



Our campaign logo by Barbara Klunder

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A TOXIC-FREE ONTARIO

Environmental, Worker and Health Groups' Expectations for Ontario Toxic Use Reduction Legislation

To sustain Ontario in the 21st century, Toxic Use Reduction Legislation needs to create new tools to reduce and eliminate toxins and require substitution of safer alternatives to harmful substances while greening the economy.

Prior to the last Ontario election a coalition of environmental, health and worker groups approached all Parties with our vision for Toxic Use Reduction Legislation. We are now asking all Members of Provincial Parliament in Ontario to act on their Parties' election promises by supporting the passage of strong legislation in the next session of the legislature. We expect the government will be releasing their plans very soon.

Strong Toxic Use Reduction legislation for Ontario should:

- Set targets for reducing toxic releases to the environment;
- Promote the substitution of safer alternatives to toxic substances;
- Require companies to do pollution prevention planning;
- Require a complete materials accounting of toxic use and releases;
- Require companies report regularly on their progress in reducing toxics;
- Provide for the public's right to know and improved workplace safety;
- Allow the most health protective laws to prevail;
- Establish programs that will provide companies with technical assistance;
- Create incentives for the development of sustainable manufacturing and;
- Fund these initiatives through toxics use fees.

Why does Ontario need toxics use reduction legislation?

Reducing or eliminating toxic chemicals results in less pollution to the environment.

- In North America, Ontario is second only to Texas in the tonnes of toxic chemicals being released into the air, water and going to landfill sites.
- The federal government has identified more than 4,000 common chemicals that threaten the environment and human health. Instead of assessing their risks one at a time, toxic use reduction helps companies to evaluate how they use toxic chemicals and reduce their use and release as much as possible.
- With Massachusetts' Toxics Use Reduction Act, companies reduced their toxic waste by 65%, their use of toxic substances by 41% and their off-site releases to

the environment by 91%.

It reduces the risk to the health of workers and the public.

- More than 40 different toxics have been found in our bodies, including heavy metals, PCBs, pesticides and Teflon-related chemicals. The Premier himself carries around 41 different chemicals.
- Cancer, asthma, infertility, learning problems and birth defects are all being increasingly linked with our exposure to toxic chemicals.

It saves companies money and makes them more competitive .

- Massachusetts' companies saved \$14 million by changing to more efficient processes and safer chemicals.
- European chemicals legislation sets high environmental standards that Ontario companies must meet if they want to be competitive and export to the world's largest market.

It promotes innovation and the development of green technologies.

- California, Michigan, Maine and New York are all investing in pollution prevention and green chemistry initiatives to develop innovative and safer products and processes.

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Endorsed by:

