

Notes for remarks by

**The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of the Environment**

at

Smog Summit 2005

Council Chambers, Toronto City Hall

Wednesday, June 8, 2005 (9 a.m.)

(Check Against Delivery)

I am very excited to share this stage with Minister Dion today.

As you heard earlier this morning, the Government of Canada is taking its commitment to cleaner air quite seriously.

It took courage for the federal government to sign the Kyoto Protocol, and it took careful planning to develop its climate change strategy.

But courage and planning alone will not get you to the goal.

So today we heard Minister Dion deliver on the other two pillars of success – partnership and resources.

Ontario is a strong supporter of Canada's climate change strategy.

We know that because of our size and our economic strength, our province is key to the overall success of the plan.

The Smog Summit has seen this platform used for a lot of promises over the years, but never before have they seen two levels of government go so far in less than one year to meet and even exceed their commitments to cleaner air.

Last year, Ontario revealed its five-point plan for cleaner air at this Summit.

Today I am proud to report that we have delivered on every point of that plan, including draft regulations that will greatly decrease industrial emissions of harmful pollutants.

A promise made on this stage is a promise kept.

Today, thanks to Minister Dion, action on climate change holds new promise.

Last year, our governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding on climate change.

Today we have a commitment from Ottawa that will allow Ontario to pursue initiatives that will have the greatest impact on climate change and significant benefits for reducing air pollution.

Today I am proud to announce that over the summer, we will continue serious negotiations for a real partnership to support projects that reduce Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions.

These initiatives could take many different forms.

We will look at the issues of energy efficiency, conservation and fuels.

This could include initiatives such as a better provincial building code and promoting greener buildings.

An area that is quite important to me is innovation and technology.

Our agreement could decide on support for innovations such as the capture of methane gas from landfills or other green energy technologies.

We could also support the use of ethanol, bio diesel and other green alternatives to gas.

There could be opportunities in resources and agriculture, for instance, in the further use of co-generation in the forestry sector.

Finally, a key area to develop is public awareness and education. I will speak more about its importance later in my remarks.

Of course, the biggest initiative for Ontario is one that we are already pursuing – the replacement of all coal-fired electricity generators in the province. The Lakeview coal station is closed for good, which is great news in particular for the GTA, and our government remains on track to replace our remaining facilities. Eliminating coal will take Ontario, and Canada, much closer to its Kyoto targets. Whether the issue is global or local air emissions, the Smog Summit is a conference that deserves more than just good intentions – it deserves concrete results. As everyone here knows, there are hundreds of studies on the health effects of air pollution. The McGuinty government is committed to maintaining and improving the health and well-being of Ontarians with the strongest possible protections for our air, water and land. We are guided by a vision of Ontario where the most vulnerable among us – children, the elderly and people with respiratory illnesses – do not have to worry about the quality of the air that they breathe. It is an Ontario where we will not see statistics like the one from the Ontario Medical Association stating that one in five school-age children suffer from asthma. We have all heard the alarming statistics from the Toronto Board of Health and our provincial Medical Officer of health and we know that action is needed now. How do we reclaim the clean and clear air we all envision? Three words come to mind. Co-operation. Innovation. Determination. We co-operate with a broad coalition of partners. We embrace innovation. We have the determination to see the job through. These are the qualities we are bringing to the task of reducing emissions from the three major domestic sources of airborne pollutants – on-road vehicles, power generation and industrial activities. We can all breathe easier without Lakeview spewing contaminants that threaten our health and way of life. Our government has admitted to its own role in contributing to our pollution. Earlier this spring, our Cost of Coal report showed the impact that coal is having on our province. That report provides us with all the rationale we need for taking action. There is exciting progress in making Ontario a leader in clean and renewable energy sources. Last June, my colleague Energy Minister Dwight Duncan began seeking up to 2,500 megawatts in new, clean electricity generation and conservation measures. This represents one-third of the power we need to replace coal-fired electricity generation. Minister Duncan has announced new clean energy projects with a capacity for 2245 megawatts. They would attract more than \$1 billion of new capital investment to Ontario. Ontario is making similar progress with its call for new renewable energy capacity. We have ambitious goals for renewables. We are planning to provide 5 per cent of Ontario's electricity through renewable sources by 2007, and 10 per cent by 2010. We also have a target of reducing peak electricity demand growth in Ontario by 5 per cent by 2007. We have also appointed the first Chief Energy Conservation Officer, who will help us find innovative ways to reach that target. I should note here that Premier McGuinty has traveled to the U.S. several times and has expressed Ontario's concerns over the course of U.S. energy policies. He has noted that while Ontario is moving away from coal-fired power generation, our American friends are moving in the opposite direction. New coal facilities are being built, many upwind of Ontario.

He has called on the Americans to work with us to build a sophisticated, new technology-based clean energy system for the Great Lakes region.

The Premier said yesterday that he is trying to create a shared approach to dealing with our air. "We're breathing their air, and they're breathing our air," he said. "I think it would be a good thing if we begin to approach it in a way that recognizes our right on each side of the border to breath cleaner air."

This is a message he will be delivering forcefully at the Shared Air Summit on June 20 at the University of Toronto.

Since I last spoke at the Smog Summit, we have implemented stronger Drive Clean vehicle emissions standards for heavy-duty diesel trucks and buses, as well as light-duty cars and trucks.

We have strengthened enforcement for the network of Drive Clean facilities that test light-duty vehicles.

In keeping with Drive Clean's commitment to continuous improvement, a program review had been planned for 2006-2007, but I moved it up to begin in January of this year.

We will continue to ensure that Drive Clean effectively protects our air from harmful contaminants.

We are also promoting cleaner transportation alternatives.

We have dedicated two cents of the gas tax for public transit and pledged a further \$1 billion for GO transit and \$1 billion for the Toronto Transit Commission.

We have also made solid advances with an industrial pollution plan that will reduce emissions from industrial sources, including sectors that have never had emission limits before.

The plan set clear goals to significantly reduce industrial emissions of two of the major contributors to smog – sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide.

We have taken concrete steps that would put in place caps on emissions of these contaminants for seven large industrial sectors.

Our regulation would make these limits progressively tougher over the years.

We also made a commitment to introduce new standards for harmful pollutants, including carcinogens and toxins.

Last year we committed to set new standards for 29 harmful substances. Our draft regulation has upped that total to 40.

The commitments we made last year have come to fruition, and they will achieve real, measurable results to reduce air pollution.

We stand on our record today when we say we will take action to address climate change.

Our governments will take this stage together next year with real results.

We are proud to work in partnership with Minister Dion and the federal government.

We applaud our federal counterparts for backing their strategy with the resources we will need to get the job done right.

Closer to home, the Ontario government is proud to launch a new public awareness partnership. It will educate Ontarians about smog, its implications for our health, and how each of us can help reduce emissions that contribute to smog.

While most people are aware that their health is affected by air quality, we need to strengthen that link.

We have jointly produced a series of educational materials that focus on those who are most sensitive to the effects of smog – including seniors, children and people who spend a lot of time outdoors.

These products will be available through Public Health Units and hospitals, as well as through local community organizations.

We are also going to work more closely with municipalities to enable them to better play their role in raising public awareness.

In recent years municipalities have been actively pressing for change at the local level. You should be acknowledged as leaders for your efforts to build the local capacity of your boards of health and it is certainly fair to say your efforts are paying off.

Today I am also releasing an expanded and revised guide called Smog Alert Response: A Municipal Guide to Action.

The Guide is a comprehensive resource on smog and it was developed in partnership with many of you in this room.

It includes information on best practices being implemented across Ontario, strategies for developing and strengthening smog response plans.

It also includes current research on the science and human health effects of smog.

We are participating in the Federal process of developing a national health-based Air Quality Index. We recognize the need for Ontarians to better understand the health effects of smog and how this pertains to them and their loved ones.

Everyone here has an important responsibility to the people of Ontario.

We must work co-operatively.

We must make innovation integral to our efforts.

We must have the determination to get the job done.

Ontario is making good on its responsibility.

We are moving away from coal-fired power generation and making greater use of cleaner, renewable energy sources with the help of the federal government.

We are implementing an industrial pollution plan that will reduce emissions from industries that have never had limits before.

We are updating and introducing new standards and models to ensure that Ontario is a leader in improving air quality.

We are tackling vehicle emissions.

We are launching two new public awareness campaigns to help the public play a bigger role in fighting smog and other forms of air pollution.

Taken together, these efforts are helping bring about the Ontario we envision – an Ontario we can all breathe more freely, where our health is protected and where our air is being protected for generations to come.

We have kept our promises and delivered on our commitments, and thanks in no small part to our continuing productive relationship with the federal government, we will continue to succeed and continue to deliver.

Thank you.

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