



# DOWNEY DIGEST

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**DOUG DOWNEY**  
Member of Provincial Parliament  
Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte

## A NOTE FROM DOUG

It's September and that means it's time to go back.

Back to school for many, and for my colleagues and I a return to the Ontario Legislature. This year we return with some changes to our cabinet, including the newly appointed Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Andrea Khanjin.

As always I look forward to returning to the Legislature and continuing to advocate for what matters most to those in Barrie - Springwater - Oro-Medonte. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office and share your thoughts and concerns through this Legislative session.

## GOVERNMENTS INVESTING IN ONTARIO'S MAPLE SYRUP SECTOR

The governments of Canada and Ontario are investing up to **\$1 million** over two years through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) to support productivity and growth in the province's maple syrup sector.

The Maple Production Improvement Initiative will provide eligible maple syrup producers access to cost-shared funding to support a range of activities to enhance their operations. Project costs can be applied retroactively to April 1, 2023, when Sustainable CAP officially launched.



Under the Maple Production Improvement Initiative, applicants can receive up to 50 per cent cost-share funding for eligible costs, to a maximum of **\$20,000** per project.

Eligible businesses can apply for support through this program starting on November 9, 2023. The initiative will support the purchase and installation of upgraded production equipment for eligible syrup producers that increase productivity, efficiency and growth, such as reverse osmosis or remote monitoring systems. It will also provide funding to cover a portion of certain woodlot management activities, including tree marking and the development of a forest plan, to assist the operation of eligible businesses.

This initiative was developed following discussions with sector business. It builds on other actions the government has taken to support the overall agri-food sector's growth, such as Minister-led agri-food investments of up to \$6 million through the Grow Ontario Market Initiative and more than \$68 million through the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Initiative.

To be eligible, applicants must have a minimum of 1,000 taps in operation as of April 1, 2023 and meet other criteria.

Sustainable CAP is a five-year (2023-2028), \$3.5 billion investment by federal-provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation and resiliency of the agriculture, agri-fod and agri-based products sector. This includes **\$1 billion** in federal programs and activities and a **\$2.5 billion** commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs designed and delivered by the provinces and territories.

The Maple Production Improvement Initiative will be delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA). More details about the initiative and its application process will be soon available online via the OSCIA.

## ONTARIO CONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND SPURRING ECONOMIC GROWTH

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The Ontario government has introduced the *Transportation for the Future Act, 2023*, that if passed, would help build more GO Transit stations, spur more housing and mixed-use communities around transit, and help make it more convenient to travel across the Greater Toronto Area.

The proposed legislation is in response to requests from municipalities for a new optional funding tool that would enable municipalities to raise revenues to build much needed transit and housing. The new tool, called the Station Contribution Fee, would allow municipalities to fund the design and construction of GO stations and recover the costs overtime as transit-oriented communities are built around future stations. This would help speed up the construction of new GO stations, while also creating new opportunities for mixed-use communities around those stations.

The legislation would also help the City of Toronto to better integrate itself to transit services with other regional transit networks by allowing the Toronto Transit Commission to enter into cross-boundary service agreements with neighbouring transit agencies.

By taking these steps, our government is strengthening and connecting communities, expanding and integrating Ontario's transit network, supporting economic growth, creating more jobs and housing, and improving the lives of Ontarians for generations to come.



My office is always here to help with any provincial matters and concerns. While we endeavour to respond to every matter in a timely manner, our team is often busy helping constituents. Take a look at the month so far:



**2,085**

email contacts



**138**

phone calls



**12**

walk-in visits



**8**

new cases

You can always contact us at [Doug.Downey@pc.ola.org](mailto:Doug.Downey@pc.ola.org) or 705-726-5538.