

Multilevel Climate Governance in Ontario

To know more about multilevel governance in Canada, read our [case study here](#).

In 2007 Go Green: Ontario's Action Plan on Climate Change established GHG emissions reduction targets (15% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050), replaced in 2015 by the Climate Change Strategy which added a 2030 target (37% below 1990 levels) and instituted an emissions cap-and-trade system. Ontario requires climate change mitigation and adaptation policies in municipal official plans but did not specify reporting requirements. Despite a 2016 audit of Ontario's Climate Change Strategy, which concluded that local governments should be given additional resources to enable local mitigation and adaptation strategies, its 2018 Made in Ontario Environment Plan does not address the role of local governments.

The Community Emissions Reductions Plan established in 2017 common methods for municipal climate planning, and Ontario introduced in 2019 specific requirements for municipalities in the Toronto region to develop GHG inventory and reductions plan. But funds for municipalities are inconsistent: the Atmospheric Fund for carbon reduction and air quality, is only available in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and funding through the Ontario Climate Change Action Plan limit the way municipalities can spend the funds (Hill and Perun, 2018).

Monitoring Ontario's mitigation policy

Annual emissions reporting has been required since 2009. A decrease can be observed for the last 10 years particularly from the electricity production that fell by 8-fold since 2005 as well as heavy industry (-20% since 2005 and -46% since 1990). Ontario has led in phasing out coal fired electricity generation by permanently banning it in 2015.

Transportation and building increased between 1990 and 2005 and are quite stable since then. Ontario is on its way to reach its 2020 goals if the 6% increase in 2018 remains an exception. But the cancellation in 2018 of the cap-and-trade program and other programmes to shift consumer choices like GreenON (rebates for insulations and energy efficiency in households) or the Green Commercial Vehicle (helps diesel trucks shifting to electric/cleaner vehicles) may have hampered efforts such as limiting SUV growth, on the rate of retrofitting or renewable energy installation (Environmental Defence, 2020). The 2018 cold winter and hot summer also provoked a higher use of natural gas and air conditioners.

Ontario's emissions performance standards (EPS) program came in 2019 as an alternative to the federal "carbon tax and dividend" strongly opposed by Ontario (Climate Chance, 2018). It requires large industries emitting more than 50,000 tCO₂e/year, to reduce emissions or purchase compliance units to cover the unreachd annual reductions goals, which price starts at \$20/tCO₂e in 2020 to reach \$50 by 2023.

Adaptation

The Climate Risk Institute in Ontario delivers services related to climate change risk assessment, adaptation planning, policy evaluation and resiliency. Three CRI flagship programs include the Infrastructure Resilience Professional (IRP) training engineers and other professionals; the Program on the Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee (PIEVC) Protocol; and Canada's Climate Change Adaptation Community of Practice, an online platform where researchers, experts, policy-makers and practitioners from across Canada can come together to ask questions, share knowledge on adaptation (CRI, n.d.).

ONTARIO'S ANNUAL GHG EMISSIONS IN KT CO₂E. Source: [Canada Government, 2020](#).

