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Failure on all fronts

A bogus climate plan

The last two elections have been very bad news for our climate. In 2018 Ontario's newly elected Premier immediately erased the words "climate change" from the name of the Environment Ministry. It was a sign of the times. Doug Ford proceeded to trash Ontario's climate programs.

- 750 green energy contracts: Torn up
- Environment Commissioner: Eliminated
- Zero emission vehicle subsidies: Scrapped
- Tree planting programs: Scrapped
- Electric vehicle chargers at GO stations: Removed

After the 2022 election Ford accelerated his climate wrecking policies with the announcement of more bad energy choices and a full-scale assault on green spaces, wetlands, and biodiversity.

Ontario goes it alone.... and fails

When it was first elected, the Ford government claimed it would achieve the Paris agreement greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions on its own terms. Forget co-operation with

Ottawa. The eight-prong 2019 "Made in Ontario" climate plan was supposed to accomplish that goal.¹ At best, it was an exercise in foot-dragging. Basically, a shambles.

In fact, the lawyer representing the government in the *Mathur et al* case (see Climate Crime # 6) admitted that Ford's climate plan is nothing more than a "glossy brochure" – a "communications project" with no force of law.²

Ford scheme not supported by "sound evidence"

Ontario's Auditor General undertook comprehensive reviews of the Ford government's climate plan in 2019 and in 2021. The official conclusion? The climate action claims were not "supported by sound evidence".³

Both reports are a searing indictment of the Ford government's response to climate breakdown. Since 2018 the Ford government has made no progress and is ill-equipped to deal with the climate emergency.

But it is not simply the case that the Ford plan lacks sound evidence and suffers from poor performance metrics. Ford's climate plan is fraudulent and the government's policies are wrecking the climate.

¹ "Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made in Ontario Environmental Plan".

² The Energy Mix, Ontario Climate Plan is Just a Glossy Brochure, Ontario Lawyer Says, Sept 18, 2022

³ Ontario Auditor General Annual Report 2019 chapter 3, Auditor.on.ca



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Two principal emission reduction initiatives in the Ford climate plan are zero emission vehicles and Emission Performance Standards. They expose the plan's failings.⁴

Zero emission vehicles

Some 15% of the emission reductions the Ford government has projected for 2030 results from the shift to electric vehicles. The government estimated that by 2030 there would be 1.3 million electric cars on the road in Ontario. The figure represents more than a 3000 per cent increase over the number of electric cars on the road in 2019.

To arrive at that amazing number, the government assumed that Ontario would see a surge in electric vehicle sales – based on a subsidy program that Ford had *already cancelled*. Incredibly, Ford has calculated pollution emission reductions *as if the program still existed*.

The government now admits that their calculations were way off. Without initiatives to spur sales, electric vehicles will have a marginal impact on GHG emissions.

Missing emission performance targets

A principal carbon emission reduction, according to the Ford plan, is the introduction of Emission Performance Standards. These industry standards supposedly require big emitters to reduce their GHG emissions.



But the rules are so loose and the caps so flexible that the impact of the standards on GHG emissions will be negligible. When introduced, they were expected to achieve an emission reduction of 2.7 Mt (Million metric tonnes). The government, in response to its own Auditor's examinations, has admitted they will only account, at best, for a 1 Mt GHG reduction. That figure represents only 2% of the total emissions from industry.⁵ Once again, the government had exaggerated the results.

The government has routinely indulged in such exaggeration. It has counted future emission reductions from programs the government cancelled. It has double counted the potential gains from various programs. And it has conjured away the huge remaining shortfall by introducing a magic category – “future innovation.”

Accelerating climate breakdown

Ontario is responsible for about 22 per cent of Canada's GHG emissions. If Ontario is saddled with Ford's climate plan after the 2022 election, not only will Ontario fail to meet its target. So will the entire country. Missing the target is increasingly a matter of life and death, as the fires and floods of 2021 have so clearly shown. (see Climate Crime # 3, below)

Ontario's GHG emissions come from several sectors. The big three are transportation at 35 per cent, industry at 30 per cent and buildings at 22 per cent.

⁴ This information comes from the Ontario Auditor's reports of 2019 and 2021, op. cit.

⁵ SCAN! calculation based on 2019 data and industry share of Ontario emissions at 30% of total emissions.



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Any credible climate plan needs clear policies and programs to reduce emissions in each. The government's "Made in Ontario" climate plan fails in all three.

We need to act. Now.

We need to make electric power more affordable, providing substantial subsidies to people shifting away from fossil fuels.

We must shift home heating and cooling from fossil fuels to electric based systems. We need to update building codes to improve energy efficiency and conservation.



We need to encourage more public transit, shifting from gas powered vehicles to electric cars, eliminate gas fired electrical plants. We must protect natural ecosystems, create low carbon products, processes and the green jobs we desperately need. We need clear and enforceable rules to drive down the emissions from big emitters. And we need to invest heavily in renewable energy.

We need to advance the cause of climate

justice and build a just transition with income guarantees and job commitments for workers and their communities. And we need to honour the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples.

None of these vital climate actions are possible with a Ford government.