

NAME OF COMMITTEE Report

For the Meeting of DATE

To:

Date:

From:

Subject: Council Resolution from (Municipality Name) to Province of Ontario to advance a municipal/provincial dialogue to identify provincial support for policies and actions identified in the Help Communities Lead Policy Briefs

Recommendation

That Council advance a resolution calling for the Province of Ontario to engage with Help Communities Lead Working Groups to identify opportunities to advance policy actions identified in each of the Help Communities Lead policy briefs:

- a. Pass a council resolution providing support for the province and the Help Communities Lead Working Groups to engage in a dialogue to identify the policy priorities the Province and municipalities can work together to advance.
- b. Notify the following provincial ministers of the policy actions municipalities would like to collaborate on:
 - Office of the Premier of Ontario
 - Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
 - Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Minister of Energy
- c. Work with the Ontario Climate Caucus and Help Communities Lead Working Groups to secure a meeting with the above Ministers and Ministries to identify alignment opportunities.
- d. Promote your municipality's resolution to other Ontario municipalities using the Help Communities Lead website and Ontario Climate Caucus network.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement for the Help Communities Lead (HCL) effort which aims to support engagement between the Province of Ontario and Ontario municipalities to identify where there is provincial willingness to support the policy priorities identified in the HCL policy briefs. HCL supports municipal and provincial governments to take meaningful and collaborative action on climate change, while achieving other economic, social, and environmental priorities for the province and municipalities.

Support for these policy priorities by City Councils to MPPs and Cabinet Ministers is necessary to:

1. Advance key policy actions on files of strategic importance to the province and municipalities, including climate action, energy affordability, and building efficiency.
2. Foster ongoing dialogue between municipal Councils, Ministers, MPPs and Ministries to identify areas of alignment on climate commitments between municipalities and the provincial government.

3. Demonstrate to Ontarians that their governments are working collectively to address key climate, energy and economic issues while efficiently using tax dollars.

Help Communities Lead Policy Priorities

1. **Advance a Climate Accountability Framework:** Ontario's current Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan's actions and commitments are not where they need to be to ensure a credible, accountable and transparent Climate Action Plan. Increased accountability and transparency related to climate commitments from all levels of government and society are needed. Governments set the bar for the level of transparency and accountability society should expect from all sectors of society. (Municipality name here) would like to work with the Province to advance a comprehensive climate accountability framework.
2. **Advance the use of an Energy Decision Matrix that Considers, Economic, Environmental and Social Considerations of Ontario Energy Decisions:** Ontario's energy planning needs to consider the environmental and economic implications of expanding fossil-fuel infrastructure and its use in electricity generation. A balanced, measured, and transparent approach to energy pathway planning needs to be advanced.
3. **Implement a Building Improvement Strategy:** From a greenhouse gas, operating cost and climate resilience perspective, Ontario buildings need significant and immediate attention through a collaborative and comprehensive building improvement strategy. Ontario can build on existing policies and programs to support GHG reduction, energy efficiency, local economic development and job creation, and climate resilience in new and existing buildings in Ontario.

Background

After years of devastating floods, fires, heat waves, and other climate disasters around the globe and here in Ontario, we are continuously reminded of the immediacy and proximity of the climate crisis and the urgency for action. For the Government of Ontario, the economic and environmental case for climate action should be obvious. Putting out close to 150 million tonnes of GHG emissions per year, Ontario is the second largest GHG polluting province in Canada. The biggest sources of these GHG emissions are transportation at 32%, buildings (including residential and commercial) at 25%, and manufacturing (including iron, steel, and chemicals) at 23%.

Reducing these emissions is critical to protecting Ontario, our communities, and the climate for future generations. It is also a huge opportunity to invest in the emerging low-carbon economy, develop skilled trade job opportunities, create energy system resilience and security, and make life more affordable for Ontarians.

Municipal Leadership

In recent years, many municipal governments have shown increasing climate leadership, adapting their services to be more responsive to climate change. Communities have demanded their municipalities reduce GHGs from their operations, and municipal governments have responded by developing climate plans and implementing climate actions, and integrating a climate lens to decision making across municipal services and infrastructure investments.

Municipal governments have increased investment in technologies and services that reduce emissions and increase resilience. Municipalities are advancing climate mitigation actions through active transportation, buildings retrofits, and investments in services such as public transit, gas capture in

wastewater and waste treatment plants, and expanding public electric vehicle infrastructure to name but a few.

In Clean Air Partnership's [State of Climate Action Implementation in Ontario Municipalities Report](#), which tracks climate actions in 35 Ontario municipalities up to April 2022, 77 climate mitigation actions have been recorded. For example:

- To reduce GHGs in new buildings, the Town of Whitby adopted the Whitby Green Standard in 2020 with the goals of encouraging new developments to meet higher environmental, social, and economic performance goals, increase community resiliency, and reduce GHGs.
- The City of London, Ontario is approaching climate accountability through the development of a climate lens. The climate lens is a process which uses a screening tool, issues lists, and internal conversations to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations into master planning, operations, projects, and budgeting decisions.
- In November 2021, the City of Ottawa launched the BetterHomes Ottawa Loan Program to support homeowners in reducing home energy consumption and GHG emissions through low-interest loans that cover the cost of retrofit projects, incorporating thermal envelope upgrades, mechanical systems, renewable energy, electric vehicle chargers, climate adaptation measures, and the addition of rental suites.

While these are just a few examples of the municipal actions that are currently underway in Ontario, it is important to mention that there are many more actions being discussed and developed that will continue to reduce emissions. Clean Air Partnership has developed the [Climate Action Atlas](#) to highlight the climate action implementation occurring in Ontario municipalities.

Provincial Leadership

Provincial climate action implementation is insufficient to achieve the province's 2030 GHG reduction target of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030, much less science based municipal targets of 40- 50% GHG reductions by 2030 and net zero by 2050 that many Ontario municipalities have adopted. In 2018, the Government of Ontario released its Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. While some of the elements included in the Plan are a step in the right direction, most of the key policy actions needed to advance meaningful climate action, support the low-carbon economy, and achieve Ontario's emissions target are either inadequate or are completely missing.

This lack of robust, accountable, and measured climate policy is putting the province's environmental and economic record at risk. Moreover, municipalities that are making efforts to advance meaningful climate policy on their own are being set back due to provincial decision making.

For example, Ontario is currently contemplating an energy pathway that would expand the use of fossil fuel gas to meet electricity demand, increasing grid emissions [260% by 2040](#). These decisions pose a significant risk related to stranded infrastructure assets when clean electricity requirements are enacted in 2035. This direction would also make it extremely difficult for municipalities to meet their climate goals. In addition, the Province through OPG, has been selling the environmental attributes related to the decarbonization of the electricity system with little transparency related to amount sold, to whom, or what the sale means to its 2030 GHG reduction target.

Help Communities Lead (HCL) Response

To address this municipal-provincial climate policy gap, HCL will bring together a network of municipalities with their provincial government counterparts to identify opportunities to advance action on strategic policy issues of interest to Ontarians, municipal governments, and the Government of Ontario.

The Ontario Climate Caucus, a non-partisan network of more than 100 Ontario Mayors and Councilors facilitated by Clean Air Partnership, identified the following three key policy actions for prioritization. These actions are expanded in three policy briefs provided.

- **Attachment A - Advance a Climate Accountability Framework**
- **Attachment B - Advance the use of an Energy Decision Matrix that Considers, Economic, Environmental and Social Considerations of Ontario Energy Decisions**
- **Attachment C - Implement a Building Improvement Strategy**

These three policy actions already align with the Government of Ontario's priorities and goals outlined in the 2022 Ontario Budget: [Ontario's Plan to Build](#). Advancing a climate accountability framework, bringing climate considerations into Ontario's energy decisions, and improving building resilience and efficiency can not only help meet Ontario's emissions reduction goals, but also find cost efficiencies in government spending, invest in infrastructure, spur economic development, invest in skilled trades, create good paying jobs, address affordability and cut red tape. Help Communities Lead encourages the province to engage with municipalities via the Help Communities lead working groups to identify where there is provincial willingness to advance the actions suggested in the policy briefs.

These actions are also just a starting point from which municipalities can continue working with the province. Help Communities Lead aims to increase dialogue specifically between municipal council members and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Ministry of Energy, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to advance common municipal and provincial priorities.

Municipal Alignment

The Help Communities Lead project team worked with numerous leading municipalities in the Ontario Climate Caucus to identify these policy actions as a priority for provincial engagement and action due to their importance in helping them achieve climate goals and aligning municipal and provincial priorities.

The three policy actions being requested by municipalities should ideally be considered as an integrated suite of actions to drive deep GHG emissions reductions and stimulate the low-carbon economy, rather than standalone measures. If adopted, the three policy actions will allow the province and municipalities to plan for and meet climate goals more effectively.

Alignment with Climate Plan and Climate Emergency

These three policy actions are necessary to meet the targets outlined in **NAME OF MUNICIPALITY'S CLIMATE PLAN AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES**.

Alignment with AMO Resolutions

These three policy actions align with policy recommendations that have been advanced by the Association of Municipalities Ontario in their 2018 submission to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, [Municipal Governments in Ontario and Climate Action](#).

Alignment with Existing Council Resolutions on Decarbonization in Electricity

These policy actions align with **NAME OF MUNICIPALITY'S** resolution calling on the Government of Ontario to phase-out the province's gas-fired power plants by 2030, which passed on **DATE OF RESOLUTION**.

Official Plan Consistency Statement

This initiative directly supports the following goals in the OP:

- **DETAIL RELATED OP GOALS HERE**

Impacts to Financial Plan

The advocacy recommended in this report does not have any impact to the Financial Plan for 2023. If in the future, legislative actions were taken to advance the recommended policies, **MUNICIPALITY'S** climate action staff would begin exploring potential impacts to the Financial Plan. A complete project plan outlining the costs and benefits, including impacts to the Financial Plan, of each initiative would be brought to Council for consideration.

Summary

Council endorsement of Help Communities Lead sends a strong signal to the Province of Ontario that **NAME OF MUNICIPALITY** and other municipalities need stronger climate action from the province to meet Ontario's climate goals, and to seize the economic opportunities of the low-carbon economy. The Province, as the level of government that controls Ontario's energy system and establishes municipal authorities and growth management, is critical to advancing municipal climate action implementation. Ontario municipalities cannot achieve their GHG reduction targets without commitment and support from the Province of Ontario.

Three measures where policy is action is requested are:

1. Adopt a Climate Accountability Framework
2. Advance the Use of an Energy Decision Matrix that Considers, Economic, Environmental and Social Considerations of Ontario's Energy Decisions
3. Implement a Building Improvement Strategy

These actions will help achieve more significant and cost-effective action on climate, lead the way in reducing emissions and produce many other economic, social, and environmental co-benefits for the province, municipalities, and Ontarians.

Respectfully submitted,

Name of Council Meeting Resolution Approval :

Date:

List of Attachments

Attachment A: Policy Brief: Advance a Climate Accountability Framework

Attachment B: Policy Brief: Advance the use of an Energy Decision Matrix that Considers, Economic, Environmental and Social Considerations of Ontario Energy Decisions

Attachment C: Policy Brief: Implement a Building Improvement Strategy

Attachment D: Council Resolution