

Ontario Climate Caucus Meeting Notes from May 28th, 2025

Action Items

- If your council has an upcoming (or had) a discussion on Bill 17 if you can share the staff report and resolutions/motions that were approved by council that would be greatly appreciated.
 - We are also tracking any municipal motions/resolutions related to Bill 5. If you do have any if you can send info and links to Gaby at gkalapos@cleanairpartnership.org
 - OCC In person gathering at AMO Conference in Ottawa on Monday August 18th from 5 PM onwards.
 - Ontario Climate Caucus Survey will be sent out in June – seeking feedback on value of OCC efforts – what has been the value, what would make it more useful to you.
 - OCC Resource Hub: <https://guides.co/g/ontario-climate-caucus-hub/190617>
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Presentation Proceedings

- [PDF on Bill 17 Implications on GDS Presentation](#)
 - [Presentation Recording](#)
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Bill 17 and Green Standards - What does Bill 17 mean to Municipal Green Standards and What Suggested OCC Action Items Should Take Place?

- Green Development Standards (GDS) are mandatory targets brought together in one standard to enable municipalities to encourage environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable design.
- We often focus on the energy/emissions metric to drive the efficiency and decarbonization of new buildings, but there are many other metrics associated with green standards such as how much precipitation is dealt with on site, EV readiness, bird friendly design, native plantings, tree canopy, active transportation etc..
- 14 municipalities with GDS in place and over 10 additional municipalities working on their GDS.

Case #1: A municipality that already has a green standard in place.

- Seems to be that it carries on BUT municipalities with green standards already in place will need to identify the reports they require as part of their GDS compliance to province.
- The report requirement is not only for GDS but municipalities but for all reports that a municipality requires as part of a full development application.

- Still confusion related to what happens if a municipality doesn't believe the submitted report complies with municipal requirement. Do municipalities have oversight related to

Case # 2: Municipalities Developing Green Standards

- It appears municipalities advancing green standards will have to get permission from the Minister of MMAH now.
- This is due to the wording speaking to Minister approval of any OP amendments.
- Green standards authorities are activated via OP inclusion.
- There are a growing number of municipalities this will affect.
- Will the minister approve or reject a municipal green standard? We don't know yet.
- Plan compliance? Someone has to ensure compliance. Or is the province planning on taking on the liability re lack of compliance re: requirements?

Energy/Emissions Metrics Mandatory versus Voluntary

- The mandatory energy/emissions metric is the metric that gets the most push back from development sector.
- From the press releases from RESCON (who is the development association that has been lobbying the province to remove green standard authorities from municipalities) RESCON believes municipalities can't mandate above OBC. However, while it is very likely that the province intends to undermine municipal abilities to mandate above OBC, there is consistent reference to construction standards not being able to be advanced by municipalities. However, no municipalities consider their energy/emissions metrics to be construction standards. They are performance standards, however, there is nothing in the green standards performance standards that conflicts with the ability of the development to achieve OBC requirements.
- OBC is supposed to be the minimum standard, not the maximum standard. The floor, not the ceiling.
- Municipalities have been advancing green standards in response to lack of progress in the OBC on energy efficiency improvements and lack of GHG considerations. The OBC hasn't improved any energy efficiency requirements since 2017 and does not include any consideration of GHG emissions from new developments.

MMAH Overrides

- MMAH can override municipal decisions via MZO's and by requiring MMAH Minister approvals on municipal council decisions.

Municipalities Open to Aligning GDS Metrics—If Provincial Code Steps Up

- Bill 23 originally risks undermining municipal green standards and the province backtracked on the GDS implications of Bill 23.

- The Province reneged on a promise to provide municipalities with a Green Standards By-law authority after Bill 23. [Link to Letter from MMAH Minister.](#)
- [There was also mention of municipal green standards support via the legislative discussion on Bill 23.](#)
- National Model Code alignment, previously supported, was withdrawn due to lobbying pressure from RESCON.
- Municipalities do not insist on retaining mandatory energy and emissions metrics in GDS if the Ontario Building Code (OBC) achieves equivalent outcomes.
- There is support for a provincial step code like BC's model or aligning with National Model Energy Code (when it brings in GHGI metrics)
 - Base level set by the Province
 - Optional higher tiers municipalities can adopt to build market readiness and support innovation
 - Inclusion of GHGI metrics that set a pathway and timeframe towards net zero emissions.

If Municipal Energy/Emissions Metric is Undermined by Province Removing Mandatory Uptake By Municipality and No Progress on Improvements from Province.

- Without a mandatory energy/emissions metric mechanism it is likely that efficiency and emissions reduction opportunities in new developments will not achieve uptake. Sadly, there hasn't been uptake to voluntary energy/emissions metrics in green standards in the past.
- Quebec has banned fossil-fuel-based heating systems in new builds at the provincial level.
- Montreal has a municipal bylaw banning fossil fuel systems in new development.
- Ontario municipalities are exploring the possibility of fossil fuel phase-out strategies if GDS GHGI metric uptake is undermined.
- The lack of uptake on GHG reductions in new developments will only place additional burden on Existing Building Emissions Standards to drive scale up on retrofit efforts.
- Existing Buildings Emission Performance Standards (BEPS) are crucial for achieving municipal, provincial, and national climate goals. Buildings account for a significant share of urban greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—often between 40 – 60% of community GHG emissions—largely due to building and water heating in buildings.
- BEPS provide a framework for systematically reducing emissions from the existing building stock, which is essential because most buildings that will exist in 2050 have already been built. BEPS:
 - Drive retrofits that improve energy efficiency and reduce operating costs.
 - Support decarbonization by phasing out fossil fuel-based systems.
 - Encourage market transformation toward high-performance building technologies and services.
 - Improve public health and comfort, particularly for vulnerable residents, by enhancing indoor air quality and thermal regulation.

- Align with equity goals when paired with financial supports to prevent burdening low-income households or small landlords.
- Create economic opportunities through skilled job creation in energy retrofits and building performance services.
- Offer regulatory certainty to developers, property managers, and utilities, enabling better long-term planning.

Tracking of Municipal Communications on Bill 17

- The province has forced through Bill 17 to final vote prior to the date of the public consultation deadline (June 11th). <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/current>
- CAP is tracking staff reports and municipal decisions and resolutions related to Bill 17. If your council has an upcoming (or had) a discussion on Bill 17 if you can share the staff report and resolutions/motions that were approved by council that would be greatly appreciated.
- This sharing of municipal council discussions is super helpful because we can't search through municipal council/committee agendas with google.
- [City of Waterloo - Resolution](#)
- [City of Mississauga - Staff Report](#)
- [City of Pickering - Staff Report](#)
- The Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) has also provided comments on Bill 17: [CELA Comments on Bill 17](#)
- [The Atmospheric Fund Myth busting GDS](#)
- [The Atmospheric Fund GDS Action Support Page](#)
- If you are also advancing municipal council resolutions related to Bill 5 if you can share that with us as well we will track and share across the network. Email to gkalapos@cleanairpartnership.org

Climate Caucus Update

- Climate caucus had an event at the FCM conference that took place on May 30 from 4pm — 6pm at the National Arts Centre
- The [Elbows Up for Climate](#) Effort was the focus for the event.

OCC In person gathering at AMO Conference in Ottawa on Monday August 18th at 5 PM

- If you are going to the AMO Conference in August save the Monday evening for a gathering with your OCC peers.

- We will have some promo materials and if you can help us promote the Ontario Climate Caucus by handing out post cards to other municipal council members during the AMO conference that would be of great help.