MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Bill of Rights

Update to the
Statement of Environmental Values

September 2008
1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Ontario *Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR)* was proclaimed in February 1994. The founding principles of the *EBR* are stated in its Preamble:

- *The people of Ontario recognize the inherent value of the natural environment.*
- *The people of Ontario have a right to a healthful environment.*
- *The people of Ontario have as a common goal the protection, conservation and restoration of the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations.*

While the government has the primary responsibility for achieving this goal, Ontarians should have the means to ensure that it is achieved in an effective, timely, open and fair manner.

The purposes of the Act are:

- To protect, conserve and where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment by the means provided in the Act;
- To provide sustainability of the environment by the means provided in the Act; and
- To protect the right to a healthful environment by the means provided in the Act.

These purposes include the following:

- The prevention, reduction and elimination of the use, generation and release of pollutants that are an unreasonable threat to the integrity of the environment.
- The protection and conservation of biological, ecological and genetic diversity.
- The protection and conservation of natural resources, including plant life, animal life and ecological systems.
- The encouragement of the wise management of our natural resources, including plant life, animal life and ecological systems.
- The identification, protection and conservation of ecologically sensitive areas or processes.
To assist in fulfilling these purposes, the Act provides:

- The means by which Ontarians may participate in the making of environmentally significant decisions by the Government of Ontario;
- Increased accountability of the Government of Ontario for its environmental decision-making;
- Increased access to the courts by residents of Ontario for the protection of the environment; and
- Enhanced protection for employees who take action in respect of environmental harm.

Statements of Environmental Values are a means for designated ministries to record their commitment to the environment and be accountable for ensuring consideration of the environment in their decisions.

The *EBR* requires a Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) from the ministries and affected agencies. A SEV explains:

- How the purposes of the *EBR* will be applied when decisions that might significantly affect the environment are made in the Ministry; and
- How consideration of the purposes of the *EBR* will be integrated with other considerations, including social, economic and scientific considerations that are part of decision-making in the Ministry.

It is each Minister's responsibility to take every reasonable step to ensure that the SEV is considered whenever decisions that might significantly affect the environment are made in the ministry.

The Ministry will examine the Statement of Environmental Values whenever there is a significant change in mandate.
2. MINISTRY VISION, PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Vision: To be a world leader in moving people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably to support a globally competitive economy and a high quality of life.

The Ministry is focused on delivering four key priorities:

1. Increase transit ridership.
   
   Work with our partners to improve public transit by expanding services, promoting integration and reducing congestion.

2. Promote a multimodal transportation network to support the efficient movement of people and goods.
   
   Deliver infrastructure improvements through strategic investments and create a policy environment that encourages all modes of transportation to contribute to Ontario’s economic growth in an environmentally responsible way.

3. Promote road safety in order to remain among the safest jurisdictions in North America.
   
   Improve safety and security for all road users through education, legislation and regulation.

4. Improve Ontario’s highway, bridge and border infrastructure.
   
   Improve transportation infrastructure through strategic investments in highways, bridges, and borders as well as local transportation infrastructure throughout the province.

The Ministry views the environment as an integral component of transportation planning and policy, and management of the provincial highway system. The Ministry believes that the strategic management and planning activities already underway in the organization are consistent with the Act, allowing it to be broadly supported and implemented within the Ministry, when the ministry contemplates environmentally significant decisions.

A: The Natural Environment

The Ministry believes that the protection of air, water, and land resources is necessary to sustain current and future generations, and the long term survival of plants, animals and aquatic life. To put this value into action, the Ministry will advance key priorities such as:
• Improving public transit in order to make it a viable alternative to the single-occupant passenger car thereby:
  o Helping to manage congestion and reduce gridlock;
  o Reducing transportation-related air emissions.

• Modernizing our environmental approach to all construction/maintenance activities so as to:
  o Reduce transportation-related discharges of contaminants to water
  o Improve salt management practices;
  o Promote the efficient and prudent use of water and energy in our activities;
  o Conserve resources by using recycled and non-traditional construction materials.

• When planning or facilitating the development of transportation, the Ministry will strive to protect natural habitats whenever possible and practical.

_B: Environmental Concerns in Decision-Making_

The Ministry believes that the environment is an integral part of its activities, including policy and project development, and the operation of transportation facilities.

• The environment will be an integral component of the provincial transportation planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance process.

• Transportation planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance will be carried out in concert with other government needs, priorities and aspirations.

• The purposes of the EBR will be integrated into strategic planning, day-to-day activities and long-term decision-making, in order to foster a commitment to environmental protection.

_C: Integrated Transportation Planning_

The Ministry believes that a healthy environment depends on sound planning.

• The Ministry will promote the integration of transportation, land use and environmental planning.

• The Ministry will promote an integrated transportation system and the use of public transit and other alternative forms, including non-motorized transportation options.

• The Ministry will explore alternatives, including transportation modes, options and partnerships in its decision making processes.

• The Ministry will consider energy efficiency when planning transportation systems.
**D: Research and Development**

The Ministry believes that research and development is important to the protection, enhancement and care of the environment. To put this value into action, the following measures will be taken:

- The Ministry will continue to research and develop environmentally-compatible transportation technologies and methods.
- The Ministry will continue to develop environmentally-sensitive procurement, design, construction, and maintenance techniques.

**E: Education and Promotion**

The Ministry believes that the environment is an integral part of its activities, including the operation of transportation facilities. Raising the awareness of its partners and the general public regarding environmental issues is an important component of environmental protection. The Ministry will:

- Strive to create an environmentally skilled and informed workforce.
- Seek to influence its partners (federal, provincial, municipal, business, etc.) to be aware of the environment in their respective decision-making processes.
- Continue to make the public aware of the various transportation options available to them to promote sustainability of the environment.

**3. APPLICATION OF THE SEV**

The Ministry is committed to applying the *Environmental Bill of Rights’* values when it makes decisions that might significantly affect the environment.

**4. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The Ministry will encourage energy and resource conservation in those sectors where it provides policy direction or programs.

The Ministry committed to delivering infrastructure improvements through strategic investments and creating a policy environment that encourages all modes of transportation to contribute to Ontario's economic growth in an environmentally responsible way.
The Ministry will apply and integrate the purposes of the EBR along with social, scientific, economic and other considerations when conducting its business activities. These considerations will be integrated with the ministry’s environmental values and measures as a foundation for transportation decision-making.

5. MONITORING USE OF THE SEV

The Ministry is committed to documenting SEV consideration and will monitor and assess the application of SEV commitments to the ministry mandate.

6. CONSULTATION

The Ministry believes that public consultation is critical to sound environmental decision-making. The ministry will provide opportunities for an open and consultative process when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment.

The Ministry will provide opportunities for the public to be made aware of transportation initiatives and will encourage the public to participate in transportation planning and design in Ontario.

The Ministry will strive to create working relationships with professional, community, and advocacy groups to ensure that transportation decisions incorporate a wide level of community involvement and benefit from a range of environmental information and expertise.

The Ministry will seek to achieve a planning process that is open to comment by the public, stakeholders and transportation partners.

7. CONSIDERATION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The Ministry recognizes the value which Aboriginal peoples place on the environment. When making decisions that might significantly affect the environment, the Ministry will provide opportunities for involvement of Aboriginal people whose interests may be affected by such decisions so that Aboriginal interests can be appropriately considered. This commitment is not intended to alter or detract from any constitutional obligation the province may have to consult Aboriginal people.

8. GREENING OF INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

The Ministry believes in the wise use and conservation of natural resources. The ministry will support Government of Ontario initiatives to conserve energy and water, and to wisely use our air and land resources in order to generate environmental, health and economic benefits for present and future generations.