

AG Report Misses Sector Building Benefits of Ontario's Purchase of Clean Power

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As the attention of the world is focused on the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, it has become increasingly clear that clean tech and renewable energy will take on a major role in the world's plans to keep global warming below 2°C. Governments that are able to position their businesses and people to provide the products and services that will achieve this goal will find themselves benefiting from the transition to a low carbon economy.

This month the Ontario Auditor General stated that the provincial government had overspent on the province's electricity system. What the Auditor General and subsequent media coverage fails to address is that the government's investments weren't simply buying electricity. With the Green Energy Act, Ontario became one of the first North American jurisdictions to implement a comprehensive renewables procurement strategy and the first to phase out electricity generated from coal. Within the solar sector alone this has resulted in over 2,400 MW of contracted electricity generation, \$5 billion of private sector investment and the creation of more than 30,000 person years of employment.

In 2013, the rate of job growth in Canada's clean energy sector outpaced that of every other sector in the country. Last year, \$265 billion was invested in clean energy globally. Investment in clean energy in Canada climbed 88 per cent in 2014 to nearly \$11 billion, according to [a report from Clean Energy Canada](#). Thanks to the Green Energy Act, Ontario is attracting most of that investment, with more than half of the nation's clean power generation investment originating in the province. Every 150 MW of installed solar energy capacity represents approximately \$310 million in investment, 1,875 direct full-time equivalent construction jobs and 45 permanent direct jobs in operations. It also provides approximately \$54 million in lease payments to site-hosts and \$30 million in property tax payments to municipalities over a 20 year period.

We now have the technology that can increasingly compete with fossil fuels. Costs for solar have come down 50% in the last five years alone. By joining the Western Climate Initiative and putting a price on carbon, and incenting clean energy, we're developing a green economy in Ontario. Entrepreneurs are making the province cleaner and greener while gearing up to market their expertise and experience in other jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally.



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The continued evolution of the solar market in Ontario is bolstered by the emergence of Alberta's Renewable Portfolio Standard of 30% by 2030 creating an opportunity for approximately 10 GW of new renewables capacity in the coming decade. Add to this, Saskatchewan's competitive procurement of 60 MW of utility-scale solar in 2016 and a new federal government looking to shift subsidies away from the fossil-fuel industry and encourage the advancement of renewable energy. The net-effect of these new dynamics is that Ontario's solar industry will fuel Canada's transition to a green and robust economy.

Ontario has built a mature, mainstream and cost-competitive industry ready to deliver at home and abroad.