

## **Delivering Economic Growth: Environment Industry Day 2012**

*Ontario is facing an unprecedented challenge. International economic turmoil, low growth rates, flat job prospects and the continuing erosion of our traditional manufacturing base are all threatening the prosperity that has supported our standard of living for decades. One of the bright spots in recent years has been growth in environment and cleantech firms, but this vibrant sector is at a crossroads. How can Ontario firms take advantage of booming Canadian and world markets and create the jobs and growth our economy so desperately needs? What can government do to encourage these companies to grow and prosper? The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of ONEIA's Environment Industry Day brings together hundreds of business leaders, policymakers and political leaders to discuss this important challenge.*

### **Roundtable topics**

- 1. The Next Innovation Challenge – moving beyond winners and losers:** Over the past several years, the province has pursued an aggressive strategy to promote innovation. Dedicated funding programs and regulatory changes have been accompanied by significant investment in leading-edge research. In an era of spending reductions and increasing pressure to demonstrate growth and employment benefits, there is an opportunity for the province and industry to explore new ways to encourage and reward research conducted within established companies.
- 2. At a Crossroads on Waste:** Ontario faces a number of key decisions on issues related to waste and recycling. Firms are curious and concerned about the direction the government will take with such files as the Waste Diversion Act (WDA), Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and other key regulations and policies. This discussion will bring the concerns of industry, municipalities and the province to the table for a frank discussion about where Ontario is heading on these files.
- 3. Ontario's Energy Future?** The 2011 provincial election and subsequent Auditor General's report have raised serious questions about the Green Energy Act, its impact on pricing and its role in the province's "clean jobs" agenda. With Ontario at a crossroads, renewable energy companies are asking, "where are we going?" Join this discussion about the future of FIT, new directions at OPA, challenges to the grid, our changing energy mix, government incentives available to energy companies and the business climate for renewable energy.
- 4. Brownfields – unlocking value and expediting projects:** Development of Ontario's valuable brownfield sites hangs under a cloud. Companies report

that uncertainty about contaminant standards, soil management, risk assessment and other issues is holding up numerous development projects. How can Ontario move forward in this context to unlock the investment and jobs from Brownfields projects?

5. **Modernization of Approvals – the next stage:** The Ministry of the Environment is in the midst of a complex, multi-year effort to transform its approvals process. This involves migrating the majority of approvals to a “permit-by-rule” registry system, while more complex issues will still be covered by a certificate process. This change will have a profound impact on ONEIA members, their clients/suppliers and Ontario industry in general. How has this process been received so far? What problems have emerged – and are there solutions? What are the next stages that companies can expect?
6. **Water / Wastewater / Stormwater:** Ontario is home to one of the world’s leading water sectors. Whether companies are focusing on water purification, wastewater, stormwater management or the host of consulting solutions that relate to these areas, this dynamic sector is attracting interest from investors and policymakers. How does our policy environment affect growth in this area? How can governments better relate to these firms and their concerns? How do we support these companies and help them meet their growth challenges?