

News Release

Ford Government to Help Expand Access to Natural Gas

Announced legislation that, if passed, will bring natural gas to families and businesses throughout rural and northern Ontario

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[Office of the Premier](#)

PAIN COURT — Ontario's Government for the People will take action to expand natural gas access to families and business throughout rural and Northern Ontario thanks to an innovative partnership with local communities and the private sector.

"We heard from people across Ontario that natural gas expansion is important in order to grow businesses, create jobs and compete," said Premier Ford, who announced the program while attending the 2018 International Plowing Match & Rural Expo. "By cancelling the cap-and-trade carbon tax, we have already acted to bring natural gas prices down for Ontario families and businesses. Now we are taking the next step to ensure that the benefits of natural gas expansion are shared throughout the entire province."

The government will introduce legislation to develop the new natural gas program. Under the previous government's restrictions, private sector companies were limited from participating in natural gas expansion, portions of which were instead managed by a taxpayer-funded program. If passed, the Ford government's new program would encourage more private gas distributors to partner with communities to develop projects that expand access to affordable and efficient natural gas.

The proposed new program would deliver decades of benefits to potentially dozens of communities across Ontario at no additional costs to the taxpayers while keeping existing natural gas costs low.

"Expanding natural gas will make Ontario communities more attractive for job creation and new businesses," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Infrastructure. "This is part of our government's plan to bring quality jobs back to Ontario and to send the clear message that Ontario is Open for Business."

"The decision to extend natural gas services will support future housing supply and choice in rural and northern communities while providing home owners and businesses with an affordable and reliable heating option that will keep their everyday costs down," said Joe Vaccaro, CEO of the Ontario Home Builders' Association.

This announcement builds on the government's work to stand up for the people of Ontario by removing the carbon tax from natural gas bills, saving families about \$80 a year and small businesses about \$285 a year.

Quick Facts

- Natural gas is the most common heating source in Ontario and is more affordable than other sources like electricity, oil or propane.
- Switching to natural gas can save an average residential customer between \$800 and \$2,500 a year.
- Currently, about 3.5 million homes and 130,000 businesses in Ontario use natural gas.
- These changes would potentially enable natural gas connections for over 70 communities, connecting approximately 33,000 households.

Background Information

- [Ontario Supporting Communities by Expanding Access to Natural Gas](#)