

CHANGE

for the better

for Northern Ontario





a message from
Andrea Horwath

Dear friends,

I believe in people. That at the end of the day, we all want the same thing — a chance to build a good, full life for us and our loved ones, no matter where in this great province you live.

Today, after 15 years of Liberal government in Ontario, families are further from that goal instead of closer to it. Northerners have been hit particularly hard by decades of Conservative and Liberal premiers who have taken things from bad to worse.

We can do better.

Let's have a government that listens. That works with Northerners to solve problems instead of copying and pasting one-size-fits-all decisions from Toronto.

Our party has worked with communities across the province to put together a complete, fully-costed platform, *Change for the Better*. In these pages, you'll find some changes for the better for Northern families.

Together, we can invest in hospitals and innovative community-based care to make quality health, drug and dental care a reality for every last Ontarian. Together, we can be responsible stewards of our natural resources and ensure good, sustainable jobs in the resource sector. Together, we can make sure that the roads, bridges and infrastructure that hold our province together are fully funded and reliably and publicly maintained.

And together, we can partner in good faith with First Nations to build a true government-to-government relationship.

Change for the better isn't only possible — it's coming.

Let's get it done.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Horwath".

Andrea Horwath
Leader, Ontario's NDP



Six changes for the better for Northern Ontario



Protect and invest in Northern health care, so people can get the care they need close to home – including \$19 billion in new health care facilities, repairs and upgrades



Make life more affordable by ending price gouging at the pumps, and lowering hydro costs by about 30 per cent – including an end to higher rural and northern delivery costs



Make travel safer by improving winter road maintenance and making it public again – and improve access by bringing back the Northlander passenger service



Keep Northern and rural schools open – giving Northern youth more opportunity, not less



Create good jobs across the resource development sector – the kind of jobs young people can raise a family on – and light the Ring of Fire with a \$1 billion investment



Establish a true government-to-government relationship with First Nations based on the principles of Reconciliation

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Safer Roads

FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES across Northern Ontario rely on clear, safe highways, but year after year privatized winter road maintenance has left roads unsafe.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will bring winter road maintenance and inspections back to the public sector as each contract expires. The provincial auditor has found that private operators cut corners by using too few plows, failing to keep roads ice-free. And the government has put drivers at risk by failing to enforce contracts and collect fines. With long-term contracts, we will publish infractions and fines, and collect on them. Bad contractors will have their contracts terminated.



Additionally, we will invest in infrastructure across Northern Ontario, including widening highways and maintaining bridges.

Health care

IT'S THE NEW normal in Ontario hospitals: waiting for hours in emergency rooms, only to end up on a gurney in a hallway — with no privacy or dignity — because there aren't enough hospital beds. Years of cuts and funding freezes have pushed hospitals across Ontario into a dangerous overcrowding crisis. The last Conservative government shut down 28 hospitals, closed over 7,000 beds and laid off 6,000 nurses. And Kathleen Wynne froze hospital operating budgets for four years in a row, forcing hospitals to make deep cuts to keep up.

Northerners have been hit particularly hard. The Chairs of the four Northeastern Ontario hub hospitals in Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie,

North Bay and Timmins, wrote that choices made by the Liberals “threaten the basic financial survival” of these hospitals.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will restore hospital funding and ensure it keeps pace every year with inflation, population growth, and the unique needs of communities, such as an aging population. Funding will increase immediately by 5.3%. We will make sure that hospitals have the staff they need to provide excellent patient care. That begins with bringing all stakeholders and partners to the table for a comprehensive review of staffing needs. We will stop any further layoffs of nurses and front-line health care workers.

We will take immediate steps to expand hospital capacity — starting with funding for 2,000 hospital beds now.

We will deliver equitable health care to Northern Ontario. We will ensure Sudbury's PET scanner is up and running. An NDP government will improve the Northern Health Travel Grants, ensuring that when services are unavailable close by, Northerners can get the best health care in Ontario, without worrying about the cost or having to fight to be reimbursed.

Northern Hospitals

Liberal and Conservative governments have cut local hospitals and the services they deliver for years. They don't seem to understand that when the blue H sign comes down and the lights go out at a community hospital, part of the community goes with it.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will protect small and northern hospitals by addressing the funding crunch that has threatened them in the past. We will restore hospital funding and ensure annual funding keeps pace with inflation, population growth, and the unique



needs of communities, such as an aging population — including rural and remote locations. And our \$19 billion capital investment will include much needed investments to replace or repair aging northern hospitals.

Home Care

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will immediately increase home care funding by \$300 million. This investment will allow us to:

- ➔ Eliminate wait lists for personal support services
- ➔ Increase service hours, so health-care providers have more time to spend with each person who needs care
- ➔ Remove arbitrary caps on care imposed by the Conservatives and left in place by the Liberals
- ➔ Offer more respite care for family caregivers
- ➔ Ensure more stable employment, better working conditions and higher wages for personal support workers
- ➔ Ensure consistent, reliable equitable care throughout Ontario

Long-Term Care

Seniors living in long-term care deserve to live in dignity. Andrea Horwath and the NDP will restore a legislated minimum standard of care for every long-term care resident in Ontario, and fund long-term care homes so they can meet it. That standard will require every long-term care home to give each resident a minimum of four hours of hands-on care every day on average.

In our first 100 days in government, Andrea Horwath and the NDP will expand the mandate of the public inquiry into long-term

care to find and fix the specific problems that have been stripping seniors of their dignity.

And we will build and fund 15,000 more long-term care beds over the next five years — with an increase to 40,000 new beds by 2028.

Our investment will focus on expanding the not-for-profit and municipal sector, where funding goes to patient care instead of profit. And we will protect long-term care facilities in small, northern communities.

Schools

TOGETHER WITH HOSPITALS, schools are at the heart of communities. While the Liberals have closed rural schools, sending students on longer and longer rides, Doug Ford has said no to a moratorium on rural school closures.

Andrea Horwath will put a moratorium on school closures until the provincial funding formula is fixed.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will fund schools properly. We will work with parents, front-line educators, students, and educational experts to overhaul the education funding formula, starting with a comprehensive public review based on two key principles: equity and quality. A new funding formula will address violence in classrooms, and will mean boards, teachers, and education workers have the resources they need to ensure the well-being and safety of all learners, and all educators. It will allow us to curb class sizes and support our most vulnerable students, an important



step in making classroom environments safer and more conducive to learning.

The first-hand experience of parents, teachers and education workers will play a major role in shaping the new model, and we will take into account factors that affect rural and remote schools, such as school transportation.

We will base special education funding on actual needs, not overall populations, with timely needs assessments.

Making Life More Affordable

IT'S A SIMPLE fact that life in Northern Ontario is more expensive. An NDP government will be there for Northerners to make life more affordable.

The Ontario NDP supports a just transition to a low-carbon economy, where burdens are shared fairly and no one is left behind. We will dedicate at least 25% of cap-and-trade revenues to programs that support disproportionately-burdened communities and families, particularly people living in northern, rural or low-income households, meaning direct support for northern and rural families, in recognition that they have higher costs and more challenges transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

We will dedicate \$50 million in cap-and-trade revenues to seed the creation of a new no-interest/on-bill home-efficiency retrofit program, allowing residents to install energy-conserving technologies and equipment in their home. We will target the program to communities and individuals facing the greatest financial barriers to lowering their energy use, including northern households.

Price of Gas

Most people in Northern Ontario have to drive as a fact of life, which means gas. People across

the North know the price they pay at the pump can spike without warning or cause, and prices can vary widely from community to community for no reason. We will stop gouging at the pumps, so Northerners can be confident they are paying a fair price. It will mean an end to unpredictable spikes, and lower costs in many communities.

Housing

People who have built a life in Northern Ontario should be able to stay in Northern Ontario. Andrea Horwath and the NDP will make it easier for seniors to stay in their homes by allowing seniors who own their home to defer property taxes until their house is sold. No senior should ever need to sell their home to pay their property taxes. The province will finance the deferral, so municipalities don't see their tax bases reduced. Evidence from a similar program in British Columbia shows that seniors will maintain substantial equity in their homes, ensuring that they can pass something along to their kids and grandkids.

Public Services in Northern Ontario

ONTARIANS DESERVE ACCESS to high-quality public services no matter where they live. Andrea Horwath and the NDP understand the difference that quality public services can make.

We will ensure that families in Northern Ontario have access to high quality services, including but not limited to developmental

supports, free licensed not-for-profit child care for families earning \$40,000 or less, and affordable child care for all Ontario families, and supports for children with autism.

But we aren't just going to undo the damage of 20 years of cuts and neglect. We're going to move Ontario forward with bold new universal programs that meet the needs of a

changing, modern province: dental care, prescription drug care and affordable child care.

Pharmacare for Everyone will cover 90% of prescriptions. It will ensure that every Ontarian, no matter their age or income will receive drug coverage.

We will ensure every Ontarian can see a dentist. In addition to ensuring people can see their dentist, people will be able to get care through community health centres, public health units, or Aboriginal health access centres. Many northern and remote communities do not have a dentist, which is why we will invest in 7 new dental busses to serve communities without a dentist.

Rail

FOR NEARLY FOUR decades, people in Northern Ontario relied on the Northlander as their link to southern Ontario. It was an essential mode of transportation, until the Liberal government killed the service in 2012.

New Democrats will implement a Northern Rail Strategy, which will include getting Ontario Northlander's passenger service

running, and supporting the Huron Central and Algoma Central Rail Lines.

An NDP government will work with the federal government and VIA rail to return VIA service to Thunder Bay and the north shore of Lake Superior without cutting service to VIA's current northern route.

Fran Cote Iroquois Falls

As a cancer patient who lives in a small community in Northeastern Ontario, the Northlander train was my link to my specialists in Toronto. The train ride was long but it was comfortable and safe and my doctors were relieved that I wasn't doing the long drive on icy roads.

That was the case until the Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty decided in 2012 that our one and only passenger train in Northeastern Ontario was one train too many and he cancelled it. My doctors could not understand why this safe and convenient method of transportation would be taken away from people who needed this service. I don't understand it either.



Natural Resources

Forestry

For decades Conservative and Liberal governments sat by while paper mills, sawmills, plywood and wood processing mills closed, killing thousands of jobs. An NDP government will stand with forestry and mill workers to defend good, sustainable jobs. We'll develop a Provincial Forest Strategy to protect the long-term sustainability of our forests. And we will defend our resource sector's viability by ensuring it meets the highest environmental and sustainability standards.

We will work to ensure that the forestry sector has access to an annual allowable cut that is sustainable, and allows the industry to grow and thrive.

High hydro prices are an ongoing challenge for Ontario's resource sector. While the privatization scheme adopted by the Liberals and supported by the PCs will increase bills by over 70% over the next 10 years, New Democrats will lower bills starting with getting private profits off of hydro bills, and eliminating unfair rural delivery charges. The resource sector can count on an NDP government to lower bills and keep them low.

Mining

Ontario sits on a wealth of mineral resources, and mining benefits families in every region of Ontario. An NDP government will build on the strength of the sector to ensure Ontario's mining sector can grow responsibly. We will enforce clear, effective, and responsible environmental and safety standards.

We will bring a badly needed jolt of political energy to get things moving on the Ring of Fire. Northern communities have waited far too long. We will invest \$1 billion to get the Ring of Fire moving, now.

We will collaborate with northern communities and First Nations to quickly begin building the infrastructure that will allow development projects to proceed.

Whether it's chromite or other resources, we will make it a priority to process Ontario's natural resources in Ontario. As the Ring of Fire gets going we will fight to bring smelting and ferrochrome processing to Northern Ontario. Unlike the Ford Conservatives, we do not believe it's acceptable to locate these plants on the American side of the border.

Responsible Stewardship

Ontario is blessed with a wealth of natural resources. Whether it's minerals, forests, wildlife or water, our use should be based on clear, evidence-based practices that promote sustainable development and protect our environment and resources for future generations.



Fair Deal for First Nations

IT HAS BEEN nearly three years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission delivered its report, and its 94 calls to action to heal the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. Yet First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Ontario continue to face systemic barriers to basic rights enjoyed by others in Ontario — dirty water, unsafe housing, gendered violence, unfair treatment by the justice system, the child welfare system and more. Reconciliation demands a lot more of the provincial and federal governments than ceremonies, symbolic gestures, sound bites and photo-ops. It demands good faith — and it demands action.

An Ontario NDP government will work with First Nations based on the principles of reconciliation and consent to build a new path forward:

- ➔ We will establish a true government-to-government relationship with Ontario's First Nations
- ➔ We will work with First Nations leaders to sign a cooperative, government-to-government accord
- ➔ Together with affected First Nations, we will guarantee access to clean, safe drinking water and send the bill to Ottawa
- ➔ We will clean up the mercury contamination in the English–Wabigoon River
- ➔ We will implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- ➔ We will replace the Far North Act
- ➔ We will implement resource revenue sharing with First Nations
- ➔ We will invest \$209 million immediately in the First Nations Health Action Plan
- ➔ We will invest \$28 million for urgent repairs and capital upgrades at Friendship Centres, plus an ongoing investment of \$91 million over six years into 28 Friendship Centres
- ➔ We will exempt First Nations communities from electricity delivery charges, and connect remote First Nations to the grid through the Wataynikaneyap Power Grid Connection Project
- ➔ We will work with First Nations and the Federal government to ensure First Nations and Indigenous students have access to the same high quality of education as every other student in Ontario



Working with Northern Cities and Towns

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS ARE often called the level of government closest to the people — and no wonder. They deliver services that everyone counts on, from maintaining streets and sewers, to operating emergency shelters, to plowing local streets.

Northern cities and towns often feel like their priorities aren't listened to by provincial politicians in Toronto. An Ontario NDP government will work collaboratively with cities and towns across Northern Ontario, the Northern Ontario Municipal Association,

and the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities.

People living in Northern Ontario cities and towns will benefit from:

- ➔ New support for cities and towns through the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund
- ➔ New affordable, not-for-profit housing
- ➔ Access to broadband internet and natural gas
- ➔ Sharing the cost of public transit

Steel

ONTARIO'S STEEL INDUSTRY has been essential to the economy and identity of our province for over 100 years. For generations, the industry has supported families by providing good, stable jobs. Ontario steel has quite literally built our province. The combination of skilled workers, innovation and geography grew the industry and is essential to its long-term health. We believe in the future of steel.

Unlike PC and Liberal governments, the NDP will never stand by doing nothing while plants close and steel workers lose their jobs, their pensions and their benefits. Steel workers and the steel industry know that they can count on New Democrats to work with them to strengthen and support the industry, create jobs, and ensure Ontario steel has a bright future.

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund

THE NORTHERN ONTARIO Heritage Fund has a record of sound management and successes. An Ontario NDP government will maintain funding and support for the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. We will ensure that the fund has the tools it needs to get projects up and running quickly and efficiently, and that funds flow annually, consistently and predictably.

Northern Committee

FOR DECADES, LIBERAL and Conservative governments have ignored northern voices. They've failed to understand that one-size-fits-all decisions made in Toronto don't work in northern and remote communities.

An Ontario NDP government will establish a Northern Committee in the legislature composed of all northern MPPs to review any legislation that affects the North. It will ensure that Northern Ontario has a say in decisions that affect the North.

Connecting the North

WE WILL MAKE it a priority to invest in northern and rural infrastructure. In addition to fixing schools and maintaining hospitals, we will increase access to reliable broadband and natural gas across Ontario in order to reduce dependence on high-carbon diesel

and heating oil. We will invest \$100 million in natural gas expansion to rural Ontario, and create a 10-year \$1 billion fund for bringing broadband service to rural and Northern Ontario.



**Andrea will deliver better health care,
and make Ontario a better place to work
and a more affordable place to live.**

Five changes for the better



Provide drug and dental coverage for all Ontarians



Take on student debt by converting loans to grants, and creating thousands of student co-op jobs



End hallway medicine and fix seniors care



Protect middle class families by having the wealthiest people and most profitable corporations pay their fair share



Cut hydro bills 30% by bringing Hydro One back into public hands