OAIA Ontario Association for Impact Assessment 2019 Conference

Transforming and Re-Energizing Ontario: Impact Assessment for a Low Carbon Future

From Paris to Projects: implications for assessments in Ontario

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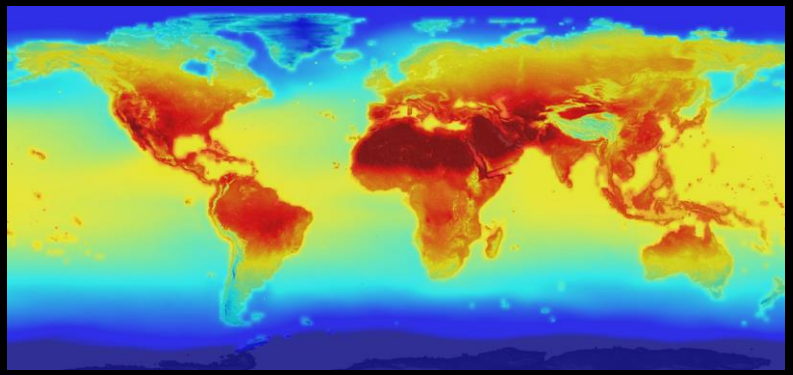
Impact assessment and climate change

- CC as big cumulative effects concern:
  - global, long term, delayed, irreversible
  - much already locked in and deeply entrenched
- Beyond conventional IA responses:
  - not useful to evaluate direct effects of project-attributable emissions
  - not enough to mitigate emissions
- Must eliminate net GHG emissions while preserving and enhancing sinks:
  - implies actions throughout all sectors, institutions, jurisdictions, etc.
  - covers social, economic, cultural and biophysical aspects and interactions
  - project assessments only one venue



NASA

Steps from Paris to projects in Ontario

R. Crumb

- The *Paris Agreement:*
  - well below 2ºC, best efforts for 1.5ºC (IPCC, net zero by 2050 for 1.5ºC)
  - fair share expectations for capable and culpable countries
- Implications for Canada
  - net zero by 2050 for 1.5ºC
  - plus fair share
- Implications for Ontario
  - net zero by 2050
  - what consequences for project and strategic assessments?

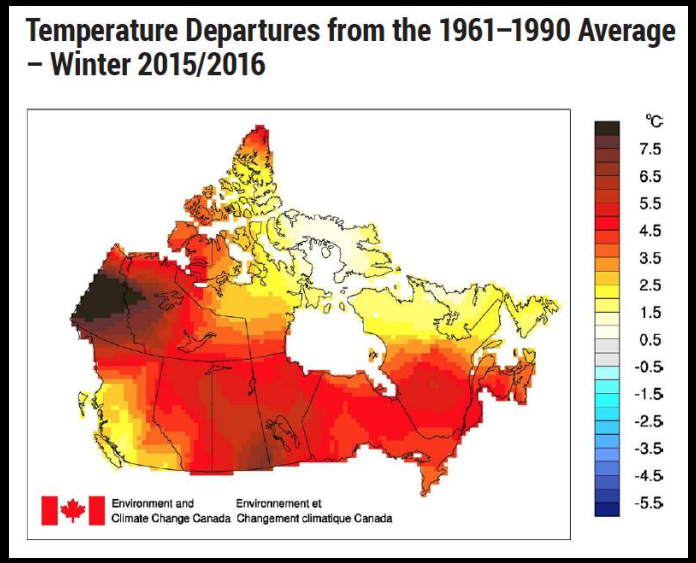
Paris implications for Canada

Net zero by 2050

- may be earliest realistic Canadian deadline
- Liberal election commitment
- plus fair share contributions to CC mitigation achievements elsewhere
- always aim to do better

Banksy

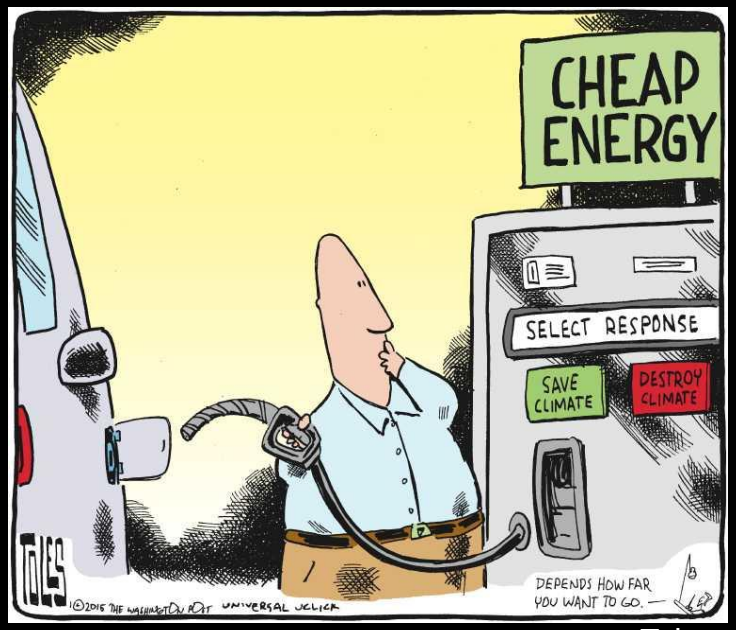
Specification needs for implementation in Canada



ECCC

- *Pathways:* scenarios of climate-related desirable futures, alternatives routes, multiple sustainability benefits; constant review and updating (recognizing need for reliability for planning)
- *Carbon budget:* determination and allocation
- *Economic and regulatory tools:* graduated carbon pricing; social cost of carbon; financial incentives/penalties; technology forcing requirements
- *Application:* to all activities affecting emissions and sinks

Implications for IA law and practice



Toles

- Application to all climate-significant undertakings (project and strategic level)
- Broad scope (sustainability-based or the equivalent, including positive, adverse, cumulative, indirect, interactive and long term effects)
- Comparative evaluation of alternatives
- Climate test(s)
- Collaboration with other jurisdictions (without sacrificing the core imperative)

New federal *Impact Assessment Act* provisions on climate

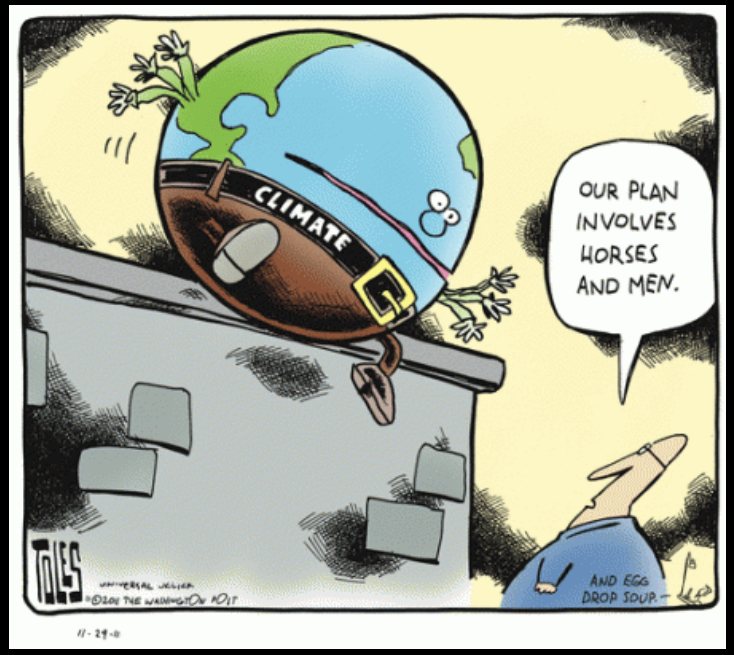
Seppo Leinonen

Impact Assessment Act: under section 63(e), decision makers on designated projects must consider

(a) the extent to which the designated project contributes to sustainability; … [and]

(e) the extent to which the effects of the designated project hinder or contribute to the Government of Canada's ability to meet its environmental obligations and its commitments in respect of climate change.

Section 63(e) implementation guidance so far



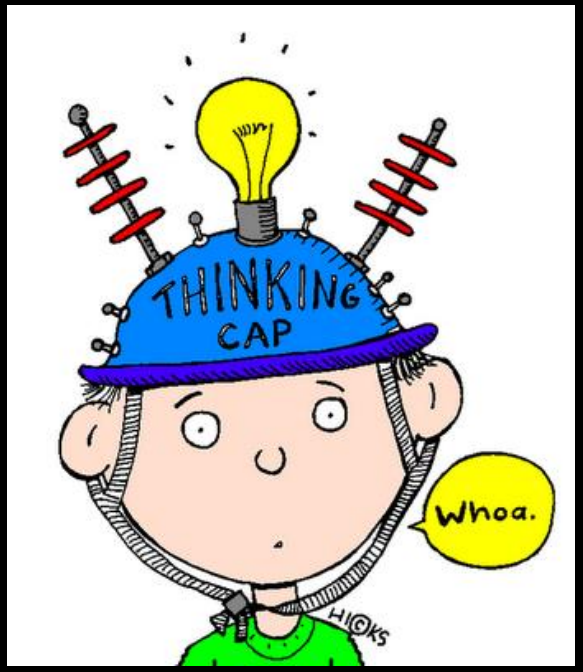
Toles

- GHG and sink impairment triggers for Project List (not yet)
- Guidance on what analyses (climate tests) will be used in applying section 63(e) in project assessments (none yet)
- Guidance on comparison of relevant alternatives (not yet)
- Related strategic and regional assessments (no real ones yet – just a pre-election draft policy on project-attributable GHG emissions, skewed to minimize net attributable emissions)
- Perhaps post election ….

Components of a possible s.63(e) climate test

Is the proposed undertaking

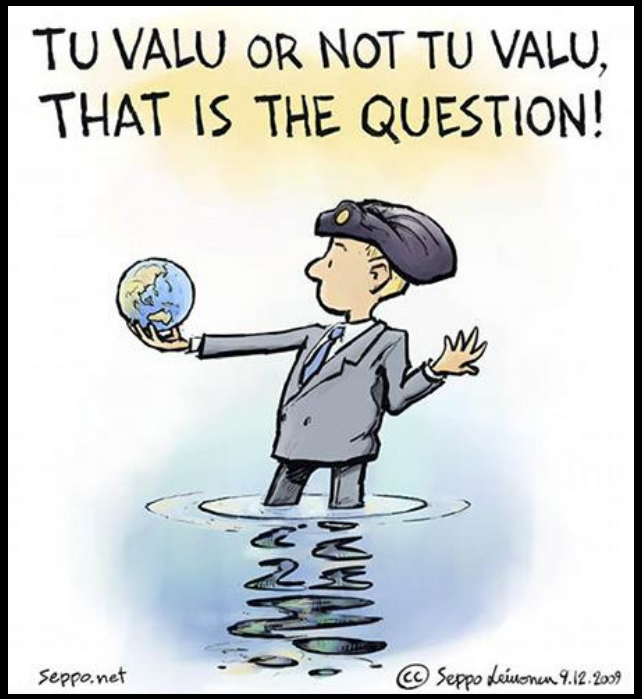
- on a viable path (to zero emissions after 2050, or offset by new and permanent sequestration or sink enhancement)?
- within national (and provincial and/or sectorial) carbon budget?
- viable with sufficiently rising carbon prices over lifetime?
- viable with internalized social cost of carbon?
- best option among alternatives?



Hicks

Implications for Ontario assessments

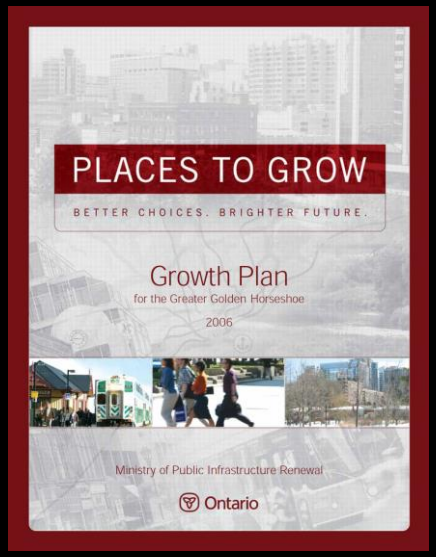
- Requires clarification of provincial share in national overall pathways, pricing implications, etc.
- Assessment application to all climate-significant projects and strategic level undertakings
- Comprehensive scope (sustainability equivalent)
- Comparative evaluation of alternatives
- Ontario versions of climate test(s)
- Inter-jurisdictional collaboration

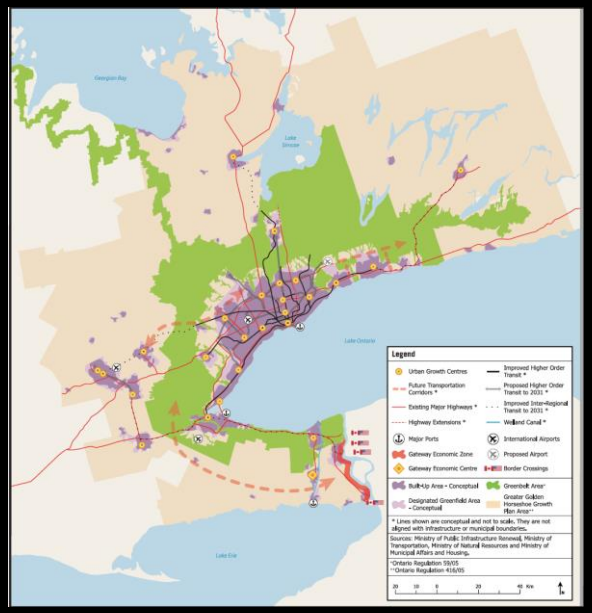


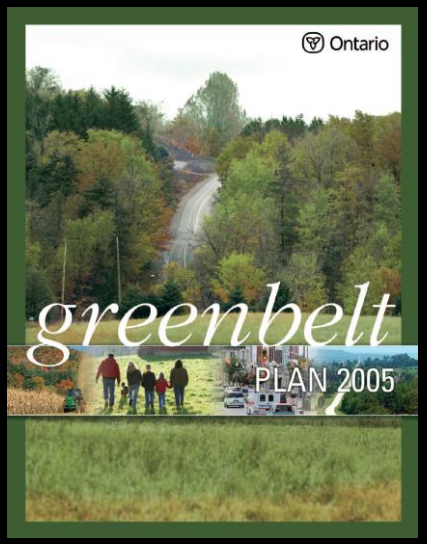
Seppo Leinonen

A simpler but similar Ontario challenge

- Transition of basic approach to design of urban regions from cars and sprawl to density and transit
- Inter-generational shift, multi-tiered planning and assessment, diverse tools, depends on some certainty for investments, also open to learning and adjustment







All of this in the bigger context of transition towards sustainability

Aim higher

- Climate objectives to be served along with ecological integrity, sustainable livelihoods, more equitable distribution of the risks and opportunities, greater understanding and engagement, etc.
- Aiming for multiple, mutually reinforcing gains while avoiding adverse effects and risks
- Consistent with Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act* purpose since 1975.

The Report with the details

From Paris to Projects: Clarifying the implications of Canada's climate change mitigation commitments for the planning and assessment of projects and strategic undertakings

Robert B. Gibson, Karine Péloffy, Daniel Horen Greenford, Meinhard Doelle, H. Damon Matthews, Christian Holz, Kiri Staples, Bradley Wiseman and Frédérique Grenier,

Waterloo: Paris to Project Research Initiative, January 2019
full report 233pp., summary 31pp.

https://uwaterloo.ca/paris-to-projects/publications-0/reports-journal-papers-and-book-chapters