



## Confusion Slows Adaptation to Climate Change

**Toronto, July 14, 2015** – Ontario's acting Environmental Commissioner said a lack of coordinated and easy-to-use projections for climate change is making it hard for government and business leaders to adapt to the new reality.

Ellen Schwartzel said businesses, governments and individuals need accurate forecasts of the changing climate if they are to figure out how to adapt to the coming changes. "Making the data on climate change more local and more usable is essential if we are to succeed in better protecting our homes, crops, roads and other infrastructure."

Schwartzel today released "*Connecting the Dots on Climate Data in Ontario*", the report of a roundtable held earlier this year. The Environmental Commissioner gathered together 65 experts and users to discuss how to improve the existing information on climate change, and how to make it easier to use.

Ryan Ness, from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, told participants that there are at least 21 different databases for future climate projections in Ontario, but they all provide slightly different results. While having multiple data sources is generally a good thing, users find it difficult to know which particular data to use.

Participants at the roundtable also said they want the data on climate change to be more localized. They heard that more resources and more powerful computers have made it possible to project the effects of climate change down to scales as small as a 1 km<sup>2</sup> area; but such localized data is expensive to acquire, especially for smaller users.

One contributor said the data on climate change can often get "lost in translation." Ewa Jackson, from ICLEI Canada, believes staff at small and medium-sized municipalities frequently lack the necessary support to use and interpret the information. The same challenges face staff and decision makers at larger organizations.

The acting Environmental Commissioner said the roundtable produced a number of valuable recommendations on how to give governments and corporations the information they need to adapt their services and physical structures to the coming impacts of climate change.

Participants said the provincial government had a role in ensuring that users can access and understand climate data, and pointed out there are models for how to do this in British Columbia and Quebec that we can learn from.

../2



“There was consensus on one important issue,” said Schwartzel. “Participants agreed that there is a definite need for an independent organization in Ontario to service the climate data needs of the end users of the data.”

The acting Environmental Commissioner emphasized that governments, businesses and individuals must have better information if they are to adapt to climate change. “The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change says it will release an updated climate change strategy for Ontario by the end of 2015. Access to credible useful data on climate change will be critical to its success.”

Download the report at [eco.on.ca](http://eco.on.ca)

Video: [Why Climate Data Matters](#)

- 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](mailto:hayley.easto@eco.on.ca)

*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.*