

May 16, 2016

The Honourable Christy Clark, MLA
Premier of the Province of British Columbia
Box 9041
Station PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E1

Dear Premier,

One year ago, you asked us to serve on the Climate Leadership Team and provide your government with advice on how to advance B.C.'s climate change plan. The motivation for the new plan was clear: while B.C. had been a leader on developing climate policy in Canada, and in fact around the world, the province's carbon pollution was rising and stronger policy would be needed to get the province on track to meet our legislated emissions reduction targets.

You asked us for recommendations that would enable the province to meet its 2020 and 2050 climate targets, maintain a strong economy, and provide support to the British Columbians most in need. You asked us to reach consensus across a group that included leaders from First Nations, business, academia, local government, the provincial government and environmental organizations.

The process we worked through last year was difficult, but it was also successful. We managed to deliver in six months. Our work resulted in 32 recommendations that we provided to your government last November. The package of recommendations represents a mix of innovative thinking and compromise that fulfills our mandate and respects the different perspectives represented on the team. The recommendations provide a blueprint to help get the province back on track for our climate targets, stimulate innovation, create jobs, protect B.C. businesses and support rural communities.

We advised your government to commit to the package of recommendations this year so that British Columbians and B.C. businesses have time to plan. This is particularly true of our recommendations to strengthen the carbon tax, which were central to the overall package. Committing to a next schedule of increases, closing gaps in its coverage and explaining how the revenue will be used will help reduce uncertainty, ease the transition to a low-carbon economy for emissions-intensive and trade-exposed sectors and families, and support investments in clean energy across the province.

The reasons to move forward with this plan are stronger than ever. Climate change threatens our economy, our communities and our environment. To confront those threats, we need to increase our efforts to reduce fossil fuel use and better prepare ourselves for a changing climate. And as the world increasingly begins to act, the demand for clean energy is accelerating. The actions we take to increasingly shift to clean energy in the province will also help position B.C. businesses to provide the solutions the world needs.

We want to see the province reach its climate targets; delay only increases the costs and makes it harder to succeed. We are thus concerned about the shifts in deadlines. You initially committed to having a draft plan in advance of the Paris climate talks last December and a final plan by this March. The draft plan was cancelled and the deadline for the final plan was pushed to June.

B.C. is in no position to delay or scale back its efforts. The rest of Canada and the rest of the world have been taking action since B.C.'s initial climate plan in 2008, and B.C.'s increasing carbon pollution is taking us in the wrong direction.

B.C. can't be a climate leader if its carbon pollution is rising. As the federal government places a renewed emphasis on climate action, now is the time for B.C. to be articulating its next steps.

The new federal-provincial relationship on climate change will be defined by the jurisdictions taking actions to significantly reduce their carbon pollution and B.C. should be among them.

The Climate Leadership Team recommendations, implemented in their entirety, provide the blueprint for a B.C. climate plan to put the province back on track for the 2050 and interim 2030 targets. Anything less is not climate leadership.

Sincerely,

Chief Ian Campbell, hereditary chief, Squamish Nation
Chief Michelle Edwards, Cayoose Creek Band
Tom Pedersen, professor of oceanography, University of Victoria
Matt Horne, B.C. associate director, Pembina Institute
Merran Smith, executive director, Clean Energy Canada
Tzeporah Berman, adjunct professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University
Nancy Olewiler, professor, School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University

CC:

Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Honourable James Carr, Minister of Natural Resources
Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson, Parliamentary Secretary
Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Environment
Honourable Bill Bennett, Minister of Energy and Mines
Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
Honourable Rich Coleman, Minister of Natural Gas Development
Honourable Mike de Jong, Minister of Finance
Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Mr. Jordan Sturdy, Parliamentary Secretary