



# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Not Yet an Ontario Cross-Government Priority: Auditor General

(TORONTO) The Ontario government and its agencies will have to do more to tackle greenhouse gas emissions from homes and other buildings across the province if it plans on hitting its climate change target, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk stated in her *2020 Annual Report on Environmental Value-for-Money Audits and the Operation of the Environmental Bill of Rights*.

“Our audit found the province risks missing its 2030 emission-reduction target, in part because climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is not yet a cross-government priority,” said Lysyk. “We found there is not enough of a focus on reducing fossil fuel use or greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario’s buildings sector at the moment.”

The report, which has 19 recommendations, noted buildings are the third-largest source of emissions in Ontario, contributing 24 per cent of the provincial total—and of these emissions about 76 per cent result from the use of natural gas.

The audit also found neither the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, nor the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing assesses or enforces compliance with its building energy efficiency programs, despite risks of non-compliance.

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Visit [www.auditor.on.ca](http://www.auditor.on.ca) to read the report.

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**Background and Other Findings:**

- Climate change has had major impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, infrastructure (such as transportation systems), food and water supply, human health and tourism. In response, jurisdictions around the world have established goals to reduce emissions and help address climate change.
- In November 2018, Ontario established a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.
- Since the 2018 release of Ontario’s Environment Plan and climate change target, none of the three auditees (the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Ontario Energy Board) has made progress to reduce emissions or prioritize climate change in their building programs. This puts achievement of the 2030 target at risk.
- The Ministry of Energy does not have an integrated long-term energy plan that aligns with Ontario’s 2030 target, despite a growing trend in natural gas use, especially in buildings. The Ministry has not directed the Ontario Energy Board to develop an updated natural gas conservation framework to replace the one that expires in December 2020. This means conservation efforts will likely remain at current levels, and opportunities for further emissions reductions may be missed. The Ministry has also made little or no progress on other Environment Plan initiatives to expand renewable natural gas and encourage voluntary home energy use disclosure.
- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing cancelled proposed changes to the Ontario Building Code that could have improved energy efficiency by 20% and required major renovations to meet the same standards as new buildings. The Ministry is now focused on harmonizing with the updated National Construction Codes, which delays energy efficiency improvements and creates uncertainty regarding future requirements for new buildings.