



News Release

For Immediate Release

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New Report Shines Light on State of Ontario's Environment: Auditor General

(Toronto) Today, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk, along with Dr. Tyler Schulz, the Commissioner of the Environment, released a report that gathers information from various Ontario government ministries and other sources to produce an overview of the state of Ontario's air, water, land and waste, climate, and nature and wildlife.

"Government decision-makers, businesses, citizen groups and the public need a clear picture of whether our air, water, soil and wildlife populations are getting better or worse," Lysyk says. "This is the type of reporting the Province could be providing to the public demonstrating how well Ontario is doing in protecting the environment for future generations."

Lysyk said her Office released *The State of the Environment in Ontario* because, while ministries produce various reports on different areas, the Province does not yet consolidate that information to provide an easily accessible, holistic picture of Ontario's environment. The Auditor General detailed the gaps in the Province's environmental reporting in her 2021 audit, *Reporting on Ontario's Environment*, and in her 2020 audit, *Setting Indicators and Targets, and Monitoring Ontario's Environment*.

"The Province takes actions and runs programs that have the potential to significantly impact the environment — either positively or negatively. Regular reporting on the state of the environment can provide information to the public and decision-makers on the impacts of these and future changes," says Dr. Schulz.

The report found that Ontario's air and Great Lakes water quality have improved in many ways over the past several decades. However, there are exceptions for some contaminant trends, as well as some hotspot areas with elevated levels of air pollution. A warming climate from increased global greenhouse gas emissions has raised Ontario's surface air temperature, in turn reducing Great Lakes ice cover and increasing the number of weather-related disasters. Although the trend of converting natural land cover for human use is slower than in the centuries following European settlement, remaining wetlands and forests continue to be lost, invasive species are spreading, and more native species continue to be classified as at risk, according to the report.

Other jurisdictions, including Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Australia, New Zealand and many European Union nations, are required by law to publicly release state-of-the-environment reports every few years.

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Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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