

**Ministry of  
Environment and  
Climate Change Strategy**

**2023/24 – 2025/26  
Service Plan**

**February 2023**



For more information on the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy contact:

PO BOX 9335  
STN PROV GOVT  
VICTORIA, B.C.  
V8W 9M1

1-800-663-7867

Or visit our website at

[www.gov.bc.ca/env](http://www.gov.bc.ca/env)

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## Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. Heyman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable George Heyman  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy  
February 9, 2023

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## Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

The Ministry will continue to support government's priorities and foundational principles identified in the previous [November 2020 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

## Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy](#) is responsible for the protection, management, and conservation of British Columbia's water, land, air, and living resources. It administers the province's parks and protected areas, and recreation sites and trails; monitors and enforces compliance with environmental laws and regulations; manages discharges to the environment from human activities; and protects B.C.'s biodiversity, ecosystems, native species, and natural habitats in parks and protected areas. It acquires, manages, and analyzes environmental and climate data to provide a robust platform for decision-making across the province. It mitigates and manages the risks and consequences from climate change, including developing plans to meet carbon pollution reduction targets; responds to the impacts of climate change; and oversees provincial environmental assessment through the [Environmental Assessment Office](#). The ministry delivers services directly through staff based in regional offices across the province, as well as through partnerships and agreements with First Nations, local governments, the federal government, and stakeholder groups.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy delivers its mandate through several key pieces of legislation including the *Environmental Management Act*, the *Integrated Pest Management Act*, the *Park Act*, the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*, the *Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act*, the *Climate Change Accountability Act* and the *Environmental Assessment Act*. A full list of provincial legislation can be found at [BC Laws](#).

## Performance Planning

### Goal 1: Effective protection and conservation of the environment

The ministry strives to protect the environment by managing risks to B.C.'s water, land, and air. It does this by setting robust regulatory requirements, verifying compliance and taking enforcement action where required, and evaluating environmental quality through air and water monitoring and assessment. It also promotes shared environmental stewardship and collaborative partnerships with Indigenous Peoples.

The ministry engages and partners with First Nations in advancing the protection, management, and conservation of B.C.'s natural resources. The ministry also seeks opportunities to continually improve the systems that govern natural resource decision-making and the sustainable stewardship of these resources.

#### Objective 1.1: Strong environmental regulation, compliance, and enforcement for a clean, safe, and resilient environment

##### Key Strategies

- Improve the streamlined review of contaminated sites services applications and timely issuance of approvals through the recently announced [Permitting Strategy for Housing](#). Contaminated site remediation supports the sustainable redevelopment of usable land and provides community benefits through environmental clean-up, improved human health, and increased housing availability.
- Implement the [CleanBC Plastics Action Plan](#) including province-wide phase-out of single-use plastics. Key actions include:
  - Amending a regulation to allow all municipalities to institute bans on plastic bags and certain single-use plastics, passing legislation to allow provincial bans on single-use items, proposing a new regulation to address the most problematic single use items;
  - Managing the CleanBC Plastics Action Fund;
  - Phasing in recycling of new products under the [Extended Producer Responsibility Five-Year Plan](#) between now and 2026; and
  - Supporting the largest coastline cleanup in B.C.'s history through the [Clean Coast, Clean Waters Initiative](#).
- Reduce municipal solid waste through regional solid waste management plans, promotion of organics recycling, food and plastic waste prevention initiatives, and continuous improvement and expansion of extended producer responsibility programs.

- Deliver the first phase of B.C.'s new bonding policy to ensure owners of large industrial projects are bonded moving forward so that they – not British Columbians – pay the full costs of environmental cleanup if their projects are abandoned.

**Objective 1.2: Support the sustainability of British Columbia’s environment and provide high-quality user experience through sound management of the protected areas system, recreation sites and trail networks**

**Key Strategies**

- Manage parks and protect areas for ecological representation, biodiversity, and landscape connectivity.
- Create new camping opportunities, recreation sites, trails, and protected areas. Improve infrastructure and ensure provincial parks and recreation sites remain accessible and affordable for British Columbians.
- Lead work with the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship to co-develop and implement recommendations to better reflect Indigenous Peoples’ history and culture as a component of BC Parks’ broader effort on the path of reconciliation.

**Performance Measures**

Performance Measure	2015/16 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
1.1a Per capita municipal solid waste disposal (kg per person)	497	460	460	440	440

Data source: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, manually compiled.

**Discussion**

The targets for Performance Measure 1.1a have been increased to reflect the reported disposal rates that have been provided by regional districts. Significant debris clean-up and restoration activities after disaster events including floods and fires have led to increasing amounts of waste being disposed. Construction and demolition debris are also contributing to increases in disposal rates across many regional districts, and regional authorities have communicated the need to continue to adjust future waste reduction targets in the short-term to recognize these changes.

The performance measure for *Per cent of population covered by an organic waste disposal restriction* was removed this year as the targets were met and government continues to work with municipal partners in supporting organic waste options.

The performance measure for *Actions implemented to support the phase out of single-use plastics* was removed this year. The performance measure was based on number of actions taken by

provincial and local governments such as policies, legislation, etc. The ministry is moving towards meaningful and measurable performance measures and will be looking to provide a more substantial measurement in the future.

Actions from all levels of government that encourage waste prevention and support the phase-out of single-use plastics and the development of a circular economy contribute to attaining our long-term target of 350 kg solid waste disposal per person. Managing municipal solid waste minimizes environmental impacts by supporting sustainable land management practices, reducing plastic pollution, improving air and water quality, and reducing greenhouse gas.

Over the last 15 years, and particularly in the last five years, the ministry has supported communities to reduce food waste and expand organics collection and processing infrastructure capacity, diverting this material from landfill, and helping communities achieve their waste reduction goals. In partnership with the federal government, the province funded 18 organic waste processing facilities with a combined investment of \$20 million under the Organics Infrastructure Program (OIP). Further, the province contributed \$25.9 million towards 17 organic waste collection programs and 8 organic waste processing facilities under the CleanBC Organics Infrastructure and Collections Program (CleanBC-OICP). Three additional projects expect to be announced under the CleanBC-OICP stream by spring 2023. These activities decrease greenhouse gas emissions and provide beneficial products such as nutrient rich compost.

The performance measure for *Number of inspections conducted under the Environmental Management Act (EMA) and the Integrated Pest Management Act (IPMA)* was removed this year as targets were met. Ministry staff continue to conduct inspections under EMA and IPMA to determine compliance with regulatory requirements and take appropriate action if there is non-compliance. The ministry continues to focus on high-risk sites and activities, but also strives to ensure that all regulated parties are inspected on a routine basis.

In recent years, inspectors are spending an increasing amount of time preparing enforcement packages where escalated action has been deemed necessary to ensure compliance. The Compliance and Enforcement Division was created in April 2022, in conjunction with the organizational restructuring in the natural resource sector. The creation of the new division amalgamates many of the ministry's compliance and enforcement functions under one division. The ministry will be exploring new performance measures that better reflect the work of this division in preparation for the 2024/25 Service Plan in Fall 2023.

The performance measure for *Number of completed contaminated sites services applications* was removed this year. [Premier Eby announced](#) on January 16, 2023 that these applications will become part of coordinated permitting system that will receive funding and staffing. Once the program determines new targets based on these changes, the performance measure will be revisited. See also Objective 1.1 Key Strategies.



## Goal 2: A sustainable, clean economy

The ministry works to reduce carbon pollution while developing and implementing measures that will create clean and diverse economic development. It also helps British Columbians prepare for a changing climate.

### Objective 2.1: Implement the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 to provide a pathway for B.C. to prosper economically while significantly reducing our carbon pollution

#### Key Strategies

- Continue working with the [Climate Solutions Council](#) to review and measure opportunities and work closely with other ministries to implement actions under [CleanBC](#) to meet the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets legislated under the *Climate Change Accountability Act* by:
  - Implementing the [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#) to achieve the 2030 GHG target and put the province on the path towards a net zero target by 2050;
  - Publishing annual accountability reports as required under the *Climate Change Accountability Act*; and
  - Establishing a new net zero GHG emissions target for 2050.
- Continue to work with the Ministry of Finance to implement annual increases to the carbon tax so that it meets federal requirements of \$170 t/CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030.
- Redesign CleanBC's Program for Industry to align with new federal carbon pricing rules while continuing to promote a competitive business environment and significant GHG reductions.
- Develop policy to achieve the Roadmap commitment to require new large industrial facilities to develop 2050 net-zero plans that also address B.C.'s 2030 and 2040 legislated targets.
- Establish policies that will reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 75% by 2030 (as compared to 2014) and achieve near elimination of industrial methane by 2035. Ensure oil and gas emissions are reduced in line with sectoral targets.

#### Discussion

The ministry worked together with the Ministry of Finance to implement annual increases to the carbon tax and government met its stated target from the previous Service Plan of \$50 t/CO<sub>2</sub>e in April 2022. Key strategies above show that government will continue working towards the next target of meeting the federal requirement of \$170 t/CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030.

B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions reporting is based on the [National Inventory Report](#) from Environment and Climate Change Canada. Due to the necessary 16–24-month period to collect, verify and review the data from the federal government, the targets for this performance measure look at data from approximately two years behind the current year. The

latest GHG data for British Columbia is for 2020, published in the [Provincial GHG Inventory](#) and the [2022 Climate Change Accountability Report](#).

Implementation of CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 policies are underway. The current emissions forecast projects that emissions are likely to rebound to a degree in 2022, as economic activity (including air travel and road transportation) returns closer to pre-COVID-19 levels. However, as we see the long-term, positive impacts of CleanBC policies, emissions will continue to follow a downward trajectory over time. GHG intensity is expected to decline significantly as we reduce emissions toward our targets.

## **Objective 2.2: Effective management of the risks and consequences associated with a changing climate**

### **Key Strategies**

- Coordinate implementation of the provincial [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy](#) (CPAS) that will support a thriving and healthy province that is resilient to a changing climate.
- In partnership with Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, conduct a provincial disaster and climate risk and resilience assessment that is co-developed with Indigenous Peoples, applies an equity lens, and builds on local and regional input.
- Build community and government adaptation capacity and resilience, including partnerships with First Nations.
- Further develop a climate risk reporting program that meets the requirements of the [Climate Change Accountability Act](#).

### **Discussion**

Completion and implementation of a Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS) was included in the Minister's 2022 mandate letter. In June 2022, the Province released its first CPAS following engagement with First Nations, local governments, the public, and other partners. Implementation, now underway, is being done co-operatively with Indigenous Peoples, consistent with Action 2.12 of the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#). The Climate Action Secretariat will monitor the effectiveness of actions taken across government as part of the CPAS and will report on progress in the annual Climate Change Accountability Report.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measures	2020/21 Baseline <sup>1</sup>	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target
2.1 B.C.'s annual GHG emissions as compared to 2007 levels (goal of 40% below 2007 levels by 2030)	2020 emissions are 1% below 2007 levels	2021 emissions are 1% below 2007 levels	2022 emissions are 4% below 2007 levels	2023 emissions are 7% below 2007 levels	2024 emissions are 13% below 2007 levels	2025 emissions are 16% below 2007 levels <sup>2</sup>
2.2 Carbon intensity of B.C.'s economy (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per million dollars of gross domestic product)	243 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per \$M GDP (2020)	233 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per \$M GDP (2021)	216 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per \$M GDP (2022)	204 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per \$M GDP (2023)	188 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per \$M GDP (2024)	177 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per \$M GDP (2025)

Data source: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, based on emissions data from the National Inventory report and GDP data from the B.C. Government.

<sup>1</sup> The 2020/21 baseline emissions have been updated with 2020 data. Last year's service plan used 2019 emissions data, which was the most recent available at the time.

<sup>2</sup> Legislated CleanBC GHG targets are based on the calendar year, not the fiscal year as represented in this table.

Performance Measures	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2.3 Provincial Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS) developed and implemented	CPAS 2022/23 - 2024/25 published and implementation initiated	1. CPAS first progress evaluation completed  2. Initiate a joint <b>provincial scale</b> Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment (DCRRA) in partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Resilience and co-developed with First Nations partners	1. CPAS second progress evaluation completed  2. Complete and publish the <b>provincial scale</b> DCRRA  3. Initiate <b>regional scale</b> DCRRA in partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Resilience and co-developed with First Nations partners	Complete and publish the <b>regional scale</b> DCRRA

Data source: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

## Discussion

British Columbia has set ambitious, but necessary targets in law to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 40% below 2007 levels by 2030, 60% by 2040, and 80% by 2050. There is also a non-legislated interim target, a 16% reduction by 2025 to guide and measure our progress. In October 2021, the [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#) was released, which builds on CleanBC Phase 1 (2018) with significant new and expanded actions that will accelerate emissions reductions to reach climate and clean economy goals.

Performance Measures 2.1 and 2.2 include two inter-related metrics to ensure that GHG reductions are occurring and that the carbon intensity of B.C.'s economy is decreasing. These metrics are: 1) the most recent year's progress toward B.C.'s 2030 GHG target and; 2) B.C.'s GHG emissions per million dollars of gross domestic product (GDP).

These metrics demonstrate that achieving a low-carbon economy requires both low emissions and a robust economy. These performance measures have been updated to include the most current data provided in our annual [Climate Change Accountability Report](#). Annual GHG and carbon intensity forecasts have changed slightly with the use of gross rather than net projections (used in the previous service plan). Unlike net emissions intensity, gross emissions intensity does not require an estimation of future offset volumes which can be uncertain, therefore this approach has been determined to be more appropriate for forecasting.

Performance Measure 2.3 tracks progress in establishing a government-wide approach to identifying and managing climate risks to British Columbia. This performance measure has been updated to better reflect the role of the ministry in leading and coordinating development of climate adaptation policy and plans, where multiple ministries have responsibility for implementation of specific adaptation actions. This performance measure now reflects the partnership between the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness to deliver a Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment.

## Goal 3: Thorough, timely, transparent, and impartial environmental assessment

The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) has implemented a revitalized environmental assessment process that ensures the rights of First Nations are respected and that the public's expectation of a thorough, timely, transparent, and impartial process are met. This includes collaborating with First Nations in relation to reviewable projects, consistent with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). The [Environmental Assessment Act](#) (the Act) offers clear pathways to sustainable project approvals. This promotes sustainability by protecting the environment, fostering a resilient economy, aligning with government climate targets, and supporting the well-being of British Columbians and their communities. B.C. has also signed a cooperation agreement with the [Impact Assessment Agency of Canada](#), supporting jurisdictions working together to achieve "one project; one assessment" and

ensuring that projects requiring both federal and provincial assessments are conducted as efficiently as possible.

### Objective 3.1: Implement the revitalized environmental assessment process

#### Key Strategies

- Continue to develop the remaining regulations, policies, and guidance materials for the Act to be fully supported.
- Continue to support EAO staff, proponents, practitioners, government reviewers, First Nations, local governments, and the public with learning and development to effectively participate in regulatory activities under the Act.
- Continue to coordinate across governments to ensure the EAO’s practices and ongoing projects reflect effective implementation of the cooperation agreement with the Government of Canada and any other relevant agreements.
- Negotiate government-to-government strategic agreements with First Nations and federal agencies to support efficient environmental assessment processes that result in effective protection and mitigation conditions. Continue to explore the establishment of a committee between Canada, British Columbia, and Indigenous leaders to support successful implementation of the new federal and provincial acts.

#### Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
3.1 <i>Environmental Assessment Act</i> implementation	1. Develop regulations and/or policies that enhance functionality of the Act  2. Identify a framework to evaluate whether implementation of the Act is achieving the intended purposes	1. Finalize regulations and/or policies that enhance functionality of the Act  2. Finalize framework to evaluate whether implementation of the Act is achieving the intended purposes	Begin an evaluation of whether the Act is achieving the intended purposes	Complete the evaluation of the Act

Data source: Environmental Assessment Office, manually compiled.

## **Discussion**

In order to implement the new environmental assessment process, key actions include the passage of regulations and the development of policies linked to environmental assessment revitalization.

Performance Measure 3.1 has been updated to reflect new information regarding the necessary phased work for implementing the Act. The target for completing regulations and policies has been extended, as some items are tied to external factors that the EAO has less control over, such as engagement and consultation commitments with First Nations and community organizations.

The review of the Act will be initiated by late 2024. Based on the findings of the review, further policy and legislative updates may be undertaken in 2024/25.

# Financial Summary

## Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Core Business	2022/23 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Environmental Protection	19,006	24,977	26,307	26,336
BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails	58,969	69,601	75,466	75,840
Compliance and Enforcement	24,220	25,997	26,407	26,407
Climate Action	42,513	42,942	42,585	42,585
Clean BC Program for Industry	142,919	6,463	6,474	6,474
Executive and Support Services	28,306	29,702	30,199	30,199
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>315,933</b>	<b>199,682</b>	<b>207,438</b>	<b>207,811</b>
Park Enhancement Fund	9,800	12,920	12,949	12,949
Sustainable Environment Fund special account	30,435	26,135	26,135	26,135
<b>Total</b>	<b>356,168</b>	<b>238,737</b>	<b>246,522</b>	<b>246,895</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures (\$000)</b>				
Consolidated Revenue Fund				
Executive and Support Services	42,514	46,975	32,854	32,616
Park Enhancement Fund special account	400	400	400	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,914</b>	<b>47,375</b>	<b>33,254</b>	<b>33,016</b>
<b>Other Financing Transactions (\$000)</b>				
Climate Action Greenhouse Gas Emissions Offsets				
Disbursements	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

\* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

## Environmental Assessment Office

Core Business	2022/23 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Environmental Assessment Office	15,367	16,392	16,655	16,655
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,367</b>	<b>16,392</b>	<b>16,655</b>	<b>16,655</b>

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

\* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).



## Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 9, 2023, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

### [Climate Solutions Council](#)

The Climate Solutions Council (the Council) was created in October 2017. The Council provides strategic advice to government on climate action and clean economic growth. It includes members from First Nations, environmental organizations, industry, academia, youth, labour, and local government. The Council supports a steady and committed approach to climate action that drives down emissions, increases economic opportunities, and improves community resilience.

