

October 20, 2023

The Honourable Vic Fedeli
Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade
18th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON
M7A 1S5

Re: Climate Positive Energy's Focus on Supporting Ontario's Energy Transition

Dear Minister Fedeli,

On behalf of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), I am writing to share our support for [Climate Positive Energy's](#) (CPE) efforts around Ontario's energy transition, grid resilience, climate action, and workforce development.

As you know, the [OCC](#) is the indispensable partner of business and Canada's largest, most influential provincial chamber. We are an independent, non-profit advocacy and member services organization. We represent a diverse network of 60,000 members, including local chambers of commerce and boards of trade in 157 communities across the province. The OCC's mission is to convene, align, and advance the interests of its members through principled policy work, value-added business services, and broad engagement to drive competitiveness and economic growth in Ontario.

Established in 1911, the OCC is focused on advancing a range of policy issues of interest to our members. [Climate action](#), the [energy file](#), and [workforce development](#) are among our core priorities.

As our [2023 Ontario Economic Report](#) revealed, climate action and sustainability are a growing focus for Ontario businesses, with two-thirds of organizations agreeing these are priorities for them. In addition, investing in workforce development (i.e., retraining, micro-credentials, education, etc.) is the second most important policy priority for Ontario businesses.

Accordingly, we have [encouraged](#) policymakers to create the predictability that businesses need to invest and plan by developing long-term strategies. This includes strategies to address climate change and energy planning, thereby ensuring businesses and residents continue to have access to reliable, clean, and affordable energy. We have also encouraged policymakers to:

- [Invest](#) in the key drivers of business competitiveness like workforce development strategies, technology, and infrastructure
- Invest in [inclusive economic growth](#) to create new opportunities for underrepresented groups
- Better [support entrepreneurship](#) and [streamline regulatory frameworks](#)

The OCC believes CPE's activities align with our members' priorities and the advocacy objectives described above. Launched in 2022, CPE is an [Institutional Strategic Initiative](#) at the University of

Toronto. This tri-campus initiative brings together 160+ faculty members and 200+ students and post-doctoral fellows – from engineering to economics to sociology to public policy. As noted in the OCC’s [Climate Catalyst](#) report, CPE is leveraging the scale and excellence of the University’s [research](#) enterprise to address the climate and energy challenges facing policymakers.

To begin, CPE is helping develop the next generation of leaders who will drive the decarbonization of Ontario’s economy. For instance, CPE’s [Student Advisory Committee](#) provides graduate students and post-doctoral fellows with the opportunity to develop leadership, communication, and [green skills](#), as well as the opportunity to develop their knowledge of sustainability, energy, and climate change. Over the last two years, CPE has supported 60+ student projects focused on climate change research from a technological, political, and societal perspective. Thanks to their partnership with Mitacs and various industry stakeholders, CPE aims to offer 120+ internship opportunities through their proposed Grid Modernization, Testing and Simulation Centre. The OCC supports activities that help students launch careers in Ontario’s energy, clean tech, EV, and engineering sectors and, in so doing, address the growing demand among industry for green skills and [energy workers](#).

Second, CPE is committed to supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and a just energy transition. Through their [CANSTOREnergy project](#) and collaboration with Yukon University, CPE will engage Indigenous and other community members on their energy challenges and goals and the transition to renewable energy solutions. The OCC believes collaborative approaches such as this can produce meaningful outcomes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders.

Lastly, CPE is committed to supporting SMEs and the development of new, green technologies through various initiatives. Through the [Climate Finance Accelerator](#) and in partnership with the Rotman School of Management, this experiential learning course provides graduate students with interdisciplinary, hands-on training focused on climate financing for the low carbon transition. Through this program, the University will develop new leaders who will deliver on Ontario’s environmental commitments. CPE’s focus on working with stakeholders across the electricity ecosystem through their proposed Grid Modernization Centre will allow CPE to develop policy and regulatory recommendations that address the obstacles hindering the scale-up and adoption of made-in-Ontario green technologies. The OCC welcomes these types of collaboration to help unlock private sector investment, innovation, and the creation of new jobs.

As some of the biggest challenges of our times, the OCC believes that climate change and the energy transition require an all-hands-on-deck approach. Industry, academia, utilities, regulators, and government must be at the table and work together to develop tangible solutions. To this end, our [Smart Growth Symposium](#) in partnership with CPE on November 21 will provide a valuable forum for exploring comprehensive and collaborative solutions.

In closing, we commend CPE for their recent activities and support their efforts to advance Ontario's energy transition, grid and climate resiliency, and the development of skilled talent for the green economy. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these priority areas further.

Sincerely,



Rocco Rossi
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce

CC: The Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Energy
The Hon. Michael Kerzner, Minister of the Solicitor General
The Hon. Andrea Khanjin, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
MPP Andrew Dowie, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job
Creation and Trade
Karen Moore, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy