

**GETTING
REAL
ABOUT
CANADA'S
CLIMATE
PLAN**



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Canada's primary network of organizations working on climate change and energy issues, CAN-Rac is a coalition of more than 100 organizations operating from coast to coast to coast. Our membership brings environmental groups together with trade unions, First Nations, social justice, development, health and youth organizations, faith groups and local, grassroots initiatives.

www.climateactionnetwork.ca



Wa federal election approaching this fall, Canada's political parties are preparing their climate platforms. Climate change may be the single most important issue at stake in this race, because the consequences of electing a party that isn't dedicated to real climate action will be devastating for the country, and the planet. We need science-based and meaningful climate commitments from our leaders, regardless of their political persuasion.

Canada has been talking about the climate crisis for decades. The country has been setting targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions since the early 1990s and has never met any target it has set. Yet the effects of a changing climate are becoming more dangerous and costly by the day, from recent flooding in Toronto, Calgary and Quebec to destructive wildfires in B.C. and Alberta, and rising sea levels that threaten land loss around PEI. We're seeing shorter winters and people now refer to a smoke season. Powerful storms. Decimated crops. These local pieces of the larger climate picture confirm a stark truth: no individual, group, or political party can afford to ignore this issue. The time to act is now.

In 2015, Canada signed the Paris Agreement, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Every country in the world is part of the Paris Agreement, which strives to limit average global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. To meet this goal, each signatory commits to cut its carbon pollution, and submits a plan to reduce its annual greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). This plan is known as its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Canada's NDC is a plan to cut GHGs by 30% below 2005 emission levels by 2030.

To deliver on its Paris promise, the Canadian government worked with the provinces and territories, and consulted with national Indigenous organizations, to launch the Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change and Clean Growth (PCF) in 2016. This was a critical step, and it set in motion a set of policies and regulations designed to reduce emissions across all sectors of the economy. These include carbon pricing, a 2030 coal phase-out, clean fuel standards, efficiency measures in buildings and transportation, and regulations to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, among others. Furthermore, the federal government made historic investments in public transit, and modified capital depreciation rules to accelerate investment in zero carbon technologies.

Canada now has some solid foundations laid for climate policies, regulations, and investments. Yet the scale of ambition remains woefully inadequate. Canada needs do much more to address the climate crisis. [400 hundred](#) Canadian [municipalities](#) have recognized the urgent need to act by declaring states of climate emergency.

As parties put their climate plans forward, how might the adequacy of any proposed climate action be assessed? Below, we lay out criteria, grounded in science and equity, that, together, represent Canada's fair share to address the global climate crisis – and a baseline against which we can assess federal parties' climate plans. The Appendix discusses in detail policy recommendations that the parties may want to consider including in their climate plans, and which will help meet the criteria laid out in this document.



WHERE WE STAND TODAY

Our dilemma

While unprecedented, efforts under the PCF are insufficient. Canada isn't yet on track to meet its 2030 target. According to the latest assessment from the federal government, there is still a gap of 79 million tonnes of GHGs between our 2030 target emissions and the levels Canada is on track

to achieve. Even more troubling, we know that our current target is nowhere near what it would take to hold global warming to the 1.5°C limit enshrined in our Paris commitment. A report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018 confirms that the current 2030 climate pledges of all Parties to the Paris Agreement aren't consistent with any scenario that limits warming to 1.5°C. Rather, we can expect to see warming of between 2.6°C and 4°C if nations continue down our current path.

Canada's Fair Share: Why Our Climate Plan Needs to Do More

Countries with more historical responsibility for contributing to the climate crisis by emitting carbon into the atmosphere, and that have more wealth to tackle the problem, should do more. Canada falls into both categories.

Despite our country's small population, Canada has ranked among the top 10 global carbon polluters for most of the last century. When it comes to per-capita emissions, the picture gets even more grim: Canadians emit more per person than almost any other country, including all Europe nations and Russia (and that's including several other large, cold countries). Oil and gas operations are the largest and fastest growing source of carbon pollution in the country, with transportation emissions coming a close second in terms of size. Meanwhile, Canada is one of the richest nations on the planet with one of the lowest-emitting electricity grids.

Climate Action Tracker, an independent international think tank, has assessed the Canadian climate commitment to be "highly insufficient". Climate Action Network's latest calculations indicate that for us to do our fair share, Canada's target would have to double in ambition to reduce GHGs 60% below 2005 levels by 2030, while ramping up our international climate finance. The bottom line is, we need to do more, and quickly.

The Way Forward: Key Pieces of a Robust Climate Plan

In order for Canada to pull its weight in the global fight against climate change, it needs to take meaningful climate action now, and commit to building up its NDC by 2020. Any future climate plan needs to:

1. Get Canada back on track to meet its 2030 Paris Agreement commitments. To dramatically reduce Canada's carbon pollution to safe levels and meet our national target for 2030, we'll need to ramp up our current efforts and design stringent new measures and policies, with three core elements:
 - A. Comprehensive: A national plan that ensures everyone – from industry to households - is part of the solution. The plan must address carbon pollution for all sectors and all provinces and territories.
 - B. Effective: Stringent laws and regulations that restrict and reduce emissions and put a price on pollution while prioritizing clean and efficient energy generation and use.
 1. C. Accountable - We need a science-based climate plan, that demonstrates in measurable metrics that it will reach our Paris Commitment. In particular, a plan must be rigorously modeled to show that it will achieve its targets and any short-fall will require a clear plan about how and by when additional measures will be proposed to close that gap.
2. Set and legislate new, more ambitious, GHG reduction targets. Canada will also have to legislate targets which cover politically-relevant short-term periods, such as interim 2025 targets, or create carbon budgets to define needed progress between 2020 and 2030. To ensure that federally-approved projects fall within the legislated targets or budgets, Canada will further need to prescribe a framework for considering projects' climate effects in impact assessments and regulatory approval processes and require projects to show consistency with Canada's legislated targets or budgets.
3. Eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and start a real conversation about the future of Canada's oil and gas sector in the age of the climate crisis. Canada will need to stop using public funds, including financing, to support oil and gas companies. Canada will need to ensure any energy infrastructure projects are consistent with the goal of mid-century decarbonization. Canada needs to be serious about its contribution to global carbon pollution if the world stands a chance to meet its Paris Agreement commitment.
4. Leave no community, group, or worker behind. Canada needs to offer real assistance to communities and workers grappling with the inevitable decline of fossil-fuel-dependent sectors, and improve consultation of Indigenous groups by integrating the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into future climate policy.
5. Increase support for emission-reducing measures in other countries. Even if it adopts the most stringent domestic measures, Canada will likely fall short of its fair contribution. One way to make up the difference will be to fund emission-reducing measures in other countries, to the tune of C\$4 billion between 2020 and 2025 (our share of funding already committed under the UNFCCC).

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6. Begin a national conversation about how to build communities and a nation that are climate resilient, given climate change which is already occurring. Such measures are essential to protect Canadians from wildfires, flooding, extreme weather, sea level rise and other impacts of climate change. The conversation must include realistic discussions of what the costs both of doing so and failing to do so, and the question of how this work will be paid for. Adaptation to protect Canadian communities is urgently required.
7. Change the polarizing public conversation on the climate crisis. Canada should lead public discussion of the climate crisis away from partisan politics, and toward a national dialogue that connects peoples' realities with science and equity-based facts. Appointing an independent expert panel to initiate and review climate policy, and establishing a cross-partisan committee on climate change, will go a long way toward this goal.

APPENDIX



POLICY TOOLS TO CUT CANADA'S CARBON POLLUTION ACROSS ALL SECTORS

Canada has made progress on its domestic climate policy; however, stringency and timelines are slipping. Below is a status overview of policies working to reduce GHGs in emitting sectors, highlighting the current shortfalls and enhancements needed to take up the slack. Full implementation of these policies will go a long way towards meeting the criteria laid out in “Getting real about Canada’s Climate Plan.”

Pricing carbon fairly

Current policy framework

The June 2018 federal budget included the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. According to this legislation, all provinces and territories must have a carbon price of at least \$20/tonne in place by January 1, 2019, or a cap-and-trade system stringent enough to deliver equivalent GHG reductions. Carbon pricing must increase by \$10/tonne every year until it reaches \$50/tonne in 2022.

Canada is also developing an Output Based Pricing System (OBPS) to help major industrial players safeguard their competitive edge globally. The system provides financial incentives to large emitters who agree to reduce their GHG emissions. It also aims to prevent “carbon leakage,” which occurs when companies relocate to international areas that don’t price carbon similarly.

Shortfalls

The aim of an OBPS is to minimize competitiveness and carbon leakage risks for activities for which those risks are high, while retaining the incentives to reduce emissions created by the carbon pricing signal. As such, the OBPS is a subsidy provided to high-emitting facilities and should be targeted only to those sectors that can demonstrate a material competitiveness impact. Significantly, the approach to assessing competitiveness pressure and hence to set the appropriate level of relief to avoid leakage does not exclude non pollution pricing pressures that influence firm performance and hence doesn’t isolate for carbon pricing differentials between Canadian and foreign jurisdictions. If the OBPS is misused to address any other regional, market, resource quality, or technological issue, its success may be constrained. Finally, electricity generation is not by necessity emissions-intensive or trade exposed and hence does not meet the criteria for inclusion in an OBPS.

Essential enhancements

The OBPS should be carefully targeted, transparent, and temporary. The current approach to assessing sector competitiveness risks could be enhanced to provide more transparency. The regulations should include unambiguous principles and definitions to mitigate the risk of interpretations and outcomes that weaken the output-based pricing system’s ability to drive climate change mitigation and innovation. The entire system should be phased out on a short timeline that allows industries to adjust, including those industries into the carbon pricing system as soon as competitiveness impacts are removed, for example when competing jurisdictions have comparable carbon pricing systems in place.

Canada also needs to plan and schedule carbon price increases beyond 2022, and speed up the pace of those increases. To help the country to meet its 2030 Paris commitments, the carbon price would need to increase at roughly the current pace (\$10/tonne per year) up until 2030. However, we now know our 2030 targets are insufficient, so steeper price increases are needed beyond 2022. These increases should also be tied to inflation, to keep pricing consistent in real terms.

For jurisdictions in Canada with a Cap-and-Trade carbon pricing system, the current greenhouse gas emissions reduction benchmark of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 for federal compliance should also be increased to reflect the new, increased federal emissions target for the 2030 year and beyond.

Phasing out coal and growing clean electricity generation

Current policy framework

Canada has committed to phasing out coal-fired electricity by 2030, and has implemented several new regulations to this end. It has also created new emissions standards for natural gas-fired generation, and earmarked funding to help Indigenous, northern, and remote communities move away from diesel power. Promised support for smart-grid technologies, and investments in the country’s electrical transmission system, will further cut emissions in this sector.

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Shortfalls

Canada has taken a leadership role in phasing out coal power, even spearheading a global movement and forming the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) at the 2017 United Nations Climate Change Conference. However, rules on conversions and new gas units allow replacement of too many coal units by natural gas, potentially locking in more fossil fuel generation at a time when costs for firm renewables continue to plummet. Further, Equivalency Agreements with provinces are being considered that would result in less aggressive emissions reductions than the federal regulations.

The current federal government has established new programs for phasing out diesel fuel in remote communities, including the \$220 million Clean Energy in Rural and Remote Communities (CERRC) program and the \$20 million Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative. However, among sub-national governments in Canada, policies, targets and progress vary significantly. All governments need to take more action to prioritize community and Indigenous-led initiatives that reduce diesel reliance and develop meaningful and achievable diesel reduction targets. As part of these efforts, the federal government should identify energy policies and diesel reduction targets in remote communities that are aligned with the PCF.

Essential enhancements

Clean, renewable power should replace a larger proportion of coal units, and stricter standards should govern gas-fired electricity to ensure Canada meets its target for an electricity supply that is 90% non-emitting. Canada should invest in clean electricity solutions, especially grid interties between provinces, and work with provinces and territories to develop ambitious diesel reduction targets for remote communities, backed by a shift in engagement practices, utility regulation and policy that encourages community participation and leadership in diesel reduction initiatives. Electrification is an essential strategy to support decarbonization of the economy, implying that much more electricity will be required by 2030, so federal policies should support investments in renewable energy.

Sustainable mobility

Current policy framework and shortfalls

After decades of underfunding, the Canadian government has made historic investments in new public transit infrastructure in recent years. If transit is to support modal shifts, to help cure congestion and to give Canadians more transportation options, even more ambitious federal investments in public transit will be essential.

Essential enhancements

Mobility services around the world are rapidly changing, with the introduction of disruptive new mobility models such as UBER and other shared mobility services. Only if properly regulated, shared mobility services have the potential to decrease emissions from personal transportation. The arrival of autonomous vehicles can also serve our climate goals, or could hinder them, if unregulated. The Canadian government must work with provinces and territories to establish a regulatory task force to look at the future of shared mobility services and autonomous vehicles in Canada, and how to regulate these services and technologies to ensure they result in GHG emissions reduction.

All climate plans should include a permanent federal commitment to fund public transit growth across Canada and to accelerate deployment of zero emission bus fleets and system-wide electrification. To support life-long transit use, the Canadian government must work with provinces and territories to make public transit affordable, with an initial focus on free transit for those 18 and under. Future federal public transit investments should be targeted at initiatives that will result in increases in ridership (modal shift) and set expectations for compact complete communities to optimize GHG mitigation from these investments. The government of Canada should introduce [location](#) criteria in the [national housing strategy](#) and in [home buying incentives](#) to incite households to choose complete neighbourhoods with good access to sustainable mobility and services.

The Canadian government should take the lead on providing low-emission, long-distance and interprovincial transportation options, likely through rail or bussing.

Finally, the Canadian government can provide targeted federal investments to support active transportation infrastructure, together with new transit infrastructure. This means making funds available for public transit projects in middle-sized communities and working with provinces and territories to ensure better flexibility in the allocation of federal investments according to regional priorities.

Creating cleaner fuels and supporting Zero Emission Vehicles

Current policy framework

In November 2016, the federal government announced that it would develop a performance-based clean fuel standard (CFS). An important and ambitious element of the CFS is its application to many types of fuels in several different sectors, including transportation, buildings and industrial use. By measuring the life-cycle or “well-to-wheel” GHG emissions associated with each regulated fuel, and then requiring producers and distributors to gradually reduce the carbon intensity of the fuels they supply, this policy ensures a certain level of pollution is avoided. Crucially, the CFS will be technology-neutral, so it will allow companies to comply with its GHG performance standards in ways best suited to regulated parties. Options include innovating to achieve process energy-intensity improvements, upgrading facilities to reduce a fuel’s total carbon footprint, blending renewable content into higher-carbon fuels, and switching from fossil fuels to electricity or hydrogen. Companies can also choose to purchase compliance credits from other firms. The objective of the CFS is to achieve 30 Mt of annual reductions in GHG emissions, which makes this policy the single largest contributor under the PCF towards Canada’s 2030 climate commitment.

In addition, Canada has committed to reaching 10% of new car sales to be zero emissions vehicles (ZEV) by 2025, 30% by 2030 and 100% by 2040. Those are aspirational goals that will require targeted policies to meet. The federal government has introduced a federal ZEV purchase incentive as well as fiscal measures to incentivize ZEV adoption in commercial fleets in Canada.

Canada is also strengthening fuel-efficiency standards for vehicles.

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Shortfalls

Currently, only British Columbia and Quebec have enacted legislation to ensure an adequate supply of ZEV in their market. Lack of availability of ZEV at dealerships across Canada remains one of the main barriers to electrification.

Currently, Canada's GHG regulations for light duty vehicles are linked to U.S. federal standards. However, the U.S. government is rolling back pre-2025 fuel-efficiency regulations for light-duty vehicles. If Canada's light duty vehicle regulations continue to default to U.S. federal standards, Canada's standards will also be weakened, resulting in a 10MT emission reduction loss to 2030.

Essential enhancements

ZEVs are expected to reach price parity with internal combustion engine vehicles by 2025, or sooner, according to Bloomberg Energy Finance. Consequently, ZEV purchase incentives will no longer be necessary to spur demand at that time. Lack of availability of ZEVs in the Canadian market and access to charging stations will remain the main barriers to electrification. Canada should therefore implement a national ZEV mandate, a regulation requiring that car manufacturers meet the aspirational sales targets set for ZEV sales to eventually represent 100% of new car sales by 2040.

Canada must maintain the stringency of its existing light duty vehicle regulations, and increase their stringency post-2025 together with the state of California and at least 17 other states that have committed to more ambitious standards.

The Clean Fuel Standard is still under discussion. The current government had initially set out to regulate liquids, solids and gaseous fuels in one regulatory swoop. In July 2018, the government decided to move with the liquids portion first, but is maintaining its commitment to regulating all 3 streams. As roughly 80% of liquid fuels are used for transportation—Canada's second-highest emitting economic sector—this is a reasonable priority. The current government published the [CFS Regulatory Design Paper](#) in December 2018 for comments, and draft regulations are expected this summer. Regulations for solid and gaseous fuels are expected for 2020-21. Implementation and enforcement of the CFS for liquid fuels would begin in 2022, with requirements on the other fuel streams coming online the following year. Given the large emissions reduction impact of this standard, it is important that these timelines be met. Canada can't afford to delay this regulation, especially in light of the long lead times needed for investment in and construction of renewable fuel production capacity. We need to use all available tools if we are going to close the gap on Canada's climate commitment.

Stemming emissions from buildings

Current policy framework

The building sector offers some of the lowest-cost emission-cutting opportunities, along with some of the greatest potential for job creation, GDP stimulus, and other benefits. Canada's NDC commits to the development of a Net-Zero Energy Ready model building code by 2030, as well as codes for improvements in existing buildings and improving energy-efficiency standards for appliances and equipment. The Clean Fuel Standard will also apply to buildings with carbon-intensity reduction requirements for gaseous and solid fuels in the building sector coming into effect in 2023.

Shortfalls

While there has been progress in setting targets for new buildings to reach Net-Zero Energy Ready in some provinces, too many jurisdictions have yet to commit to a code roadmap that ensures new construction does not add to the carbon liability of building stock. Furthermore, there is still a lack of clarity on decarbonization targets for existing buildings: proposed equipment regulations roadmaps will not suffice, and code requirements for existing buildings will also miss the mark if they focus only on energy efficiency and not also on fuel switching. The code also falls short of accounting for the carbon embodied in building materials and energy systems.

Additionally, the development of a code for retrofits of existing buildings does not ensure the deep retrofit of all applicable buildings across Canada. For instance, in BC, it is expected that a Net Zero Energy Ready building code will only achieve one third of the emission reductions needed from BC's building sector.

Essential enhancements

Canada should set a goal of reducing energy use in existing buildings to achieve emissions of 40–50% below 2005 levels and to fully decarbonize the sector by mid-century. To prevent slippage in the implementation of codes and regulations for new and existing buildings, Canada should take steps to ensure the provinces adopt the codes in a timely manner, making code adoption a requirement for targeted infrastructure funding or other building-sector incentives. This will also require a retrofit strategy, and innovative financing to support the development of a retrofit market. Canada's federal government can lead the way by investing in deep energy retrofits of publicly owned buildings.

Canada needs to invest in training and education for workers in the building industry - the sector is expected to grow by over 100,000 jobs in the next decade. As standards are rapidly changing, to maintain affordability and quality of construction, education about building science and energy efficiency will be essential for those already working in the sector and for those entering it.

Cutting emissions in the industrial sector

Current policy framework

Canada has committed to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40–45% by 2025, to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and to invest in industrial energy efficiency. In April 2018, Canada became a global leader by releasing the world's first comprehensive federal methane regulations. If fully implemented, the country will be able reach its methane pollution reduction target in the next six years by limiting damaging and wasteful emissions from both new and existing oil and gas facilities nationwide. Canada has also endorsed the international objective to eliminate flaring – the controlled burning of excess flammable gas – at oil and gas facilities by 2030.

In late 2017, with leadership from the Canadian government, the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol came into effect, dictating the phase-down of HFCs by more than 80% over the next 30 years. This is expected to prevent up to 0.5°C of global warming.

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Despite Canada's commitment on methane, it's unclear whether weaker draft laws recently proposed in B.C, Alberta and Saskatchewan will be allowed to supersede federal regulations. If so, this would seriously undermine Canada's ability to reach its 40–45% methane reduction target. The federal government published in March 2019 a draft equivalency agreement with B.C., despite that province's regulations having a significantly weaker approach to Leak Detection and Repair than the federal standards.

Essential enhancements

Relatively inexpensive technology is already available to go much further than the 40–45% methane reduction target. New technologies for continuous monitoring of methane emissions are improving rapidly, as are low and zero emission equipment. Canada should strive to virtually eliminate methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 2030. This becomes more feasible as the oil and gas sector shrinks and as technology improves. Most mitigation can already be achieved for less than the current price on carbon pollution.



CRITICAL NEW MEASURES TO BRIDGE CANADA'S EMISSIONS GAP

Addressing emissions from the oil and gas sector

Ever-increasing oil production, and the infrastructure that delivers it, are the main barriers to Canada meeting its 2030 emissions reduction goals. Emissions from Canadian oil and gas exports also undermine the whole world's decarbonization goals. If left unchecked over this century, GHG emissions from [Canadian oil alone would use up 16% of the total global carbon budget in a 1.5°C scenario](#).

Yet our current climate policies are mostly geared to reducing energy demand. There are regulations to lower the fuel needs of vehicles, for instance, but we are lacking sufficient action to reduce the emissions from Canadian oil and gas. Eliminating fossil fuel subsidies would help to rectify this. Every proposed Canadian infrastructure project should also face a climate test to determine if it helps or hinders Canada's climate goals.

The Bank of Canada has recently acknowledged that asset prices for Canadian securities in carbon intensive sectors “may not fully reflect carbon-related risk, which could also raise the cost of transitioning to a low-carbon economy” and increase the risk of fire sale of oil and gas sector stocks, introducing systemic risk to Canada’s economy. To reduce risk to the economy, government should avoid carbon lock-in and ensure investors are fully informed of climate risks, such as the likelihood that infrastructure will either require retrofits to mitigate emissions or will need to be written off.

Under no circumstances should Canada claim credit for purported emissions reductions abroad from liquified natural gas (LNG) exports, as some Canadian politicians have suggested. Such credits lack validity. Further, fossil fuel exports of any kind lock in future emissions, and the availability of gas may in fact displace renewable projects in importing countries.

Increasing climate financing to the developing world

Canada’s NDC is silent on our responsibility to assist developing nations with low-carbon development and adapting to climate change impacts. Yet the rich, industrialized nations of the world expect poorer, developing countries to deliver on specific, and scheduled, emission reductions. Since many of these reductions will depend directly on international financial support, it’s fair for our own NDC to be clear about the amount and timing of that support.

We have benchmarks to guide us. In 2009, developed countries committed to deliver US\$100 billion in climate finance by 2020. In Paris, parties to the UNFCCC agreed to extend this commitment until 2025 for international climate financing. Depending on the formula used, Canada’s fair share of this amount is 3-4%, or US\$3-4 billion annually from 2020 to 2025. In November 2015, Canada committed C\$2.65 billion over five years to help developing countries tackle climate change. This is a good start. However, the C\$800 million of the total now earmarked for 2020 falls short of our fair share, and there has been no commitment, thus far, to increase this funding and continue to provide it to 2025.



A PLAN THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND

Engaging meaningfully with Indigenous peoples

Canada's current NDC calls for meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and includes support for monitoring and addressing climate impacts in Indigenous communities. But this engagement has

been less than successful so far, with tension erupting between the Assembly of First Nations and government representatives during the development of the Pan-Canadian Framework. Canada needs to take this issue seriously by integrating the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into future climate policy, including:

- The right to free, prior, and informed consent on policies that affect Indigenous peoples.
- The right to free, prior and informed consent on resource development on their land or territories.

Protecting Canadian prosperity, jobs, and communities

Canada should prepare communities for the transition away from fossil fuels and towards a zero emission economy. This work has already begun, with the world's first government-initiated national Just Transition Task Force for workers and communities in the coal sector which has delivered its final report and recommendations to the federal government. These recommendations should be heeded by government and implemented fully and swiftly. This effort should expand to all GHG-intensive sectors where employment impacts from environmental regulations are anticipated, so that communities are ready and workers have the training and income support they need to retool to new opportunities in clean tech, energy efficiency, green building and retrofits, renewable energy, low carbon fuels and electrification. It's also important to keep in mind that the nature of work in Canada is changing broadly, for a number of reasons that have nothing to do with climate change. Automation, the rise of the gig economy, and precarious global markets are challenges that Canada will have to face head-on.

Improving transparency and accountability

Canadians deserve greater openness on climate action, along with processes to evaluate whether climate policies are succeeding. Canada should establish an arm's-length expert panel, to review and prescribe corrective actions as needed. This panel should be transparent, gender-balanced, informed by Indigenous knowledge, and inclusive of stakeholders from all segments of Canadian society. It should be responsible for publicly recommending measures needed to keep the country on track to

meet its 2030 commitments, and empowered to set 2050 targets based on climate science, in line with the goal of holding global warming to 1.5°C. Legislators, in turn, must be accountable for acting on the panel's recommendations, and explaining to Canadians how they will do so.

Accountability also requires that governments not simply set long-term targets, with the possibility that future governments will not work to achieve them, but also set interim targets that are consistent with longer-term targets, but are largely achievable within a government's mandate. The use of annual or short term carbon budgets – which indicate the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions that can be emitted across the economy over a period – can be a useful planning tool. The expert panel would play an important role in setting carbon budgets or interim targets that are consistent with longer-term 2030 and 2050 targets.

For impact assessments and regulatory approval processes, accountability will require a clear framework for considering a project's climate impacts, including the scope of lifecycle and lifespan emissions that should be assessed, as well as whether the project helps or hinders Canada's ability to meet the legislated targets or budgets.

Changing the conversation on climate change

To protect progress on climate issues, it is essential that we, as a country, move public dialogue about climate change away from political game playing and partisanship. All Canadian political parties, and all Canadian politicians, should work to foster a candid national discussion on the impacts of acting, and not acting, on climate change. This conversation must be grounded in science, Indigenous and community knowledge, and a deep understanding of equity. Such a discussion has the potential to be a catalyst for building inclusive, bold, and creative policy that ensures we not only reach our existing 2030 commitments, but go well beyond them. Though it's bound to be a challenge, it's critical that we move forward and do our fair share in the global fight against climate change – to take advantage of the opportunities that climate action presents and to uphold our responsibility to future generations.



Photos

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