

Forward. Together.



THE ONTARIO LIBERAL PLAN FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO



O N T A R I O

The Ontario Liberal Plan for Northern Ontario

BY 2003, AFTER EIGHT YEARS UNDER THE PC GOVERNMENT, across the North, schools and hospitals were closing, and highways and the electricity system were neglected and crumbling. The public sector — the largest employer in Northern Ontario — was under siege, with thousands of jobs lost.

Today, Northern Ontario is moving forward. Together we are making real, measurable progress for families in the North. We're building six new hospitals in cities like North Bay, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie. And a new medical school is training doctors in the North, and encouraging them to practice in the North.

Our once-neglected electricity system is being modernized through new hydro projects, the conversion of coal-fired stations to biomass and natural gas generation, and expanded transmission capacity, creating new jobs and powering Northern industry.

The mining sector is exploring new opportunities, like the Ring of Fire, creating new jobs for Northerners.

Together, we've brought the forestry sector back from the brink, with modernized facilities and a new forest tenure system that provides opportunities for new entrants who want to take advantage of the value-added opportunities in the bio-economy. Rentech's new

bio-diesel plant in White River is just one of the projects taking advantage of the new opportunities in the North.

We know how important it is to stay connected with family and friends, support our local businesses and grow the economy in the 21st century. That's why, we're expanding access to high-speed internet in the North. Over the last four years, Ontario Liberals have invested approximately \$45 million to expand broadband and cellular telephone services to 26 remote First Nations communities, as well as cities and towns like Elliot Lake, St. Joseph Island and Manitoulin Island.

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund has partnered with municipalities, First Nations and the private sector to create and retain 16,969 new jobs.

We still have much more to do. But together with Northern Ontarians, we've shown that we're up to the task.

The Hudak PCs and the Horwath NDP have no plan to address the fundamental challenges facing the North. The NDP would introduce a crushing \$9 billion in job-killing taxes that would be particularly harmful to the North, where many communities are seeing a recovery that has just begun. And as for the Hudak PCs, their past record is the best indicator of what to expect if they get elected. When Tim Hudak was Northern Development Minister in the Mike Harris government, he helped the PCs download \$3

billion in costs onto cities and towns, causing property tax hikes and massive cuts to public services.

Ontario Liberals know that Northern communities face unique challenges. That's why we committed to uploading Ontario Works, land ambulances, public housing and other elements of our social safety net that were always a provincial responsibility until the PCs took power and placed the burden on Northern Ontario. When the upload is complete, about \$2.7 billion in costs will be taken off of municipal budgets.

The last PC government cancelled funding that supported the health and vitality of our Northern communities — funding meant for local roads, parks, snow plowing, garbage pickup, and community centres. Ontario Liberals will honour our commitment to municipalities, and undo years of damage caused by the PCs by continuing our upload.

A \$14 billion hole in the PC platform would mean going back to deep cuts that will put our economy, education and health care at risk in the North and across the province.

Ontario Liberals know the key to Northern Ontario's future won't be found by looking backward. It will be in moving forward, together.

Creating Jobs and Developing New Opportunities

THE GLOBAL RECESSION hit Northern Ontario especially hard. And industries in the North felt the effects of the recession earlier than the rest of the province. So together, we worked to protect Northern communities, while taking steps to ensure key sectors like forestry and mining emerged from recovery faster and better than our competitors.

We uploaded road-building programs and introduced loan guarantee and grant programs to ease financial pressures on forestry companies. Programs like the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program, which reduces industrial electricity rates by 25%, have helped keep people employed in mines and forestry mills.

A key component of our 2011 Budget is the creation of 10,000 new and existing jobs for Ontario families. The Northern economy was a prime beneficiary of this target.

Despite the recession, our innovative Wood Supply Competition has put Ontario's wood and Northerners back to work, creating over 700 new jobs and protecting more than 2,500 jobs — a huge step in helping to build a strong forest industry and a stronger Northern Ontario.

Another important driver of job creation in the North has been the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. Over the last eight years, we've increased funding to this program from \$60 million to \$100 million. Under the last PC government, with Tim Hudak as Minister of Northern Development, the Fund was treated as a slush fund that paid for golf tournaments for PC insiders and other pet projects. It had no private-sector programs to encourage job creation.

We changed that, resulting in thousands of jobs being created and over \$2 billion in economic activity for Northern communities.

The Conference Board of Canada now says “Ontario is entering a period of strong economic growth in its goods-producing industries, many of which are centred in Northern Ontario.” At least six mines are re-opening, and four new mines are expected to open by the end of 2012.

One of the most promising opportunities Ontario has seen in generations is the Ring of Fire. This massive mineral deposit is one of the most significant and exciting natural resources Ontario has, already attracting more than 50 companies who want to be part of the development.

Estimates suggest the potential for decades of chromite production, as well as significant production of nickel, copper and platinum. This is a major economic development opportunity for Northern Ontario that will lead to thousands of jobs for Northerners in the coming years.

We need to work together to seize its benefits just as we always have when supporting Ontario's mining sector. With our leadership, the entire province will be able to benefit economically from the Ring of Fire. That is why we've made sure that the Ring of Fire is an important piece of our economic plan for Ontario.

We've also developed, in collaboration with thousands of Northerners, the *Northern Ontario Growth Plan*, a long-term strategy that will promote job creation and sustainable growth. The Growth Plan will guide infrastructure and transportation planning and investment, while bringing new opportunities and jobs to the North.

Harnessing Our Natural Resources for the Future

AS ONTARIO EMERGES AS AN INTERNATIONAL LEADER in clean-energy ideas, technologies and jobs, we will need to make the necessary investments in our energy system to make it more reliable and shift from coal-fired generation to cleaner, renewable sources of power like solar, wind and biogas.

We'll also make the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program permanent.

“Ontario is entering a period of strong economic growth in its goods-producing industries, many of which are centred in Northern Ontario.”

CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA

MINING FOR SUCCESS

Ontario leads all other provinces in Canada for production of minerals.

At least

6

mines ready to re-open by 2012

4

new mines slated to open by 2012

Almost

100,000

Ontarians employed

Ontario Liberals are committed to refining in Northern Ontario, drawing on mineral resources from across the North—and around the world — including US, Peru, Chile and Australia. This has helped create good jobs in the North for Northern families.

The NDP would kill these jobs by banning exports of raw ore, a move that would result in other places responding with similar bans on sending raw ore to our refineries.

We have a different approach.

Working with our partners in the private sector, we'll strike a blue ribbon panel to look at the long-term sustainability of our mining centres to make sure we make the most of this opportunity.

And we'll open at least eight new mines in the next 10 years.

New Incentives for Job Creators

WE RECOGNIZE THE VALUE and unique nature of economies in the North. Through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund we've helped create and retain 16,969 jobs and supported more than 900 new business start-ups across the North.

We'll increase funding to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund to \$110 million, and increase the number of jobs created to 4,000 per year.

Our plan to create jobs and growth is about creating the best, most highly educated workforce so that companies will want to come to Ontario.

We'll create a new Bio-Economy Fund to promote innovation and open up new markets for forestry in biofuels and other value-added sectors. This support will create new clean-manufacturing jobs in the province, building on the 50,000 jobs already being created under the Green Energy Act.

To help our small businesses continue to invest and create jobs, we've reduced the tax rate from 5.5% to 4.5%. And we'll further reduce that to 4%.

Keeping the North Moving

WHILE PRICES FOR MINERALS AND FORESTRY PRODUCTS go up and down, it is infrastructure that keeps our communities moving forward.

This is why the Ontario Liberal Plan focuses on priorities like developing the Ring of Fire, and on broader transportation challenges in the North.

We're proud of the infrastructure investments we've made in Northern communities. For example, the last PC government spent only \$270 million annually on Northern road construction —

Ontario Liberals have invested an average of more than \$700 million annually.

But to ensure strong vibrant Northern communities we need to make continuous investments.

New Infrastructure for New Jobs

WE KNOW YOU CAN'T HAVE A 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY without 21st century infrastructure.

Following years of neglect by the PCs and NDP, Ontario Liberals have worked hard to rebuild Ontario's aging infrastructure.

Now that we're back on track, we need to keep moving forward, together.

Ontario Liberals want to ensure we keep the flow of products and goods moving in the North.

We'll complete a multi-modal transportation plan to improve the road, rail, air and marine links that move products and people throughout the North.

We'll work with companies, communities and First Nations to finalize the infrastructure needs for roads, rail lines and hydro corridors to open up the Ring of Fire for development.

We'll also work to ensure the federal government is at the table for Northern communities and First Nations in planning for smart development of the Ring of Fire.

We'll continue to work with First Nations, companies, and communities, coordinating infrastructure and planning to ensure world-leading environmental standards and a streamlined approach to approvals.

Strengthening Communities by Expanding Health Care and Education

BUILDING ON THE STRONG FOUNDATION of the forestry and mining sectors, Northern Ontario has grown to be a hub for public services — like universities and colleges, hospitals and other public-sector services.

Ontario Liberals stand for a strong publicly funded education system — something every Ontario family values. Northern Ontario communities know how important a good education is for their children, and for their future.

Public education and health care came under attack by the last PC government. Families in Northern Ontario were not immune to the chaos and cuts, schools and hospitals closed, and teachers and nurses fired.

That's no way to treat hard-working Northern Ontario families. We deserve better than a high dropout rate, low test scores, closed schools, and private-school tax giveaways.

Ontario Liberals believe a strong Ontario needs strong Northern Ontario schools, and working together we will deliver the best public education system possible to Northern families.

We'll ensure that any family who wants their child to attend full-day kindergarten in the North will be able to do so by 2014. For these children, the opportunity to learn will be matched by the freedom their parents will have to get a full-time job or further their careers through education. And families will save thousands of dollars in child care costs.

Since we were first elected, funding per student in Northern Ontario has risen almost 70%. It's helped us reduce class sizes, hire thousands of new teachers, increase the graduation rate from 68% to 81% — a rise of 13 percentage points — and increase test scores by 15 percentage points.

Ontario's surgical wait-times used to be the longest in Canada. The last PC government closed 28 hospitals and fired 6,200 nurses. Many Ontarians didn't even have a family doctor.

The Ontario Liberal government is opening 18 hospitals — 6 in the North — and hiring more than 11,500 nurses. There are now 2,900 more doctors practicing medicine and 1.3 million more people now

have a family doctor. Now, our surgical wait times are the shortest in Canada. That's real, measurable progress.

Together, we've made smart investments in health care that mean better care for Northern families. But there's more to do.

Study and Stay in the North

ONTARIO'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES have come a long way in a short time.

When we took office in 2003, successive NDP and PC governments had abandoned colleges and universities — leaving them with too many students jammed into old, outdated buildings, while allowing tuition to skyrocket.

So we took action.

First, we froze tuition for two years. Then, we took permanent steps to prevent tuition from spiraling out of control.

Next, we made sure students had access to the loans and grants they needed. We doubled student assistance and added a \$150 grant for technology and textbooks.

We also invested in our postsecondary institutions.

We invested \$4 billion in building new classrooms, libraries, labs and other buildings on campuses across Ontario including a new Bioscience Technology & Convergence Centre at Algoma University, a Regional Education Alliance for Community Health at Confederation College, and an E-Learning Resource Centre at Nipissing University/Canadore College.

We doubled apprenticeships to 120,000.

Today, students entering an Ontario postsecondary program know they're going to get a great education, and that we're willing to make the investments that will help them succeed.

But there's still more to do.

A postsecondary education is as necessary today as a high school diploma was a few generations ago. Experts say 70% of the jobs created in the future will need workers with a postsecondary education.

To make sure there's a space for every student who is willing and qualified, we'll create 60,000 more spaces in addition to the 200,000 new spaces we already created, to help more students get a great education close to home.

We want more and more of our young people to go on to pursue a postsecondary education. So we introduced new Distance and Commuting Grants of up to \$500 per term to help college and university students from remote areas with transportation costs.

And now we're introducing a new, 30% postsecondary undergraduate tuition grant. That means — every year — the families of five out of six full-time undergraduate students will save \$1600 per student in university and \$730 per student in college.

We'll make major new investments in postsecondary education in the North, including a Northern law school at Lakehead University and an architecture school at Laurentian University.

We need more than just a smart workforce, we need a healthy workforce. Healthy workers are productive workers.

And a strong public health care system gives Ontarians a real competitive advantage.

Health Care Anytime, Anywhere

WHEN YOU — OR ANY OF YOUR LOVED ONES — ARE SICK, almost nothing else matters. For the past eight years, Ontario Liberals have worked hard to ensure you and your family get the health care you need.

Over the next decade, our population of seniors will grow by 43%. The number of people living with chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease will increase dramatically — as will the costs associated with treatment.

Today, too many people are in our hospitals or long-term care homes because they don't have the support they need to stay well at

home. Families are worried they don't have enough time or money to keep their elderly loved ones safe and healthy.

We'll ensure that frail seniors and others with complex chronic conditions get access to world-leading tele-medicine services including tele-homecare. This will improve quality of life and health status and reduce avoidable hospitalizations throughout the North.

In addition, we'll provide more family health care for our underserved areas. There are now 42 Family Health Teams and eight Nurse Practitioner Led Clinics in the North and these new family practices are continuing to expand access for patients in the North.

Greater Access to Health Care

WE KNOW THAT SOMETIMES NORTHERNERS must travel outside of their communities for care.

We'll streamline the administration of the Northern Health Travel Grant to improve response times and allow Ontarians to apply online, and institute a service guarantee of a three-week maximum processing time.

We'll also change the Northern Health Travel Grant eligibility criteria to expand the flexibility of the program to cover those who currently fall between the cracks — especially those who have to travel for repeated medical procedures and those who have to

remain in southern Ontario for treatment for extended periods of time.

We'll also reform specialist referral policies to ensure that Northern Ontarians have equitable access to leading specialists in southern Ontario.

Over the last eight years, working hard together, we've turned the page on the cuts and chaos of the last PC government. Northern Ontario economies are emerging stronger and we're attracting new jobs and investments. This is progress that Northerners deserve and want. Ontario Liberals want to keep building and growing the North, together. That's our way. That's the Ontario way.

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