

**Notes for remarks by**

**Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario**

**JUNE 26, 2013**

**CANADA 2020**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Good evening. Bonsoir.

We're gathered tonight on the traditional territory of Algonquin and Anishinaabe Peoples.

It's a pleasure to have a chance to meet with Canada 2020. I appreciate your work and your insight, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and questions later this evening.

I know you've been working on your signature project, The Canada We Want. I'm pleased to have this chance to introduce myself and to tell you about the Ontario We Want, and how my vision and that of our government fits in with your own vision.

I have been Premier of Ontario since February of this year, and since then I have been travelling the province as much as possible and meeting all kinds of people. My vision and my plan for Ontario draw, in part, on that recent experience; my conviction has been deepened by what I feel when I'm out there.

I have seen how hard people work; I have seen how talented and creative they are – across the economic spectrum. I watch them take care of their families and build their communities, and I am more sure than ever that this province needs to live up to their expectations.

The people of Ontario want a government that believes in them; that has their backs and is hopeful for their future. They don't want to be cynical, they don't want to keep hearing about things that CAN'T be done. If that is all they hear, then they will grudgingly play that back to those of us in decision-making roles. But they want to be a part of something positive and experience real growth. Because they are capable of great things.

To me, that's what progressive politics is all about. It's about believing in people and each other and supporting each other, to benefit all of us as a whole. It's not about slashing funding or quashing debate. It's about starting serious conversations about who we are and the future we want for our families. That's what I have been doing and what I will continue to do.

My vision is inspired by the people I have met and by places like Ottawa. You just have to look out the windows of this hotel to see that we live in a beautiful place. The Parliament Buildings are a symbol of our thriving democracy. The Ottawa River connects us to our proud history and our natural environment. We can see Quebec and be reminded of our close relationship with our provincial and territorial partners. We are in close proximity to great cultural and academic institutions, beautiful works of art, a thriving market and a diverse and growing population that hails from all corners of this world. Ottawa is Ontario. And Ontario is filled with promise.

But we can do better. Our economy is not as strong as it could be. Our reputation internationally should be soaring – but it's not; and our industries are not growing at the pace I would like. There are still citizens in Ontario who are unable to reach their full potential, who struggle to make ends meet and to feel connected to their communities.

We must challenge ourselves to expand our thinking and our horizons; to grow our economy and our communities in a way that will ensure sustainable, long-term success for future generations. We must strive to help people in every part of Ontario, to improve their quality of life and their standard of living. I want Ontario to define its strengths, address its challenges and show the world what we are really capable of. That is my vision for this province. This is the Ontario We Want. And I know we can do it because I have seen what is happening in Ontario. I see the potential and I feel the desire for real progress.

So how do we do it? What is the foundation of that growth? Well, one of the fundamental components is infrastructure. As far as I'm concerned, this issue is not up for debate. You look around the world and the regions that are setting the economic agenda are those that are investing in infrastructure. They're building communities where people and goods can move with ease, and with reduced environmental impact. They are preparing for the dramatic population growth that will occur in all of our urban centres over the years and decades to come. They understand that a culture of mobility is necessary to draw investment and industry, to build tourism and cultural vibrancy.

So if we want to put Ontario on the map, we need to draw a line in the sand when it comes to infrastructure investment. People need to get on board.

Our government is going to show people that transportation and transit in this province are essential to creating jobs, building our regional economies and giving people communities where they want to live, work and raise their kids. That's the reality. There are some political parties who say we can't afford to do anything about it. But the truth is that we can't afford not to.

In the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, congestion is crippling the region's economic and cultural growth, and the problem is nearing a crisis. Right now, GTHA congestion is costing us about \$6 billion a year. By 2031, it's going to be about \$15 billion. During that time, the area is projected to undergo about a 50 per cent increase in its population.

Something has to be done. Of course, I know in Ottawa you get tired of hearing about Toronto, I get that. But Toronto is the financial centre of this province, and if its economy can't grow, then we all suffer. And if we address this issue, if productivity in that region improves and the GTHA can attract new investment, the best companies and the right employees – then all of Ontario will benefit as well. There will be direct results, including jobs.

Take the Eglinton Crosstown Line in Toronto, as an example. That's a local project, but the subway cars it uses are made by Bombardier in Thunder Bay and tested nearby in Kingston. The concrete walls that go in the tunnels are made in Barrie.

The infrastructure projects we pursue create jobs elsewhere while opening up vital trade corridors across this province. Yes, we need to pay for it, and so our government is going to find new revenue tools for infrastructure improvements in the GTHA. This conversation does not scare me. Because I know people understand the situation, they want to stop sitting in traffic all the time. And they know that empty rhetoric is not going to improve their lives.

The tools that we employ in the GTHA will be fair, practical and directly invested in solving specific transportation issues. And, if you do not live in that region, you will not pay for those solutions. We will not introduce new revenue tools outside of Toronto to pay for infrastructure and transportation inside Toronto. But I will tell you what we will do. We will address that region's needs, while continuing to invest in infrastructure projects in every region of Ontario, including this one. Because this is not about one city or one subway line – this is about our collective future.

We will advocate for a national transit and transportation strategy that will allow Ontario and all our provincial and territorial partners to adequately address these needs. The federal government has to address this deficit if we are going to create the conditions for this country's success. They must do their part. It has been estimated that our recent and planned investments in the province's infrastructure issues will contribute an average of \$11.3 billion to our real GDP each year and support 167,000 jobs annually. The federal government has to acknowledge the necessity of that investment and their role in making it happen.

It is time for our transportation networks to receive the support and attention they deserve from the federal government – not only to unlock gridlock, but to invest in jobs and economic prosperity in our time. If our federal government worries about giving too much attention to our urban populations, let me assure you that a stable source of funding is absolutely necessary for rural communities as well, the places that serve as such a vital part of our Canadian identity. Before our government took office, the decline in infrastructure spending in Ontario was profound. And if you think that had an impact in our cities, you should see what it's done to rural Ontario.

There are communities that have gone so long without infrastructure investment that their bridges now have weight restrictions that prevent local school buses from driving across them. And if those bridges aren't replaced in the next five years, the main street of those towns will be cut off. There are places that can't maintain their population or attract new business, because their water infrastructure has not been replaced in nearly a century. The lack of adequate investment is choking out the future of small communities, just as it is paralyzing our urban and economic hubs. It is time for the federal government to join with me to address this pressing need.

Another fundamental of new growth is going to be tapping into our strengths – like our smart, educated people with new ideas and the experience to make them real. Here in Ottawa, you have new centres of expansion, places where the jobs are being created, where industry is growing and families are putting down roots. That's exciting. You need to accommodate that growth and tap into that potential in the best way possible, and we're going to work with you to make sure that happens.

Ottawa's master plan is designed to alleviate congestion as well as streamline its operating costs. It's about efficiency, yes. But I want to help because we need to support your innovative, knowledge-based economy. There are exciting things happening here, big ideas that are starting to grow, and you want to attract people to build this workforce, to bring their ideas and create new industries.

And I assure you, those people want to bike to work or take rapid transit. They want a thriving scene in the market and they want to be able to drive into the Gatineaus on the weekend to catch a show at the Black Sheep in Wakefield. They want to live in a beautiful city with a vibrant culture and easy access to the natural environment, and they want a government that sees how all those things are connected. This is what progressive politics is, in my opinion. It's seeing the connections between the issues, among the social and the economic and the environmental.

Another fundamental component of the kind of growth I envision is fairness. Our government's economic plan is based on the idea of fairness and prosperity. I don't believe those two ideas are in competition. Helping one another is actually an economic imperative, as well as a moral one. I know that if people are given the support they need, they will help our economy to grow. It is not just compassion, it's a savvy investment.

The young woman who recently won your essay contest wrote about the need for political policy that helps individuals with disabilities enter the workforce. This is the kind of thinking we embrace. In fact, this idea was included in our Throne Speech and our Budget. We want people to have the right education, training and tools to find great jobs, to contribute to their communities and to help Ontario grow. So we are investing in our Youth Jobs Strategy because unemployment among young people in Ontario is too high. They need to find the right careers for today's marketplace and if they're not working, then our economy doesn't work either.

We are easing the stresses facing manufacturing and small business, and promoting local food, not because we are nice but because we are smart. These industries are vital parts of our economy and we cannot despair at their prospects, we must encourage their growth. At the same time, we are investing in research and innovation to foster the industries of tomorrow. We believe in supporting Ontario's entrepreneurial drive, and so we have created a new fund for Ontario start-ups.

My government also believes that climate change is a very real threat that must be addressed, and that science and evidence are cornerstones of our strong society. We

will ensure the survival of the Experimental Lakes Area and dedicate ourselves to public policy that is good for our air and our water as well as our bottom line. We care about the environment, and we care about people, too.

We boast one of the most dynamic, educated and diverse populations in the world, and we plan to build our success around this huge demographic advantage. We're going to use that population to expand our network, by tapping into the international networks of our diverse communities to find new trade avenues around the world, not just in India and China but in South America and the Middle East as well.

Yes, the economy has changed and gone global. But the great thing is: Ontario has changed and gone global as well. We have the perfect population to participate in this new 21<sup>st</sup> century marketplace, and we will give them the support and investment they need.

I know you see the importance of this work. Canada 2020 has publicly raised these exact issues again and again: innovation and productivity, public health, environmental consequence, reducing income disparities that divide our land. I want to assure you that I believe in the future of progressive politics because I have seen the optimism and determination in people's eyes.

The people of Ontario want their government to believe in them, and they want to believe in their government. They want to show the world what they can do. And we will.

So I thank you for your leadership, and for your advocacy. Together, we are going to build the Canada We Want, the Ontario We Want. We can do better.

Thank you.