



The Honourable Rod Phillips
Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
77 Wellesley Street West, 11th Floor, Ferguson Block
Toronto, ON M7A 2T5

November 2, 2018

Dear Minister Phillips

Re: Made-in-Ontario Climate Change Plan

We are writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (**CAPE**) and the **569** members who signed the attached petition. CAPE is a doctor-directed non-profit organization that seeks to improve human health by protecting the planet.

People are calling the summer of 2018, “the summer that climate change became real”. Blistering heat around the world and record-breaking temperatures in Ontario have been attributed by experts to climate change. Over the last summer, the temperatures in Toronto exceeded 28°C on more than 40 days. In Québec, the only province in Canada that tracks heat-related deaths in real time, July’s heat wave claimed the lives of over 90 people in only one week, making international headlines.

Wildfires, fueled by climate-driven droughts and heat, threatened the lives, health, and finances of millions of Canadians this summer. In Ontario, wildfires spiked to 1312 this year, up from a 10-year average of 716. These fires were fought by about 1000 firefighters, forced evacuations on thousands of people in northern communities, and exposed tens of thousands of Ontarians to toxic air pollution.

Many people are describing this weather as the “new normal”, but climate experts disagree. A new National Academy of Science (NAS)-published study suggests that we are approaching a tipping point with climate change: a point of no return. These experts warn that we are quickly approaching a global tipping point that could drive global average temperatures to 4 or 5°C above pre-industrial levels. In the words of the scientists, these are temperatures that would make the world “uninhabitable”.

The new International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, which compared the impacts of a 1.5 and 2°C increase in the global average temperature relative to pre-industrial times, found that several hundred million people will be protected from climate-related risks and poverty if we limit global warming to 1.5°C instead of 2°C. Even though devastating effects are already being felt throughout Canada, the evidence suggests we still have some limited time to prevent even greater harms.

Given the harm that Ontarians are already suffering from climate change, and the burgeoning risks it poses to people around the world in the near future, we are asking you to develop an ambitious climate plan that protects the lives and health of Ontarians now and benefits our economy into the future.

In Ontario, where the greatest sources of climate emissions are the transportation sector (33%), buildings (22%), and industry (18%), we need to urgently implement policies and programs that make deep and quick reductions in climate emissions from these sectors. Based on the expert advice and evidence, we recommend the following actions:

For the Transportation Sector:

- Move quickly to electrify the GO transit system to reduce climate emissions, an action that will reduce air pollution, adverse health impacts, and health care costs;
- Expand the GO transit system and improve transit service to reduce the number of cars on the road, an action that will also reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and time lost to commuting;
- Establish policies and funding to encourage the development of safe walking and cycling infrastructure within and between communities across Ontario, actions that would reduce chronic diseases and health care costs and increase access to jobs, services and recreational opportunities, while reducing climate emissions;
- Expand the electric vehicle charging network to encourage residents and businesses to purchase electric vehicles, an action that will reduce air pollution as well as climate emissions; and
- Implement policies to reduce emissions from heavy duty diesel vehicles used for freight.

For Buildings:

- Implement policies that will reduce energy demand in buildings, an action that will reduce air pollution and consumer costs as well as climate emissions;
- Update the Ontario Building Code to increase energy efficiency, foster renewable energies, and support electric vehicles, an action that will reduce air pollution and consumer costs as well as climate emissions; and
- Maintain and/or improve programs such as net metering that foster and support the use of renewable energies, which will reduce air pollution and consumer costs as well as climate emissions.

For Industry:

- Provide loans and/or grants to encourage the adoption of clean and low carbon energy options; and
- Provide funds to encourage innovation and new technologies to help transform Ontario's economy for a low carbon future.

To ensure that Ontario's plan is ambitious, efficient and effective, it should include:

- A long-term hard emission target that is needed to ensure that Ontario's does its fair share to meet international commitments to limit global warming to 1.5°C;
- Benchmark targets that are needed to ensure that we meet our long-term target;
- Annual Progress reports on climate reductions; and
- Plan reviews at least every 5 years.

As health professionals who agree with the World Health Organization's characterization of climate change as the most significant public health challenge of the 21st century, we implore you and your government to act quickly and decisively to protect the health of Ontarians today, and to preserve a stable future for our children and grand-children.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns and recommendations in person.

Yours truly,



Kim Perrotta, MHSc
CAPE Executive Director



John Howard, MD, FRPC
Former Chair, CAPE Board
Professor Emeritus, Western University



Edward Xie, MD MSc CCFP(EM) DTM&H
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Gary Bota MD FRCPC
Associate Professor
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Attachment: Petition & Signatories

Cc The Honourable Christine Elliot, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-term Care
The Honourable John Yakabuski, Ontario Minister of Transportation
The Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines
The Honourable Monte McNaughton, Minister of Infrastructure