

Submission: Building BC's Recovery, Together

Prepared by:
Merran Smith, Executive Director
Dan Woynilowicz, Senior Associate
July 21, 2020

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Introduction

B.C.'s ambition to build a clean economy is a defining opportunity for our generation, an opportunity made even more poignant by our experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have so many opportunities and advantages to harness, and we believe that BC's economic recovery plan can firmly place the province on a trajectory towards a resilient recovery, with lower carbon pollution, enhanced global competitiveness, reconciliation with First Nations, greater equity and shared prosperity.

Doing so is no small task, it requires a significant multi-year investment of both human and financial resources, starting with stimulus investments this fall and furthered through Budget 2021. We strongly endorse Minister Taylor's view shared in the consultation document, that in BC *"we're starting from a strong place. We have a lot of advantages in BC, from our natural resources and clean technology, to our capacity for research, to our culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. We're the gateway to Asia and a major port to the US. And our most important advantage is our people."*

We also support Premier Horgan's assertion on May 6, echoed in the discussion document, that the province must recommit to putting CleanBC at the center of our recovery. As we have [written](#), "while it may be tempting to try to rebuild the past, we must be realistic and build for the present and the future... Governments should aim stimulus at the economy they want: one with less pollution and more resilience."

In charting B.C's recovery we shouldn't simply try to get things back to normal but aspire for 'better than normal'. Better and more secure jobs. Better wages. Better services. A better environment. Better quality of life, for all British Columbians.

The result? British Columbians will live in healthy communities, benefit from strong public services, and will be back at work in secure jobs that support their families and a sustainable economy.

Framework for Resilient Recovery

We share and support the values articulated in the government's discussion document, which are consistent with our recommended values in action:



Sustainable economy: Supported by CleanBC policies and programs, the BC economy is diversified, innovative, and clean. Using local innovations and technologies, we will produce low and zero carbon commodities, goods and services, and clean technologies to meet growing local and global (export) demand.



Secure Jobs: Immediate support is provided to businesses to get workers back to work and to re-train workers whose jobs don't return. Investments are made in initiatives around the province that put people in rural and urban communities to work and align with equity and Clean BC goals.



Clean environment: BC protects its forests, parks, and oceans while reducing single-use plastics and other forms of waste. Where possible, waste is repurposed into renewable fuel.

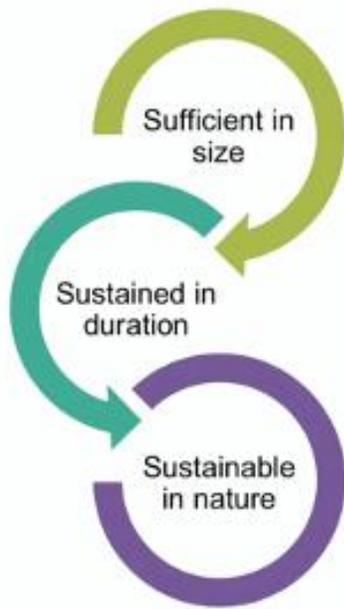


Healthy and connected communities: Every community in BC feels safe, healthy, connected, and prosperous, served by strong public services, including health, education and broadband internet. Local food and medical supply chains will be strengthened.



Equity, UNDRIP & affordability: British Columbian and Indigenous citizens have equitable access to opportunities and a high quality of life in their communities—nobody is left behind anywhere in the province.

To live up to these values, we recommend that three key principles guide government efforts:

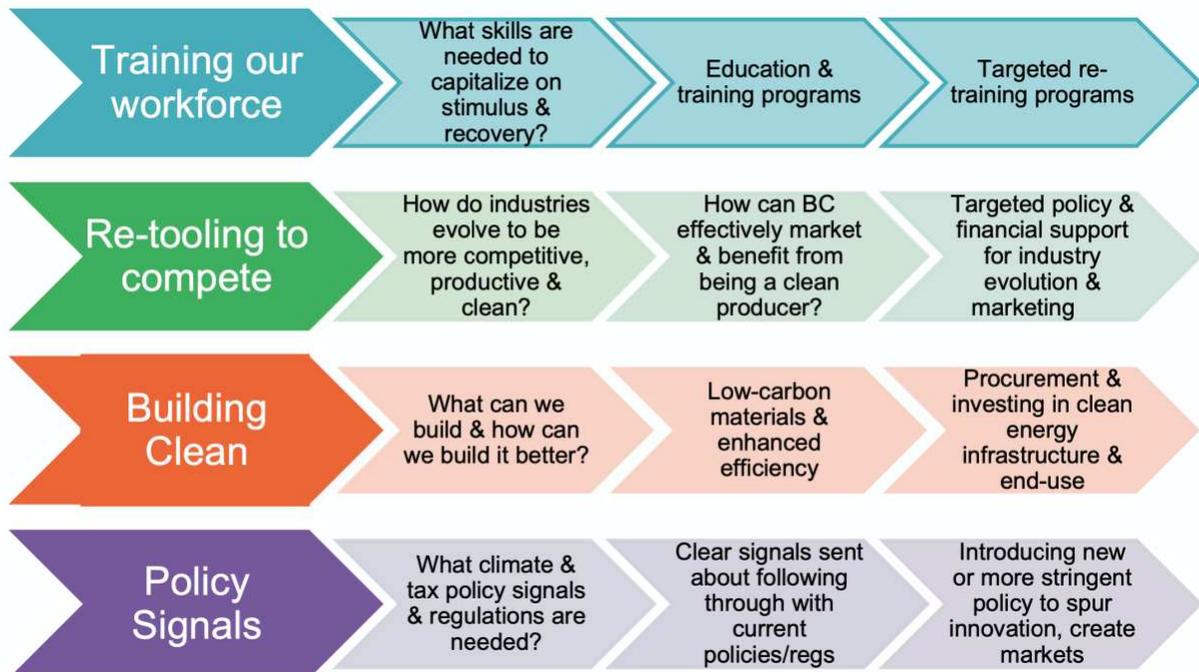


1. Support must be **sufficient in size**. Success requires that the scale of stimulus and recovery support matches the scale of the challenge. Inadequate effort will compound our current challenges, making it even more difficult and pushing off a successful recovery.

2. It must be **sustained in duration**. Recovery won't happen overnight, especially in those sectors and regions hardest hit, so government support can't disappear overnight. If no region or British Columbian is to be left behind, this will be a multi-year endeavour.

3. The recovery must be **sustainable in nature**. Our recovery will only be as resilient as it is sustainable. Both economically sustainable (which means diversifying our economy and growing our clean energy sector) and environmentally so (which means British Columbians live in healthier communities with less air pollution and fewer climate catastrophes).

In developing a recovery action plan, we recommend the strategic consideration of training requirements, industrial re-tooling, building better and a strong policy framework, which are informed by the CleanBC plan, as well as recent (Emerging Economy Task Force, Innovation Commissioner) and forthcoming (CleanBC Labour Readiness Plan) reports.



Clean stimulus: the research behind it and the countries adopting it

[Source](#)

If there's one word to describe clean stimulus measures, it's opportunity. From the head of the International Energy Agency who [said](#) recently that “governments have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reboot their economies... while accelerating the shift to a more resilient and cleaner energy future.” To House Democrats in the U.S. who described the “incredible opportunity” to transition to clean energy [in a recent letter](#). To the leaders of some of Canada's largest corporations who [wrote that it is an](#) “opportunity to emerge... with a resilient economy that creates prosperity for more Canadians.”

Clean stimulus measures not only help reduce emissions and fight climate change, but a growing body of research also suggests that such policies may be particularly effective at creating jobs and supporting economic growth. After the 2008 recession, the Obama-era U.S. introduced a [number of successful clean stimulus measures](#).

But despite mounting evidence in favour of a clean recovery, [not all countries are realizing its potential](#). The following summarizes some of the most recent research into clean stimulus as well as newly introduced clean recovery packages and announcements from around the world.

Cost effectiveness of stimulus

- A [May 2020 study](#) by U.K. and U.S. economists reviewed more than 700 economic stimulus policies launched during or since the 2008 financial crisis by G20 nations; it also surveyed 231 experts from 53 countries, including economists and officials from finance ministries and central banks. They found that clean stimulus measures were the most cost-effective ways to kickstart economies. Clean infrastructure and building energy retrofits were found to be particularly effective. Non-conditional airline bailouts were found to be among the worst-performing recovery measures.
- [Researchers from Imperial College London and the International Energy Agency](#) reported that “publicly traded renewable power portfolios have posted significantly higher returns for investors and lower volatility over fossil fuels

during the past 10 years.” Over the first four months of 2020, clean energy stocks actually grew 2.2%, while fossil fuel stocks fell by 40.5%.

- A report by McKinsey found that, compared to funding for fossil fuels, clean stimulus creates nearly three times as many jobs for every \$10 million invested by governments.

Newly adopted clean stimulus measures

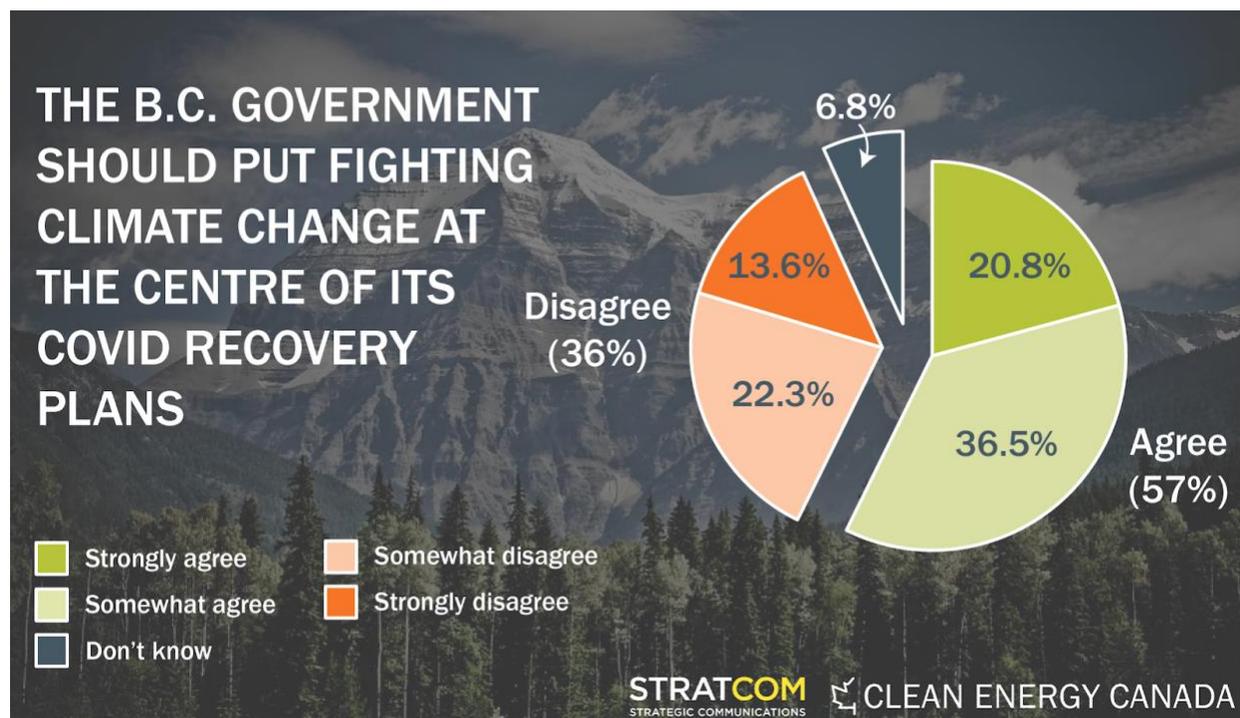
- The **European Union** has passed a €572 billion green stimulus package, which comprises roughly one-third of the total recovery package.
- **Germany** adopted a stimulus package worth €130 billion (C\$200 billion), which includes €50 billion (C\$77 billion) to address climate change, innovation, and digital technology (again, roughly one-third of the total recovery package).
- **South Korea** unveiled a 100 trillion won (C\$116-billion) ‘New Deal’ plan to reshape the economy, which focuses on digital and green technologies.
- **The United Kingdom** has announced £3-billion (C\$5.1 billion) to boost “environmental projects” including £1-billion (C\$1.7-billion) to make existing public buildings greener.
- **New Zealand** has announced \$210 million (C\$187 million) for “climate resilience and flood protection projects” and \$155 million (C\$138 million) for “transformative energy projects” as part of a \$3-billion (C\$2.7-billion) post-COVID infrastructure fund.
- **Scotland** launched a £62-million (C\$105-million) fund to help the energy sector recovery. While funding will also go to oil and gas, other projects to be considered for funding include a global underwater hub, a net-zero solution centre, a hydrogen hub, and an energy transition zone. The fund aims to position the northeast of Scotland as a hydrogen model region.
- In **Denmark**, the Danish Business Promotion Board is releasing 82.5 million Danish Krona (C\$17 million) to ensure small and mid-sized businesses don’t abandon plans to transition away from fossil fuels as they recover from COVID-19.

Public Opinion Research

Most British Columbians see the province’s post-COVID economic recovery as an opportunity to increase the B.C. government’s climate efforts through investments in clean energy and

technology—and believe doing so would likely be to our economic benefit. [Polling](#) from Stratcom and Clean Energy Canada offers insight into how many would like to see things unfold.

Over three-quarters of British Columbians (79%) agree that the economic changes brought about by COVID-19 provide an opportunity to do more now to fight climate change. Asked whether climate action should be at the centre of the province’s recovery plans, 57% say yes versus 36% who oppose the idea. The poll surveyed 802 British Columbians (see methodology below).

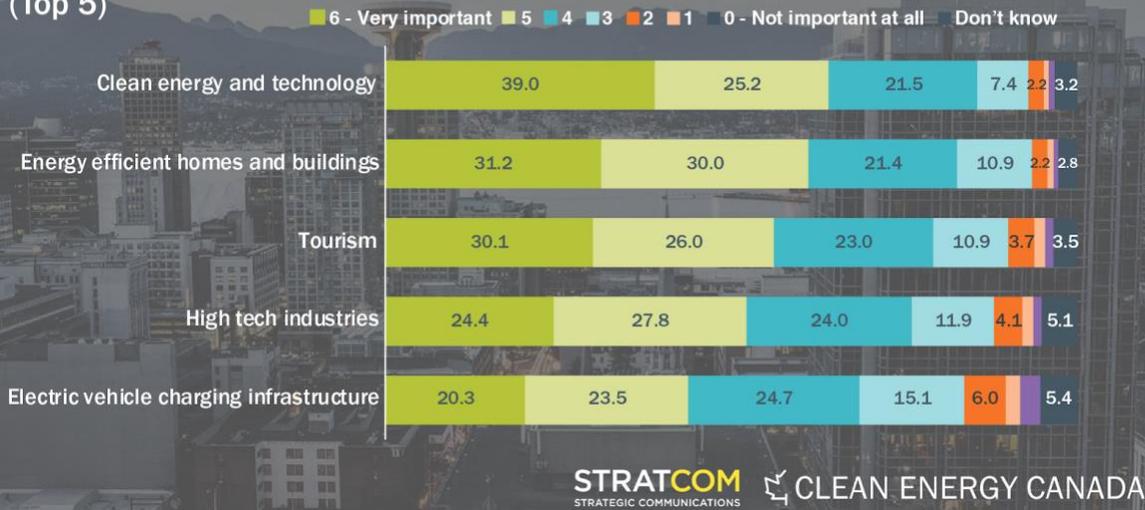


Roughly half (48%) of respondents also believe provincial government efforts to make the economy cleaner will make B.C. more competitive in the global marketplace, compared to one in five (20%) who think it will make B.C. less competitive. That said, **85% support efforts to make B.C.’s economy cleaner**, regardless of impacts on competitiveness.

On a list of 10 areas in which the government could invest, “clean energy and technology” is considered the most vital with 64% rating it important. This is followed by “energy efficient homes and buildings” (61%), “tourism” (56%), “high tech industries” (52%) and “electric vehicle charging infrastructure” (44%). Nearer the bottom of the list, “oil, gas and LNG” is chosen as important by just 33% of respondents.

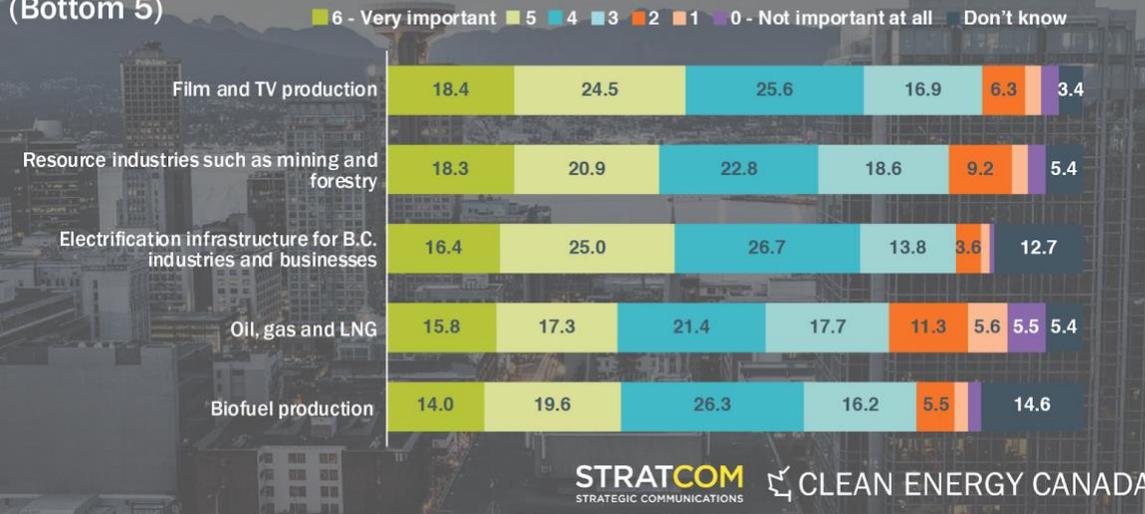
IMPORTANCE OF B.C. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

(Top 5)



IMPORTANCE OF B.C. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

(Bottom 5)



British Columbians were also polled on their support for specific clean stimulus and recovery measures. Support is highest for energy efficient retrofits (60%), followed by investments in electric buses (59%) and public transit more broadly (55%).

SUPPORT/OPPOSE INVESTMENTS IN CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY STIMULUS AND RECOVERY MEASURES (Top 5)



STRATCOM STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CLEAN ENERGY CANADA

SUPPORT/OPPOSE INVESTMENTS IN CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY STIMULUS AND RECOVERY MEASURES (Bottom 4)



STRATCOM STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CLEAN ENERGY CANADA

A strong majority also believe that traditional resource industries in B.C. should definitely (39%) or in some cases (48%) be required to implement better sustainability measures, such as using less-polluting processes and cleaner vehicles to shrink their carbon footprint.

The findings of this survey suggest that British Columbians' experience with the COVID-19 crisis appears to be increasing their desire for action on another looming crisis: climate change. Premier Horgan and the government's signalled intent to put CleanBC, the province's climate plan, at the centre of economic recovery appears to be the approach British Columbians want to take too: not returning to business as usual but using recovery efforts to rebuild a cleaner, sustainable economy.

Conclusion

Public trust in government has increased significantly thanks to an effective government-led response to COVID-19. British Columbians, like other Canadians, are feeling optimistic and expect that the post-COVID recovery will be transformational, delivering on more societally-focused goals. Leading economic experts analyzing historic economic stimulus and recovery efforts have noted that clean stimulus policies often have advantages over traditional fiscal stimulus, delivering climate benefits, superior economic results and other societal co-benefits. B.C has good company in its commitment to put climate action at the centre of its economic recovery and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to chart a course toward a sustainable and prosperous future for all British Columbians. We look forward to supporting the government in this endeavour

About Us

Clean Energy Canada is a climate and clean energy think tank within the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University.

We work to accelerate Canada's clean energy transition by sharing the story of the global shift to renewable energy sources and clean technology. We conduct original research, convene influential dialogues, inform policy leadership, and build citizen engagement.

Clean Energy Canada is not a recipient of public funding.