



Ontario's energy plan falls short

Plan doesn't provide the path from fossil fuels to low-carbon energy sources

TORONTO April 10, 2018 – The Ontario government's Long-Term Energy Plan ignores its own climate law, says [Making Connections: Straight Talk about Electricity in Ontario](#), a new report from Dianne Saxe, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner. The climate law requires Ontarians to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, such as gasoline, natural gas and oil by 2030, but the province isn't planning how to make that happen.

"The climate law means that Ontarians must be prepared to reduce emissions from fossil fuel use by 40 to 50 per cent in the next 13 years," said Saxe. "This means more conservation, and converting some fossil fuel uses – including some gas-fuelled cars and trucks, and some heating of our homes and businesses – to electricity instead." Ontario's electricity system produces very few emissions since coal-fired power plants were closed.

The Long-Term Energy Plan is produced by the Ministry of Energy to detail Ontario's energy needs for the future. It guides the government's energy investments to meet these needs. The current Long-Term Energy Plan however, predicts that demand for electricity will remain fairly stable, and doesn't recognize or plan for the low-carbon transition that is needed. In addition to switching from fossil fuels to electricity, the energy system as a whole must become more efficient, and Ontarians must do more to conserve.

Saxe acknowledged the government's role in cleaning up Ontario's electricity system and air by ending coal-fired power. By replacing coal with low-carbon electricity sources such as hydro, solar, wind and nuclear power, the system was 96 per cent emission-free in 2017. She noted that the cost to clean up the system led to higher electricity bills, but overall, it was worth it.

"Electricity was cheap, but it came at a very high cost to our environment and health," said Saxe. In 2005, the system not only strained to meet the peak demand, it was also a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and smog. "Those with asthma and other respiratory ailments struggled with bad air quality. There is no doubt that our electricity system was a major contributor to poor air quality and higher health costs."

Making Connections: Straight Talk about Electricity in Ontario can be downloaded at: eco.on.ca/reports/2018-making-connections

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The **Environmental Commissioner of Ontario** is an independent officer of the Legislature who reports on government progress on environmental protection, climate change and energy conservation. The ECO is the province's environmental watchdog and guardian of Ontarians' environmental rights.