

BUDGET 2024 SUBMISSION

Date: January 31, 2024 | **Prepared by:** Oliver Sheldrick, Program Manager, Clean Economy

Summary

With its clean electricity grid, skilled workforce, and growing cleantech sector, Ontario is well-positioned to take advantage of the transition toward a clean economy. We recommend Budget 2024 realize this opportunity by showcasing Ontario innovation, delivering on long-term energy planning, and supporting Ontarians looking to save on energy.

Firstly, Ontario should invest in the development of its low-carbon construction materials sector by leveraging existing spending. By [procuring construction products with a lower carbon footprint the government can effectively support a sizeable market](#) for clean building products

Already, the [government has provided funding for clean innovation in the province](#) e.g. greener steel in Hamilton. a Buy Clean initiative and low-carbon materials pilot projects would reap the benefits.

Secondly, Ontario should signal its intention to long-term energy planning for the province, by implementing a number of recommendations from the [final report of the Electrification and Energy Transition Panel](#). Modest resourcing to understand the energy needs of the province, and make long-term plans will reap substantial dividends. Doing so will mean Ontario is a globally competitive jurisdiction that can offer low-cost clean energy, which is fast becoming a critical component of international site selection investment decisions.

Finally, the government has an opportunity to step-in and help everyday Ontarians with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis by funding rebates for energy saving upgrades to homes and small businesses. With the [official pause on the federally funded Home Efficiency Rebate Plus](#), many Ontarians are left worried that they will no longer be able to afford the upgrades they have been planning. A commitment from the Government of Ontario to fund additional rebates will immediately address these concerns, and support the hundreds of small businesses across the province who have flourished in recent years providing these services.

Suggestion 1:

TOPIC: Infrastructure

Invest \$10 million over 2 years to pilot & demonstrate Ontario-made, low-carbon construction materials in existing public infrastructure projects. A low-carbon materials pilot would provide up to 5% top-up funding for 5-20 existing infrastructure projects. A modest top-up fund would leverage planned billions in infrastructure investments to support made-in-Ontario clean materials. This should be part of a broader government effort to develop an Ontario Buy Clean initiative alongside industry.

Suggestion 2:

TOPIC: Energy

\$30 million over five years to deliver key EETP recommendations on long-term integrated energy planning across government. This would include committing resources for the Ministry of Energy to publish integrated long-term energy plans in regular cycles, the creation of an independent external Energy Transition Advisory Council, funding for regular independent whole economy energy pathways studies and providing resources to departments and ministries for their own energy planning.

Suggestion 3:

TOPIC: Energy

\$250 million to the Save on Energy program to provide an additional program of broadly accessible rebates to homeowners and small businesses for the purchase of heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. With the current pause on access to the federal Greener Homes Grant in Ontario, a major support gap has opened up. Upgrading to a heat pump [could save an Ontario household \\$385 a year](#), including equipment costs. The program should offer point-of-sale rebates to maximize effectiveness and reach.

