

Meeting Our Green Obligations



The Green Party of Ontario Platform 2007



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The Green Party of Ontario

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Stop Climate Change

Achieve at least a 6% reduction in emissions below 1990 levels by 2010 to help meet Canada's Kyoto obligations and 80% by 2050.

Energy Self-sufficiency

The GPO's target for 2020 is to reduce our peak energy usage by 50% per capita or lower it to 60% of projected consumption.

Better Education

Merging the Roman Catholic and public school boards to eliminate duplication, save \$500 million and improve quality of education.

Local Sustainability

Work where we live, buy local goods, and support public transit and low-impact solutions to strengthen communities.



**Real Issues. Real Answers.
Be Real. Vote Green.**

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Introduction

In a green and sustainable Ontario, the interdependent health of society, environment and economy is our measure of success.

Growth is balanced with the imperative of finite resources. Ontario is more than a source of profits; it belongs to the people of this province. This is our home. It is where we live, work and raise families.

The Green Party of Ontario believes that social, economic and environmental policy should:

- create a green and sustainable living for the people of Ontario
- contribute to the planet's greater good
- establish the foundation for a green and sustainable future.

Our platform seeks to do so not by spending more money, but by shifting priorities to achieve sustainable results.

The need to do so is urgent. The time to act is now.

When other parties say that it's time for change, they mean that it's their turn to be in power and do what they usually do.



Ontario is where it is today because the mainstream parties are more interested in power than in responsibility.

When the Green Party says it is time for change, we mean that it is time for this province to change fundamentally the way it does business.

We support the right of all taxpayers to get all the information about an issue, to be involved in its resolution through citizens' assemblies, to receive incentives for doing the right thing and to know when they're doing the wrong thing.

Is this about power? In a way, yes. It is about people having the power to take responsibility for our province's future.

It's time to get real. It's time to put Green Party representatives in the legislature to speak for you about true change and responsibility.

Frank de Jong,
Leader of the Green Party of Ontario



Green economics is about people, planet and prosperity.

The Green Party of Ontario's economic objectives are about enriching our society, economy and ecology.

The three old parties suggest it is acceptable to trade off environmental and social well being for a prosperous economy. They want you to believe there is no other option. The GPO rejects this myth. Time after time, retooling for social and environmental responsibility has reaped economic rewards. In the emerging green economy, we will discover that addressing critical issues such as climate change will create many new opportunities.

The GPO has a practical economic plan to create a prosperous and sustainable economy by encouraging innovation, efficiency and competitiveness. Government policies currently encourage inefficient and wasteful economic activity. This hinders prosperity and is bad for the planet. Greens believe that the best strategy for a vibrant economy is to encourage green production, create green jobs and open opportunities for sustainable practices.

Ecological Fiscal Reform

The cornerstone of the Green Party of Ontario's economic plan is a balance of market-based solutions, regulations, environmental taxes and a tax-shift away from personal and business income onto environmentally harmful goods, services and activities.

Ecological fiscal reform addresses lifecycle costs of production, distribution and disposal. Independent from special interests, GPO policies protect the planet while developing meaningful employment, ensuring social



justice and preserving the health of communities. This is the only logical way to measure development.

Tax Shifting: Pay for what you burn, not for what you earn

The Green Party of Ontario's economic plan proposes to shift the income tax burden gradually from labour, business activities and farming to resource use related to water, energy and aggregates. We will do so gradually without impeding economic development or employment.

The Green tax plan rewards businesses and individuals for making

good environmental decisions and discourages harmful decisions by making people pay for what they use. By imposing taxes early in the production process, the GPO will encourage innovation, efficiency and alternatives. Taxes on resources influence the sourcing of raw materials, the energy used to extract them, the manufacturing and distribution chain, and the amount of energy used by the final product. This will allow green and responsible companies to profit over irresponsible companies.

By the end of the next four-year term, the GPO's tax plan will have shifted approximately \$7.9 billion dollars from productive activity onto environmentally detrimental activities and resource use. Our four-year green tax shift plan is a bold and important first step in the fight against climate change and protecting our environment, while supporting a vibrant economy.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Reduce personal taxes by \$3.5 billion over the next four years by phasing out the Ontario Health Premium Tax in a fiscally responsible manner through a revenue-neutral green tax shift.**

The phase out of the \$2.6 billion Ontario Health Premium Tax, which is a tax on jobs, will be achieved by raising exemption levels. In four years, everyone with income under \$100,000 will be exempt. The tax will be fully phased out as revenue from carbon and resource taxes increase.

- **Reduce personal income taxes by \$2.3 billion over four years by gradually raising the personal tax exemption to \$11,000.** Raising the personal tax exemption will benefit all wage earners, particularly low-income earners, and will be increased on a revenue-neutral basis with the establishment of carbon and resource taxes. When fully phased in, this tax reduction will save Ontarians about \$1 billion per year.

- **Reduce corporate income taxes by \$1 billion over four years through a revenue-neutral green tax shift.** By shifting taxes from profits onto resource use, the green tax shift will reward successful companies that produce clean, green products and services.

- **Apply an immediate 2% carbon tax on oil, natural gas and coal imported or extracted for use in the province,** to be increased 2% annually every year for the next three years to 8% total tax in four years. These taxes will generate approximately \$483 million in the first year based on current use. By year four, it is estimated that these taxes will generate a total of \$4.5 billion, which can be used to reduce taxes on jobs and profits.

- **Increase the annual aggregate (sand and gravel) licence and wayside permit tonnage rate from \$0.115 to \$1 per tonne in 2008,** with a \$1 per tonne per year increase for three years (\$4 per tonne by 2011), capped until 2015 then indexed to inflation, and increase the royalty fees (for aggregate extraction on Crown land) from \$0.50 to \$1 per tonne. Under the GPO plan, fees paid to municipalities and other programs will remain unchanged. The estimated year one revenue increase is \$154 million. The total four-year revenue is estimated at \$1.66 billion, which can be used to reduce taxes on jobs and profits and encourage conservation and recycling of aggregates.

- **Implement an immediate tax on permits for water taking of \$100 per million litres,** with an annual increase of \$100 per million litres over four years (\$400 per million litres by 2011). This tax will value and encourage conservation of one of Ontario's most precious resources, while generating approximately \$1.8 billion over four years to be used to reduce taxes on jobs, profits and to encourage the diversification of Ontario's economy. Usage for agriculture will be exempted.

- **Establish a sustainable business development program for northern and rural communities by investing \$1 billion over four years** to encourage green business investment and job creation. As the tax system shifts towards one that supports a green economy, northern and rural areas will likely face disproportionate challenges that can be turned into opportunities to benefit all Ontarians.

- **Place a moratorium on any increases in the assessed market value of all residential properties and introduce a revenue neutral Location Value Tax to replace the existing property tax system.** Under the GPO's LVT plan, municipalities will capture the increased value of land that results from infrastructure and development financed by the surrounding community. LVT will separate property assessment into the value of the building and the value of the land. The municipality will tax the land at a higher rate than the buildings, which will increase taxes on underused and vacant land. LVT will encourage intensification, deter sprawl and protect precious farmland. Rate differentials for zoning, such as for agriculture land, will remain within the LVT system.

Green Jobs for a Sustainable Economy

Ontario needs to do more to foster 21st-century jobs—green jobs in sustainable industries such as the manufacturing of fuel-efficient vehicles, wind turbines, public transit, sustainable agriculture and forestry, eco-tourism, energy-efficient materials and construction. The opportunities are unlimited.

The Green Tax Shift plan is a good first step in creating the conditions for a prosperous and sustainable economy that produces green jobs. By shifting taxes from employment to the resource use, Ontario will receive a double dividend: improved environmental performance and more jobs.

The GPO's Green Jobs Plan will increase employment, competitiveness and innovation, while establishing worker protection. By adjusting market signals to reflect environmental costs, the GPO's plan will create markets for new, innovative green businesses, technologies and products. Greens realize that small businesses, coops and non-profit social enterprises are important engines of a vibrant green economy. The threats of climate change, pollution and energy shortages can create opportunities for green jobs and healthy communities.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

Shift the focus to sustainability

- **Establish a Product Stewardship Program that places responsibility for the entire life cycle of products with the manufacturer or importer.** Producers, not taxpayers, should be responsible for all costs associated with manufacturing, distribution and disposal. This program will create jobs in businesses that incorporate repair and recycling of products at the design stage.
- **Create the conditions for a carbon market by establishing a cap and trade system for large final emitters.** As part of this plan, the GPO will establish an Ontario Carbon Bank to encourage the purchase of local carbon offsets that will promote sustainable business development and green jobs in Ontario.

Create incentives and protection

- **Ensure that all government purchases and contracts with outside agencies require sustainable practices, local procurement, full-cost accounting and minimal environmental impact.** Government should take the lead in buying locally produced green products, which will lead to more jobs in Ontario.
- **Introduce legislation and policies that reduce overtime.** Excessive overtime is bad for the economy because it reduces the productivity and competitiveness of Ontario's work force, increases unemployment and ultimately increases health costs.
- **Introduce legislation to establish six new provincial statutory holidays.** These will include the first Monday in March to celebrate the birth of Ontario, Earth Day in April, the Friday preceding the first Monday in August, Remembrance Day in November, and polling days for municipal and provincial elections. Labour productivity is higher in countries that provide workers with additional holidays.

- **Establish a review panel to examine existing government regulations to assess their effect on small farms and businesses with the goal of creating equal opportunities for small businesses.** The era of one-size-fits-all regulations, which are usually oriented to large businesses, must end so that small businesses can thrive in a prosperous green economy.
- **Invest \$11.5 million over four years to alleviate labour shortages, especially in the skilled trades by:**
 - Improving access to apprenticeship programs
 - Easing immigration for qualified immigrants
 - Providing assistance for the labour market integration
- **Introduce legislation to prohibit unpaid overtime.**
- **Create a \$10 million program over four years to provide zero interest loans for worker's coops and other democratic forms of workplace organization.**
- **Introduce legislation giving government inspectors more powers to enforce labour laws.**
- **Introduce legislation to strengthen protections for whistle blowers.**

The Green Party understands that climate change will impact Northern communities more severely than those in other regions.

Northern Development

The Green Party understands that Northern Ontario faces a unique set of challenges because of the mounting pressures of international competition on the supply-side of natural resource economics, particularly in the forest sector. The Green Party acknowledges that the resource sector will remain an important factor in the Northern economy. However the North must diversify its economy to retain its workforce and standard of living. It could do so through an aggressive pursuit of secondary and tertiary manufacturing opportunities to create “value added” products, and by capitalizing on the tourism opportunities that lie in its inherent natural beauty.

The Green Party also understands that climate change will impact Northern communities more severely than those in other regions, and that Ontario must act now to ensure the people living in this region are provided with additional assistance to adapt to this environmental reality.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Invest \$90 million in health and well-being,** including \$20 million to get healthier fresh food into remote communities and to promote local market gardening; \$35 million to locate more health care and social services workers in remote communities ; \$20 million for further development of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine's outreach programming; and \$15 million to bring the Northern Health Travel Grant benefits into line with those in the rest of the province.
- **Inject \$180 million into economic development initiatives,** including \$95 million for innovation centres and as seed money and incentives to encourage the development of secondary and tertiary resource processing and manufacturing industries, including non-timber forest resources; \$20 million each to support mineral exploration, local food storage and



processing facilities, and new forest industry energy generating capacity; \$20 million for further expansion of high-speed Internet access; and \$5 million towards promoting Northern tourism.

- **Allocate \$55 million to environmental issues**, including \$25 million for development of Northern-located renewable energy technologies; and \$10 million each for researching the effects of climate change on forest ecosystems, subsidies for the higher costs (distance factors, smaller communities) of a comprehensive Northern recycling program, and the enhancement of a Northern landscapes protected-areas program.
- **Invest \$45 million in education**, including \$20 million for centres of excellence associated with Northern universities and colleges; \$15 million for continuing education outreach; and \$5 million each for local entrepreneurial training, for programs that promote community youth involvement and regionally appropriate outdoor education programs such as canoeing, winter camping, etc., and to compensate for the higher Northern cost/student of elementary and high school recreation programs.
- **Invest \$45 million in the general well-being of communities and citizens**, including \$20 million as seed money for urban parks, community beautification and waterfront development enhancement projects; \$10 million for vehicle-access recreation; \$5 million for remote recreation opportunities; and \$10 million for cultural activities and programming.
- **Inject \$25 million towards improving regional transportation linkages**, including \$15 million for passenger rail and \$10 million assistance for community airport programs.
- **Apply \$50 million to the higher per capita costs of Northern infrastructure** work to offset the increased expense of dealing with bedrock, frost and smaller scale and remote projects.
- **Invest \$5 million to fund periodic travel of the District Courts to outlying communities.**



Clean, reliable green energy is critical to Ontario's economy

and quality of life. Ontario is blessed with a wealth of renewable energy, yet renewables are a very small portion of our total energy supply.

Energy

In the next 50 years, we need to reduce and eventually eliminate our dependence on fossil and nuclear fuels to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases and to prepare safely for declining supplies of oil and gas. Moving to renewable energy sources will save us from the instability of price fluctuations and the unreliable availability of fuel. Renewable sources by definition use local energy such as wind and sun, which are not dependent on political or market forces. This will lead to a more reliable and affordable energy supply.

The Green Party of Ontario has a comprehensive plan to address our energy needs for electricity, heating, transportation and industrial uses, while putting health, climate change and sustainability first. The GPO will achieve this balance by addressing issues of supply and demand.



Conservation: A Fiscally Responsible Approach to Energy

The primary focus of the GPO's energy plan is to reduce demand. Ontarians are ready to embrace rigorous conservation efforts. However, all current and previous governments have failed to provide energy consumers with the information to reduce their consumption and with programs to implement affordable options. The Green Party of Ontario will implement effective consumer programs to reduce energy consumption.

Reducing both peak demand and overall total consumption has a

greater effect than reducing consumption only. Since the cost of generating and distributing electricity in Ontario is directly related to peak consumption, the GPO's conservation plan emphasizes reduction of peak consumption, particularly air conditioning on hot summer days. The GPO's target for 2020 is to reduce our peak by 50% per capita or lower it to 60% of projected consumption.

In the long term, we aim to reduce overall consumption to 25% of current demand. Our medium-range target is 75% of current consumption by 2020. This represents a daily household consumption of 18 kWh per day compared to the current value of 30 kWh per day, taking projected growth into account. The effective reduction target will be 60% of per capita consumption.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Invest \$16 billion over 15 years through loan guarantees, grants and tax credits for conservation and demand-management programs.** The funding for this program will come from savings realized through the elimination of funding for new nuclear reactors and associated transmission capacity.
- **Allow electricity rates to increase over the next three years until they reach their true, unsubsidized cost and ban exports of non-emergency and non-renewable power.** The most effective way to encourage conservation efforts is to charge the real cost for electricity. The GPO will create programs to mitigate these changes for low-income renters and home owners and northern communities.
- **Provide up to \$150 million per year for a program for low-income households to convert from electric space heating to natural gas or renewable energy sources and technologies** such as heat pumps or biomass. This program will provide low-income households with the resources to convert to more efficient and lower cost heating systems.
- **Double the maximum provincial energy-efficient grant for home owners to \$10,000 per household.** As part of this program, the GPO will increase the provincial grant for geothermal heating and cooling conversion to \$5,250 and triple the provincial solar hot water heating conversion grant from \$500 to \$1,500. Many homeowners want to embrace energy efficiency, but may not have the resources to cover the initial costs. This program is a cost-effective way of reducing energy demand.
- **Create a 10-year \$500 million grant program for municipal building projects that utilize green building technologies and LEED certification.** As with homeowners, the GPO will partner with municipal governments to support conservation efforts.
- **Mandate the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to look at conservation and efficiency as a primary element of the Ontario energy mix.**
- **Implement legislation requiring all new construction by 2010 to have solar water heating and energy-efficient home orientation** for maximum solar benefit. All new swimming pool installations will require solar heating to qualify for a building permit.
- **Mandate the integration of conservation and environmental awareness into the common curriculum of both elementary and high schools in the province.**
- **Implement legislation requiring greenhouse gas (GHG) emission and energy consumption labels on all appliances and energy-consuming devices.**
- **Create a 2% tax on all large appliances that do not provide real-time electrical consumption information by 2010.**
- **Advance the dates for Ontario Building Code (OBC) energy-efficiency targets for compliance to realize efficiencies and reduce energy costs for homeowners.** Programs include EnerGuide 80 for homes (thermal envelope, building automation systems, lighting, mechanical systems, water), full-height basement insulation, energy-efficient windows and high-efficiency furnaces.
- **Encourage conservation by reforming the Ontario Building Code as follows:**
 - Fully prescribe the *Building Code Act* and its regulations under the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) for the purposes of commenting on proposals and applying for reviews.

- Amend the 2006 Ontario Building Code to require all new homes to be built to a minimum of R2000 standards and all commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, including apartment buildings, to be built to a minimum of LEED-certified rating.
- Make retail sales tax (RST) refunds and other incentives available to those participating in the Commercial Building Incentive Program (CBIP). To assist property owners and contractors in complying with these requirements, the RST on retrofitting buildings meeting the approved standards or higher will be waived for the first five years and gradually phased back in over the next five years.
- Further amend the 2006 Ontario Building Code to simplify the approval process for the installation of environmental technologies. Create a knowledge bank of best practices for environmental technologies relating to innovative design and installation methods, particularly those arising from implementation of the 2006 Ontario Building Code Objective-Based Format.
- Mandate a 30% heating-emission reduction over the 2007 Building Code. Canada already has several voluntary building codes that reduce the heat emissions by 30%, 40% and even 90% (Energy Star, LEED, Net Zero). This will add 1 to 2% to the cost of new buildings.

Renewables: Clean, green and affordable

The GPO has a comprehensive long-term plan to move Ontario to 100% renewable energy.

The transition to 100% renewables will begin with the implementation of full cost pricing for coal, nuclear and gas energy sources so that energy consumers attach full value to these resources. This will enable energy markets to function properly. It will lead to conservation and efficiencies, the natural development of renewable alternatives and proper demand management to prepare for peak oil/gas and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs).

Ontario's coal-fired power plants are among Canada's largest emitters of GHGs. Though these big polluters are due to be phased out, the timing is uncertain. The Green Party of Ontario will set a definite date for the closure of coal-fired plants by working with energy users to reduce consumption. In addition, the Green Party of Ontario does not believe that nuclear power plants, with their inherent economic and environmental shortfalls, are a viable alternative.

Through a dedicated approach to conservation and full support of renewable energy technologies, the Green Party of Ontario believes the province can meet its aggressive targets.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

Legislate

- **Immediately adopt legislation banning the construction of new nuclear reactors or the refurbishment of existing reactors, excluding regular maintenance** that would extend their projected life span past 2025.
- **Phase out all coal-fired power plants by late 2009 if electricity users are able to reduce consumption by 20% through implementation of conservation and efficiency programs.**
- **Ban exports of non-emergency and non-renewable power out of the province.**

Innovate

- **Create a secretariat in the Ministry of Environment to coordinate information sharing and research on renewable technology.** This should facilitate renewable energy development and help make Ontario a world leader.



- **Create a long-term supply management plan to provide regulatory stability in the renewable energy sector.** This will encourage more private investment in renewable energy projects.
- **Provide \$200 million over 10 years for converting government building heating systems to combined heat and power systems, which are more efficient.** This will establish electric power generation closer to where it is being used in urban centres.
- **Work with municipalities to create renewable energy zones where wind projects will be pre-approved by the provincial government for environmental impact assessments.** This proposal will lower the costs of renewable energy projects and expedite the development of renewable capacity, while addressing environmental impact concerns.
- **Create a peak-energy trading system for industrial users.** This system will use market mechanisms to encourage business to use less power during peak times and reward those businesses that do.

Facilitate

- **Tie renewable-energy standard offer program (SOP) payment rates to the Ontario Consumer Price Index and create a sliding scale for wind power based on the wind availability at the build site.** In addition, raise the SOP payment rate for photovoltaic systems to \$0.50 per kWh from \$0.42, and to \$0.24 from \$0.11 for all other technologies for the first 10 years to encourage investment in renewable energy projects.
- **Remove the 10 MW cap on standard offer program projects.**
- **Facilitate the ability of small renewable energy generators to sell to the grid,** removing barriers and creating more flexibility to ensure fail-safe operation while preserving stability. This program will encourage more citizens to become energy producers.
- **Direct Hydro One to establish grid connection charges at a rate proportional to rated power production.** Ontario needs a more decentralized energy supply. Small-scale producers should not pay the same connectivity charges as large producers.
- **Negotiate with the federal government to allow a capital cost allowance of 100% in the first year for photovoltaic systems** mounted on commercial structures. The GPO believes the tax system should encourage and reward business for doing the right thing.



Environmental Health

We all depend on the health of our natural environment to sustain life. The Green Party believes it is unacceptable that air pollution kills 1,900 Ontarians a year or that asthma rates are 20 times higher today than they were 20 years ago or that unsafe water causes 90 deaths every year in Canada.

The Green Party of Ontario believes that all living things, especially our children, have the right to live in a healthy environment with clean air, land and water.

Water

Every person in Ontario has the right to drink and enjoy clean water. Currently, this right is threatened by pollution and commercial exploitation. We must take control of the way our water is managed to ensure it remains clean and freely available for future generations.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

■ Implement a *Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act* by 2010:

- Ensure full operational and lifecycle cost-recovery for water and sewer services via water rates
- Eliminate polluted runoff to waterways by establishing design and construction standards that require no net loss of permeability for residential and commercial development
- Create an incentive for municipalities to purchase and distribute residential rainwater-harvesting systems such as rain barrels to reduce urban runoff in established communities

■ Implement a *total volume cap on water-taking permits*. This cap will limit water taking to an environmentally sustainable level.

- **Tax all water taking at an initial rate of \$100 per million litres (ML) to encourage conservation.**

The highest water-taking fee previously proposed in Ontario was a mere \$3.71/ML, which will have little impact on water consumption. By contrast, the United Kingdom charges approximately \$250/ML. Usage for agriculture will be exempted.

- **Ban the diversion of water from the Great Lakes Basin in bottles under 20 L.** Bottles under 20 L are exempted from the current ban. Because of this loophole, large quantities of water are being diverted from the Basin and exported outside of Ontario.
- **Implement a Water Conservation Plan in areas where usage may have an environmental impact with measurable targets for industry and municipalities.** Incentives and funding will be provided to those municipalities and businesses that demonstrate a strong commitment to the Water Conservation Plan. As part of this plan, all water-taking permit-holders must reduce takings when any nearby community is under a water ban or reduction.
- **Revise the *Clean Water Act* to allow for splitting of fines against polluters with citizens who identify and supply reliable evidence to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) for successful prosecution, as allowed under the *Federal Fisheries Act*.**
- **Amend the *Clean Water Act* to ensure that Source Protection Committees are public, local and democratic.** Recent government proposals have suggested that industrial and commercial stakeholders should make up one-third of these committees, which are responsible for watershed planning. Local communities, not industry, should determine water-use planning.
- **Implement Ontario-wide standards for sewage treatment.** Currently, the quality of sewage treatment varies significantly by region. The GPO will provide funding to municipalities to help with necessary upgrades to meet the new standards.

- **Work toward agreements with Quebec and the U.S. Great Lake states on standards for ballast water (ship) discharge and biological pollution.**

Our goal is to reach agreements that prevent the release of non-native aquatic species from vessels into the Great Lakes. The GPO will also work to strengthen programs to clean up and protect the Great Lakes by implementing the Great Lakes Charter Annex and working to strengthen the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

- **Add 50 new water inspectors to the Ministry of Environment's Compliance Branch and reinstate government testing of municipal water.** There are currently 101 inspectors, and the government relies on private labs for testing.

Pollution and Air Quality

The Green Party's economic, energy and transportation plans will reduce pollution and improve air quality with a goal of eliminating smog-alert days. However, with rising rates of cancer and other illnesses linked to these and other environmental factors, more needs to be done. Ontario needs a plan to reduce and prevent exposure to harmful substances that cause illness and cost our health system billions of dollars.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Introduce legislation to establish a *Pollution and Cancer Prevention Act*.** This act would require any company using substances on the federal National Pollutant Release Inventory to have a pollution prevention plan in place to reduce and/or eliminate the use of toxic chemicals. The act would also require the labelling of products containing carcinogens, mutagens or reproductive toxins.
- **Adopt California-style mandatory emission standards for new cars, light trucks and SUVs by 2012.** These standards would be tied to vehicle size rather than weight to provide an incentive to lower fleet weight.

- **Introduce legislation to phase in a province-wide ban on the cosmetic (non-food related) application of synthetic pesticides.** This will significantly reduce the level of toxins contaminating our soils and watersheds.
- **Increase fines to pay for increased enforcement of existing environmental legislation.** Higher fines and better enforcement of environmental regulations will deter and punish violators.

Agriculture

Ontario's farmers are important stewards of our working rural landscape. The viability of agriculture maintains our food security, enriches our environment and leads to a healthy rural economy. Yet, all of these benefits are threatened, as farmers face an unprecedented income crisis.

The Green Party of Ontario is committed to working with the agriculture sector to restore the market power of farmers so that they can earn a viable income from the business of farming. The GPO is committed to using a market- and incentive-based approach, rather than regulations, to address environmental issues in agriculture. The GPO will maintain funding for existing programs in the short term and begin to reform programs so that farmers can take advantage of market trends to local and sustainable food consumption.

The objectives of the GPO's agriculture policy are to restore the financial viability of the family farm, support higher farmgate prices, assure a reliable supply of local sustainably produced food, preserve ecological diversity, and stabilize the social and economic life of rural communities.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Invest \$300 million over four years in infrastructure programs that foster local marketing and distribution systems that promote local food and provide farmers with a fair share of the consumer food dollar.** The GPO's rural infrastructure program will provide support for the development of producer coops, community access post-harvest handling and storage facilities, farm-based business development support for enterprises that supply local markets, support for small-scale and farm-based processing, the promotion of farmer's markets and other projects that assist farmers in obtaining higher returns for their products.
- **Invest \$100 million over four years to expand the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program to compensate farmers for the public benefits of the ecological goods and services that they provide.** The ALUS program provides an incentive for farmers to engage in land-use practices that benefit the environment by promoting biodiversity, habitat and wildlife preservation, carbon sequestration and clean water.
- **Invest \$10 million over four years on an Organic Farming Transition Plan to assist farmers with the transition to organic production methods.** The organic sector generally offers farmers better pricing and is growing at a rapid and sustained pace. This program will assist Ontario farmers to access this high-value market.
- **Establish food procurement rules for provincial food service venues that support the purchasing of local and sustainably grown and processed food products, and create a four-year \$40 million renovation fund to assist food service venues to use more fresh products.** It makes sense from the environmental, public health and economic viewpoint to buy local sustainable food. The province needs to set the example by buying locally in government food venues.

- **Create a four year \$50 million program to assist farmers with succession planning and to support farm apprenticeship programs.** The average age of farmers continues to rise. The Green Party is committed to helping farmers work with family members or others to ensure that agricultural lands are transferred to the next generation intact.
- **Reform agricultural research funding and priorities by redirecting existing funding from technology development such as genetically modified organisms and bulk commodity exports to support for cost and waste minimization and net income maximization for farmers.** The GPO will work with OMAFRA staff to redirect resources to support farmers to reduce input costs, while exploring income opportunities from “waste” products. Redirected production support will assist farmers to access premium markets and new income streams such as power generation.
- **Review regulations affecting agriculture to create a level playing field for family farms and small-scale processors.** All too often government regulations are written for large operations. This places unnecessary burdens on smaller producers, particularly farms with value-added enterprises. The GPO is committed to working with the food and agricultural sector, as well as other levels of government, to develop regulations, by-laws and zoning laws appropriate for smaller operations, farm-based businesses and alternative products such as raw milk cheeses.

Forests

Nearly 80% of Ontario is covered by boreal forest – one of the largest wild ecosystems left on the planet. The boreal forest is home to countless wild creatures, is one of the largest reservoirs of fresh water in the world and has the ability to prevent climate change by storing carbon in its soils, trees and wetlands. The boreal forest accounts for 83% of Ontario’s natural carbon storage. Each hectare lost reduces this capacity by 177 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

With proper forest management and planning, Ontario has an opportunity that no longer exists in most of the world; we can protect a vast wilderness, while capturing a growing, higher-value green market for sustainable forest products.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Establish large protected areas in the southern half of Ontario’s boreal region.** We have a responsibility to provide for all the habitat requirements of Ontario’s species, which for some will mean setting aside very large tracts of land.
- **Implement a conservation-focused land-use plan for the entire boreal forest before any additional permits for resource extraction are granted.** A proper conservation plan, developed in cooperation with First Nations, must be in place before new economic interests in the boreal forest are addressed.



- **Ensure that all protected lands, including Living Legacy sites, remain closed to logging.**
- **Engage in stakeholder consultations for a plan to move to certification-based sustainable forestry by the end of 2009 and 100% Forest Stewardship Council-certified forestry by 2012.** Better forest management is sound environmental and economic policy to ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of the forestry sector.
- **Require the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to consult with affected communities when issuing cutting licences.** Establish a MNR stakeholder task force to study the establishment of a program whereby licence fees will compensate communities for the value provided by an intact forest – including its ability to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, support wildlife, store water and conserve soil.
- **Ban the use of synthetic herbicides in forestry, except when required to control non-native invasive species for which no other controls exist.**
- **Introduce legislation that requires only native species to be used for reforestation. Imported and genetically modified species will be banned as reforestation species.**
- **Require all government facilities to purchase paper products that are eco-certified according to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) criteria.** The FSC promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.
- **Place a permanent ban on logging within Algonquin Park.** Currently, 78% of the Park's area may be logged and is not protected. The GPO will extend protection to the entire park.



Green Space, Land Use and Urban Planning

Ontario is a large, cold province with a strip of warmer, arable land in the south. Understandably, this is where most people live.

Unfortunately, irresponsible development is devouring rural lands and forests at an unprecedented rate. Prime farmland is being transformed into mile after mile of single-family homes. Speculators are purchasing even environmentally sensitive lands, confident that urban pressures and greed will crumble development restrictions.

Urban sprawl affects both urban and rural Ontario. Building car-commuting suburbs increases pollution, decreases air quality, endangers source water resources and contributes to climate change. Municipalities pay considerably more to service low-density communities than high-density ones.

The Green Party asserts that we need communities where you can live where you work, walk to essential services and take efficient rapid transit for longer trips. Ontario's planners must be given the support to create higher-density, walkable communities that incorporate sustainable design and extensive greenspace. Municipal official plans and local vision must be respected by the Ontario Municipal Board. The time has come to stop urban sprawl.

The Green Party will work with municipalities to build communities that cost less to service, create a heightened sense of neighbourhood and counter negative development effects such as pollution, gridlock and long commutes.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Make the Ontario Greenbelt permanent and modify the Greenbelt Act to prevent urban sprawl as follows:**
 - Move the boundaries of the four Greater Toronto Area (GTA) regions inward to the edge of the designated urban areas in the regional official plans.
 - Allow subdivision of agricultural land for intensive local food production, provided the land is zoned for agriculture.
 - Permit limited non-agricultural use on agricultural land by farm families whose primary activity is local food production.
 - Establish an accelerated program of agricultural and conservation easements within the Greenbelt, using funding from development charges and other sources.
- **Establish a Land Owners Roundtable with stakeholders in the Greenbelt to develop strategies to address the economic impacts, especially for farmers, of Greenbelt legislation.**

- **Freeze urban boundaries around all municipalities and allow new construction only on land already zoned urban.** New greenfield development would only be allowed by an act of the provincial legislature.
- **Increase the 40% intensification target for new residential development in existing built-up areas to 60% by 2012.**
- **Direct provincial infrastructure investments to projects that fight urban sprawl.** Cancel sprawl-promoting projects, such as large highway extensions. All new infrastructure projects will undergo comprehensive environmental and sprawl assessments.
- **Introduce legislation that by 2009 requires all new developments in Ontario to be designed as walkable communities, with access to public transit and zoning plans that balances population and job growth.**
- **Lobby the federal government to cease all development of the proposed Pickering Airport; purchase expropriated airport lands from the federal government to establish a provincial park but retain agricultural uses where applicable through long-term lease agreements tied to continued agricultural usage.**
- **Reform the *Development Charges Act* to:**
 - Remove the current 10% reduction on allowable development charges for any service
 - Reinstate the authority of municipalities to calculate development charges based on the true cost of growth for infrastructure and services, including roads; culture, parks and recreation; municipal offices; water, wastewater, waste and recycling; health care and health promotion; and any other downloaded services
 - Permit municipalities to include a development charge for transit and for other services not currently provided by the municipality provided that a 10-year plan for the development of such a service has been prepared
 - Permit municipalities to levy development charges based on an improved level of service, provided it implements a 10-year plan for the development of that service

- Permit municipalities to offset greenfield development with development charges to fund acquisition of woodlots and/or conservation easements and/or large-scale tree planting programs to preserve tree cover and/or biomass equivalent to anticipated losses during the planning period

Waste Reduction and Management

Ontario has a garbage problem and it is time to clean up. The most environmentally responsible and financially prudent solution is to reduce the amount of waste we produce.

The Green Party has a plan to encourage and reward businesses for making products that are durable, reusable and repairable with low environmental impact; to charge the full lifecycle costs of products; and to make it easier for people to consume less and recycle more. The GPO's waste reduction plan aims to divert 70% of Ontario's waste from landfill by 2010. Over the long term, our goal is to reduce waste output to the point that it is environmentally sustainable.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Implement deposit-return systems for selected products by 2010.** Deposits will be collected at the time of sale, and will be refunded when the product is returned to an approved recycling facility. Targeted products include all plastic containers, metal and cardboard containers, and products containing hazardous chemicals.
- **Introduce legislation requiring all deposit-return products to be accepted for return at the point of sale.** This makes it convenient for consumers to return their old product when replacing it with a new one. Furthermore, it puts pressure on retailers to carry products that are easily recycled.

■ **Implement disposal and impact fees for selected products that are difficult to recycle, expensive to dispose of and which create health and environmental hazards.** These non-refundable fees will be collected at the time of sale. Target products will include electronic products, appliances and products containing hazardous chemicals.

● **Introduce legislation requiring large retail properties to provide waste and recycling drop-off points for all classes of products sold within their store(s).** The property may contract with any licensed collector. Properties targeted will include malls, outlet stores, department stores and any other retail-use properties over a certain size. This measure will transform community shopping centres into shopping-recycling centres, allowing citizens to return old goods as they shop for new ones.

● **Introduce legislation to prohibit improper end uses for tires and hazardous chemicals.** This includes incineration, disposal in municipal landfills, dumping, indefinite storage, conversion into fuel and export to territories where any of the above end-uses are not also prohibited. Improper end-use will be punishable by a fine.

● **Restore the 50% incentive for municipalities to purchase and distribute backyard composters.** Backyard composting is the most efficient method of disposing of organic waste, as there are no collection costs.

● **Introduce legislation to make organic recycling programs mandatory wherever large quantities of food are consumed.** This includes restaurants, office buildings, schools, large commercial properties such as malls, government buildings, residential apartments and public parks. Similarly, organic recycling will be a permit requirement for events such as concerts and outdoor athletic competitions.

Transportation

The Green Party of Ontario is committed to cleaner, cheaper, more efficient and safer forms of transportation.

Ontario's current transportation system is inefficient, expensive, polluting, dangerous and unsustainable. The Green Party envisions a transportation system that does not reduce our quality of life.

Infrastructure and land-use planning are integral to solving our transportation problems. The province and municipalities need to change the way communities are designed. Sustainable communities locate basic amenities within walking, biking and transit-accessible distances. As part of this evolution in planning, the GPO is committed to investments that improve and expand public transit.

In the short term, as Ontario redesigns its communities and transportation systems, the Green Party is committed to reducing the environmental impacts of existing modes of transportation, particularly cars and trucks.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

Plan for sustainability

■ **Divert 75% of all money budgeted for new high-way construction until 2012 to public transit such as GO Transit, Toronto Transit Commission and Ottawa's OCTranspo.** This will fund the service improvements, expansion and infrastructure renewal required to create a world-class transportation system, relieve gridlock and eliminate the need for new highways. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce gridlock and prepare for the new green economy, Ontario must invest our transportation dollars wisely, looking forward, not backward.

■ **Introduce legislation that requires each municipality by 2012 to have a sustainable master transportation plan.** This plan would contain land-use planning that encourages walkable communities where citizens can live, work and play nearby; provisions for transit service and non-automobile alternatives; plans for peak-hour traffic volume decreases; and transportation-related greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.





- **Require development charges in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to fund transportation plans that create a large-scale shift of commuter transportation toward transit and away from cars,** and which ensure no net increase of peak-hour traffic volume per lane-kilometre on any arterial road or provincial highway within the planning period.
 - **Create a Priority Roads Program by 2016 requiring municipalities to designate roads and parking for small and electric vehicles (including car-share vehicles) in downtown cores and other suitable locations.** This program will create safe, higher-speed conduits for commuters who switch to smaller, more efficient vehicles and reduce conflict between drivers.
- Reward responsibility***
- **Provide a fuel-efficiency incentive of up to \$2,000 per vehicle in addition to the existing retail sales tax rebate and the federal government program. Levy an additional \$2,000 fee on low-fuel-efficiency vehicles.**
 - **Introduce a green sticker licence plate program for fuel-efficient cars and light trucks that will enable HOV (high occupancy vehicle) express lane access and free vehicle licensing until 2016.**
 - **Reduce licence fees for private electric vehicles and provide a program of free training for scooter drivers and a guaranteed low-cost insurance package for low-speed and electric vehicles.** Smaller, more efficient vehicles not only use less energy but also require fewer resources such as road space and parking space. To ease congestion in large urban centres, and to decrease emissions and energy consumption, we must lower the barriers to using smaller vehicles.
 - **Introduce legislation permitting pay-as-you-drive non-commercial insurance that bases fees on distance travelled and fuel use.** This class of insurance will reflect reduced risk of loss and reward vehicle owners who drive less, yet still need to maintain a personal vehicle.

Facilitate change

- **Lobby the federal government for more investment in heavy rail for city-to-city links, especially a high-speed passenger rail link connecting Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal.** Creating an efficient rail system for moving people and goods is a federal responsibility, but it shapes many provincial and municipal government policies. There is only one taxpayer and that taxpayer deserves an integrated and forward-looking approach to transportation policy.
- **Partner with municipalities to increase transit ridership.** Greens will support programs such as annual U-passes for colleges, eco-passes for neighbourhoods and commuter-passes for businesses.
- **Extend the Drive Clean program to include SUVs, heavy trucks and diesel-powered trucks throughout the province.**
- **Mandate speed-limit governors for all trucks licensed in Ontario.**
- **Invest \$20 million over five years in a Volts for Vehicles Program to equip provincial and municipal fleets with electric vehicles and the required infrastructure for maintenance and operation.**

The efficiency of electric vehicles is much higher than internal combustion engines, particularly in towns and cities. Government should take the lead in promoting electric-vehicle use.
- **Spend \$5 million to create a web-based GPS-compatible guide to routes, points of interest, and road and hazard information for cyclists and small vehicle users.** With today's technology and information-sharing ability, small investments will have a large impact on our ability to make commuting by bicycle more friendly and accessible.

Safe Communities

Family violence continues to plague Ontario's communities. The problem is not going away. Capital projects such as crisis shelters are a critical part of a community's response to family violence, however we lack solutions to the long-term cycle of violence. The Green Party also recognizes the disproportionate impact of family violence felt by rural and native communities and addressing this tragedy will be one focus of our efforts.

The Green Party believes that taking a few steps now can make a big difference in the future. Therefore, we would immediately increase core funding to provincial family violence agencies.

Boys and girls who witness violence in the home are vastly more likely to become abusers and victims themselves. The Green Party will ensure that culturally specific counselling for child witnesses of domestic violence is available in every community in Ontario, beginning with Aboriginal communities.

We will also implement ongoing family violence counselling, targeted to abusers and abused of all genders, to provide people with the tools needed to break the cycle of violence.

The Green Party will inject core funding into supporting rural and Aboriginal family violence services, including:

- Holistic healing centres, with the capacity to keep women and children safe from immediate harm and to promote personal, family and community healing
- Access centres for government services, so women in isolated communities can find the help they need
- Capacity building among native communities to provide services on an ongoing basis

The Green Party will institute mandatory province-wide responses to violence against women, developed with the expertise of survivors and women's advocates.



Education is not a social cost. It is an investment.

Creating equity and opportunity for Ontario and Canada, our schools are struggling to make ends meet.

Education

Without adequate resources, meeting our education goals is impossible. The current funding formula makes school boards either run a deficit or cut essential services. This is unacceptable. It is time for the rhetoric to stop and for us to act.

The Green Party believes in a single publicly funded education system that treats all students fairly and equally and is relevant within the context of the local community.

The UN Human Rights Committee has censured Ontario twice (in 1999 and again in 2005) for violating the equality of its own citizens by funding Roman Catholic schools but not schools of other religions. The UN advocated accommodating religious diversity within a single publicly funded system. The Green Party would follow that advice and move to one school system with English and French streams.

To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **End funding for religious education in Ontario.** This would save millions of tax dollars that can be reinvested in public education, allowing us to institute nutrition programs, make classes smaller, hire more counsellors and reinstate outdoor education, school nurses and other services now lacking in our schools.
- **Address problems with the funding formula by giving local school boards a say in how funds are to be spent.**
- **Introduce a mandatory world religion course in all grades to promote tolerance, understanding and respect for every student in publicly funded schools.**
- **Increase environmental education.** To meet tomorrow's challenges, children must become ecologically literate citizens. We must teach children the importance of sustainable living and an appreciation for their connection to their natural environment.
- **End standardized testing.** Standardized testing is unhelpful, expensive and wastes time in schools. The tests are expensive to implement and since so much value is placed on test results, teachers are often encouraged to teach to the test, ignoring other student needs and interests.

- **Immediately address the \$700-per-student funding gap between elementary and secondary students.** We will do so by increasing elementary school funding, not decreasing secondary school funding.
- **Increase physical education and nutrition programs and make physical education courses mandatory in secondary school.** At the same time, the GPO would invest in and encourage diverse and varied physical education programs to ensure that students have a choice of sports or other activities.
- **Extend loans to schools to finance the construction of renewable energy installations.**
- **Introduce legislation to abolish the College of Teachers.** The College of Teachers is redundant. Teachers are hired, monitored and disciplined effectively by local boards and the Ministry of Education. Unions are already very effective at standing up for the rights of teachers. This leaves the College with no unique duties.

Post-secondary education

The cost of tuition has continued to increase despite government promises to address the issue. Students graduate from college and university with unmanageable debt loads—about \$15,000 per year of education.

The Green Party believes that high tuition is counter-productive to developing both a competitive economy and a qualified, engaged workforce.

To address this issue, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Provide \$500 million per year by 2011 to cap university tuition at \$3000 average per year and college tuition at \$700.** The Green Party understands that in the 21st century Ontario needs well-educated citizens who are able to achieve their full potential. The province will receive a return on this investment through labour productivity gains and a healthier, happier society.
- **Re-regulate currently unregulated undergraduate university programs.**

- **Improve apprentice opportunities for skilled trades, agriculture and artisans.**
- **Reinvest interest earned on student loans in grants to students in financial need and qualified foreign students.** Qualified new and returning students in financial need should receive unrestricted or non-repayable bursaries.

Healthy Communities

The GPO's health plan takes a broad approach to wellness, with an emphasis on healthy communities, healthy lifestyles and a healthy environment, not just health care. Reducing toxins in our environment, addressing the social determinants of health and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices are important components of the Green Party's health plan.

The Green Party believes the health care system should be publicly funded, publicly delivered and publicly accountable. The Canadian single-payer system is affordable, effective and provides care for everyone.

Yet, health care reform is urgently needed if we are going to have a health care system that is sustainable and viable in the future. The Green Party has a plan that will offer more choice, emphasize prevention and be accountable to the public.

To achieve these objectives, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Provide Ontarians in the lowest 75th percentile of income an additional health care allowance of \$1,000 per person,** phased in over five years at \$200 per year, for purchase of prescription drugs and/or care from any practitioner mandated by the *Regulated Health Professionals Act* (RHPA) at an eventual cost of \$9.75 billion by 2012. These professions include: physicians and surgeons, nurses, chiropractors, physiotherapists, naturopaths, audiologists, chiropodists, dental hygienists, dental technologists, denturists, dieticians, massage therapists, medical laboratory, midwives, occupational therapists, opticians, optometrists, respiratory therapists and dental surgeons.

- **Immediately increase the budget of the Ministry of Health Promotion from its current 1% level to 2% of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's budget.** Since most illnesses result from life-style choices, the GPO believes that health promotion is fiscally prudent and will lead to improved wellness. These funds would be used to place nurses in the school system to promote healthy lifestyles and to assist in identifying youth at risk of long-term health problems.
- **Increase the funding and effectiveness of primary and preventive health care by:**
 - **Creating a joint commission of stakeholders to explore best practices for implementation of preventive and primary health care by family doctors, with an emphasis on improved outcomes.** This may include rewarding doctors who successfully assist their patients resolve risk factors such as obesity, smoking or uncontrolled high blood pressure.
 - **Increasing support and incentives for multi-disciplinary clinics and practices that team doctors with nurses, dieticians, psychologists, counsellors, physiotherapists etc.** This is particularly important for taking a holistic approach to mental health, addiction and lifestyle counselling.
- **Create incentives for the establishment of community-based nonprofit long-term care facilities to displace profit as the prime motivator in LTC facilities.** Encourage development of multi-level facilities to decrease the current cruel practice of separating couples who have different care needs.
- **Expand the mandate of Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) to include monitoring, support and funding of informal caregivers, compensated at minimum wage, providing assisted daily living in the home.** This will help seniors to stay in their homes longer and enable family and friends to provide basic, compassionate care for loved ones and double the number of informal homecare hours.
- **Legislate full and open disclosure of all P3 (public-private partnership) agreements for future development of health care facilities.** We need a health care system that is not driven by ideology, but by what produces the best results efficiently and affordably.
- **Mandate that 50% of hospital board members be health care professionals.** The Green Party believes in a health system that is publicly accountable and empowers health practitioners at the local level and on the front lines to make more decisions by participating on the boards of health care institutions.
- **Provide fully refundable tuition for graduating family doctors who commit to working a year in under-served areas for every year of free tuition.** The GPO will work with doctors to provide financial incentives to practise in under-served communities.
- **Increase the funding of midwifery training by \$10 million over four years.** This should allow women more choice by providing approximately 70 additional midwives to assist 1500 more mothers per year.



Democratic Renewal

The Green Party believes that the democratic system in Ontario needs retooling. On many levels, the current political system does not reflect the values of the citizens of Ontario.

Recent positive steps include fixed election dates, formation of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform and the upcoming referendum, but much more remains to be done.

The Green Party's plan for democratic renewal recognizes the equality of all citizens and of their votes, the need for ongoing reform to reflect the our province's evolving culture and grassroots democracy that places decision-making power in the hands of the people.

To achieve these objectives, the
Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Introduce legislation requiring a simple majority of voters to win a referendum.** The Green Party will make sure that democracy-denying supermajorities, as required in Ontario's upcoming electoral system referendum, never happen again. The GPO would implement mixed member proportional representation (MMP) if passed by a 50% majority.
- **Lower the voting age from 18 to 16 years and increase electoral education in our schools.** The Green Party of Ontario recognizes the need to encourage life-long participation in democracy in our disenfranchised youth.
- **Introduce legislation to create a taxpayer-supported system that funds political parties in proportion to the popular vote they attained in the previous provincial election, and paid to them at the rate of \$1.75 per year per vote obtained.** The GPO believes it is time for corporate and union funding of political parties to end.
- **Eliminate the \$200 deposit required to run for elected office.** This change would make it more affordable for a broader range of citizens to run for elected office.
- **Establish a statutory holiday on polling days for provincial and municipal elections to encourage voter participation.**
- **Ban contributions by corporations and trade unions to provincial political parties or to individuals seeking election at the municipal or regional levels.**
- **Eliminate the carry-over of municipal campaign funds from one election campaign to the next.** All funds raised must be spent in the election, transferred to a registered charity of choice or returned to donors.

Social

The key to social responsibility is the just distribution of social, economic and natural resources, both locally and globally. The Green Tax Shift focuses on distributing natural resources more effectively, but we are responsible for ensuring that the costs of this shift are not borne unduly by those with a low standard of living.

The Green Party of Ontario believes that unlimited consumption of non-renewable resources is impossible. However, everyone has a right to a standard of living that enables them to participate fully in their community, and a sufficient income to enable this. Ontario needs to better meet the needs of low-income people.

Income Support

Income support ensures that all Ontarians' basic needs are met, regardless of their ability to earn a living in the conventional economy. It empowers people to take greater responsibility for their lives and enables them to participate in their community.

To achieve these objectives, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- **Introduce legislation to index Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) payments to the rate of inflation.** Since these payments have been frozen for over a decade, every time the cost of living goes up, recipients' real income goes down. This prevents people from working their way out of poverty.
- **Adjust OW and ODSP shelter allowances to reflect average local rents as defined by CMHC.** The GPO would ensure that OW and ODSP shelter allowances are reflective of the actual rents people pay across Ontario.

- **Increase the legislated minimum wage until a person working 40 hours per week at this wage earns more than the Statistics Canada poverty line, then index the minimum wage to the rate of inflation.** The Green Party supports implementing the proposed \$10.25 minimum wage by June 2008.
- **Introduce legislation to set all welfare rates across the province at the low-income cut-off rate set by Statistics Canada for major urban centres, so that recipients can move to rural areas without penalty.**
- **Stop the provincial claw-back of the National Child Benefit Supplement.**
- **Create a multi-stakeholder Ontario Food Policy Council (OFPC) within the Ministry of Health Promotion to advise the government on policies to guarantee food security, access to nutritious local food and adequate farm incomes.** The OFPC will include members from farm organizations, anti-poverty and anti-hunger NGOs, immigrant organizations, the food processing and distribution sector, nutritionists and health care providers.

Equitable access to services

- Create a provincial “Don’t ask, Don’t tell” policy in all provincially funded community support systems and services, including within public services and the broader public sector, to ensure that refugee and immigrant men and women of tenuous legal status can access systems and community services without fear of detention or deportation.

Child Care Policy

- Provide the promised \$300 million annually to provide non-profit, quality child care across the province.
- Guarantee that all \$97 million of federal funding designated for child care in Ontario is spent on providing non-profit, publicly funded quality child care spaces.

Family Time, Leisure and Culture

A healthy society needs leisure time with family, friends and neighbours. The Green Party believes a healthy, productive community needs to promote the arts, culture, tourism, recreation and sports.

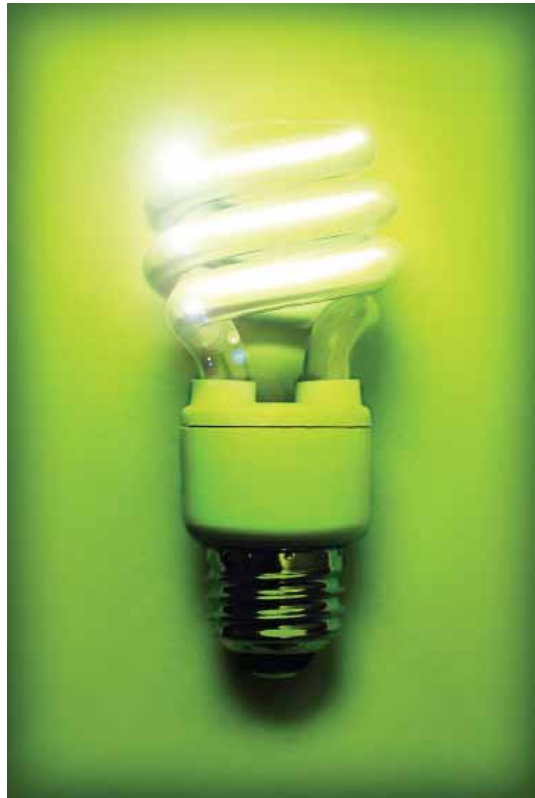
To achieve these goals, the Green Party of Ontario will:

- Protect the natural heritage needed to sustain and enrich Ontario’s eco-tourism industry.
- Support community programs, cultural centres, teen drop-in centres and sport activities for young people.
- Increase access to theatres, galleries, museums, music and community events.
- Provide \$45 million in additional funding per year to increase access to schools for community groups.



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