

## Questionnaire Response: Canadian Confederation of Unions (CCU)

### **1. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and currently, the richest 10% of income earners control almost 60% of all wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Ontario?**

The Wynne government has a strong reputation for promoting greater fairness by investing in people, ensuring equal access to key public services such as health care and education, and supporting the needs of low-income families and the most vulnerable. If given another mandate, my government will continue to invest in equal opportunity for Ontarians. Over the past decade, the Ontario Liberal government has enacted substantial increases in the minimum wage, the introduction and expansion of the Ontario Child Benefit, and new investments in social assistance after years of neglect.

Through the 2014 Budget, the Wynne government introduced a new 10-year economic plan to create the conditions to help lift people out of poverty. Highlights of this plan include:

- Raising the minimum wage to \$11.00, and tying it to inflation to provide fairness to low-income workers and predictability to businesses. Investing in affordable housing and homelessness prevention initiatives, by enhancing annual funding for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative by \$42 million starting in 2014–15 to a total of \$294 million, and by contributing \$80.1 million annually for five years to the jointly funded federal–provincial Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program.
- Increasing and indexing the Ontario Child Benefit to \$1,310, enhancing the incomes of 35 per cent of children under 18.
- Establishing a new health benefit program to provide prescription drugs, mental health supports, assistive devices, and vision care for children in low-income families to improve health outcomes for children and help their families remain in employment. This builds on our expanded dental program for children in low-income families.

- Continuing to reform the social assistance system through a rate increase, which would total a 17.2 to 24.4 per cent increase since 2004.
- Expanding the Student Nutrition Program, resulting in a total annual investment of \$32 million by 2016–17 and funding 340 new breakfast programs for an additional 56,000 children in higher-needs elementary and secondary schools, including on-reserve First Nation schools.
- Investing an additional \$810M over 3 years to eliminate treatment waitlists for children and adults with developmental disabilities.
- Creating a more accessible justice system where low-income families and vulnerable groups have access to the legal supports they need by amending the legal aid eligibility thresholds, which have not changed since the 1990's.
- Proposing to remove the Debt Retirement Charge cost from residential users' electricity bills after December 31, 2015, to save a typical residential ratepayer about \$70 per year.

The above initiatives would be funded, in part, by progressive tax measures such as:

- A proposed personal income tax increase on taxable incomes above \$150,000, affecting the top two per cent of Ontario tax filers. Legislative amendments that would improve the fairness of dividend tax credits.
- Phasing out the small business deduction for large Canadian corporations, which represent 1.5 per cent of companies currently claiming the deduction.

Unfortunately, the measures in the 2014 Budget stalled when the NDP and the PCs chose to go to the polls rather than pass the budget. Conservative slash-and-burn policies would put these measures at risk. Andrea Horwath and the NDP chose to abandon people living in poverty by voting against these critical measures. In fact, the NDP platform did not mention the word "poverty" once. Only Kathleen Wynne and the Ontario Liberal Party are committed to addressing these important issues.

**2. Since 2001, the combined federal-provincial corporate tax rate in Ontario has been reduced from 44 percent to 25 percent, supposedly in order to “create jobs.” Yet the unemployment rate in the province today is higher than it was in 2001, while according to the International Monetary Fund, the amount of so-called “corporate dead money” in Canada now stands at over \$625 billion. What concrete policies will your party implement to actually create good-paying, full-time jobs in Ontario?**

Our province is one of the most competitive jurisdictions in the world for new investment, with its highly educated and skilled workforce, competitive tax rates, and light touch regulation. Corporate tax rates in Ontario are the fourth-lowest in Canada and almost 15 percentage points lower than any of our Great Lakes competitors. Competitive tax rates are essential to maintaining a business climate that can attract and grow investment. However, in today’s global economy, we must strengthen our competitive advantage and expand our economic potential by fostering a business climate that attracts and supports investment and jobs.

We will create a dynamic and innovative business climate that supports key industries – industries with the highest growth potential, and the conditions that make them successful. We will also support small business as the engine of our economy.

We will also invest in people, their talent and skills, and in modern infrastructure. It’s these foundational strengths that serve as the basis for our competitive advantage. We will partner with businesses, educators, labour, the not-for-profit sector, and communities because we need all hands on deck, working together so that each person has the best opportunity to succeed in life.

*Energy:*

Ontario Liberals have made crucial investments to the electricity system, rebuilding much of it while building clean new generation. Reliability is crucial for businesses. But helping businesses manage the cost of electricity is a priority, which is why we would build on our existing programs to support industrial consumers.

Working with the OPA, a Wynne government would also expand and renew the Industrial Electricity Incentive (IEI). The IEI assists with the management of electricity demand by encouraging increased industrial production through sharply discounted electricity rates for local job creators, putting the current surplus base load generation to use in supporting economic growth. A new IEI stream would make up to four terawatt hours of electricity available per year, and would expand the program to more sectors.

We will also continue to help businesses save by conserving electricity through our Industrial Conservation Initiative (ICI). We'll expand eligibility to more consumers (3MW and up). Our aim is to continue the 15 to 20 per cent energy savings businesses are currently achieving through this program.

*Red tape:*

On March 19, 2014, the Wynne government introduced *The Better Business Climate Act, 2014* which, if passed, would have helped to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens and practices that cost businesses time and money. The proposed legislation would require the government to report annually on burden reduction activities and join British Columbia and Saskatchewan as the only provinces with legislation around regulatory reform. This new legislation and renewal of the associated "Open for Business" initiative will save business over \$100 million and countless hours by 2016-17.

*Taxes:*

The Wynne government has created a highly competitive tax system, especially for small business. Highlights of our competitive regime include:

- Low general corporate income tax of 11.5 per cent (cut from 14 per cent) and small business rate of 4.5 per cent (cut from 5 per cent), with corporate income tax cuts delivering \$2.3 billion of tax relief per year.
- Streamlining tax administration saves business over \$635 million per year in compliance.

- HST will remove \$4.7 billion per year in embedded sales taxes paid by business when fully implemented.
- Implementation of significant cuts to high Business Education Tax rates has resulted in savings of over \$200 million per year.
- Extending the 50 per cent accelerated depreciation rate for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment to 2015, providing a benefit of \$265 million over three years.

Further tax cuts before the budget is balanced, as proposed by the PCs, would recklessly endanger Ontario's plans to balance the budget by 2017-18; the spending cuts proposed by the Hudak PCs would stop growth in its tracks, obstructing Ontario's path to balance. Our plan reiterates our commitment to maintain competitive corporate tax rates already the fourth lowest in North America.

Our plan is working. Ontario has recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession, and employment is now 3.1 per cent or 211,300 above the pre-recession peak. Since the recessionary-low in June 2009, Ontario has added 477,100 jobs, erasing the 265,800 job losses during the recession. The majority of the jobs added are full-time and in the private-sector. Our unemployment rate has declined from a recessionary high of 9.4 per cent in June 2009 to 7.4 per cent in April (2014)

For our complete plan to grow the economy, I invite you and your members to read our plan at: <http://ontarioliberalplan.ca/jobs/>

**3. According to opinion polls, a large majority of Ontarians support greater funding for social services like health care, child care, housing and education. What will your party do to ensure these programs are properly funded in both the short and long term?**

The Wynne government is committed to balance the budget by 2017-18 in a fair and responsible way. Like the CCU, Ontario Liberals rejects the reckless tax cuts proposed by both the PCs and the NDP. It's impossible to provide high-quality public services while cutting taxes. PC and NDP claims that taxes can be cut while public services are preserved or expanded are unrealistic and impractical.

Ontario Liberals have a practical and realistic plan to balance the budget while continuing to invest in jobs and priority services. Our plan includes both targeted tax increases and a careful review of spending to determine which programs should be enhanced or reduced, while transforming public services to increase efficiencies and improve outcomes.

Ontario Liberals are also committed to making investments in the Ontario economy to create jobs, increase opportunity and support long-term prosperity, while continuing to manage the province's finances responsibly. We would continue to make important decisions to control costs while supporting key public services to, for example, reduce health care wait times and improve student achievement.

These outcomes speak to spending effectively in areas that have the greatest benefit to Ontarians, both now and in the future. These decisions would enable Ontario's economy to take full advantage of the expected return of stronger global economic growth. This will create the new jobs necessary to generate revenue to help support eliminating the deficit. Those same choices will put Ontario on a path to begin to pay down the debt to reduce Ontario's net debt-to-GDP ratio to its pre-recession level of 27 per cent.

Our measures to balance the budget and raise revenues include:

- A proposed Personal Income Tax increase on taxable incomes above \$150,000, affecting the top two per cent of Ontario tax filers.
- Legislative amendments that would improve the fairness of dividend tax credits.
- Phasing out the small business deduction for large Canadian corporations, which represent 1.5 per cent of companies currently claiming the deduction.

To support public transit, transportation infrastructure and other priority projects:

- A proposed change to better target the small business deduction
- A proposed increase to the tax rate on aviation fuel

- An increase to the tobacco tax rate from 12.350 cents to 13.975 cents per cigarette and per gram of other tobacco products.
- Enhanced compliance measures to preserve the integrity of the tax administration system.
- An expenditure review to find greater efficiencies
- Moving ahead with recommendations of the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services. (Over 80 per cent of the recommendations are now being acted on.)

With respect to ensuring compliance with our tax system, the Wynne government would work both independently and with the federal government to enhance revenue integrity. Measures include:

- An action plan focused on addressing illegal activities in high-risk sectors. The approach would focus on increasing public awareness, coordinating enforcement activities and working with industry partners to encourage businesses to operate in accordance with the Province's laws.
- Working with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) on enhancing compliance activities to address the underground economy. (As part of a multi-year agreement negotiated in 2013, the CRA has been able to generate more than \$60 million in additional tax revenues for Ontario in 2013–14.)
- Strengthening tobacco enforcement, by proceeding with the implementation of the raw leaf oversight system effective January 1, 2015 and introducing amendments to the Tobacco Tax Act that would increase fines for offences related to marked tobacco products, impound vehicles used to transport illegal tobacco and strengthen other enforcement measures.
- Tender Contract Tax Compliance initiative launched in February 2014, that requires businesses engaged in procurement activity with the Ontario government to demonstrate (via certification of tax compliance) that they are compliant with their provincial tax obligations prior to being awarded government contracts.

- Supporting the various initiatives undertaken by the federal government, including those in the 2014 federal budget, to address aggressive international tax planning. If given another mandate, the Wynne government would introduce legislative amendments to the Taxation Act, 2007, requiring corporations in Ontario to disclose aggressive tax avoidance transactions to the federal Minister of National Revenue, who administers Ontario's corporate taxes (through the multi-year enhanced compliance agreement signed with the CRA last year to address aggressive international tax planning, Ontario received increased revenues of more than \$150 million in 2013–14).
- Directing additional resources to its Flexible and Integrated Risk System (FAIRS) program to identify high-risk audit cases across several tax statutes, expected to generate an additional \$10 million in tax revenue annually (cumulatively, the new compliance activities introduced over the past three years now contribute an additional \$75 million annually in tax revenues).

Ontario Liberals know that affordable and secure housing provides the stability needed to raise families and build futures. That is why we have invested more toward housing than any previous government. To date, we have committed nearly \$3 billion for repairs, new construction, and rent supplements. Through our investments, we have built and repaired more than 280,000 units and provided rental and down-payment assistance to over 81,000 households in need.

Our Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, a key component of our Poverty Reduction Strategy, is the first of its kind in Ontario. It addresses the need for affordable housing and homelessness prevention. Recently, we created the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), a 100 per cent provincially funded investment.

If given another mandate to govern, we are committed to enhancing annual funding for the CHPI by \$42 million starting in 2014-15, to a total of \$294 million. By consolidating five silo-ed homelessness-related programs into one program, we have provided greater flexibility to Service Managers to address local needs.

Our road to success has not been easy. Ontario's housing supply was put into a catastrophic state by the previous PC government. When in power, the PCs cancelled the creation of 17,000 new units following their first Cabinet meeting in 1995 – and downloaded the entire housing portfolio onto the backs of local governments.

Ontario Liberals have always been committed to ensuring that Ontario families have safe and affordable housing options. We are proud of this commitment and if re-elected, we will continue to build upon our track record of success to meet the affordable housing needs of Ontario.

We continue to urge municipalities, other provinces, and other parties to join us in asking the federal government to commit to stable and permanent funding for affordable housing. Working together with our housing partners and other levels of government, we will continue in these efforts.

**4. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers in Ontario enjoy 29% higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?**

Our party believes that unions play an important role in our economy, and it's unfortunate that we are the only party that's willing to say it aloud. We're proud of the changes we've already made to Ontario's labour laws to reverse some of the damage done by the Harris government Tim Hudak is so proud of. We were very disappointed that huge improvements on social issues unions have pushed for were defeated by Andrea Horwath for the NDP's partisan political gain.

We have consistently repudiated the Ontario PC Party's right-to-work-for-less schemes. We remain convinced that Tim Hudak can't be trusted on labour issues. Eliminating the Rand Formula would be an outrageous attack on the right of trade unions to operate for the benefit of their members. Tim Hudak's plan will lead to lower wages and less benefits for all workers in Ontario in a global race to the bottom. And Andrea Horwath doesn't seem to be able to say the word "union" anymore, as she panders to the far right.

Ontario Liberals will continue to be the only voice speaking out against these schemes, and standing up for the value Ontario's unions add to our society, by building the middle class and protecting their members.

**5. While corporate profits, productivity and GDP have all increased consistently during the past thirty years, Statistics Canada reports that real hourly wages have been stagnant since 1980. Why do you think this has happened, and what does your party propose to change the situation?**

Despite global economic challenges, Ontario's economy has shown its resilience and created jobs lost during the last recession.

Our new 10-year economic plan will continue to help stimulate the economy, create jobs and increase prosperity and fairness for all Canadians. The Ontario Liberal Party will ensure Ontario has the skilled and productive workforce that is needed to meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

We plan to invest over \$130 Billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years, focusing on hospitals, schools and transportation infrastructure. And we will continue to create a dynamic and innovative business climate that will leverage business investment, stimulate innovation, and create high-quality, well-paying jobs for today and tomorrow.

Health Care:

**6. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout Ontario. More of our health services, however, are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?**

Ontario Liberals are committed to the principles of a single, publicly-funded health care, as set out in the Canada Health Act. That is why we passed the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, which commits the province to a publicly-funded health care system. Our Excellent Care for All Act and subsequent Action Plan for Health Care are expressions of this commitment. They are tools meant to preserve the integrity of our publically-funded health care system.

However, we know that the status-quo isn't acceptable. It is our responsibility to drive change within the system in order to preserve it for our children and grandchildren. A key part of this is to provide more services in the community, where patients want to be, and where we can provide high-quality care at a better value for taxpayer dollars. For example, our government introduced birth centres which we know is a cost-effective way of delivering high-quality care in the community. Innovative service-delivery models like these will help to deliver the care Ontarians expect, while sustaining our single-payer health care system for generations to come.

We will continue to work with our partners to uphold the principles of a publicly-funded healthcare system, and drive the change needed for its preservation.

**7. There are more than 10,000 people in the province on waiting lists for home care, and 400,000 are actively seeking but cannot find a family doctor. What will your party do to fund more doctors, nursing positions and hospital beds throughout the province?**

Ontario Liberals are committed to helping people stay at home – home is where people want to be, for as long as possible. Providing care in the community has been the focus of our transformation agenda in health care: our 2013 Budget committed to increasing investments in home and community care services by an average of 5 per cent per year, resulting in a total investment of over \$750M by 2016-17. Ontario Liberals have built capacity in the sector to provide high-quality, appropriate care at good value for the taxpayer dollar.

If re-elected, Ontario Liberals would continue to invest in capacity for the community sector – ranging from more nursing hours, to personal support worker wage increases – so more Ontarians can stay at home, longer. We will also guarantee that every Ontarian has access to a primary care provider. We will work with our partners to expand access to primary care, and develop targeted approaches for northern, rural, and fast-growing communities.

Since taking office, Ontario Liberals have made great strides in stabilizing the nursing workforce in Ontario. Over 20,500 more nurses are working in Ontario since 2003, including 4,000 more nurses in 2013. Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions in the world that offers a nursing graduate guarantee, from which more than 16,000 nurses have benefitted.

This strong commitment to nursing was necessary to rehabilitate a system that was left in disrepair, with the previous Progressive Conservative government having fired thousands of nurses.

Our Action Plan for Health Care commits to transforming our health care system into one that provides the right care, at the right time, in the right place. This is particularly important as Ontario's population ages, and nurses will continue to play a vital role in this transformation.

Ontario Liberals are committed to building on the successes that we have achieved together with our partners and the nursing community broadly. If given the opportunity, we would work with all our partners in the system to achieve the optimal supply of nurses in Ontario.

Education:

**8. Only 20% of young children today have access to regulated child care spaces in Ontario. What will you do in government to create more child care spaces? Will you commit to investing more in Early Childhood Education in the province?**

Child care plays a key role in promoting healthy child development and learning, particularly during the early years of a child's life.

Our vision is to ensure that Ontario's children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.

Since 2003–04, the Ontario Liberal government has increased funding for child care by 90 per cent – to more than \$1 billion annually.

The next steps are building on our accomplishments: modernizing and strengthening the child care sector in Ontario. On December 3rd 2013, the Wynne government introduced the Child Care Modernization Act (Bill 143), new legislation that would have modernized the child care and early years system in Ontario. It would:

- Strengthen oversight to enhance safety and respond to non-compliant child care providers.
- Increase access in the licensed child care sector.

While we worked to transform the legislative framework, we also proposed to make interim regulatory changes that respond to feedback we received as part of the Modernizing Child Care in Ontario discussion paper, released in 2012. The proposed regulatory amendments would have supported three priority areas:

- Program quality
- Access and flexibility
- Health and safety

Early childhood educators (ECE's) and other child care staff play a key role during the critical years of a child's development. However, there is a significant wage gap between ECEs working in the publically funded education system and those in the child care sector. Currently, an ECE in the child care sector earns an average of \$16.34 per hour. The average ECE in a school board makes over \$22 per hour, which continues to increase as an ECE moves through a salary grid.

In the 2014 Budget, we have provided an additional \$269 million over three years to support an average \$1 per hour wage increase in 2015 and a further average \$1 per hour wage increase in 2016 for front-line child care workers who work in licensed child care centres, child care centers managed by First Nations and licensed private-home daycare agencies.

Also, to further support the ongoing modernization of Ontario's child care system, we announced additional funding of \$33.6 million over the next three years. This will help protect the gain made in child care through the previously announced, four-year \$346 million child care modernization investment, helping to preserve spaces and helping to keep parent fees stable.

We are committed to continuing our work with the sector to transition in a way that best serves families and the child care sector. Our proposed changes to modernize child care reflect the advice received from stakeholders as well as the Modernizing Child Care in Ontario discussion paper. Our plan has been put at risk by the opposition parties decision not to support the budget.

We believe that the best long-term economic investment we can make is in the early years of a child's life. Full day Kindergarten is the most significant transformation in our education system in a generation. The plan is the first of its kind anywhere in North America and it is important for Ontario's future prosperity.

Our Liberal government contributed over \$1.4 billion in funding in order to support the implementation of full-day kindergarten. This is an increase of \$437M over last year. The results are clear. Research results demonstrate that children in full-day kindergarten programs do better at school and are more likely to graduate. Full-day kindergarten can also save hard-working parents in Ontario as much as \$6, 500 annually.

The PC party called full day kindergarten unaffordable, voted against it, and has done everything to try and prevent the success of this program. Due to the hard work of the Ontario Liberal Party, full day kindergarten is being phased in gradually and will be fully implemented by September 2014.

### **9. What specific policies will your party implement to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes in primary and secondary schools in Ontario?**

We are proud of our investments to ensure all primary classes in Ontario have 23 students or fewer and over 90 per cent of all primary classes have 20 students or fewer. For five straight years our investments helped us reach our primary class size targets. We have also reduced our average class size for Grades 4 to 8 from 25.6 in 2003-04 to 24.3 in 2013-14. And, we have reduced our average class size for Grades 9 to 12.

We know that students who are supported to succeed in the earlier grades are more likely to stay in school and go on to achieve success in high school and beyond. That is why ensuring smaller primary class sizes has been a priority. To make class sizes smaller, we needed more teachers and more classrooms. To meet our target, we funded over 5,000 additional primary teachers and built or renovated nearly 2,000 classrooms.



The Ontario Liberal plan for education is focused on working collaboratively with our partners in education to deliver better results for students. Working together, we have implemented full-day kindergarten and our schools are now recognized among the best in the world. We will build on that record to meet tomorrow's challenges in education.

Since 2003, funding for Ontario schools is up \$8.1B or 56 per cent. We have invested in hiring 13,500 new teachers and over 9,000 support staff; reducing class sizes; creating innovative, new programs like Specialist High Skill Majors and Dual Credits; and supporting programs to make our schools safer and more accepting spaces. Our 2014 budget committed to provide more than \$11 billion in capital grants to school boards to continue building better places to learn across the province.

It is unfortunate that the Tim Hudak PCs have committed to increasing class size, fire at least 9 000 teachers and 9,700 support staff, and cut 1.5 billion from the education budget. These cuts will have devastating effects on our education system and on student achievement. Less support staff like education assistants, psychologists, and speech-language pathologists will mean less support for special education at a time in which need to ensure they are supported to succeed.

We have chosen a different path. Significant investments have helped support success in teaching and learning. Our graduation rate is up from 68 per cent to 83 per cent and 71 per cent of our Grade three and six students are meeting the high provincial standard compared to 56 per cent in 2002-03.

**10. Ontario university students with loans currently graduate with an average of \$37,000 of debt after a four-year degree, and our province has the lowest rate of public funding for colleges and universities - less than half the per student funding of Alberta. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt?**

The Ontario Liberal government has invested billions of dollars to keep student debt low, and dedicates more dollars to student financial assistance than any other province. In fact, public student debt has maintained its average debt at \$27,000 per student, the same rate for the last ten years. Through the Ontario Student Opportunity Grant, we have capped public debt to \$7,300 per year, at a cost of over \$565 million per year.

**Ontario Liberal Party**

10 St. Mary Street, Suite 210, Toronto, ON M4Y 1P9  
Phone: 416.961.3800, 1.800.268.7250 | Fax: 416.323.9425  
Email: [info@ontarioliberal.com](mailto:info@ontarioliberal.com) | Web: [www.ontarioliberal.ca](http://www.ontarioliberal.ca)

OSAP provides over \$1.1 billion of support to students, with nearly \$900 million of that is issued in non-repayable grants through programs like the 30 per cent Off Tuition Grant, Ontario Access Grant, Ontario Distance Grant, and the Ontario Student Opportunity Grant to name a few. The 30 per cent Off Tuition Grant itself gives university students \$1780 and college students \$820 per year, and has helped over 400,000 students and families since 2012.

Per student funding has also increased over 80 per cent in the last 10 years, and will continue to grow in order to fund students on their ability to learn, not their ability to pay. Qualified students will continue to be guaranteed a place at Ontario's publicly funded colleges and universities.

This past year, we announced a 4-year tuition framework that caps tuition at 1% above inflation. The plan set-up a predictable framework for both students and institutions to plan for the future, while also saving students at least \$1200 over the next four-years compared to the previous framework. Additionally, recent changes to many fee structures like flat-fee or per-credit tuition billing, along with the elimination of deferral fees, will save all students hundreds of dollars each.

The Environment

**11. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment, and how will you pay for them?**

Ontario Liberals are the only party with ideas and actions – already underway – to fight climate change – the challenge of our age.

Ontario is taking strong action against the cause of climate change, namely greenhouse gases emissions. We have shut down the biggest greenhouse gas emitters in the province – the five coal-fired power plants. Ontario's coal plant shutdown is the single largest greenhouse gas reduction initiative in North America.

We are making it easier for Ontario's most energy-intensive industries to substitute lower-greenhouse gas fuels for coal.

Places to Grow requires more compact development with nearby employment lands. Places to Grow discourages urban sprawl and the unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions that long automobile commutes generate. This approach builds our communities in a way that minimizes greenhouse gas emissions, now and in the future.

And our efforts are bearing fruit:

We adopted a tough greenhouse gas emission target for 2014, and are meeting it. We adopted an even tougher goal for 2020 – and programs already in place put us two-thirds of the way to attaining it.

Ontario Liberals have acted decisively to fight climate change. Neither of the other two parties have a plan – or seem to care.

**12. One of the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment is public transportation. What will you do to make public transportation throughout the province more affordable and accessible to Ontarians?**

Ontario Liberals have always been dedicated to making public transit more affordable and accessible. Since 2003, the provincial government has demonstrated its commitment to getting people out of cars and onto public transit by investing more than \$19.3 billion in public transit.

Ontario Liberals have committed more than \$4.0 billion in the City of Toronto, up to \$300 million in provincial funding for Waterloo Region, and up to \$600 million towards the construction of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit (OLRT)'s, to help improve and expand public transit.

However, Ontario Liberals understand that transit is an issue for all municipalities in Ontario, not just large ones. Since 2004, we have committed more than \$2.7 billion in gas tax funding, including \$163.4 million between October 2013 and March 2014. These funds are currently distributed to 96 municipal transit systems in 133 communities across the province, representing nearly 90 per cent of the total Ontario population.



In our 2014 Budget, "Moving Ontario Forward," we proposed a ten-year vision for investment in transportation and transit. That plan dedicated an additional \$29 billion over ten years in transit and transportation infrastructure, including more than \$9.1 billion invested in GO Transit. Our plan would immediately begin work on electrifying the GO rail network and offering 15-minute service across the GO system. We believe this Regional Express Rail plan is the most cost-effective and environmentally-friendly way to facilitate the movement of a growing population across the GTHA.

**Ontario Liberal Party**

10 St. Mary Street, Suite 210, Toronto, ON M4Y 1P9  
Phone: 416.961.3800, 1.800.268.7250 | Fax: 416.323.9425  
Email: [info@ontarioliberal.com](mailto:info@ontarioliberal.com) | Web: [www.ontarioliberal.ca](http://www.ontarioliberal.ca)