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## Media Release

### Focus on What Matters

Toronto, 31 May 2016 – At Queen’s Park today, Environmental Commissioner Dianne Saxe, in her first report, *Conservation: Let’s Get Serious*, called for public bodies to be accountable for the energy they use. Right now, it’s hard for taxpayers to find out which public buildings are energy hogs. The Environmental Commissioner calls for this information to be easily available in the lobbies of public buildings. In the meantime, the Commissioner’s website now has an [interactive map](#)\* showing the energy use and greenhouse gas emissions of every building in the Ontario broader public sector.

Ontario has made progress in reducing per capita energy use, especially electricity, while simultaneously growing the economy. Because we closed our coal-fired generating stations, Ontario now has low-emission electricity and much cleaner and healthier air. But Ontario still depends on fossil fuels for more than 80% of our energy. Except for coal, Ontario uses more fossil fuels now than we did in 2007. Ontario should get serious about a “cleaner, leaner, greener” approach to energy, and reduce the use of fossil fuels.

"Ontario’s strategy is lopsided. The government has focussed on conserving electricity, the smallest and cleanest of our major energy sources. Proportionately to the energy provided, Ontario has invested one-tenth the amount into conserving natural gas and even less on high-emission transportation fuels. So it’s no surprise that their use is going up", says Saxe.

It is not all bad news. Overall, energy conservation programs by electric and gas utilities have been reasonable and cost effective. The Commissioner praises progress in bench-marking energy performance of public buildings, such as hospitals, schools, colleges, and municipal facilities, which mostly consume natural gas. This sets the stage to save up to \$450 million and 1 megatonne of greenhouse gases every year by improving public buildings. "The value to taxpayers is clear," says Saxe, "as well as the obvious environmental benefits." Savings of over \$1 billion a year could be achieved by extending the same approach to the 90% of buildings that are privately owned.

What matters most to Ontario’s energy future is conservation of transportation fuel.

"Transportation is typically our largest and fastest growing use of energy, and it depends almost exclusively on fossil fuels that cause air pollution and climate change. Yet the ECO cannot attribute any progress on transportation fuel conservation to Ontario government programs in 2014," the Commissioner warns. Fortunately, recent initiatives on land use, transit and low-carbon vehicles could start to chart a better path.



Ontario knows how to conserve energy. Climate change and air pollution tell us why. Now let's get serious and do it.

Download the Environmental Commissioner's full Annual Energy Conservation Progress Report – 2015/2016, “*Conservation: Let's Get Serious*” at [eco.on.ca/reports/2016-lets-get-serious/](http://eco.on.ca/reports/2016-lets-get-serious/).

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\* The interactive map of public buildings' energy use referred to in this media release (above) is available at [eco.on.ca/maps/2016-lets-get-serious/](http://eco.on.ca/maps/2016-lets-get-serious/)

*Aussi disponible en français*

*The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario is the province's independent environmental watchdog. 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 to achieve greater energy conservation in Ontario.*