

# GREEN ENERGY ACTION KIT

For advocates of Ontario's sustainable energy future



## The Founders of the Green Energy Act Alliance:

🌀 Ontario Sustainable Energy Association 🌀 Community Power Fund 🌀 David Suzuki Foundation  
🌀 Environmental Defence Canada 🌀 First Nations Energy Alliance 🌀 Fraser & Company 🌀 Ivey Foundation  
🌀 Ontario Federation of Agriculture 🌀 Pembina Institute 🌀 WWF-Canada



## A TIME TO ACT

Scientists believe global warming to be the greatest threat facing the planet today. Already people around the world are suffering prolonged droughts, violent storms, and record-breaking floods. In Canada's north, the ice is melting at an unprecedented rate. We need to reduce the greenhouse gases emitted from burning fossil fuels right now. And we can because we have the solutions. In fact, we are the solution.

The answer is for every one of us to become both a conservator of energy and a generator. Solar panels on our rooftops, bio-digesters on the farm, windmills on the hilltops: sustainable energy and conservation are the solutions that will make us all healthier and wealthier while clearing the air, creating thousands of jobs and boosting our economy.

However, if we are to generate enough renewable energy and fast enough, we need both the political will and the legislation to back that will. A Green Energy Act would establish sustainable energy and conservation as top priorities. It would offer fair, fixed prices for green energy, spurring a real investment in renewables and putting small producers – farmers, first nations, co-ops and municipalities – on par with the big players. Most importantly, a Green Energy Act would guarantee that the sustainable energy is purchased ahead of coal and nuclear power, while ensuring continuous improvements in conservation.

Similar legislation in Germany made it a global powerhouse. In 2006, 12 per cent of Germany's electricity came from renewable energy resulting in a reduction of over 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide that would have been spewed into the atmosphere. Nearly a quarter of a million new, green-collar jobs in manufacturing and services have been created, all for just a few extra dollars a month.

Proponents of renewable energy are on the cutting edge, but we are not alone. A poll for the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association shows that Ontario residents overwhelmingly support a Green Energy Act. Most people are convinced once they hear of the benefits. Our job is to inform people and to ask them to let their local leaders and provincial politicians know they support a Green Energy Act for Ontario.

This advocacy kit will help you spread the word to your friends and neighbours. It includes suggestions for getting the message out and for applying the political pressure needed to nudge our political representatives in the right direction. Everyone in Ontario uses electricity. A Green Energy Act has the potential to make us all producers too. Most importantly, it will pave the way for a clean, green future for our children.

## ADVOCATING A GREEN ENERGY ACT

An alliance of environmental, labour, agricultural, First Nations, and industrial groups is campaigning for a Green Energy Act for Ontario to solve both the environmental and economic crises. The recommendations of the Green Energy Act Alliance are based on landmark legislation in Germany that made it the world's leader in renewable energy. In less than a decade, Germany has developed the capacity to generate 33,000 MW of green electricity, more than Ontario's peak demand. As well, a quarter of a million green collar jobs have been created because of the legislation and Germany has avoided emitting thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere enabling it to meet its tough climate change targets.

The Green Energy Act recommended for Ontario has four main components:

### Conservation is key

All of us can contribute to the greening of Ontario. Every watt conserved is a watt that does not have to be produced. A Green Energy Act must mandate the continuous improvement in the conservation of electricity and regulate these improvements.

### The right to connect to the grid

Farmers, First Nations and concerned citizens across Ontario want to contribute clean energy to the province's electricity supply but are being prevented from selling their electricity to the grid because the limited capacity to transmit power is being reserved for large energy generators such as nuclear. To attract investments, producers of renewable energy must be guaranteed the right to connect to the grid, which all Ontario residents have paid for.

### Fair, long-term fixed prices

Feed-in tariffs may not sound sexy but these fixed prices for renewable energy have been described as the single most effective climate policy measure yet devised. Fair prices that assure a modest profit for producers and which are guaranteed for 20 years encourage everyone to become a generator of electricity.

### Purchase of renewables a priority

Green energy should be purchased as a priority before conventional power from dirty sources such as coal and nuclear, which pollute our environment and leave a legacy of radioactive waste.

*“The province should be surfing on a green wave of renewable energy, but we risk being left behind by other jurisdictions that aren't afraid to embrace innovation.”*

**Dr. David Suzuki**

*“Cleaner air need not come at the expense of economic activity as some would suspect – rather that the two are achieved hand in hand.”*

**Honourable Minister  
George Smitherman**

*“A renewable energy economy isn't some pie-in-the-sky, far-off future. It's happening all across America right now. It's providing alternatives to foreign oil now. It can create millions of additional jobs and entire new industries if we act right now.”*

**U.S. President Barack Obama**

**TIP:** Subscribe to updates from organizations like Environmental Defence and independent electricity system operators.

**TIP:** Go team Go ! No matter how you chose to get involved, there's always great ways to make it fun times with a friend or ten.

## JOIN THE MOVEMENT

You must be part of the solution. Government policymakers, your local community, and the media need to know that while we are facing some serious challenges, we have workable answers. You can help by getting the word out, engaging your community, and showing your provincial representative that you understand the urgent need to address climate change and support a Green Energy Act.

### Stay plugged in

The most important first step is to stay informed. Visit the Green Energy Act website ([www.greenenergyact.ca](http://www.greenenergyact.ca)) or attend an information session in your area. Find out more about renewable energy – give it a Google. Try to understand the arguments both for and against. When you have the facts, you're ready to spread the good news to the community.

### Make your mark

Sign the petition calling for a Green Energy Act and get your friends and neighbours to as well. Let Queen's Park know where you stand.

### Talk to folks

Bring renewable energy up in discussion, whether in personal conversations with your friends, or at community meetings.

Raising awareness about renewable energy should be easy. You're already connected with friends, family, and colleagues, in clubs, at church, and on your sports team. There's always an opportunity to talk about a hot topic over coffee or at public meetings.

Reach out to potential allies, people who share your concerns about the environment and smog. There are lots of us out there and you know them.

This campaign for a Green Energy Act is exciting, and community advocacy can be fun, fostering lasting relationships. The more you collaborate with others, the more flexibility there is for each individual in these busy times.

Forming a group of your own can be very effective. It can help keep everyone up to speed and give your cause credibility.



## Power to the people

The possibilities for events are boundless! Events are a great way to spread the word, and a fantastic opportunity to showcase renewable energy. Make a presentation about the Green Energy Act to clubs or hold a public meeting. Suggest a bestselling book on sustainable energy to your book club, or organize field trips to see sustainable energy first hand. OSEA is taking its own field trip to promote the Green Energy Act, so look for us in your community.

Your member of the provincial parliament, and other local leaders will hold regular events in your community to hear from their constituents, so don't let them down! Make sure at least you or one of your allies can attend to talk about renewables and the Green Energy Act.

## Engage the government

It is vital that decision makers are aware of the wide-spread support for a Green Energy Act. Remember, your MPP has been elected to represent you. He or she is obliged to be aware of the concerns in your area and to address them. Send a letter to your MPP, and copies to the Premier's office and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. To find contact information for your MPP, see [www.ontla.on.ca](http://www.ontla.on.ca).

Better yet, meet your representative. Let them know you support rooftop solar, that you like the look of wind turbines, that you believe in green jobs, and that you are concerned about global warming and your children's future.

Be specific about what you want, and make sure your points are relevant to issues in your MPP's jurisdiction. You will be forming a relationship with your representative, so do your homework – know something of their position on renewables. Bring key information to leave with them, and note any commitments made so you can hold them to their word.

Even if you can't meet with your MPP, talk with one of their staff. It is also helpful to bring along an ally, an expert from the area so you can back each other up. If you decide to bring a group, keep it small, and always inform the person scheduling the meeting who will be coming.

If you are looking for an expert in your area, contact OSEA and be sure to send us copies of your correspondence to your reps. [geaoutreach@ontario-sea.org](mailto:geaoutreach@ontario-sea.org).

Remember to talk to your local leaders at city hall and form allies at that level too. To find out what's going on in your municipality [www.amo.on.ca](http://www.amo.on.ca).

### Market your event

- Target your audience.
- Send media advisories.
- Distributing pamphlets personally is more effective than mailboxes.
- Have your friends send emails to their contacts.
- Plug your event during other gatherings.
- Always provide a forum for asking questions.

**TIP:** Remember to invite your elected officials to your events.

### Write to your MPP

- Focus your message. Avoid long lists of demands.
- Provide local examples.
- Know your facts – do not risk losing credibility.
- Acknowledge counter points of view – present a fair position.
- Call to follow up.
- Avoid being overly negative.

cc: [dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)

cc: [gsmitherman.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:gsmitherman.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)

bcc: [geaoutreach@ontario-sea.org](mailto:geaoutreach@ontario-sea.org)

**TIP: Perfect is Possible**  
– Have friends proofread your piece before submitting it.

**Recruit your MPP**

- Understand their responsibilities.
- Make face time – as simple as a greeting them at a public engagement
- Be receptive to their arguments just as they should be to yours

**Contact your newspaper**

- **Editors** – Contact the assignment editor with your story or event
- **Timelines** – Be aware of deadlines.
- **Website** – Check “contact us” or the editorial page to submit your piece
- **Tools** – Press releases, media advisories, letters to the editor, opinion pieces.

**Work with broadcasters**

- **TV** – Provide an interesting backdrop for those being interviewed.
- **Radio** – Be well acquainted with the show before you call in.
- **Interviews** – Stay on message while still answering the questions. Don’t talk too much as most quotes are very short.

## Take the message to the media

Media coverage can apply pressure to policymakers, increase awareness of your group or community, educate people about sustainability and drive home the fact that local communities are engaged and informed about renewable energy.

Let the media know about your events, and inform them about the Green Energy Act. Follow the news, and respond to relevant stories, both good and bad. Write letters to the editors, submit opinion pieces and call into radio programs.

Form relationships with local reporters. You can help reporters with their stories, making sure they hear about what’s happening with renewables and conservation. Stories can motivate people to back vital policies, to start a renewable energy project, or to become advocates of the Green Energy Act themselves.

Most local newspapers include a calendar of upcoming activities in which you can advertise your event for free. Also, newspapers will often publish a small ad for charitable groups to promote good causes, also for free if there is space. You should design a small ad and submit it to the paper to use whenever there is small space to fill. The Ontario Community Newspapers Association can help you connect with local media, see <http://www.ocna.org>.

## WE’RE HERE TO HELP

OSEA is committed to this campaign for a Green Energy Act, and we’re here to back you up. Feel free to contact us anytime. Got an opportunity for a Green Energy Act workshop in your area? Want information and materials for an event? Would you like some feedback on a written piece? Let us know. If you want your opinion pieces or press releases for the media reviewed by an expert, you can send them our way. Let us know what you’re doing in your community to promote renewables and support the Green Energy Act. Remember, you are part of a massive movement that is sweeping not only Ontario but the world ushering in an energy revolution.

For more tools, tips and resources, see the full kit at [www.ontario-sea.org](http://www.ontario-sea.org) or [www.greenenergyact.ca](http://www.greenenergyact.ca).

### Templates and Samples:

- Letter to the editor
- Letter to your MPP
- Media advisory
- Press release

### Background resources:

- Legislative process
- Join the GEAA
- Executive summary
- Draft proposal
- Flyer
- Presentation materials
- Best practices documents
- MPP contacts
- GEAA Newsletter



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### **For advocates of Ontario's sustainable energy future**

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#### **Final Notes / Disclaimer**

This guidebook is for information purposes only. A variety of information sources were consulted in the writing of this guidebook however permits and approvals processes are under constant review and revision in this sector.

OSEA makes no guarantee as to the accuracy contained in this guidebook.

The authors can not be held liable for any errors found in this guidebook.

Wind and biogas projects are complex undertakings and project proponents are required to consult all relevant agencies and to ensure that the information they have about regulations, policies and procedures is accurate and up-to-date.

***The Green Energy ACTION Kit*** was developed by OSEA,  
a proud member of the Green Energy Act Alliance  
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The Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA) represents farmers, First Nations, co-ops and institutions developing renewable energy projects. Our vision is an economy in Ontario, based on 100 per cent sustainable energy. To realize this, we support community power projects, advocate for policies required to get sustainable energy projects up and running, and provide capacity building resources and services.

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