

## **Energy conservation: a wise investment in Ontario's future**

*Increased conservation of fossil fuels needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions*

**Toronto, August 11, 2017** — A new report by Dianne Saxe, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO), shows that energy conservation continues to be a wise investment in Ontario's future.

[\*Every Joule Counts\*](#), Volume Two of the ECO's Annual Energy Conservation Progress Report, provides the only comprehensive public review of energy use and conservation in the province. Volume One, [\*Every Drop Counts\*](#), which was released in May 2017 and has been well received across the country, focused on energy use in Ontario's municipal water and wastewater systems.

"Ontario has been growing its economy and population for a decade without increasing energy use," commented Saxe. "And energy efficiency continues to improve; last year, conservation programs became better funded, more innovative, more successful, and more accessible to Ontario residents and businesses."

Conservation of electricity and natural gas remain the most cost-effective sources of energy in Ontario (electricity conservation cost 3.5 cents/kilowatt-hour in 2015, far less than any form of new generation; [for other generation costs, see section 6.1.1 of \*Every Joule Counts\*](#)). Two factors should make electricity conservation (especially peak reduction) an even more important investment in Ontario's long-term energy stability: electricity supply is going down while demand is going to go up. Just when the province's nuclear plants will be being refurbished or reaching the end of their useful life, Ontario's climate laws will be driving the increased use of low-emission electricity over fossil fuels.

*Every Joule Counts* also shows that natural gas conservation has considerable potential to save residents and businesses money and energy, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While funding for Ontario's natural gas conservation programs has almost doubled, they are still underfunded; although natural gas supplies 37% of Ontario's energy use (compared to the 20% supplied by electricity), conservation programs for natural gas received 85% less funding than for electricity in 2015.

Additional funding from cap-and-trade revenues will make conservation programs more accessible to customers who heat their homes with other fossil fuels, such as propane and oil. These funds will also supplement utility electricity and natural gas conservation programs. Careful oversight is needed to ensure that these initiatives do not conflict.

The Commissioner's report found that the biggest weakness in Ontario's energy conservation plan continues to be the absence of policies, programs and funding to conserve petroleum products, especially those used for transportation. These petroleum products are Ontario's largest energy uses, and the largest source of its greenhouse gases. Progress on this front depends greatly on the Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP), expected in the fall of 2017.

As long recommended by the ECO, the LTEP will, for the first time, consider all fuels used in Ontario, not just electricity. However, as shown by the ECO's December 2016 [Special Report](#), the Ministry of Energy's long-term energy planning process has critical weaknesses that must be addressed this fall.

"It won't be possible for Ontario to meet its greenhouse gas targets without substantial changes in how we plan and deliver our energy supply," concluded Commissioner Saxe. "Ontario must look beyond its traditional energy silos and integrate electricity supply, storage and use with other energy sources."

*Every Joule Counts* can be downloaded at [eco.on.ca](http://eco.on.ca).

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*The **Environmental Commissioner of Ontario** is an independent officer of the Legislature who reports on government progress on climate change, energy and other environmental issues. The ECO is the province's environmental watchdog and guardian of Ontarians' environmental rights.*