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Commissioner

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Climate change is a Jewish issue

Tu B'Shvat, 5768

See to it that you do not destroy my world, for there is no one to repair it after you. Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

Dear Rabbis,

As the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, I am writing to ask that you draw the attention of your community to the climate change report that I have delivered to the Ontario Legislature on their behalf, during your upcoming Tu B'Shvat celebrations. There is no more important environmental issue.

As you may know, I am an independent legislative officer, required by law to report to the Ontario legislature every year on, among other things, Ontario's progress in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. **Our reports are nonpartisan and fact-based**, and we do everything within our power to make them **reliable and useful**.

In accordance with this mandate, I recently delivered my first climate change report as the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. This report should be useful to all of Ontario's communities as we struggle to find a moral and effective response to the urgent crisis of climate change. Climate change may fairly be considered of particular importance to the Jewish community, both because of its impact on the habitability of the Middle East, and because of the frequent scapegoating of Jewish communities at times of stress, conflict and upheaval. It also presents a direct call to action in light of our traditional commitment to tikun olam, and the current discussions of Ontario energy policy.



Is it as bad as we thought?

It's worse

What I find, going around the province, is that most people understand climate change, at best, as I did before I became Commissioner. In the process of preparing this report, I have been gobsmacked and thoroughly frightened. But it is still not too late for us to make an important difference.

A quick overview of the current science is available in a

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powerpoint of one of my recent talks, at <https://goo.gl/JupPWS>.

The full report and its executive summary are available for download at <https://eco.on.ca/reports/2016-facing-climate-change/>. The direct link to the full report is <http://docs.assets.eco.on.ca/reports/climate-change/2016/2016-Annual-GHG-Report-EN.pdf>. We can provide hard copies of the executive summary in a single gatefold page; a small number of hard copies of the entire report are also available on request. We also prepared a primer on cap and trade in Ontario that explains how the program works, available at <https://goo.gl/3d2RjJ>.

My office will be offering a public webinar about the report in February; those interested can sign up for alerts on our website, eco.on.ca.

If you have any questions about our report, please let us know.

Thank you very much for bringing these resources to the attention of your community.

Dianne Saxe