

For Immediate Release
December 12, 2007

ONTARIO COMMITS CLIMATE CHANGE FUNDING FOR ADAPTATION
Province Working To Mitigate Impacts Of Global Warming

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is receiving world-class scientific advice as part of its climate change plan, Environment Minister John Gerretsen announced today.

The advice will come from members of an Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation, co-chaired by Dr. Ian Burton, Emeritus Professor University of Toronto, and Dr. David Pearson, Professor of Earth Sciences, Laurentian University. The panel will consist of eleven leading scientists and environmental experts.

“The McGuinty government is committed to a greener Ontario. We are cutting emissions, but we also have to be prepared for the consequences we can’t avoid,” said Gerretsen.

Anticipated impacts of climate change in Ontario include:

- a drop in the Great Lakes water levels;
- increased risk to the province’s northern forests and species;
- droughts or severe floods;
- more invasive pest species;
- increased incidence of poor air quality days and hot weather-related health problems such as heat stress.

“This is an extremely important Ontario initiative. It is imperative that we begin to adapt to the impacts of climate change as well as controlling greenhouse gas emissions,” said Dr. Burton. “Adaptation has an important role to play in reducing the vulnerability of ecosystems and species, people’s health, their livelihoods and communities, and activities in many sectors of the economy, including resource management and infrastructure design and standards.”

“The temperature in Sudbury has risen by a degree in the last thirty years. It might not seem like much but the difference between now and the last ice age in Ontario is only 5 or 7 degrees. Only a few degrees can result in massive changes. That is why it is so important to think hard about the risks we are facing and how to adjust as a warmer future unfolds,” said Dr. Pearson.

The ministry also committed \$220,000 to the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources. Based in Laurentian University in Sudbury, the centre will deliver resources and outreach activities related to climate change impacts and adaptation in Ontario. The project will build partnerships and deliver information and education through workshops for municipalities and other Ontario stakeholders on the science of climate change, and an Adaptation Kit for Municipalities to mainstream climate change adaptation into the decision-making process.

Panel members are:

Grand Council Chief John Beaucage, Grand Council Anishinabek Nation
Alain Bourque, Ouranos
Dr. Quentin Chiotti, Pollution Probe
Dr. Judith Guernsey, Dalhousie University
David Lapp, Engineers Canada
Eva Ligeti, Executive Director, Clean Air Partnership
Dr. Gord McBean, University of Western Ontario
Jo-Ellen Parry, International Institute for Sustainable Development
Dr. Barry Smit, University of Guelph

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EXPERT PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Dr. Ian Burton and Dr. David Pearson, both accomplished and respected professors of science and leaders in their respective fields, have been appointed as co-chairs of Ontario's new Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation.

Adaptation is a key part of a successful climate change plan. While Ontario is actively cutting its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the GHGs already in the atmosphere will still affect our climate; we need to prepare for how to cope with that change. The Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation will provide the province with adaptation strategies to address the impacts of climate change in our communities and our ecosystems.

Dr. Ian Burton is Emeritus Professor at the University of Toronto and a Scientist Emeritus with the Meteorological Service of Canada's Impacts and Adaptation Research Group. He is a lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 4th Assessment Report, Working Group II, and has recently served as a consultant with the World Bank and the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Dr. Burton has authored and co-authored several books and over 150 professional papers. His main work now deals with the role of science in the policy process. Dr. Burton has also served as senior advisor to the International Development Research Centre and as a consultant to UNESCO, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, US-AID and numerous Canadian government agencies and engineering firms. He has worked for the Ford Foundation in India, Sudan, and Nigeria and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the World Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. David Pearson is Professor of Earth Sciences at Laurentian University and member of the Cooperative Freshwater Ecology Unit at Laurentian University with an interest in Sudbury lakes, and Co-Director of the Laurentian University / Science North Graduate Diploma program in Science Communication. From 1980-84 Dr. Pearson was the Project Director for Science North, the science centre in Sudbury. He has also hosted two TV series: "Understanding the Earth" (TV Ontario) and "Down to Earth" (MidCanada TV); and was the scientist for CBC Northern Ontario's weekly "Radio Lab" program from 1981 to 1995. In 2000 he was awarded the Ward Neale Medal by the Geological Association of Canada for his contribution to public awareness of the geosciences in Canada. In 2003 he was awarded the prestigious McNeil Medal for the Public Awareness of Science by The Royal Society of Canada for extraordinary achievement in communication of science to students and the public.

Grand Council Chief John Beaucage is the leader of the 42-member First Nations of the Anishinabek Nation. Beaucage is also President of the Anishinabek Nation Management Group Inc. and the Anishinabek Nation Seventh Generation Charities. He holds the Ontario Portfolio for Housing and Infrastructure and chairs the Ontario First Nations Steering Committee on Housing.

Alain Bourque is Director of the Impacts and Adaptation Program at Ouranos, an applied research consortium on regional climatology and adaptation to climate change based in Montreal. Previously, he was manager and climatologist at Environment Canada's Meteorological Service where he was involved in the analyses of the Ice Storm of January 1998, the analyses of the July 1996 floodings in the Saguenay region and numerous climate impacts initiative.

Dr. Quentin Chiotti is Director of the Climate Change Programme at Pollution Probe. Dr. Chiotti has worked for the Adaptation and Impacts Research Group of the Meteorological Service of Canada, and was the scientific authority for an Environment Canada lead multi-stakeholder study on atmospheric change in the Toronto-Niagara Region. He has published extensively in the area of climate change impacts and adaptation. He is currently an associate member of the Graduate Faculty at the Centre for Environment, University of Toronto.

Dr. Judith Read Guernsey is Director of the CIHR Atlantic RURAL Centre on Physical and Social Environments and Health and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology at Dalhousie University. She serves as a member of the Environment Canada Atlantic Environmental Sciences Network, as a member of Public Health Agency of Canada National Collaborating Centre on Environmental Health and as a member of the Canadian Population Health Initiative Council. Previously, she served on the US Institute of Medicine Scientific Advisory Panel on Damp Indoor Spaces and Health. Dr. Guernsey has written and co-authored several chapters and over 100 professional papers, technical reports and abstracts. She has been recognized for her work as Past Chair of the Occupational Epidemiology Committee for the American Industrial Hygiene Association and is listed in Who's Who in Industrial Hygiene.

David Lapp, P.Eng. is Manager of Engineers Canada. He also manages the Secretariat for the Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee, which is assessing the vulnerability of Canada's infrastructure to changing climatic conditions.

Eva Ligeti is Executive Director of the Clean Air Partnership and Moderator of the Greater Toronto Clean Air Council. She served as Ontario's first Environmental Commissioner. She is a past principal at Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology and former chair of its School of Legal and Public Administration. An adjunct professor at the University of Toronto, she teaches environmental law in the Graduate Program in Environmental Science.

Dr. Gordon McBean is Professor in the departments of Geography and Political Science, and Research Chair in policy at the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, at The University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. He is also Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences. Dr. McBean has received the Patterson Medal for distinguish contributions to meteorology by a Canadian and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society, and the American Meteorological Society.

Jo-Ellen Parry is Manager of the Climate Change and Energy Program with the International Institute for Sustainable Development. She also coordinates activities of the KyotoSmart Network, an initiative that brings together Canadian industry, labour, non-government organizations and provincial government representatives.

Dr. Barry Smit is a Professor at the University of Guelph and holds the Canada Research Chair in Global Environmental Change. He also serves as Director of the Canadian Climate Impacts and Adaptation Research Network – Agriculture. Dr. Smit has acted as a consultant to Canadian agencies including Canadian International Development Agency and several federal and provincial government departments. He has also advised international organizations including United Nations Environment Program.

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