



green
PARTY OF ONTARIO



Green Party of Ontario
**Delivering government
that works for people**
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Authorized by the CFO of the Green Party of Ontario

Delivering Government that Works for People

We have an incredible wealth and diversity of talent in Ontario. We have tremendous potential to build strong communities that promote individual and public well-being, with community members and leaders who are active in the political process and deserve to be heard,

We need a government that engages and empowers individuals, businesses and organizations to develop sensible, long-term solutions to the challenges facing our communities and our province.



We've seen an emerging theme in global politics over the last year. Citizens are demanding a new level of accountability from politicians, and showing a desire for government that truly engages and listens to communities. This is also a call for an end to political insiders benefiting at the taxpayers' expense, abusing power, circumventing rules and imposing unwanted projects on communities without proper consultation.

It's time for a government that respects and engages citizens and communities; a government committed to building partnerships with communities to develop sensible solutions, instead of imposing top-down bureaucratic solutions. It's time for more democracy, not less.

It's time for a fresh new approach to governing, an approach that the Green Party of Ontario is excited to champion.

The Green Party's plan to deliver government that works for people includes:

1. Ensuring open, transparent and accountable government
2. Removing barriers that prevent citizens from being heard
3. Ensuring public officials are held to the highest standards

1. Ensuring Open, Transparent and Accountable Government

Instead of engaging citizens, the old parties have used the back rooms of Queen's Park to make important decisions. Outcomes of these decisions on energy, health care, civil liberties and land use affect us all. We need a government that seeks meaningful input from the people who will be most affected.

Green Party MPPs will bring a breath of fresh air to Queen's Park, valuing good ideas and sensible solutions over partisan games. We are committed to a long-term view that maintains our well-being today, and is responsible for the well-being of future generations.



We will:

- **Commit to transparency and will end backroom deals.**
- **Post details of public contracts online.**
- **Make government information truly accessible to the public.**

Ensure Open, Transparent and Accountable Government for Ontarians

We are committed to transparency and will end backroom deals.

In January 2010, the Ontario government locked us into a deal with Samsung, giving a multinational corporation priority access to our electricity grid for 25 years. This backroom decision has left farmers, community groups and small businesses unable to connect their renewable energy projects to the electricity grid.

Later in 2010, the government passed a secret regulation restricting our civil liberties at the G20 summit. The confusion surrounding the application of this regulation shows a profound disregard for transparent governance.



These types of closed door decisions violate our democratic principles, as well as fair and open process. Green MPPs are committed to an open and transparent government, because we know that meaningful public engagement results in a stronger process and better democratic decisions.

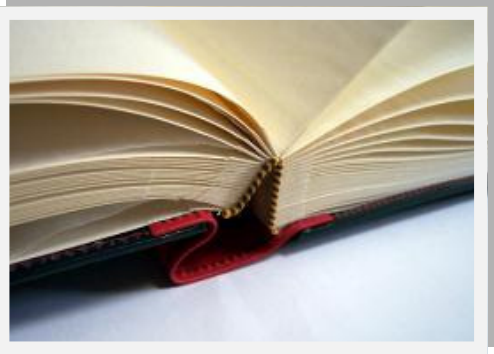
Your Green MPPs will:

- **Oppose backroom deals, no bid contracts and secret regulations.**
- **Create a level playing field for all businesses in Ontario, ensuring contracts are awarded in a fair, open and consistent manner.**

Ensure Open, Transparent and Accountable Government for Ontarians

We will post details of public contracts online.

The best way to deal to ensure transparency is by defaulting to open data. The Green Party supports the principles of Open Data, a centralized directory of all government data which allows more clarity into the workings of government. This means anyone could examine the details of contracts - such as Samsung, or e-health contracts - to ensure that we are getting the best bang for our buck.



Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver have recently joined forces to collaborate on such an open data framework.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **Support the implementation of Open Data principles by the Government of Ontario, the Legislature, agencies, local governments and businesses that manage public data on behalf of the Government.**
- **Support the creation of an Open Data Portal, where government data such as contracts and expenses would be available for the public to access.**

We will make government information truly accessible to the public

Provincially, while some progress has been made towards openness and transparency, there have also been some major steps backwards.

The examples are too numerous to list. We have been denied access to information about everything from secret energy deals with multinational corporations, to G20 security arrangements, to hospital information on quality of patient care, to public servant wage agreements, to daycare inspection records.

The Green Party believes that publicly available government information is a cornerstone of a strong democracy. Freedom of information requests should be dealt with promptly, without political interference.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **Work with ministries to ensure that freedom of information requests are being dealt with promptly and without political interference, with a special focus on making it easier for citizens to apply for freedom of information requests.**
- **Aim to reduce the number of freedom of information requests over time by proactively making as much data available online as possible.**

Remove Barriers that Prevent Citizens from Being Heard

2. Remove Barriers that Prevent Citizens from Being Heard

Strong provincial planning occurs when there is a true partnership between the province and communities, and when citizen input plays a meaningful role in final decisions.

The Green Party supports an increase in the quality and quantity of local public input in provincial decision making by creating new opportunities for citizens to be heard. We will facilitate citizen participation in the public consultation process by removing barriers and moving forward with institutional reforms.



We will:

- **Make sure your voice is heard in decisions about energy that affect you.**
- **Ensure that residents have a say in community health care decisions.**
- **Give citizens a greater say in formal public consultations.**

Remove Barriers that Prevent Citizens from Being Heard

We will make sure your voice is heard in decisions about energy that affect you.



Energy costs are rising around the world. In Ontario we are also faced with ageing infrastructure that has economic and environmental impacts. The Green Party knows that we can use the potential for generating green energy that we have in our own communities, and reduce the need for expensive and disruptive new infrastructure projects such as power plants and transmission lines.

Countries around the world are beginning to move away from big, expensive, centralized electrical grids to more efficient decentralized, distributed systems. This transition has the potential to democratize energy production, providing individuals, local businesses, farmers, First Nations, community groups and municipalities with the opportunity to be energy producers. To succeed, these projects will require community participation and local decision making.

The successful development of renewable energy industries in countries such as Germany and Denmark is often driven by local projects. When local communities are equal partners in the decision-making process and receive benefits, energy projects tend to receive local support and are developed in ways that respect the natural heritage and local economies of host communities.

Together we can ensure that our energy supply system more effectively matches our demand, and that our system has a smaller impact on our environment and our wallets.

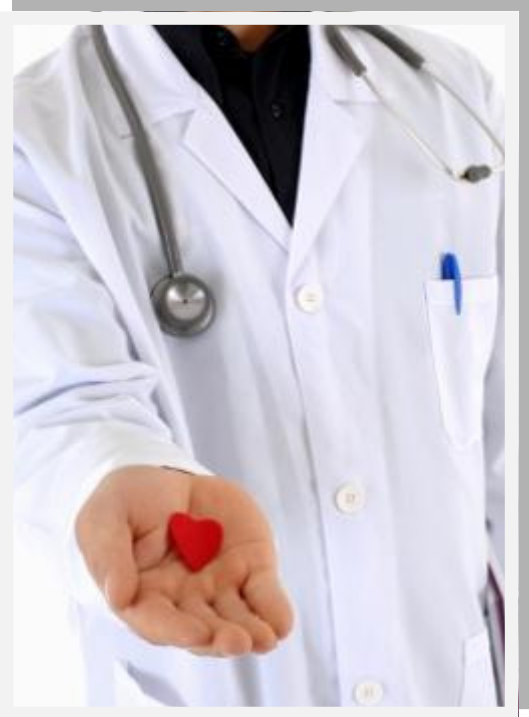
Your Green MPPs will:

- **Restore local participation over decisions on energy projects.**
- **Establish a community participation and decision making process for energy projects.**
- **Improve environmental assessment and renewable energy approvals under the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act*.**
- **Oppose decisions that circumvent planning and environmental legislation such as occurred with the natural gas-fired peaker plant in King Township.**

Remove Barriers that Prevent Citizens from Being Heard

We will ensure that residents have a say in community health care decisions.

The Green Party believes that citizens and communities need to be a part of health care decisions.



Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), established in 2006 with the stated purpose to promote regional efficiencies, are not meeting their promise of community participation. Far too many decisions are being made behind closed doors without citizen and community participation.

We need an immediate evaluation of LHINs. This review was promised in the past but never started. Once we have an evaluation in hand, we can have a responsible debate about the future of LHINs and about what reforms are needed to make them work better.

At the end of the day whether they are called LHINs, District Health Councils, or something else, the Green Party believes that Ontario needs regional health authorities and local decision making.

Communities have unique needs. It is appropriate and cost-effective to make decisions at the community level according to plans, guidelines and strategies set by the provincial government.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **Immediately embark on an evaluation of Local Health Integration Networks. We need to reform LHINS so that we have real community engagement and decision making, not additional bureaucracy.**
- **Ensure that LHINS conduct meetings and make decision in an open and transparent way.**

Remove Barriers that Prevent Citizens from Being Heard

We will give citizens a greater say in formal public consultations.

There are several tools that citizens can use to formally participate in government decision-making, such as the Environmental Bill of Rights and the Ontario Municipal Board. There are also obstacles, such as laws which prevent ordinary citizens from having their say. The Green Party would reform these processes to give all Ontarians the opportunity to make meaningful contributions.

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is an independent tribunal that makes decisions on municipal and planning disputes. The OMB hears appeals from communities, municipalities and developers. The OMB can - and usually does - overturn local decisions.

The stated principle of the OMB as an independent and unelected board is to ensure that long-term public and environmental interests are respected, outside of the constraints of short-term demands and election cycles.

This is a good principle. However, the OMB badly needs reform. Participating in the appeals process can be financially prohibitive for citizens and communities. This means developers are often able to win decisions simply by showing up.

The Green Party believes the mandate of the OMB is to help municipalities develop and stick to their own official development plans, and interpret the law when provincial legislation or regulations is in conflict with municipal regulations or plans.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **Change the mandate of the OMB so that it can only be used to strengthen the community development and planning processes at the municipal level. The OMB will not be used to "end-run" planning at the local level.**

A Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) is a lawsuit that is used to suppress or silence critics by burdening them with the cost of a legal defense until they abandon their criticism or opposition. Protecting people's freedom of expression from undue interference and encouraging the public to participate in our democracy is a core value of the Green Party of Ontario.

The recent Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel report recommends anti-SLAPP legislation that would shift the burden of proof to the plaintiff, allowing the courts to award damages and to quickly dispose of the case to allow the defendant to resume public participation, should the plaintiff be found to be bringing forward a SLAPP.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **Introduce anti-SLAPP legislation, which shifts the burden of proof to the plaintiff to show that a case has substantial merit or the defendant has no valid defense, or the harm done to the plaintiff outweighs the harm done to the public interest by allowing the defendant's actions to continue.**

Remove Barriers that Prevent Citizens from Being Heard

The Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) gives every citizen of Ontario the right to participate in environmental decision-making. The goals of the EBR are to protect, conserve and restore the integrity of the environment, to provide for the sustainability of the environment, and to protect the right to a healthful environment.

Since its creation in 1993, the EBR has provided greater participation for the public. However, many people are concerned that the participation isn't actually meaningful – in many cases, there are no requirements for the ministries under the EBR to actually do anything other than acknowledge the feedback.

For example, the Environment Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) reports that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has rejected every single Application for Review that it has ever received under the EBR. As noted by the ECO, this response denies the opportunity for serious issues to be addressed, discourages citizen participation and does not make good public policy.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **Reform the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) to ensure that citizen participation is meaningful.**
- **Empower the Environment Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) to initiate investigations, and implement mechanisms to ensure Ministries incorporate ECO recommendations into decision making.**



3. Ensuring Public Officials are Held to the Highest Standards

We will:

- Strengthen conflict of interest rules for provincial and municipal officials.
- Disclose public officials' expenses in a timely way.
- Eliminate corporate and union donations to political parties.



We will strengthen conflict of interest rules for provincial and municipal officials

Local decision making in the public interest is essential to a vibrant democracy. We need to have checks and balances to ensure that all public officials are held to high ethical standards.

The province holds jurisdiction over the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, which holds elected officials responsible for declaring a conflict of interest where they may have a monetary interest in a given decision or discussion. The Green Party believes it is a good law but that important improvements are necessary.

Your Green MPPs will:

- Strengthen the existing *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* to create a mechanism where cases can be quickly addressed without significant cost to the elector or member.
- Bring the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* under the authority of the Integrity Commissioner to ensure that municipal officials have the opportunity to request advice and guidance.
- Bring municipal workers up to the standards of provincial public servants covered by the *Public Service Act*, and make them accountable to the Integrity Commissioner.

Ensure Public Officials are Held to the Highest Standards

We will disclose public officials' expenses in a timely way.

We all know first-hand the effects of the recession on our wallets. When we are planning for ourselves and our businesses, we know the importance of every dollar and plan accordingly.

We know that most public officials are responsible, but as we have seen with the eHealth controversies, expenses can get out of control without proper oversight. As part of our commitment to Open Data, the Green Party will work towards publishing expenses of public officials' online in a timely way.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **Publish expenses of public officials' online in a timely way under an Open Data strategy.**

We will eliminate corporate and union donations to political parties.

It takes money to run a political campaign. Advertising, materials, strategists, and staff all cost money and require a candidate to contribute their own money and fundraise. In many cases, unions and corporations are large donors to political parties and election campaigns.

But unions and corporations don't vote – people do. And when unions and corporations are allowed to donate, the people in them are effectively allowed to exceed the contribution limits set by the province.

By ending corporate and union donations, we remove even the appearance of undue influence. It also saves politicians the awkwardness of voting on issues that benefit companies who may have donated to their campaign.

Take the case of the proposed mega-quarry in Melancthon Township. This mega-quarry, would roughly 1/3 the size of Toronto, would be the largest in Ontario's history. Located at the headwaters of five major river systems, it will destroy some of Ontario's most fertile farmland. The quarry would manage and manipulate about 600 million litres of water every day- that is approximately 25% of the provinces average daily water usage!

Proponents of the mega quarry have made recent political donations. The Green Party of Ontario believes that corporations and unions should not be able to make such in Ontario as this influences the development of policy and decision-making that is not in the interests of the people of Ontario.

Your Green MPPs will:

- **End corporate and union donations to political parties, candidates and campaigns in provincial and municipal elections.**

