborative partnerships with stakeholders.
- Modernizing office spaces within the Ontario Public Service (OPS) to maximize productivity, facilitate collaboration and integrate technology. Using an enterprise

approach, office space planning aligns office space with human resources and information technology strategies across all ministries.

- Providing effective and efficient management and oversight function for the government's realty portfolio to optimize its value and make best use of realty resources to support provincial programs and policies for Ontarians. This includes providing realty advice and delivery on a corporate basis to support other ministries, policy and delivery oversight and direction to Infrastructure Ontario (IO).
- Establishing a Centre of Realty Excellence (CORE) that will help to create a better coordinated approach to decision making around public sector real estate and where possible align with key priorities, including housing and long-term care.
- Providing strategic leadership to drive the delivery of the Ontario Place redevelopment project.
- Leading the oversight and implementation of the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) program for Subways and GO Heavy Rail/Light Rail Transit (LRT), which are delivered by Infrastructure Ontario and Metrolinx as part of the government's plan to build vibrant, sustainable, mixed-use communities near transit, while reducing the cost to taxpayers to build transit station infrastructure.
- Providing oversight of Waterfront Toronto and Infrastructure Ontario.

The Ministry of Infrastructure will promote an innovative, competitive economy supported by modern infrastructure and maintain oversight of Infrastructure Ontario and Waterfront Toronto, 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 are made 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.

5. Monitoring the 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.

The Ministry will strive to ensure that infrastructure program decisions incorporate a wide level of community engagement and benefit from a range of environmental information and expertise. The Ministry will seek to achieve a planning process for its infrastructure programs that is open to the public, stakeholders, and infrastructure partners for feedback.

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 Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) and the municipal asset management planning regulation.

- The federal government has confirmed that Ontario may reallocate money from the Green stream of ICIP for subway projects that support climate change mitigation projects, including Ontario priority public transit projects that will result in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The regulation, which applies to all 444 Ontario municipalities, encourages municipalities to consider opportunities to undertake adaptation and mitigation measures to address the impacts of climate change on infrastructure.

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 Environment 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.

The Ministry has worked closely with Waterfront Toronto as well as federal and provincial government partners to fund the Port Lands Flood Protection Project, which will help prevent flooding in the Lower Don area, thereby improving the City's climate resilience and disaster mitigation in the face of major storms and extreme weather events that are becoming more common due to climate change.

The Ministry's TOC Program aims to increase transit ridership and reduce traffic congestion by creating mixed-use communities that will allow people to work and live in close proximity to regional and local transit. These improvements will help to contribute to the government's plans to address climate change.

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 Indigenous 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. MOI also reduces its environmental footprint by allowing flexible work arrangements and the use of digital technologies (e.g., videoconferencing).

The Ministry is optimizing and rightsizing the OPS office real estate footprint across the province, with more efficient use of office space and a reduced environmental impact. In addition to improving the overall efficient use of office space, the Macdonald Block Reconstruction Project specifically is targeting 'Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver' certification.

The Ministry will 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.