



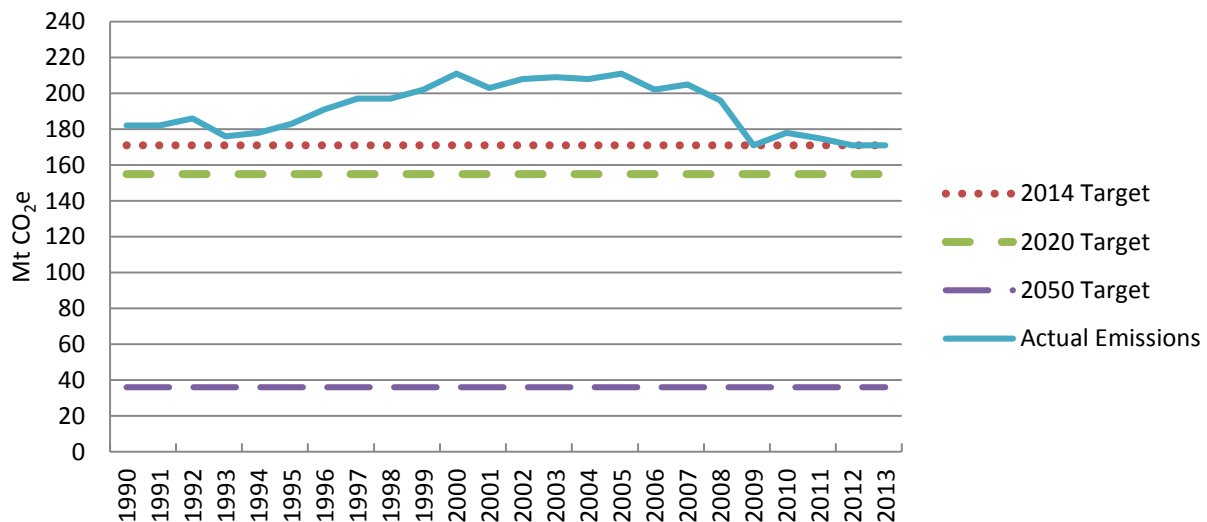
Gap Looms in Ontario's Fight Against Climate Change

Toronto, July 7, 2015 – Ontario's acting Environmental Commissioner Ellen Schwartzel offers some praise for the provincial government, but also a warning the government will find it difficult to meet its next target for combatting climate change.

On the eve of the Climate Summit of the Americas, Schwartzel praises Ontario's ambitious targets for reducing emissions, noting they are in line with those adopted by leading jurisdictions. "Now it has to do the hard part and deliver on its commitment."

The acting Environmental Commissioner today released "*Feeling the Heat: Greenhouse Gas Progress Report 2015*", the latest in the Commissioner's annual reports on the issue. The 2015 report points out that the government will miss its 2020 target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions if it doesn't expand and act on its policies.

Figure 1. Ontario greenhouse gas emission trends and targets (1990-2013). (page 12)



"Unless the government takes more aggressive action" says Schwartzel, "particularly in the transportation and building sectors, it will not be able to meet its target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 19 megatonnes by 2020. This would be roughly equivalent to the reductions it achieved with the closure of the province's coal-fired electricity plants."

... /2



Feeling the Heat singles out the transportation sector as the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario. “The government can rightly point to its success in closing the coal-fired plants” says Schwartzel, “but we need a more ambitious suite of actions to get us to our 2020 target, focused especially on reducing emissions from cars and trucks. And each time a new high-rise tower goes up, we should be reminded that buildings account for the next biggest increase in megatonnes of CO₂.”

Schwartzel acknowledged the government recently announced a number of positive initiatives, especially a cap-and-trade program for greenhouse gas emissions. But she says the cap-and-trade program will likely focus on large industrial emitters, and this will not be enough to fill the near-term gap.

“Climate change has already begun to cost Ontarians,” said the acting Environmental Commissioner, “and the costs are only expected to grow.” The report notes that extreme weather associated with climate change has already damaged the province’s infrastructure; for example, intense storms and flash floods in recent years have caused costly damage to provincial roadways and commuter rail lines. And future projections for the province point to an even more unpredictable and unstable climate.

“I am heartened by the government’s recent actions” says Schwartzel, “as they indicate a commitment to fighting climate change. Our office looks forward to assessing the government’s new climate change strategy that it promised for the end of 2015.”

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

Hayley Easto, Communications and Outreach Coordinator
Environmental Commissioner of Ontario
416-325-3371 / 416-819-1673
1-800-701-6454
hayley.easto@eco.on.ca

Aussi disponible en français

*The **Environmental Commissioner of Ontario** is the province's independent environmental watchdog. Ellen Schwartzel has been named interim Environmental Commissioner until a permanent replacement is appointed. Appointed by the Legislative Assembly, the ECO monitors and reports on compliance with the Environmental Bill of Rights, the government's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and its actions towards achieving greater energy conservation in Ontario.*