

Expanding Ontario's Leadership on Climate Change Mitigation through Supporting Net-Zero Homebuilding

Submitted by the Guelph Chamber of Commerce

Issue:

Ontario homebuilders are unable to leverage their innovative capacity and maximize their business and economic output by accessing the Green Ontario Fund to scale up the building of net-zero homes.

Background:

A net-zero energy home produces as much energy as it uses on an annual basis, depending on occupants' behavior. In terms of technology, materials and efficiency standards, the homes are built at least 15 years ahead of where the building industry is today. They include features such as advanced heating, cooling, ventilation, high-efficiency windows, superior levels of insulation and air tightness and solar panels that feed the electrical grid. Net-zero homes have been around for many years but they have typically been custom-built and at a significantly higher expense than regular homes. Net-zero homes offer the potential to save money on energy costs year-round as well as protect home-owners from future energy price increases. Most importantly, they lower greenhouse gas emissions, conserve resources, reduce pollution, and minimize the household's ecological footprint.

As part of the implementation of the Ontario government's *Climate Change Action Plan* the Green Ontario Fund was created. Funded through proceeds from Ontario's carbon market, the Green Ontario Fund is a not-for-profit provincial agency under the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change tasked with reducing greenhouse gas pollution in buildings and industry to help meet Ontario's emission reduction targets. Through programs and rebates, it is intended that the Green Ontario Fund will help people and businesses take climate action into their own hands. Similarly, the *Climate Change Action Plan* stated clearly that there was an imperative to halt the ongoing rise in building-related emissions by giving Ontarians more choices, incentives and tools to make the right energy choice for their homes and businesses, by making new buildings increasingly energy efficient over time. With over 76,000 new home starts in Ontario, it makes it increasingly timely that builders of net-zero homes receive the support needed to build these homes on a larger scale in a cost-effective manner.

Recommendations:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Recalibrate the regulations associated with the Green Ontario Fund to allow Ontario's home builders the access to funds to support building net-zero homes.
2. Recalibrate the regulations associated with the Green Ontario Fund to provide a New Home Rebate Program, to support consumers in the purchasing of net-zero homes.
3. Provide greater capacity for these builds by reviewing relevant legislation to increase land supply in regions where this is restricted.
4. Amend the *Development Charges Act* to take into consideration the service needs of net-zero homes.