

research snapshot

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Ontario Must Continue to Make Strategic Policy Investments to Support the Growth of Renewable Energy

What is this research about?

Ontario is facing two big challenges. The first challenge is that the province has lost approximately 230,000 manufacturing jobs in the last 5 years. This means that there is a great need to develop new local economic opportunities in the province. The second big challenge is that Ontario needs to find a better way to lower its emissions of greenhouse gases and control water and air pollution. The province must do this to fight global climate change and protect its environment. One solution to all of these challenges is developing, to their full potential, conservation strategies and renewable energy resources such as biomass, solar and wind. Unlike most other forms of power generation, renewable sources are free of emissions and cost-effective. Cutting reliance on fossil fuels helps the province to fight climate change and increases energy security. Also, building a renewable energy industry in Ontario helps to create new jobs. The Ontario Green Energy Act was implemented to address these issues; however, there still is a great need for complimentary policy strategies that will help Ontario become a North American leader in renewable energy.

What did the research do?

Researchers at York University developed a policy strategy to grow the renewable energy industry and expand the use of renewable sources in Ontario. They held interviews with energy experts in Ontario

What you need to know:

Renewable energy helps to fight climate change. It creates sustainable jobs and economic growth. There is an urgent need for Ontario to develop new policies that support renewable energy.

and around the world and researched barriers that are holding back the province from becoming a leader in renewable energy. They also analyzed the policies of leading countries that have successful renewable energy industries. These include Spain, Germany, and Denmark.

What did the research find?

The researchers found that Ontario must do more to fully develop its renewable energy sector. Ambitious legislation such as the Ontario Green Energy Act constitutes a step in the right direction to make Ontario a renewable energy leader. The researchers presented three additional principles that can help the province reach its true potential in renewable energy:

1. Set up a domestic market where sustainable energy development is prioritized over dirty energy sources
2. Develop a strong financial infrastructure so that all Ontarians can actively invest in renewable energy development

3. Expand training and education opportunities to develop skills in the workforce for employment in the renewable energy sector

Ontario is ideally positioned to attract work and investment in renewable energy. Public healthcare and affordable education give Ontario an advantage over US states. Ontario can become the capital of renewable energy development in North America. To achieve these goals the government needs to continue to create a strong supportive policy environment in the province. This framework is essential to obtain community support and to harness market forces to grow the renewable energy sector.

How can you use this research?

Policymakers in Ontario need to:

- Strengthen the Green Energy Act so that renewable energy development becomes a priority in the province and so this focus becomes a consistent beacon to attract investment
- Bring in supportive rules that allow renewable energy systems to become the primary source of electricity in the province
- Provide new funding so that zero-interest loans become available to finance renewable energy systems in homes and businesses across the province
- Start a province-wide training and awareness program that helps develop a strong local workforce and that helps Ontarians understand the multiple benefits of renewable energy

About the Researchers

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Knowledge Mobilization at York

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