

Section III – Items for the Information of the Board

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #9/18, Friday, November 30, 2018

FROM: Chandra Sharma, Director, Watershed Strategies

**RE: TRCA RESPONSE TO ONTARIO'S CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN
CONSULTATION**

KEY ISSUE

To provide TRCA Board of Directors a summary of staff comments on Ontario's Climate Change Plan Consultation, as released by the Province of Ontario and due on November 16, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the staff report, highlighting TRCA staff comments on Ontario's Made-in-Ontario Climate Change Plan, be received.

BACKGROUND

On October 24, 2018, the Province of Ontario [released a consultation process](#) to obtain comments in advance of their release of a climate change plan later this fall. The plan proposed by the Province of Ontario is expected to include several areas of focus, specifically:

1. Creating an understanding of the effects that climate change is having on our households, businesses, communities and public infrastructure to better prepare and strengthen our resiliency;
2. Ensuring polluters are held accountable and creating dedicated measures that will efficiently reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
3. Improving Ontario's business climate by unlocking the power of the private sector to finance and drive innovative climate solutions. This will include an emissions-reduction fund to invest in technology-based and other solutions to reduce emissions in Ontario.
4. Finding a balanced solution that puts people first, makes life more affordable for families, and takes Ontario's role in fighting climate change seriously.

TRCA staff have compiled and provided comments in response to this consultation process prior to the closing date of November 16, 2018.

SUMMARY OF TRCA COMMENTS

1. **Creating an Understanding of Climate Change Effects on Households, Business, Communities and Public Infrastructure to Strengthen Resiliency**

Climate Information Translation Service is needed - While more climate information is needed in some areas, we do have a significant amount of historical data and future climate projections already available through a range of government and academic sources to help inform current decision-making. However, there is insufficient capacity, guidance and support on how to best use climate data to make evidence-based decisions in the public and private sectors. In order to help households, businesses, and communities better prepare for future climate and strengthen resilience, there is a particular need to build knowledge and capacity of how to use climate data in the broader public sector (eg. municipalities, CAs, transit agencies, energy utilities Infrastructure Ontario) in asset management and capital planning for critical infrastructure systems (water,

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energy, transportation, etc.), as well as in land use and watershed planning. The TRCA, acting as host of the Ontario Climate Consortium, is playing such a role with public sector partners connecting them with leading climate research expertise in universities across the province to transform climate data into formats that support decision-making, such as vulnerability and risk assessments. We would be pleased to work with your ministry team to highlight this collaborative work and to further advance this work as part of this Plan.

Need for Investment in Local Flood Management and Flood Mitigation- TRCA, working with our municipal partners also plays a critical role in flood plain mapping and management. There is a strong economic rationale for increased public investment into Conservation Authority flood management programs, as was articulated in [Conservation Ontario's 2013 business case](#) which identified updated floodplain mapping, investments in under resourced flood management operations and aging infrastructure as priority areas for funding. TRCA has been able to update its flood modeling and mapping capabilities using state of the art techniques capable of assessing the impacts of climate change, thanks to collaborative support from the Federal and Provincial governments through the National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP). Given the success of the NDMP program to date, TRCA highly recommends that the Government of Ontario work collaboratively with the Federal Government to renew it beyond intake 5. Furthermore, as part of your Plan, additional guidance from the Province through an update to the MNRF *Technical Guide, River and Stream Systems: Flooding Hazard Limit* could include further guidance and a consistent approach to incorporating measures to address the impacts of climate change.

Need for more refined scale of local watershed baseline data via expansion of local monitoring- TRCA supports efforts to develop a better understanding of the impacts of climate change, particularly as it relates to flooding and drought which are two of the most significant impacts on ecosystems, households, businesses, communities and public infrastructure in our jurisdiction. To achieve a better understanding of impacts we suggest that the province as part of the Plan, support the expansion of local monitoring and baseline data capacity related to both precipitation and stream gauging stations to build the evidence base to support adaptation investments.

Resilient Infrastructure Capital Funding and Opportunities for continued Fed/Prov cooperation – TRCA is undertaking heavy infrastructure resiliency work including the construction of flood protection landforms, coastal shorelines, and restored river corridors. These projects often facilitate redevelopments and help make our communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change. We would like to discuss how to fund many EA approved projects where detailed design and construction dollars from senior levels of government could ensure more resilient communities as part of this Plan. In many cases the opportunity for TRCA to lever private investment and industry partnerships is possible if government funding or land is made available (e.g., Black Creek Renewal in Vaughan, Brampton Riverwalk, etc.). In addition to the NDMP projects, the TRCA would like to emphasize the importance of continuing efforts to leverage the Federal Government's \$2 billion Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) which is aimed at strengthening the resilience of Canadian communities through investments in large-scale infrastructure projects, including natural/green infrastructure projects, enabling them to better manage the risk associated with current and future natural hazards, such as floods, wildfires and droughts. The TRCA would encourage the Government of Ontario to continue to work with the Federal Government to ensure the eligibility of Ontario-based applicants for DMAF funding and to use TRCA as a vehicle to deliver such infrastructure projects for the Province and municipal partners as part of this Plan.

Source Water protection is a priority - Conservation authorities have been integral partners in the implementation of the Drinking Water Source Protection Program and the *Clean Water Act*,

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2006, the legislation that enables the protection of sources of drinking water. The quality and amount of drinking water available to municipal water supplies are threatened by warming temperatures, drought, stormwater runoff, and more frequent flooding. Relying just on water treatment facilities to ensure safe drinking water is costly. We recommend that you continue to support efforts to protect water sources and prevent overuse and contamination as a first step in partnership with water treatment approaches.

Public engagement and awareness building - Public engagement is needed to help individuals, businesses and other organizations understand how climate change will impact them, and how they can become more prepared. Engagement tactics will need to take many forms to reach key audiences, including via social media, and the use of infographics that make complicated information easier to understand. TRCA is a leader in community engagement in the GTA, and has made significant advances to incorporate information about projected climate impacts into its programming. With over 3.5 million people living within our watersheds, we would welcome opportunities to collaborate with the Province to increase awareness of climate risk, and mitigation opportunities through proactive investments in engagement via TRCA as part of your Plan in support of provincial climate change plan measures.

2. Ensuring Polluters are Held Accountable and Creating Measures to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Ecosystem-based carbon sequestration - In addition to GHG emissions reductions, the Government of Ontario could also explore ways to encourage increased carbon sequestration in Ontario forests, wetlands and other natural systems. Land based carbon sequestration is an approach that can complement GHG emissions reduction approaches, while also providing land conservation benefits and increased access to nature for residents of Ontario. As one of the largest landholders in the GTA (15,000 hectares), the TRCA and other CA's are well placed to support the province with a comprehensive approach and a program to increase carbon sequestration in ecosystems, across the province. We would encourage the province to support efforts to better understand the carbon sequestration potential of Ontario's natural systems, particularly those in highly urbanized areas where conservation and enhancement can provide a multitude of co-benefits for public health. We are cautiously supportive of efforts to develop carbon offset market mechanisms to incentivize ecosystem based carbon sequestration, and would welcome the opportunity to work with MECP staff on program design considerations to ensure high quality offsets are generated as part of your Plan.

Enhanced data collection and reporting measures, and engagement to identify reduction opportunities - Collecting good data on GHG emissions across all sectors is a necessary first step towards ensuring polluters are held accountable. There are already mechanisms in place to collect GHG data from large emitters, as well as from broader public sector organizations. Furthermore, regulations for large buildings (>50,000 sq ft) are coming into effect over the coming years. We recommend that these steps be maintained as part of your Plan. Complementing data collection and reporting, there is a need for engagement efforts to help building and facility managers understand their energy and GHG footprint, as well as opportunities to make reductions through changes to building operations as well as capital upgrades. TRCA runs a suite of programs under its Partners in Project Green (PPG), and Community Transformation Program that do just that across a wide range of sectors, including industry, hospitals, municipal buildings, and schools. We would welcome the opportunity to share with the Ministry our track-record of success in this area to demonstrate the potential of scaling up training and education in the building sector as part of the development and implementation of your Plan.

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3. Improving Ontario's Business Climate by Unlocking Private Sector Finance to Drive Innovative Climate Solutions

Many proven technologies exist today that can be deployed to reduce GHG emissions, however a wide range of barriers impede widespread adoption and scaling. Through partnerships and collaboration of private sector organizations to share knowledge, resources, best practices, and work on collective impact projects, many of these barriers can be overcome. TRCA is actively involved in efforts to raise awareness of new technologies and to promote adoption. For example, TRCA's Partners in Project Green (PPG) program has established close relationships with IC&I sector organizations and is actively working with them to reduce GHG emissions. In addition, our Sustainable Technology Evaluation Program is working with businesses to identify and test the best available technologies for getting us to our climate goals. Through this research and industry training we are helping our communities select and install the right technologies for the job. We would welcome the opportunity to expand and highlight this work as part of your Plan.

From an adaptation investment perspective, better information on the risk/return ratios is needed. For example, climate scenario analysis and vulnerability assessments can help inform return-on-investment calculations for adaptation investment decisions in critical infrastructure sectors. This requires best-in-class climate information, and the expertise to translate that into cost benefit tools. TRCA is developing this expertise, in collaboration with our Ontario Climate Consortium partners, and is eager to work with our municipal and provincial partners to mainstream this practice into asset management and capital planning across the public sector. Support for this effort via inclusion of similar direction in your Plan would help accelerate better decision making.

4. Finding a Balanced Solution to put People First, while making Life Affordable and taking Ontario's Role in Fighting Climate Change Seriously.

Conservation First - Conservation (e.g. energy and water consumption) is the most cost-effective way to drive emissions reductions across key sectors while also making life more affordable for families by reducing utility bills. The narratives of conservation and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand and, and can also help to drive investment and job creation in local communities such as contractors delivering home retrofits that reduce energy cost for households.

The TRCA has a range of programs that support conservation efforts across a range of sectors. For example, our Partners in Project Green (PPG) program is supporting resource conservation in the industrial commercial sectors, while our Sustainable Neighbourhoods program (SNAP) is working in mainly suburban residential neighbourhoods across the GTA to engage communities in conservation and stewardship efforts. Both of these programs are driving GHG emissions reductions, along with a range of other environmental priorities, as well as cost savings for households and businesses. These are proven successful models that could be scaled up across the province.

For the institutional sector (e.g. hospitals, schools and municipalities), TRCA has been working with the private sector to identify low capital ways to unlock significant savings in cost, energy and GHG emissions. Through our community transformation program with the Ontario school sector, we identified readily achievable savings of \$71 million in costs, 262,000MWhH in electricity, 140 million m³ in natural gas and total GHG emissions reduction potential of 213ktonnes. The Community Transformation Program is another model that could be scaled up across the province.

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Scaling-up EV deployment – Electric vehicles are another pathway to drastically reduce Ontario's GHG emissions while making life more affordable for families. EVs can rely on made-in-Ontario electricity to power them, and result in reduced annual fuel costs for the average consumer. When EVs are charged overnight, consumers are taking advantage of Ontario's surplus baseload electricity, and helping to create local jobs (win-win-win). TRCA is working with its municipal partners to develop local and regional strategies to scale-up EV adoption in the GTA. We are keen to share the results of these municipal strategies with the province, to seek support and enable scaling-up of successful approaches.

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Staff is engaged in this policy analysis work as per the normal course of their duties. No additional funding is proposed.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

- TRCA staff to continue to stay engaged with the Province of Ontario as details and potential future engagements for their new climate change plan are released.

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