



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Office of the Auditor General Ready for Expanded Environmental Responsibilities

(TORONTO) With the proclamation of Schedule 15, the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario today assumes its new environmental responsibilities under the *Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, 2018* (Act), Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said today.

“After preparing for this expanded mandate, we can now begin to audit and report on ministries’ compliance with the *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR),” Lysyk said. The reporting mandate also covers energy conservation, greenhouse gas emissions reductions and any other environmental subjects that the Auditor General considers appropriate to conduct work on and report on to the Legislative Assembly.

The EBR is a tool that Ontarians can use to draw attention to environmental issues they regard as important and hold the government accountable for decisions that affect the environment—air, land and water.

The government announced plans to fold some of the functions of the Environmental Commissioner’s Office into the Office of the Auditor General in November 2018, and passed enabling legislation the following month.

Most of the former Environmental Commissioner’s Office’s specialized technical staff are now employees of the Auditor General’s Office. This team of professionals will benefit from liaising with their peers in similar roles in the Offices of the Auditors General of Canada and Quebec. The Auditor General will appoint a Commissioner of the Environment who, reporting to the Auditor General, will be responsible for executing our Office’s expanded EBR responsibilities.

The former website of the Environmental Commissioner’s Office and all of its previous reports and publications will be available by a redirect on the auditor.on.ca website.

The Auditor General’s Office has a long history of auditing environmental programs and issues, having completed 35 such value-for-money audits since it began conducting value-for-money audits in 1978. This includes audits of source water protection (2014), management of contaminated sites (2015), climate change (2016), environmental approvals (2016), environmental assessments (2016) and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (2018).

The Office has taken on many diverse responsibilities over its 130-year history. In 2004, for example, our mandate was expanded to include audits in the broader public sector (such as school boards, hospitals, long-term-care homes, colleges and universities). In 2005, the Office became responsible for vetting most government advertising to ensure it is not partisan, and for reviewing the government’s Pre-election Report for the reasonableness of its fiscal projections.

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