



TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO

(formerly Transport 2000 Ontario)

Advocating for Sustainable Public and Freight Transportation

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RESPONSE TO PREMIER WYNNE'S "MOVING ONTARIO FORWARD" TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PLAN

April 15, 2014

On April 14, 2014, the Premier of Ontario announced the Move Ontario Forward plan. It will create two 10-year funds to invest \$15 billion capital for Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) transit expansion, and \$14 billion capital for transportation improvements in the rest of Ontario. The plan will start in the 2014-15 fiscal year and be largely funded by re-purposing existing revenue streams that currently go into general revenue (gas/diesel taxes and HST on gas/diesel tax) as well as funds from High Occupancy Toll lanes. These will be supplemented by debt financing and potentially other new revenue tools to be announced in the upcoming budget. The funds will be transparent and dedicated to transportation.

Transport Action Ontario welcomes the creation of long-term funds dedicated to supporting urgently-needed transportation improvements in Ontario. This will give the certainty essential for long-term planning and execution, and the transparency, that many have long sought.

New revenue tools will be critical to the sustainability of this capital spending commitment. We note that a recent Angus Reid poll commissioned by the Move the GTHA collaborative, including Transport Action Ontario, found that 60% of GTHA residents stated they would support an increase in taxes and fees in order to improve transportation infrastructure.

The Premier's announcement also highlighted several important transportation initiatives that have long been supported by Transport Action, including:

- Investment in all-day, two-way GO rail service on all lines, and electric train service every 15 minutes on all GO lines owned by Metrolinx, bringing fast and reliable transit service to many parts of the 905 and 416 regions. These investments are key steps towards achieving our "GTHA Regional Rapid Rail" vision outlined in our July, 2013 report.
- Initiating work on higher speed, frequent, all-day intercity passenger rail service from Toronto to Pearson, Waterloo Region, and London. This is consistent with advocacy efforts by Transport Action Ontario and numerous local passenger rail groups in southwestern Ontario.

In summary, Transport Action Ontario finds the "Moving Ontario Forward" plan promising, and looks forward to further details in the upcoming provincial budget on new revenue sources to sustain the plan.