Work and Climate Change Report

The green transition of work and workplaces: Research and News from a Canadian viewpoint

YEARLY ARCHIVES: 2018

COP24 Updates and Week 2: Voices of unions, business, the U.S., and youth

Posted on **December 11, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The official meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP 24) in Katowice began optimistically, with over 40 countries, including Canada, adopting the host country's **Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration** . On the same day, December 3, IndustriALL Global Union and IndustriAll European Trade Union issued a **joint declaration demanding a Just Transition for workers** . The week ended with a diplomatic stand-off on whether delegates would "welcome" or "recognize" the landmark IPCC Scientific report – with four obdurate fossil fuel countries – U.S., Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait –refusing to use the word "welcome"; *The Energy Mix* **summarizes** those weekend negotiations and why the outcome is important – the Union of Concerned Scientists **issued a statement** that they are "deeply alarmed" by the U.S. position. DeSmog UK sums up some of the concerns from Week 1 in **'We Cannot Accept an Unjust Energy Transition': Future of Coal Communities Becomes Crucial Issue at Climate Talks"** . The good news, according to an ITUC policy officer quoted in the article, is that "never, ever, before had climate negotiators debated so much about the impacts of the energy transition on workers and their communities".

Away from the official agenda, in all-important side meetings: on December 6, the Polish trade union Solidarność signed a **joint declaration** with the U.S. Heartland Institute, aligning itself with the climate denying group and rejecting climate science. A series of meetings were co-organized by **Trade Unions for Energy Democracy** (TUED) , Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-New York Office, the UK's Public and Commercial Services Union, Friends of the Earth Europe, transform! europe. The Agenda of the meetings is **here** ; discussion focused on the TUED discussion paper written by Sean Sweeney and John Treat, ***When "Green" Doesn't "Grow": Facing Up to the Failures of Profit-Driven Climate Policy***, which is described as "a discussion paper highlighting the failures of profit-driven climate policy and making the case for an alternative approach that focuses on the public good and meeting basic human needs, and that embraces the struggle for public / social ownership and democratic control over energy resources and use." It concludes with the observation that at the moment, everyone is being left behind. "This is not a scenario that unions can accept. Only a coordinated, public-goods approach allows us to escape the contradictions of commodified energy systems that pit some workers against others."

Week 2, which runs from December 10 to 17th, has seen the arrival of political leaders, including Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna. An interview with McKenna on her first day in Katowice appears in the *National Observer,* "**McKenna says climate targets could be law in future"** . One of the issues addressed in the interview: a new report from Stand.earth and Environmental Defence, ***Canada's Oil and Gas Challenge: A Summary Analysis of Rising Oil and Gas Industry Emissions in Canada and Progress Towards Meeting Climate Targets*** , which shows how oil and gas emissions in Canada are rising, and documents examples of how oil and gas companies have influenced Canada's climate policies. It calls for phasing out subsidies to the oil and gas sector on an accelerated timeline, and extending just transition policies , especially to oil and gas workers. McKenna did not commit to any such new policies.

In its only official event, the U.S. Administration attempted to lead a session on December 10, called "US innovative technologies spur economic dynamism", which promotes " clean coal". As reported by ***Common Dreams*** and ***DeSmog UK*** , protesters – mostly young people – disrupted the meeting with laughter and speeches before they walked out. *Think Progress* summarizes the event and the U.S. presence at COP24 in **"Anger, protests greet U.S. fossil fuels side event at U.N. climate talks"**. In contrast to the positions of the U.S. Administration, **We are Still In** , the coalition of U.S. state and local governments and organizations, is presenting a full slate of presentations and panels supporting the Paris Agreement – their agenda is **here** . Included under this umbrella are the positions of the U.S. business community, including the We Mean Business coalition . Their blog, "**Why we need a Just Transition to a Low Carbon World**" summarizes their report, released at COP24: ***Climate and the Just Transition: The Business Case for Action*** .

From an international business view, ***Climate Change and the Just Transition: An Investor Guide*** was released on December 10 by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics, in partnership with the the **Initiative for Responsible Investment** at the Harvard Kennedy School. The International Trade Union Confederation is also listed as a partner in this publication. The Guide endorses the need for Just Transition and illustrates a review of academic research and reveals the viewpoints of the financial community on the value of Just Transition. The release of the report coincides with the release of a ***Global Investor Statement*** by some of the world's largest pension funds, asset managers and insurance companies, which calls for governments to phase out thermal coal power, put a meaningful price on carbon, and phase out fossil fuel subsidies. It's significance is described in *The Guardian* article, "**Largest ever group of global investors call for more action to meet Paris targets"** . The Investor Group ***Briefing Paper*** includes an endorsement of the Powering past Coal Alliance, and states: "Investors encourage governments to transition to a low carbon economy in a sustainable and economically inclusive way. As stated in the Paris Agreement, this must include "the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities", by providing appropriate support for workers and communities in industries undergoing transition . Additionally, governments should work with investors to ensure that the benefits and opportunities created by acting on climate change and the increased adoption of clean energy technologies are accessible to all".

For COP24 News from a trade union perspective , read a blog by Philip Pearson appear in "**Breaking News**" at the Greener Jobs Alliance website or the **COP24 Blog** by IndustriALL .

And for another view of the "unofficial" side of COP24, check ***Democracy Now,*** which is reporting from Katowice. "**Thousands Protest at U.N. Climate Summit in Coal-Heavy Poland, Facing Riot Police & Intimidation** " was posted on December 10, and Amy Goodman interviewed Swedish teenager and "climate hero" **Greta Thunberg** on December 11. December 8 was officially dedicated to **Youth voices** , with Greta being the most publicized, but certainly not alone. Last words to **Greta and the young people she represents**: "… we have not come here to beg the world leaders to care for our future," …. They have ignored us in the past and they will ignore us again. We have come here to let them know that change is coming whether they like it or not. The people will rise to the challenge." And from video of a **speech posted by the UNFCC** , she states: "The first thing I have learned is that you're never too small to make a difference."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Business positions on climate change**, **Coal Industry**, **COP24**, **energy democracy**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **Greta Thunberg**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Low-Carbon Investment**, **Younger workers** | **Leave a reply**

New B.C. Plan weds a clean economy with economic growth and worker training

Posted on **December 7, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

British Columbia's long-promised climate plan, **CleanB.C.** was released on December 5. The press release summary is **here** , details are in a 16-page ***Highlights Report*** . Top-line summary: the CleanBC plan is at pains to emphasize that it is a plan for economic growth as well as a cleaner environment. B.C.'s existing carbon tax will increase $5.00 per year from 2018 to 2021, with rebates for low and middle income British Columbians and support for clean investments in industry. CleanB.C. repeats some already announced initiatives, such as the the **zero-emissions**

vehicle sales mandate and ZEV consumer incentives, and the requirement for new buildings to be "net-zero energy ready" by 2032. Publicly-funded housing will benefit from $400 million to support retrofits and upgrades. Cleaner operations by industry will target a 45% reduction of methane emissions from upstream oil and gas operations , and incentives "will provide clean electricity to planned natural gas production in the Peace region". There is also support through "a regulatory framework for safe and effective underground CO_2 storage and direct air capture ".

CleanB.C. recognizes the needs of workers. From the **Highlights**: "As new jobs and professions emerge, post-secondary education and training need to keep pace. The Province is working with employers, Indigenous communities, labour groups and postsecondary institutions to analyze the labour market and identify: -where the strongest job growth is likely to be, – what skills are needed to meet the demand, – what specific training we need to develop and deliver in our communities, and – what support students and apprentices need to excel in these programs. As a first step, we are investing in two key sectors where we already know demand is strong and growing – cleaner buildings and cleaner transportation: – Developing programs like Energy Step Code training and certification and Certified Retrofit Professional accreditation – Expanding job training for electric and zero-emission vehicles." The government also states it is developing a CleanBC Labour Readiness Plan, which is part of the reason that Unifor responded with "**Unifor supports introduction of Clean B.C. Plan**". Laird Cronk, president of the **BC Federation of Labour calls** the new strategy an "historic opportunity" to develop a sustainable economy, and states: "We're committed to working together on just and fair transition strategies to protect existing workers and to ensure that new employment opportunities created by the CleanBC plan are good, family- and community-supporting jobs."

The general acclaim for Clean B.C. is compiled in a **Backgrounder** at the B.C. government website, with statements from politicians, environmentalists, business leaders, First Nations, labour unions, and academics- among them, Marc Jaccard from Simon Fraser University, who states: "This plan returns B.C. to global climate leadership." From other sources: Clean Energy Canada: "**CleanBC marks a turning point for B.C.'s environment and economy"** (Dec. 5); The **Broadbent Blog** , which singles out the exemplary commitment to equity and reconciliation with First Nations people; the Pembina Institute, "**B.C. climate plan sets a course to Canada's clean future**" and "**Five bright spots in B.C.'s new climate plan**", which highlights the importance of the accountability mechanism. The **David Suzuki Foundation** calls it a "Big Step Forward", but points out that there is more to be done – a Phase 2 is needed.

The Phase 2 of further initiatives (and implementation legislation) are promised. The Government clearly admits that the initiatives announced on December 5 will only achieve 18.9 Mt GHG reduction, leaving a 25% gap with what is required by the legislated target for 2030 (25.4 Mt GHG from a 2007 baseline).

The **response from West Coast Environmental Law** applauds and endorses CleanB.C. and its accountability measures, but raises the elephant in the room question: "We know that the Province needs to go further: the map set out in CleanBC is not complete, nor does it go far enough. Some recent decisions, for example on LNG, are difficult to square with this climate plan". This big LNG question also appears in "**Critics question B.C.'s LNG pursuit in wake of climate**

plan announcement" (updated on December 6), stating that " the already-approved LNG export facilities — LNG Canada and Woodfibre in Squamish — would take up almost all of B.C.'s allowable carbon footprint under the current targets." The government's **current LNG Framework** was released in March 2018 , allowing **the approval of a controversial $40-billion LNG project** centred in Kitimat in October 2018. At that time, the Green Party leader linked his Party's support for the clean growth strategy and promised the Greens "would have more to say" about LNG after the Clean Growth strategy was finalized.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **B.C. Carbon Tax**, **British Columbia**, **Green Economy**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Talking Just Transition in the heart of coal country: COP24 delegates gather in Katowice, Poland

Posted on **December 6, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Representatives of almost 200 nations are meeting at the **24th annual Conference of the Parties (COP24)** in Katowice, Poland from December 3 to 17. Their goal is to negotiate a "rulebook" to turn the Paris Agreement pledges of 2015 into reality – basically, trying to find agreement on a host of implementation details so that the world can limit warming to 2, preferably 1.5 degrees C.

— Museum to coal mining in Katowice, Poland

With Poland as the host country and the location of the meetings in the centre of the country's coal region, it was inevitable that Just Transition would have a high profile at COP24 . The first day of the meetings at the Polish Pavilion was devoted entirely to discussion of the ***Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration*** which has been **signed by** Poland's President and heads of 44 other countries. The Declaration states that social approval of changes is essential for the transition to a low-carbon economy and the social security of workers in affected communities is the first and foremost policy goal. Although the International Trade Union Congress is meeting for its **4th World Congress** in Copenhagen in the week of December 2, it released a **statement of support** for the Silesia Declaration, stating "This declaration means that workers and their unions will have a seat at the negotiating table and workers' voices will be heard when climate policies are developed and implemented. Good social dialogue processes are a crucial factor to make the changes to industries, sectors and national economies that will stop dangerous climate change and unleash a 65 million low-carbon jobs dividend by 2030. "

Also at the ITUC World Congress, Canadian Labour Congress president Hassan Yussuff delivered a speech (radio broadcast **here**) on December 5 about on how Canadian unions are dealing with climate change. The European Trade Union Confederation is also participating in the discussion on Just Transition –notably with participation in the December 3 session '**Game changer for the future of work: Towards a just transition with gender equality**' . A list of ILO sessions and events regarding Just Transition and Decent Work is **here** .

December 10 has been designated as "Ambition and Just Transition Day", and on December 13, Canada and the U.K. , as co-founders of the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, will co-host a **Side-event** to showcase the PPCA progress and to launch a new report on global coal economics by Carbon Tracker .

Already launched at COP24: ***Just Transition: Mapping Just Transition(s) to a Low Carbon World*** , published by the Just Transition Research Collaborative (JTRC), part of the U.N. Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD). It focuses on Brazil, Germany, Kenya, South Africa, the United States, and Canada – with contributions from Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood. The report discusses how differently Just Transition has been framed, and provides case studies of how it is being implemented in the six countries.

The Climate Action Network- Canada (CAN-Rac) is participating at COP24 and released a **Brief** which sets out five goals for the meetings, including Just Transition goals. CAN-Rac calls for stronger institutional recognition of just transition – by including a Just Transition commitment in the official Nationally Determined Contribution, and by including it as a permanent theme within the COP meetings (which guarantees it status as an agenda item and as part of the official work programme). CANRac supports the Polish Solidarity and **Just Transition Silesia Declaration**, recognizing the need for a carefully planned process built on social dialogue. Within the Canadian context, the Brief calls for an ongoing mandate for the federal Just Transition Task Force and an expansion beyond coal phase-out, to include all fossil fuel sectors. Finally it states: “The contribution of Indigenous communities in the creation and implementation of just transition policies and national plans is essential.”

What will Canada do at the COP24? The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) makes its predictions in “**The End of Coal? What to Watch for at the Upcoming UN Climate Conference (COP24)”** . Environment and Climate Change Minister McKenna will not arrive at the meetings until December 9 ; December 10 has been declared “Ambition and Just Transition Day”, and December 13, “Coal-free Day”. On December 13, McKenna , along with the other co-founder, U.K.’s Claire Perry, will co-host a **Powering Past Coal Side-event** to showcase the PPCA progress and spotlight a new report, **Powering Down Coal** by Carbon Tracker.

In advance of leaving for COP24, the Minister **pledged** that Canada will set more ambitious GHG emissions targets when the Paris Agreement begins in 2020 – which is a good thing since **recently released data** from the Global Carbon Project shows Canada is one of the world’s top ten polluters, and the current target of reducing emissions 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 is generally considered insufficient (even if we were to meet it). The ***2018 Emissions Gap Report*** from the U.N. documents just how insufficient the efforts of all countries have been.

How to Keep up to date with COP24: The United Nations Framework on Climate Change (**UNFCC) website** has comprehensive coverage including highlights, official documents, photos, and webcasts from the meetings. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) also provides detailed daily coverage, including photos, in its ***Earth Negotiations Bulletin*** (and has also written a ***Short Guide to COP24*** as an introduction to how it all works). For media coverage: ***Climate Home News*** has extensive and expert coverage of all aspects and ***The Guardian***, as always, has strong coverage. For the latest developments, follow Environment and Climate Change Canada's Twitter feed **here** ; also   **#JustTransition** ; **#Climate Justice** ; and for a variety of views , **#COP24Katowice** .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **coal phase-out**, **COP24**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Paris Agreement**, **Poland** | **Leave a reply**

U.S. Democrats promote Green New Deal, based on a Jobs for All guarantee

Posted on **December 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

"Climate Jobs for All"   by Jeremy Brecher appeared in *CounterPunch* on December 3, and it would be hard to find a more knowledgeable guide to the current U.S. policy discussion about a Green New Deal. Brecher traces the origins and evolution of one of the key aspects of the Green New Deal – the Jobs for All Guarantee (JG), which began in 2017 as a policy proposal to combat unemployment and inequality. He then discusses how the concept expanded to include a Climate Jobs for All Guarantee – a jobs guarantee program that is geared to the transition to a climate-safe, fossil-free economy.

The Green New Deal is an increasingly popular and powerful policy within the Democratic Party of the U.S. Here are some of the stepping stones along the way to the present:

In May, 2017, ***Toward a Marshall Plan for America: Rebuilding Our Towns, Cities, and the Middle Class*** was published by the Center for American Progress as a proposal for full employment policies, based on the precedent of the Roosevelt New Deal policies of the Great Depression.

The Federal Job Guarantee – A Policy to Achieve Permanent Full Employment was published in March 2018 by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; also in March, **"Why Democrats Should Embrace a Federal Jobs Guarantee**" appeared in *The Nation* .

"**The Job Guarantee: Design, Jobs, and Implementation**" , published in April 2018, was one of several working papers on the topic by **Pavlina R. Tcherneva** of Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, New York.

Application to the climate change movement began with **"It's Time for the Climate Movement to Embrace a Federal Jobs Guarantee**", which appeared in *In These Times* in May 2018, written by two members of the **Sunrise Movement,** the U.S. youth organization which promotes climate justice, and which has published the **Climate Jobs Guarantee Primer** .

A Green New Deal: A Progressive Vision for Environmental Sustainability and Economic Stability was published by Data for Progress in September 2018, stating: "This report articulates a vision for a broad set policy goals and investments that aim to achieve environmental sustainability and economic stability in ways that are just and equitable."

The topic began to hit the headlines with the sit-in at Nancy Pelosi's office on November 13, organized by youth activists for climate justice in the **Sunrise Movement** and **Justice Democrats** . Representative-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez unexpectedly took part in the demonstration, demanding that Pelosi support a **Select Committee on the Green New Deal** – which had been part of AOC's platform in the congressional election . David Roberts of *Vox* provides expert political analysis in "**Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is already pressuring Nancy Pelosi on climate change**" (Nov. 15) , and *The Intercept* also reported on the demonstration in "**Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Joins Environmental Activists in Protest at Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi's Office** " .

For the latest, as Democratic members of Congress begin to sign on, read "**The Game-Changing Promise of a Green New Deal**" by Naomi Klein in *The Intercept* (Nov. 27); "**Video: Naomi Klein interviews Bernie Sanders on Climate Change**" on December 3, before the National Town Hall on Solutions for Climate Change, and "**The Green New Deal is designed to win"** in *The Atlantic* (Dec. 5) .

If time is short, read the brief introduction by the Sierra Club magazine : "What is this Green New Deal anyway?" , and follow **#Green New Deal** .

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Green Job Creation**, **Green New Deal**, **Just Transition**, **United States** | **Leave a reply**

GM Oshawa closure – a sign of the disruption to auto manufacturing

Posted on **December 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

After the November 26 bombshell announcement that the GM plant in Oshawa will close at the end of December 2019, Unifor President Jerry Diaz **has demanded** that GM allocate product to the Oshawa plant, putting his faith in the newly-signed USMCA trade agreement and stating "Oshawa has been in this situation before with no product on the horizon and we were able to successfully make the case for continued operations." But in a CBC interview, "**Why can't they make the future in Oshawa?**'"(Nov. 27), the Canadian Vice President for Corporate and Environmental Affairs states firmly that there is no hope for further production in Oshawa. "This decision has to do with simply being able to make the transition to the future and reallocate capital into the massive investments that are needed for electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles." He forecasts that about half of the existing Oshawa workers will be eligible to retire with enhanced full pensions, some (but not all) others may find work at GM plants in Ingersoll or St. Catharines, and the rest will be covered by whatever compensation, benefits and timing is negotiated with their union, Unifor. In a more recent CBC article, "**GM Canada president says electric vehicles are the future — but they won't be made in Oshawa**" (Dec. 4), the president reiterates that there are no changes planned for the CAMI plant in Ingersoll or the St. Catharines facility, and points to the growth of the new GM Canadian Technology Centre opened in Markham in January 2018, which has already hired approximately 450 software engineers and coders, with plans to hire more.

Although Ontario Premier Ford somehow blamed the previous government's cap and trade policies for GM's decision, others are recognizing the GM closure as part of the disruption and transformation of the auto industry.   From the *Energy Mix*, "**GM Plant Closure Shows Industry Transition Catching Canada, Ontario Flat-Footed**" (Nov. 30) ; (also of interest: "**Lost Opportunities Show Cost of Canada's Moribund Cleantech Manufacturing Strategy**"   (Nov.

30), which discusses the dilemma of electric bus manufacturers in Canada). In "**GM and Canada's transition to a zero-emissions fleet**" in IRPP P*olicy Options* (Dec. 3) , author Ryan Katz-Rosene of the University of Ottawa states that " the 20th-century auto-sector model (in which a handful of global automakers commanded the market and much of the supply chain associated with it) is pretty much dead now." The article asks, "Where does this leave Canada in terms of its preparedness to participate in the 21st century automobile sector, which is largely centred on electric and autonomous vehicles? And, what role (if any) should governments, at all levels, play to improve Canada's industrial positioning in that sector?" And Barry Cross of Queen's University asks "**Have we reached peak car?**" in *The Conversation* (Dec. 2) – a quick view of the future of autonomous vehicles and car sharing.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Electric Vehicles**, **General Motors**, **plant closings**, **Unifor** | **Leave a reply**

New Ontario Environment Plan steps backwards on emission reduction ambitions

Posted on **December 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On November 29, the Ontario government of Doug Ford released its promised climate change proposals in a new report, called ***Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan***. The government will continue consultation, with public submissions accepted **here** until January 28 2019, and pledges to establish an Advisory Panel on Climate Change. The major focus of the plan is to establish a Carbon Trust of $400 million over four years, which includes a $50 million 'reverse auction,' through which the government will fund private sector clean technology proposals. It commits to an 8% emissions reduction over the next 12 years, a much less ambitious target than that of the previous Liberal government. Reaction has been almost universally negative, as compiled by **Climate Action Network Canada** and by the CBC in "**Ontario Climate change plan includes fund to help big polluters reduce emissions**" (Nov. 29) . The Ecofiscal Commission offers a detailed critique and assessment in "**Up in the Air**" ; the **Pembina Institute states** "The plan weakens Ontario's carbon pollution reduction targets by 27 per cent…. The plan released today contains mainly aspirational statements and plans to make plans."

The Ontario **Green Party calls** the Ford government plan a Litter Reduction Plan, not a climate plan . The Green Party's own Climate Plan, ***Leaping into the future: A comprehensive strategy for reducing Ontario's emissions***, was released on November 15, and sets a 100% carbon neutral by 2050 target, and a return to carbon pricing.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Emissions reduction targets**, **Ontario**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Lancet Report details health impacts of climate change with new estimates re heat impacts on labour

Posted on **December 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The latest landmark Report of the ***Lancet Countdown*** was released at the end of November 2018, updating the global research on the health impacts of climate change. The title of the press release reveals the focus : **Extreme heat damaging our health and livelihoods and threatening to overwhelm hospitals around the world** . Using new methodology, the report estimates work hours lost to extreme heat: "153 billion hours of work were lost in 2017 due to extreme heat as a result of climate change. China alone lost 21 billion hours, the equivalent of a year's work for 1.4% of their working population. India lost 75 billion hours, equivalent to 7% of their total working population."

Although the 2018 report emphasizes the increasing threats related to heat, it measures 41 indicators related to disease, air pollution, extreme weather, and addresses economic and social impacts – including food security and climate migration. Regarding energy, it states " In 2017, renewable energy provided 10.3 million jobs – a 5.7% increase from 2016. But fossil fuel extraction industries increased to 11 million – an 8% increase from 2016." The report estimates deaths from air pollution by source attribution, with coal estimated to account for 16% of deaths globally. It also includes a new indicator mapping extremes of precipitation, identifying South America and southeast Asia among the regions most exposed to flood and drought and, on food security, the report points to 30 countries experiencing downward trends in crop yields, reversing a decade-long trend.

In addition to the main global report, national Briefings for Policymakers are provided for the Brazil, China, the EU, India, the Netherlands, Spain, U.K. and the U.S., as well as Canada. An **excellent summary of the main report** and the Canadian sub-report appears from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

The ***Briefing for Canadian Policymakers*** is written in collaboration with the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Public Health Association. It provides a Canada-specific view of health impacts, and makes recommendations: for example, "Phase out coal-powered electricity in Canada by 2030 or sooner, with a minimum of two thirds of the power replaced by non-emitting sources ;… increase ambition in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in Canada and twin this with an emphasis on Just Transition Policies to support an equitable transition for people who work in the fossil fuel industry as the energy economy transforms;…. Apply carbon pricing instruments as soon and as broadly as possible, enhancing ambition gradually in a predictable manner, and integrate study of resulting air pollution-related health and healthcare impacts into ongoing policy decisions." The report provides Canadian context for the under-appreciated topic of "Climate Change, Mental Health and Ecological Grief", with examples from the Arctic and sub-Arctice: Rigolet, Nunatsiavut, and a study of the SOS Summer-of-Smoke , when the area around Yellowknife experienced prolonged smoke and fire exposure in 2014.

Finally, the global Countdown report warns that "A lack of progress in reducing emissions and building adaptive capacity threatens both human lives and the viability of the national health systems they depend on, with the potential to disrupt core public health infrastructure and overwhelm health services." It points to the growth of health-related advocacy groups , the divestment from fossil fuels, (including by the Canadian Medical Association), and the need for climate change-related training for health professionals. The Canadian report also addresses this need for training for health professionals, stating: "A well-trained workforce is required to respond to these challenges. The Canadian Public Health Association's Ecological Determinants Group on Education has been working to integrate an ecosocial approach into public health education, including facilitating the participation of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students in an International Federation of Medical Students' Associations initiative which seeks to see climate change and health gain a foothold in curricula by 2020 with fuller integration by 2025."

The ***Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change*** is a global, interdisciplinary report funded by the Wellcome Trust, and researched through the collaboration of 27 academic institutions and inter-governmental organizations. The full report is **here** (registration required).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and health**, **climate change and mental health**, **health care professionals**, **health effects of climate change**, **Heat Stress**, **Hospitals**, **medical professionals**, **outdoor workers** | **Leave a reply**

Quebec youth sue the Canadian government for inadequate action on climate change

Posted on **November 27, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

ENvironment JEUnesse is the Quebec youth group behind the world's latest intergenerational climate lawsuit. Their **press release states**: "On November 26 2018, ENvironnement JEUnesse, represented pro bono by the firm Trudel Johnston & Lespérance, applied to bring a class action against the Canadian government before the Superior Court of Québec today on behalf of Quebeckers aged 35 and under. ENvironnement JEUnesse alleges that the Canadian government is infringing on a generation's fundamental rights because its greenhouse gas reduction target is not ambitious enough to avoid dangerous climate change and because it does not even have a plan that would allow it to reach this already inadequate target." The law firm **Trudel Johnston & Lespérance** provides legal details, and states that "The class action seeks a declaration that the Canadian government's behaviour in the fight against climate change infringes on the rights of young people, as well as an order to pay punitive damages."

ENvironment JEUnesse invites readers to join the class action suit, donate, and support the initiatives of other Quebec activists (**Pact for the Transition** , and the **Déclaration d'urgence climatique**). The main **website is in the French language**, and a French language newsletter is available.

The National Observer broke the news with ***Quebec youth apply to sue Canada to get toughter carbon pollution targets***" and *Climate Liability News* published "**Canada Faces Latest Youth-Led Climate Lawsuit**" . Both articles identify the Quebec lawsuit as part of a world-wide movement in where youth are suing their governments for their right to a future without climate catastrophe. The best known climate case of such cases is the **Juliana vs U.S. constitutional "Trial of the Century**" which began under President Obama and was scheduled to be heard on October 29. It is still under challenge from the federal government. There have also been youth cases in several U.S. states – most recently in **Florida** . In Norway, Nature and Youth Norway, in cooperation with Greenpeace, are currently appealing an **unsuccessful court decision** in January 2018, and the youth of Columbia achieved a successful decision in the **Demanda Generaciones Futuras v. Minambiente case** , in which the government was ordered to formulate plans to protect the Amazon from deforestation. ENvironment JEUnesse provides a summary of all related cases **here**

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **intergenerational climate justice**, **Our Children's Trust**, **Quebec**, **youth lawsuits** | **Leave a reply**

Good news and bad news about electric vehicles: B.C. mandates, Oshawa plant closing

Posted on **November 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The Good News: British Columbia: In the latest encouragement to electric vehicle ownership in British Columbia, the Premier **announced on November 20** that he will introduce legislation in Spring 2019 to phase in targets for the sale of zero-emission vehicles in the province – 10% ZEV sales by 2025, 30% by 2030, and 100% by 2040. This will be accompanied by funding to expand charging infrastructure, and for consumer incentives in addition to the existing incentives under the **Clean Energy Vehicle program** . The new policies are in line with the ***Intentions Paper on Transportation***, part of a public consultation in Summer 2018. (For background, read "**Fuelled by strong demand, B.C. adds $10 million to electric vehicle incentive program**" (Sept 27) and "**B.C. proposes mandate for electric vehicles"** (July 27), both in the National Observer.) Mandates for EV sales are already in place in Quebec, California, and other U.S. states.

The Bad news: Ontario: Mandates for EV sales in the U.S. was part of the modernization strategy by General Motors in its **comments to the U.S. government** under the *Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule* on October 26, 2018. According to the *National Observer* at the time, "**Transport Canada welcomes GM's electric car plan**". Apparently, Transport Canada didn't know what was in store. As of November 26, GM's global modernization strategy came crashing down on Ontario auto workers – announced in the November 26 corporate press release: ***GM Accelerates Transformation*** . The brief and unexpected press release names the GM Assembly plant in Oshawa Ontario as one which will be "unallocated" in 2019, along with Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly (Detroit) and Lordstown Assembly (Warren, Ohio). The *Toronto Star* makes the connections in **"GM plant closure in Oshawa part of company's shift to electric, self-driving autos"** (Nov. 26) .

Unifor, which represents approximately 2,500 GM Oshawa workers who will lose their jobs, was only informed of the decision one day ahead of the public announcement, and **has stated** : "Based on commitments made during 2016 contract negotiations, Unifor does not accept this announcement and is immediately calling on GM to live up to the spirit of that agreement." Ontario's Premier Ford **issued a statement** saying: "As a first step, I will be authorizing Employment Ontario to deploy its Rapid Re-Employment and Training Services program to provide impacted local workers with targeted local training and jobs services to help them regain employment as quickly as possible….we are asking the federal government to immediately extend Employment Insurance (EI) eligibility to ensure impacted workers in the auto sector can fully access EI benefits when they need them most….We are also asking the federal government to work with their U.S. counterparts to remove all tariffs so that impacted auto parts suppliers can remain competitive after the Oshawa Assembly Plant closes its doors."

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Electric Vehicles**, **General Motors**, **Unifor** | **Leave a reply**

Canada's record on climate change, and the global failure to meet Paris emissions targets

Posted on **November 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

An analysis of the evolution of Justin Trudeau's climate change policies is summarized in "**The Rise and Fall of Trudeau's 'Grand Bargain' on Climate"**, published in *The Tyee* (Nov. 14). The article is a summary by author Donald Gutstein of his new book, ***The Big Stall: How Big Oil and Think Tanks Are Blocking Action on Climate Change in Canada*** , which the publisher describes this way: "The Big Stall traces the origins of the government's climate change plan back to the energy sector itself — in particular Big Oil. It shows how, in the last fifteen years, Big Oil has infiltrated provincial and federal governments, academia, media and the non-profit sector to sway government and public opinion on the realities of climate change and what needs to be done about it." (Interesting companion reading to this argument: an October report from the Parkland Institute and the Corporate Mapping Project, ***Who Owns Canada's Fossil-Fuel Sector? Mapping the Network of Ownership & Control****.)* *The Big Stall* concludes that by framing the challenge as an opportunity for economic growth through clean technology, the government has failed to address climate change effectively.

Recent studies continue to support the assessment that the world, including Canada, has not done enough to meet its climate change goals, let alone the urgent need to decarbonize. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will release its annual ***Emissions Gap Report 2018*** in November, but in a pre-release chapter released at the Global Climate Action Summit in September, the UNEP asserted that national governments are not meeting their Paris Agreement targets, and that **non-state actors and sub-national governments are crucially important in closing the gap**.

Time to Get on with It: The LCEI 2018: Tracking the Progress G20 Countries Have Made to Decarbonize Their Economies was released in early October by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) consultants. Their Low Carbon Economy Index (LCEI) report states that in 2017, no country was on track with the decarbonization rate needed to achieve the Paris Agreement temperature goal, and ranks Canada as 14^{th} out of 20.

The ***Brown to Green Report 2018*** released by Climate Transparency in November rates all the G20 nations on 80 indicators regarding decarbonisation, climate policies, finance and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. No G20 countries are on track to meet their targets (Saudi

Arabia, Turkey and Russia are ranked as worst).The 15-page ***Canada Country Report*** finds that Canada's GHG emissions per capita are the highest of any G20 country at 22 (compared to a G20 country average of 8). Despite encouraging coal phase-out policies, "Canada's NDC is not consistent with the Paris Agreement's temperature limit but would lead to a warming between 3°C and 4°C. "

Finally, for an academic treatment of this issue: "**Warming assessment of the bottom-up Paris Agreement emissions pledges**" appeared in *Nature Communications* on November 16. It states that India is the only country close to being on track to meet a 2 degree target, and singles out Saudi Arabia, Russia, Canada and China as laggards.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Climate change policy**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction**, **Justin Trudeau**, **Oil and gas industry** | **2 Replies**

4th U.S. Climate Assessment provides new estimates of economic costs of climate change

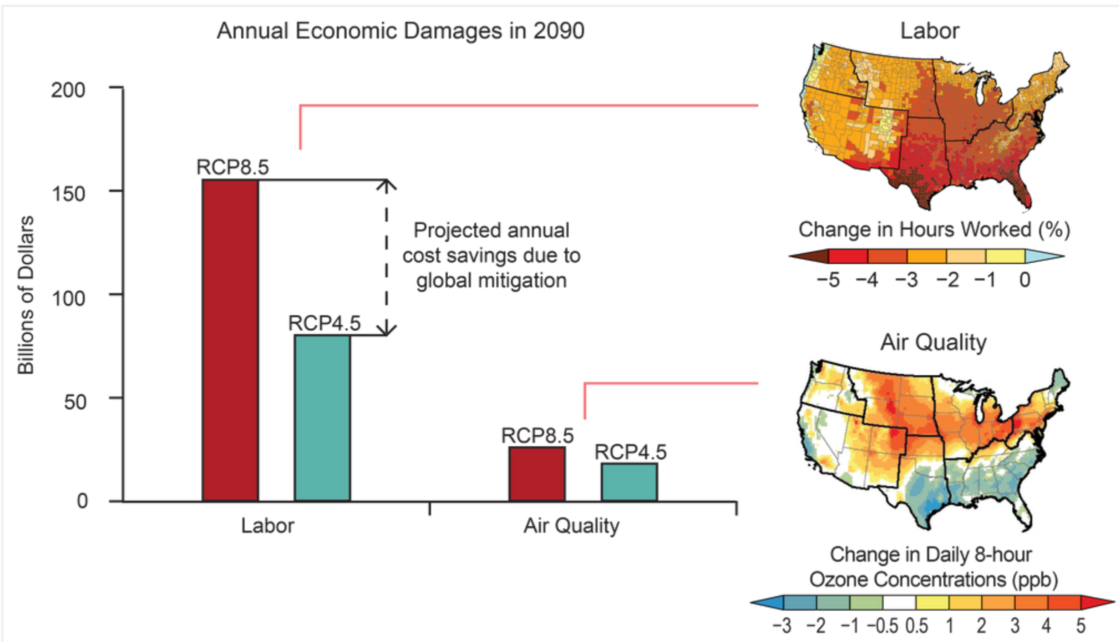
Posted on **November 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The U.S. Global Change Research Program, a consortium of 13 federal government departments and agencies, released volume 2 of the ***4th National Climate Assessment* of Climate-change Impacts on the United States** on November 23. This report is exceptional for the unequivocal, comprehensive, and detailed information contained, and a new emphasis on the economic impacts of climate change, described as "broader and more systematic", providing an advancement in the understanding of the financial costs and benefits of climate change impacts. For example, the report estimates a worst-case scenario for 2090 where extreme heat results in "labor-related losses" of an estimated $155 billion annually; also, $141 billion from heat-related deaths, $118 billion from sea level rise and $32 billion from infrastructure damage by the end of the century. Other key themes: the negative impacts of climate change on trade, the disruption of supply chains for U.S. manufacturers, likely loss of productivity for U.S. agriculture, unequal impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, and the impact on Indigenous peoples.

In an article from the *New York Times*, climate expert Michael Oppenheimer says, "This report will weaken the Trump administration's legal case for undoing climate change regulations and it strengthens the hands of those who go to court to fight them." Small wonder the administration chose to release it on the eve of American Thanksgiving, when public attention would be distracted.

Volume 2, just released, is based on the scientific findings of the ***4th National Climate Assessment, Volume 1***, which was released in 2017. Volume 2 is over 1500 pages, and is composed of 16 national-level topic chapters, 10 regional chapters, and 2 response chapters. Each of the 29 individual chapters is **downloadable from this link**. The **Overview is here**. A ***Guide*** briefly explains the modelling assumptions and sources of information used; more specific detail is in **Appendix 3: Data tools and scenario products** .

Media reaction and summaries include: "**Climate Change Puts U.S. Economy and Lives at Risk, and Costs Are Rising, Federal Agencies Warn**" in *Inside Climate News* (Nov. 23); "**New National Climate Assessment Shows Climate Change is a Threat to our Economy, Infrastructure and Health**" from the Union of Concerned Scientists (Nov. 23); **"U.S. economy faces hit, climate change report warns"** from the *New York Times,* reposted to *Portside (Nov. 24) ; or* **"3 big takeaways from the major new US climate report**" in *Vox* (Nov. 24) .



— From the 4th National Climate Assessment U.S. – Chapter 1 Overview

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **climate change impacts**, **Economic Risk**, **Heat Stress**, **United States** | **Leave a reply**

Reducing emissions from Canada's built environment – what is the government thinking?

Posted on **November 22, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In 2015, Canada's building sector accounted for approximately 12% of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions, according to ***Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Canada's Built Environment***, a November 16 report from the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. The report discusses "a wide range of policy tools and technology solutions that could lower building sector GHG emissions, including: national building codes; energy efficiency standards and labels; technology research, development, and demonstration; fuel-switching for space heating; federal investments in buildings; and, the role of cities and urban design." In its concluding statements, the Committee notes that the existing federal **Build Smart Strategy** faces pressures of climate-change related urgency, as well as the need to harmonize and work with the various provincial jurisdictions. In the discussion of energy efficiency, the report cites the **testimony of David Lapp of Engineers Canada**, in which he states that each $1 million invested in energy efficiency improvements is estimated to generate up to $3 to $4 million in gross domestic product and up to 13 jobs. The report provides links to the testimony of all witnesses who appeared before it – no unions or worker representatives appeared.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Canada's Built Environment is the last of five interim reports by the Senate Committee regarding Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy. A final report is scheduled to be released later in 2018, compiling all five studies and issuing recommendations for the government.

The government has already received recommendations on the topic, from the June 2018 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development: ***Better Buildings for a Low-Carbon Future***, and in French, ***De Meilleurs Bâtiments Pour un Avenir À Faibles Émissions de Carbone***. In October, the Government released its **Response report** (French version **here),** which included reaction to the Committee's Recommendation # 4, that "Employment and Social Development Canada ensure that programs exist or are established to address the labour transition required so that skilled personnel are available to implement net-zero energy ready codes." The Government response offers only a reaffirmation of its commitment to existing skills training, upgrading and apprenticeship programs. What little new thinking there is comes in the statement regarding green jobs: "The Government is also supporting the development of specific skills required for employment in green jobs. For example, the Green Jobs Science and Technology Internship program is investing more than $16 million to create 1,200 jobs as part of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy. This program provides opportunities for post-secondary graduates to gain relevant work experience through green jobs in science, technology, engineering and math fields in the natural resources sector.

NRCan is also exploring opportunities to collaborate with non-government organizations, trade associations and provincial and territorial governments to develop training resources to support implementation of net-zero energy ready codes by 2030."

Posted in **Government Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **energy efficiency**, **Government Policy**, **Green Building**, **retrofitting**, **Skilled Workers**, **Training** | **Leave a reply**

Position paper committed to centrality of unions in Just Transition and green industrial policy

Posted on **November 22, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Working Together for a Just Transition is a brief new position paper by the U.K.'s New Economics Foundation (NEF), in association with the London Office of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung . The report was released on November 14, to launch a new, multi-year "programme of work" on just transition. Some highlights: Low carbon industrial policy, if done well, offers "an opportunity to deliver pioneering models for wider systemic reform – power, democracy and ownership – that would perhaps be impossible without that sense of urgency." The report cites the Scottish Government's **Just Transition Commission**, established in September 2018, as "an exciting model" which the U.K. should follow. Further, "NEF and FES are strongly committed to the centrality of the union movement in delivering a stronger, fairer and more sustainable economy . We believe that unions must be actively involved in shaping a programme of green industrial strategy, retraining and shaping. Individual and collective power in the workplace is a vital means to securing other ‘good job’ characteristics, and greater ownership by employees and meaningful corporate governance are central parts of the economic rebalancing that is essential for the UK’s long-term prosperity.”

Regarding the Just Transition project as a whole, **New Economics Foundation** states: “Our interest is in the practicality of change: the policies, processes, narrative and investment needed to accelerate the UK’s progress on ‘just transition’, here and now. Over the coming months and years we will be working at local and national levels to explore what is needed to build common cause and provide the right mixture of incentives and critical challenge to all parties to help unlock a new momentum for a ‘just transition’ for the UK. “

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Newfoundland and Labrador announces its “lax tax” on carbon

Posted on **November 13, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

A “ Made-in-Newfoundland and Labrador Approach to Carbon Pricing” was announced and described in a **press release on October 23** , with a carbon tax rate of $20 tonne starting on January 1, 2019. The details are many, as published **here** . Exemptions are granted for consumers (e.g. for home heating fuel) , and for industry – specifically “for agriculture, fishing, forestry, offshore and mineral exploration, and methane gases from venting and fugitive emissions in the oil and gas sector.” These exemptions make sense in light of the province’s Oil and Gas growth strategy announced in February 2018, Advance 2030 , which aims for 100 new exploration wells to be drilled by 2030.

Despite the weakness of the provincial plan, it has been accepted by the federal government – thus, Newfoundland will avoid the stricter regime which would have been imposed by the federal backstop plan in 2019. For a brief overview: **“Why the lax tax? Finance minister says Muskrat**

burden played role in carbon pricing" (CBC) . In depth analysis appears in **"Newfoundland's carbon tax gives 'free pass' to offshore oil industry"** in *The Narwhal*. (Nov. 9)

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **carbon backstop**, **Carbon Tax**, **Newfoundland**, **offshore oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition proposals to protect workers' interests in a report commissioned by Australia's energy workers' union

Posted on **November 13, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

An October 29 report commissioned by CFMEU Mining and Energy union of Australia argues that government will need billions of dollars for comprehensive measures to support workers and communities in a move away from coal-fired power generation. It calls for consultation and participation in planning, and an independent statutory Energy Transition Authority . ***The Ruhr or Appalachia? Deciding the future of Australia's coal power workers and communities*** examines case studies from around the world – both successful and unsuccessful – including South Wales (U.K.), Appalachia (U.S.), Singapore, Limburg (Netherlands) and the Ruhr Valley (Germany). Within Australia, the Hazelwood closure is judged as unsuccessful – due to a lack of advance planning – and the LaTrobe Valley experience as a positive model. The report concludes that advance planning is essential to success, with a national framework …" International evidence tells us that such a framework will require active participation from companies, workforce union representation, and government."

The Ruhr or Appalachia? report was written by Professor Peter Sheldon at the Industrial Relations Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. It includes an extensive bibliography of other studies of Just Transition. The report was commissioned by **CFMEU Mining and Energy union**, which represents over 20,000 workers, mainly in coal mining and also in metalliferous mining, coal ports, power stations, oil refineries and other parts of the oil and gas production chain. For briefer versions see the union's press release "**New Independent Authority Needed To Manage Transition For Energy Workers"**, or a 4-page **Executive Summary** .

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Australia**, **case studies**, **Hazelwood**, **Just Transition**, **LaTrobe Valley** | **Leave a reply**

A "new social contract" launches to fight climate change in Quebec

Posted on **November 13, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

An **article in the *Montreal Gazette*** on November 12 describes the rapid rise of a new grassroots group in the province: in English, called "The Planet goes to Parliament". Their demonstrations have been covered by **the CBC**– including a march of 50,000 people in Montreal on November 10, calling for the newly-elected provincial government to make climate change action an urgent priority . A report of an earlier march in October **is here**   .

In addition to marches and demonstrations, over 175,000 Quebecers have signed the group's ***Pact for Transition*** (English version here), French version **here**), which calls for "radical, co-ordinated and societal transformation" . The Pact first calls for a solemn personal pledge to change behaviours "to wean ourselves off fossil fuels." It also calls for the government to: enact a plan by 2020 for reaching Quebec's climate targets; commit to reducing emissions by 50 per cent by 2030; develop an energy efficiency and electrification strategy; rule out any exploitation of fossil fuels in Quebec; and make climate change the first consideration of every policy. Dominic Champagne, a theatre producer and anti-fracking campaigner, is being credited with launching the mass movement, and states: "This time it's not just left-wing ecologists and artists. It's way larger … This is really fulfilling an empty space on the political landscape."

The Quebec government is now led by the right-wing Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) party, which had the weakest environmental platform in the election campaign; Québec Solidaire, a new left-leaning party, had the most well-developed and ambitious climate platform , and went from 0 to 10 seats in the new legislature. (See a WCR explainer **here).** Since taking power in October, the CAQ government announced the cancellation of the **Apuiat wind farm** , which was to be built in partnership with Innu communities. As reported by the ***Energy Mix*** ,the Chair and Vice-Chair of Hydro-Québec resigned due to the cancellation. Details about the Apuiat project are provided by **CBC here** (Oct. 20).

The Planet Goes to Parliament **has announced plans** for at least two more climate protests, in Quebec City and in Montreal, during the COP24 meetings in Katowice Poland in December. The group is thinking big, with a goal of 1 million signatories to their Pact – out of a population of 8 million in the province.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **climate change activism**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Quebec**, **Wind Farms** | **Leave a reply**

Climate Strikes: Children are leading the way

Posted on **November 8, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Although all eyes have been on the ***Juliana vs. United States*** legal action in the U.S (given the go-ahead again on November 2, according to **Inside Climate News**), other young people are taking up the fight against climate change. In September, after record heat and forest fires in Sweden, Greta Thurnberg began to skip school to demonstrate outside the Swedish Parliament buildings, and, using the hashtag **#Fridays for Future** , is calling for people to demonstrate in solidarity at their own government's buildings on Fridays – read "**The Swedish 15 year old who's cutting class to fight the climate crisis**" in *The Guardian* for more.

Greta has become a Nordic celebrity, and her protest has spread. Australian kids from 8 to 15 began their own campaign on November 7, with a call for a nation-wide strike on November 30 – Updates and news are at **#School Strike 4 Climate** (the website is **here**) .

— NDP MP Charlie Angus supports Sudbury striker

In Canada, an 11-year old in Sudbury Ontario credits Greta for inspiration and began striking from school in November, as reported by the *Sudbury Star* in "**Young climate activist to strike Friday in Sudbury**" (Nov. 2) and **"Activism runs in the blood for Sudbury student "** (Nov.8) . The article quotes her as asking: "If adults don't care about our future why should I? What is the point of going to school?"

Further inspiration also comes from (slightly older) young adults in Canada, in "**Meet 2018's Top 30 Under 30 in Sustainability**" in *Corporate Knights* magazine (Nov. 6). It profiles young adults from 16 – 29 who have rolled up their sleeves in a variety of green projects, organizations, and businesses.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Australia**, **Climate Activism**, **climate strikes**, **Greta Thunberg**, **Our Children's Trust**, **Sweden**, **Younger workers** | **3 Replies**

Preview of the recommendations by Canada's Just Transition Task Force

Posted on **November 6, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In a November 5 article, " **Federal panel privately urges Trudeau government to do more for coal workers"** , *National Observer* reporter Carl Meyer reveals that the Just Transition Task Force Interim Report is already in the hands of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, though not yet publicly available. Canada's **Just Transition Task Force** was launched in April 2018 – an 11-member advisory group co-chaired by Canadian Labour Congress president Hassan Yussuff, to " provide advice on how to make the transition away from coal a fair one for workers and communities." The Task Force **Terms of Reference** allowed for 9 months for the report; Environment and Climate Change Minister McKenna said on November 2 : "We're still reviewing the report, but as we talk about the need to power past coal and our commitment in Canada to phase out coal by 2030, we know there has to be a priority to supporting workers and communities." A formal response is expected in November, and given the Minister's leadership role in the international **Powering Past Coal Alliance** and the public spotlight of the upcoming **COP24 meetings** in Katowice Poland in early December, that deadline is likely to be met.

The *National Observer* **article of November 5**, along with an **April 2018 article** about the Task Force launch, provide good background to the Task Force. The new article emphasizes the different needs of different provinces – notably Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Most of the article is based on interviews with a few Task Force members.

But what are the Report's Recommendations? One member states that "A lot of the recommendations are directly connected to what we heard from municipalities, from workers, from unions and from communities." The comments about the actual recommendations are far from earth-shattering, but include: 1. Just Transition policies should be enshrined in legislation so that they are not as vulnerable to changing governments; 2. The government should commit to infrastructure funding for municipalities in order to attract other businesses and offset job losses; 3. Support to workers should be extended, to help people quickly and efficiently access benefits like employment insurance, retraining, and relocation assistance. These fall along the same lines as the 2017 **Recommendations from the Alberta Advisory Panel on Coal Communities** , which are more detailed and which also accounted for First Nations issues.

A list of Task Force members is **here**. In addition to co-Chair Hassan Yussuff, there are members from the CLC, the Alberta Federation of Labour, United Steelworkers, Unifor, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **coal phase-out**, **Just Transition**, **Just Transition Task Force** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition for energy workers in Northern England includes job quality, skills training

Posted on **November 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Risk or reward? Securing a just transition in the north of England is a study released in late October by the Institute for Public Policy Research North (IPPR), based in Manchester and Newcastle of the U.K. – an area disproportionately at risk for job losses in the shift to a low carbon economy as it is the home of the majority of England's coal and gas power stations. This Interim report estimates that approximately 28,000 jobs in the coal, oil and gas industries could be lost by 2030 as the low carbon economy grows. In 2017, the IPPR forecasts that up to 46,000 low-carbon power sector jobs and 100,000 jobs could be created by 2030 by its **Northern Energy Strategy** , including a Northern Energy Skills Programme .

Risk or Reward? forecasts job numbers, but also discusses the quality of jobs using compensation levels of representative energy jobs. The report concludes that "Fundamentally, there is a failure to incorporate a just transition into industrial strategy and decarbonisation policy more generally; but, even if it were acknowledged, the skills system is ill-equipped to provide support for those that need retraining or for the next generation. Compounded by the uncertainty of Brexit amidst international competition for labour and skills, there is a real risk that the transition to a low carbon economy will not be just."

Risk or Reward is an interim report. IPPR promises a Final Report in 2019 which will recommend a strategy for government action, to put just transition "at the heart of decarbonisation and industrial strategy", and to build a skills system capable of supporting existing and future workers through well-paid, skilled and secure jobs. "This strategy will also consider other challenges facing the low-carbon sector both now and in the future, including how to ensure it can deliver good working conditions and a diverse workforce. In addition, it will set out the crucial role of trade unions in delivering well-paid, secure and high skilled jobs, as well as a successful industrial strategy and improving productivity."

Companion reading to *Risk or Reward* is the broader perspective of ***Prosperity and Justice: A plan for the new economy*** – the final report of the **IPPR Commission on Economic Justice** , established in the 2016 in the wake of Britain's vote to leave the European Union. The Final Report is **here**; an Executive Summary is **here**. ***Prosperity and Justice*** presents a 10-part plan for economic reform and makes more than 70 recommendations – which it states " offer the potential for the most significant change in economic policy in a generation". It includes a chapter titled "Ensuring Environmental Sustainability" as fundamental to its economic goal of just growth. The IPPR Commission on Economic Justice published an Interim Report (2017), as well as **discussion and policy papers** – including including ***Power to the people: How stronger unions can deliver economic justice***.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **economic policy**, **England**, **Job Quality**, **Just Transition**, **Retraining** | **Leave a reply**

Updated: New Just Transition agreement for Spanish coal miners called a model for others

Posted on **November 2, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The new government of Spain, in power since May 2018, has reached a new Just Transition agreement with coal miners, to further the coal phase-out which has been underway since the early 2000's. Approximately 1,000 miners and contractors at 10 mines will lose their jobs at the end of 2018, but according to a report in ***The Guardian*** (Oct. 26) "Unions hailed the mining deal – which covers Spain's privately owned pits – as a model agreement. It mixes early retirement schemes for miners over 48, with environmental restoration work in pit communities and re-skilling schemes for cutting-edge green industries." The cost of the program is estimated at 250 million Euros.

UPDATED: For the most detailed summary of this new agreement, see the press release from IndustriALL : "**Spanish coal unions win landmark Just Transition deal**" (Nov. 1) . It includes a link to the 37-page **actual agreement** – in Spanish only – and quotes the Sustainability Director of IndustriALL, who states that it is a model agreement, and "The deal sets a precedent for responsible transition through social dialogue."

Spain's coal industry employed more than 100,000 miners in the 1960s, but today only 2.7% of the country's electricity is powered by coal. The country had already done a good job of its coal phase-out, according to ***Coal Transition in Spain***, published in 2017 by The Institute for

Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and Climate Strategies Just Transition project. That report draws on Spanish language resources to provides a thorough overview of employment statistics, policy instruments and stakeholder positions from previous coal phase-out. It also evaluates the success of measures taken, including training and early retirement incentives, community and infrastructure investment. The **press release from IndustriALL** summarizes the history from a different, union viewpoint.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **coal phase-out**, **Just Transition**, **social partnerships**, **Spain** | **2 Replies**

Updated: What are the prospects for a Just Transition in U.K. communities?

Posted on **November 2, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 30, DeSmog UK began a new series of reporting titled ***Just Transition, from Fossil Fuels to Environmental Justice***, which it describes as "a comprehensive exploration of the UK's prospects for a just transition towards a sustainable future and environmental justice." The first installment, **Part One: Kingdom of Coal** profiles Fife, Scotland: the history of its coal mine closures around 2002, and the transition to its current situation as the site of a gas extraction facility run by Shell and an ethylene production plant operated by ExxonMobil. The report states that the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has issued fines and final warning letters to both Shell and Exxon for the flaring conducted at the two sites; a SEPA investigation into the flaring is underway, with a report scheduled for November 2018. Finally, **Kingdom of Coal** discusses the prospects for a just transition for Fife to a renewable energy industry, in the context of the **Just Transition principles** proposed by the Friends of the Earth Scotland. The impending Brexit threatens funding from the European Investment Bank (which was used to build the Beatrice Wind Farm in the Moray Firth), and "wider economic insecurity makes longer-term investments, such as hiring more apprentices, growing the workforce and investing in new machines and premises, increasingly challenging."

Update: Part 2 of the series, **City of Oil** appeared on November 7 and profiles Aberdeen Scotland. Employment there centres on the harbour and the specialist tasks associated with the North Sea offshore oil and gas industry – decommissioning oil platforms at the end of their life, laying sub-sea cables, servicing and maintaining offshore drilling platforms – and representing the new economy, the offshore wind turbines of the Vattenfall installation. Through interviews, the report describes the workplace issues of the workers on ships under flags of convenience in the North Sea , changes to shift schedules for oil rig workers, and a growing problem of poverty.

Just Transition, from Fossil Fuels to Environmental Justice is described by DeSmog UK as : "This powerful new series starts from the basis of understanding that current lifestyles are dependent on oil and plastic, and that we are all to some degree complicit and integrated into the present system. It looks at how the UK can achieve the immediate, transformative and radical changes to the economy and society necessary to address the climate crisis. And it addresses this transformation through the perspectives of the communities that will be most affected."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **coal phase-out**, **Just Transition**, **Scotland** | **Leave a reply**

Tips for greening office workplaces in new Guide

Posted on **November 2, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare**, in partnership with the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment** and others, recently published the ***Green Office Toolkit*** , which provides practical tips and examples focused on improving energy and water conservation, handling of toxic materials, and workplace transportation, as well as the topics of creating, organizing and motivating a workplace "green team". Although it is intended for health care clinics and medical offices, like ***Confronting Climate Change on Campus*** , (published by the Canadian Association of University Teachers in 2018), the ***Green Office Toolkit*** is easily adaptable to other office workplaces beyond the medical office or university setting.

The Guide falls squarely within the interest area of the **Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare** , established in 2000, and which is the lead agency managing the Green Hospital Scorecard program, " the only comprehensive health care benchmarking tool in Canada measuring energy conservation, water conservation, waste management and recycling, corporate commitment and pollution prevention." The CCGH publishes an electronic newsletter, ***Green Digest*** , with news from Canada and the U.S. , and other resource guides and tools.

One of the other partners in the publication of the ***Guide*** is the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment** , best known for its increasing advocacy related to the health impacts of climate change – such as air and water pollution, toxic chemicals, health effects of wildfires and natural disasters. The other partner organizations are McMaster University Hospital (Hamilton, Ont.), Women's College Hospital (Toronto, Ont.) and Synergie Santé Environnement (Quebec).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **energy conservation**, **guides**, **health care industry**, **office workers** | **Leave a reply**

Updating the political battle of carbon pricing in Canada

Posted on **November 1, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 23, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the federal government will hold its resolve to impose a carbon pricing policy across all Canadian jurisdictions in 2019 – see the press release, "**Government of Canada Putting a price on pollution"** (Oct. 23). Key to the plan: the Climate Action Incentive, whereby all carbon revenue will go directly back to people in the provinces from which it was generated. David Roberts of *Vox* hits the nail on the head with "***Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is betting his reelection on a carbon tax"*** (Oct. 24) , stating, "It's a thoughtful plan, remarkably simple, transparent, and economically sound for something cooked up in a politically fraught context. If it's put into place (and stays in place), it would vault Canada to the head of the international pack on climate policy."

Reaction from the Canadian mainstream media: From the *Globe and Mail*, an Editorial: "**For the Liberals, a spoonful of sugar helps the carbon tax go down**" ; "**Arguments against the carbon tax boil down to a desire to do nothing**" (Oct. 24) by Campbell Clark ; "**Carbon tax vs. climate change will be an epic contest**" by John Ibbitson and "**Trudeau's carbon tax rebate is smart – but complicated"** by Chris Ragan of the Ecofiscal Commission . From Andrew Coyne in the *National Post*: "**Liberals' carbon tax plan has its faults — but who has a better option?"** and from Chris Hall of the CBC, "**How the Liberals hope to escape the 'Green Shift' curse in 2019"** (Oct.23) .

The **National Observer** provides some detail to the complex calculations of the backstop rebates of the Climate Action Incentive, but the detail is at the government's webpage, **Pricing Pollution: How it will work** which provides links to individual explainers for each province and territory.

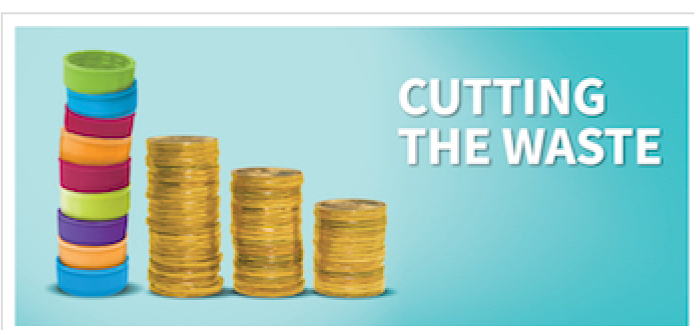
Other Responses: Rabble.ca ; **Elizabeth May** of the Green Party of Canada ; **Canadians for Clean Prosperity** ; and the **Smart Prosperity Institute** , which also provides a **compilation of reaction** and reports .

There seems to be general agreement that it is politics, not economics, which will determine support for the carbon plan. Ontario Premier Doug Ford has been making the rounds with other Conservative politicians in Canada to coordinate their messaging and opposition to the federal carbon tax – culminating in the introduction of ***Bill No. 132—The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act** , 2018* in Saskatchewan on October 30, and on October 31, passage of Ontario's ***Bill 4, The Cap and Trade Cancellation Act***. The *National Observer* describes the events of October 31 and summarizes the recent political dance in "**Doug Ford and Andrew Scheer play fast and loose with facts about carbon tax**" . Other press coverage: from the CBC: "**'The worst tax ever': Doug Ford and Jason Kenney hold campaign-style rally against carbon levy**" on Oct. 5 ; "**Doug Ford attacks 'terrible tax' on carbon alongside Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe**" on Oct. 29; and "**Doug Ford meets Andrew Scheer as carbon tax war heats up**" on October 30, describing their meeting in Toronto. The gist of their arguments: the carbon tax is a money-grab which will "drive up the price of heating your home", with Doug Ford stating "It's just another Trudeau Liberal tax grab. It's a job-killing, family-hurting tax. " After the rebate details were announced on October 23, Ford has added that the promised rebates are "a complete scam", "trying to buy Canadians with their own money." But as *iPolitics* reported on October 26, **"Ford gets his facts wrong while bashing federal carbon tax**" and "**Ford doubles down on falsehoods about federal carbon tax"** . *iPolitics* cites the **independent analysis of the carbon tax's impact** by Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer, which supports the federal government's numbers, and differs from Premier Ford's public statements. Meanwhile, the Ontario government promises to release their climate plan in November, **according to the *Toronto Star*** (Oct. 29), and Andrew Scheer also promises a climate plan "in 183 days".

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **carbon backstop**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Carbon Tax**, **Ontario**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Extended Producer Responsibility reduces waste and impacts the workplace

Posted on **November 1, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



The October 16 report from the Ecofiscal Commission , ***Cutting the Waste: How to save money while improving our solid waste systems*** is a thorough examination of the issue of waste management in Canada, and while it discusses consumer behaviour (including single use plastics, briefly), the main focus is on municipal programs of disposal pricing (tipping fees and "pay as you throw") and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs shift the costs and responsibility for waste management from taxpayers and consumers to manufacturers. ***Cutting the Waste*** recommends expanding and harmonizing Canada's EPR programs, stating…. " "extended producer responsibility" programs … can improve the efficiency of recycling programs while also creating incentives to produce goods that generate less waste or goods that can more easily be recycled." The report provides a good overview of the history, structure, and efficiency of EPR programs in Canada, stating that there are over 120 such programs (both voluntary and legislated) in Canada, following an ***EPR Action Plan*** which was developed through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) in 2009. Their most recent **progress report** on the Action Plan was conducted in 2014 . The Ecofiscal Commission highlights British Columbia as having the most stringent and comprehensive plan, and states, "Alberta is the only province that does not have legislated extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs and is falling behind in its commitments under the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR." **EPR Canada** , a non-profit association, also publishes Report Cards – their most recent was released in **2017**.

How does waste management translate into a greener workplace? The automobile manufacturing industry provides a Canadian example, and in its 2011 Fact Sheet **"Taking Back our Jobs – Taking Back our Environment "** , the Canadian Auto Workers endorsed EPR, with concise arguments, stating "The future job creation potential is enormous. The motor vehicle industry is one of the best examples of EPR job creation." (The Fact Sheet was republished by Unifor in **2013, here**). From the company, the ***GM Landfill-free Blueprint*** (2018) makes a business case for reducing waste and includes the concept of employee engagement.

In September 2018 , one of **Canada's Clean50 awards for 2019** went to the General Motors Assembly plant in Oshawa Ontario for its **"zero waste to landfill" project** . The announcement states: "At the core of the success of General Motors Landfill-Free Project at GM Oshawa Assembly Plant initiative lies the fact that the "team" for this project numbers approximately 3,000. …. it was the employees at the plant who were directly and indirectly part of the successful implementation of their project."

According to a **GM press** (February 2018) ,GM is now diverting 100 per cent waste from landfills at all Canadian manufacturing facilities; St. Catharines Propulsion facility since 2008, and CAMI Assembly since 2014. The St. Catharines facility is also the proposed site of Ontario's first complete renewable landfill gas industrial co-generation system, which will use landfill gas from an offsite source, delivered via pipeline, to generate electricity and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from the plant by more than 77 per cent. More details are **here** . A caveat: although this project was projected to come online in mid-2019, it was initiated under the previous Liberal government, funded by cap and trade revenues through **GreenON Industries,** which is one of the programs cancelled by the current Conservative government.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Canadian Auto Workers**, **Extended Producer Responsibility**, **General Motors**, **Unifor**, **Waste management** | **Leave a reply**

New climate legislation in Saskatchewan – Prairie Resilience without carbon pricing

Posted on **October 31, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 30, the first Bill introduced to the new session of the Saskatchewan legislature was Bill No. 132—*The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2018* , which, according to **a *Regina Leader-Post* article** , carries on Bill 95, which was introduced in 2009 by the previous government of Brad Wall . The **government's press release**   states that the new legislation: "provides the regulatory framework for performance standards to reduce industrial greenhouse gas emissions, a provincial technology fund, performance credits and offset credits…. In addition to performance standards and compliance options, these amendments require large emitters to register with the province, provide for administrative efficiencies in governance of the technology fund, and enable associated regulations and standards. "   The press release carries on the province's existing climate change strategy from December 2017, titled ***Prairie Resilience***, which rejects carbon pricing.

"**Saskatchewan introduces climate change legislation as feud with Ottawa continues"**   in the *National Observer* provides a summary; the "feud" referred to was most recently in the news on October 29, "**Doug Ford attacks 'terrible tax' on carbon alongside Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe**" .

As yet, the text of the Bill is available only through a two-step process: Bills are listed **here** , which lists a PDF file " Progress of Bills 2018 – 2019" which includes a live link to Bill 132.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition Summit in Saskatchewan – updated

Posted on **October 30, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Although Alberta is the clear leader in oil and gas production in Canada, the province of Saskatchewan ranks second, with about 13% of Canada's total crude oil production. Saskatchewan also derives approximately 40 per cent of its power from coal. Yet on October 27 and 28, progressive organizations in that province convened an enthusiastic forum, **Just Transitions: Building Saskatchewan's Next Economy Summit** in Regina. Sessions most related to employment issues included: "Transitioning Employment and Work", moderated by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and including panels on "Labour and Just Transition" by Unifor, CUPW and SEIU West. There was also a session on "Phasing out Coal" , presented by Climate Justice Saskatoon and Chris Gallaway of the Alberta Federation of Labour. The full list of presentations is **here** .

Hosting organizations included: **Saskforward** , the Corporate Mapping Project, **Climate Justice Saskatoon** , the **Regina Public Interest Research Group** and **Unifor**.

Local media coverage appeared in the **Regina Leader-Post** newspaper, and several items at CBC-Saskatchewan, including: "**Indigenous perspective must be heard on climate change, Regina conference told**" ; "**Regina summit looks at what shift from coal to renewable energy means for future of Sask. Economy**" (specifically reporting on the town of Coronach, home of the Poplar River coal mine and associated Poplar River Generating Station, threatened by the federal government's goal to phase-out coal generated electricity by 2030); and an Opinion piece by Emily Eaton from the University of Regina **"Beyond 'jobs versus environment': Transitions to renewable energy present opportunities for us all**" (Oct. 25).

Emily Eaton was one of the authors of **"Winds of Change: Public Opinion on Energy Politics in Saskatchewan"** , published in April 2018 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Saskatchewan office. Based on a public opinion poll of 500 Saskatchewan adults, the report summarizes the political climate in Saskatchewan and shows that despite the **government's opposition** to carbon taxes and the Pan-Canada Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, there *is* public support for a transition away from fossil fuels, and for government investment in solar and wind power.

The Saskatchewan event follows the **Just Transition and Good Jobs for Alberta 2018** meetings, held in Edmonton on October 22 and 23, with active participation and sponsorship of USW, Unifor, and the Alberta Federation of Labour. This was the third year of meetings, coordinated by BlueGreen Canada.

Update: In November, Climate Justice Saskatchewan has released a report, ***The Future of Coal in Saskatchewan: Bridging the Gap: building bridges between urban environmental groups and coal-producing communities in Saskatchewan*** . The report summarizes what was heard during 17 interviews with citizens of the small coal-producing communities of Estevan and Coronach during the spring of 2018, and draws some conclusions which might have application for other social justice and climate justice initiatives. In general, the interviews exposed the unique challenges of each rural community, but found a common sense of uncertainty stemming from a lack of planning and communication about phasing out coal, bound up in wider challenges of rural decline, agricultural trends, and the boom-and-bust cycles of oil and gas.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **coal phase-out**, **Just Transition**, **Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

The Fossil fuel industry in Alberta: public opinion, and mapping ownership

Posted on **October 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In ***Provinces Apart? Comparing Citizen Views in Alberta and British Columbia***, released by the Parkland Institute on October 25, the authors re-visit the data from a survey conducted in February – March 2017, and conclude that what differences exist between citizens of Alberta and British Columbia are attributable more to their political self-identification than to their province, age, or educational status. While the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion was certainly an active issue at the time, the survey pre-dated the bitter political battle and subsequent media attention which ensued from the federal government's purchase of the project, and the Court decision which suspended construction. After a brief review the political events of the most recent Trans Mountain controversy, the authors conclude "the governing and opposition parties in both provinces have exacerbated this partisan divide."

In those calmer days when the survey was conducted, citizens' views on political influence, the fossil fuel industry, climate change, and the role of protests in a democracy were not as divergent as stereotypes tell us.   Findings of particular interest: 53% of respondents in Alberta and 69% in B.C. agreed that "we need to move away from using fossil fuels;" 76% in Alberta and 68% in B.C. thought the petroleum industry has too much influence over governments, (fewer than one-third said the same about either environmentalists, labour unions or Indigenous groups).

The Parkland Institute also published ***Who Owns Canada's Fossil-Fuel Sector? Mapping the Network of Ownership & Control*** in October, as part of the **Corporate Mapping Project**, in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. and Saskatchewan, and the University of Victoria. The analysis covers the period from 2010 to 2015, and demonstrates that the production, ownership and control of the fossil fuel industry is highly concentrated: "The top 25 owners together account for more than 40 per cent of overall revenues during this period." At 16%, foreign corporations are the largest type of majority owners (led by ExxonMobil) ; asset managers and investment funds are the 2nd largest; banks and life insurers are the third-largest type of owner (approximately 12% of revenues), with the big five Canadian banks (RBC, TD, Scotiabank, BMO and CIBC) among the top investors. The federal Canadian government, combined with provincial governments, own 2%. The report provides a wealth of information, including names and ranks of specific companies in the network of ownership and control, points out the importance of divestment campaigns, and "identifies the need to shift from fossil-fuel oligarchy to energy democracy, in which control of economic decisions shifts to people and communities, such as through public ownership of renewables and much greater democratic participation in energy policy."

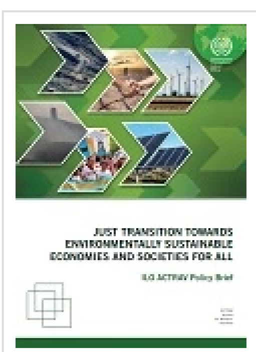
For more insight into Alberta and its energy economy, the Parkland Institute is hosting a conference, **Alberta 2019: Forces of Change** from November 16 – 18. Presentations include: Opening Keynote, "In the Eye of the Storm", by Lynne Fernandez (Errol Black Chair in Labour Issues, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives- Manitoba); "The Alberta Economy in Context" by Angella MacEwen; "Just Transitions in the Belly of the Beast" by Emily Eaton (University of Regina); and "Boom, Bust, and Consolidation: Corporate Restructuring in the Alberta Oil Sands" by Ian Hussey (Research Manager at Parkland Institute).

Also from Alberta: the 2018 event from BlueGreen Canada, **Just Transition and Good Jobs for Alberta 2018** was held in Edmonton on October 22 and 23, with active participation and sponsorship of USW, Unifor, and the Alberta Federation of Labour. This is the third annual event – summaries from **2017** and **2016** are here.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **fossil fuel industry**, **public opinion polls**, **Transmountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition is essential to a low carbon economy. How can unions contribute?

Posted on **October 25, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



On October 22, the International Labour Organization (ILO) released ***Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All***, which argues for the importance of just transition policies – not as an "add-on", but an integral part of the climate policy and sustainable development policy framework. This Policy Brief, aimed at a labour union audience, reviews the history and fundamental principles of the Just Transition concept, provides case studies which form an impressive catalogue of how just transition has (and in some cases, hasn't) worked around the world, and concludes with recommendations of how trade unions and workers' organizations can contribute to the goal of Just Transition to a low carbon economy .

The Just transition case studies are drawn from both from the global North and the global South – specifically, Alberta; Australia; Brazil; California; Chiapas State, Mexico; Europe; India; Indonesia; Phillipines, Ruhr Valley; South Africa; and Vietnam. They reflect interventions at the regional, country, and sectoral level – most frequently the coal industry. In the end, the author concludes that, while a coherent strategy with clear objectives and targets is essential, it can only work properly if supported by the main stakeholders. Cooperation of environmental and labour advocacy groups is extremely important, as is the input of Indigenous people. He further judges that " 10-12 years seems to be a realistic framework which would also allow time to build up well-founded just transition plans."

What can trade unions do?: The author's recommendations are: Be proactive and build just transition strategies for the future; Be involved at all levels; Build coalitions; Manage labour market transitions; and Develop future-oriented innovative approaches. To help unions, the author provides information for "Capacity and network building" on page 10, including the network and databases provided by the **Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW)** project : specifically, the **Green Collective Agreements database** and the **Education and Training materials database** .

Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All was written by Béla Galgóczi, Senior Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute and an Associate of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) research project. The new report is available in **English** and in **French** , published by the ILO Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV), which also publishes the **International Journal of Labour Research**. In May 2018, the ILO Employment Policy Department issued an Employment Research Brief, ***Green Growth, Just Transition and Green Jobs: There's a Lot we don't know*** , which summarizes and links to the most recent international studies on these three topics.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **case studies**, **Green Jobs**, **ILO**, **International**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies** | **Leave a reply**

Research and opinion support a carbon tax for Canada

Posted on **October 19, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Carbon taxes continue to be a hot topic in Canada for many reasons, including the **October Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report** , the **Nobel Prize in Economics** to

William Nordhaus, and the **report from Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer** on October 16, which estimates that the cancelling the province's cap and trade program will drive the provincial deficit up by $3 billion, ($841 million in the first fiscal year alone). And as provinces rebel against the **federal carbon pricing plans**, the January 1 2019 deadline approaches, by which the federal government will impose its "backstop" carbon pricing on any province without it own equivalent carbon pricing regime in place.

In response to these developments, there are many responses. Recent articles emphasize William Nordhaus' work: for example, "**Nordhaus Nobel Recognizes What We've Long Known: Carbon pricing works**" by Scott Vaughan at the IISD ; "**Nobel award recognizes how economic forces can fight climate change**" in *The Conversation Canada* (Oct. 9); "**Hurricanes, hog manure and the dire need for carbon pricing"** in *The Conversation Canada* (Oct. 14); and "**Opinion: To avoid catastrophic climate change we need carbon pricing**" from the **Ecofiscal Commission** , one of Canada's strongest proponents of carbon pricing. From the horse's mouth: "**After Nobel in Economics, William Nordhaus Talks About Who's Getting His Pollution-Tax Ideas Right"** (*New York Times*, Oct. 13), in which William Nordhaus is interviewed by Coral Davenport and states: "…. I think the model is British Columbia. .. It would have the right economic effects but politically not be so toxic. … British Columbia is not only well designed but has been politically successful."

CARBON DIVIDENDS: The issue of political acceptability of carbon taxes generated an academic discussion in "**Overcoming public resistance to carbon taxes"** by Carattini , Carvalho and Fankhauser in *WiRES Climate Change* in June 2018. In Canada, a change in vocabulary in taking hold. "**Carbon Dividends could save carbon pricing – and create a new national climate consensus"** say Mark Cameron (from Canadians for Clean Prosperity) and David McLaughlin (from the International Institute of Sustainable Development) in the *Globe and Mail* . The **commissioned studies** released by **Canadians for Clean Prosperity** in September showed that most households, regardless of income level, would receive more money in the form of carbon dividend cheques than they would pay in carbon taxes under the backstop plan. They have produced estimates for Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick, and maintain an online petition at a website called **Canadians for Carbon Dividends** .

In **"The Rocky Road to Canada-wide Carbon Pricing,"** released by the C.D. Howe Institute on October 17, author Tracy Snoddon from Wilfred Laurier University offers recommendations on how the revenues should be distributed after January 1, 2019, when the minimum carbon price backstop comes into force. The author estimates carbon revenues of $ 2.8 billion in 2019 if the backstop was implemented in Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. She recommends that the federal government should impose the backstop price and return the revenues as an equal per-capita rebate to residents- with the justification that such an approach minimizes intrusion in provincial fiscal matters, reinforces the environmental goals rather than revenue generation, and is most progressive in its distributional impacts. A summary appears in the C.D. Howe **press release** and in "**C.D. Howe Institute throws its weight behind federal carbon tax"** in the *Globe and Mail* (Oct. 19).

PUTAPRICEONIT CANADA

Finally, a new organization launched in October. **Put A Price On It Canada** promotes carbon pricing as a solution to climate change – and asks "why does Canada need another group fighting for carbon pricing?" The difference: it aspires to be a national network to empower students on university campuses – currently at Simon Fraser University, the University of Ottawa, University of Waterloo, and Carleton University.

So in response to the National Observer Opinion piece on October 18, asking "**Is it time to torch the carbon tax debate?**" , the answer seems to be a strong "no".

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **carbon backstop**, **carbon dividends**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Carbon Tax**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

IPCC report prompts emergency debate in Canada's House of Commons

Posted on **October 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The landmark report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October, ***Global Warming of 1.5*** , continues to generate debate and reaction around the world. On October 15, Canada's House of Commons held an emergency debate on Global Warming. Request for the debate was led by **Elizabeth May**, leader of the Green Party, and was joined by Members of Parliament from the New Democratic and Liberal parties. The Conservatives did not support the request, according to reports by both **CBC** and the ***National Observer*** . The official Hansard transcript of the Emergency Debate is here **in English** and **in French** . Although the debate fell along partisan lines, it also provided opportunity for Members from across the country to highlight clean economy innovations within their own communities, and many made statements calling for actions, not just more debate.

From **Elizabeth May's website** : "The issue tonight is not to debate Canada's current carbon plan, Canada's current climate plan. This is not a status quo debate. We should not be scoring political points because one party did this and another party did that. We should be here as humanity, human beings, elected people for our constituencies who know full well that if we do not change what we are doing as a species, we will face an unthinkable world. The good news is we still have a chance to save ourselves. "

Further, she likens the current situation to the crisis of the Dunkirk evacuation in World War 2, and calls for leadership like that shown by Winston Churchill:

"This is when we need our Prime Minister to go to the negotiations in Poland, or to dispatch the Minister of Environment to the negotiations in Poland, and say, "We are stepping up. We are going to rescue everybody. We are going to be the heroes in our own story. We are going to adopt

what the IPCC says we must do: 45% reductions by 2030." .... We need to tell Canadians that we have hope, to not despair or think it is too late. They should not turn away from the IPCC reports. They should not be afraid because we cannot breathe in British Columbia in the summer because of forest fires. They should not give up. We will rally and marshal every small town, every big city, every Canadian group, rotary clubs, church groups, and we will tell those naysayers who think that climate change is about a cash grab that they are in the way of our future and that they must get out of the way."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Climate change policy**, **Elizabeth May**, **IPCC Reports** | **Leave a reply**

Manitoba cancels its carbon tax, joining Ontario and Saskatchewan in opposition

Posted on **October 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 3, Manitoba's Premier joined the Premiers of **Ontario** and Saskatchewan in opposing carbon taxes. In **" 'We say no': Manitoba defies Ottawa by killing its carbon tax plan"** , the CBC reports that the government will introduce amending legislation in the week of October 8; Its previous legislation, ***The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act*** (March 2018) had set a carbon price of $25 per ton, and followed the **Made-in-Manitoba Green Plan** submitted to fulfill the federal Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change agreement . "**The Drilldown: Carbon tax clash intensifies as Manitoba joins resistance"** in *iPolitics* explains the Premier's reasons; "**Feds on track to impose carbon price on growing number of provinces on Jan. 1**", also from *iPolitics*, gives more detail.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Tax**, **Manitoba**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Urgenda decision upheld: victory for citizens' climate rights comes just ahead of Juliana v. United States

Posted on **October 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 9, the Hague Court of Appeal upheld the lower court ruling in the landmark case of **Urgenda Foundation v. The State of Netherlands** , which in 2015 was the first case in the world to rule that governments have a "duty of care" to protect their citizens against climate change. The 2015 ruling ordered the Dutch government to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by the end of 2020 (compared to 1990 levels). The Urgenda Foundation **press release is here** ; a **compilation of documents** by the Foundation, including the text of the decisions, is here and an **English-language Explainer** is here. The **article** in *Climate Liability News* expands on the global importance of this decision, which has inspired other court challenges in U.S., Norway, Pakistan, Ireland, Belgium, Colombia, Switzerland and New Zealand.

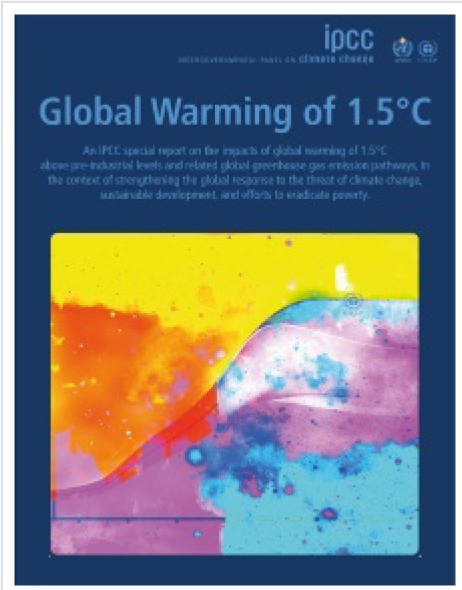
The Urgenda decision comes just as the highly- publicized **Juliana v. United States** case proceeds to its next court appearance on October 29. *Juliana vs. the United States* was originally filed in Oregon in 2015 under the Obama administration, and argues that the 21 young plaintiffs have constitutional rights to life, liberty and property, which are currently jeopardized by federal climate change policies. It is led by **Our Children's Trust** and has been called "the trial of the century" and has received media attention throughout the ongoing challenges from the federal government.

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation** | Tagged **Climate change Law**, **Juliana v. United States**, **Our Children's Trust**, **Urgenda Decision** | **Leave a reply**

Political will and urgent action required to save our planet, IPCC

Report warns

Posted on **October 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



The world's climate science experts have spoken in the landmark report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on October 8. The full title is: ***Global Warming of 1.5 °C: an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty*** . That dry title doesn't reflect the importance and impact of this report – the first time that the UN body has modeled the difference between the impacts of the Paris agreement goals of 2°C and 1.5 °C, and an urgent, unanimous challenge by 91 scientists to the policy makers and politicians of the world to act on the solutions outlined in their models . An IPCC official quoted in a **CBC report** strikes the hopeful tone the report tries to achieve: "We have a monumental task in front of us, but it is not impossible… This is our chance to decide what the world is going to look like."

The official report, commonly called ***Global Warming 1.5*** runs over 700 pages. The **official press release** states: "The report finds that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require "rapid and far-reaching" transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050. This means that any remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO_2 from the air….Limiting warming to 1.5ºC is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics but doing so would require unprecedented changes". A 34-page **Summary for Policymakers** and a 3-page **Headline Statements** provide official summaries. *Climate Home News* offers **"37 Things you need to know about 1.5 global warming"** and *The Guardian* offers summary and context in "**We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero or face more floods**" by Nicholas Stern and "**We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, warns UN"** (also republished in The National Observer) .

CAN CANADIANS EXPECT URGENT ACTION? : A thorough CBC summary of the report appears in "**UN Report on global warming carries life- or- death warning"** , and the *Globe and Mail* published **"UN Report on Climate Change calls for urgent action to avert catastrophic climate change"** (Oct 8) – yet no official reaction has been released by the federal government of Canada. "**Trudeau's Big Oil-friendly decisions mean climate chaos"** from Rabble.ca contrasts the IPCC report with a brief summary of Canada's recent policy failures. "**No change to Canada's climate plans as UN report warns of losing battle"** appeared in the *National Observer* (Oct. 8). The *National Observer* also posted "**We challenge every Federal and provincial leader to read the IPCC report and tell us what you plan to do"** on October 9, characterizing Canada's current divisions over a national carbon tax as representative of the world's dilemma – the failure of political will to act on known scientific facts. 350.org Canada also addresses the issue of political will with an **online petition** calling for an emergency debate in the House of Commons on Canada's plan to limit climate change, in light of the IPCC report.

Opinion Pieces are still being written, including: "**To avoid catastrophic climate change, we need carbon pricing"** by Dale Beugin and Chris Ragan of the Ecofiscal Commission in the *Globe and Mail* (Oct. 9) which argues that "The best that economics has to offer is telling us we have a key solution right under our noses. Carbon pricing is now a Nobel Prize-winning idea. "

"**On Climate, Our Choice Is Now Catastrophe or Mere Disaster** " by Crawford Kilian in *The Tyee . …."* modern governments and most of their voters are sleepwalking into catastrophe. If anyone or anything can wake them up, we might have a chance. And if we don't work hard to turn that catastrophe into a mere disaster, we won't be able to say nobody warned us. "

"Canada's carbon-tax plan is collapsing just as the planet runs out of time" in the *Washington Post* (Oct. 9)…. " Today, Canadians should take a minute to write to their elected officials provincially and federally and demand that we get the carbon tax done. Every elected official should take a moment to decide how they would like to be remembered. That is, assuming there will be anyone around to remember."

WELL-INFORMED GLOBAL SUMMARIES : " **IPCC: Radical Energy Transformation Needed to Avoid 1.5 Degrees Global Warming**" and "**Not Just CO2: These Climate Pollutants Also Must Be Cut to Keep Global Warming to 1.5 Degrees"**appeared in *Inside Climate News*. The World Resources Institute published "**8 Things You Need to Know About the IPCC 1.5˚C Report**" , accompanied by a **blog and infographic** which explains the consequential difference between 1.5 and 2.0 global warming levels. Climate Action International monitored the discussions leading up to the release of the report: **here is their summary** and a compilation of global reactions . A compilation of reactions from the academics at Imperial College and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (LSE) is **here**.

A brief **Comment** was already issued by the policy and communications director of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science, which calls the report a "conservative assessment" because it omits discussion of some of the largest risks and their impacts – notably population displacements, migration and possibly conflict, as well as potential climate 'tipping points', such as disruption to the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic and shifts in the monsoon in Africa and Asia.

Another key issue: the controversial role of geoengineering, such as carbon capture and storage or "carbon dioxide removal technologies"(CDR) . "**Negative Emissions technologies in the new report on limiting global warming"** was posted at *Legal Planet* (Oct. 8) , pointing out how important geoengineering is in the report's models. The author argues that " …. The text of the relevant chapter is honest about large-scale negative emissions, when it states: "Most CDR technologies remain largely unproven to date and raise substantial concerns about adverse side-effects on environmental and social sustainability. " But the author argues that the message was deliberately watered down in the executive summaries and in the Summary for Policymakers.

On October 4, just before the release of ***Global Warming 1.5***, 110 organizations and social movements, led by Friends of the Earth International, released their **Hands Off Mother Earth! Manifesto,** which opposes any geoengineering solutions, including carbon capture and storage.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of this report, and it will draw more and more discussion as the UNFCCC meetings in Katowice, Poland approach in December 2018.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **carbon capture and storage**, **climate change policies**, **Climate Science**, **COP24**, **geoengineering**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction**, **International**, **IPCC Reports**, **Paris Agreement** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. LNG project approved despite emissions, fracking

Posted on **October 3, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Described as one of the largest infrastructure projects ever in Canada, a $40-billion liquefied natural gas project in northern British Columbia was approved on October 1, and the five investors

– Royal Dutch Shell, Mitsubishi Corp., Malaysian-owned Petronas, PetroChina Co. and Korean Gas Corp. – have stated that construction on the pipeline and a processing plant will begin immediately. According to the **CBC report** , the project is expected to employ as many as 10,000 people in its construction and up to 950 in full-time jobs. The processing plant will be located in Kitimat, which is within the traditional territory of the Haisla First Nation, and which is in favour of the project, as are the elected councils of 25 First Nations communities along the pipeline route. The **B.C. Federation of Labour** also supports the project, as stated in its press release: "The Federation and a number of other unions have been part of the LNG process since 2013….As a part of the former Premier's LNG Working Group, and the new government's Workforce Development Advisory Group with First Nations and LNG Canada, labour pushed for many of the work force provisions that are reflected in today's final investment decision".

That leaves environmental activists in opposition. Although B.C.'s Premier announced the project with as "**B.C.'s new LNG Framework to deliver record investment, world's cleanest LNG facility"** , the project's emissions will represent more than one-quarter of B.C.'s legislated targets for carbon pollution in 2050. Both the **Pembina Institute** and **Clean Energy Canada** note how difficult it will be to reach B.C.'s targets for clean growth (currently under a consultation process), and Pembina warns of the dangers of fracking and of methane emissions associated with natural gas. Reflecting years of opposition, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives wrote "**LNG is incompatible with B.C.'s climate obligations"** (July 11). As far back as 2015, CCPA B.C. published ***A Clear Look at B.C. LNG: Energy Security, Environmental Implications, and Economic Potential ,*** by David Hughes. An October 2 Maclean's published an Opinion piece, **"Will LNG Canada increase greenhouse-gas emissions? It's complicated."** which considers (and rejects) the idea that B.C. LNG might have a global benefit if it displaces coal use in China .

And finally, the issue of fossil fuel subsidies, which Canada and other G20 countries have promised to phase out. In **"LNG Canada project called a 'tax giveaway' as B.C. approves massive subsidies"** in *The Narwhal,* author Sarah Cox reports that a senior B.C. government official "pegged the province's total financial incentives for the project at $5.35 billion", including break on the carbon tax, cheaper electricity rates, a provincial sales tax exemption during the project's five-year construction period, and a natural gas tax credit.

The B.C. Green party, which has to date supported the current minority NDP government through a **Confidence and Supply Agreement** , maintains an online petition called **LNG is not worth it** . Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver issued this **statement** on October 1, expressing disappointment and stating:

> "The government does not have our votes to implement this regime…..Despite our profound disappointment on this issue, we have been working closely in good faith with the government to develop a Clean Growth Strategy to aggressively reduce emissions and electrify our economy. The B.C. NDP campaigned to implement a plan to meet our targets and reaffirmed that promise in our Confidence and Supply Agreement. We will hold them to account on this. We will have more to say once that plan becomes public later this year."

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **B.C. Federation of Labour**, **British Columbia**, **First Nations**, **Liquefied Natural Gas**, **LNG** | **1 Reply**

NAFTA becomes USMCA – what has changed for workers and the environment?

Posted on **October 3, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

— Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland in Mexico City, July 25, 2018. (AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

On September 30, the governments of Canada, the United States and Mexico agreed on a replacement of the North American Free Trade Agreement – the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA). Legislatures in all three countries must now consider and ratify the agreement before it is final; if that happens, it will automatically be reviewed after six years, at which time it will continue for a 16-year period, if all parties agree to that.

What has changed? The new agreement runs to over 1800 pages, including annexes and side letters – a complexity that will take a while to digest. For WCR readers, the major changes of interest relate to the elimination of Chapter 11, (Investor-State Dispute Resolution) for Canada, and a change to auto tariffs, so that, as of 2020, a car will qualify for tariff-free treatment if 75 per cent of its contents are made in North America (an increase from the current NAFTA threshold of 62.5 per cent).

General summaries and reaction: From CBC News **"Buried behind the cows and cars: key changes in NAFTA 2.0"** ; an *iPolitics* article on October 3 is headlined **"Canada can claim at least partial success of progressive agenda in USMCA"** . From the Council of Canadians: "**The Good, the bad and the ugly from NAFTA 2.0"** with #1 in the "good news" category: "at the request of the U.S., there will be no ISDS process between U.S. and Canada"; also on

ISDS, **"Canada cheers the end of corporate NAFTA challenges in the new deal"** (*Toronto Star* Oct. 2) . From *The Conversation Canada*: "**Winners and Losers in the new NAFTA"** by Atif Kubursi , Professor Emeritus of Economics, McMaster University, who states " The most significant achievement by Canadian negotiators is their success in preserving Chapter 19 from the original NAFTA" (which covers dispute resolution re tariffs and countervailing duties).

In the bad news category: An Opinion from Gordon Ritchie in *The Globe and Mail* on Oct. 1 says "**NAFTA gets a new name but little else has changed"** , reflecting a cynicism that the agreement was an exercise in "branding" by President Trump. It has been noted that Article 32.1 would make it difficult for Canada or Mexico to negotiate any separate free-trade agreements with a "non-market country," (shorthand for China) . And from a broader view, the *New York Times* on October 3, "**For Canada and U.S., 'That Relationsip is Gone' after bitter NAFTA Talks"** and **"For Canada, a Sigh of relief more than a celebration in new Nafta deal"** (Oct. 1), which chronicles the difficulties of negotiation and includes some unique reactions.

The oil and gas industry lobbied and made gains, mostly in provisions relating to Mexico (which maintains the Investor State Dispute Resolution provisions for oil and gas investment) – explained in **an article in *Grist*** , and explained in more detail in "**Trump's USMCA delivers big wins to drugmakers, oil companies and tech firms"** in the *Washington Post*. *Energy Mix* echoes the same ideas from a Canadian viewpoint in "**Fossils cheer climate absent as Canada Mexico U.S. reach new trade deal"** (Oct. 3) .

On the key issue of the Environment: The ***National Observer* article** of October 1 notes that the agreement does not appear to contain the terms "climate change" or "global warming" in any of its chapters, annexes or side letters. The article quotes the Sierra Club in the U.S. : it "includes weak environmental terms that have historically enabled outsourcing of pollution and jobs, fails to make any mention of climate change, and includes special handouts to oil and gas corporations. …Much of the language appears designed to greenwash the deal, not to rectify NAFTA's threats to wildlife, ecosystems, or clean air and water." Sierra Club's "**Environmental Audit of the new NAFTA deal"** is here . The weaknesses of USMCA on the environmental front are explored in "**Trudeau says he still wants to talk climate change and trade with Trump"** in the *National Observer* (Oct. 1). The Canadian government ***Technical Summary of the Negotiated Outcomes: Environment Chapter*** states "Climate change remains a priority for Canada, and we remain committed to addressing this issue through ongoing negotiations of a parallel environmental cooperation agreement (ECA)."

Union Reaction to the USMCA: The Canadian Labour Congress welcomes the elimination of Chapter 11 and is "pleased to see the side agreements on labour moved into the main agreement, now subject to a state-to-state dispute resolution process." in "**Along with key gains in the USMCA, Canada's unions raise concern"** (Oct. 1) .

Similarly, Canadian Union of Public Employees posted: "CUPE applauds the elimination of Chapter 11, the ISDS (investor-state dispute settlement) mechanism from NAFTA, which CUPE has long fought to have removed, though it is regrettable that Mexico will remain subject to ISDS provisions" in **"NAFTA gets worse for Canadians under USMCA"** (Oct. 1) .

CUPE continues: “it is disappointing that the agreement does not meet or even come close to the progressive benchmarks that the Liberal government set for itself on NAFTA.”

The current tariffs against Canadian steel and aluminum remain unaffected by the new USMCA, prompting the United Steelworkers to issue a press release: **“NAFTA Deal a Sell-Out for Canadian Steel, Aluminum Workers”** .

“United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) should offer more protections for workers, says OFL” in a press release (Oct. 2) . “ The OFL calls on the government of Ontario to work alongside their federal counterparts to ensure that the immediate removal of security tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum are a top priority.”

In a surprisingly subdued press release on September 30, auto workers union Unifor was withholding any celebrations until further study of the language of the official agreement, according to **“USMCA framework achieves auto gains: Unifor”**

Official Documents related to the USMCA: Canada’s Office of International Trade has compiled Technical summaries of the Chapters and backgrounders at its main website **in English** and **in French** . The government’s overview summary is in **English here** (in **French here**). Also available, Technnical Summaries of the Negotiated Outcomes: for **Labour ;** for **Trade remedies and related dispute settlement (Chapter 19)** (re countervailing duties and tariffs); for **State-to-State Dispute Settlement ; Section 232 Side Letters summary re auto industry**

The **full text of USMCA** is (so far) available only at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Chapter 23 on **Labour is here** ; Chapter 24 on the **Environment is here** ; Chapter 31 on Dispute Settlement **is here** .

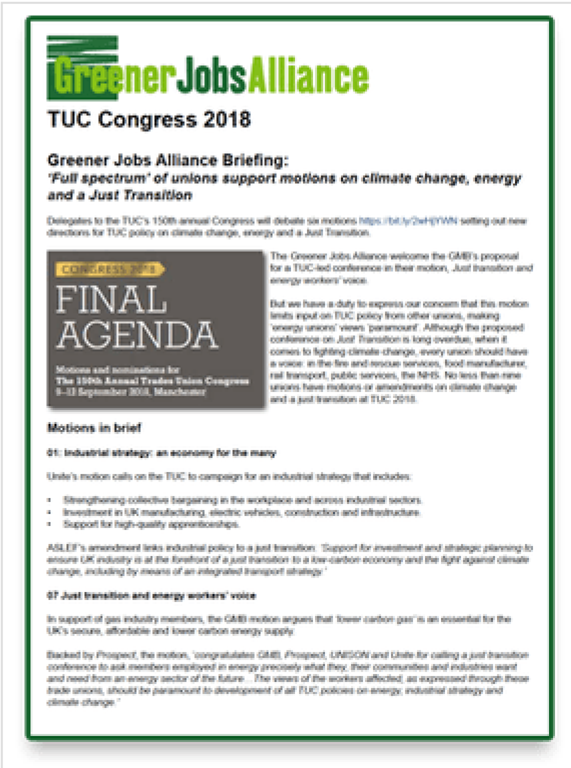
Posted in **Government Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)**, **NAFTA**, **Trade Policy**, **USMCA** | **Leave a reply**

Controversial motion on Just Transition passed at 2018

TUC Congress

Posted on **October 1, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Delegates gathered in Manchester U.K. for the **2018 Congress** of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Britain's central labour body, in early September, marking its 150th anniversary by returning to the city in which it was founded. Speeches and debates covered a broad range of issues, notably **Brexit** , and **diversity and equality** among union members .



GreenerJobsAlliance

TUC Congress 2018

Greener Jobs Alliance Briefing:
'Full spectrum' of unions support motions on climate change, energy and a Just Transition

CONGRESS 2018

FINAL AGENDA

Motions in brief

01: Industrial strategy: an economy for the many

07 Just transition and energy workers' voice

The **Greener Jobs Alliance Congress Briefing** lists and summarizes the six motions which relate to climate change, energy, and Just Transition, including one which has proven controversial. **Motion 07, Just transition and energy workers' voice** was presented by **GMB** (which includes workers at the **Hinkley Point** nuclear facility amongst its members); the motion was adopted with minor amendments. It states that "Congress notes that 'just transition' is a much-used but often ambiguous term and there is no shortage of voices who believe they are qualified to say what energy workers and communities want and need", the motion continues with … "Congress believes that the views of the workers affected, as expressed through these trade unions, should be paramount and central to development of all TUC policies on energy, industrial strategy and climate change, and that the TUC should develop a political and lobbying strategy led by the voices and experiences of energy unions and their members." "These unions" referred to in the motion are GMB, Prospect, UNISON and Unite.

But the **Greener Jobs Alliance Briefing** calls for a "full spectrum" of unions in the Just Transition debates, stating: "we have a duty to express our concern that this motion limits input on TUC policy from other unions, making 'energy unions' views 'paramount'. Although the proposed conference on Just Transition is long overdue, when it comes to fighting climate change, every union should have a voice: in the fire and rescue services, food manufacturer, rail transport, public services, the NHS. No less than nine unions have motions or amendments on climate change and a just transition at TUC 2018." The **Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union group** expressed similar "deep concern" in its blog, saying that the motion "carries the risk of moving backwards from last year's progress on climate policy (**2017 climate motion**)." Finally, the **Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)** labelled the motion as "divisive", according to a **UK DeSmog blog** (Sept. 27) . That same blog notes that the U.K. Labour Party has picked up on the TUC's motion in its Environmental Policy statement, ***Green Transformation ,*** which states that the Labour Party will "work closely with energy unions to support energy workers and communities" through the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Brexit**, **Greener Jobs Alliance**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Trades Union Congress (TUC)**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Activists force consultation re Ontario's cap and trade policy as Environment Commissioner pans government's actions to date

Posted on **September 27, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In the annual *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Progress Report for 2018*, titled ***Climate Action in Ontario: what's next?*** , the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has published a blunt critique of the Conservative government's actions to date.

As was widely reported, the government in Ontario (among other actions) tried to dismantle the province's cap and trade program after its election, introducing ***Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018*** on July 25 . The Environmental Commissioner wrote:

> "Unfortunately, cap and trade was both complex and poorly communicated; for some, its costs were more obvious than its benefits. Today, cap and trade, the low-carbon programs that it funded, and 752 renewable energy projects have all been swept away, with nothing in their place. The government's proposed replacement, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act (Bill 4), currently lacks most of the features of a good climate law..… There is no perfect answer, but the best international model for long-term consistency is the United Kingdom's Climate Change Act. The U.K. Parliament sets legally binding long-term emission limits, plus five-year carbon budgets 12 years in advance, based on non-partisan, expert advice and reporting. Ontario should do the same."

The Commissioner's report includes appendices, including **Appendix B: Revenue from cap and trade: What was it used for?**

On September 11, environmental activists filed a lawsuit against Bill 4, alleging that it violates the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights because no public consultations were held on the matter. On the same day, a **notice appeared in the Environmental Registry**, allowing for **comments online** or in writing, until October 11.   EcoJustice, one of the groups behind the lawsuit, (along with **Greenpeace** and the University of Ottawa) has posted a summary of all these developments on September 25 in "**Let Premier Ford know where you stand on climate action"**, urging comments.

Jumping in to this debate: Canadians for Clean Prosperity, which commissioned a study to examine the costs and benefits of carbon "costs" (e.g. fuel and household heating) in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, in the event that the federal carbon price backstop is triggered in 2019. The author, Dave Sawyer of EnviroEconomics, concludes that most households, regardless of income, would receive more money through rebates than they would pay out through a carbon price, assuming that all fees are rebated to consumers.   The report summary is **here** ; the formal report is ***Federal Carbon Price Impacts on Households in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario*** . An economist's (Brendan Frank) explanation of the EnviroEconomics report appears in an EcoFiscal Commission blog ***"How carbon dividends affect incentives (hint: they don't)"*** (Sept. 26).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Ontario**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian Circular Economy coalition launched at G7 meetings

Posted on **September 27, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Circular Economy Leadership Council** (CELC) of Canada was launched at the Halifax meetings of G7 Environment, Energy and Ocean ministers on September 20, when the focus was on plastic pollution of our oceans. The CELC is a Canada-wide, non- profit coalition which includes corporate and NGO leaders, think tanks, and academics, with a dual goal “to eliminate waste and accelerate the reduction of carbon emissions from the Canadian economy.” Their immediate objective is to develop and publish a Circular Economy Roadmap which will serve as a national strategy document. More details appear in their **bilingual brochure** .

Co-chairs of the coalition are David Hughes, President and CEO of **Natural Step Canada**, and John D. Coyne, Vice-President and General Counsel of **Unilever Canada**. Founding members are listed as: Unilever Canada • IKEA Canada • Loblaw Companies Limited • Walmart Canada • NEI Investments LP • International Institute for Sustainable Development • **National Zero Waste Council** • Smart Prosperity Institute • The Natural Step Canada, and • **Institut EDDEC – Environment, sustainable development and the circular economy** in Quebec. The CELC also declares strong working relationships with two well-established Circular Economy organizations – the **Ellen MacArthur Foundation** based in the U.K., and **Sitra** in Finland, which organized the first World Circular Economy Forum in Helsinki in June 2017, with 1,600 participants from 100 countries. The **2nd World Circular Economy Forum** will take place in Yokohama, Japan on 22-24 October 2018.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Circular Economy**, **Recycling** | **Leave a reply**

Recommendations for Canada’s high growth industries, including natural resources and clean technology

Posted on **September 27, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On September 25, the federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development released a report: ***The Innovation and Competitiveness Imperative: Seizing Opportunities for Growth***, with over-arching "signature" proposals in the consolidated report, and specific proposals in individual reports by six "high-growth potential" sectors: **advanced manufacturing**, **agri-food**, **clean technology**, **digital industries**, **health and biosciences**, and **resources of the future**. These six groups had been identified by the **Advisory Council for Economic Growth**, a body which has issued many of its own reports, including the 2017 reports, ***The Path to Prosperity*** and ***Learning Nation: Equipping Canada's workforce with skills for the future***.

In this latest series of reports, the identified Sector groups were led by "**Economic Strategy Tables**"— which the government characterizes as "a new model for industry-government collaboration". Each "Table" consisted of a Chair, and approximately 15 industry experts, with consultants McKinsey & Company providing "fact-based research and analysis". The reports are unmistakably written by management/industry authors (replete with many references to "agility", "own the podium" and "sandboxes"). A deeper dive into two of the sector reports reveals very substantial recommendations, with common themes of best practice examples from other countries, Canada's international competitiveness, Indigenous relationships, and attention to workforce issues of skills gaps and diversity.

The **Clean Technology Economic Table Report** proposes: "the ambitious, export-focused target of clean technology becoming one of Canada's top five exporting industries, nearly tripling the sector's current value for exports to $20 billion annually by 2025" – a growth rate of 11.4% per year on average. The report makes recommendations under six categories, including financing, engagement with Indigenous communities in partnership and co-development of clean technology initiatives, increased government procurement, regulation, and workforce issues. Greatest attention is given to the regulatory environment, with proposals for a "Regulatory Sandbox for Water Regulation" and a "Regulatory Sandbox for air quality and methane emissions regulation". "Ultimately, we will need as much innovation in our public policy tools as there is in technology to ensure progress on critical economic and environmental objectives." Regarding workforce issues, the report recognizes that Clean Technology will compete for Scientific, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills, but highlights a particular shortage of soft skills required for entrepreneurship, business development, finance, advocacy, risk management and forecasting. It calls for "work-integrated learning programs", and better labour market data collection and dissemination. Without ever using the term "Just Transition", it does call for "Opening streams of these programs for workers to re-skill", and "Adding new eligibility criteria for these programs to promote an inclusive and diverse workforce".

The "**Resources of the future"** Table Report examines the mining, forestry and energy industries; the tone is set in the introductory remarks which state: "While resource companies are committed to the highest environmental and safety performance, they are burdened with an inefficient and complex regulatory system that adds cost, delays projects and is not conducive to innovation." Recommendations are set out in five thematic sections, including "agile regulations, strategic infrastructure, innovation for competitiveness, indigenous people and communities, and attracting and re-skilling talent.

The report notes the established issues of an aging and gender-biased workforce in natural resources and identifies automation and digital skills as a neglected and misunderstood issue in the industry. It proposes a "Resources Skills Council" which, notably, would include labour unions, along with all levels of government, industry associations, universities and polytechnics.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **automation**, **Clean Technology**, **Forestry Industry**, **Labour Market Planning**, **mining industry**, **Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Oil Sands update: Trans Mountain will undergo new NEB Review – but watch out for the new Frontier mine

Posted on **September 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On September 21, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources **announced that the federal government** has begun its path forward after the **Court of Appeal decision** on August 30 which stopped the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The press release states: "we have instructed the National Energy Board (NEB) to reconsider its recommendations, taking into account the effects of project-related marine shipping. The NEB will be required to complete a thorough and prompt review and deliver its report within 22 weeks."… and "…the NEB will provide participant funding so that the views of Indigenous groups are well represented in the Board's consideration of marine issues." The National Energy Board website provides official news of the new Order in Council **here.**

A CBC report on September 21 summarizes the government action and reactions: "**Ottawa gives pipeline regulator 22 weeks to review Trans Mountain expansion project**" ; in it, the Minister promises a further announcement on improved consultations with First Nations (one of the two grounds cited by the Court of Appeal for quashing the project).

Other reactions:

Although her office hasn't released an official statement, Alberta's Premier Rachel Notley has taken a hard line in media interviews, as **reported by CBC** on Sept 21) : "We will not tolerate legal game playing,"… "And should it start to appear that game playing is working, we will hold Ottawa's feet to the fire."

From federal Conservative party leader Andrew Scheer: "**Ottawa needs 'special representative' to consult Indigenous groups and save Trans Mountain, says Scheer**" (Sept. 24); From B.C.'s Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, a **press release** limited to cautious acknowledgement; and from Perry Bellegarde, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, as **quoted in *The Straight*** (Sept. 25) : it would be "a win-win-win" to move the terminal from Burnaby to Delta, thus avoiding concerns about tanker traffic in the sensitive Burrard Inlet (but not addressing any concerns to "keep it in the ground").

West Coast Environmental Law has written a **thorough summary of the August Court of Appeal decision** , and suggested questions for the coming review. Ottawa is also facing a call from Washington State for improved oil spill protocols for the part of the Trans Mountain pipeline which passes through the Puget Sound, **according to the National Observer** (Sept 25).

"Colossal" new oil sands mine: But as all eyes are on the progress of this Trans Mountain review, another enormous oil sands project is under consideration. **"Hearings begin today into a $20-billion oilsands mine that's even bigger than the massive Fort Hills"** in *The Financial Post* (Sept. 24), reporting the on a five-week, joint-review panel regulatory hearing by **Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency** and Alberta Energy Regulator into the development of the Frontier oilsands mine by Teck Resources. *The Narwhal* analysis describes the Frontier mine as " a colossal undertaking that relies on 'relentless' growth in world oil demand at a time of global climate precarity". Read "**One of the largest oilsands mines ever proposed advances to public hearings**" from *The Narwhal* for background and discussion of the potential impact, including the economic arguments, for this new development.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Energy policy**, **Frontier Mine**, **Oil Sands**, **Trans Mountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

Fossil fuel subsidies, plastics pollution, circular economy are key topics at the G7 Energy and Environment meetings

Posted on **September 25, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Following the G7 meetings at Charlevoix Quebec in June 2018, further meetings in Halifax from September 19 to 21 brought together the G7 ministers with responsibilities for Environment, Oceans and Energy. The International Institute (IISD) published a **comprehensive summary** of the meetings on September 25, with links to the official Chair's Summary statements. The *National Observer* was one of only a handful of media outlets which reported on these meetings. Their report of September 25, "***Unscrambling the language of Canada's G7 Climate Diplomacy"*** is a plain language overview of what happened. Environment and Climate Change Canada, as host of the meetings, also published press releases highlighting Canada's commitments: the press release of September 19, titled **"G7 environment meetings in Halifax focus on climate action, and the $26 trillion opportunity of clean growth and tackling air pollution"** announced a Canadian pledge of $2 million for the National Adaptation Plan Global Network, to further climate change adaptation in developing countries and $2 million for a new initiative to empower women entrepreneurs working on climate solutions in the developing world. More broadly, Environment ministers discussed the implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement on climate change – the Paris Rulebook – in an attempt to move that forward before the scheduled deadline of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP 24) in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018.

On September 20, the **Canadian government's press release** states : the Government of Canada committed to diverting at least 75 per cent of the plastic waste from government operations by 2030. It will achieve this by eliminating the use of unnecessary single-use plastics, increasing recycling rates, and leveraging its purchasing decisions to focus on sustainable plastic products. The Government of Canada also announced a $65 million investment through the World Bank for an international fund to address plastic waste in developing countries. "

A contentious issue was fossil fuel subsidies. An earlier report by the National Observer , **"G7 promise to kill fossil fuel subsidies hangs over Halifax meetings**" (September 20) , highlights the topic, which has been a perennial but never-resolved issue since the **G20 first agreed to phase them out** in 2009. In 2016, the **G7 first set a deadline for ending fossil fuel subsidies** by 2025 ; Energy ministers at the 2018 Halifax meetings reaffirmed that commitment.

Despite the G7 commitment, “Canada is still the largest provider of subsidies to oil and gas production in the G7 per unit of GDP”, according to the newest report by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), which has published **extensively** on the issue. ***Fossil Fuel Subsidies in Canada: ‘Public Cash for Oil and Gas: Mapping federal fiscal support for fossil fuels*** , a September 2018 report was published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), in collaboration with Oil Change International, Equiterre, Environmental Defence, and the Climate Action Network. It also states that overall fossil fuel subsidies declined in Canada in 2016-2018 over 2015, but it attributes this to the impact of oil price fluctuations on the value of deductions, and how companies use tax deductions, rather than any substantive policy reform. In a concluding discussion , the report states that the oil and gas sector will inevitably follow the economic path of the coal industry, and thus, “it is imperative that those in these declining energy sectors are part of the planning” for a Just Transition. Removing subsidies for the sector, could create enough “fiscal space” to fund a just transition for workers and communities.

The Green Budget Coalition also weighed in recently on fossil fuel subsidies in its ***Recommendations for Budget 2019*** , which includes a discussion of the history of fossil fuel subsidies in Canada, a rationale for their phase-out, and calls for the government: to provide a transparent accounting of what subsidies are in place to the Parliamentary Budget Office; not to introduce new subsidies; and to legislate a timeline for the phase-out of remaining deductions for fossil fuel exploration and production, and for direct subsidies.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **COP24**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **G7**, **Ocean Protection**, **Paris Agreement**, **plastics pollution** | **Leave a reply**

Some workers risk their jobs if they flee disasters. Can unions help?

Posted on **September 21, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

With the well-accepted consensus that **climate change will make extreme weather disasters more likely** in Canada and around the world, and with the misery of Hurricane Florence in full view, it is time to consider the dilemma of those who *must* work despite evacuation orders and disaster. A recent AFL-CIO blog (reposted to Portside) summarizes the problem: **"You can be fired for not showing up for work during a hurricane"** (Sept. 13) . The blog relates the results of a survey conducted by Central Florida Jobs With Justice following Hurricane Irma in 2017, which found that more than half of survey respondents said they faced disciplinary action or termination if they failed to show up to work during the storm. Others weren't paid if they if they didn't report for work – making it an impossible choice between a normal, much-needed paycheque, or tending to their own and their family's safety. Following Hurricane Irma, a few employers instituted climate leave policies, and in June 2018, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners passed an ordinance prohibiting employers from retaliating against employees who comply with evacuation orders during a state of emergency. But for most workers, evacuation is not an option.

A similar situation was reported in the latest newsletter from **Labor Network for Sustainability** . The Central Labor Council in Miami conducted a survey and interviews, canvassing labor leaders and coalition partners from AFSCME Florida, IUOE and South Florida Building Trades, Unite HERE, United Teachers of Dade, and the Miami Climate Alliance of community, and environmental groups, to find out their concerns about climate change and health. **Answers** reflected the difficulties of working in extreme heat in a surprising number of ways, and also asked the question: "Have extreme weather events like hurricanes, flooding, or high heat impacted your job on a day to day basis?". Recurring responses included: "Being required to work during a hurricane or bad weather" , and concerns for job security and losing wages, because of a workplace being closed. Other concerns: unsafe workplaces, being required to work excess hours without allowance for caring for one's own home, and "Not having access to clean, safe drinking water."

Similar concerns were reported in a December 2017 report of a survey about the impacts of Hurricane Harvey in Texas, highlighted in the WCR article "**What happens to workers when wildfires and natural disasters hit?" .** In that summary, we also featured the impacts on families after the wildfires near Fort McMurray in Alberta in 2016. In the case of Alberta, amendments to the Alberta Employment Standards Code took effect in January 2018, providing new Personal and Family Responsibility Leave of up to 5 days of job protection per year for personal sickness or short-term care of an immediate family member, including attending to personal emergencies.

Until legislation makes such personal leaves universal, consider the job and wage protection in the **2014-2019 Collective Agreement** between Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3886 and Royal Roads University in Victoria B.C..

Article 31.8 states:

> “a) Should the University, or an area of the University, be closed temporarily due to environmental conditions, utility disruptions, road conditions or other reasons beyond the control of the University, employees shall receive their regular salary (excluding shift differential and weekend premium) during the closure. The University may layoff employees in accordance with the terms of Article 16 if the closure is expected to be for greater than twenty (20)working days.
>
> b) If an employee is called in to work during a temporary closure of the University they will be paid at Overtime rates as per Article 18.02. “

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Extreme Weather Events**, **Flooding**, **green collective bargaining**, **Hurricanes**, **job security**, **wildfires** | **Leave a reply**

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung releases studies of “radical realism” for climate justice

Posted on **September 21, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In September, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung of Berlin released a compilation of eight reports, titled ***Radical Realism for Climate Justice*** – “ a civil society response to the challenge of limiting global warming to 1.5°C while also paving the way for climate justice. Because it’s is neither ‘naïve’ nor ‘politically unfeasible’, it is radically realistic.” Individual chapters, each available **from this**

link , are written by a variety of international organizations and individuals. Of particular interest are the two from Canadian authors: ***System Change on a Deadline. Organizing Lessons from Canada's Leap Manifesto*** and ***Modelling 1.5°C-Compliant Mitigation Scenarios without Carbon Dioxide Removal***, by Christian Holz of Carleton University in Ottawa. Also of especial relevance for Canadians: ***A Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production : The Paris Goals Require No New Expansion and a Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production*** by Oil Change International, and ***Another Energy is Possible*** by Sean Sweeney.

In Chapter 5, ***System Change on a Deadline. Organizing Lessons from Canada's Leap Manifesto*** authors Avi Lewis, Katie McKenna and Rajiv Sicora provide a broad-brush summary of the history and growth of The Leap movement, beginning with its launch in Toronto in 2015, tracing the need for coalition building, and concluding with a statement of its international potential, and its application in Los Angeles.

Chapter 8 , ***Modelling 1.5°C-Compliant Mitigation Scenarios without Carbon Dioxide Removal***, is by Christian Holz, a post-doctoral fellow in Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University. His chapter reviews the recent technical studies about Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) and Bioenergy combined with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) technologies, which some see as the route to achieving the 1.5°C global warming target. Holz' assessment is that 1.5°C can be achieved without relying on on these technologies, "if national climate pledges are increased substantially in all countries immediately, international support for climate action in developing countries is scaled up, and mitigation options not commonly included in mainstream climate models are pursued."

Chapter 1, ***A Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production : The Paris Goals Require No New Expansion and a Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production*** by Oil Change International is an update of its 2016 publication, ***The Sky's the Limit*** , which makes the "keep it in the ground" case. For Canadians still reeling from the federal government's purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline, this new report is a timely reminder of the dangers of continued investment in exploration and expansion of oil, coal and gas and the need for Just Transition policies.

Another Energy is Possible by Sean Sweeney of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy is a tight summary of his assessment that current energy policies are allowing energy consumption to continue to grow. Sweeney calls for a two-pronged solution: " a shift in policy towards a «public-goods» approach that can liberate climate and energy policy from the chains of the current investor-focused neoliberal dogma, where the private sector must lead…. and … a shift towards social ownership and management so that energy systems can be restructured and reconfigured to serve social and ecological needs." Sweeney states: " The next energy system must operate within an economic paradigm that is truly needs-based and sustainable."

The other worthy chapters of ***Radical Realism for Climate Justice*** are: ***Zero Waste Circular Economy: A Systemic Game-Changer to Climate Change*** by Mariel Vilella of Zero Waste Europe; ***Degrowth – A Sober Vision of Limiting Warming to 1.5°C*** by Mladen Domazet of the Institute for Political Ecology in Zagreb, Croatia; ***La Via Campesina in Action for Climate Justice*** by the international peasants movement La Via Campesina, and ***Re-Greening the Earth:***

Protecting the Climate through Ecosystem Restoration by Christoph Thies of Greenpeace Germany.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **climate change mitigation**, **energy democracy**, **Energy policy**, **fossil fuel industry**, **Ghg emissions reduction strategies**, **Leap Manifesto** | **Leave a reply**

Labour union voices at the Global Climate Action Summit

Posted on **September 19, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Global Climate Action Summit (GCAS)**, which brought together the world's politicians, business leaders, and civil society organizations in San Francisco, concluded on September 14 . The final **Call to Global Climate Action** calls on national governments to urgently step up climate action, including by enhancing their UNFCC Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020.The GCAS **final press release** summarizes the many announcements and 500+ commitments that were made; even more comprehensive is ***A Chronology of Individual Summit and Pre-Summit Announcements*** , in which Summit organizers list all important actions and documents, dating back to January 2018. Plans were announced to monitor actions flowing from the Summit at a revamped **Climate Action Portal**, hosted by the UNFCC – focused around an interactive map as the key to aggregated data about climate action by region and sector.

Labour unions at the Summit: Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO, delivered a speech to the Summit on September 13, "***Fight Climate Change the Right way"*** , in which he highlighted the passage of ***Resolution 55*** at the AFL-CIO Convention in October 2017. He emphasized that the climate change/clean energy resolution was adopted unanimously…"with the outspoken support of the unions whose members work in the energy sector. That part is critical–the workers most impacted by a move away from carbon fuels came together and endorsed a plan to save our people and our planet…."

Trumka also spoke on September 12 at **Labor in the Climate Transition: Charting the Roadmap for 2019 and Beyond** , an affiliate event sponsored by the University of California

Berkeley Labor Center, along with the California Labor Federation, California Building and Construction Trades Council, Service Employees International Union, IBEW 1245, the International Trades Union Confederation, and BlueGreen Alliance.   In that speech, titled ***Collective Action and Shared Sacrifice Key to Fighting Climate Change***, Trumka cast the AFL-CIO climate record in a positive light, repeated the success of Resolution 55 at the 2017 Convention, gave a 100% commitment to fighting climate change, and stated: "…we must be open to all methods of reducing carbon emissions—including technologies some environmentalists don't like." He concluded: "When the movement to fight climate change ignores the issue of economic justice, or treats it as an afterthought, when we seek to address climate change without respecting the hard work and sacrifice of workers in the energy and manufacturing sectors whose jobs are threatened—we feed the forces who are trying to tear us apart…. If we don't get this right, we could find that our democracy fails before our climate…as rising fear and rising hate converge on us faster than rising seas."

The **Berkeley event** also featured panels on Just Transition, chaired by Samantha Smith, Director, Just Transition Centre of the ITUC, and included Gil McGowan, President, Alberta Federation of Labour, as a speaker, and a panel on Energy Efficiency in buildings , which included John Cartwright, President, Toronto & York Region Labour Council (pictured right) as a speaker. Videos of the Berkeley event are **here** , including one of the Trumka speech.

Finally, as part of the main Summit announcements, the International Transport Federation (ITF) **released a statement** in support of the Green and Healthy Streets Declaration by the **C40 Cities**, which commits signatory cities to procure zero emission buses by 2025 and to ensure that major areas of cities are zero emissions by 2030. (Montreal and Toronto are the two Canadian signatories). The ITF statement, ***Green & Healthy Streets: Transitioning to zero emission transport*** , is motivated by the benefits of lowering air pollution and occupational health and safety for transport workers, as well as the economic justice of providing transit opportunities for workers to commute to work.

The ITF and its affiliates commit to: "Working in partnerships with mayors and cities to ensure that the transition to fossil-fuel-free streets is a just transition that creates decent jobs, reduces inequality, and drives inclusion and improvements in the lives of working class and low income people. • Building partnerships with mayors and city authorities to develop and integrate just transition plans that drive decent work and social action, including labour impact assessments, safeguards and job targets for men and women workers. • Mobilising workers knowledge and skills to shape and enhance the supportive actions needed to meet the commitments in the Declaration. • Working in partnerships with mayors and city authorities to deliver a just transition to zero emission buses, including developing plans for relevant worker training."

Other progress for workplace concerns at the Summit:

Amid the announcements from the formal meetings, one new initiative stands out: the **Pledge for a Just Transition to Decent Jobs**, which commits renewable energy companies to ILO core labor standards and ILO occupational health and safety standards for themselves and their suppliers, as well as social dialogue with workers and unions, wage guarantees, and social protections such as pension and health benefits. The BTeam press release "**Companies step up to Deliver a Just Transition"** lists the signatories, and also quotes Sharan Burrow, Vice-Chair of The B Team and General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, who states: "We will not stand by and see stranded workers or stranded communities.… We have to work together with business, with government and workers. We can build a future that's about the dignity of work, secure employment and shared prosperity." The BTeam press release also references ***Just Transition: A Business Guide***, published jointly by the B Team and the Just Transition Centre in May 2018.

Another announcement related to the workplace: 21 companies announced the **Step Up Declaration,** a new alliance "dedicated to harnessing the power of emerging technologies and the fourth industrial revolution to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all economic sectors and ensure a climate turning point by 2020." The **press release** references "the transformative power of the fourth industrial revolution, which encompasses artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing and the Internet of Things (IoT). In addition, the declaration acknowledges the role its signatories can play in demonstrating and enabling progress both in their immediate spheres of influence and "collaboratively with others— across all sectors of society, including individuals, corporations, civil society, and governments." Signatories include several established climate leaders: Akamai Technologies, Arm, Autodesk, Bloomberg, BT, Cisco Systems, Ericsson, HP, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Lyft, Nokia, Salesforce, Supermicro, Symantec, Tech Mahindra, Uber, Vigilent, VMware, WeWork, Workday.

Posted in **Business Policy**, **Government Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Business attitudes**, **California**, **Green Economy**, **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Transit** | **Leave a reply**

Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco includes labour meetings

Posted on **September 10, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Global Climate Action Summit** in San Francisco will gather 4,500 delegates from around the world on September 12 – 14. According to the Summit website, "At GCAS governors and mayors, business, investor and civil society leaders will make bold new announcements that will act as a launch-pad to Take Ambition on climate action to the Next Level while calling on national governments to do the same. " Discussion and statements will be organized around five themes: Healthy Energy Systems, Inclusive Economic Growth, Sustainable Communities, Land and Ocean Stewardship and Transformative Climate Investments.

The University of California Berkeley Labor Center is holding an official "affiliate event" at the Summit, called **Labor in the Climate Transition: Charting the Roadmap for 2019 and Beyond**. The sold-out event will showcase the best practices in worker-friendly climate policy for 2019 and highlight "the importance of labor unions for building sustainable broad-based coalitions that can support strong climate policies at the state, national and international level." Co-sponsors of the event are the California Labor Federation, California Building and Construction Trades Council, Service Employees International Union, IBEW 1245, the International Trades Union Council, and BlueGreen Alliance.

The global **Rise for Climate action** , led by 350.org, was timed for September 8, to capitalize on the publicity and high profile attendees of the San Francisco Summit. According to ***The Guardian's* report** , San Francisco alone attracted 30,000 demonstrators, led by Indigenous leaders. The *San Francisco Chronicle* also reported that demonstrations will continue throughout the week, in **"Angry activists plan to crash Jerry Brown's SF climate summit"** (Sept. 9), and there is an online petition at the **"Brown's Last Chance"** protest website , calling for the elimination of fossil fuels in the state.

Among the reports/announcements released so far at the Global Climate Summit: ***Climate Opportunity: More Jobs; Better Health; Liveable Cities*** , which estimates that "by 2030, a boost in urban climate action can prevent approximately 1.3 million premature deaths per year, net generate 13.7 million jobs in cities, and save 40 billion hours of commuters' time plus billions of dollars in reduced household expenses each year." The report was published by C40 Cities, The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy and the New Climate Institute; a **press release** summarizing the report is here (Sept. 9).

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **350.org**, **California**, **Cities and Climate Change**, **Climate Activism**, **climate change policies**, **labour union policies** | **Leave a reply**

Coal transition case studies argue for anticipation and early action

Posted on **September 10, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Implementing coal transitions: Insights from case studies of major coal-consuming economies , published on September 5, brings together the main insights from the **Coal Transitions project**, the international research program led by IDDRI and Climate Strategies. The report provides an overview of the drivers of coal transition across the world (with brief mention of the Powering Past Coal Alliance and Canada), and concludes that coal transition is already happening, and that it is technically feasible and affordable. The report then presents case studies of coal transition in six countries: China, India, Poland, Germany, Australia and South Africa.

The analysis concludes that there are multiple policy options which have proven effective for coal transition, but warns that the meaningful consultation and participation of stakeholders early on in the decision-making process is critical to success. In an **explanatory blog**, lead author Oliver Sartor states that coal transition policies: "…. must be context-specific and agreed between the relevant parties. However, the crucial success factor is to anticipate rather than wait until the economics turns against coal. A good preparation can allow for younger eligible workers to be more easily placed into alternative jobs, for older workers to retire naturally, and for tailored worker reconversion and job-transfer programs for workers in the middle of their careers."

In addition to the Synthesis report, national reports for each of the six countries are available from the IDDRI **here**.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Australia**, **China**, **coal phase-out**, **Germany**, **India**, **International**, **Just Transition**, **Poland**, **South Africa** | **Leave a reply**

Ford government sued by Greenpeace for cancellation of cap and trade without consultation

Posted on **September 10, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Updated September 11:

On September 11, CBC News broke the news that **"Greenpeace suing Ontario government over cancellation of cap-and-trade program"** . The lawsuit was filed in Ontario Superior Court by EcoJustice and the University of Ottawa's Ecojustice Environmental Law Clinic. It asks the Court to quash the legislation, on the grounds that the Conservative government "unlawfully failed" to hold public consultations before cancelling the program, **as required by Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights**. An expedited hearing on the matter has been granted and scheduled for September 21. The EcoJustice press release of September 11 is **here** .

At issue is Bill 4, ***The Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018*** , introduced in July to honour a campaign pledge to repeal Ontario's cap and trade program, authorized through the *Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016* of the previous Wynne government. Yet as the *National Observer* reported on August 15, "**Ontario legislature adjourns without adopting Ford government bill to cancel cap and trade"** . The article also compiles expert opinion and reaction to the move, and notes that the government will be expected to propose new greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets when the Ontario legislature returns for its fall sitting on Sept. 24.

In "**Ford government does U-turn, expands electric vehicle rebates for Tesla buyers"** (Aug. 31), CBC reports on another Court case involving the rookie Ford government. The Court ruled against the government and in favour of Tesla, which had claimed that it had been discriminated against when the government discontinued electric and hybrid vehicle sales incentives. The CBC quotes Sara Singh, an Ontario NDP MP, who stated in August: "This is likely only the first of many decisions against the Ford government's decision to rip up hundreds of cap-and-trade and green energy contracts." The *Huffington Post* compiled **a list the legal actions against the government**, on a variety of fronts, on Sept. 5.

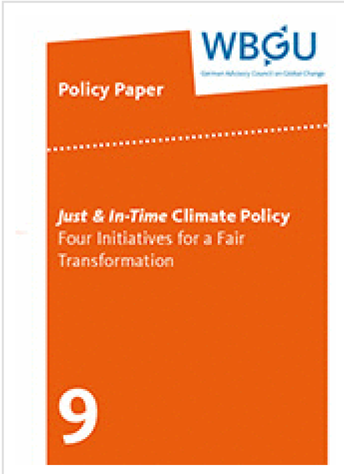
Others who have weighed in on Ford's climate and energy policies: Climate Action Network, along with 37 signatories, sent an **Open Letter to Premier Ford** on August 8. It documents the heat and fire emergencies throughout the province in the summer of 2018, and calls for a public commitment, along with a detailed plan, to achieve Ontario's existing legislated emissions reduction goals. Environmental Defence maintains **an online petition** calling for similar action.

Regarding Ford's **cuts to renewable energy programs:** A widely-cited article appeared in *Forbes* magazine: "**Ontario's Economic Investment Outlook Dims With New Government Energy Actions**" (Aug. 13) (and was re-posted by the **Pembina Institute**) stating: "In one fell swoop Ontario's government has dramatically slashed a source of funding for clean transportation infrastructure to help consumers lower travel costs, erased hundreds of clean energy projects to help consumers reduce electricity costs, dimmed the prospects for jobs and economic growth from clean tech industries, and took a major step backwards in making the province an attractive climate for business and investment today – and into the future."

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Energy policy**, **environmental rights**, **Ontario** | **Leave a reply**

German report proposes innovative "Just and In-time" Transition policies

Posted on **September 6, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



Just and In-time Climate Policy: Four Initiatives for a Fair Transformation was released on August 31 by the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU). The paper makes innovative proposals for the German climate change policy in an international perspective. The four exemplary initiatives under discussion relate to (1) “the people affected by the structural change towards climate compatibility” (specifically, Just Transition for coal-mining regions), (2) the legal rights of people harmed by climate change (including financial support for citizens bringing climate liability suits), (3) the dignified migration of people who lose their native countries due to climate change, (through the vehicle of an international climate passport), and (4) the creation of financing instruments for just & in-time transformation processes.

Regarding the transitions required by coal phase-out, the paper discusses the concept of Just Transition, but argues that it may be too slow for the emissions reduction challenge the world faces. Instead it uses the term “Just and In-Time” transition, reviewing past structural transition models but concluding that they will not be sufficient. “Purposive decarbonization requires forward-looking, early, proactive intervention by the state in alliance with other actors.” The report proposes to reach that goal through “an overarching ‘Zero Carbon Mission’ on multiple political levels”- local, regional, national, and international.

Regarding citizens’ legal rights and climate liability, the paper states: “Under certain circumstances, companies that contribute to climate change through emissions can sue for damages in the courts if they are forced by state authorities to close their plants. Yet the legal rights of people affected by massive climate damage vis-à-vis large corporations partly responsible for climate change are completely uncertain. The WBGU recommends that the German Federal Government should support a number of promising pioneer lawsuits, particularly those brought by people and communities harmed by climate change, against major corporations that have a significant responsibility for global warming, and assume the litigation cost risks for these lawsuits. It should furthermore use its influence internationally to ensure that the people affected are given opportunities to take legal action across national borders.”

Regarding climate migration, the report urges the German government to advocate at Katowice for a “climate passport” for climate-driven migrants “as a sign of intergenerational justice and responsibility”, and that “Countries with considerable responsibility for climate change should open their doors as host countries to people with a climate passport.”

Regarding the financial instruments to support transformation, the paper proposes that transition funds be created by pricing greenhouse-gas emissions (e.g.through carbon taxes), and be supplemented by revenue from a reformed inheritance or estate tax. “The transformation funds should accelerate the implementation of the climate and sustainability goals via investments and holdings in key industries, and use the profits generated for early and participatory structural change.” The WBGU also recommends providing support for economically weaker countries to build up their own transformation funds and manage structural change via a facility at the World Bank or regional development banks.

The German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU), an independent, scientific advisory body established by the German government in 1992. The paper **was released** in anticipation of the 24th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Katowice in December. The **German Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment** is also underway now, with the goal of contributing to the COP24 discussion on coal transition planning.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **climate liability**, **Climate migrants**, **coal phase-out**, **COP24**, **Germany**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

New York state announces new funds for clean energy training, electric vehicles

Posted on **September 6, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo issued a **press release on September 4,** announcing $15 million to help promote clean energy workforce development and training programs at various campuses of the State University of New York (SUNY). Some of the programs awarded funding include: a “Solar Ready Vets” program on site at Fort Drum to train veterans transitioning to civilian life in renewable energy ; updates including electrical/solar photovotaic information for continuing education curricula for architects, engineers, and building and code inspectors at Erie Community College; development of a wind operations technician training program at the Off-Shore Energy Center of SUNY Maritime . These initiatives are part of the Clean Climate Careers

Initiative, announced in June 2017, which aims to create 40,000 new, good-paying clean energy jobs by 2020. The Clean Climate Careers Initiative partners the state government with Cornell University's Workers' Institute, as well as **Climate Jobs NY** , a labour union coalition led by the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, New York's Central Labor Council, and the Service Employees International Union.

According to the **latest available report** from the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) in Q12018, 3,919 New Yorkers had been trained in a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy courses, through the *Green Jobs – Green New York Act (2009)*. The funding program ended in December 2016, although one training program still continues. The ***New York Clean Energy Industry Report for 2017*** reported that there were 146,000 clean energy jobs in New York State by December 2016 – 110,000 of those in energy efficiency roles.

Electric vehicles: Governor Cuomo issued another **press release on September 5**, announcing that the state will utilize $127.7 million received from the 2016 Volkswagen diesel emissions settlement to increase the number of electric and clean vehicles, by reducing the cost of new transit and school buses, trucks, and other vehicles, as well as supporting electric vehicle charging equipment. The new proposals are detailed in the **NYS Beneficiary Mitigation Plan.** The existing **Charge NY** program to incentivize electric vehicle adoption is credited with a 67 percent increase in ev's sold in New York state between 2016 to 2017.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Electric Vehicles**, **Green Jobs**, **New York State**, **renewable energy industry**, **Retraining**, **Training**, **volkswagen diesel settlement** | **Leave a reply**

Global Renewable Energy industry lacks human rights and labour rights protections

Posted on **September 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

London-based Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) released a new report on September 5th : ***Renewable Energy Risking Rights & Returns: An analysis of solar, bioenergy & geothermal companies' human rights commitments*** . The report analyses 59 companies' human rights policies and practices on five key areas: human rights commitment, community consultations, grievance mechanisms, labour rights and supply chain monitoring. It concludes that "The current level of commitment by the majority of renewable energy companies is insufficient to prevent, address and mitigate human rights harms, especially as the sector rapidly expands."

Concerning labour rights, only 36% of renewable energy companies were found to have policies committing them to core labour rights such as collective bargaining and freedom of association, 42% commit to the prohibition of child labour and 41% to prohibition of forced labour and modern slavery. An aspect with resonance for Canadians, in light of the recent federal Court of Appeal decision against the Trans Mountain Pipeline, the report found that "less than 30% (17 out of 59) of renewable energy companies have a stated commitment to consultation with communities affected by their projects. Only 8 companies reference indigenous peoples' rights and 4 companies have a commitment to free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities." Overall, 47% of companies do not have basic human rights commitments or processes in place, and only 5 companies met a set of basic criteria on human rights, community consultation and access to remedy. These findings are consistent with a previous BHRRC survey, **reported in 2016.**

Based on its extensive research of the mining industry, BHRRC also states that "failure to respect human rights can result in project delays, legal procedures and costs for renewable energy companies, underlying the urgency to strengthen human rights due diligence." It calls for investors to step up their engagement in renewable energy companies to ensure better respect for human rights.

Read the press release **here** for a summary of the report, and explore ongoing monitoring of human rights in the renewable energy sector **here**.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Geothermal energy**, **Human Rights**, **Labour Rights**, **renewable energy industry**, **Solar energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

International Labour delegates demand Just Transition action by G20 leaders

Posted on **September 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

G20 government leaders gathered in Argentina in September under the general theme, "Building consensus for fair and sustainable development", and within that, the Argentinian leadership has focused on three themes: the future of work, infrastructure for development, and a sustainable food future. Canada's website regarding the meetings is **here.**

Of specific interest to WCR readers are the side meetings of the **Labour 20 (L20) Engagement Group**, where international labour union leaders met on September 4 and 5th under the theme: "An Agenda for Global Policy Coherence." The **L20 press release** on September 5 calls on the G20 Labour Ministers to commit to a nine-point plan, which go beyond past commitments regarding equality, job security, and social protection, and include demands around climate change and Just Transition. The detailed, **10- page statement** is **here** , with these climate change-related demands:

> "The scale of the industrial transformation needed to comply with the climate objectives of the Paris Agreement is colossal but feasible. The transition to a low-carbon economy that keeps the temperature rise under 2°C requires not only massive investment in new and redesigned jobs, skills training, redeployment in new sectors, but also income guarantees and secure pensions. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are central components of the Just Transition, delivering socio-economic results that work better for

> everyone, building consensus and easing policy implementation." ….. "We call for coordination between Labour and Environment and Energy Ministers to support and accompany effective climate change policies with employment measures anticipating sectoral transformations, developing green sectors and skills, and providing social protection measures, following the ILO Just Transition Guidelines; and to adapt in order to deal with the impact of climate change on workers, their families, and communities, including increased heat and other extreme weather events on working conditions."

Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress represented the CLC, which

tweeted at #L20.

A library of all L20 statements, reports and documents is **here.**

The Group of Twenty (G20) sees itself as the " leading forum of the world's major economies that seeks to develop global policies to address today's most pressing challenges." Its membership includes the European Union and 19 individual countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. In addition to the government representatives, the following Engagement Groups also meet and issue statements: Business20, Women20, Labour20, Think20, Civil20, Science20 and Youth20 . **News releases** summarize discussion and policy statements issued, and for 2018, reflect an emphasis on the digital economy and education and skills training. The press release for the discussions of the official G20 Climate Sustainability Working Group is **here** (August 28) .

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Labour Congress**, **G20**, **international labour action**, **Just Transition**, **L20** | **Leave a reply**

Global Commission proposals for clean growth forecasts 65 million new low-carbon jobs in 2030

Posted on **September 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate released its 2018 flagship report at the **G20 meetings in Argentina** on September 5 . Under the title, ***Unlocking the Inclusive Growth Story of the 21st Century: Accelerating Climate Action in Urgent Times*** , the report acknowledges that all models are imperfect, but its extensive research and modelling predicts that its "bold climate action" prescription could deliver at least US$26 trillion in economic benefits through to 2030, and over 65 million new low-carbon jobs in 2030, as well as avoid over 700,000 premature deaths from air pollution. As the final point in its action road map, it calls for Just Transition measures and a role for civil society and trade unions in their creation.

The report is structured around a sectoral approach, focused on energy, cities, food and land use, water, and industry. Across those economic sectors, every chapter hammers the theme of urgency, calling this the world's "use it or lose it moment". "The decisions we take over the next 2-3 years are crucial because of the urgency of a changing climate and the unique window of unprecedented structural changes already underway. The world is expected to invest about US$90 trillion on infrastructure in the period up to 2030, more than the entire current stock today. …. Investing it wisely will help drive innovation, deliver public health benefits, create a host of new jobs and go a long way to tackling the risks of runaway climate change. Getting it wrong, on the other hand, will lock us into a high-polluting, low productivity, and deeply unequal future. "

Unlocking the Inclusive Growth Story of the 21st Century calls for the following urgent actions:

1. "governments should put a price on carbon and move toward mandatory climate risk disclosure for major investors and companies." (Specifically, the carbon price for the G20 economies should be at least US$40-80 by 2020, with a predictable pricing pathway to

around US$50-100 by 2030, accompanied by a phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies and harmful agricultural subsidies and tax-breaks by 2025);
2. all economies should place much greater emphasis on investing in sustainable infrastructure as a central driver of the new growth approach;
3. “ the full power of the private sector and innovation needs to be harnessed.” (Specifically, “ By 2020, all Fortune 500 companies should have science-based targets that align with the Paris Agreement.” Governments need to change regulations, incentives and tax mechanisms that are a major barrier to implementing a low-carbon and more circular economy, and public-private partnerships should be encouraged.
4. **“a people-centred approach is needed to ensure lasting, equitable growth and a just transition.** It is good economics and good politics.”….“All governments should establish clear Energy Transition Plans to reach net-zero energy systems, and work with energy companies, trade unions, and civil society to ensure a just transition for workers and communities. Successfully diversifying local economies as we shift away from coal and eventually other fossil fuels will require multi-stakeholder dialogue, strategic assistance, re-training, and targeted social protection.”

The **Global Commission** is comprised of government leaders, academics, and business leaders, including Sharan Burrow of the ITUC, and Lord Nicholas Stern. Established in 2013, the Commission published its first, landmark report in the New Climate Economy initiative in 2014: ***Better Growth, Better Climate*** , which established its position that there is no trade-off between growth and strong climate action. In addition to the annual policy document, international climate issues are published in a Working Paper series, available **here** .

Posted in **Government Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing**, **climate change policies**, **Energy policy**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **Infrastructure Investment**, **International**, **Job Creation**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

Federal Court of Appeal stops Trans Mountain pipeline in its tracks

Posted on **August 31, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

An **August 30 decision by the Federal Court of Appeal** has quashed the approval of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline expansion, directing that the the consultation with First Nations be re-done before the approval can again be considered. The Court's decision was based on two grounds: 1). Failure to adequately consult with First Nations – characterizing the interaction as more "note-taking" than consultation – and 2) the National Energy Board did not consider the environmental impacts of oil tanker traffic, especially its effect on the Southern Resident Orca Whales . The Court stated: "The unjustified exclusion of project-related marine shipping from the definition of the project rendered the board's report impermissibly flawed". The *National Observer* has summarized the decision thoroughly **here** , and maintains an ongoing series on "**Kinder Morgan" here** . CBC News produced several stories, including a broad overview, including reactions, in "**After Federal Court quashes Trans Mountain, Rachel Notley pulls out of national climate plan**" . A straightforward, briefer summary appeared in the *Calgary Herald*, **"Five things to know about today's Trans Mountain Pipeline Court Ruling"** .

Reaction from environmentalists and First Nations is understandably overjoyed. EcoJustice, one of the main legal players in this consolidated case issued a **press release** jointly with the Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Living Oceans Society, emphasizing the conservation aspects of the decision. It states: "The past six years have been a hard-fought battle against a project that has come to symbolize some of the defining issues Canadians face at this moment in time: Navigating the ongoing process of reconciliation, mitigating climate change, and protecting the land and water for future generations." **Climate Action Network states** that "This decision from the Federal Court of Appeal affirms the primacy of Indigenous rights and community consent. " The **David Suzuki Foundation press release** touches on both aspects of the decision, saying "What is clear is that today's decision sets a new high-water mark in terms of what it means to achieve true reconciliation, with Indigenous Peoples and nature." From The Narwhal, "**The death of Trans Mountain pipeline signals future of Indigenous rights: Chiefs"** is a good compilation of First Nations response, to be read along with the *Vancouver Sun*'s **"B.C. First Nations Divided on Kinder Morgan Ruling"**.

Another environmentalist reaction: "'**This pipeline is dead': Stand.earth applauds federal court decision on Trans Mountain Pipeline"** which states: "Today's victory is a vindication for everyone who worked to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline and tanker project — the hundreds of Water Protectors who were arrested in acts of peaceful civil disobedience, the tens of thousands of climate activists who marched against this pipeline, and the millions of Canadians who used their votes to elect candidates committed to creating a better future for Canada and the world."

What does this mean for Canadian climate policy? Professor David Tindall of University of British Columbia wrote an Opinion piece which appeared in *The Conversation* on August 30, **"Trans Mountain ruling: Victory for environmentalists, but a setback for action on climate change".** He states: "While environmentalists can claim a victory in delaying the construction of a pipeline that would ship a further 500,000 barrels of oil each day to the Pacific Coast, the court ruling also threatens Canada's plan to deal adequately with its greenhouse gas emissions. " A fuller discussion of this dilemma appears in "**Trans Mountain pipeline ruling shakes central pillar of Trudeau agenda"** (Aug. 31) in the *National Observer*, and features in the many arguments for "**Why Ottawa should step away from the Trans Mountain pipeline"** , in *Policy Options* in August. (A follow-up to an August 29 **Open Letter** to Prime Minister Trudeau on the topic, from 189 Canadian academics). Finally, "**The Global Rightward Shift on Climate Change"** in *The Atlantic* (Aug. 28) examines Trudeau's contradictory policies even before the Court decision, in light of the **recent ouster of Australia's Prime Minister**, partly over energy policies.

The threat to federal climate change policy comes because Alberta's Premier Rachel Notley, in reaction to the Court's decision, pulled the province out of the Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, blaming the federal government for "the mess we find ourselves in". The **Premier's press release** issues an ultimatum, stating: "…Alberta, and indeed Canada, can't transition to a lower carbon economy, …if we can't provide the jobs and prosperity that comes from getting fair value for our resources….So the time for Canadian niceties is over… First, the federal government must immediately launch an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Even more importantly, Ottawa must immediately recall an emergency session of Parliament to assert its authority and fix the NEB process as it relates to this project to make it clear that marine matters have been and will be dealt in a different forum. Then Ottawa needs to roll up its sleeves and continue its work to protect our coast and improve consultation and accommodation relating to Indigenous peoples in the way they deserve."

The political context is behind Notley's response is reported in "**'Notley's in a lot of trouble': Massive political fallout from Trans Mountain court decision**" in the *Calgary Herald* and in the Edmonton Journal (Aug. 31) : **"'It is a crisis': Alberta premier withdraws support for federal climate plan after Trans Mountain approval quashed"** . Other Western politicians are quoted in **" 'A hideously expensive white elephant': Essential quotes on the quashing of the Trans Mountain pipeline approval"** in the *Calgary Herald*. **Reaction from British Columbia's Premier** was brief, and focused on First Nations rights; **the mayors of Burnaby and Vancouver B.C.** were more enthusiastic (having been part of the applicant group of the case) .

What's Next? The **Prime Minister reiterated federal resolve** to build the pipeline in an interview on August 31, after the decision. Construction has been stopped indefinitely, but a CBC analysis cautions, "**Don't dig Trans Mountain's grave just yet"** , and UBC Professor George Hoberg **has predicted** that it will take another 18 months at least for the issue to reach, and be decided, in the

Supreme Court of Canada. And in the meantime, in Canada, the **September 8 RISE Global Day of Climate Action** will be a day of celebration .

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **First Nations**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **Kinder Morgan pipeline**, **Trans Mountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

Wind energy continues to grow in the U.S.; Solar energy weathers Trump's tariffs

Posted on **August 29, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Wind power capacity has tripled across the United States in just the last decade as prices have plunged and the technology has improved, according to new reports released by the U.S. Department of Energy at the end of August. Three reports are summarized in **a press release** on August 23 , and in **"U.S. Wind Power Is 'Going All Out' with Bigger Tech, Falling Prices, Reports Show"** by *Inside Climate News* . The full reports are: ***2017 Offshore Wind Technologies Market Update August 2018*** ; ***2017 Wind Technologies Market Report*** ; and ***2017 Distributed Wind Market Report*** .

"**How Much Damage are Trump's Solar Tariffs Doing to the U.S. Industry?**" (Aug. 20) in *Inside Climate News* concludes that the tariffs have had a dampening effect on the industry, but less than expected. The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), using confidential information provided by the companies which are its members, estimates that 9,000 jobs have been affected to date – either by layoffs or prospective jobs that were cancelled. Their initial forecast in January 2018 had been that tariff-related job losses could reach about 23,000 for 2018. The Solar Foundation reported in February 2018 in its **annual *Solar Jobs Census*** that 250,271 Americans worked in solar as of 2017, although the number of workers had declined in 2017 for the first time since 2010. That trend will surely turn around by 2020 when the **new regulations in California** take effect, requiring solar panels on almost all new homes.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Solar energy industry**, **Trade Policy**, **wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Election proposals from Québec Solidaire party forecast 300,000 new green jobs by 2030

Posted on **August 29, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Citizens of Quebec will vote on October 1 in a provincial election, with the leading parties, the Liberals (led by Philippe Couillard) and the Coalition Avenir Quebec (led by Francois Legault) so far emphasizing their economic plans. It is the new, urban-based **Québec Solidaire** party which has raised the profile of the issue of climate change, with its proposal to ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2030 – as reported in "**Quebec election promise to ban new gas cars and go electric draws praise and skepticism**" in the *National Observer* (Aug. 28) . The article reports that, the 2030 ban of new gasoline-powered vehicles would be followed by a ban on the sale of new hybrid vehicles in 2040, with the goal of eliminating all gas and hybrid vehicles from Quebec roads by 2050. Quebec's existing zero-emission vehicle law and regulations – considered trendsetting when passed in 2016 and 2017 – require 10 per cent of new vehicle sales to be low- or zero-emission by 2025.

The full program, **Plan d'investissement en transport collectif** (available in French only) was released on August 28, and further proposes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 48 per cent in 2030 and 95 per cent in 2050, compared to 1990 levels. As well as the ban of conventional cars, the party proposes increased spending on public transport infrastructure, and reduction of public transit costs by half.   In launching the Plan, Québec solidaire co-leader Manon Massé said that it would make Quebec a world leader in the fight against climate change, and would be the most important social change in the province since the Quiet Revolution. She also forecast that the Plan would create 300,000 green jobs by 2030.

So far there has been little fanfare for climate change issues from the mainstream parties – a **CBC special feature** summarizes all four provincial party platforms on all issues, including the environment. The right-leaning Coalition Avenir Québec party did **hit the headlines** on August 16 in advance of the campaign start when it proposed the cancellation of the Apuiat wind project, a $600-million wind energy investment on traditional Innu territory. Reaction focused less on the attack on renewable energy than on what it reflected about the party's attitude to Indigenous rights, as well as the comparison to the recent cancellation by Doug Ford of the White Pines wind project in Ontario.

The Quebec Federation of Labour released its own **statement on election issues** ; its statement on a green economy, including Just Transition, is available in French only, as **Il faut adopter un plan québécois de transition juste vers une économie verte et « sans pétrole »** .

For English-language coverage, see the *National Observer* ongoing special feature at **Quebec 2018** , or the *Montreal Gazette*, a Postmedia company, which also maintains a **special section of election coverage**.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Quebec**, **wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Canada launches consultation on vehicle emissions regulations under cloud of Trump rollbacks

Posted on **August 23, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On August 20, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change published a **Discussion Paper** to launch consultations on the mid-term evaluation of Canada's light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas emission regulations for the 2022–2025 model years. Public comments may be submitted to ec.infovehiculeetmoteur-vehicleandengineinfo.ec@canada.ca by September 28,

2018. Once comments have been reviewed, if the government determines that regulatory changes are needed, it promises a second consultation period. One of the first off the mark with a response: Clean Energy Canada, with "**Canada should explore stronger vehicle standards to cut pollution and enhance competitiveness**" .

The mid-term review is required by the 2014 regulations under which Canada currently operates, but it comes at a time when Canada must decide whether to continue to align its fuel efficiency standards with the U.S., as it has done for 20 years, or follow its own path. The current Canadian trajectory is shaped by our GHG reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement, the **Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change** , and a 2017 commitment to develop a national **Zero-Emissions Vehicle Strategy** by 2018.

But in the U.S. , on August 2, the Trump administration announced the ***Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient Vehicle Rule (SAFER)*** , which proposes weakening the EPA's greenhouse gas emissions standards and Department of Transportation's Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for light duty vehicles in model years 2021 through 2025. The proposed rule would also revoke a legal waiver which allows California and 13 other states to set their own pollution standards. Based on arguments made in the document "**Make Cars Great Again**" , published by the *Wall Street Journal*, the Trump plan claims it will save $500 billion in "societal costs," avert thousands of highway fatalities and save consumers an estimated $2,340 on each new automobile.   Most of the Administration's arguments are refuted in "**Five Important points about the Safe Vehicle Rule"** by the Sabin School of Law at Columbia University. Other critiques: from Vox: "**Trump is freezing Obama's fuel economy standards. Here's what that could do"** (Aug. 2); and **"The EPA refuted its own bizarre justification for rolling back fuel efficiency standards"** (Aug. 16); "**Trump administration to freeze fuel-efficiency requirements in move likely to spur legal battle with states"** in the *Washington Post* (Aug. 2) ; "**Trump's Auto Efficiency Rollback: Losing the Climate Fight, 1 MPG at a Time"** by *Inside Climate News* (Aug. 2) .

What should Canada do? Technical analysis comes in   ***Automobile production in Canada and implications for Canada's 2025 passenger vehicle greenhouse gas standards***, released by the International Council on Clean Transportation in April 2018, which analyzes the Canadian vehicle manufacturing market and sales patterns and describes the possible impacts if Canada aligns weakens its greenhouse gas emission standards with the Trump administration, or maintains its existing standards and aligns with California. Other opinions: From Clean Energy Canada on Aug. 2 , "**Canada should hold firm and reject Trump's efforts to roll back vehicle standards"** ; or "**On vehicle emissions standards It's time Canada divorced the United States**"   in *Policy Options* (April 2018); and "**Trump's plan to scare Americans into supporting car pollution"** in the *National Observer* (Aug. 7) .

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Canada**, **Emissions Regulations**, **transportation policy**, **United States**, **Vehicle emission standards** | **Leave a reply**

“Hothouse Earth” and “Losing Earth” reporting missed the point – there is still time to act

Posted on **August 20, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Two high-profile news stories appearing in August highlight the perils of climate change journalism: the **“Hothouse Earth”** article, and **“Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change”** in the *New York Times Magazine.* Both prove the old adage that there are two sides to every story; if you only read the original articles, here is some discussion and context to counter the fatalistic news coverage.

“Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene” published in the *Proceedings of the National Academies of Science (PNAS)* on August 6 was widely reported as the “**Hothouse Earth”** article. It reviewed the existing studies about feedback loops which could push the Earth System toward “a planetary threshold” that, if crossed, could prevent stabilization of the climate at intermediate temperatures and cause “continued warming on a “Hothouse Earth” pathway”. *The Guardian* translated the scientific language and quoted some of the authors in “**Domino-effect of climate events could move Earth into a ‘hothouse’ state”** (Aug. 7), but the byline “Leading scientists warn that passing such a point would make efforts to reduce emissions increasingly futile” typifies the sort of fatalistic coverage which followed. One of the worst examples appeared in an Opinion piece from *The Tyee* on August 12 “**If We Can’t Stop Hothouse Earth, We’d Better Learn to Live on It”** .

In fact, the original PNAS paper was a call to action, calling for “ stewardship of the entire Earth System—biosphere, climate, and societies—and could include decarbonization of the global economy, enhancement of biosphere carbon sinks, behavioral changes, technological innovations, new governance arrangements, and transformed social values.” It was accompanied by a **supplementary document** which included specifics in *Table S5: Human actions that could steer the Earth System onto a ‘Stabilized Earth’ trajectory*. The authors have also been active in promoting their main message: **"World is finally waking up to climate change, says 'hothouse Earth' author"** (August 19) in *The Guardian*, in which Hans Joachim Schellnhuber states: "There's a time to sit down and work at your desk and there's a time to get up and leave the area where you are comfortable. That time is now."

Similarly, in **"Hothouse Earth" Co-Author: The Problem is Neoliberal Economics"** by Kate Aronoff in *The Intercept* (Aug. 14) another co-author, Will Steffen states: "the obvious thing we have to do is to get greenhouse gas emissions down as fast as we can. That means that has to be the primary target of policy and economics. You have got to get away from the so-called neoliberal economics." He suggests something "more like wartime footing" at very fast rates for renewable energy , transportation and agriculture ".

Others also call for action: Eric Holthaus, in **"Terrified by 'hothouse Earth'? Don't despair — do something"** in The *National Observer* (Aug. 7) states "Humanity is now facing the need for critical decisions and actions that could influence our future for centuries, if not millennia" . David Suzuki struck a similar note in **"David Suzuki: Cool solutions mean a hothouse planet isn't inevitable"** in *The Straight* (August 14) and also in **Rabble.ca** , saying, "The research is profoundly disturbing. But the media coverage often missed or downplayed a crucial element: the solutions the report outlines toward a "stabilized Earth pathway." Suzuki states: "We must insist that politicians represent the interests of citizens rather than corporations. We must stand up to the fossil fuel industry and climate science deniers.", and quotes Professor Simon Lewis from University College London and University of Leeds, saying "diagnosing global warming and its consequences is a scientific issue, but solving climate change is about power, money, and political will."

For a review of other scientific studies : "**Is our planet headed toward a 'Hothouse'? Here's what the science does — and doesn't — say"** in the *Washington Post* (Aug. 10) by Richard Betts, a U.K. scientist, who credits the importance of the article but speculates that it has received such outsize press response because of the timing of being released in the midst of the world's heat waves, and because of the use of the perjorative "hothouse" term.

The second case which needs some context: **"Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change"** , published on August 1 in the *New York Times Magazine* . The article was preceded by extensive publicity to establish its importance and authority: "with support from the Pulitzer Center, this two-part article by Nathaniel Rich is based on 18 months of reporting and well over a hundred interviews, documenting the history of climate change science and activism between 1979 and 1989." Sounds unassailable, and presents a highly detailed historical account, yet criticism followed immediately. From *The Atlantic*, **"The Problem With The New York Times' Big Story on Climate Change"** (Aug. 1) with the byline: "By portraying the early years of climate politics as a tragedy, the magazine lets Republicans and the fossil-fuel industry off the hook". In an interview in *Democracy Now*, **""Losing Earth": How Humanity Came to Understand Climate Change & Failed to Act in Time"**, Amy Goodman invites Nathaniel Rich to refute some of the criticism. Finally, **"Capitalism killed our climate, not human nature"** by Naomi Klein appeared in *The Intercept* (Aug. 4), stating: " it is so enraging that the piece is spectacularly wrong in its central thesis." … Klein argues that climate activism "suffered from an epic case of historical bad timing… governments were getting together to get serious about reining in the fossil fuel sector, the global neoliberal revolution went supernova, and that project of economic and social reengineering clashed with the imperatives of both climate science and corporate regulation at every turn." She concludes: "We aren't losing earth — but the earth is getting so hot so fast that it is on a trajectory to lose a great many of us. In the nick of time, a new political path to safety is presenting itself. This is no moment to bemoan our lost decades. It's the moment to get the hell on that path."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate change in the Media**, **Climate Science**, **Journalism** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. consultation on "Clean Growth" policies for transportation, industry, and the built environment

Posted on **August 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

While British Columbia is understandably preoccupied with the devastating wildfires raging across the entire province, an engagement process called **Towards a Clean Growth Future in B.C.** was launched on July 20, with a short, summertime deadline of August 24.

Three brief Intentions Papers have been published to solicit public input : ***Clean Transportation*** ,which discusses policies to incentivize Zero Emissions Vehicles – including the possibility of a ban the sale of new gasoline and diesel light duty vehicles by 2040; ***Clean, Efficient Buildings,*** which proposes five steps to cleaner buildings, including Energy efficiency labeling information, financial incentives, and additional training for workers in energy efficient retrofitting and in the new-build Energy Step code; and ***A Clean Growth Program for Industry*** , which includes the province's Industrial Incentive under the carbon tax regime and addresses the potential dangers of "carbon leakage".

Public Submissions **are available online** and to date have been submitted by: **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives** (CCPA), written by Marc Lee ; **Closer Commutes** ; **The Wilderness Committee ;** and **The Pembina Institute** , which at 37 pages is extremely detailed, and includes 5 recommendations relating to Training and Certification for Clean Buildings, including a call for "a construction labour strategy that addresses skilled labour gaps and equity issues in the building industry. Integrate with emerging technology and innovation strategy to foster greater use of automation and prefabrication."

The West Coast Environmental Law Association (WCEL) also posted a thorough discussion of the Clean Growth proposals on its own website on August 16. "**BC's decade-delayed climate strategies show why we need legal accountability**" by Andrew Gage notes that the intentions papers are largely built on existing proposals (some dating back to the ***2008 Climate Action Team Report***), and that they are not complete, as the government is also developing proposals through its **Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council** and the newly appointed **Emerging Economy Task Force**. (The Wilderness Committee calls the proposals "underwhelming"). Whatever the final policies that flow from these consultations, WCEL emphasizes the importance of demanding accountability, and like Marc Lee in his submission, points to the success of the U.K.'s *Climate Accountability Act (2008)*. WCEL has **previously critiqued** Bill 34, ***B.C.'s Climate Change Accountability Act*** which received Royal Assent on May 31 2018.

Another commentary, appearing in the *National Observer* (July 27) addresses the weakness of the transportation proposals. "**B.C.'s climate plan needs a push – from you"** refers to the author's more detailed report, ***Transportation Transformation: Building complete communities and a zero-emission transportation system in BC***, which was published by the CCPA in 2011.

The CCPA also published an article on August 2, 2018 in *Policy Note*: "**The Problem with B.C.'s Clean Growth climate rhetoric"**. Author Marc Lee reviews the history of the term "clean growth" and offers his critique, noting that clean growth "promises change without fundamentally disrupting the existing economic and social order."

Individuals have until August 24 to can email their input to clean.growth@gov.bc.ca .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **B.C. Carbon Tax**, **British Columbia**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Green Building**, **provincial climate change policies**, **transportation policy** | **Leave a reply**

Green collective agreement language achieved by Canadian Union of Public Employees

Posted on **August 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

“Bargaining language for a green agreement” , posted to the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) *Table Talk* newsletter on July 25, is a brief article highlighting some of the innovative bargaining done by CUPE locals on the issues of environmental stewardship, transit passes, bicycle reimbursement, sustainable work practices and green procurement. The *Table Talk* article reproduces the actual language of the agreements; for links to the full agreements, and almost 200 others by many unions, go to the **Green Collective Agreements database** maintained by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)**, **green bargaining**, **green collective bargaining** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian Postal Workers Union bargaining for greener operations, postal banking

Posted on **August 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Canadian Union of Postal Workers** (CUPW) and Canada Post are currently negotiating a new collective agreement, with “**Canada Post hellbent on labour dispute as talks continue, union president says”** in the *Toronto Star* (July 12). If no deal is reached by September 9, a strike or lockout is possible by September 26. An important goal has been to consolidate two agreements into one, and to achieve equity between the Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC) unit and the Urban unit on job security, guaranteed hours of work, and wages, following an **arbitration award in CUPW’s favour** on June 1 . Also highly important in this round of negotiations, however, are CUPW demands related to climate change and the environment.

CUPW's interest in environmental issues is not new. In February 2016, CUPW launched The ***Delivering Community Power Initiative*** which re-imagines the postal service by leveraging its huge retail network to provide: Charging stations for electric vehicles at post offices; postal banking, especially to rural and indigenous communities; community hubs for digital access and social innovation. In addition, the postal vehicle fleet could be converted to renewable fuels; provide consolidated last-mile delivery service that would ease congestion and pollution in urban centres; and vulnerable people in their own homes could be served with a check-in service by door-to-door mail carriers. The **2012-2016 collective agreement** between CUPW and Canada Post included an Appendix T: Service Expansion and Innovation and Change Committee, which secured the right "to establish and monitor pilot projects which will test the viability of the proposals" to expand services – and from CUPW's perspective, these could lay the groundwork for its Community Power initiatives.

In the current negotiations, CUPW's ***Negotiating Update*** (August 2) states: "We recognize that both Canada Post and CUPW have responsibilities to work together to reduce our environmental impact. We have put forward a bold vision: Delivering Community Power. Our vision will expand services for everyone and generate more revenue while also creating new jobs. It's interconnected: our environment demand supports the Delivering Community Power campaign, and the campaign's massive public support will help us in bargaining. " An updated statement of the Community Power document was released in August: ***Delivering Community Power: Postal Service and the Low carbon economy*** and in June CUPW published ***It's time for a postal bank for everyone: How a bank in the post office could help you*** to present the advantages of postal banking and describe examples from other countries.

The specific environment–related demands, as outlined in ***Negotiating Program Bulletin*** are :

C.3: Improve Services and Standards to the Public: Expand retail services, delivery hours, banking, and internet and other services. Contract-in all work that CUPW members can perform with no contracting out of work. Maximize work in local communities.

C.22: Green Canada Post Operations and Reduce Emissions with New Services: Require CPC to take measures to reduce its environmental footprint, initiate new environmental services and negotiate joint environmental sustainability committees.

Follow CUPW updates to the current negotiations **here** .

CUPW's long history with environmental concerns is outlined by Geoff Bickerton, Meg Gingrich and Sarah Ryan in Chapter 9: "Climate change and work and employment in the Canadian Postal and Courier Sector", in the book ***Climate@Work*** (2013) . In 2016, Carla Lipsig Mumme of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW) made a presentation to the federal government's Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, titled C***anada Post and Environmental Leadership*** , which made proposals for a Green Plan for Canada Post, drawing on many of the CUPW themes. Canada Post Corporation's latest ***Sustainability Report (2016)*** reports on existing environmental performance re fleet performance, GHG emissions, landfill waste diversion, paper consumption, and building operations and real estate.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)**, **Electric Vehicles**, **green bargaining**, **postal workers** | **Leave a reply**

Job protection gets high priority in Germany's Commission on phase-out of brown coal

Posted on **August 15, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

According to **a March 2018 report** by Clean Energy Wire, Germany's coal industry, (hard coal and lignite coal), employed approximately 36,000 workers in 2016, in contrast to 160,000 people employed in the wind power industry and 340,000 in the entire renewable energy generation sector. Yet on June 6, Germany's **Special Commission on Growth, Structural Economic Change and Employment** was launched to study and make recommendations for social and economic policy for a phase-out of lignite coal in Germany by the end of 2018. The word "coal" does not appear in its name, reflecting the political tension surrounding the issue. Groups such as The Green Party, WWF Germany and Greenpeace Germany are critical, as summarized in "**Why are German coal workers so powerful, when there are so few?**" in *Climate Home News* (Aug.

14) , which states that " "saving jobs in the coal sector is its first priority, followed by designing the structural change in the coal regions towards low-carbon economies, with climate protection and coal phase-out coming last."

Although much information about the Commission is in German, Clean Energy Wire (based in Berlin) publishes in English, and is **monitoring the Commission's progress** . It has produced two Fact Sheets that are essential reading: 1. ***Coal in Germany, a Fact Sheet*** (Dec. 2017) (full of facts and figures about the industry); and 2. ***Germany's Coal Exit Commission, a Fact Sheet*** – which includes a list of the members of the Commission – representatives from government, industry, academia, environmental groups, and these unions: **German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)** ; **Ver.di** (Service industries) and **IG BCE** (mining, chemicals and energy industries). **Position statements** from some of the members of the Commission are here ; IG BCE states: "The people in the mining regions do not need an accelerated exit from coal.. .The path for a phase out of coal-fired power generation has long been mapped out. What they need is an entry into structural change that secures good industrial work. That's what we will work towards in the commission." From another member, Germanwatch: "The coal exit is aligned with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and has the potential to be the foundation for a fair structural change and a modernisation of the economy. One hopes that the economic associations involved do not obstruct, but put the opportunities front and centre."

On August 3 that the Germany's Employment Minister presented a 6-point plan, summarized in **"Employment minister suggests infrastructure projects for coal mining regions"** .

Further background and opinion:

From Euractiv: "**Leaked: Germany's planned coal commission shows little interest for the climate"** (June 1) and " **Germany launches coal commission in a bid to protect climate and jobs**" (June 7)

From DW, "**Germany's mining communities brace themselves for post-coal era"** (June 1) and "**Germany's coal exit: Jobs first, then the climate"** from DW (June 26);

Contrast the European coverage with "**New Commission studies unprecedented, orderly coal phase out for Germany"** in *The Energy Mix* (August 14) .

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Coal Industry**, **coal phase-out**, **Germany**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

Job losses feared as Ontario government cancels renewable energy contracts

Posted on **August 10, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On July 13, the Province of Ontario **announced** the immediate cancellation of 758 renewable energy projects, calling them "unnecessary and wasteful" . In **"Inside Ontario's clean energy contract cancellations"** by *GreenTech Media* (July 26), the CEO of the Canadian Solar Industry Association estimates that Ontario will lose 6,000 jobs and half a billion dollars of investment as a result, although the general tone of the article displays confidence in the unstoppable momentum of clean energy. The decision, however, has thrown the industry into confusion, disappointed some consumers, and is seen as a blow to Ontario's reputation amongst investors.

A sampling of reaction: "**Green shift to green slump: How trade decisions and electoral politics are crippling the vision of a clean Canadian power play**" in the *Globe and Mail* (Aug. 3)

"**Solar companies may exit Ontario for Alberta after Doug Ford kills rebate program"** from CBC News

"**Renewable Energy stocks slide as Ontario vows to scrap clean- power projects**" in the Globe and Mail (July 13)

"**Clean power advocates disappointed by defiant in the face of Ford's sweeping cuts**" (July 17) in the *National Observer*

"**Cancellation of Energy Contracts Punishes Famers, School Boards, Municipalities and First Nations"** a press release from the Canadian Solar Industries Association. CanWEA also **responded** to the announcements with a disjointed compilation of links about the benefits of wind energy (July 13) .

One high profile example of the cancelled projects: the White Pines wind project in Prince Edward County, owned by **German company WPD** , which was first approved in 2010 and was weeks away from completion when it was cancelled by ***Bill 2, The Urgent Priorities Act***. Local reaction appeared in ***The Picton Gazette*** , and the *National Observer* published an extensive four part report, **"*I*nside one Ontario town's decade long wind war"** .   CBC News published "**Ford government's plan to cancel wind project could cost taxpayers over $100M, company warns"** , and even the conservative *National Post* published **"John Ivison: Wind turbine decision says Doug Ford's Ontario is closed for business"**   (July 23), calling it a "bone-headed"decision. Activist group Leadnow.ca has posted on online petition, "**Save the White Pines project"** .

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Ontario**, **provincial climate change policies**, **renewable energy industry**, **wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

TUED conferences: A Social Power vision of Just Transition, and U.K. Energy Democracy

Posted on **August 3, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The international alliance of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy convened two meetings over the summer of 2018, summarized in **Just Transition: A Revolutionary Idea – TUED Bulletin 73** , which summarizes an international conference held in New York in late May, and **Reclaiming UK**

Energy: What's the Plan? – TUED Bulletin 75 , which summarizes meetings in the U.K. on June 28 and 29 to discuss different approaches to reclaiming the power sector, while honouring climate commitments and addressing energy poverty.

The **Just Transition international conference** brought together representatives of 31 unions as well as 15 environmental, community-based, research and policy allies from both the global North and the South. The Program is **here** ; links to videos of the presentations on YouTube are **here** . In Opening Remarks, Paula Finn, Associate Director of the Center for Labor, Community & Public Policy at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies "highlighted the necessity of confronting frankly and honestly the divisions within the global trade union movement—in particular divisions over "whether unmitigated economic growth and extractive capitalism must be challenged, or we can somehow ride the wave of 'green jobs' towards a solution of the climate crisis." Much of the discussion was based on the TUED's Working Paper #11, ***Trade Unions and Just Transition: The Search for a Transformative Politics*** (April 2018) by Sean Sweeney and John Treat and available from the Rose Luxemburg Stiflung as part of its **Climate Justice Dossier** . The Sweeney/Treat paper argues for a "Social Power vision" of Just Transition, which " must be radically democratic and inclusive, and it must hold at its center a recognition that nothing short of a deep socioeconomic and ecological transition will be sufficient for the challenges our planet currently faces." Watch Sean Sweeney summarize and discuss the paper in a **video of Session 2: Broadening the Just Transition Debate: The Search for a Transformative Politics** . Donald LaFleur, Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress, appears as a discussant to the paper at approximately minute 29 of the video.

The second TUED meeting of the summer of 2018 is summarized in ***Reclaiming UK Energy: What's the Plan? – TUED Bulletin 75*** . The forty delegates attending included GMB, UNISON UNITE, PCS, TSSA, Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union, National Education Union, and the Trades Union Congress (TUC), along with allies including the Greener Jobs Alliance, Friends of the Earth Europe and Scotland, Transnational Institute and others from across Europe. The Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of the U.K. Labour Party presented **their current energy platform** which focuses on establishing a number of regional public energy companies, and participated in a discussion of union policies and opinion. In addition to the summary from the TUED Bulletin, a summary also appears in the **July/August Newsletter of the Greener Jobs Alliance** . Documents on which discussion was based include:

From the TUED: ***All, or Something? Towards a "Comprehensive Reclaiming" of the UK Power Sector,*** which argues for establishing a new national public entity that would encompass generation, transmission, distribution and supply.

From Unison: ***The need to take into public ownership the customer and retail operations of big 6***

From Professor Costas Lapavitsas, the University of London spoke regarding the potential impacts of Brexit on energy nationalization, based on his arguments and observations in "**Jeremy Corbyn's Labour vs. the Single Market.**" in *Jacobin* (May 2018) .

The many activities and accomplishments of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy are summarized in ***New Unions and Regional Advances: A Mid-Year Report — TUED Bulletin 76*** dated 30 July 2018. Of note : "The first half of 2018 saw three important additions to the TUED network, with the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union(BCGEU), the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU; US and Canada) and the Nordic Transport Workers Federation (NTF; headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden). Together these unions represent 560,000 workers." 64 trade union bodies are now members of TUED .

TRADE UNIONS FOR ENERGY DEMOCRACY

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **energy democracy**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Trade Unions for Energy Democracy**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Against the evidence for its efficiency, Ontario's Cap and Trade program axed

Posted on **August 2, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In Ontario, newly-elected Premier Doug Ford quickly fulfilled a central campaign promise, as the Province **revoked the cap-and-trade regulations** and prohibited all trading of emission allowances, officially announced on July 3, 2018.   A further **July 25 press release** announced the introduction of Bill 4, ***The Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018*** and claimed that "The average Ontario family will receive $260 in annual savings thanks to the elimination of the cap-and-trade carbon tax." All programs currently funded through the cap-and-trade revenues have been cancelled, including the immediate wind-down of the Green Ontario Fund, which funded many energy efficiency incentive programs. The ***Cap and Trade Cancellation Act*** repeals the ***Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016*** of the previous Wynne government "and provides for various matters related to the wind down of the Cap and Trade Program."

Earlier, on July 13, the **province had announced** the cancellation of 758 renewable energy projects, calling them "unnecessary and wasteful" – one notable example, the almost-completed White Pines wind project in Prince Edward County. And on August 2, in addition to **the previously announced court challenge to the federal government's carbon pricing requirements** under the Pan Canadian Framework, Ontario's Attorney General **announced a second court challenge** – this time in the Ontario Court of Appeal. "**Doug Ford's Ontario pursues 'doomed' plan to stop Trudeau government's efforts to fight climate change**" in the *National Observer* (August 2) summarizes the development from a political viewpoint, and the *Globe and Mail*'s editorial is titled: "**Caroline Mulroney's carbon-tax court challenge is a partisan waste of money**"

Reactions :

"**Ford government Attempts to minimize Ontario taxpayer losses after abandoning carbon markets**" (July 25) in the *National Observer;*

"Ontario's fiscal watchdog to probe cancellation of cap and trade,at Horwath's request" in the *Globe and Mail* (July 24);

From Professor Mark Winfield, York University: "**Doug Ford's energy shake-up could cost Ontario**" in *The Conversation* (July 25) ;

"**Clean power advocates disappointed but defiant in the face of Ford's sweeping cuts**" from the *National Observer* (July 17)

"**Solar companies may exit Ontario for Alberta after Doug Ford kills rebate program"** from CBC News (June 21) ;

"**Scrapping of cap and trade revenues a big loss for Ontario tenants badly in need of apartment retrofits"** from ACORN Canada;

"From Cap-and-Trade to White Pines: What Lies Ahead In Ontario's Energy Sector" from Toronto law firm Gowlings .

Before his election but based on the platform statements, **Unifor said** in June : "Workers in Ontario need forward-looking policies with the intention to build a green economy, but instead Ford announced his intention to cancel a successful program and pick an unnecessary fight with the federal government…. "Workers accept that climate change is real and need our government to lead with a real, predictable plan to reduce emissions and grow green jobs."

Was there a problem with Ontario's cap and trade system? The April 2018 WCR article "**New evidence supports benefits of cap and trade policies**" summarized several favourable studies, including ***A Progress Report on Ontario's Cap-and-Trade Program and Climate Change Action Plan: Year One***, published by the Clean Economy Alliance – which concluded that, in the first year of cap-and-trade employment had grown at the same time that Ontario economy grew to a 7-year high. Environmental Defense published "**Carbon pricing has no downside: why are we still arguing about it?**", which summarized the Clean Economy Alliance report, as well as ***No Bad Option: Comparing the Economic Impact of Ontario Carbon Pricing Scenarios*** by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, published in April 2018 by CCPA in partnership with the Clean Economy Alliance.

More recently, Dale Beugin, Don Drummond, Glen Hodgson and Mel Cappe asked **"If not carbon pricing in Ontario – which works well – then what, Mr. Ford?"** in a blog published by the Ecofiscal Commission. The purpose of the brief summary is to "correct the record on some of the myths and misunderstandings surrounding carbon pricing. The economic evidence clearly contradicts some of the recent rhetoric coming from Ontario." Earlier Ecofiscal opinion appeared in "**Tread Carefully: Ontario's cap-and-trade system meets a fork in the road"** (June 8), and "**Can Ontario hits its targets without carbon pricing?"** .

In the U.S., economist Marc Hafstead recently published "**Carbon taxes and employment: Rhetoric vs research**" in the Summer Issue of *Resources*, the online newsletter of Resources for the Future (RFF), stating "Opponents of policies to price carbon will likely continue with the "job-killing" rhetoric, but careful economic analysis suggests that these arguments are seriously exaggerated." (the brief article is based largely on his academic working paper ***Unemployment and Environmental Regulation in General Equilibrium: Considering a US Carbon Tax: Economic Analysis and Dialogue on Carbon Pricing Options***).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Carbon Tax**, **Ontario** | **Leave a reply**

New podcast series celebrates women fighting climate change

Posted on **July 30, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

A new, optimistic initiative called **Mothers of Invention** was launched in July, led by Mary Robinson, former Prime Minister of Ireland and a well-known climate justice campaigner. Maeve Higgins, an Irish-born comedian is her "sidekick" in a series of podcasts designed to celebrate " amazing women doing remarkable things in pursuit of climate justice." Through lighthearted, informal conversations, the podcasts educate and inspire with stories of local climate activists – initially focusing on women only, but eventually planned to include men as well. The clear purpose is to motivate individuals with positive examples, rather than a climate change "doom and gloom" message.

Episode 1, *All Rise*, explores the issue of global climate litigation through interviews with Tessa Khan, Co-Founder of the Global Climate Litigation network ; Marjan Minnesma, Director of the Urgenda Foundation which launched the world's first climate liability lawsuit in the Netherlands; and Kelsey Juliana, Victoria Barrett & Ridhima Pandey – young plaintiffs from the U.S. and India who are supported in lawsuits against their own governments by the Our Children's Foundation. Each episode consists of the podcast interviews and discussion, with links for more information, more involvement, and a chance to donate.

The line up of future "Mothers" includes activists from around the world who have focused on land protection, zero waste, fossil fuel divestment, energy poverty, plastic pollution, and environmental racism. The initiative is profiled in *The Guardian* in **"Mary Robinson launches new feminist fight against climate change"** (July 24).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **case studies**, **climate change litigation**, **Gender**, **Urgenda Decision** | **Leave a reply**

U.K. Committee issues recommendations for heatwaves –

including workplace changes

Posted on **July 30, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On July 26, the U.K.'s Environmental Audit Committee published ***Heatwaves: adapting to climate change***, which examines the developing trend of heatwaves, the responsibility for heatwave protection, how to protect human health and well-being, and effects on productivity and the economy. The final statement on conclusions/recommendations states: "*Heatwaves can result in overheating workplaces and lower employee productivity. In 2010, approximately five million staff days were lost due to overheating above 26°C resulting in economic losses of £770 million. Given that extreme temperature events in Europe are now 10 times more likely than they were in the early 2000s, similar losses will occur more frequently. However, some businesses, particularly smaller businesses, do not have business continuity plans in place. The Government should make businesses aware of the developing threat of heatwaves and the economic consequences. Public Health England should also issue formal guidance to employers to relax dress codes and allow flexible working when heatwave alerts are issued. The Government should consult on introducing maximum workplace temperatures, especially for work that involves significant physical effort. Procurement rules should be updated so that schools and the NHS do not spend public money on infrastructure which is not resilient to heatwaves. The Department for Education should issue guidance for head teachers about safe temperatures in schools and relaxing the school uniform policy as appropriate during hot weather*. " At present, there is no set temperature limit for indoor work, (only that buildings be kept at a "reasonable" temperature) and the government's ***2018 Heatwave Plan*** makes no mention of employer responsibilities or the dangers of heat stress for workers.

Some of the Committee recommendations echo those contained in the Trades Union Congress publication, ***Cool it! Reps guide on dealing with high temperatures in the workplace*** . It documents examples of heat stress in workplaces, and provides checklists for union representatives in both indoor and outdoor workplaces. The *Cool it!* guide recommends that a maximum indoor temperature be set at 30°C (27°C for those doing strenuous work), and " a new legal duty on employers to protect outside workers by providing sun protection, water, and to organise work so that employees are not outside during the hottest part of the day." The guide also takes note of the special circumstances of drivers.

Current heat-related guides and information from the government's Health and Safety Executive are **here**.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **climate change and health**, **health effects of climate change**, **Heat Stress**, **labour union policies**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Nova Scotia environmentalists campaign for a moratorium on oil and gas drilling after BP spill

Posted on **July 30, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In late June, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Drilling Board (CNSOPB) issued an incident report – summarized in the National Observer in " **BP Canada spews thousands of litres of toxic mud during offshore drilling incident near Halifax**" ; CBC reported "**Mi'kmaq want answers from BP Canada after drilling mud spill off Nova Scotia coast"** (June 26) . Yet on July 23, **the Board issued** a notice allowing BP to re-start operations, and describing the terms of an investigation into the incident. CBC summarized it all in "**BP Canada restarts drilling off Nova Scotia after spill".**

In response, the Offshore Alliance of Nova Scotia on July 19 sent **Open Letters to Prime Minister Trudeau** and **to the Premier of Nova Scotia** , stating : "The inadequacies of the current regulatory and impact assessment regime, the failure to consider the latest science (on risk assessment, dispersants, impacts of seismic, added risks of deepwater drilling, ocean acidification, and recovery of the fishery, to name a few), the poor state of public awareness and involvement and the magnitude of the risk to the marine biosphere and to the present and future economic base of Nova Scotia's coastal communities all demand an up-to-date, thorough public re-examination. We anticipate an inquiry of this nature could take up to two years. In the meantime, there should be a moratorium on all new oil and gas activity offshore respecting the established precautionary principle." Similar demands had been made in an **Open Letter in June** to Canada's Environment Minister, and names the members of the Offshore Alliance – approximately 20 fisher, social justice and environmental organizations, as well as concerned communities and individuals. They issued their call through the Sierra Club of Canada – the July 19 press release is **here** .

Local member organizations of the Offshore Alliance of Nova Scotia include the Clean Ocean Action Committee (COAC), which represents fish plant owners, processors and fishermens' organizations in southwestern NS, and the **Campaign to Protect Offshore Nova Scotia (CPONS)** . The CPONS explanatory **Position Paper** discusses the issues of what is at stake, and asks "what is regulatory capture?". The CPONS website includes resources to "**Take Action**", including a number of petitions and addresses for a letter writing campaign. The Council of Canadians is also monitoring offshore drilling on the East Coast **here** , and maintains its own **active petition** which calls on the federal government "to stop BP from drilling up to seven exploratory wells and institute a moratorium on oil and gas exploration in offshore Nova Scotia. We further demand an end to proposed changes under Bill C-69 that would grant east coast petroleum boards more power in the environmental assessment process for Atlantic offshore drilling."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Atlantic Canada**, **Climate Activism**, **Nova Scotia**, **offshore oil and gas**, **Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Suicide and heat waves: the mental health effects related to climate change

Posted on **July 27, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

"Higher temperatures increase suicide rates in the United States and Mexico" was published in *Nature Climate Change* online on July 23, warning that up to 26,000 more people could die by suicide in the United States by 2050 if humans don't reduce emissions of greenhouse gas pollution. The study has been widely reported and summarized: for example, in *The Atlantic* (July 23). The authors used new statistical techniques, including analysis which correlates social media posts about depression with temperature conditions. Part of this social media analysis is based on the work of Patrick Baylis of the University of British Columbia, whose academic paper "Temperature and Temperament: Evidence from a Billion Tweets" was published by the Energy Institute at Haas, University of California at Berkeley, in November 2015.

A second article published in July 2018 is "Associations between high ambient temperatures and heat waves with mental health outcomes: a systematic review" appeared in the British journal *Public Health*. It reports on a literature review of 35 studies, and the authors conclude that: "High ambient temperatures have a range of mental health effects. The strongest evidence was found for increased suicide risk. Limited evidence was found for an increase in heat-related morbidity and mortality among people with known mental health problems. …. Mental health impacts should be incorporated into plans for the public health response to high temperatures, and as evidence evolves, psychological morbidity and mortality temperature thresholds should be incorporated into hot weather–warning systems."

A 2014 article examined weekly suicide death totals and anomalies in Toronto between 1986–2009 and Jackson, Mississippi, from 1980–2006. The authors found that for both cities, warmer weeks had an increased likelihood of being associated with high-end suicide totals. "Association of Weekly Suicide Rates with Temperature Anomalies in Two Different Climate Types" from the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* is here .

The growing literature about the impacts of climate change on mental health has been summarized in an article in *Forbes* magazine, "Weather And The Warm Season Are Among Factors Associated With Suicide" (June 2018) and in the April 2018 issue of *Corporate Knights* magazine. The *Corporate Knights* article, "Deep Impact" is by Professor Helen Berry , the inaugural Professor of Climate Change and Mental Health at the University of Sydney, in Australia. Although her brief overview emphasizes mental health impacts of climate-change related disasters such as floods, it also provides links to recent articles linking mental health with chronic climate conditions such as heat waves and drought. Some examples of Professor Berry's research: "The importance of humidity in the relationship between heat and population mental health: Evidence from Australia" in *PLoS One* (2016) ; "The Effect of Extreme Heat on Mental Health – Evidence from Australia" from the *International Journal of Epidemiology* (restricted access) (2015); and "Morbidity and mortality during heatwaves in Metropolitan Adelaide" in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (2007).

Professor Berry and co-author Dominic Peel provoked public discussion in 2015 with an article in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, "Worrying about climate change: is it responsible to promote public debate?"

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and mental health**, **Extreme Weather Events**, **Heat Stress**, **suicide** | **Leave a reply**

Heat waves: How well are workers protected ?

Posted on **July 18, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The heat waves that have gripped much of the world in June and July have also been manifest in Canada, where as many as 70 people died in Quebec (mostly in Montreal), as temperatures stayed at over 40 degrees Celsius with the humidex. Many more are likely to have died, but Health Canada does not keep statistics on heat related deaths. In their July 7 press release on the topic, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment quote figures from the ***Climate Atlas of Canada*** which state: "Before 2005, Montreal had, on average, 8 days per year with temperatures over 30 degrees C. With climate change, it is predicted that Montreal will experience more than 50 days per year with extreme temperatures by 2050." For Toronto, the prediction is for 55 days per year with temperatures over 30 degrees after 2050.

In general, public attention and interventions are normally directed to the most vulnerable in the population: the aged, chronically ill, homeless and those living alone, as in "**Doctors urge population to stay cool after dozens die during heat wave in Central Canada**" in the *National Observer* (July 10). But what about workers, who may not have the option to "cool off"?

On July 17, the U.S. advocacy group Public Citizen published ***Extreme Heat and Unprotected Workers***, describing the state of regulation in the U.S., current and historical statistics on heat-related illness and death, particularly for construction and farm workers, the likely exacerbation of the situation due to climate change, and making the case for a federal heat stress standard. One example: The report states that from 1992 to 2016, heat killed 783 workers in the U.S. and seriously injured nearly 70,000. Based on this hard-hitting analysis, Public Citizen, along with United Farm Workers Foundation and Farmworker Justice, joined more than 130 public health and environmental groups in submitting a petition to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, calling for the agency to require employers to protect their workers from heat by imposing mandatory rest breaks, hydration and access to shade or cooled spaces, among other measures. The report is summarized by *Inside Climate News* in "Heat Wave Safety: 130 Groups Call for Protections for Farm, Construction Workers" .

In a **July article in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*,** published by the U.S. Centres for Disease Control (CDC) , researchers recommend using a heat index of 85 degrees F as a threshold for potentially hazardous worker heat stress, rather than the current U.S. standard of 91 degrees F (32.8C). They base this recommendation on a review of 25 incidents of outdoor occupational heat-related illnesses, including 14 deaths, that were investigated by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) between 2011 and 2016. They found a risk of illness at a heat index of just 29.4 C (85 F) – and 6 deaths happened below 90 degrees F. The authors also noted: "Employers often obtain heat index information from publicly broadcasted weather reports or forecasts that do not necessarily reflect conditions at their work sites." Other recommendations from the article: " a comprehensive heat-related illness prevention program should include an acclimatization schedule for newly hired workers and unacclimatized long-term workers (e.g., during early-season heat waves), training for workers and supervisors about symptom recognition and first aid (e.g., aggressive cooling of presumed heat stroke victims before medical professionals arrive), engineering and administrative controls to reduce heat stress, medical surveillance, and provision of fluids and shady areas for rest breaks."

In Canada, Professor Glenn Kenny of the University of Ottawa is an expert on the effects of heat stress on older people, and on workers. Some of the studies on which he has collaborated: "**Heat Exposure in the Canadian Workplace**" (2010) in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* , in which he points out the strengths and weaknesses of the Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) based upon Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), the standard used in most Canadian jurisdictions; "**Do the Threshold Limit Values for work in hot conditions adequately protect workers?**" (2016) ; and "**An evaluation of the physiological strain experienced by electrical utility workers in North America**" (2015) in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene* .

What are the existing heat standards for workers? A fact sheet from The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), ***Temperature conditions: Legislation*** , provides a summary chart of Canadian legislation, ranging from Alberta, (which has guidelines only), to Ontario, which has the most specific standards, set out in clause 25(2)(h) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* . Also useful: CCOHS ***Fact Sheet: Humidex and work*** and ***Thermal Comfort for Office work.*** From the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) – ***Humidex Based Heat Response Plan*** (2014).

In the U.S., Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) maintains a ***web portal for working in indoor and outdoor heat*** and the ***National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health portal on heat stress*** is here. NIOSH also publishes information on ***Hazards to Outdoor Workers*** which includes heat, sun exposure, vector- borne diseases by ticks, mosquitos, and a separate fact sheet for Lyme disease(none of which have been updated since 2010) . In February 2016, the NIOSH published ***Criteria for a Recommended Standard: Occupational Exposure to Heat and Hot Environments***, which updated the previous version from 1986.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **climate change and health**, **Heat Stress**, **outdoor workers** | **Leave a reply**

Government campaign claims Trans Mountain pipeline is a "bridge to a greener tomorrow" – economists and citizens disagree

Posted on **July 12, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

— *#keepcanaddaworking social media campaign*

Now that the government of Canada has bought the Trans Mountain pipeline project from Texas-based Kinder Morgan, the governments of Alberta and Canada have launched a public relations campaign to "sell" the deal to Canadians. The *Keep Canada Working* television and social media campaign promotes the familiar Liberal government message that "Developing the economy and protecting the environment are two things that can happen side by side – without choosing one over the other", and argues that "The Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion funds green investments, shifts the transportation of oil away from more carbon intensive methods like rail or truck, and provides a bridge to a greener tomorrow." The full "Climate Action" defense is here .

The "Jobs and the Economy" claims are here, including endorsements by politicians and includes a quote from Stephen Hunt, Director of the United Steelworkers District 3: "Members of the United Steelworkers are proud that the pipeline will be using Canadian-made USW-built pipe." The other positive job arguments are sourced from an April 2018 *Globe and Mail* article by the CEO of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the corporate website of Trans Mountain, which are in turn based on an unnamed Conference Board of Canada report .

What do other economists say about the benefits of the Trans Mountain pipeline? In February 2018, the Parkland Institute summarized and critiqued the economic arguments in a still-useful blog "Let's share the actual facts about the Trans Mountain Pipeline" , and Canadian economist Robyn Allan has written numerous articles critical of the Trans Mountain project for the *National Observer*, most recently "Premier Notley's claimed $15 billion annual benefit from Trans Mountain exposed as false by her own budget" (June 7 2018). Other more detailed publications since the May 2018 purchase by the government: "*Canada's Folly: Government Purchase of Trans Mountain Pipeline Risks an Increase in National Budget Deficit by 36%, Ensures a 637% Gain by Kinder Morgan"*, published by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, describes the fiscal and financial risks and calls for more public disclosure of those details before the Purchase Agreement is finalized in August. Similarly, *The view from Taxpayer Mountain* (June 2018) from the West Coast Environmental Law Association links to the actual *Purchase Agreement* and reviews Canada's obligations and risks. On June 26, Greenpeace USA has published *Tar Sands Tanker Superhighway Threatens Pacific Coast Waters* highlighting the dangers of a potential oil spill on the environment, and on coastal economies. At risk: the $60 billion coastal economy of Washington, Oregon and California, which currently supports over 150,000 jobs in commercial fishing and over 525,000 jobs in coastal tourism, and in the British Columbia Lower Mainland, Greenpeace estimates there are 320,000 workers in industries that rely on a clean coastline.

On the issue of climate change impacts, a widely-cited discussion paper, *Confronting Carbon lock-in: Canada's oil sands* (June 2018) from the Stockholm Environment Institute, concludes that "The continued expansion of Canada's oil sands is likely to contribute to carbon lock-in and a long-term oversupply of oil, slowing the world's transition to a low-carbon future." And still valuable reading: David Hughes' *Can Canada Expand Oil and Gas Production, Build Pipelines and Keep Its Climate Change Commitments?* (June 2016) from the Corporate Mapping Project , and from Jeff Rubin, *Evaluating the Need for Pipelines: A False Narrative for the Canadian Economy* (September 2017).

Demonstrations continue: Vancouver housing activist Jean Swanson's argues that the billions spent on Kinder Morgan would be better used for social housing, job creation, and renewable energy in "Why I got arrested protesting the Kinder Morgan pipeline" in *The Tyee,* July 11. Twelve Greenpeace activists mounted an "aerial blockade" for Trans Mountain oil tankers by hanging from a bridge above the water on July 3 and 4. And on July 11, CBC reported "Secwepemc First Nation's 'Tiny House Warriors' occupy provincial park in Trans Mountain protest" . The Tiny House Warrior movement began in 2017, near Kamloops, to block the pipeline by re-establishing village sites and asserting authority over Secwepemc First Nations unceded Territories.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Climate change policy**, **First Nations**, **fossil fuel industry**, **Infrastructure**, **Kinder Morgan pipeline**, **Protests & Rallies**, **Trans Mountain Pipeline**, **United Steelworkers** | **Leave a reply**

U.K. government releases strategy to reduce transportation emissions, stimulate clean vehicle manufacturing

Posted on **July 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The U.K. Committee on Climate Change (CCC) submitted its 2018 annual report to the British Parliament on June 28, marking ten years since the *Climate Change Act* became law in 2008. On the plus side, the report highlights a decoupling of economic growth: since 1990, emissions have fallen by 43% and the economy has grown by over 70%. Since 2008, the UK has achieved a 59%

reduction in emissions from electricity generation. Yet despite that progress, other sectors, notably transport, agriculture and the built environment, have not achieved reductions – transport emissions have actually grown and at 28% of total UK emissions, are now the single largest emitter. *Reducing UK emissions – 2018 Progress Report to Parliament* outlines four high-level, messages for government and calls for immediate policy action in residential energy efficiency, development of Carbon Capture and Storage, and stronger consumer incentives for electric vehicles.

No sooner said than done: on July 9, the British Ministry of Transport released a long-awaiting document, *The Road to Zero Strategy* , with the goal that all new cars and vans will be effectively zero emission by 2040, at which time the government will end the sale of new conventional gas and diesel cars and vans. The press release highlights and summarizes the proposals . Some specifics: commitment to continue consumer purchase incentives for plug-in cars, vans, taxis and motorcycles; commitment that all the central Government car fleet will be zero emissions by 2030; the launch of a £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund and as much as £500 incentive for electric vehicle owners to help them install a charge point at their home; increasing the grant level of the existing incentives for Workplace Charging stations.

Stimulating the motor vehicle industry: Notably, the strategy aims to improve emissions in road transport in the U.K. while putting the U.K. "at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles." Measures announced to support industry include: public investment in auto technology R & D, including £246 million to research next generation battery technology; and working with the industry training group, Institute of the Motor Industry, "to ensure the UK's workforce of mechanics are well trained and have the skills they need to repair these vehicles safely, delivering for consumers" .

However, "Road to Zero or Road to Nowhere: Government revs up green vehicle 'ambition' " in *Business Green* newsletter compiles reaction from business and environmental sources, all of which agree that the 2040 target date is too late. The quote from the Policy Director of Green Alliance sums up reaction: "It's rare for the oil industry, mayors and environmentalists to agree on something, but we all think 2040 is far too late for a ban on conventional vehicles…Moving it to 2030 and setting a zero emissions vehicles mandate would encourage car companies to build electric cars in the UK, and give the country a head start on its competitors across Europe. While there are some welcome measures, including on charging infrastructure, the Road to Zero strategy is on cruise control. As it stands, it won't help the UK build a world leading clean automotive industry."

The full *Road to Zero* policy document is here ; the accompanying technical report, *Transport Energy Model* provides data about the GHG emissions, energy requirements, and pollution associated with cars, trucks and double decker buses using conventional fossil fuels as well as biofuels, hydrogen, and electricity.

Posted in **Business Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Green Infrastructure**, **transportation policy**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Nova Scotia announces consultation for coastal protection legislation

Posted on **July 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

— Lighthouse at Brier Island, Nova Scotia, from Government of Canada website

Just after the Nova Scotia Minister of Energy announced funding for geoscience research on June 20 to support the $11.8 million Offshore Growth Project to encourage oil and gas development, the Minister of the Environment made good on an election promise from 2017 with the launch of a consultation process to consider coastline protection, allowing the period from June 26 to August 17 for the public to respond to an online survey. Discussion will focus on *The Coastal Protection Legislation: Consultation Document* , which addresses the complexity of the legislative situation – both federal and provincial legislation – and addresses three questions: 1. How to define a "Coastal Protection Zone" ? 2. How to restrict certain activities within the Coastal

Protection Zone? and 3. What provisions are required for monitoring and compliance?   The document states: “Fishing and aquaculture will be exempt, but how do we define this exemption? What other economic activities must we keep out of the way of?”

The Ecology Action Centre in Halifax announced the consultation with this neutral press release ; CBC News summarized it with “Nova Scotia seeks public input on legislation to protect coastlines” CBC News, and the *Halifax Chronicle* published an Editorial on July 3, “Coastal construction rules needed to curtail climate calamities” , calling for the government to allow more time for public input.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Fisheries Industry**, **Nova Scotia**, **Ocean Protection** | **Leave a reply**

New report calls on B.C. Pension Fund management to divest from fossil fuels, reinvest in renewables

Posted on **July 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI) is the fourth largest pension fund manager in Canada, and controls capital of $135.5 billion, including the pension funds of the province’s public employees. A June report asks the question: is BCI investing funds in ways that support the shift to a two degree C global warming limit? The answer is “no”, and in fact, fossil fuel investments have been increasing, according to the authors of *Canada’s Fossil-Fuelled Pensions: The Case of the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation* . For example, BCI boosted its investment in Kinder Morgan, owner of the Trans-Mountain pipeline, to $65.3 million in 2017 from $36.7 million in 2016.

An article in the Victoria B.C. *Times Colonist* newspaper summarizes the study and includes reaction from one of the authors, James Rowe, an associate professor at University of Victoria. Rowe states: "BCI claims to be a responsible investor. …But we find some hypocrisy in that we don't find any good signs they are investing with climate change in mind." The article also quotes an email from BCI, which defends the investment in Kinder Morgan, as "a passive investment held inside funds designed to track Canadian and global markets." Further, it states, "BCI does invest in oil and gas companies, but that particular sector accounts for a significant portion of the Canadian economy. It's about 20 per cent of the composite index on the Toronto Stock Exchange." For more from BCI, see their website which provides their *2017 Responsible Investing Annual Report* , as well as a *Responsible Investing Newsletter*, with the most recent issue (Oct. 2017) devoted to "Transparency and Disclosure".

Canada's Fossil-Fuelled Pensions: The Case of the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation makes the following recommendations so that BCI can align its investments with the 2°C limit:

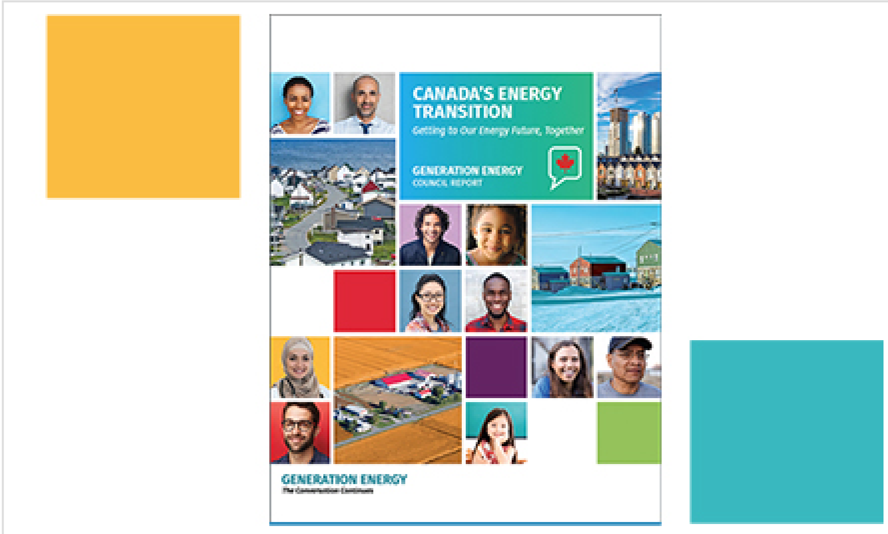
1. "A portfolio-wide climate change risk analysis to determine the impact of fossil fuels on BCI's public equity investments in the context of the 2°C limit. And, subsequent disclosure of all findings to pension members.
2. Divestment. The surest way to address the financial and moral risks associated with investing in the fossil fuel industry is to start the process of divestment: freezing any new investment and developing a plan to first remove high-risk companies from portfolios, particularly coal and oil sands producers, and then moving toward sector-wide divestment.
3. Reinvest divested funds in more sustainable stocks. The International Energy Agency estimates that trillions of dollars of investment are needed in the renewables sector to support the transition away from fossil fuels."

The report is part of the Corporate Mapping Project (CMP), jointly led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Parkland Institute. CMP is a research and public engagement initiative investigating power dynamics within the fossil fuel industry.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Divestment**, **Kinder Morgan**, **Pension Fund management** | **Leave a reply**

Council delivers recommendations for Canada's energy transition, including "cleaner oil and gas"

Posted on **June 28, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



The federal government established a Generation Energy consultation process in 2017, to inform an energy policy for a low-carbon future. That process concluded when the appointed Generation Energy Council presented its Report to Canada's Minister of Natural Resources on June 28. The report, titled *Canada's Energy Transition: Getting to our Energy Future, Together*, identifies "four pathways that collectively will lead to the affordable, sustainable energy future": waste less energy, switch to clean power, use more renewable fuels, and produce cleaner oil and gas. The report outlines concrete actions, milestones for each of these pathways – most problemmatic of which is the pathway cleaner oil and gas. Each pathway also includes a general statement re the "tools" required, giving passing mention to "Skill and Talent Attraction and Development".

The priorities for the "cleaner oil and gas" pathway include: "reducing emissions per unit of oil or natural gas produced; • improving the cost competitiveness of Canadian oil and gas; and • expanding the scope of value-added oil and gas products and services for both domestic and export markets." The report lauds the potential of Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS), as well as the economic value of the petrochemical industry. Amongst the milestones in this pathway: "By 2025, reduce methane emissions by 40 to 45 percent from 2012 levels, with ongoing improvements thereafter.. …By 2030, reduce life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions for oil sands extraction to levels lower than competing crudes in global markets…Develop a trusted and effective regulatory system, including a life-cycle approach to greenhouse gas emissions, as measured by objective third party assessment of key attributes relative to competing jurisdictions… By 2030, a more diversified mix of oil and gas products, services and solutions to domestic and global markets has a measurably significant impact on industry and government revenues."

The Council was co-chaired by Merran Smith (Clean Energy Canada and Simon Fraser University) and Linda Coady (Enbridge Canada); members are listed here . The Council heard from over 380,000 Canadians in an online discussion forum and in person. An impressive archive of submissions and commissioned studies, some previously published and some unique, is available here . Authors include government departments, academics, business and industry associations, and think tanks.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **carbon capture and storage**, **Clean energy industry**, **electricity sector**, **energy efficiency**, **Energy policy**, **Methane Emissions**, **Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

How to lead a workplace discussion on climate change

Posted on **June 28, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

CUPE Canadian Union of Public Employees

In June, the National Environment program of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE/SCFP) shared online the materials for a workshop on *How to lead a workplace discussion on Climate Change* . The materials consist of a 28-slide PowerPoint presentation, Speaking notes and Tips for facilitators, in English and French versions. It provides labour-focused information and interactive discussion tools on "how climate change is affecting our planet, our communities and our economy", and although the content is specific to CUPE – presenting examples from CUPE jobs and CUPE policy statements, it offers an excellent model for other unions.

CUPE has a long history of climate change related educational materials, including: *Healthy, Clean & GREEN: A Workers' Action Guide to a Greener Workplace* (2015), which encourages workplace behaviours such as waste reduction, environmental committees and environmental audits; *How to form a workplace environment Committee* ; and an online, interactive Eco-audit tool to workers score their workplace behaviours related to energy conservation, recycling, water use, cleaning products, transportation, and workplace meetings. A very early document was the *CUPE Green Bargaining Guide* , published in 2008 and which provided examples of collective agreement language on many issues, including conservation, commuting, and establishing an environment committee . Most of these examples have also been incorporated in the ACW Green Collective Agreements database, here.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE/SCFP) is Canada's largest union, with over 650,000 members in every province, representing workers in health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, municipalities, social services, libraries, utilities, transportation, airlines and more. All CUPE materials are available in English or French.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **CUPE**, **green collective bargaining**, **labour education materials**, **labour union policies**, **Workplace Environment Committees** | **Leave a reply**

Expert Panel proposes 54 measures for climate adaptation

Posted on **June 28, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Results was commissioned by the federal government in August 2017, and on June 26, the Panel released its report, *Measuring Progress on Adaptation and Climate Resilience*. The press release is here , the French version is here .

The mandate of the Expert Panel was to propose indicators to the Government of Canada to measure the overall progress on adaptation and climate resilience, aligned with the thematic pillars of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Accordingly, the Panel winnowed down their recommendations to 54 indicators, presented in five themes/chapters: Protecting and Improving Human Health and Well-Being; Supporting Particularly Vulnerable Regions; Reducing Climate-Related Hazards and Disaster Risks; Building Climate Resilience through Infrastructure; and Translating Scientific Information and Indigenous Knowledge into Action. "It's essential that Canadians act now' on climate change: federal report" appeared in the *National Observer* as a summary.

Stepping briefly beyond the adaptation mandate, the report also states: "While the focus for this report is on monitoring and evaluating progress on climate change adaptation, the Expert Panel stresses the importance of Canada's role in mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and advocates for resilience measures that reflect the transition to a low carbon society."

The Chair of the Expert Panel was Dr. Blair Feltmate, Head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. The Panel members, listed here, were drawn from academia, Indigenous organizations and governments, the private sector, municipal government, NGO's and the youth organization Starfish Canada .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Adaptation**, **Climate Preparedness**, **Infrastructure**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Converting fleets to electric vehicles: examples include buses, UPS delivery, and the U.S. Postal Service

Posted on **June 27, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The federal government's announcement of new fuel-efficiency standards for light-duty trucks and buses on June 14 presents an opportunity for electric vehicles in Canada, according to an article by Clean Energy Canada. "Electric buses and trucks a big (rig) opportunity for Canadian innovators"   argues that the new regulations will limit the lifespan of heavy- and medium-duty trucks in Canada, by requiring the older, more polluting vehicles to be replaced by cleaner vehicles. The article provides an overview of examples.

Canadian examples: An article from *Corporate Knights* magazine in January 2018: "The e-bus revolution has arrived". In March, Winnipeg Transit released the first Report on its Bus Electrification Demonstration Project   which began in 2015 (summarized by the CBC here) . Winnipeg is home to the New Flyer Industries, which manufactures the battery-electric buses in use. The government of Quebec announced its Sustainable Mobility Plan in April 2018, with an emphasis on transit and electrification.   New Flyer buses, along with those from Nova Bus from Quebec are being tested in the Pan-Ontario and Pan-Canadian Electric Bus Demonstration and Integration Trials , launched in April 2018 and coordinated by Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC- CRITUC) . Their CUTRIC-CRITUC news site provides updates; their 2018 Biennial Forum, Building Low-Carbon Smart Mobility Projects Across Canada, gathered industry players in Montreal, June 21 and 22.

U.S. News: A June 21 article in the *New York Times* cites many examples of electric fleet conversion. "Buses, Delivery Vans and Garbage Trucks Are the Electric Vehicles Next Door" in the (June 21) highlights the Antelope Valley Transit Authority in Los Angeles County, which intends to replace all diesel buses with 80 fully-electric ones in 2018; the Chicago Transit Authority (planning to buy 20 electric buses) ; San Francisco (will convert to electric-only bus procurement starting in 2025, aiming for an all-electric fleet by 2035), as well as the Los Angeles Sanitation department for garbage trucks, Duke Energy for pick-up trucks. An article in *Cleantechnica*, "UPS Places Order For 950 Workhorse N-GEN Electric Delivery Vans" describes Workhorse products, which include the N-GEN vans sold to UPS and which are also competing (with partner VT Hackney) in the US Postal Service procurement process for Next Generation Delivery Vehicles. The N-GEN vans offer an option to include the Horsefly autonomous delivery drones .

The Transportation Electrification Accord (TEA) was officially launched in Portland, Oregon at the EV Roadmap 11 conference on June 19. In fact, the Accord was first signed in November 2017 , according to the Sierra Club press release which describes it and lists the original signatories, including the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers District Nine, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, as well as Plug In America, and industry organizations Advanced Energy Economy, Energy Foundation, Enervee, Illinois Citizens Utility Board, Proterra, and Siemens. Honda and General Motors signed on at the June 19 launch.

The "Accord" is a voluntary statement of eleven principles, meant to educate policymakers and inspire change. The first two principles are: 1. There is a clear case on both policy and regulatory grounds for electrifying transportation, which can provide benefits to all consumers (including the socioeconomically disadvantaged), advance economic development, create jobs, provide grid services, integrate more renewable energy, and cut air pollution and greenhouse gases.

2. Electrified transportation should include not only light-duty passenger vehicles, but also heavy-duty vehicles (e.g., transit buses and delivery trucks), as well as off-road equipment (e.g., airport and port electrification equipment).

Globally: A March 2018 report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance and the C-40 Leadership Initiative provides a great overview of statistics and analysis: Electric buses in cities and demonstrates the strength of China's leadership. The city of Shensen has been seen as the poster child of this strength – for example, read the blog from the World Resources Institute in April 2018 "How did Shenshen China build the world's largest electric bus fleet?". The *Global EV Outlook 2018* released by the International Energy Association at the end of May focuses mostly on the growth of personal vehicles, but reported that the stock of electric buses rose from 345,000 in 2016 to 370,000 in 2017 , (with electric two-wheelers at 250 million). Growth has been driven almost entirely by China, which accounts for more than 99% of both electric bus and two-wheeler stock.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **alternative fuel vehicles**, **China**, **electric buses**, **electric trucks**, **Electric Vehicles** | **Leave a reply**

Federal government sets out new requirements for Infrastructure funds – climate lens, community benefits

Posted on **June 25, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The Investing in Canada Plan of the federal government will invest more than $180 billion over 12 years for public transit projects, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation, and Canada's rural and northern communities. Two recent press releases define how the program funds will be awarded: at the start of June , Infrastructure Canada announced that proposals under the Investing in Canada program, as well as the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, and those submitted to the Smart Cities Challenge, will be required to use a "climate lens", to assess "how their projects will contribute to or reduce carbon pollution, and to consider climate change risks in the location, design, and planned operation of a project." The General Guidance document for Climate Lens is here .

A second press release, on June 22, announced a new Community Employment Benefits requirement – under which applicants for major projects will be required to set targets for training and employment opportunities for at least three groups targeted by the CEB initiative: Indigenous peoples, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, youth, apprentices, and recent immigrants, as well as procurement opportunities for small-to-medium sized businesses and social enterprises. The General Guidance document for Community Enterprise Benefits   explains the administrative details.

Ontario became the first Canadian jurisdiction to promote community benefits, through the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act 2015* , and in May 2018, the province announced five new community benefits projects under its Long-term Infrastructure plan.

Engage and Empower , an April 2018 report from the Mowat Centre at University of Toronto, discusses the Ontario Community Benefits framework, and sets out principles which are applicable outside Ontario. It states: "it is essential to engage that community to understand the types of benefits that are most aligned with its priority needs, and to continue this engagement throughout the project as impacts are being measured and evaluated. This process of defining and engaging the community requires an ongoing relationship built on trust and collaboration … It is critical that governments avoid an overly prescriptive approach and recognize, instead, that communities are dynamic and robust ecosystems – with existing networks and capabilities – and desire autonomy in the process of defining, articulating and negotiating the benefits to accrue through an infrastructure project."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Community benefits**, **community benefits agreements**, **Infrastructure Investment**, **Ontario** | **Leave a reply**

Standing Committee recommendations for a greener built environment include training

Posted on **June 22, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 18, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development presented their latest and 17th report, *Better Buildings for a Low-Carbon Future* . The Committee mandate included the collective of residences, commercial buildings, and institutional buildings – which are responsible for approximately 12% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

The research for the Standing Committee report began in February 2018 and consisted of four meetings, during which Committee members heard from 19 witnesses and received five written briefs from witnesses – including government officials, industry associations such as the Building Owners and Managers Association, real estate developers such as Landmark Homes, Canada Green Building Council, Passive House Canada – but no labour unions or worker organizations . Testimony is available from this link , and a Brief from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada has also been made public.

The report summarizes the provisions related to the built environment in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Energy and Climate Change, also available in the federal 2018 Status Report on the Framework), discusses the building codes in Canada, and addresses the unique situations of heritage buildings and buildings in Canada's North. The Committee makes 21 specific recommendations, including:

#1 "the National Research Council, working with the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes, publish the national model energy codes for both new and existing buildings as soon as possible, and for existing buildings no later than fiscal year 2022-23";

#4 "The Committee recommends that Employment and Social Development Canada **ensure that programs exist or are established to address the labour transition required so that skilled personnel are available to implement netzero energy ready codes**;

#6 "The Committee recommends that Infrastructure Canada work to provide significant funding in order to accelerate energy retrofits of commercial, institutional, and multi-residential buildings in the public and private sectors, such as through the Canada Infrastructure Bank";

#10 "The Committee recommends that Natural Resources Canada, the National Research Council, and Environment and Climate Change Canada **include building operator and building inspector training as part of federal funding, research, and incentive programs aimed at improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment**";

#16 "The Committee requests that the federal government focus more attention on its Greening Government Strategy and report back to the Committee on its progress by the end of 2018 ."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Building Codes**, **energy efficiency**, **Green Building**, **Training** | **Leave a reply**

Doug Ford has begun to dismantle Ontario's climate leadership – Step 1, exit the cap-and-trade agreement

Posted on **June 21, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

As a result of the provincial election on June 7, Progressive Conservative leader Doug Ford will take power as the premier of Ontario on June 29, 2018. Even before that hand-over date, he has begun to make the changes many feared – announcing on June 15 that Ontario will exit the cap and trade market of the Western Climate Initiative (which includes California and Quebec) and on June 19, cancelling the $377-million Green Ontario Fund, financed by the proceeds of cap-and-trade auctions and which provided consumer incentives for energy efficiency improvements. On June 21, he committed to keep the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station in operation until 2024 – in the name of protecting 4,500 local jobs and an additional 3,000 jobs province-wide. Some general articles about the Ford government appeared in *The Tyee* "Green hopes, NDP fears, and PC Dreams: The challenges that await Ontario in Ford Nation" (June 15); "What does a Doug Ford victory mean for the climate?" in *The Narwhal* (by DeSmog Canada), and "Doug Ford's Environmental policies light on details, advocates say" on CBC News (June 13).

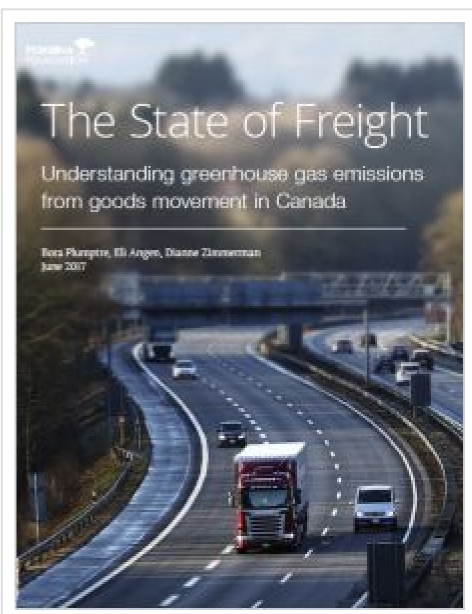
Ford's decision to end the cap and trade market has many implications – the possibility of lawsuits from investors and companies who had bought carbon credits, as well as a direct confrontation with the federal government, which requires all provinces to enact carbon pricing by 2019, under the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Energy and Climate Change. Additionally, the federal government just passed Bill C-74, which includes Part 5: *The Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* on June 14 , the day before Ford's announcement. For discussion of the carbon pricing issue, see "Ontario's Doug Ford says the province is abandoning its price on carbon pollution" in the National Observer (June 15) ; "PC's will end Ontario cap and trade program, Ford vows" in the *Globe and Mail* (June 15). An official reaction from Environmental Defence is here , with more detail in their blog, "What you need to know about Ontario's carbon pricing drama" . From the Ecofiscal Commission, "Tread Carefully: Ontario's cap-and-trade system meets a fork in the road" (June 8) , and "Can Ontario hits its targets without carbon pricing?" (June 21) , which discusses the two remaining options for reducing emissions: regulations and incentives. Finally, the arguments are summed up in the Unifor press release, "Unifor urges Premier-designate Doug Ford to maintain the cap and trade system" : "Workers in Ontario need forward-looking policies with the intention to build a green economy, but instead Ford announced his intention to cancel a successful program and pick an unnecessary fight with the federal government…. Workers accept that climate change is real and need our government to lead with a real, predictable plan to reduce emissions and grow green jobs."

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Markets**, **Ontario**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

New fuel regulations aim to reduce emissions from Canada's freight industry

Posted on **June 20, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

With freight transportation producing approximately 10 percent of Canada's total emissions, on June 14, Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister announced new carbon-pollution regulations for heavy-duty vehicles, defined as " school buses, transport tractors and trailers, garbage trucks, delivery vans, and larger pick-up trucks". The regulations begin in 2020, and become increasingly stringent with each passing year – with a goal to reduce carbon pollution by approximately 6 million tonnes a year by 2030.



The Pembina Institute welcomes the regulations here, with reference to its detailed report on the issue: *State of Freight* (June 2017), and also an OpEd from *Policy Options* in April 2018, "On vehicle emissions standards, it's time Canada divorced the U.S." . "McKenna touts new climate pollution controls for large trucks and buses" in the *National Observer* (June 14) includes a discussion of the Canada-U.S. alignment over fuel standards.

In May, the Conference Board of Canada released Greening Freight: Pathways to GHG Reductions in the Trucking Sector, which recommends several ways to help reduce emissions from freight transport, including the adoption of established fuel-saving technologies, carbon pricing, and disruptive technologies such as electric zero-emission and driverless trucks. The report is available from this link (free, registration required).

Also on this topic, an article by researchers from the University of British Columbia's Clean Energy Research Centre appeared in the April 2018 issue of *Energy Policy*. "Electrification of road freight transport: Policy implications in British Columbia" concludes that all-electric trucks could reduce 64% of the emissions from road freight transport in the province by 2040, if 65% of trucks ran on 100% hydroelectric power. However, the demand created would overwhelm the supply available – therefore, the authors call for new policies "to support diversified renewable electricity generation and low-carbon pathways. For example, carbon capture and sequestration coupled with provincial reserves of natural gas can enable low-carbon hydrogen production and decrease the electricity requirements for zero-emission vehicles in B.C." An article on the CBC website summarizes the academic article.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **alternative fuel vehicles**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Fuel Efficiency**, **Low Carbon Fuel Standard**, **Trucking Industry** | **Leave a reply**

How local government policies can encourage energy efficiency jobs and training

Posted on **June 20, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Through the Local Government Lens: Developing the Energy Efficiency Workforce, is a report released on June 13 by the American Council for an Energy- Efficient Economy (ACEEE). It cites data from the *2018 U.S. Energy & Employment Report,* which reported that there are 2.25 million efficiency jobs in the U.S. currently – 1.27 million of which are in the construction trades, followed by 450,000 in professional and business services. The report dives more deeply into the demographics and characteristics of the energy efficiency workforce, and discusses the unique challenges of workforce development policies – the need to replace a retiring workforce, funding uncertainty for job creation and infrastructure, a need to encourage diversity, and a complex set of stakeholders, given that there is no single educational or skills path for efficiency workers. The report includes unions and union-led training in its discussion of stakeholders and in its recommended strategies for workforce development policies.

Case studies with various approaches are presented from across the U.S., with the sole Canadian example of Vancouver, B.C. For example: Boston, where training in energy building management is provided to city and utility workers at local community colleges; New Orleans, where the city coordinates with U.S. Green Building Council, local community colleges, the New Orleans Office of Supplier Diversity, and the Urban League of Louisiana to provide efficiency-related training to low-income community members and minority- and women-owned businesses; and Los Angeles, which has established a Cleantech Incubator to attract new businesses and private-sector investment to the city. Other U.S. cities discussed are New York City, Orlando Florida, and Columbus Ohio.

Vancouver, B.C. launched several initiatives to teach skills required to build in accordance with its Zero Emissions Building Plan, approved in 2016. The city plans to subsidize training for builders and developers to learn more about passive house design standards, technical building requirements, economic and energy impacts, and energy modeling tools. Vancouver will also contribute funds to the Zero Emissions Building Centre of Excellence, a nonprofit-run collaborative platform that will compile and disseminate zero-emission building educational resources to the local building industry.

A blog summarizes the report; it is available free from this link, registration is required.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Construction Industry**, **energy efficiency**, **Green Building**, **Green Jobs**, **local job creation**, **Municipal Government**, **retrofitting** | **Leave a reply**

Recognition of the mental health impacts of flooding and wildfires in Canada – B.C. offers support

Posted on **June 18, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

A June 2018 report from the Intact Centre for Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo presents statistics about the rising financial costs of weather-related disasters in Canada, and profiles the results of 100 door-to-door interviews with households in flooded communities around Burlington Ontario. *After the Flood: The Impact of Climate on Mental Health and Lost Time From Work* found that members of households which had been flooded experienced significantly more worry and stress than non-flooded households, and the worry and stress persisted even up to 3 years after the event. *After the Flood* also reported that 56% of flooded households had at least one working member who took time off work, and that the average time lost was seven days per flooded household (10 times greater than the average absenteeism for non-flooded workers).

The report cites official documents concerning the growing financial costs of disasters for example, the 2016 report from Canada's Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer , *Estimates of the Average Annual Cost for Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements due to Weather Events* and includes a bibliography of the growing international public health literature concerning the health effects of weather disasters.

Other official recognition of the rising dangers of extreme weather events: in May 2018, the Province of British Columbia, under the leadership of Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, announced mental health support services for those who might be impacted by re-living their experiences from the record-breaking 2017 wildfire season. In partnership with the B.C. branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the program directs people to support services through a Facebook campaign called Talk in Tough Times, and a phone-based support program.

Federally, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities announced the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund in May 2018, a 10-year national program that will invest $2 billion in infrastructure projects such as diversion channels, wetland restorations, wildfire barriers and setback levees, to help communities better withstand natural hazards such as floods, wildfires, seismic events and droughts.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **absenteeism**, **British Columbia**, **climate change and mental health**, **Extreme Weather Events**, **Flooding**, **forest fires**, **natural disasters**, **wildfires** | **Leave a reply**

German unions call for mass retraining to support the electrification of vehicle manufacturing by 2030

Posted on **June 18, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 7, the European unions IG Metall and IndustriAll Europe released a report which models the employment impacts of the possible fuel efficiency standards required to further decarbonize the European automotive industry. The report, whose title translates as *Effects of vehicle electrification on employment in Germany,* presents three scenarios: the first, close to existing regulations, will require a 2030 automotive fleet consisting of 15% plug-in hybrids and 25% battery-electric vehicles, and is forecast to result in an 11% loss of employment by 2030, or 67,000 jobs. The second and third scenarios predict even more job loss – 108,000 or 210,000 across Europe.

In a press release announcing the study, the automotive advisor of IG Metall and chairman of the automotive committee of IndustriAll Europe says: "We fully support the evolution towards a new automotive paradigm, but this has to happen in a socially acceptable way. …. It will require the combination of industrial and employment strategies. Mass training programmes will be needed while ambitious reconversion plans should avoid the decline of regions…. In this respect we should not forget that many regions all over Europe are heavily integrated in the automotive supply chains. Equally, we should not forget that thousands of SMEs producing conventional components are at risk as they miss the necessary financial resources, the research capacity and the technologies to invest in alternative products. Also, the aftermarket and its 4m jobs will be severely disrupted as electric vehicles require much less maintenance".

The report is not available in English, but is summarized in the press releases by IndustriAll and by IG Metal (in German, use the "translate" feature) . It was initiated by IG Metall, along with car manufacturers BMW, Volkswagen and Daimler, automotive suppliers Robert Bosch, ZF Friedrichshafen, Schaeffler, and Mahle and the German Association of the Automotive Industry. Research was conducted by the Fraunhofer Institute for Ergonomics and Organization (IAO) in Stuttgart , using data from the companies involved.

In March 2018, IndustriAll announced that it was one of the stakeholders in a newly-approved EU Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills in the automotive industry (part of the New Skills Agenda for Europe). The March press release characterized the automotive sector as "in turmoil because of so many structural changes taking place at the same time: the ever stricter emission standards and the resulting quest for alternative powertrains, the digitalisation of production processes, automated driving, the increasing connectivity of cars with the outside world, development of mobility as a service."

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **autonomous vehicles**, **Electric Vehicles**, **employment impacts**, **Germany** | **1 Reply**

G7 Summit makes some progress on Just Transition, plastics pollution – but not on fossil fuel subsidies

Posted on **June 11, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

With the chaos emanating from Donald Trump's performance at the G7 Summit hosted by Canada on June 8 and 9, it would be easy to miss the news about one of the five Summit themes : *Working Together on Climate Change, Oceans, and Clean Energy* . But according to a brief statement by Canada's Climate Action Network, *G7 Stands it Ground* : "The G7 should be congratulated for publicly acknowledging for the first time the need for a just transition…..Canada showed leadership by stickhandling this climate outcome as the G7 host. "

In contrast to the Final Communique of 2017, which contained only one paragraph on climate change, the 2018 Official Communique includes four lengthly paragraphs (#23 – 27, including #26 which is the independent statement of the United States). Included: "Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the European Union reaffirm their strong commitment to implement the Paris Agreement, through ambitious climate action; in particular through reducing emissions while stimulating innovation, enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening and financing resilience and reducing vulnerability; as well as **ensuring a just transition**, including increasing efforts to mobilize climate finance from a wide variety of sources. …. Also, Recognizing that healthy oceans and seas directly support the livelihoods, food security and economic prosperity of billions of people, …. We endorse the Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities, and will improve oceans knowledge, promote sustainable oceans and fisheries, support resilient coasts and coastal communities and address ocean plastic waste and marine litter. Recognizing that plastics play an important role in our economy and daily lives but that the current approach to producing, using, managing and disposing of plastics and poses a significant threat to the marine environment, to livelihoods and potentially to human health, we the Leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Union endorse the Ocean Plastics Charter."

Background: As usual, several reports and position statements were released in advance of the international meetings. The Climate and Energy Working Group of the G7 Global Task Force, (a broad coalition of over 40 civil society organisations) released their *Recommendations* on a full range of climate change issues, and a separate Brief titled *It's Time for G7 countries to commit to Just Transition* , which concluding with this: "Canada, as President of the G7, and building on the work of the Task Force on the Just Transition for Canadian Coal-Power Workers and Communities has the opportunity to elevate this discussion, and promote mainstreaming of just transition principles across all G7 priorities and discussions for the upcoming years."

Other position statements: The Global Investor statement to G7 leaders, signed by 319 investors representing more than USD $28 trillion in assets , and a Statement from the We Mean Business Coalition . Both business-oriented groups affirm their commitment to the Paris Agreement and made recommendations.

Also, from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Oil Change International (OCI), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI) : the *G7 Fossil Fuel Subsidy Report Card* , released on June 4 . It states that G7 governments continue to provide at least $100 billion in subsidies to the production and use of coal, oil and gas, and ranks the G7 countries according to seven indicators: transparency; pledges and commitments; ending support for coal mining; ending support for exploration; ending support for oil and gas production; ending support for fossil fuel-based power; and ending support for fossil fuel use. Using these categories, Canada ranked 3rd out of the G7 countries overall, after France (1st) and Germany (2nd), followed by U.K., Italy, Japan, and the U.S. (7th). This, against the backdrop of an Ekos Research public opinion poll from March 2018 that shows Canadians want an end to fossil fuel subsidies in virtually every part of the country and across gender, age, region, education, and income. For a new discussion of the issue and the *Scorecard* report, see "Canada leads G7 in oil and gas subsidies" in *The Narwhal*.

The *National Observer* coverage of the entire G7 Summit is here, with a focus on the trade dispute, but including "G7 still negotiating as clock runs down on climate commitments and "McKenna praises IKEA move to ban single-use plastics by 2020" , which discusses the broader issue.

Reactions : A compilation of reactions appears in "G7 Leaders isolate Trump on Climate" in *The Energy Mix*, and CAN-RAC released a position paper in response *Shaping the Future: A new vision for civil society and the G7* . Environmentalists, including Greenpeace, called the Plastics Charter inadequate because it is voluntary,and focuses on recycling and repurposing, rather than reduction or an outright ban on single-use plastics. The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada (CIAC) and the Canadian Plastics Industry Association (CPIA) released a statement of support of the Ocean Plastics Charter on June 10 , also stating that its members: " had committed to goals of 100 per cent of plastics packaging being recyclable or recoverable by 2030 and 100 per cent of plastics packaging being reused, recycled, or recovered by 2040."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **G7**, **International cooperation**, **Just Transition**, **Ocean Protection**, **Paris Agreement**, **Plastics Industry**, **Water pollution** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian government spends $4.5 billion taxpayers' dollars to buy Trans Mountain pipeline project and push expansion ahead

Posted on **May 29, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Despite strenuous and prolonged opposition from environmental and Indigenous activists in Canada and internationally, and two days before a deadline imposed by Texas corporation Kinder Morgan, Canada's Liberal government announced on May 29 that it will spend $4.5 billion to buy the existing Trans Mountain pipeline and its associated infrastructure, so that a pipeline expansion can proceed under the ownership of a Crown corporation. The press release is here ; details of the transaction are here in a Backgrounder ; the text of the speech by Finance Minister Bill Morneau is here . Repeating the mantra of the Trudeau government, Morneau claims that the project is in the national interest, will preserve jobs, will reassure investors and improve the price for Canadian oil by expanding its market beyond the U.S. Morneau says the federal government does not plan to be a long-term owner and is in negotiations with interested investors, including Indigenous communities, pension funds (notably the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board) and the Alberta government.

In fact, the expansion pipeline, if built, would almost triple the amount of dilbit transported from Alberta to the British Columbia coast, from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels a day, and increase tanker traffic off B.C.'s coast from approximately five to 34 tankers a month. As recently as May 24, an Open Letter coordinated by Oil Change International and signed by over 200 groups summed up the situation, stating there is a "…. clear contradiction between Prime Minister Trudeau's unchecked support for the Kinder Morgan pipeline project and his commitments to Indigenous reconciliation through the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and his obligation to address climate change through the Paris Agreement." The letter notes that currently planned Canadian oil production would use up 16% of the world's carbon budget to keep temperatures below 1.5 degrees, or 7% of the budget for 2 degrees. Canada has less than 0.5% of the world's population.

Today's initial reaction to the government's decision has called it "astounding", "shameful", and an "historic blunder". From the CBC: "Liberals to buy Trans Mountain pipeline for $4.5B to ensure expansion is built" and " Bill Morneau's Kinder Morgan surprise comes with huge price tag, lots of political risk: Chris Hall". From *The National Observer* "Trudeau government to buy troubled Trans Mountain pipeline for $4.5 billion" ; "BC Will Continue Legal Strategy to Oppose Pipeline After Federal Purchase, Premier Says" in *The Tyee* . Toronto's *Globe and Mail* posted at least 6 items on the decision , including an Explainer , and Jeff Rubin's Opinion: "Morneau had better options for Canada's Energy sector" .

From Greenpeace Canada: "Federal government volunteers to "captain the Titanic of tar sands oil pipelines" and risks $4.5B of Canadians' money in the process" ; and West Coast Environmental Law reaction points out that "There are currently 14 legal challenges before the Federal Court of Appeal, alleging that the government failed in its constitutional duty to consult First Nations about the Trans Mountain project, and that the federal review had other regulatory flaws. Success in just one of those challenges could derail the underlying federal approvals."

In the *Victoria Times Colonist*, "Green Party Leader May calls pipeline decision 'historic blunder'" ; John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia, released an official statement , and a jubilant Alberta Premier Rachel Notley is profiled in the CBC story, " 'Pick up those tools, folks, we have a pipeline to build,' Alberta premier says ". Reaction from B.C. First Nations leaders is compiled in this CBC story.

Social media reaction, as compiled by CBC , is here . The Dogwood Initiative has mounted a "Time for Bill Morneau to go" online petition here ; SumofUs has an online petition here, to urge the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board not to invest in Kinder Morgan. Direct emails can be sent to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca . Opposition continues and the story is not over.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **Climate change policy**, **First Nations**, **Kinder Morgan**, **Oil pipelines**, **Trans Mountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

British Columbia sets new GHG reduction targets, reviews environmental assessment process

Posted on **May 24, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Amidst the noise and fury of the B.C.-Alberta feud over the Kinder Morgan TransMountain pipeline, the province of British Columbia is moving forward with reform of its climate change policies. On April 25, the B.C. Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council released a detailed letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy , describing the Council's principles, supporting much of the government's current direction, and making recommendations, based on the 2015 recommendations of the province's Climate Leadership Team. Shortly thereafter, on May 7, a government press release committed to a new provincial climate action strategy to be released in autumn 2018, including plans for GHG emission reduction for buildings and communities, industry and transportation sectors.

With that same press release, the government announced Bill 34, the Climate Change Accountability Act, which amends the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act (2007), repealing the emissions reduction target for 2020 (generally deemed unachievable) and sets new targets: reduction of GHG's by 40% from 2007 levels by 2030, 60% by 2040, and 80% by 2050. Accountability looms large in the responses to Bill 34. The Pembina Institute notes the failure of recent GHG emissions reductions, and calls for "a robust accountability mechanism to ensure history doesn't repeat itself ". In addition, Pembina notes that any development of emissions-intensive industries, such as liquefied natural gas, would jeopardize the province's climate progress.

In "Looking for accountability in BC's Climate Change Accountability Act", West Coast Environment Law reviews B.C.'s emissions reduction progress , summarizes responses by other environmental groups to Bill 34, and recommends how the government can incorporate principles of accountability and transparency in its new policies. Similar concerns are discussed in "A

Carbon Budget Framework for BC: Achieving accountability and oversight" by Marc Lee, in CCPA's *Policy Notes* (May 22).

Another policy issue under review in B.C. is environmental assessment, with a 12-member advisory committee appointed in March 2018, a public discussion paper promised for May, and reforms to come in Fall. The government portal to the "Revitalization" process is here ; "B.C. Moves Ahead With Review of Controversial Environmental Assessment Process" (Mar 8) summarizes the situation. On May 9, twenty-three environmental, legal, social justice and community organizations released *Achieving Sustainability: A Vision for Next-Generation Environmental Assessment in British Columbia* , which calls for an independent environmental assessment body which will involve the public, and require decision-makers to demonstrate that their decisions are based on science and Indigenous knowledge. A summary, with links to more detailed discussion is provided by West Coast Environmental Law. Analysis and practical examples are provided by Sarah Cox in "Time For a Fix: B.C. Looks at Overhaul of Reviews for Mines, Dams and Pipelines", which appeared in April in the newly-named newsletter from DeSmog Canada, *The Narwhal*.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Carbon Budget**, **Environmental Assessment**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Unifor calls for federal leadership in Just Transition and a role for collectively-bargained protections

Posted on **May 24, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

More than sixty members of Unifor met federal Members of Parliament in Ottawa on May 24, to convey the union's positions on four major issues: pharmacare, child care, public control of airports, and Just Transition. The press release is here ; the four page Just Transition backgrounder is here . In it, the union expresses its broad support of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and carbon pricing, calls for federal policy leadership to ensure that workers do not bear the brunt of climate change-induced industrial restructuring, and offers specific recommendations.

Unifor's Recommendations are noteworthy in that they explicitly call for a role for collective bargaining (or worker representation in non-unionized workplaces). From the text: "Unifor sees two potential avenues to finance Just Transition. The first means is through the new federal carbon tax, which need not be entirely revenue neutral. A portion of the proceeds could be used to create a 'Green Economy Bank' or some such fiscal mechanism. The second option is to bolster the Low Carbon Economy Fund, which is already explicitly committed to job creation, but should be geared towards good, green job creation, and widen its mission." ….. Unifor calls for "Labour market impact assessments to monitor the emergent effects of climate related policy; Community benefit agreements, to support regions that are more heavily dependent on carbon-intensive economic activities; The promotion of green economy retraining and skills upgrading, through appropriate funding for postsecondary institutions. This includes mandatory apprenticeship ratio's linked to college training programs and skills trades certification processes; Preferential hiring for carbon-displaced workers, including relocation assistance; Income support, employment insurance flexibility and pension bridging for workers in carbon-intensive economic regions and industries; Tax credits, accelerated depreciation, grants and/or investment support for firms and industries that bear an extraordinary burden of change; **In unionized workplaces, there needs to be a role carved out for the bargaining agent in negotiating and facilitating workplace transition. In non-unionized workplaces we need to envisage a role for workers to provide input on adjustment processes and procedures."**

Unifor is Canada's largest private sector union, with more than 315,000 members across the country in climate-vulnerable sectors such as energy, mining, fishing, as well as automobile and auto parts manufacturing. Some of its existing collective agreements, compiled in the ACW database, have long-established workplace environment committees.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **green collective bargaining**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Retraining**, **Unifor** | **Leave a reply**

U.S. energy employment report: statistics by gender, age, race, and union status

Posted on **May 22, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The *2018 U.S. Energy & Employment Report* (USEER) was released in May, reporting that the traditional Energy and Energy Efficiency sectors employ approximately 6.5 million Americans, with a job growth rate of approximately 133,000 net new jobs in 2017 – approximately 7% of total U.S. new job growth.   The report provides detailed employment data for energy sectors including Electric Power Generation and Fuels Production (including biofuels, solar, wind, hydro and nuclear) and Electricity Transmission, Distribution and Storage. It also includes two energy end-use sectors: Energy Efficiency and Motor Vehicle production (including alternative fuel vehicles and parts production). It is important to note that, unlike many other sources, this survey includes only direct jobs, and not indirect and induced jobs.

In addition to overall employment totals, the report provides an in-depth view of the hiring difficulty, in-demand occupations, and demographic composition of the workforce – including breakdowns by gender, age, race and by union composition. As an example for solar electric power generation: “about a third of the solar workforce in 2017 was female, roughly two in ten workers are Hispanic or Latino, and under one in ten are Asian or are Black or African American. In 2017, solar projects involving PV technologies had a higher concentration of workers aged 55 and over, compared to CSP technologies.”

The previous USEER reports for 2016 and 2017 were compiled and published by the U.S. Department of Energy. In 2018, under the Trump Administration, two non-profit organizations, the National Association of State Energy Officials and the Energy Futures Initiative, took over the task of compiling the data, using the identical survey instrument developed by the DOE. Timing was coordinated so that year over year comparisons with the precious surveys are possible. Peer review of the report was performed by Robert Pollin, (Political Economy Research Institute) and James Barrett, (Visiting Fellow, American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy). The overview website, with free data tables at the state level, is here .

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Clean energy industry**, **Electric power generation**, **Gender**, **Job Creation**, **Labour Market**, **Solar energy industry**, **wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

How to increase women`s representation in green industries

Posted on **May 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Two new reports were released in May in the Smart Prosperity Clean Economy Working Paper Series. *Identifying Promising Policies and Practices for Promoting Gender Equity in Global Green Employment* by Bipasha Baruah, synthesizes and analyses existing literature on women's employment in manufacturing, construction and transportation – "brown" sectors which are important in the transition to a green economy. From the paper: "The literature points to four overarching barriers that exist for women who seek to enter and remain in these fields: lack of information and awareness about employment in these sectors, gender bias and gender stereotyping, masculinist work culture and working conditions, and violence against women. … Most policies designed to address women's underrepresentation in these fields tend to be reactive responses that do not engage adequately with broader societal structures and institutions that produce and maintain inequality. Improving lighting in construction sites in order to prevent sexual assaults against women and requiring women to work in pairs instead of alone are classic examples of reactive policies that end up reinforcing social hierarchies rather than challenging them… …. Raising broader societal awareness about the benefits of gender equity, and about women's equal entitlement to employment in all fields, is as crucial as policy reforms and state or corporate actions that protect women's interests and facilitate their agency. " The discussion includes interesting observations about women's challenges in engineering professions and in apprenticeships.

The second paper, also by Bipasha Baruah, is *Creating and Optimizing Employment Opportunities for Women in the Clean Energy Sector in Canada* . This paper has been released previously and was highlighted in April 2018 in the *Work and Climate Change Report*, along with *Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada: Feminist, Indigenous and Intersectional Perspectives* , published by Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces in Canada`, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience. Both reports note the underrepresentation of women in the clean energy industry and call for improvements in workforce training and hiring; the working paper by Bipasha Baruah emphasizes the need for change in societal attitudes.

The publisher, Smart Prosperity is based at the University of Ottawa, and announced major new funding at the end of March 2018 , which will enable new research in a "Greening Growth Partnership" initiative. Click here for information about the funding and the international experts who will be participating in Smart Prosperity research.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Clean Energy**, **Construction Industry**, **disadvantaged workers**, **First Nations**, **Gender Equality**, **Women in Renewable Energy** | **Leave a reply**

ILO Report projects 18 million net new jobs in a green economy, and highlights policy role for social actors, including unions

Posted on **May 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The International Labor Organization released its annual *World Employment and Social Outlook Report* for 2018 on May 14, with the theme: *Greening with Jobs*. In an economy where global warming is limited to 2°C , the report projects job losses and job creation, both within and amongst sectors, to 2030. A net increase of approximately 18 million jobs globally will result from adoption of sustainable practices, such as changes in the energy mix, the projected growth in the use of electric vehicles, and increases in energy efficiency in existing and future buildings.

This landmark report also includes analysis and discussion of climate impacts on working conditions, job quality, and productivity, (including estimates of impacts of extreme weather conditions), and the need for social dialogue and a legal and policy framework which promotes just transition. Of particular interest is the discussion of the role of social dialogue, which includes examples of green provisions in international and national agreements – and on page 94, highlights green provisions in Canadian collective agreements, based on the database compiled by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project.

Other key findings from the press release :

Of the 163 economic sectors analysed, only 14 will suffer employment losses of more than 10,000 jobs worldwide – hardest hit: petroleum extraction and petroleum refining (1 million or more jobs).

2.5 million jobs will be created in renewables-based electricity, offsetting some 400,000 jobs lost in fossil fuel-based electricity generation.

6 million jobs can be created by transitioning towards a ‘circular economy’ which includes activities like recycling, repair, rent and remanufacture.

A 5-page summary is available in English and in French . The full report, Greening with Jobs, is here .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **decent work**, **green bargaining**, **Green Economy**, **Green Job Creation**, **international agreements**, **Just Transition**, **social dialogue** | **Leave a reply**

ETUC Guide to best practices for union impact on EU climate change and Just Transition policies

Posted on **May 15, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

At a conference in Brussels on May 15, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) released *Involving trade unions in Climate action to build a Just transition,* a Guide which makes the arguments for why unions should care about climate change, and provides recommendations and best practice examples from unions in the European Union. The ETUC press release summary is here, in which the ETUC General Secretary states: “The ETUC’s new guide is about the policies, initiatives and governance involved in a just transition. At the end of the day our key message is that there is no just transition without workers participation. Imposed solutions do not work, we need dialogue to make climate progress.” A YouTube summary from ETUC is here.

The 48-page guide is packed with information and examples where trade unions have made impacts on national policies. It began with a questionnaire circulated to ETUC affiliates, and also includes insights from five workshops involving experts from EU unions and “relevant institutions”, organized around five thematic areas: employment and working conditions; governance and trade union participation; education; training and skills; social protection; and internal capacity building for trade union organizations (how to mobilize and prepare unionists to engage in the transition).

The Guide offers analysis about the role of trade unions, and states that union involvement in climate change policy development is on the rise, though it varies widely across EU member countries. The main message is that a Just Transition requires workers' participation and dialogue. Some of the specific thematic recommendations include:

Promote economic diversification in regions and industries most affected by the transition;

Negotiate agreements at sectoral and company level to map the future evolution of skills needs and the creation of sectoral skills councils, using the ETUC guide on "*Restructuring and collective competences*" (2013) ;

At sectoral and workplace levels, extend the scope of collective bargaining to green transition issues to discuss the impact on employment and wages of the decarbonisation process and the impacts on skills needs and health and safety at work;

Establish dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and regional authorities to identify and manage the social impacts of climate policies;

In line with the ILO guidelines on a just transition , promote the establishment of adequate social protection systems based on the principles of universality, equal treatment and continuity, providing healthcare, income security and social services;

Encourage internal union capacity and increase members' participation by developing and strengthening a network of green representatives at the workplace level, and involve workers in concrete actions aiming to reduce the environmental footprint of their company.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **case studies**, **European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)**, **European Union**, **green bargaining**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies** | **Leave a reply**

Air pollution savings by substituting Videoconferencing for airline travel

Posted on **May 14, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

According to a ranking by Project Drawdown, businesses around the world could eliminate 82 billion hours of air travel time for employees by substituting travel to meetings with high-quality video conferencing systems – a work practice with the potential to cut atmospheric carbon dioxide by 1.99 gigatons by 2050. This solution, dubbed Telepresence, is ranked as 63rd out of 100 solutions to global warming in the Project Drawdown study which compares the cost and GHG savings of three adoption scenarios (ranging from 16% – 50%) in the period 2020-2050.

Project Drawdown describes its work as "the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming". In an April 25 *New York Times* interview , Paul Hawkin, Project Drawdown's executive director, states: "A primary goal of Drawdown is to help people who feel overwhelmed by gloom-and-doom messages see that reversing global warming is bursting with possibility: walkable cities, afforestation, bamboo, high-rises built of wood, marine permaculture, multistrata agroforestry, clean cookstoves, plant-rich diet, assisting women smallholders, regenerative agriculture, supporting girls' ongoing education, smart glass, in-stream hydro, on and on." The solutions have been proposed and researched by an international collaboration of " geologists, engineers, agronomists, researchers, fellows, writers, climatologists, biologists, botanists, economists, financial analysts, architects, companies, agencies, NGOs, activists, and other experts" .

The complete list of 100 proposals was published by Penguin Books in 2017 and is available at the Project Drawdown website. Canadian news outlet *The Energy Mix* is currently posting excerpts from Project Drawdown, and highlighted Telepresence in its May 11 issue.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **air travel**, **business travel**, **Project Drawdown**, **Workplace greening** | **Leave a reply**

Workforce implications of innovation in Canada's Forest Sector

Posted on **May 8, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On May 4th, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources released its report, *Value-added products in Canada's forest sector : cultivating innovation for a competitve bioeconomy* . The report is the latest discussion of advancing Canadian value-added forest products and a forest-sourced bioeconomy, and addresses five themes: (1) protecting Canadian forests and primary resources (which recognizes the threats of climate change and beetle infestation); (2) advancing industrial integration, innovation and talent development; (3) strengthening partnerships with Indigenous peoples; (4) maximizing market opportunities in Canada and abroad; and (5) a case study on building with wood, with a focus on advanced mass timber construction.

Discussion of the issue of training and talent development (beginning on page 18), calls for more internships and employment opportunities for engineering and science students and highly trained post-graduates; the need to develop a well-educated forest-sector workforce in rural areas; and the need for diversity and gender equity. Employment implications are present in the discussion of wood-based construction of homes, where witnesses talk about transforming wood construction from a craft-based industry to a more mainstream manufacturing process, where "prefabrication in a factory environment would make wood construction more cost competitive and less wasteful, with greater potential for automation, customization and design accuracy." The report also provides a case study of two Canadian examples of "tall wood buildings": including Brock Commons, a new

18-storey student residence at the University of British Columbia , and Origine, a 13-storey building in Quebec City's Pointe-auxLièvres eco-district.

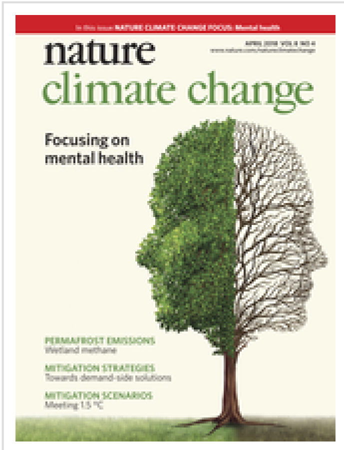
The United Steelworkers , who represent over 18,000 forestry workers after their 2004 merger with the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA), presented a *Brief* to the Committee in November 2017. The Brief identifies the main challenges facing the sector, as low harvest volumes, insufficient infrastructure funding, and decreasing raw log exports, and concludes that, although it's a provincial jurisdiction, "The Steelworkers submit that Canada needs a national forestry strategy that recognizes while the challenges within the lumber, pulp, paper, or value added sector are unique, … the whole sector is highly integrated, and dependent on each facet of the sector succeeding. " The Brief also states "The costs that the industry as a whole faces will further increase with the federal government's plan to roll out a $50/tonne price on carbon by 2022. This new carbon pricing regime will not only risk further impacting tight margins in regions like Ontario, but also risks leading to carbon leakage. Canadian companies are now operating in the southern USA which does not have a carbon pricing regime."

Unifor, which represents approximately 24,000 forest workers, also issued a report (not submitted to the Committee) in October 2017: *The Future of Forestry: A Workers Perspective for Successful, Sustainable and Just Forestry* . A key message from Unifor is the need to involve workers in a in a national policy-making process: "forestry ministers must lead efforts to bring together business, government, labour, Indigenous leaders, environmental organizations and community leaders in a reinstated National Forestry Council." Also on this topic, a 2017 report by the Innovation Committee of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, *A Forest Bioeconomy Framework for Canada* .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Leakage**, **Forestry Industry**, **Unifor**, **United Steelworkers** | **Leave a reply**

New research on climate change impacts on mental health

Posted on **May 8, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

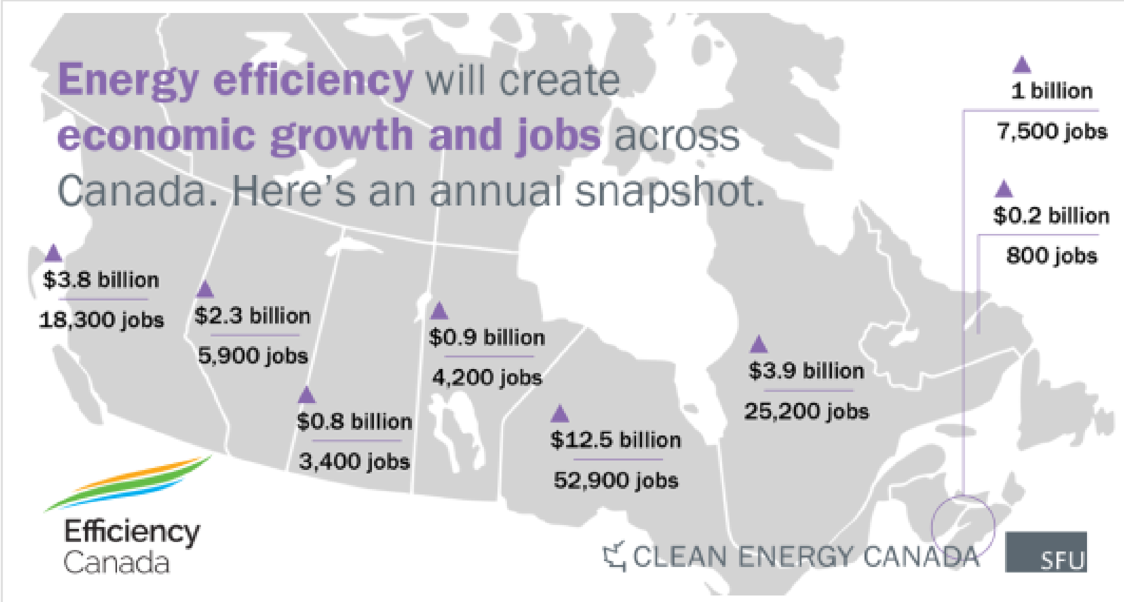


The April Issue of *Nature Climate Change* focuses on the relationship between climate change and mental health. The introductory editorial summarizes the three articles on the topic and makes the case that 1. Mental health issues are often neglected in the general research about the health impacts of climate change, and 2. more research is needed. (Please note that all articles have restricted access and are available only for a fee.) The first article in the issue, "Ecological grief as a mental health response to climate change-related loss" discusses the personal grief experienced by people as their natural world changes, illustrated by the experiences of Indigenous people in Northern Canada and the Australian wheatbelt. The second article, "The case for systems thinking about climate change and mental health" examines the current state of research about climate change and mental health from a policy perspective, arguing for a more epidemiological research. The third article, "Mental health risk and resilience among climate scientists" discusses whether climate scientists themselves face unique mental health risks because they are immersed in depressing information. Dr. Susan Clayton, author of the third article, is also co-author of the influential 2014 report *Beyond Storms & Droughts: The Psychological Impacts of Climate Change*, published by the American Psychological Association and ecoAmerica. In March 2017, the APA, ecoAmerica and Climate for Health updated *Beyond Storms & Droughts* with *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance* .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and mental health** | **Leave a reply**

Energy efficiency programs can create 118,000 jobs per year in Canada, says new report

Posted on **May 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



A new report from a new organization: on May 3, Clean Energy Canada announced that it had partnered with a new national policy organization, Efficiency Canada, to publish a study of the economic impacts of energy efficiency for Canada. The report's title tells the story: *Less is More: A win for the economy, jobs, consumers, and our climate: energy efficiency is Canada's unsung hero* .

There are two scenarios reported: The first, modelling energy efficiency programs in the Pan-Canadian Framework ("PCF") , estimates that every $1 spent on energy efficiency programs generates $7 of GDP, and an average of 118,000 jobs per year will be created between 2017 and 2030. Jobs would be spread across the country and the economy, with about half of new jobs produced in the construction, trade and manufacturing sectors, peaking in 2027 and 2028. The overall economic impact is largely driven by energy cost savings – for consumers, $1.4 billion per year (which translates into $114 per year per household). For business, industry and institutions, the savings are estimated at $3.2 billion each year. Importantly, the PCF energy efficiency programs could reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by approximately 52 Mt by 2030, or 25% of Canada's Paris commitments.

For the second, more ambitious policy scenario, "PCF+", the net increase in GDP grows to $595 billion, employment gains are over 2,443,500 job-years in total from 2017 to 2030, and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by 79 Mt, or 39% of Canada's Paris commitment.

Less is More is only 8 pages long. The detailed results, as well as explanation of the modelling assumptions, are found in the *Technical Report* , produced by Dunsky Energy Consulting of Montreal, commissioned by Clean Energy Canada and Efficiency Canada. The technical report modelled the net economic impacts of energy efficiency measures related to homes, buildings and industry (not included: the transportation sector, nor electrification and fuel switching in the building sector). Modelling was done for two scenarios: implementation of programs in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF), and a PCF+ scenario, which includes all the PCF programs plus "best in class" efficiency efforts , derived from exemplary programs across North America.

Efficiency Canada , the national policy organization launched on May 3, is based at Carleton University in Ottawa and is the new incarnation of the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance. From the new website: "Efficiency Canada advocates to make our country a global leader in energy efficiency. We convene people from across Canada's economy to work together to advance policies required to take full advantage of energy efficiency. And we communicate the best research out there to build a more productive economy, sustainable environment, and socially just Canada."   To read their full story, go to their webpage, Who is Efficiency Canada ?

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **employment impacts**, **energy efficiency**, **Energy policy**, **Job Creation**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Corporate Disclosure of climate change risks, and shareholder action by BCGEU on sustainability

Posted on **May 2, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The British Columbia Government and Services Employees' Union (BCGEU) issued a press release on April 20 to announce its partnership with the global advocacy group SumOfUs (Fighting for people over profits). Over the summer, on behalf of BCGEU, SumOfUs will file proposals at annual general meetings of Canadian companies, calling for greater fairness in corporate governance and increased scrutiny around human rights and labour practices as well as of the impacts of deforestation.

BCGEU President Stephanie Smith stated "As a union, we need to make sure that funds our members count on, such as the strike fund, are financially healthy and this requires careful and responsible investment decisions. …Calling for greater corporate responsibility as a shareholder is not only financially prudent, but it allows us to pursue our values as a labour union as well." This is not the first time BCGEU has taken initiative – in 2014, the union divested its strike fund and general reserves from fossil fuel equities, and saw in increase in values.

With a similar strategy, the Fonds de Solidarité des Travailleurs du Québec (FTQ), empowered SHARE (Shareholder Association for Research and Education), to file a shareholder proposal at the April 27 annual meeting of Imperial Oil, requesting better disclosure on its exposure to and management of water-related risks in its oil and gas operations.

Even Canada's financial regulators are moving in the direction of increased transparency and disclosure for corporations. The Canadian Securities Administration, concluding a process which had stretched out for over a year, issued a press release on April 5, announcing   *CSA Staff Notice 51-354 Report on Climate change-related Disclosure Project*. The report announced its intention to consider new disclosure requirements relating to material risks and opportunities and "how issuers oversee the identification, assessment and management of material risks. This would include, for example, emerging or evolving risks and opportunities arising from climate change, potential barriers to free trade, cyber security and disruptive technologies."

And on April 12, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change announced the creation of an Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance. Part of the mandate of the Expert Panel will be to explore the issue of voluntary standards for corporate disclosure of the financial risks associated with climate change, and to provide recommendations to the federal government by the fall of 2018. Full Terms of Reference are here . The Expert Panel is expected to build upon the work of the CSA Task Force, and the earlier, international Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCDF), led by Michael Bloomberg, and chaired by Mark Carney. Canada's new Expert Panel will be chaired by Tiff Macklem, Dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and former Senior Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada; the other three members are Andy Chisholm, member of the Board of Directors of the Royal Bank of Canada; Kim Thomassin, Executive Vice-President, Legal Affairs and Secretariat, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec; and Barbara Zvan, Chief Risk and Strategy Officer, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.

For context on the issue of corporate disclosure, read "Investigation finds nearly half of Canadian failing to Disclose Climate-Related Risk" from the *National Observer* (April 5), and, in the opposite direction in the United States, In 'Attack on Shareholder Rights,' SEC Seeks to Sideline Activist Investors .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Risk**, **Financial Risk**, **Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure** | **Leave a reply**

Facts, not politics: Parkland Institute report plans for Canada's transition from fossil fuels

Posted on **May 2, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On May 1, the Parkland Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives co-released the latest report for the Corporate Mapping Project. *Canada's Energy Outlook: Current Realities and Implications for a Carbon-constrained Future* is described in the press release as " a definitive guide to Canada's current energy realities and their implications for a sustainable future, taking a detailed look at Canadian energy consumption, renewable and non-renewable energy supply, the state of Canada's resources and revenues, and what it all means for emissions-reduction planning."

The title of the press release is instructive: "Pipeline feud underscores need for evidence-based energy strategy" – *Canada's Energy Outlook* is an attempt to inject facts into the current emotion-charged debate about the TransMountain pipeline and the role of oil and gas in Canada; in doing so, it counters many of the pro-pipeline claims, including the job creation claims. For example, Chapter 2, "Non-renewable energy supply, resources and revenue" states: "Oil and gas jobs are a relatively minor overall component of the Canadian economy: 2.2% of Canada's workforce was employed in oil, gas and coal production, distribution and construction in 2015. Of these jobs, 52% were involved in construction, most of which were of a temporary nature. In Alberta, 6.3% of jobs were involved in fossil fuel production and distribution, and a further 6.6% in related construction."

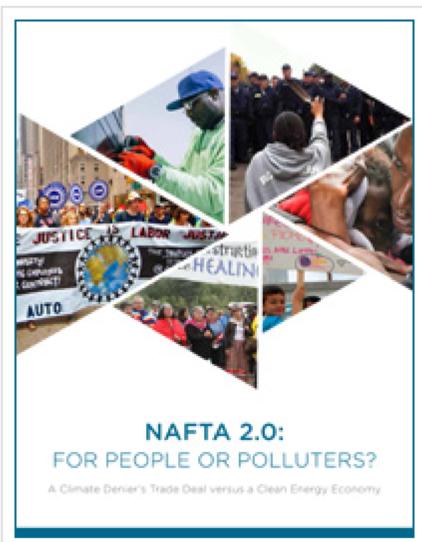
A commentary titled "Politics versus the future: Canada's Orwellian energy standoff" discusses the pro-pipeline arguments being made by Alberta and the federal government in light of their incompatibility with our emissions reductions targets, but acknowledges the insufficiency of our renewable energy supply as yet. It concludes: " Some environmental groups assert that it will be relatively easy to swap out fossil fuels for renewable energy – wind, solar, biomass, biofuels and geothermal energy. That is unlikely given the scale of such a transition. Renewable energy can certainly be scaled up a lot, along with geothermal energy for heating and cooling, but we will likely need fossil fuels for decades to come as we make the transition."

The report was written by David Hughes, an earth scientist,well-known energy expert, and author of several related reports, including *Can Canada Expand Oil and Gas Production, Build Pipelines and Keep Its Climate Change Commitments?* (2016).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **employment impacts**, **Energy policy**, **fossil fuel industry**, **renewable energy industry**, **Trans Mountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

New voices calling for climate change protections in NAFTA 2.0 – updated on May 7

Posted on **April 30, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

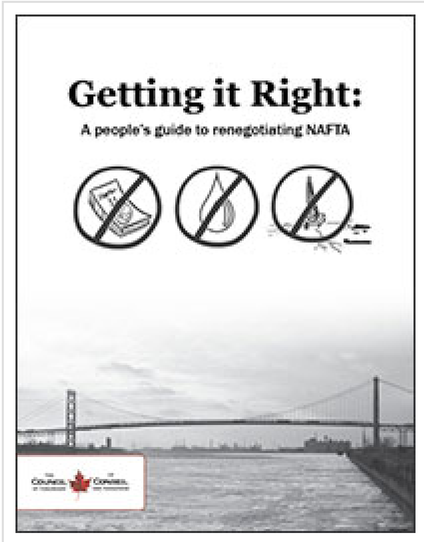


Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, arrived in Washington on May 7 for final "make or break" talks about NAFTA, according to a CBC report. Below, some reports reflecting concerns from Canada's labour and climate change communities.

On April 17, the Sierra Club, the Council of Canadians, and Greenpeace Mexico released a new report, *NAFTA 2.0: For People Or Polluters? A Climate Denier's Trade Deal versus a Clean Energy Economy*.   In this report, economists from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico document the obstacles to climate progress in the current North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations, and propose climate, labour, and human rights protections in line with the Paris Accord. Canadian contributor Gordon Laxer, founder of the Parkland Institute, states: "NAFTA's little-known 'proportionality' rule locks Canada into perpetual production of climate-polluting tar sands oil and fracked gas, while giving corporate polluters a permanent green light to build tar sands oil pipelines to the U.S." The *NAFTA 2.0* report urges elimination of the proportionality rule, elimination of the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) tribunals under Chapter 11, and elimination of rules regarding regulatory cooperation that could be used to delay, weaken, or halt new climate policies, or to pressure Canada and Mexico to adopt the weaker climate standards favoured by the Trump administration. *NAFTA 2.0: For People or Polluters?* was written and researched by Dr. Frank Ackerman (Synapse Energy Economics, U.S.), Dr. Alejandro Álvarez Béjar (Professor, National Autonomous University of Mexico), Dr. Gordon Laxer, (Founding Director, Parkland Institute, University of Alberta, Canada), and Ben Beachy (Director of the Sierra Club's Responsible Trade Program, U.S.). A summary appears in a Sierra Club Blog.

— Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs

On May 2, Canada's labour, climate, and social justice communities sent a joint *Open Letter* to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, stating their twelve shared principles and values on very specific NAFTA issues. They conclude: " An alternative model of trade must be rooted in principles of equity, the primacy of human rights — including the rights of Indigenous peoples, women and girls, workers, migrants, farmers, and communities — and social and ecological justice. Furthermore, if Canada wishes to be an international champion of action on climate change, its trade policy must be compatible with its climate objectives." "Chrystia Freeland urged to be a climate champion at NAFTA talks" (*National Observer,* May 2 *)* summarizes the letter and quotes from an interview on the issue with Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). The CLC was one of 8 labour unions and 47 organizations to sign the Open Letter. The others include Canadian Union of Public Employees, CWA-Canada, National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), Public Service Alliance of Canada, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, United Steelworkers, and Unifor amongst unions; Climate Action Network-Canada, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Citizens Climate Lobby Canada, Oxfam Canada, and other social justice groups.



The Council of Canadians have maintained a long-standing campaign against NAFTA, especially the ISDS provisions. Their website on the issue is here; their own guide to the NAFTA Negotiations, *Getting it Right: A People's Guide to re-negotiating NAFTA*   was published in October 2017 and agrees with the new Sierra Club report in most respects, including elimination of the ISDS, and incorporation of workers' rights.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis acts as the administrative lead in the Trade and Investment Research Project (TIRP), a coalition of NGO and labour unions. CCPA published *Canada's Track Record Under NAFTA Chapter 11* (January 2018) which tracks the cases and penalties Canada has paid under the existing ISDS provisions, and *Renegotiating NAFTA: CCPA submission to Global Affairs Canada on the renegotiation and modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement* (July 2017).

The International Institute for Sustainable Development has published *Can Investor-State Dispute Settlement Be Good for the Environment?* which reviews the European Energy Charter Treaty as well as NAFTA; *Environmental and Public Interest Considerations in NAFTA Renegotiation* (November 2017); and *A Wish List for an Environmentally friendly NAFTA* (April 2018) .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Free Trade**, **Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)**, **NAFTA**, **NAFTA Chapter 11**, **Trade Policy** | **Leave a reply**

Occupational health risks created by climate change: U.S. doctors get

Guidelines, France releases expert report

Posted on April 30, 2018 by elizabethperry493

— Warmer temperatures have brought the Black-legged tick to Ontario, bringing an increase of Lyme's Disease, especially for outdoor workers.

A Guidance Document was released by the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine in February 2018. *Responsibilities of the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Provider in the Treatment and Prevention of Climate Change-Related Health Problems* (also appearing in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*) is intended to set standards for physicians specializing in workplace health. The Guidance Document provides concise and very current information about the direct physical impacts related to climate change (heat stress and ultraviolet exposure, air quality, and allergic sensitivities) as well as indirect impacts (disaster zone exposure, stress and mental health, and waterborne and vector-borne disease). Most of this information is not new: two previous major reports have covered the same ground: The *Lancet Countdown Report for 2017*, (which links climate change and specific health conditions for the population at large, not just workers, and which included a report for Canada), and the landmark U.S . Global Change Research Program report, *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment* (2016) .

What is important about this new Guidance Document? It focuses on the workplace, and sets standards for the role of occupational health physicians which include a responsibility to protect workers. For example: "Provide guidance to the employers on how to protect working populations in the outdoors or in the field who are potentially exposed to the extreme temperatures…. Quickly identify employees with acute and chronic cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses within the organization who will be significantly affected by increasing temperature and worsening air quality, an increase in ozone, particulate matter, and high pollen count ….Provide effective guidance to employers about seasonal activity and address the increasing risk of vector-borne disease among the working population…. Deliver support to the employees at risk for mental illness due to disasters, loss, and migration by providing more comprehensive programs through their employment…. The article concludes with: " OEM providers are called to be on the forefront of emerging health issues pertaining to working populations including climate change. The competent OEM provider should address individual and organizational factors that impact the health and productivity of workers as well as create policies that ensure a healthy workforce."

There is also a call to action in a new report from France's Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety. The full expert analysis is available only in French ; an English abstract is here . The report predicts the occupational risks associated with climate change, from now till 2050, and identifies the main drivers of change: rising temperatures, changes in the biological and chemical environment, and a change in the frequency and intensity of extreme events. ***What's new in this report?*** It highlights the breadth of impact of climate change, stating that it will affect all occupational risks, except those associated with noise and artificial radiation. The report also makes recommendations, urging immediate workplace awareness campaigns and training about the health effects of climate change, with a preventive focus. From the English summary: "The Agency especially recommends encouraging all the parties concerned to immediately start integrating the climate change impacts that are already perceptible, or that can be anticipated, in their occupational risk assessment approaches, in order to deploy suitable preventive measures." The full report (in French only): *Évaluation des risques induits par le changement climatique sur la santé des travailleurs* (262 pages) is dated January 2018 but released in April. It was requested by France's Directorate General for Health and the Directorate General for Labour, to support the country's 2011 National Adaptation to Climate Change Action Plan (PNACC).

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **climate change and health**, **climate change and mental health**, **France**, **health care providers**, **health effects of climate change**, **Heat Stress**, **Occupational Health and Safety**, **Training** | **Leave a reply**

Unions well-represented on Canada's new Task Force on Just Transition – including Co-Chair Hassan Yussuff, President of the CLC

Posted on **April 25, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

— Hassan Yussuff, President, Canadian Labour Congress

On April 25, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced the members of the the Just Transition Task Force for Canadian Coal-Power Workers and Communities, to be co-chaired by Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and Lois Corbett, Executive Director of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick. Biographies are here , revealing that six of the eleven members of the Task Force are unionists: two from the CLC, the Alberta Federation of Labour, United Steelworkers, Unifor, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The press release by the Canadian Labour Congress states: "The world is watching. By launching this task force, Canada has the opportunity to set an international example on how to implement progressive policy to reduce emissions while keeping people and communities at the centre". A *National Observer article* provides context and background about the members of the Task Force, and some quotes from the press conference which announced it. A CBC report also includes a video of the press conference.

The full Terms of Reference for the Just Transition Task Force were originally published in February 2018, and include a mandate to make recommendations to the Minister via an interim report and a final report due at the end of 2018. Members of the Task Force will meet with government officials at the local and provincial level, workers, stakeholders, academics, and also make site visits to coal plants and communities that will be affected by the accelerated phase-out of coal power in Canada. The Task Force will no doubt benefit from the work of Alberta's Advisory Panel on Coal Communities , which also examined the impacts on communities and workers of an end to coal-fired electricity by 2030, and proposed strategies to support workers through the transition. The Alberta Panel issued its recommendations in a brief report, titled *Supporting Workers and Communities* in November 2017, resulting in a number of provincial programs, described here .

At the international level, Canada has been active since joining with the United Kingdom to launch the Powering Past Coal Alliance in November 2017 at the Conference of the Parties (COP23), in Bonn in 2017. Updates on that initiative are available from this link. As of April 2018, there are over 60 countries and private businesses in the alliance. An April 2018 release reports that Canada and the U.K. will collaborate with Bloomberg Philanthropies on the goals of the Alliance, including to produce research and case studies on the issue.   Also, at the One Planet Summit in December 2017, Canada announced its partnership with the World Bank Group and the International Trade Union Confederation, to accelerate the transition from coal-fired electricity to clean sources in developing countries.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **coal phase-out**, **coal-fired electricity**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Powering Past Coal Alliance** | **Leave a reply**

Quebec unveils its Vision 2030 for sustainable mobility and transportation

Posted on **April 20, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On April 17, Quebec's Liberal Premier Philippe Couillard announced the government's *Vision 2030*, a 12-year strategy to increase sustainable mobility. The official government information is available only in French, here . Information in the English language is available from the Liberal Party of Quebec press release , and a *Montreal Gazette* report. The government will invest $9.7 billion ($2.9 billion of which is new funding) to provide Quebecers with a 20% reduction in average commuting time, 20% reduction in commuting costs, and access to at least four types of sustainable mobility by 2030 for 70 % of the population. Investments will be made in a light-rail electric train line for Montreal and an extension of the métro's Blue Line; as well as transit services to Montreal's suburbs. (The government had already called for tenders for 300 additional hybrid buses for Montreal in January 2018). Future projects also include a tramway system for Quebec City, and transit alternatives for the regions, outside the two main cities. As environmental benefits, the province aims to achieve a 40% reduction in the amount of fuel consumed for transportation, with a 37.5% reduction in transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions over 1990 levels.

Although the majority of the plan addresses personal transportation, it also sets a goal to increase the goods shipped at ports and intermodal rail terminals by 25%, and promises an increase in the province's annual sales of transportation equipment from $10 billion to $15 billion.

Premier Couillard is calling the initiative "the James Bay of our era" – referring to the transformative hydro development of the 1970's.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Montreal**, **Quebec**, **Transit**, **Transit Policy**, **Transportation Infrastructure**, **transportation policy** | **Leave a reply**

New evidence supports benefits of cap and trade policies – an important issue for Ontario voters

Posted on **April 19, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

With a June 2018 election approaching in Ontario, climate change policies and the cap and trade program are already emerging as key issues. Several relevant reports have been published since the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario addressed these issues in her audit report, *Ontario's Climate Act: From Plan to Progress* in January 2018.

The government's own progress report on the 5-year Climate Change Action Plan was released on March 14 , and includes an evaluation of the policies and projects funded through Ontario's cap and trade program. One such program is the "Low Carbon Building Skills" initiative announced in August 2017 under the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, which aims to improve training for low carbon building projects – including retrofits, green construction and building operations. Other highlighted initiatives relate to hospital energy efficiency; building and school retrofits; social housing; research into climate change impacts on building codes.

A more independent view comes in *A Progress Report on Ontario's Cap-and-Trade Program and Climate Change Action Plan: Year One* , published by the Clean Economy Alliance – an alliance of Ontario's businesses, clean technology firms, industry associations, labour unions, farmers, health advocates and environmental organizations. In answering its key question, "Is there any evidence that cap-and-trade has hurt Ontario's economy or cost jobs?" the report concludes that "Rather than shedding jobs, Ontario added 155,000 jobs between January 2017 and December 2017 – the first year of cap-and-trade. Gains were driven by employment growth in wholesale and retail trade, professional services and manufacturing. Cap-and-trade doesn't appear to have hurt economic growth either. 2017 marked a 7-year high in Ontario's GDP growth. Forecasters including RBC, TD Bank and the Conference Board of Canada agree that in 2018, economic growth will slow slightly, but will remain strong." The report card evaluates impact on emissions reduction, as well as implementation rates by policy area (transportation, buildings and homes, land use planning, and "others") . It concludes with a brief case study of the incentives for electric vehicles – noting that 2017 was the first year that more electric vehicles (EVs) were sold in Ontario than in any other province.

On April 10, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario released another relevant report: the 2018 Energy Conservation Progress report, *Making Connections: Straight Talk about Electricity in Ontario*. In this statistically-dense report, she acknowledges that the province's electricity system was 96 per cent emission-free in 2017, but warns that the province will fall short of its 2030 carbon reduction target unless consumer behaviour changes: "Looking ahead, much more conservation and low-carbon electricity will be needed to displace fossil fuels as the climate crisis continues to worsen. Ontario is not yet preparing seriously for this future."

With the explicit purpose of informing the policy discussion before and after the Ontario election in June 2018, Ontario 360 has been established at the University of Toronto's School of Public

Policy and Governance, as an " independent, non-partisan, and fact-based" resource. On April 18, their first briefing on Climate Policy was published, written by Trevor Tombe, associate professor of economics at the University of Calgary. The briefing reviews the cap-and-trade system and the various initiatives which have been funded by its proceeds, and provides a top-level explanation of the merits of carbon pricing in general, with a comparison of cap and trade and carbon taxes. His conclusion: "while the evidence finds that pricing should be the backbone of any credible climate policy in Ontario, it is not a magic wand. There are areas where it may not be administratively feasible, and therefore narrow complementary policies should also be on the table. And even where pricing is appropriate, reasonable people will disagree over the appropriate price level and coverage. But whatever path forward future governments choose, they should strive for transparency in costs and benefits, clarity in the goals a policy is trying to achieve, and flexibility as new evidence emerges."

Finally, a related report from the United States was released on April 17, evaluating the economic and environmental impacts of the cap and trade markets of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in the U.S. from 2015-2017 . *The Economic Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States* found that the nine states which form the network gained $1.4 billion in economic benefits over the past three years because of the way they invested proceeds, with the biggest payoffs (including in new jobs) coming from investments in energy efficiency programs. In the same period, there has been no damage to the reliability of the electricity grid, nor a net increase in electricity bills. *The Economic Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States* was produced by The Analysis Group , who also were responsible for two previous evaluations since the RGGI launched in 2009, available here .

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Markets**, **Ontario**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative** | **Leave a reply**

Infrastructure Canada invests in public transit and requires Community Employment Benefits agreements

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

An April 11 article in the *National Observer*, "After massive investments , Trudeau government puts public transit on track" attempts to explain the political and bureaucratic tangle of the Canada Infrastructure Plan in the wake of a series of press releases by the federal government. Those press releases have announced $33 billion in funding for infrastructure projects through bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories, with the lion's share – $20.1 billion – going to public transit. The National Observer article also profiles some public transit projects already announced or in progress: the 12.5-kilometre, 13 stations Ottawa light rail project; a $365 million plan to extend the Montreal's Blue Line for five stops; Calgary's Green Line LRT; Victoria B.C.'s plan to improve resilience against seismic activity; and new electric and hybrid buses for Gatineau and Laval, Quebec, and London Ontario. Another excellent update of Canada's public transit appeared in *Corporate Knights* magazine in January 2018, "The e-bus revolution has arrived". And in March, Winnipeg Transit released its report on electrification of its bus fleet- summarized by the CBC here ; Winnipeg is home to the New Flyer Industries, which manufactures the battery-electric buses in use.

Public transit is obviously good for reducing Canada's transportation-related GHG emissions, and investments at this scale are obviously important sources of job creation. The Bilateral Letter of Agreement with Ontario states: " a Climate Lens will be applied to these federal investments, and a Community Employment Benefits Reporting Framework will be applied for relevant programs under the Investing in Canada Plan. Both the Climate Lens and the Community Employment Benefits Reporting Framework will be developed in consultation with provinces, territories, municipalities and other stakeholders over the next few months and will be embedded in the integrated bilateral agreements once completed." Community benefits agreements are already in place in some transit construction projects in Toronto, and Ontario passed the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015* , which states: "Infrastructure planning and investment should promote community benefits …. to improve the well-being of a community affected by the project, such as local job creation and training opportunities".

For inspiration on another side of the issue, read the recent article, "Connecting green transit and great manufacturing jobs" in *Portside* on April 14. It provides a very detailed case study of the fight to bring domestic, union jobs to light rail manufacturing in Los Angeles, a campaign spearheaded by Jobs to Move America (JMA) . From their website, JMA "is dedicated to ensuring that the billions of public dollars spent on American infrastructure create better results for our communities: good jobs, cleaner equipment, and more opportunity for historically marginalized people." Their website provides research papers and news updates.

— New Flyer Electric Bus, Winnipeg Manitoba. Image from http://winnipegtransit.com/en/major-projects/electric-bus-demonstration/

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Community benefits**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Infrastructure Investment**, **New Flyer Industries**, **Transit**, **Transit Policy**, **transportation equipment manufacturing** | **Leave a reply**

New forum launched to discuss the equity and justice dimensions of Just Transition

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On April 13, the Just Transition Research Collaborative launched a Just Transition(s) Online Forum , whose purpose is enrich discussion of climate change with equity and justice concerns – specifically focused on the growing debate about Just Transition, and from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. According to the introduction: "Through a combination of concrete case studies and more conceptual analyses, the forum acts as a shared space for academics and other interested parties to share their views (and voice their concerns) on the Just Transition, its meanings, its current uses and its potential. We want this space to be as interactive as possible, so please feel free to share your reactions or Just Transition-related stories and analyses."

Of the four items published to the Forum so far, three of the authors are associated with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project: 1. Dmitri Stevis posted "(Re)claiming Just Transition" , which notes "the concept's growing popularity has actually led to an expansion of its meanings." Professor Stevis sees this as "a challenge for stakeholders as it makes it more difficult to clearly identify what Just Transition stands for, who is behind it and what is the underlying theory of change. Is Just Transition simply another "buzzword"? Should we take it seriously? Can it play a positive role in the international climate and sustainable development debates?" He concludes, "It is, therefore, important to think about it systematically so that we can, at the very least, differentiate initiatives that co-opt and dilute its promise from initiatives that contribute to a global politics of social and ecological emancipation."

The second article is by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, with "Who Deserves a Just Transition?" , which focuses on Canada and is based on his recent report *Making decarbonization work for workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy in Canada*. The third ACW research associate, Roman Felli, argues "A Just Transition Must Include Climate Change Adaptation" . He uses the example of collective bargaining by UNIA, a Swiss construction union, and argues that unions need to anticipate how climate change will impact the work of their members, concluding with, "What are you doing about it in your union?"

The fourth article to date, "Just Transitions as a process with communities, not for communities" is by Rebecca Shelton, and highlights the transitions made by the coal communities of Kentucky.

The Just Transition Research Collaborative plans to release a State-of-the-art report on Just Transition in December 2018. The Just Transition(s) Online Forum is hosted jointly by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the University of London Institute in Paris, the International Social Science Council, and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

First Nations communities trading dirty diesel for renewable energy

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

First Nations' commitment to renewable energy is described in *Growing Indigenous Power: A Review of Indigenous Involvement and Resources to further Renewable Energy Development across Canada* released in February 2018 by TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative. The report highlights examples of renewable energy projects, describes the potential benefits for communities, and outlines supportive policies and programs in each province. In the section on workforce issues, the report states: "Whether a community is partnering with a developer and/or hiring a construction firm for their own project, it is important to insist, in writing, on a certain number of employment positions. After working with a developer on a wind project, Millbrook and Eskasoni First Nations (Nova Scotia) developed a database of skilled community members and had them join the union, to address employment issues." The report contains a unique bibliography of articles and reports from lesser-known Indigenous and local sources.

The *National Observer* publishes frequent updates on the issue of First Nations and renewable energy in British Columbia, which they have compiled into a Special Report titled First Nations Forward. Highlights from the series include "First Nations powering up B.C." (Dec. 2017), and most recently, "In brighter news, a clean energy success story: Skidegate on the way to becoming a "city of the future" (April 9). Also in British Columbia, the Upper Nicola Band in the southern Interior will vote in April on a proposal to build a solar farm project which, if approved, will be 15 times larger than the current largest solar farm in British Columbia (a converted mine site at Kimberley) . CBC profiled the proposed new project in March. DeSmog Canada also profiled the Upper Nicola Project, and in November 2017 published "This B.C. First Nation is harnessing small-scale hydro to get off diesel."

"How green energy is changing one Alberta First Nation" in the *Toronto Star* (April 10) profiles a solar project at Louis Bull First Nation, south of Edmonton. It was initiated under the Alberta Indigenous Solar Program , one of several provincial grant programs to encourage renewable energy and energy efficiency amongst First Nations. On April 5, Alberta's Renewable Electricity Program was announced – a 3-phase program which the government claims will attract approximately $10 billion in new private investment. By 2030, it is also expected to create about 7,000 jobs in a wide range of fields, including construction, electrical and mechanical engineering, project management, as well as jobs for IT specialists, field technicians, electricians and mechanics. Phase 2 will include a competition for renewable energy projects which are at least 25% owned by First Nations.

On March 22, the Ontario government announced : "The federal and Ontario governments are partnering with 22 First Nations to provide funding for Wataynikaneyap Power to connect 16 remote First Nations communities in Northern Ontario to the provincial power grid…..When complete in 2023, the Wataynikaneyap Power Grid Connection Project will be the largest Indigenous-led and Indigenous-owned infrastructure project in Ontario history. It will mean thousands of people will no longer have to rely on dirty diesel fuel to meet their energy needs." The Wataynikaneyap Power website offers a series of press releases that chronicle the years-long development of this initiative, in partnership with FortisOntario . The most recent press release on March 22 states that the goal is to establish "a viable transmission business to be eventually owned and operated 100% by First Nations. In addition to the significant savings associated with the avoided cost of diesel generation, the Project is estimated to create 769 jobs during construction and nearly $900 million in socio-economic value. These include lower greenhouse gas emissions (more than 6.6 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent GHG emissions are estimated to be avoided), as well as improved health of community members, and ongoing benefits from increased economic growth." Also of interest, a 2017 press release from FortisOntario : "Over $2 Million Announced For Wataynikaneyap Transmission Project First Nations Training Program ."

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **electricity sector**, **First Nations**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **renewable energy** | **Leave a reply**

Proposed Environmental Bill of Rights includes whistleblowing protection for Alberta workers

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Capping a series of related reports on the topic , the Alberta Environment Law Centre published *Environmental Rights in Alberta: An annotated Environmental Bill of Rights for Alberta* in March. The report consists of model provisions for a statute, along with annotations providing background information. Amongst the proposed provisions is protection from reprisals for employees (Whistleblower protection) – which would expand protection from reprisals beyond the existing Alberta legislation, the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower) Protection Act, which protects government employees only.

To encourage broad public participation on environmental issues, the report also addresses the issue of Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP suits) – "A SLAPP suit is a claim for monetary damages against individuals who have dealt with a government body on an issue of public interest or concern. It is a meritless action filed by a plaintiff whose primary goal is not to win the case but rather to silence or intimidate citizens who have participated in proceedings regarding public policy or public decision making."

From the introduction: "It should be noted at the outset that the Environmental Law Centre drew greatly from David Boyd's enormous academic contributions in this area. In particular, his article Elements of an Effective Environmental Bill of Rights was an invaluable resource in designing our model EBR" . Boyd's most recent book is The Rights of Nature: A Legal Revolution that Could Save the World (Toronto: 2017, ECW Press).

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Environmental law**, **environmental rights**, **whistleblowing protection** | **Leave a reply**

EPA roll back of fuel economy standards and what it means for Canada

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On April 3, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced its decision in a midterm evaluation of the fuel-economy standards for light vehicles manufactured in 2022-2025. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued his *Final Determination* , supported by a 38-page analysis – which overturned the evidence of a 1,200-page draft Technical Assessment Report completed under President Obama in 2016. This opens up the uncertainty of a new rule-making process, with vehement opposition from the State of California, which is entitled to set its own emissions standards, as well as other players in the U.S., including over 50 mayors and state Attorney Generals from across the U.S., who issued their own *Local Leaders Clean Car Declaration* . The Declaration states: " Whatever decisions the Administration may make, we are committed to using our market power and our regulatory authority to ensure that the vehicle fleets deployed in our jurisdictions fully meet or exceed the promises made by the auto industry in 2012." Within the auto industry, parts-makers represented by the Automotive Technology Leadership Group (including the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association, the Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association, and the Aluminum Association) support the existing standards . The Alliance for Automobile Manufacturers trade group, which represents Toyota, Ford, General Motors, Fiat Chrysler, BMW, Mercedes, and Volkswagen, have pushed for lower standards since the Trump inauguration.

All of this matters for Canada for at least two reasons: 1). 95% of vehicles manufactured in Canada are exported to the U.S., and thus our fuel emissions regulations have been developed in collaboration with the U.S. EPA – most recently to govern production for 2017 – 2025 models, and 2). transportation represents the 2nd highest source of emissions in Canada. The WCR surveyed Canadian reaction in March 2017, when Donald Trump first authorized the EPA review. Now, with the decision published, recent reaction appears in "Canada in tough position if Trump Administration lessens vehicle standards" in the *Globe and Mail* (April 1); the *National Observer* "Scott Pruitt delivers another Trump-era shock to Canada's climate change plan" (April 2) ; "Trump's fuel economy rollback leaves Trudeau in a bind: Follow the U.S., or take a stand" (April 3) in the *Toronto Star* , which quotes the the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, as saying that "both Canadian consumers and climate efforts could be harmed if Trudeau decides to maintain a higher standard for Canada than Trump does for the U.S." . Unifor, representing most Canadian auto workers, has not issued a reaction yet, although president Jerry Dias was quoted in March 2017 in " Auto workers union takes aim at Trump's examination of fuel standards" in the *Globe and Mail*, stating that he "would fight any attempt to roll back environmentally friendly regulations in the auto industry ".

For well-informed U.S. reaction, see "Stronger fuel standards make sense, even when gas prices are low " in *The Conversation;* "Why EPA's Effort to Weaken Fuel Efficiency Standards Could be Trump's Most Climate-Damaging Move Yet" in *Inside Climate News* (April 2) ; from the American Council for an Energy- Efficient Economy "EPA fails to do Its homework on light-duty standards" ; and "Auto Alliance Pushed Climate Denial to Get Trump Admin to Abandon Obama Fuel Efficiency Standards" in DeSmog (April 2).

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **California**, **United States**, **Vehicle emission standards** | **Leave a reply**

Even before the Kinder Morgan fight, Canada is falling short on its climate goals

Posted on **April 17, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

As we have noted in previous posts in the WCR , many voices have warned that Canada's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions is falling short of its commitments under the Paris Agreement. Three recent reports provide more evidence.

On March 27, *Perspectives on Climate Change Action in Canada—A Collaborative Report from Auditors General—March 2018* was released by the federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development and for the first time ever, compiles the findings of the federal and provincial Auditors –General, with the exception of Quebec, which did not participate. The results are presented for each province, and summarized as: Seven out of 12 provincial and territorial governments did not have overall targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; governments have different targets from each other, and of those that have targets, only two (New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) are on track to meet their targets. Most governments had not fully assessed climate change risks, and their plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions consist of high-level goals, with little guidance on how to implement actions. At the federal level, the report states: " even though Environment and Climate Change Canada was the federal lead on climate change, the Department did not provide the leadership, guidance, and tools to other departments and agencies to help them assess their risks and adapt to climate change. Moreover, only 5 federal departments and agencies of the 19 examined undertook comprehensive assessments of the climate change risks to their mandates." There was limited coordination of climate change action within most governments. Some governments were not reporting on progress in a regular and timely manner.

The second analysis is from the Pembina Institute, which partnered with the Energy Innovation of San Francisco to develop the Energy Policy Simulator (EPS), an economic modelling tool to evaluate the effectiveness and costs of energy and climate policies for Canada. *Enhancing Canada's Climate Commitments: Building on the Pan-Canadian Framework* applies the Energy Policy Simulator to three different policy scenarios, including the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change   , and concludes " that even if the PCF is fully implemented, 2030 emissions will exceed Canada's goal by 161 million metric tons (MMT), a gap 3.7 times larger than the 44 MMT shortfall predicted by Canada's government. Extending and strengthening PCF policies would allow Canada to come much closer to its target, save money, and save human lives." The Energy Policy Simulator is offered here as a free, open-source app available for other researchers to use.

Finally, the devil is in the details when author Barry Saxifrage of the *National Observer* took a close look at the federal government's report to the UNFCC in December 2017, the *7th National Communications report*. In "Canada's climate gap twice as big as claimed – 59 million tonne carbon snafu" (March 27) , the author contends that "The Trudeau government says its proposed climate policies will get Canada to within 66 million tonnes of our 2030 climate target. That's already a big gap, but the federal accounting also assumes we can subtract a huge chunk of Canada's emissions." That "huge chunk" refers to a further 59 MtCO2 of carbon emissions which the government omits to tally as part of our Canadian emissions, presuming that offsets will be purchased by Ontario and Quebec through their participation in the cap and trade market of the Western Climate Initiative with California. So far, the U.S. has not agreed to such an arrangement.

On a more optimistic note, a new report states: "Canada can reach its 2030 target if the federal, provincial and territorial governments implement climate policies in a timely and rigorous way. The Pan-Canadian Framework has the policy tools needed to achieve the target but measures will have to be ratcheted up to fill the 66 million tonne gap." In *Canada's Climate Change Commitments: Deep Enough?* ,authors Dave Sawyer and Chris Bataille use economic modelling to show that Canada could honour its Paris GHG reduction commitment (30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030) and still achieve GDP growth of at least 38 per cent. They compare this to a GDP growth of 39% if Canada took no action to reduce greenhouse gases.   The report calls for transformation changes, specifically: Building exclusively net-zero energy homes, i.e. buildings that generate as much energy as they consume. • The electrification of transportation, so that cars, trucks and trains can be powered by renewable energy rather than oil, which contributes to climate change. • Wholesale shifts away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. • Driving down energy needs by making industry, buildings and vehicles more energy efficient. • Embracing the full potential of energy storage to maximize the use of renewable electricity and building infrastructure to trade that electricity between jurisdictions.

Canada's Climate Change Commitments: Deep Enough? was released on April 12 jointly by four environmental advocacy organizations: Environmental Defence, Climate Action Network, The Pembina Institute, and the Conservation Council Of New Brunswick.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Energy policy**, **Greenhouse gas emissions**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **Paris Agreement** | **Leave a reply**

Unions supporting Pension Plan Divestment with practical guides

Posted on **April 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In Spring 2018, the Labor Network for Sustainability and DivestInvest Network jointly released a new guide: *Should your union's pension fund divest from fossil fuels? A guide for trade unionists* . The guide begins with an introduction to union pension plans in the U.S., including how they are governed, and the legal and administrative safeguards designed to protect members' money. It also recounts the role of union pension fund divestment in the South African struggle against Apartheid, describes the current global campaign for divestment from fossil fuels, and how and why unions are participating in that movement. The final section of the guide provides practical guidelines for union divestment campaigns.

Inspiration and a practical example of such a campaign can be found in the article "How New York City Won Divestment from Fossil Fuels". The article, originally posted in *Portside*, is written by by Nancy Romer, a member of the Environmental Justice Working Group of the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York and an activist in the divestment campaign which led to the January 2018 decision by New York City to divest $5 billion of its pension funds (and to sue ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips).

The *Guide* and Nancy Romer's article are available at a new Divest/Invest Hub on the LNS website, with plans for more campaign case studies and sample resolutions to be added. Guides with similar aims have been produced in the U.K.: for public sector unions: *Local Government Pension Funds – Divest From Carbon Campaign: A UNISON Guide* (January 2018) ; in 2017, Friends of the Earth-U.K. published *Briefing: Local government pensions: Fossil fuel divestment* and Friends of the Earth- Scotland published Divest Reinvest: Scottish Council Pensions for a Future worth living in . The Public and Commercial Services Union published *Divest to Reinvest* in 2016.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Divestment**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **labour union policies**, **Pension Fund management** | **Leave a reply**

Gender equity practices needed in the Canada's renewable energy sector

Posted on **April 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

A new report argues that Canada's renewable energy and aligned "climate prosperity" initiatives are perpetuating employment and income inequities for women in Canada, and calls for the renewable energy sector–a major area of action on climate change–to incorporate gender equity practices in workforce training, hiring, and management. *Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada: Feminist, Indigenous and Intersectional Perspectives* states that in countries such as Canada, United States, Spain, Germany, and Italy, women hold only 20-25% of jobs in the sector, and the vast majority of these jobs are lower paid, non-technical, administrative and public relations positions. Further, while women face social-economic barriers that leave them bearing the brunt of climate change impacts, they are denied a role in developing policies and programs to mitigate climate change. *Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada* makes a unique contribution in examining the roles and knowledge of Indigenous women, and calls for solidarity across women's groups to advance the paradigm shifts necessary to achieve gender mainstreaming and climate justice in Canada. The report was produced in collaboration between the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience, with financial support from Work in a Warming World (W3) Project, partnered with Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change Project (ACW). A summary of the findings is at the ACW website; the full report is archived in the ACW Digital Library here.

More on this topic: *Creating and Optimizing Employment Opportunities for Women in the Clean Energy Sector in Canada* (2016) is an informal working paper/knowledge synthesis by Bipasha Baruah, Canada Research Chair in Global Women's Issues at Western University. She states that "The conversation about gender equity or social justice (more broadly) in Canada's green economy is at best incipient and tokenistic" , and calls for specific employment equity policies as well as a shift in societal attitudes. The article documents the same underrepresentation of women in the renewable energy industry, and argues that Canada lags other OECD countries in data collection and analysis, and policy initiatives. "Renewable inequity? Women 's employment in clean energy in industrialized, emerging and developing economies" is a more formal article by Baruah which appeared in *Natural Resources Forum* (2017). The 2017 volume *Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries: Work, Public Policy and Action*, edited by Marjorie Griffin Cohen, offers a still broader look at the issue of gender and climate change.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Gender**, **Gender Equality**, **renewable energy industry**, **Women in Renewable Energy** | **Leave a reply**

L7 leaders alert to backsliding on Just Transition at the G7 meetings; Unionists share Just Transition experiences in Vancouver

Posted on **April 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

In Ottawa on April 4 and 5, the Canadian Labour Congress, along with the International Trade Union Confederation and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), hosted the L7 meetings of international labour leaders, as part of Canada's presidency of the G7 this year. According to the CLC press release, the L7 considered a full range of topics, including extension of bargaining rights, full employment, gender equity, and progressive trade – but also " welcomed the creation of a new G7 Employment Task Force – a key outcome of the G7 Employment Ministers meeting in Montréal from March 26th to 28th." The G7 Leaders' official statement re Employment Outcomes and the Task force is here; one of the "deliverables" is to "Share best practices and identify policy approaches to assist individuals in making the transition and adapting to changes in the labour market." In the *L7 Evaluation of the Outcomes of the G7 Innovation and Employment Ministerial Meeting* released after the meetings, the unionists point out : "While discussing transitions, the text does not refer to "just transitions" in contrast to the outcomes of the Italian G7 presidency. The main proposals for transitions by the G7 focus on reviewing social protection and training systems. The support for "apprenticeship and training opportunities and adult upskilling programs" is welcome but is not enough and does not address financing and governance challenges." The CLC press release states: "For trade unions, the Task Force should aim for "Just Transition" principles that ensure that workers are not paying the cost of the adjustment to decarbonisation, digitalisation and the shifts in production and services technologies."

— Photo by Tracy Sherlock, from the National Observer, April 6

On April 5 and 6th in Vancouver, labour leaders from around the world presented and discussed their experiences at the Metro Vancouver Just Transition Roundtable, hosted by the B.C. Federation of Labour, the Canadian Labour Congress, Green Jobs B.C., the City of Vancouver, Vancouver and District Labour Council, and others. Amongst the speakers: B.C. Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger, who argued that "the two defining problems of our time are climate change and inequality", and they need to be addressed together, and urgently. Samantha Smith, Director of the Just Transition Centre of the International Trade Union Confederation, provided European examples in her Keynote Address, and a spokesman from the United Federation of Danish Workers 3F, the largest trade union in Denmark, spoke of the clean economy investment of members' pension funds. Other union speakers were from New Zealand and Norway. From Vancouver, City Councillor Andrea Reimer discussed their Renewable City Strategy and the Greenest City Action Plan. The Councillor reported that Vancouver has 25,000 green jobs (5% of all jobs), and that surprisingly, these are not in the transportation and waste recovery sectors, but in local food production, clean buildings and local technology companies. For a summary of the event, read "BC FED President Irene Lanzinger calls climate change and inequality 'defining problems of our time'" in the *National Observer* (April 6).

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **B.C. Federation of Labour**, **Canadian Labour Congress**, **G7**, **Just Transition**, **L7**, **labour union policies** | **Leave a reply**

---

102 Cities globally are sourcing 70% of their energy from renewables

Posted on **March 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Recent meetings have prompted the release of several new research reports about cities, described as the "front-line of climate action" at the 10th anniversary meetings of the EU's Covenant of Mayors in February . The biggest meeting, and first-ever Cities and Climate Change Science Conference , was co-sponsored by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and was held in Edmonton, Alberta in March 5 – 7. The conference commissioned five reports , and included several others, including "Six Research Priorities for Cities and Climate Change" , which appeared in *Nature* in February. Detailed daily coverage of the conference was provided by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD); the closing press release is here .

In advance of the IPCC Cities conference, CDP released *The World's Renewable Energy Cities* report , with new data that shows that 102 cities around the world are now sourcing at least 70 percent of their electricity from renewables (more than double the 40 cities from their list in 2015). The 102 cities include Auckland (New Zealand); Nairobi (Kenya); Oslo (Norway); Seattle (USA) and from Canada: Montreal, Prince George (B.C.), Winnipeg, and Vancouver. The full report identifies data by type of renewable energy: hydropower, wind, solar photovoltaics, biomass and geothermal. Related, broader reports are: *Renewable Energy in Cities: State of the Movement* (Jan. 2018), which offers a global overview of local policy developments and documents from 2017, and *Renewable Energy in Cities* (October 2016) by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

All of these reports are more encouraging than another recent study in the news: "Future heat waves, droughts and floods in 571 European cities", which appeared in *Environmental Research Letters* in February 2018. These are warnings we've read before, but this study offers unique detail: it names cities that could be expected to experience the worst flooding in the worst-case scenario – Cork and Waterford in Ireland, Santiago de Compostela in Spain – and those that could expect the worst droughts: Malaga and Almeria in Spain. Stockholm and Rome could expect the greatest increase in numbers of heatwave days, while Prague and Vienna could see the greatest increases in maximum temperatures.

Some recent news about Canadian cities:

As the IPCC Cities conference met in Edmonton, the nearby **City of Calgary** convened its own Symposium as part of the process to develop its Resilience Plan, to be presented to Council in Spring 2018. The website provides overview information and links to documentation, including nine research briefs in a series, *Building a Climate-Resilient City: Climate Change Adaptation in Calgary and Edmonton* from the Prairie Climate Resilience Centre, a project of the University of Winnipeg and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

Vancouver: The Renewable Cities program at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver recently released two reports from a collaborative project called "Mapping Enabling Policies for Vancouver's 100% Renewable Energy Strategy". The *Policy Atlas* is a brief, graphic guide ; The *Dialogue Report* summarizes the views and discussion of 19 participants at a workshop held on November 30, 2017 – and attempts to clarify the roles of the federal, provincial, and local governments around issues such as a zero emission vehicles, energy efficiency in housing, land use planning, and electricfication and distributed energy, among others.

Toronto: In February, Toronto City Council approved $2.5 million for its Transform TO climate plan – which is a fraction of the $6.7 million in the budget recommended by city staff. The Transform TO goals include 80 per cent GHG reduction by 2050 (based on 1990 baseline); the website provides documentation and updates.

Finally, the mainstream *Globe and Mail* newspaper promises a new series of articles focusing on Canadian cities and climate change. The first installment: "Halifax's battle of the rising sea: Will the city be ready for future floods and storms?" (March 5).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Adaptation**, **Calgary**, **Cities and Climate Change**, **Edmonton**, **Extreme Weather Events**, **Heat Stress**, **Municipal Government**, **renewable energy**, **Toronto**, **Vancouver** | **Leave a reply**

Labour activists raising environmental justice issues in Canada's climate change policy

Posted on **March 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The featured article in the Winter 2018 issue of *Our Times* is "A Green Economy for All" , which describes the action-research project Environmental Racism: The Impact of Climate Change on Racialized Canadian Communities: An Environmental Justice Perspective. The ultimate goal: to equip Black trade unionists and racialized activists in Canada with the tools they need to influence the public policy debate over climate change, to ensure that the new green economy does not look the same as the old white economy. With important inspiration from the Idle No More movement and the Indigenous experience in Canada, the project began with research into what has already been written about environmental racism in Canada, along with a participatory social media campaign using the Twitter hashtag #EnvRacismCBTUACW, to solicit more information about lived experience. The project has now reached its second phase, designing and facilitating workshops to develop activism around the issue. The first of these workshops was presented to the Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT) in December 2017. Facilitation questions, case studies and workshop information will be made publicly available, with the goal of engaging other social and political activists, as well as the labour movement.

The Environmental Racism: The Impact of Climate Change on Racialized Canadian Communities project was launched in 2017 by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) project at York University, in collaboration with Coalition of Black Trade Unionists , and is being led by Chris Wilson, Ontario Regional Coordinator for the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and PSAC Ontario union negotiator Jawara Gairey.

"A Green Economy for All" also mentions the work of the Toronto Environmental Alliance , which produced a map of toxic concentrations in the city in 2005, and the forthcoming book *There's Something in the Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous and Black Communities*, which highlights the grassroots resistance against environmental racism in Nova Scotia, and is written by Ingrid Waldron, an associate professor at Dalhousie University and Director of the Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health Project (The ENRICH Project).

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Barack Obama**, **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists**, **Environmental Justice**, **environmental racism**, **Green Economy**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **toxic chemicals** | **Leave a reply**

Carla Lipsig-Mummé named 2018 winner of the Sefton-Williams Award for Contributions to Labour Relations

Posted on **March 1, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

York University Professor Carla Lipsig-Mummé has been named the 2018 winner of the Sefton-Williams Award for Contributions to Labour Relations. It is presented by the University of Toronto's Woodsworth College and the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, to honour those who have made a significant contribution to the field of labour relations and human rights. Previous eminent recipients of the award have included former President of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Canadian Labour Congress Bob White, feminist labour activist and Professor Emeritus of Women's Studies at York University Linda Briskin, and former Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada Ed Broadbent. The award is named in honour of Mr. Larry Sefton and Mr. Lynn Williams, two pioneering leaders of the United Steelworkers of America in Canada.

"Professor Lipsig-Mummé's research and activism in the labour relations field, most recently and innovatively exploring the link between climate change and the world of work, has bridged the gap between practitioner and scholar," said Professor Rafael Gomez, Director of the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. "The Sefton-Williams committee felt compelled to honour these achievements."

Carla Lipsig-Mummé is Professor of Work and Labour Studies at York University, and is currently Principal Investigator of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) research project, which brings together 56 individual researchers and 25 partner organizations in seven countries. Its ground-breaking work has been recognized by the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). She has edited *Climate @ Work* (2013), and co-edited *Work in a Warming World*, (2015), which present research from the ACW project.

The Award will be presented at the annual memorial lecture, to be held this year on Thursday, March 29, 2018 from 4:00 to 6:00 PM in the Kruger Hall Commons, Woodsworth College, 119 St. George St., Toronto. Juliet Schor, Professor of Sociology at Boston College, will deliver the memorial lecture entitled, "Dependence and Precarity in the 'Sharing' Economy." To register for the free event, click here .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | **Leave a reply**

Federal budget gets high marks for conservation initiatives but disappoints on green economy spending

Posted on **March 1, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Budget 2018, Equality + Growth: A Strong Middle Class was tabled by the federal government on February 27. The *Globe and Mail* published a concise overview in "Federal budget highlights: Twelve things you need to know" . A compilation of reaction and analysis from the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis is here , including statements from CCPA partner organizations such as the United Steelworkers and the Canadian Labour Congress.

The section of the Budget which relates most to a low carbon economy is in Chapter 4: Advancement . The Budget commits an unprecedented $1.3 billion over 5 years for conservation partnerships and the protection of lands, waters, and species at risk – prompting the Pew Trust in the U.S. to call the biodiversity targets "an example to the world" in "With earth in peril, Canada steps up" . Responses from the 19 environmental advocacy members of the Green Budget Coalition are compiled here , applauding the "historic" and "landmark" investments in the Budget. DeSmog Canada summarizes the provisions, which aim to protect 17 per cent of land and 10 per cent of oceans by 2020 under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and commit to recognizing Indigenous leadership.

But on the climate change front?

The National Observer writes: "Budget delivers new conservation fund but avoids climate commitments" (Feb. 27) , highlighting the Budget allocations announced for the the $2.6 Billion Low Carbon Economy Fund (announced in 2016) : $420 million will go to Ontario, for retrofitting houses and reducing emissions from farms; $260 million will go to Quebec for farming and forestry best practices, as well as energy retrofitting, and incentives for industry; $162 million will go to British Columbia, partly for reforestation of public forests; $150 million will go to Alberta for energy efficiency programs for farmers and ranchers, for renewable energy in Indigenous communities, and for restoring forests after wildfires; $51 million is going to New Brunswick and $56 million to Nova Scotia for energy retrofitting. Allocations for Manitoba will be announced later, and for Saskatchewan if it signs on to the Pan-Canadian Framework.

The Pembina Institute reaction is also fairly positive in "Budget 2018 builds on last year's commitment to climate change" . "We are pleased to see that Budget 2018 allocates $109 million over five years to develop, implement, administer, and enforce the federal carbon pollution pricing system. …Another $20 million over five years is allocated to fulfill the PCF's (Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change) commitment to assess the effectiveness of its measures and identify best practices. "

Less positive reaction: "Council of Canadians disappointed by Trudeau government's budget 2018" (Feb.27), which points out that the government has allocated $600 million to host the G7 summit in June 2018 in Quebec, yet the Budget fails to phase out subsidies for the fossil fuel industry, as it committed to at the G20 meetings and in the October 2015 election. Elizabeth May of the Green Party also "laments squandered opportunities" and points out that "Budget 2018 does not touch subsidies to fossil fuels in the oil patch and for fracked natural gas".

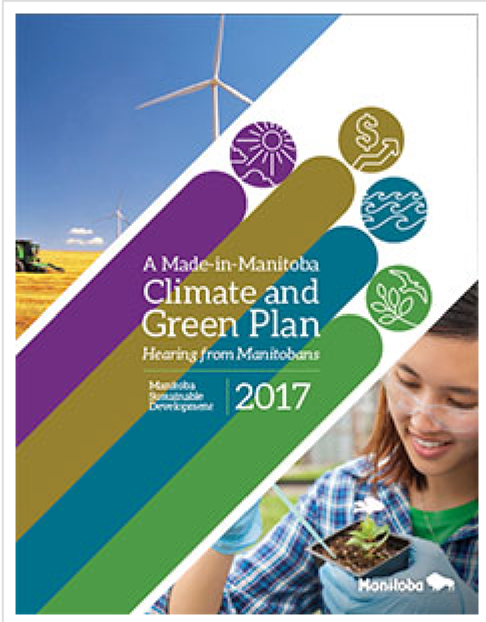
In advance of Budget 2018, the Canadian Labour Congress published "What Canada's unions would like to see in the federal budget" – a broad perspective which included a call for "a bold green economic program of targeted investments over the next five years for renewable energy development and infrastructure" … and " the establishment of Just Transition training and adjustment funds for workers affected by climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy, automation, the digitisation of work, and job losses caused by trade agreements like CETA." The CLC response to the actual Budget emphasizes the positive developments on issues like pharmacare and pay equity, but is silent on the green economy issues. Canadian Union of Public Employees' reaction is similar.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Clean Technology**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **Green Economy**, **Low-Carbon Investment**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Manitoba joins the Pan-Canadian Framework, leaving Saskatchewan the odd-man-out

Posted on **February 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Facing a deadline of February 28 to qualify for approximately $67 million in federal funding through the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the province of Manitoba announced on February 23 that it will sign on to the Framework agreement. However, the province will not compromise on its flat $25-a-tonne carbon price, as outlined in its Made-in-Manitoba climate policy document (October 2017).



Manitoba's letter announcing its adoption of the Pan-Canadian Framework is here . The federal government's letter welcoming Manitoba is here , stating that Manitoba will only be in compliance with the carbon pricing provisions until 2019. Ottawa has stated that it will review each province's carbon price plan every year starting in 2019, thus postponing until then any further conflict over the federal standard of a $50 per tonne carbon price . Details of the $2Billion Low Carbon Economy Fund, for which Manitoba now qualifies,are here.

According to a CBC report (Feb. 26), Saskatchewan is now the only province not part of the Pan-Canadian Framework, and the federal government is "just waiting" and hoping that they will commit. New Premier Scott Moe, so far, is holding to the policies outlined in Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy, released in December 2017 under previous Premier Brad Wall – a strong opponent of a carbon tax.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing**, **Manitoba**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. Auditor General reports on B.C. climate policies; B.C. Budget only begins to answer the concerns

Posted on **February 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

B.C. Budget 2018 was released on February 20, highlighting a "made-in-BC child care plan, a comprehensive housing plan and record levels of capital investment." An 8-page Highlights summary is here. The Budget was released just two days after the B.C. Auditor General's report, *Managing Climate Change Risks: An Independent audit,* which found it unlikely that British Columbia will meet its 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target and is off track to meet its 2050 target. According to the Auditor General, the existing *Climate Adaptation Strategy* has not been updated since it was written in 2010, leaving the province without clear priorities, timelines or assignment of responsibilities. In addition, the Auditor General states that B.C. is not prepared for climate risks such as rising sea levels and increased frequency and intensity of wildfires. A summary of the Auditor General's report appeared in *The Tyee* on February 20.

How will the Budget help to meet the shortcomings of the climate change file? The Pembina Institute states "B.C. budget = good news for families, businesses, and climate" , giving credit for investments in wildfire preparedness, energy-efficient social housing, and carbon-tax rebates for lower income households, yet calling for a clearer "road map" for energy and low carbon targets. (The Highlights document says that the government will invest a further $72 million in community resilience and recovery, and rural development, to help survivors of the 2017 wildfire season). The Tyee also highlighted the need for more vision and ambition in "NDP Told to Step Up Game on the Environment" (Feb. 22).   The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) describes the proposals for new incentives for large industrial emitters in "BC budget unveils support for industry to prevent 'carbon leakage'" . The David Suzuki Foundation response commends investments in transit, but criticizes the failure to extend the carbon tax to include methane gas. And DeSmog blog notes the absence of discussion in Budget 2018 of the single largest publicly funded project in the province – the Site C Dam.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Alternative Budget proposals for a Just Transition and a low carbon economy

Posted on **February 23, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released its 23rd Alternative Budget (AFB) on February 22 in Ottawa, in advance of the federal government's February 26 Budget release. According to the summary at *Behind the Numbers* : "Our budget puts forward bold progressive policy ideas rooted in a rigorous economic and fiscal framework. Our approach considers not just standard budget items but delivers a gender-based analysis, examines income distribution effects, and projects the impacts on poverty rates." High priority areas for the CCPA include universal child care, pharmacare, gender equity, free tuition, and a green, low carbon economy.

The report argues that the current, relatively low unemployment levels make this an opportune time to begin "in earnest, the just transition to a green jobs future." In a section called "Industrial

Strategy and Just Transition" the report calls for a National Decarbonization Strategy to be developed through broad consultation, and to act as a co-ordinating body for other AFB proposals – notably an enhanced Low Carbon Economy Fund to support cities and infrastructure investments, and a trade promotion strategy. A new $500-million Just Transition Transfer (JTT) is proposed, to flow federal funds to provinces – for workers and communities affected through actions under the National Decarbonization Strategy or for existing provincial just transition programs, such as Alberta's Coal Workforce Transition Fund. Finally, the AFB calls for a new $1Billion Strategic Training Fund to increase training capacity at colleges and trade schools – with the funds contingent on improved representation of women, racialized Canadians, immigrants, First Nations and other groups that have been historically excluded from the skilled trades.

Regarding the environment, some of the top-level goals are : Remove all direct and indirect subsidies for fossil fuel exploration, development and transportation; enforce a stringent national carbon pricing standard (rising to $50 per tonne by 2020); contribute Canada's fair share of global climate financing; improve energy efficiency for Canadian homes, with $600 million annually to offset the costs of retrofitting and construction; create a network of protected areas covering 17% of Canada's land and freshwater and 10% of its oceans; strengthen environmental protection laws and make advances toward sustainable fisheries, and invest $50 million annually for a stronger environmental data and science system at Statistics Canada.

Read the full Alternative Federal Budget 2018 in English or in French.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **climate change policies**, **coal phase-out**, **Green Infrastructure**, **Just Transition**, **Retraining** | **Leave a reply**

Canada announces a new Task Force on Just Transition for Coal-Power Workers

Posted on **February 21, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On February 16th, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced amendments to existing regulations to phase out traditional coal-fired electricity by 2030, along with new greenhouse gas regulations for natural-gas-fired electricity. The proposed regulations are open to comment until April 18, 2018.The government's Technical Backgrounder is here.

In fulfilment of a promise made to Canadian unions at the COP meetings in Bonn in December 2017, the Minister also announced the creation of a Task Force on the Just Transition for Canadian Coal-Power Workers and Communities. A detailed statement of the Terms of Reference calls for the Task Force to engage with specified stakeholder groups and provide policy options and recommendations by the end of 2018. The Minister will appoint 9 members and 2 chairs –

with the strongest representation from labour unions, including a representative from the from the Canadian Labour Congress; from a provincial Federation of Labour in an affected province; from a union responsible for coal extraction; from a union in coal power generating facilities; and from a union in the skilled trades related to coal power. The rest of the Task Force will include a workforce development expert, a sustainable development expert; a past executive from a major Canadian electricity company or utility; and a municipal representative, identified in collaboration with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Reaction is generally supportive, as exemplified by the Climate Action Network, or the Pembina Institute. Members have not yet been named, although the expertise of the Coal Transition Coalition, chaired by the Alberta Federation of Labour, would appear to be essential. Their report, *Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta's Coal Workers,* was submitted to the Alberta Advisory Panel on Coal Communities in 2017, and recommended establishing an independent Alberta Economic Adjustment Agency to manage Just Transition.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta Coal Phase-out**, **coal phase-out**, **coal-fired electricity**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

National Energy Board is a casualty of Canada's new legislation for environmental assessment

Posted on **February 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On February 8, following 14 months of consultation and review, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change introduced the mammoth *Bill C-69 An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts* . The government press release from Environment and Climate Change Canada highlights these talking points about the proposed legislation- It will: Restore public trust through increased public participation; Included transparent, science-based decisions; Achieve more comprehensive impact assessments by expanding the types of impacts studied to include health, social and economic impacts, as well as impacts on Indigenous Peoples, over the long-term. Also, it promises "One project, one review" – through a new Impact Assessment Agency, (replacing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency) which will be the lead agency, working with a new Canadian Energy Regulator (replacing the National Energy Board), as well as the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and Offshore Boards. Further, it will make decisions timely; Revise the project list; Protect water, fish and navigation ; and Increase funding. The detailed government explanation of the changes is here ; other summaries appeared in the *National Observer in "* McKenna unveils massive plan to overhaul Harper environmental regime" ; "Ottawa to scrap National Energy Board, overhaul environmental assessment process for major projects" in CBC News; and in the reaction by The Council of Canadians, which expresses reservations about the protection of navigable waters, and these "Quick Observations":

"1- the current industry-friendly Calgary-based National Energy Board would be replaced by a proposed Calgary-based (and likely industry-friendly) Canadian Energy Regulator
2- it includes the 'one project, one review' principle as demanded by industry
3- assessments of major projects must be completed within two years, a 'predictable timeline' also demanded by industry
4- the bill notes the 'traditional knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada' but does not include the words 'free, prior and informed consent', a key principle of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
5- McKenna said that no current projects (including the Kinder Morgan pipeline which crosses more than 1,300 water courses) would be sent back to 'the starting line'
6- the government is seeking to implement the law by mid-2019."

An overview of other reaction appears in "New Federal Environmental Assessment Law Earns Praise from Climate Hawks, Cautious Acceptance from Fossils" from the *Energy Mix*. Reaction from West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL) is here ; and from Environmental Defence here . The Canadian Environmental Law Association sees some forward progress but warns that "the Impact Assessment Act is marred by a number of serious flaws that must be fixed in the coming months." Reaction from the Pembina Institute says "Today's legislation improves the federal assessment process by centralizing authority for impact assessment under a single agency; providing a broader set of criteria for assessing projects including impacts to social and health outcomes; and removing the limitations on public participation that were put in place in 2012…. Building on today's legislation, we would like to see progress towards the establishment of an independent Canadian Energy Information Agency to ensure that project reviews include Paris Agreement-compliant supply and demand scenarios for coal, oil and gas."

Companion legislation, also the product of the lengthy Environmental Regulation Review, was introduced on February 6, Bill C-68 An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence (Press release is here ; there is also a Backgrounder comparing the old and new legislation). Most importantly, Bill C-68 restores a stronger protection of fish and fish habitat – the HADD provision – to the definition used before the 2012 amendments by the Harper government. (HADD = the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat). Reaction is generally very favourable: The David Suzuki Foundation says : "The most important changes we were looking for are part of these amendments" and West Coast Environmental Law says that the proposed legislation "meets the mark". Reaction is also favourable from the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax . And from the Alberta Environmental Law Centre, some background in "Back to what we once HADD: Fisheries Act Amendments are Introduced" .

And finally, where does the new environmental assessment process leave Canada's Indigenous people? The new legislation includes the creation of an Indigenous Advisory Committee and requires that an expert on Indigenous rights be included on the board of the new Canadian Energy Regulator body, according to a CBC report, "Indigenous rights question remains in Ottawa's planned environmental assessment overhaul" . Minister McKenna is also quoted as saying the government will "try really hard" to conform to the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – a statement that is not satisfactory to some Indigenous leaders. See "Indigenous consultation and environmental assessments" (Feb. 7) in *Policy Options* for a discussion of the issue of "free, prior and informed consent". On February 7, Private member's *Bill C-262, an Act to Harmonize Canada's Laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* passed 2nd reading in the House of Commons.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Canadian Energy Regulator**, **Canadian Environmental Assessment Act**, **Environmental Assessment**, **Environmental law**, **Environmental regulation**, **First Nations**, **Fisheries Industry**, **Impact Assessment Agency**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **National Energy Board** | **Leave a reply**

Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline ignites a trade war between Alberta and British Columbia

Posted on **February 7, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Pipeline politics have ignited a trade war between the governments of Alberta and British Columbia – both led by NDP Premiers – with the Prime Minister clearly siding with Alberta and the construction of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, as recently as February 1 . The latest episode in the longstanding interprovincial feud was triggered on January 30, when the B.C. government announced the formation of an independent scientific advisory panel to determine whether diluted bitumen can be effectively cleaned up after being spilled in water, and "Until that committee reports, the government will impose a regulation prohibiting any expansion, either by pipeline or rail, of heavy oil sands crude." Details are in "B.C. announces oil transportation restrictions that could affect Kinder Morgan" in the *National Observer* (Jan. 30); "B.C.'s Action on Bitumen Spills 'Finds Kinder Morgan's Achilles' Heel' (Feb. 5).

Alberta's reaction was strong. First, in what Toronto's *Globe and Mail* described as a "spat" on February 1: "Alberta suspends electricity talks with B.C. over pipeline fight". In a few days, *The Energy Mix* wrote " Sour Grapes: Alberta to stop importing B.C. wine over Kinder Morgan feud" (Feb. 6) and "Alberta Declares Boycott of B.C. Wine in Escalating Kinder Morgan Dispute" (Feb. 7) . CBC News reports reveal the escalating emotions: "The Alberta vs. B.C. pipeline fight. Now it's war." (Feb. 3) and "Weaponizing wine: Notley's engineering a federal crisis in her battle with B.C." and "Oil, water and wine: "Escalating Alberta-B.C. feud threatens future of Trans Mountain pipeline" (Feb. 7); DeSmog Canada wrote "This might get Nasty: Why the Kinder Morgan standoff between Alberta and B.C. is a Zero-Sum Game" (Feb. 2). On February 9, Alberta's Premier announced "a task force of prominent Canadians to respond to B.C.'s unconstitutional attack on the Trans Mountain Pipeline and the jobs that go with it". The Market Access Task Force is loaded with government representatives and oil industry executives.

If you only have time to read one article about this dispute, read the analysis of Alberta's Parkland Institute, in Let's share actual facts about the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The three claims being made by the Alberta government are: 1. the pipeline would generate $18.5 billion for "roads, schools, and hospitals"; 2. it would create 15,000 jobs during construction, and 3. it would create 37,000 jobs per year. With deep expertise in the oil and gas industry, Parkland explains how these numbers were derived and why they are mostly outdated and selective.

Protests against Kinder Morgan will continue in B.C., with the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation calling for a mass demonstration on Burnaby Mountain in March. – see the CBC summary here.

Stepping back, see Andrea Harden-Donahue's January 24 blog for the Council of Canadians, "#StopKM: State of Resistance" , which details past resistance and demonstrations against KM, and states that "the Pull Together campaign recently reached the fundraising target of $625,000 towards Indigenous legal challenges." For a view of the legal issues and lawsuits (including First Nations') in this longstanding fight, see a West Coast Environmental Law blog published on January 17, before this war erupted: "Whose (pipe)line is it anyway? Adventures in jurisdictional wonderland ".

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **First Nations**, **Oil pipelines**, **Trade Policy**, **Trans Mountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

UPDATED: How universities can confront climate change: new Canadian guide, and a new North American network

Posted on **February 6, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Confronting Climate Change on Campus is a newly-released guide by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT/ACPPU), in response to growing awareness and concern amongst the professors and researchers who are members. It presents a three-step plan of practical action to be followed by academic staff associations and researchers across Canada: To reduce the carbon footprint of campuses by improving building energy conservation and promoting low-carbon transportation; to expand course offerings dedicated to climate change, and to encourage climate change research through grants and awards; and to advocate for the creation of association or institutional environment committees, or work with established committees, such as collective bargaining or workplace joint health and safety committees, to push climate change concerns. The French version of the guide is here .

The University Climate Change Coalition, to be known also as UC3, was launched on February 6 at the 2018 Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit in Arizona. The new, North American-wide network pledges to leverage their research and to accelerate local and regional climate action. To begin, in 2018 each UC3 institution will organize a climate change forum tailored to local and regional objectives, to bring together community and business leaders, elected officials and advocates. The 13 participating research institutions include University of British Columbia and University of Toronto, whose press release about UC3 also provides an update on U of T sustainability policies and initiatives. The remaining UC3 institutions are: Arizona State University, California Institute of Technology, Tecnológico de Monterrey, La Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ohio State University, State University of New York, University of California, University of Colorado, University of Maryland, University of New Mexico, and University of Washington.

The growing awareness and concern amongst Canadian academics can be partly credited to the research efforts of the Sustainability and Education Policy Network (SEPN) at the University of Saskatchewan, which CAUT has highlighted, most recently in "The Politics of Climate Change" in the *CAUT Bulletin* (June 2017). The article summarizes results of a survey of Canadian colleges and universities by researchers at SEPN, and calls for exactly the kinds of actions addressed in the new CAUT guide. The scholarly article on which the *CAUT Bulletin* article is based,"Climate Change and the Canadian Higher Education System: An Institutional Policy Analysis" , appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* in June 2017. The key findings are: "less than half (44 per cent) have climate change-specific policies in place; those policies focus most often upon the built-campus environment with "underdeveloped secondary responses" to research, curriculum, community outreach and governance policies; and the "overwhelming" response of modifying infrastructure and curbing energy consumption and pollution, while important, risks masking deeper social and cultural dynamics which require addressing." A 2-page summary is here ; an infographic is here.

Other relevant SEPN publications include "The State of Fossil Fuel Divestment in Canadian Post-secondary Institutions" (2016) ; "50 Shades of Green: An Examination of Sustainability Policy on Canadian Campuses" (2015) , and the related Research Brief *Greenwashing in Education: How Neoliberalism and Policy Mobility May Undermine Environmental Sustainability* (2014), and "Greening the Ivory Tower: A Review of Educational Research on Sustainability in Post-secondary Education" , which appeared in the journal *Sustainability* in 2013.

And elsewhere in the world: According to *The Guardian*, on February 5, the University of Edinburgh , which divested from coal and tar sands investments in 2015, announced that it will sell its final £6.3m of fossil fuel holdings. Edinburgh has a £1bn endowment fund, (exceeded in the U.K. only by Cambridge and Oxford). Signalling the change to a more climate-friendly investment strategy, Edinburgh has invested £150m in low carbon technology, climate-related research, and businesses that directly benefit the environment.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change in education**, **colleges and universities**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **greenwashing**, **guides and handbooks**, **professors**, **Universities** | **Leave a reply**

UNISON launches a campaign for pension fund divestment with a Guide for Local Unions

Posted on **February 6, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On January 10, 2018, the U.K. union UNISON launched a campaign to encourage members of local government pension schemes to push for changes in the investment of their funds – specifically, to "explore alternative investment opportunities, allowing schemes to sell their shares and bonds in fossil fuels and to go carbon-free." A key tool in this campaign: *Local Government Pension Funds – Divest From Carbon Campaign: A UNISON Guide*, which states: "Across the UK there are nearly 50 divestment campaigns targeting local government pension funds ….. In September this year, it was revealed that a total of £16 billion is invested in the fossil fuel industry by Local Government Pension funds." The new Guide explains how the U.K. pension system works for local government employees, and provides case studies of existing divestment campaigns. In addition, it provides "Campaign Resources", including a model campaign letter, a glossary of pension and investment terms, and it reproduces the Pensions and Climate Motion passed at the 2017 UNISON Delegates conference. The Guide was written by UNISON, in collaboration with ShareAction – a registered U.K. charity that promotes responsible investment practices by pension providers and fund managers.

Information about the divestment campaign, as well as information about the National Auditor's Report re the U.K. Green Investment Bank, is included in the January-February issue of the newsletter of the Greener Jobs Alliance , a U.K. partnership of "trade unions, student organisations, campaigning groups and a policy think tank." The Greener Jobs Alliance is part of the Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Group, which is organizing an event on March 10 in London: Jobs & Climate: Planning for a Future that Doesn't Cost the Earth.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Divestment**, **Divestment - Case studies**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **labour union policies**, **Municipal Government**, **Pension Fund management**, **UNISON**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Updated: Autonomous vehicles in Canada, job displacement, and bargaining at UPS

Posted on **February 5, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Autonomous Vehicles and the Future of Work in Canada is a report released on January 11 by the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) and funded by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program. It provides an overview of the technology and benefits of autonomous vehicles, including "smart cities". Most of the report is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the impact of AV's to Canada's labour market, forecasting a demand of approximately 34,700 jobs in the industry by 2021, and considering the issues of job displacement and occupational skill requirements. The ICTC forecasts that the integration of AV technology will be slowed down in the trucking industry by a shortage of drivers (estimated by the Canadian Truckers Alliance as 34,000 by 2024), giving the industry a buffer of time to plan training and retraining strategies. The report considers non-driving occupations (including mechanics, dispatchers, auto assembly workers, insurance underwriters, heavy equipment operators) in a "deeper dive" about education, wages, and demand. The most in-demand occupations, with the highest wages, are forecast to be in Information Technology: software and computer engineers, database analysts, computer programmers, etc. . The report concludes with five recommendations centered around the need for more research and greater integration between policymakers, industry and academic experts, so that Canada can catch up with the autonomous vehicle "powerhouse" countries: U.S., Germany, and Japan.

The Canadian Senate Standing Committee on Transportation and Communication released its report on autonomous vehicles in January 2018, after hearing from over 78 witnesses from across Canada and the United States between March and October 2017 (The testimony is compiled here). The Submission by Teamsters Canada (Oct. 2017) focused mostly on the safety concerns of driverless vehicles, but raised the issue of displaced workers and their pension and benefits, stating that "Teamsters Canada believes the study of automated and connected vehicles is not just a technical study, it must examine the social and workplace consequences of technology adoption." A fuller view of the concerns of Teamsters (and B.C. Taxi drivers) appears in an article in *The Tyee*, "Job Losses from Automated Vehicles Worry Truckers" (Feb. 2).

The issue of autonomous vehicles is being tested in the negotiations underway between UPS and the Teamsters in the U.S. An article from the *Wall Street Journal* is reposted at the Teamsters' website: "Teamsters tell UPS no Drones or Driverless Trucks". The Teamsters Union has been closely monitoring all aspects of the technology and appeared at a House of Representatives

Committee hearing on autonomous vehicles, according to a Teamsters press release from June 2017.

Within Canada, Ontario strives to be the leader in autonomous vehicle development, and employs almost 10,000 workers in the industry as of November, 2017, when the Premier announced the launch of an Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network at Stratford, Ontario. Part of the $80 million investment over 5 years will be spent on a Talent Development Program, to support internships and fellowships for students and recent graduates with Ontario companies advancing C/AV technologies. Full details are at The AVIN Hub .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **autonomous vehicles**, **driverless vehicles**, **Electric Vehicles**, **smart cities**, **Teamsters Canada**, **Transportation**, **Trucking Industry** | **Leave a reply**

Clean Tech investment in Canada held back by a "fossil fuel comfort zone" and lack of financial disclosure

Posted on **February 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

"Canadian cleantech startups get ready for a breakout year" appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on January 3, 2018 citing a 2017 report by Cleantech Group, which ranked Canada "fourth in the world as a clean-technology innovator – and tops among Group of Twenty countries – up from seventh place in 2014." Then on January 24, the San Francisco-based company Cleantech Group released its ninth annual Global Cleantech 100 list for 2018 ; the List includes 13 Canadian companies, and the full Report is here (free; registration required).   Sure enough, Canada has improved its showing. And on January 18, the Government of Canada announced that the federal government will invest $700 million over the next five years through the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) " to grow Canada's clean technology industry, protect the environment and create jobs ", as part of its larger Investment and Skills funding. The same press release also announced the launch of the Clean Growth Hub, the government's "focal point for clean technology", which will focus on supporting companies and projects that produce clean technology, as well as coordinate existing programs and track results.

Yet in reaction to the government's announcement, the president of Analytica Advisors, which publishes an annual review of Canadian clean tech, had this to say in the National Post : "A $700-million investment to help clean technology firms expand and develop new products won't turn Canada's clean-tech industry into the "trillion dollar opportunity" the government keeps touting until we get out of our fossil-fuel comfort zone". She also co-authored an OpEd in the *Globe and Mail*, "Canada's financial sector is missing in action on climate change" (Jan. 23)   where she berates the Canadian financial community for sitting on the sidelines amidst international initiatives for more climate-risk disclosure so that those risks can be priced into investment decisions. For an update on the Canadian scene regarding this issue, see "Modernizing financial regulation to address climate-related risks" by Keith Stewart, in *Policy Options* (Feb. 2).

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Clean Tech**, **Clean Technology**, **Financial Risk**, **Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure** | **Leave a reply**

Circular economy contributes to clean growth – but what are the implications for jobs?

Posted on **February 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Getting to a Circular Economy: A primer for Canadian policymakers was released by Smart Prosperity (formerly Sustainable Prosperity) on January 24, the first in a planned series of policy briefs and blogs on the topic. This introductory Primer starts from the widely-held premise that current global production and consumption models are unsustainable, and states that "Canadian discussion on the circular economy has been overshadowed by the national emphasis on climate change and clean growth. In fact, the two approaches have significant goals in common: a focus on a low-carbon economy and on economic growth, innovation and new technologies."

The Primer uses a broad definition developed by Canada's Circular Economy Lab (CEL): circular economy is "an approach to maximize value and eliminate waste by improving (and in some cases transforming) how goods and services are designed, manufactured and used. It touches on everything from material to business strategy to the configuration of regulatory frameworks, incentives and markets." The Policy Brief provides a catalogue and description of the major circular economy policies and initiatives from around the world, especially Europe; from Canada, these include the National Zero Waste Council, the Circular Economy Lab , L'Institut d'environnement, du développement durable et de l'économie circulaire (EDDEC) in Quebec, and BioFuelNet , through which Warren Mabee of the ACW conducts research on advanced biofuels. The Brief concludes by proposing "Top 6 Tools for Accelerating the Circular Economy in Canada" , including extended producer responsibility programs and policies; green procurement; and public investments in circular economy related research, development, innovation and pilots." The Brief identifies one of the research gaps as the need to understand the social and employment impacts of the circular economy, and how to manage them.

In related news, on January 22 at the World Economic Forum meetings in Davos, the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE) was launched , with an agreement between the United Nations Environment Program and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the prominent U.K. charity whose mission is to accelerate the shift to a circular economy. To kick off the project, eleven global corporations pledged that all their packaging will be reused, recycled or composted by the year 2025.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Circular Economy**, **packaging industry**, **Recycling**, **Zero Waste** | **Leave a reply**

Trump's solar tariffs may impact solar jobs worldwide

Posted on **February 4, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Donald Trump's decision to impose tariffs on solar panels and washing machines on January 23 was roundly criticized on many grounds – most frequently, the impact on jobs in the solar industry, as stated in the *New York Times* Editorial on January 23 ,"Mr. Trump's Tariffs will not bring back manufacturing jobs". The *Times* supported their opinion with several articles, including "Trump's

Solar Tariffs are clouding the industry's future" (Jan. 23) , which states: "Far more workers are employed in areas that underpin the use of solar technology, such as making steel racks that angle the panels toward the sun. And the bulk of workers in the solar industry install and maintain the projects, a process that is labor-intensive and hard to automate." The Solar Energy Industries Association in the U.S. response is here, and their Fact Sheet (Feb. 2) explains the terms and impact of the decision. The Solar Foundation released its 8th annual Jobs Census on February 7, revealing the first-ever year of decline in the number of jobs, but still a census of over 250,000 workers. For a thorough overview, see the Fact Checker article by the *Washington Post*, "Trump says solar tariff will create 'a lot of jobs.' But it could wipe out many more" (Jan. 29).

Three Canadian solar companies immediately filed a suit against the tariffs in the U.S. Court of International Trade, arguing that they violate NAFTA. The EU, China, South Korea, and Taiwan have also filed complaints at the World Trade Organization. For a deeper look at the possible implications for other countries, including Canada, consider the complexity of global trade: From an excellent overview in *The Energy Mix*: "Trump Solar Tariff may be opening salvo in trade war": "Although China appeared to be Trump's intended target, the tariff on solar cells and panels will mostly hit workers in other countries. Thanks to dispersed supply chains—and partly in response to previous U.S. tariffs—solar photovoltaic manufacturing is a global industry. Malaysia, South Korea, and Vietnam all hold a larger share of the U.S. market than China does directly. And all are entitled to seek remedies under various trade agreements." *The Energy Mix* item refers to "*U.S. tariffs aimed at China and South Korea hit targets worldwide*" in the *New York Times* (Jan. 23), which adds: "Suniva, one of the American solar companies that had sought the tariffs, filed for bankruptcy protection last year, citing the effects of Chinese imports. But the majority owner of Suniva is itself Chinese, and the company's American bankruptcy trustee supported the trade litigation over the objections of the Chinese owners." From Reuters, "Why the US decision on solar panels could hit Europe and Asia hard" states that Goldman Sachs estimated that the tariffs implied "a 3-7 percent cost increase for utility-scale and residential solar costs, respectively …. Two key exclusions with respect to technology and certain countries (Canada/Singapore, among others) were included as part of the (initial) recommendation." Canadian Solar , founded in Canada but a multinational traded on NASDAQ, is one the world's biggest panel manufacturers.

For an overview of the current state of the U.S. renewable energy markets and labour force, including solar, see *In Demand: Clean Energy, Sustainability and the new American Workforce* (Jan. 2018) , co-authored by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and Meister Consultants Group. Highlights: there are 4 million clean energy jobs in the U.S., with wind and solar energy jobs outnumbering coal and gas jobs in 30 states. Quoting the IRENA *Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review for 2017* , the *In Demand* report states that: "The solar industry grew 24.5 percent to employ 260,000 workers, adding jobs at nearly 17 times the rate of the overall economy in 2016." The coal industry employs 160,000 workers in the U.S. *In Demand* compiles statistics from the U.S. Department of Energy, International Energy Agency, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and many others, about current and projected clean energy markets and employment in the U.S.: renewable energy, energy efficiency, alternative vehicles, and energy storage and advanced grid sectors.

Posted in **Government Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Clean energy industry**, **Donald Trump**, **Solar energy industry**, **Trade Policy**, **United States** | **Leave a reply**

LEED Green buildings deliver energy savings, reduced emissions, and health benefits – including reduced absenteeism

Posted on **February 1, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

A new study which examined how LEED-certified green buildings had performed over a 16 year period reported that the green buildings delivered $7.5B in energy savings, $1.4B of benefits in reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and a further $4.4B in public health benefits. Those health benefits included an estimate of 21,000 lost days of work avoided in the U.S. alone; other health benefits derive from avoiding an estimated 172–405 premature deaths, 171 hospital admissions, 11,000 asthma exacerbations, 54,000 respiratory symptoms, and 16,000 lost days of school in the U.S. The results are summarized in "Harvard study: Green buildings deliver nearly $6bn in health and climate benefits" ; the full study appears as "Energy savings, emission reductions, and health co-benefits of the green building movement" in the *Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology online* (Jan. 30) (restricted access). The study was commissioned by the engineering company United Technologies Corporation and conducted by researchers at Harvard's Healthy Buildings program at the T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Buildings studied were located in the U.S., China, India, Brazil , Germany and Turkey.

— Willingdon Office building, Burnaby B.C. – photo from the website of Lighthouse Sustainable Building Centre

Although Canada was not included in the study, on January 22, the Canada Green Building Council announced that Canada ranked second amongst countries outside the U.S. for its LEED-certified buildings, with a current total of 2,970 projects totaling more than 40.77 million gross square meters of space. The 2017 annual Top 10 Countries and Regions for LEED list is compiled by the U.S. Green Building Council to recognize LEED markets outside the U.S., which remains the largest market at 30,669 projects with 385.65 million gross square meters of space. China is the largest market outside the U.S., followed by Canada, followed by India, Brazil, and Germany. In February 2018, certification and professional credentialing services for LEED and other energy-efficiency programs in Canada will change, with the launch of a joint venture between the Canada Green Building Council and for-profit Green Building Certification Inc. Canada (GBCI). The relationship of the two bodies is outlined in their press release .

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **absenteeism**, **Canada Green Building Council**, **green buildings**, **indoor air quality**, **LEED** | **Leave a reply**

Oil sands companies called on to "keep it in the ground" – but Suncor opens new mine near Fort McMurray, deploys driverless trucks

Posted on **January 31, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The majority of Alberta oil sands production is owned by the five companies: Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL), Suncor Energy, Cenovus Energy, Imperial Oil, and Husky Energy. *What the Paris Agreement Means for Alberta's Oil Sands Majors*, released on January 31 by the Parkland Institute, evaluates what the 2°C warming limit in the Paris Agreement means for those "Big Five" – by assessing their emissions-reduction disclosures and targets, climate change-related policies, and actions, in light of their "carbon liabilities." The carbon liabilities are calculated using three levels for the Social Cost of Carbon, ranging from $50, $100, and $200 per tonne. Even under the most conservative scenario, the carbon liabilities of each corporation are more than their total value, and the combined carbon liabilities of the Big Five ($320 billion) are higher than Alberta's GDP of $309 billion. Conclusion: "the changes required to remain within the Paris Agreement's 2°C limit signals a need for concrete, long-term "wind-down" plans to address the challenges and changes resulting from global warming, including the fact that a significant portion of known fossil fuel reserves must remain underground." *What the Paris Agreement Means for Alberta's Oil Sands Majors* was written by Ian Hussey and David Janzen, and published by the Parkland Institute as part of the SSHRC-funded Corporate Mapping Project. A *National Observer* article reviewed the report and published responses from the Big Five companies on January 31.

Rather than keeping it in the ground, Suncor Energy announced on January 29 that it is continuing to ramp up production at its Fort Hill oilsands mine, about 90 kilometres north of Fort McMurray. The next day, Suncor also announced the beginning of a 6-year phase-in of approximately 150 autonomous electric trucks at numerous locations. The company said it will "continue to work with the union on strategies to minimize workforce impacts," and that "current plans show that the earliest the company would see a decrease in heavy equipment operator positions at Base Plant operations is 2019." Reaction from the local union is here in a notice on the website of Unifor 707A; Unifor National Office response is here: "Driverless trucks aren't the solution for Suncor" . The *National Observer* published an interview with a Suncor spokesperson on January 31. According to"Suncor Energy says driverless trucks will eliminate a net 400 jobs in the oilsands" , Suncor is the first oil sands company to use driverless trucks, and "Suncor's plan to test the autonomous truck systems was initially criticized by the Unifor union local because of job losses. But Little says Suncor is working with the union to minimize job impacts by retraining workers whose jobs will disappear. The company has been preparing for the switch by hiring its truck drivers, including those at its just−opened Fort Hills mine, on a temporary basis."

The good news is that "the era of oil sands mega-projects will likely end with Suncor Energy's 190,000 barrel-per-day Fort Hills mining project, which started producing this month", according to an article by Reuters. The bad news is in the title of that article: "Why Canada is the next frontier for shale oil" (Jan. 29) . The article extols the strengths of Alberta's mining industry, and quotes a spokesman for Chevron Corporation who calls the Duvernay and Montney formations in Canada "one of the most promising shale opportunities in North America." For a quick summary, read "Montney, Duvernay Oil and Gas Fields Seize the Momentum from Athabasca Tar Sands/Oil Sands" (Jan. 31) in the *Energy Mix*.

Also, consider the work of Ryan Schultz of the Alberta Geological Survey. Most recently, he is the lead author of "Hydraulic fracturing volume is associated with induced earthquake productivity in the Duvernay play", which appeared in the journal *Science* on January 18 , and which is summarized in the Calgary Herald on January 18. It discusses the complexities of how fracking has caused earthquakes in the area.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta**, **autonomous vehicles**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Fracking**, **Oil Sands**, **Retraining**, **Social Cost of Carbon**, **Stranded Assets**, **Suncor Energy** | **Leave a reply**

Ontario's GHG emissions at lowest level since 1990 – Environmental Commissioner commends the first year of cap and trade but recommends changes for freight sector, green procurement

Posted on **January 30, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Ontario

On January 30, 2018 the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) submitted her annual Greenhouse Gas Progress Report to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario – an independent, non-partisan review of the government's progress in reducing emissions for 2016-2017. The report, *Ontario's Climate Act: From Plan to Progress* covers the period since the Climate Change Action

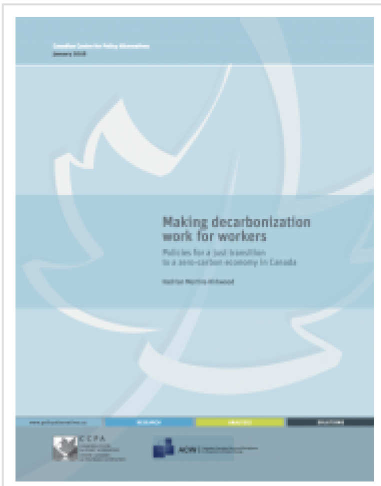
Plan was introduced in June 2016, and the cap and trade market became effective January 2017. The report provides detailed emissions statistics by sector and sub-sector, catalogues and critiques climate-related policies, and places Ontario's initiatives in a national and international context – especially the cap and trade market and its relationship with the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Top-level findings: overall, GHG emissions were at the lowest level since reporting began in 1990 and "the first year of cap and trade went remarkably well". Because Ontario's market is part of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) which includes California and Quebec, the report warns that prices make weaken because of political uncertainty in the U.S., and also calls for more "bang for the bucks" in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Account, which manages the proceeds of the carbon auctions. Chapter 4 includes an explanation and critique of Ontario's proposed carbon offsets, which are also tied to the WCI, and states that some sectors at some risk of being little more than greenwashing. The Commissioner singles out the emissions of Ontario's transportation industry and states that it will be impossible to meet Ontario's emissions reduction targets unless urgent action is taken to rein in emissions from the freight sector, with recommendations to "encourage the freight sector to avoid trucking where possible (e.g., through logistics and road pricing), improve diesel truck efficiency (e.g., through incenting the scrapping of older diesel trucks), and shift freight away from fossil fuels (e.g., providing more targeted support for zero-emission trucks)."

The report also calls for improved green procurement policies in government's own spending and a stronger climate lens for regulation, taxation and fiscal policies. The Ministry of Energy is singled out in this regard: "For example, the Ministry of Energy by itself governs 70% of Ontario's emissions, yet its 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan does little to achieve Ontario's climate targets." An 8-page summary of the report is here ; the full report, (all 284 pages) is here ; eight Technical Appendices are available from this link.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Markets**, **Carbon Offsets**, **Green procurement**, **Greenhouse gas emissions**, **Ontario**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Trucking Industry**, **Western Climate Initiative** | **Leave a reply**

Canada needs a mix of reactive and proactive Just Transition policies across the country

Posted on **January 26, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**



“*Making Decarbonization Work for Workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy*” was released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives on January 25th. In light of the federal government’s pledge to launch a Task Force on Just Transition in 2018, this report makes a unique contribution by using census data to identify the regions in each province with the greatest reliance on fossil fuel jobs. While fossil fuel dependence is overwhelmingly concentrated in Alberta, with a few “hot spots” in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the report identifies communities from other provinces where fossil fuel jobs represent a significant part of the local economy – for example, Bay Roberts, Newfoundland; Cape Breton, Nova Scotia; Saint John, New Brunswick; Sarnia, Ontario. The report also makes the useful distinction between “reactive” just transition policies, which are intended to minimize the harm to workers of decarbonization, and “pro-active” just transition policies, which are intended to maximize the benefits.   The author argues that, if the broad goal of a just transition is to ensure an equitable, productive outcome for all workers in the zero-carbon economy, a mix of reactive and proactive elements is necessary. Thus, a national just transition strategy is required for fossil fuel-dependent communities, but workers in any industry facing job loss and retraining costs will also need support from enhanced social security programs. In addition, governments must invest in workforce development programs to ensure there are enough skilled workers to fill the new jobs which will be created by the zero-carbon economy.

Making Decarbonization Work for Workers is a co-publication by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change research program . The author is CCPA researcher Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood.

Posted in **Government Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **Canada**, **fossil fuel industry**, **Green Economy**, **Just Transition**, **Retraining** | **Leave a reply**

U.K. Rolls out Green Policies, including Fighting Plastics, Phasing Out Coal, and Encouraging Divestment

Posted on **January 16, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Facing criticism for recent policy reversals which have resulted, for example, in falling investment in clean energy in the U.K. in 2016 and 2017 , the government has recently attempted a re-set with its policy document: *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment* , released on January 11. "Conservatives' 25-year green plan: main points at a glance" (Jan. 11) in *The Guardian* summarizes the initiatives, which focused on reducing use of plastics (in line with a recent EU decision), encouraging wildlife habitat, and establishment of an environmental oversight body. Specifics are promised soon; the Green Alliance provides some proposals in "Here's what Theresa May should now do to end plastic pollution" (Jan. 11). George Monbiot is one of many critics of the government policy, in his Opinion Piece.

In the lead-up to the long-term Green Future policy statement, other recent developments have included: 1. Changes to investment regulations to encourage **divestment**. "Boost for fossil fuel divestment as UK eases pension rules" appeared in *The Guardian* on December 18 , stating: "in what has been hailed as a major victory for campaigners against fossil fuels, the government is to introduce new investment regulations that will allow pension schemes to 'mirror members' ethical concerns' and 'address environmental problems.' The rules are expected to come into force next year after a consultation period and will bring into effect recommendations made in 2014 and earlier this year by the Law Commission. "

2. **Coal Phase-out:** Also, on January 4, the British government responded to a consultation report by announcing CO_2 limits to coal-fired power generation. By imposing emissions limits, the government seeks to phase out coal-fired power by 2025, but still to allow flexibility for possible carbon capture operations, and for emergency back-up energy supply. The consultation report, *Implementing the end of unabated coal: The government's response to unabated coal closure consultation* , capped a consultation period which began in 2015. The government's policy response is summarized in the UNEP Climate Action newsletter here (Jan. 5).

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **coal-fired electricity**, **Divestment**, **Energy policy**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **Pension Fund management**, **plastic pollution**, **United Kingdom** | **1 Reply**

California's progressive policies yield better job growth and wage growth than Republican comparators

Posted on **January 15, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

UC BERKELEY LABOR CENTER

A November 2017 report from the Labor Center at University of California Berkeley examined the "California Policy Model" – defined as a collection of 51 pieces of legislation and policy implementations enacted in California between 2011 and 2016 – and found that with progressive policies such as minimum wage increases, increased access to health insurance, reduction of carbon emissions and higher taxes on the wealthy, the state showed superior economic performance in comparison to Republican-controlled states and to a simulated version of California without such policies. According to "California is Working: The Effects of California's Public Policy on Jobs and the Economy since 2011", the suite of progressive policies resulted in superior total employment growth , superior private sector employment growth, and higher wage growth for low-wage workers from 2014 to 2016. All the while, keeping the state on track to meet its 2020 GHG emissions targets. The environmental policies included in the analysis were: starting in 2006, AB 32, which committed the state to lowering its greenhouse gas emissions to

1990 levels by 2020; regulations under AB 32 in 2012 and 2013, which introduced the state cap and trade program; SB 350 in 2015 and 2016, committing the state to greater use of renewable energy and further improvements in energy efficiency ; and SB 32, which raised the emissions reduction goal to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The report warns that enforcement of labour standards and a lack of affordable housing remain as challenges facing the state, and also admits to possible weakness regarding the second of its two methods of analysis, the synthetic control statistical method.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Uncategorized**, **United States** | Tagged **California**, **climate change policies**, **Decoupling** | **Leave a reply**

Federal government releases detailed proposals for Canada's carbon pricing system, including output-based pricing for industrial emitters

Posted on **January 15, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On January 15, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Finance issued a press release announcing the full draft legislative proposals relating to the carbon pricing system. Public comment will be accepted until February 12, 2018. The full text of *Legislative and Regulatory Proposals Relating to the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act and Explanatory Notes* are in English and French versions . Comment on the legislative proposals will be accepted until April 9, 2018, with "structured engagement" and consultation with provinces and territories, Indigenous Peoples, environmental non-governmental organizations, industry, and business promised over the Winter/Spring of 2018.

Minister McKenna also released for comment the proposed regulatory framework for carbon pricing for large industrial facilities – an Output-based Pricing System (OBPS), with the aim "to minimize competitiveness risks for emissions-intensive, trade-exposed industrial facilities, while retaining the carbon price signal and incentive to reduce GHG emissions. Emission sources covered by OBPS will include fuel combustion, industrial process, flaring, and some venting and fugitive sources – but notably, "Methane venting and methane fugitive emissions from oil and gas facilities will not be subject to pricing under the OBPS." The system will include emissions of all seven of the UNFCCC-designated greenhouse gases, "to the extent practicable" – carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride and nitrogen trifluoride. Details are in *Carbon pricing: regulatory framework for the output-based pricing* *system* (French version here) , and build on the *Technical Paper : Federal Carbon Pricing Backstop* (French version here) , released in May 2017.

Leading up to the January release, the federal government had released clarification about the timing of the planned backstop carbon pricing mechanism on December 20, 2017 – it will come into effect by January 2019, bringing the carbon price to $20 per tonne in any jurisdiction that doesn't meet the federal benchmark. Full details are set out in: Supplemental Benchmark Guidance, Timelines , and the Letter to Ministers . Generally positive reaction followed, from the Pembina Institute and Clean Energy Canada.

Initial reaction/summary of the proposed legislation released on January 15: "Ottawa's new carbon pricing plan will reward clean companies" from CBC, and from the *Globe and Mail*, "Ottawa prepares to relax carbon-pricing measures to aid industry competitiveness" . More substantive comment comes from the *National Observer*, in "Trudeau government explains how it will make polluters pay" (Jan. 15). Reaction from Environmental Defence came from Keith Brooks , who calls the proposed plan "an effective and fair pan-Canadian carbon pricing system." Reaction from Clean Energy Canada is similar.

Meanwhile, in Alberta: Note also that the province of Alberta released their new Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation (CCIR) for large industrial emitters in December 2017, also based on an output-based allocation system. Carbon Competitiveness Incentive regulations replaced the current Specified Gas Emitters Regulation (SGER) on Jan 1, 2018, and will be phased in over 3 years. It's expected to cut emissions by 20 million tonnes by 2020, and 50 million tonnes by 2030. Favourable testimonials from the oil and gas, wind energy, and cement industry are quoted in the government press release on December 6.

To explain output-based carbon pricing, the Ecofiscal Commission published *Output-Based Pricing: Theory and Practice in the Canadian context* , by Dave Sawyer and Seton Stiebert of EnviroEconomics in early December. The highlights of the paper are summarized here, with a discussion of the pros and cons and challenges of implementation, with special attention to Alberta's provisions.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Canada**, **Carbon Leakage**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Climate change policy**, **Emissions Regulations**, **output-based carbon allocations**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

New Zero Emissions Standard takes effect in Quebec January 11, 2018

Posted on **January 12, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On December 27, Quebec enacted a new Zero Emissions Vehicle Standard in the form of Final Regulations to Bill 104, *An Act to increase the number of zero-emission motor vehicles in Quebec*, (which passed in October 2016). The new Standard comes into effect January 11, 2018, and is meant to increase the supply so that 10% of new-vehicle sales or rentals in the province will consist of zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) or low-emission vehicles (LEV) by 2025. Earlier in December, the government had announced a committee to monitor implementation of the regulations, with representatives from the Corporation des concessionnaires automobile du Québec (CCAQ), the provincial Department of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change (MDDELCC) and the Coalition zéro émission Québec (CZÉQ), as well as environmental group Équiterre. Équiterre's reaction to the new Standard is favourable ; the Global Automakers of Canada press release states it "needs more work", reflecting the industry opposition reported in the *Montreal Gazette* when the regulations were first unveiled in July 2017. Full details and documentation are available from the Quebec government website in English and in French .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Electric Vehicles**, **Quebec** | **Leave a reply**

New York City and State announce plans to divest pension funds; Canadian Public Pension fund holds on to coal

Posted on **January 11, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

New York City Mayor Bill diBlasio captured headlines on January 10 2018 for his announcement that New York City will divest from fossil fuels and will sue Exxon and other oil companies for the damages of Superstorm Sandy. Yet it was actually on December 19 that New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer and New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo first announced separate proposals to freeze current fossil fuel investments, divest New York's public pension funds from fossil fuels, and reinvest in renewable energy. Common Dreams summarized the announcements in " 'Undeniable Victory': Cheers Follow Proposals to Divest Massive New York Pensions From Fossil Fuels" . Reaction from 350.org (Dec. 19) emphasized the importance of five years of citizen activism , and quoted Bill McKibben, who emphasized the symbolic importance of New York's announcement: "Coming from the capital of world finance, this will resonate loud and clear all over the planet. It's a crucial sign of how fast the financial pendulum is swinging away from fossil fuels." (As further proof, in November, administrators of Norway's $1 trillion sovereign wealth fund recommended no further investment in fossil fuels and divestment from existing oil and gas shares , and in the U.K., legal changes are in the works to ease divestment for pension funds.)

At the state level, Governor Cuomo's press release states: "Governor Cuomo and Comptroller DiNapoli will work together to create an advisory committee of financial, economic, scientific, business and workforce representatives as a resource for the Common Retirement Fund to develop a de-carbonization roadmap to invest in opportunities to combat climate change and support the clean tech economy while assessing financial risks and protecting the Fund." The New York Common Fund of the state manages approximately $200 billion in retirement assets for more than one million New Yorkers and is heavily invested in fossil fuels, with nearly $1 billion invested in ExxonMobil alone.

At the city level, officials have set a goal of divesting the city's funds from fossil fuel companies within five years , according to the press release from the Office of the Comptroller, which also highlights the complex process involved. In February 2017, the Office of the Comptroller had issued a press release stating, "the Trustees of the New York City Pension Funds … will conduct the first-ever carbon footprint analysis of their portfolios and determine how to best manage their investments with an eye toward climate change. In the 21st century, companies must transition to a low-carbon economy, and a failure to adapt to the realities of global warming could present potential investment risks." The New York City pension fund includes municipal employees, teachers, firefighters and police.

Related reading re New York activism : The Divest NY website; "How New Yorkers won fossil fuel divestment" from the *Indypendent* (Jan. 12); and Noami Klein's article in *The Intercept* (Jan. 11).

Contrast the New York divestment announcements with the continued fossil fuel investment of the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), revealed in two new reports. In early December, Friends of the Earth Canada, as part of its ongoing campaign, released *Canadian Coal Investment: Powering Past the Coal Alliance*, and Urgewald, a German organization, released *Investors vs. the Paris Agreement.* The two reports "present a compelling picture of entrenched investors holding onto the old dirty economy and its growing risks at a time when politicians are committing to the phase out of coal." – specifically, the Powering Past Coal Alliance launched by Canada and Great Britain at COP23 in Bonn in 2017. The Powering Past Coal Declaration commits governments to phasing out existing traditional coal power and placing a moratorium on any new traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage, and commits all *partners to supporting clean power through their policies and investments, as well as restricting financing for traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage.* In an October 2017 press release, Friends of the Earth representatives asked, "Why is the CPPIB ignoring government policy and undermining Canada's diplomatic efforts to lead a global phase-out of coal?" . To date, there has been no public statement adjusting the Sustainable Investing position of the CPPIB to bring it in line with the Powering Past Coal Alliance Declaration.

Canadian Coal Investment: Powering Past the Coal Alliance calculates the CPPIB's total investment in coal at $12.2 billion Cdn., with $267 million of that in new coal projects . In a global ranking in *Investors vs. the Paris Agreement*, Urgewald found that Canada is the 8th largest investor in new coal development, and names several Canadian institutions in its Top 100 Investors list, including SunLife (ranked #31 with $895 million invested); Power Financial Corporation (#53 with $631 million invested); Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (#71 with $433 million invested); Royal Bank (#86 with $356 million invested); and Manulife Financial (#98 with $282 million invested).

Also of interest: “Failure to Launch” in *Corporate Knights* magazine (Jan. 15 2018), which provides a serious discussion of the problems of pension plan regulation as the answer to its tagline question: “Why are Canadian pension funds dragging their feet when it comes to climate change?”

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)**, **Coal Industry**, **Divestment**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **Municipal Government**, **New York City**, **New York State**, **Pension Fund management**, **Powering Past Coal Alliance** | **Leave a reply**

Canada’s progress on emissions reduction: New reports from OECD, UNFCCC , and policy discussion

Posted on **January 11, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

An excellent overview article about Canada’s “staggering challenge” and policy options to meet its emissions reduction targets appeared in *The Conversation* on January 11, 2018), written by Warren Mabee, Director of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy at Queen’s University and a Co-Investigator in the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) project. “How your online shopping is impeding Canada’s emissions targets” outlines the issues of clean electricity, transportation emissions (where your online shopping can make a difference), greener homes, and rethinking fossil resources, and concludes that “If we’re to succeed, Canada will need an integrated, holistic suite of policies – and we need them to be in place soon.”

Other recent publications take stock of Canada’s emissions reductions in greater detail. In its 3rd Environmental Performance Review for Canada released on December 19, the OECD warns that “Without a drastic decrease in the emissions intensity of the oilsands industry, the projected increase in oil production may seriously risk the achievement of Canada’s climate mitigation targets… …“Canada is the fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gasses in the OECD [in absolute terms], and emissions show no sign of falling yet." Canada's emissions actually did decrease since the last report was issued in 2004, but only by 1.5 per cent compared to reduction of 4.7 per cent by the OECD as a whole. In addition to the impact of oil sands production, the OECD singles out a regime of poor tax incentives: "Petrol and diesel taxes for road use are among the lowest in the OECD, fossil fuels used for electricity and heating remain untaxed or taxed at low rates in most jurisdictions, and the federal excise tax on fuel-inefficient vehicles is an ineffective incentive to purchase low-emission vehicles."

The OECD analysis finds support in a report from two researchers from the University of Toronto, in "How the oil sands make our GHG targets unachievable" in *Policy Options*. They state: "… only with a complete phase-out of oil production from the oil sands, elimination of coal for electricity generation, significant replacement of natural-gas-fuelled electricity generation with electricity from carbon-free sources, and stringent efficiency measures in all other sectors of the economy could Canada plausibly meet its 30 percent target." The authors recommend a gradual (12-to-15-year) phase-out of oil sands operations, with workers and capital redeployed to emerging sectors such as renewable energy and building retrofits, and contend that the importance of oil sands production is overstated. "…. the direct contribution of the entire oil, gas and mining sector to Alberta's 2016 GDP was 16.4 percent, of which oil sands mining and processing was likely about one-third (or 5 to 6 percent of total provincial GDP)" ….and oil sands oil production is estimated to account for only 2 percent of Canadian GDP."

Yet the federal government continues the difficult balancing act of a "have-it-all" approach – for example, in a speech by Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr in November 2017, in which he defended the approval of the Trans Mountain Pipeline with: "We need to prepare for the future, but we must deal with the present …..That means continuing to support our oil and gas resources even as we develop alternatives – including solar, wind and tidal…. new pipelines will diversify our markets, be built with improved environmental safety and create thousands of good middle-class jobs, including in Indigenous communities. They were the right decisions then and they are the right ones now. " A recent blog by Patrick DeRochie of Environmental Defence, "Trudeau Thinks We Can Expand Oil And Still Reduce Carbon. Let's Put That To A Test" , challenges this view .

On December 29, Canada issued a press release announcing that it has submitted its Seventh National Communication and Third Biennial Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change , required by the UNFCCC to document progress towards its 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 30% reduction from 2005 levels. The title of the government press release, "Canada's Climate action is Working, Report to United Nations Confirms" is justified by including estimates of the effects of policies still under development in a "with additional measures scenario". Under that scenario, the government forecasts an emissions decline across all economic sectors, equivalent to approximately a third of Canada's emissions in 2015 by 2030… "

Meanwhile, the federal government has released a number of announcements and legislative proposals in December 2017 and January 2018. Regarding the planned carbon pricing backstop under the Pan-Canadian Framework, which will come into effect by January 2019: Details are set out in: Supplemental Benchmark Guidance Timelines , and the Letter to Ministers in December, and on January 15, the proposed carbon backstop legislative framework was released as *Legislative and Regulatory Proposals Relating to the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act and Explanatory Notes* (French version here) . Also on January 15, the federal government released for comment the proposed regulatory framework for carbon pricing for large industrial facilities – an Output-based Pricing System (OBPS) described in more detail in a separate WCR post here.

On December 12, the Clean Fuel Standard Regulatory Framework was released for comment. The government has also committed to developing a national strategy for zero emission vehicles in 2018 to increase the supply of zero-emission vehicles.

Also on December 12, and capping six months of consultation under the banner Generation Energy, the Minister of Natural Resources announced the creation of a 14-member Generation Energy Council to be co-chaired by Merran Smith, Executive Director of Clean Energy Canada, and Linda Coady, Chief Sustainability Officer at Enbridge. (Bios of all members are here). The council is tasked with preparing a report to advise the government on an " energy policy that ensures meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples; aligns with Canada's Paris Agreement commitments and the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change; and complements the work being done by the provinces and territories, building on the shared priorities identified at the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Meeting at the Forum."

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **carbon backstop**, **Carbon Tax**, **Climate change policy**, **Greenhouse gas emissions**, **Oil and gas industry**, **Oil Sands**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Alberta reports progress under Climate Leadership Plan, increases carbon levy

Posted on **January 11, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

Climate Leadership Plan Progress Report 2016 – 2017 , released in December 2017, summarizes and measures the outcomes for the programs initiated under the Climate Leadership Plan . The report includes a section on Skills and Employment, providing very basic measures of "Green

Skills Demand" and "Jobs Supported". Green Skills Demand is measured as the percentage of job postings categorized as green, and the results show an increase from 2014 to 2016, though green job postings have not yet recovered to 2014 levels. The Jobs Supported section estimates include total direct, indirect and induced jobs created, calculated by Statistics Canada and using an input-output (IO) model. It concludes that, in 2016-17, $311 million was invested back into the economy in programs and policies under the Climate Leadership Plan, which supported approximately 2700 jobs.

Also, effective January 1, 2018, Alberta's carbon levy increased from $20 per ton to $30 per ton. The government press release states that 60 per cent of households are expected to receive a full or partial carbon levy rebate in 2018, ranging from approximately $300 (tax-free) for a single adult earning up to $47,500 per year to $540 for a couple with two children earning up to $95,000 per year . The Pembina Institute has produced an Infographic and FAQ's "What you need to know about Alberta's Carbon Levy" .

The government also released a new Carbon Competitiveness Incentive Regulation (CCIR) in December 2017, designed to help trade-exposed industries. From the press release on December 6: "The CCIRs are the product of extensive consultation with industry and will be phased in over three years. Companies will have further incentives to invest in innovation and technology to create jobs and reduce emissions through a $1.4-billion innovation package released earlier this week, which includes $440 million for oil sands innovation alone." Although the oil sands industry receives the lion's share of the Energy Innovation Fund, described here and here , the Fund also includes incentives for bioenergy producers, cross-sector green loan guarantees of $400 million, and funding for energy efficiency upgrades for large agricultural and manufacturing operations, institutions, commercial facilities and not-for-profit organizations. The Pembina Institute explains the new regulations in a detailed technical report, *Understanding the Pros and Cons of Alberta's new industrial carbon pricing rules* , released on December 20.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Biofuels**, **Carbon Tax**, **energy efficiency**, **Oil and gas industry**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Canada's Clean Fuel Standard Framework released

Posted on **January 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

On December 13, the Government of Canada released its Clean Fuel Standard Regulatory Framework, the latest stage in the development of regulations to complement the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, by achieving 30 megatonnes of annual reductions in GHG emissions by 2030. The standard will apply to all fuels – gasoline and diesel, but also aviation fuel, natural gas for heating, and metallurgical coal. It will also apply to the full life cycle of fuels – the first jurisdiction in the world to do so, according to the Pembina Institute . The

Clean Fuel Standard process began in November 2016, with consultations held throughout 2017, largely focused on the government's Discussion Paper (February 2017). Comments received in that consultation were compiled in a November report: Clean fuel standard: Summary of stakeholder written comments on the Discussion Paper. In response to the December Framework release, comments on the technical details will be accepted from industry, provincial governments, non-governmental organizations until January 19, 2018. Draft regulations are promised for late 2018.

The Pembina Institute reaction highlights three noteworthy aspects of the proposed Canadian Fuel Standard Framework: 1. Sustainability and indirect land-use change issues are sidelined – which is "concerning and unacceptable" ; 2. Canada's existing federal Renewable Fuels Regulations will remain in place for a short-term transition period, and the new GHG-intensity-based clean fuel standard will eventually replace them – (an approach Pembina has previously recommended in its April 2017 submission to the government); and 3. Pembina urges "the importance of timelines" – i.e. the longer it takes to implement these regulations, the more stringent they must be if Canada is to meet its emissions reduction target for 2030.

How important is the Clean Fuel Standard? It has been called the single most important policy tool to achieve Canada's emissions reductions target for 2030. And in November 2017, Clean Energy Canada published "What a Clean Fuel Standard can do for Canada" in which Navius Research used two in-house models to simulate the impact of different Clean Fuel Standard designs on Canada's economy. The report concluded, among other beneficial effects : "The policy would increase economic activity in clean fuels in Canada by up to $5.6 billion a year in 2030. It would also create up to 31,000 jobs for the skilled workers needed to build, operate and supply new clean fuel facilities." A separate Technical Report explains the modelling and provides much more detail about all projections, including employment projections.

Also of interest: From the EcoFiscal Commission, *A delicate (im)balance: policy interactions and the federal clean fuel standard* and an April 2017 Submission to the Clean Fuels Standard consultations from the Pembina Institute, Equiterre, Environmental Defence, and the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Clean Fuel Standard**, **Emissions Regulations**, **Oil and Gas Regulations** | **Leave a reply**

Increasing frequency and intensity of heat stress bring dangers to outside workers and will trigger migration

Posted on **January 9, 2018** by **elizabethperry493**

The 40-plus temperatures and melting asphalt of Australia's latest heat wave seem hard to understand for North Americans shivering under a polar vortex, but both temperature extremes relate to climate change, and both can be deadly for vulnerable groups, including outdoor workers. On December 22, a new scientific paper was published in *Environmental Research Letters* and summarized in layman's terms by *Climate News Network* as "Humidity is the real heat wave threat" (December 24).   In "Temperature and humidity based projections of a rapid rise in global heat stress exposure during the 21st century" in *Environmental Research Letters,* scientists at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory used numerous models to project frequency of high wet-bulb readings, (a scale which combines heat and humidity). The authors project that in the south-east U.S., where current wet-bulb temperatures now reach 29 or 30°C only occasionally, such highs could occur 25 to 40 days per year by the 2070's or 2080's, and wet-bulb temperatures of 35°C could occur on one or two days a year. (35°C on a wet-bulb scale is considered the limit of human survivability.)

The situation would be worse in parts of South America, China, and especially in Northeast India and coastal West Africa, where there is little cooling infrastructure, relatively low adaptive capacity, and rapidly growing populations. The authors conclude that " heat stress may prove to be one of the most widely experienced and directly dangerous aspects of climate change, posing a severe threat to human health, energy infrastructure, and outdoor activities ranging from agricultural production to military training." One might add, to any outdoor worker, including those in agriculture, construction , delivery, and emergency responders.

Similar warnings were published for farmers in Asia in "Deadly heat waves projected in the densely populated agricultural regions of South Asia" in *Science Advances* (August 2, 2017), summarized by *Inside Climate News*.   Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles concluded "The most intense hazard from extreme future heat waves is concentrated around densely populated agricultural regions of the Ganges and Indus river basins."

But a recent article from *Climate News Network* shows that we're all in this together. " Warming drives climate refugees to Europe" (Dec. 22) summarizes a study which combined EU asylum-application data with projections of future warming, and concludes that even under optimistic scenarios, asylum applications to the EU would increase by 28% by 2100 . The article concludes "Though poorer countries in hotter regions are most vulnerable to climate change, our findings highlight the extent to which countries are interlinked, and Europe will see increasing numbers of desperate people fleeing their home countries."

Posted in **Uncategorized**, **United States** | Tagged **Asia**, **climate change migration**, **Climate migrants**, **Farmers**, **Heat Stress**, **outdoor workers**, **Southeast United States** | **Leave a reply**

Work and Climate Change Report

The green transition of work and workplaces: Research and News from a Canadian viewpoint

YEARLY ARCHIVES: 2017

Clean Technology Employment in Canada – new data from two Statistics Canada releases

Posted on **December 19, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A December 15 article in *Energy Mix* reported "More Canadians working in green jobs than in oil patch"; the National Observer wrote " There are nearly 300,000 high-paying clean tech jobs in Canada". Both articles were based on data released by Statistics Canada on December 13 from its new Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account survey. Statistics Canada estimates that 274,000 jobs were attributable to environmental and clean technology activity in 2016, accounting for 1.5% of jobs in the Canadian economy. This represents a growth of 4.5% since 2007 – but at a time when employment in the economy as a whole grew 8.4%. The good news of the data shows higher than average annual labour compensation per job (including benefits) for environmental and clean technology jobs – $92,000, compared with an economy-wide average of $59,900. This is largely because of the inclusion of electricity and waste management – without those two sectors, the average compensation per job was $82,000.

Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account, 2007 to 2016 is a 3-page summary report; full, interactive data is provided in CANSIM tables , including a separate table for employment .

Smaller employment numbers are reported by the Survey of Environmental Goods and Services (SEGS), most recently published on December 12, 2017, and providing data from 2015. Amongst the findings: "Ontario ($600 million) and Quebec ($247 million) businesses exported almost $850 million worth of environmental and clean technology goods and services in 2015. This accounted for 71.7% of all Canadian exports in this sector….. In 2015, about 11,000 people held environmental and clean technology positions in Ontario, while almost 4,000 people were employed in this sector in Quebec. Waste management services provided jobs for another 15,000 people in Ontario and 7,000 people in Quebec." CANSIM Tables for the SEGS are here , including a table showing employment by region of Canada.

How to explain the differences? The Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account includes clean energy, waste management, environmental and clean technology manufacturing industries, and technical services, which gives it a broader scope than the Survey of Environmental Goods and Services (SEGS), as explained here .

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Clean Energy**, **Clean Technology**, **labour market statistics**, **Waste management** | **Leave a reply**

New Brunswick's new Climate Change Act unlikely to meet the federal carbon pricing benchmark

Posted on **December 18, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The government of New Brunswick introduced its *Climate Change Act* on December 14, 2017. According to the government press release , the province will adopt the federal government's intensity targets for the 10 large industrial emitters in the province, and will redirect existing taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel – but not heating fuel – to a new Climate Change Fund. It forecasts that in 2018, 2.33 cents per litre of existing gasoline taxes and 2.76 cents per litre of existing diesel fuel taxes will be transferred to the Climate Change Fund, amounting to about $37 million, to be invested in infrastructure adaptation and energy efficiency improvements for homes, business, industry and transportation. For details, see the government Backgrounder and see the CBC analysis "Liberals' sleight-of-hand carbon tax formally proposed in climate bill "(Dec. 14) for summary and reaction. In "Legislation misses mark on protecting families and communities from worst of climate change impacts in N.B." , the Conservation Council of New Brunswick calls the government plan "an uninspiring follow-up to last December's climate change action plan , which was a smart road map for climate action and job creation that was among the best in the country…. we have legislation that largely maintains the status quo and sets us on a race to the bottom when it comes to protecting the health and safety of New Brunswickers and taking advantage of the economic opportunities that come with ambitious climate action."

The National Observer summarizes the reaction from the federal government in "New Brunswick defends climate plan against McKenna's concerns", quoting the Minister's Facebook post which reiterated the federal position that it will impose a carbon tax on any jurisdiction which falls short of federal carbon pricing benchmarks under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. In a separate statement on December 15 , the Minister extended the deadline for provincial compliance till the end of 2018.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Tax**, **New Brunswick**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Strong new policies needed for electric vehicle adoption in Canada

Posted on **December 18, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

With a National Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy expected to be released in Canada in early 2018, two reports released in December decry Canada's slow progress to date, and make policy recommendations to speed up electric vehicle adoption. Clean Energy Canada released *Stuck in Neutral*, which states that "In 2016, just 0.6 per cent of car sales in Canada were for electric vehicles, well behind the U.S., U.K., China and other world-leading nations (Norway's market share is a whopping 28.8 per cent)." The report provides a suite of recommended policies, starting with strengthening Canada's aspiration target of 30% EV sales by 2030 to a binding, ambitious national EV adoption target, beginning in 2020. Amongst the other recommendations: "Develop an EV-charging-infrastructure plan informed by EV sales targets.• Ensure that all residents in multi-unit residential buildings (such as condos and townhouses) have opportunities to charge vehicles at home.• Ensure the National Building Code and the Canadian Electrical Code facilitate EV charging in all new buildings with parking facilities." Also, "• Help Canada's mining sector capitalize on the global demand for mining and processing metals and minerals that will be central to this shift, while requiring world-leading practices; • Encourage EV parts and vehicle manufacturing in Canada."

A second new report, from the Sustainable Transportation Research Action Team at Simon Fraser University, is *Canada's ZEV Policy Handbook* , summarized and given context by one of the authors in "How to get more electric vehicles on the road" in *The Conversation* (Dec. 12) . The report identifies three effective policy approaches for achieving long-term ZEV sales targets: one, based on Norway's model of long-term incentives, a second based on the California model of suppy-side policies, and a third option of radically more stringent regulation for vehicle emission standards and fuel standards. The researchers conclude that "Regardless of which option or combination of options policymakers choose, the main message is that Canada needs to stop nibbling around the edges."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Electric Vehicles** | **Leave a reply**

Canada, the World Bank and International Confederation of Trade Unions announce a partnership to promote Just Transition in the phase-out of coal-fired electricity

Posted on **December 13, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister is back on the international stage at the One Planet Summit in Paris, which is focusing on climate change financing – notably phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, and aid to developing countries. In a press release on December 12, Canada announced a partnership with the World Bank Group to accelerate the transition from coal-fired electricity to clean sources in developing countries, stating: "This work also includes sharing best practices on how to ensure a just transition for displaced workers and their communities to minimize hardships and help workers and communities benefit from new clean growth opportunities. The transition to a low-carbon economy should be inclusive, progressive and good for business. We will work together with the International Trade Union Confederation in this regard." The World Bank Group announcement was briefer : "Canada and the World Bank will work together to accelerate the energy transition in developing countries and, together with the International Trade Union Confederation, will provide analysis to support efforts towards a just transition away from coal." The ITUC Just Transition Centre hadn't posted any announcement as of December 13.

Other Canadian partnerships announced in a general press release: a Canada-France Climate Partnership to promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement through carbon pricing, coal phase-out, sustainable development and emission reductions in the marine and aviation sectors; Canada was selected as one of five countries for a new partnership with the Breakthrough Energy Coalition led by Bill Gates; and Canada , along with five Canadian provinces, two U.S. states, and Mexico, Costa Rica and Chile, signed on to the Declaration on Carbon Markets in the Americas, to strengthen international and regional cooperation on carbon pricing.

The World Bank, one of the organizers of the One Planet Summit, made numerous other announcements – including that it will no longer finance upstream oil and gas developments after 2019, and as of 2018, it will report greenhouse gas emissions from the investment projects it finances in key emissions-producing sectors, such as energy. Such moves may be seen as a response to the demands of the Big Shift Global campaign of Oil Change International, which released a new briefing called "*The Dirty Dozen: How Public Finance Drives the Climate Crisis through Oil, Gas, and Coal Expansion*" on the eve of the One Planet Summit. Over 200 civil society groups also issued an Open Letter calling on G20 governments and multilateral development banks to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and public finance for fossil fuels as soon as possible, and no later than 2020. Signatories include Oil Change International, Les Amis de la Terre – Friends of the Earth France, Christian Aid, Greenpeace, Reseau Action Climat – Climate Action Network France, WWF International, BankTrack, Climate Action Network International, Global Witness, 350.org, Germanwatch, Natural Resources Defense Council, CIDSE, and the Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development.

In Canada, Environmental Defence is collecting signatures in a campaign to stop fossil fuel subsidies , stating " Together, federal and provincial governments hand out $3.3 billion in subsidies every year for oil and gas exploration and development. In 2016, Export Development Canada, a crown corporation, spent an additional $12 billion in public money to finance fossil fuel projects."

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **coal-fired electricity**, **Energy policy**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **Just Transition**, **World Bank** | **Leave a reply**

Site C Hydro Dam will go ahead after historic decision by B.C.'s NDP Premier

Posted on **December 12, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Bringing an end to years of controversy, in what NDP Premier Horgan called a "very, very divisive issue", the British Columbia government announced on December 11 that it will proceed with construction of the Site C hydroelectric dam , on the grounds that it is too late to turn back. In a press release which blames “megaproject mismanagement by the previous government”, the government justifies its decision by saying that cancellation would result in “ an immediate and unavoidable $4-billion bill – with nothing in return – resulting in rate hikes or reduced funds for schools, hospitals and important infrastructure.” The press release continues with a list of sweeteners for the opponents of the project, announcing that improved project management to keep costs to $10.7 billion; new community benefits programs to keep jobs in local communities and increase the number of apprentices and First Nations workers hired; a new BC Food Security Fund to help farmers whose land will be negatively affected; and the promise of a new alternative energy strategy for B.C. .

The *National Observer* provides a brief overview of reaction in “As costs escalate, Horgan says it’s too late to stop Site C mega-project” . CBC News covers the debate and the decision in several articles, including “ John Horgan disappoints both Site C opponents and supporters in northeast B.C.” and “B.C. government to go ahead with Site C hydroelectric dam project ” which examines the huge political fallout and states that the Green Party , which holds the balance of power in B.C.’s legislature, will not force an election over the issue, despite their opposition to the decision.

Reaction on labour issues : For mainstream union reaction to the decision, see “Site C: What Happens Next?” in *The Tyee* (Dec. 11) . The complex labour politics of Site C is summarized in “ Construction Unions Pressing for Completion of Site C” , which appeared earlier in *The Tyee*, (Nov. 24) , and takes a deep dive into the ties between the NDP government and the Allied Hydro Council of BC, a bargaining agent for unions at previous large hydro projects, and an advocate of the Site C project. Following the decision, the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA) stated their “relief” for the go-ahead decision, with the reservation that “Arbitrarily setting apprentice and other workforce ratios will limit contractor flexibility and inevitably drive up costs and slow the construction schedule.” Similar sentiments appear in the press release from the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) , which represents the majority of Site C workers under the Open Shop system in place since 2015.

— Photo by Yvonne Tupper, from CBC News

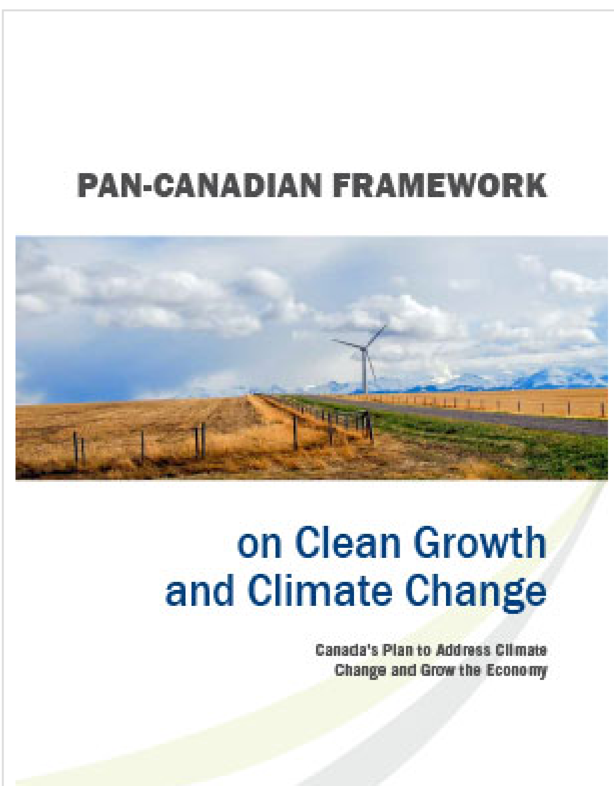
Re the First Nations opposition: "'A reconciliation fail': B.C. First Nations promise court action over NDP's approval of Site C" at CBC News (Dec. 12), quotes First Nations leaders, including the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, and the West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nations, who have already announced that they will apply for a court injunction to halt construction of the project and begin a civil action for Treaty infringement.

A sampling of reaction of environmentalists appears in "Site C a betrayal of First Nations, Ratepayers and Future Generations" (Dec. 11) and in multiple articles at DeSmog Canada https://www.desmog.ca/ . A glimpse of the environmental campaign appears at the Stop Site C website , and the Wilderness Committee, a member of that campaign, reacts here .

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Community benefits**, **First Nations**, **Green Party**, **labour union policies**, **New Democratic Party (NDP)**, **Site C Dam** | **Leave a reply**

First year progress report on the Pan-Canadian Framework lacks any mention of Just Transition

Posted on **December 12, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**



On December 9th, the Governments of Canada and British Columbia jointly announced the first annual progress report on the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change – officially titled, the *First Annual Synthesis Report on the Status of Implementation – December 2017* (English version) and *Premier rapport annuel du cadre pancanadien sur la croissance propre et les changements climatiques* (French version). The report summarizes the year's policy developments at the federal and provincial/territorial level – under the headings pricing carbon pollution ; complementary actions to reduce emissions; adaptation and climate change resilience ; clean technology, innovation and jobs; reporting and oversight; and looking ahead. It is striking that the report is up to date enough to include mention of the Saskatchewan climate change strategy, released on December 4, as well as the Powering Past Coal global alliance launched by Canada and Great Britain in November at the Bonn climate talks – yet in the section on "Looking Ahead", there is no mention of another important outcome of the Bonn talks: a Just Transition Task Force in Canada. As reported by the Canadian Labour Congress in "Unions applaud Canada's commitment to a just transition for coal workers", "Minister McKenna also announced her government's intention to work directly with the Canadian Labour Congress to launch a task force that will develop a national framework on Just Transition for workers affected by the coal phase-out. The work of this task force is slated to begin early in the new year." No mention of that, nor in fact, any use of the term "Just Transition" anywhere in the government's progress report.

"Environment Canada touts 'good progress' on climate after scathing audit" appeared in the National Oberserver (Dec. 11), summarizing some of the progress report highlights and pointing out that not everyone agrees with the government's self-assessment that "While good progress has been made to date, much work remains". Recent criticism has come from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development in her October report ; from Marc Lee at the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis in "Canada is still a rogue state on climate change" (Dec.11) ; and from the Pembina Institute in *State of the Framework: Tracking implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* . The Pembina Institute report calls on the federal government to speed up on all policy fronts, with specific recommendations including: "extend the pan-Canadian carbon price up to $130 per tonne of pollution by 2030, implement Canada-wide zero emission vehicle legislation, ban the sale of internal combustion engines, and establish long-term energy efficiency targets."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Tax**, **Clean Technology**, **Climate change policy**, **Energy policy**, **Just Transition**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Cities continue to fight climate change

Posted on **December 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The North American Climate Summit held in Chicago from December 4 to 6, 2017 brought together the mayors of 50 cities from Canada, Mexico, France, and Tanzania, to reaffirm their commitment to the Paris Agreement and greenhouse gas emissions reduction. The mayors signed the Chicago Climate Charter , which is not legally binding but commits the municipalities to at least match the emissions reductions goals of their home countries, and sets out reporting mechanisms. The Summit was also the setting for the 5th annual 2017 C40 Cities Bloomberg Philanthropies Awards, which recognized exemplary city programs from around the world (none of the winners was Canadian). The Summit was co-sponsored by the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

U.S. cities in particular are keen to demonstrate their climate change-fighting resolve – many through the "We are Still In" coalition which formed after President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and which was very active at the COP23 meetings in Bonn. Additionally, the Sierra Club has published the *Cities are Ready for 100 2017 Case Study Report* , highlighting the U.S. cities which are committing to a 100% Renewable Energy target. Disappointingly, on December 4, Bloomberg News reported that the Trump administration has terminated the Community Resilience Panel for Buildings and Infrastructure Systems, an interagency group created under President Obama to help municipalities protect their residents against extreme weather and natural disasters.

In November, the City of Vancouver updated its Renewable City Strategy, setting an interim 55% renewable energy target for 2030, which covers electricity, heating and cooling, and transport. For a discussion of Vancouver's progress, see "Can Vancouver achieve 100% renewable energy?" in *The Vancouver Sun* (Nov. 5).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Cities and Climate Change**, **Municipal Emissions**, **Municipal Government**, **Vancouver** | **Leave a reply**

Redesigning the fashion industry from linear to circular

Posted on **December 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In what is being called a revolutionary document, *A New Textile Economy: Redesigning Fashion's Future* characterizes the current system of textile and clothing production as a "wasteful, linear system" which "leads to substantial and ever-expanding pressure on resources and causes high levels of pollution. Hazardous substances affect the health of both textile workers and the wearers of clothes, and plastic microfibres are released into the environment, often ending up in the ocean." To improve the societal and environmental impacts of the industry, the report fleshes out the means to achieve four fundamental objectives: 1. Phase out substances of concern and microfibre release 2. Transform the way clothes are designed, sold, and used to break free from their increasingly disposable nature, 3. Radically improve recycling by transforming clothing design, collection, and reprocessing, and 4. Make effective use of resources and move to renewable inputs. Benefits to consumers are emphasized, and benefits to workers seem to flow from a reduced exposure to the toxic chemicals used in manufacture. There is only vague attention to "A better deal for employees. Because a circular economy is distributive by design, value would be circulated among enterprises of all sizes in the industry, rather than being extracted. This would allow all parts of the value chain to pay workers well and provide them with good working conditions." The report was released by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the Circular Fibres Initiative, with Stella McCartney adding star power.

A greater focus on the working conditions in the global clothing industry comes from The Clean Clothes Campaign . Greenpeace International has been promoting the fight against toxic chemicals in fashion for several years in their Detox My Fashion campaign.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Circular Economy**, **clothing industry**, **Recycling** | **1 Reply**

What happens to workers when wildfires and natural disasters hit?

Posted on **December 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Sadly, we are becoming used to seeing headlines about the costs of fighting climate change-related wildfires, hurricanes, and floods – most recently, the record wildfire season of 2017. These news reports usually discuss loss in terms of the value of insurance claims – for example, "Northern Alberta Wildfire Costliest Insured Natural Disaster in Canadian History – Estimate of insured losses: $3.58 billion" from the Insurance Bureau of Canada, or in terms of the budgets of emergency service agencies – for example, "Cost of fighting U.S. wildfires topped $2 billion in

2017" from Reuters (Sept. 14), or in terms of health and mental health effects – for example, "Economic analysis of health effects from forest fires" in the *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* (2006). "The Science behind B.C.'s Forest Fires" (December 5) post by West Coast Environmental Law discusses the links to climate change, and concludes that the record wildfires of 2017 foreshadow growing economic and human costs in the future.

When employment effects of disasters are reported, it is usually by statistical agencies interested in working days lost or unemployment effects, for example, "Wildfires in northern Alberta: Impact on hours worked, May and June, 2016" from Statistics Canada, or "Hurricane Katrina's effects on industry employment and wages " from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006) . While all these are important, Hurricane Katrina taught that there are also other aspects, including those of environmental and economic justice.

One recent example which illustrates recurring patterns: on December 5, the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Episcopal Health Foundation in Texas released the results of a survey about the impacts of Hurricane Harvey . While most of the survey reports on the loss of homes and cars, it also measures employment impacts: 46% of respondents reported that they or someone else in their household lost job-related income as a result of the storm – through fewer hours at work (32%), losing a job entirely (12%) or losing income from a small business or unpaid missed days (32%). And as so often is the case, income disruptions affected a greater share of Hispanic (65%) and Black (46%) residents compared to White residents (31%).

Two recent news reports highlight a more surprising story of the California wildfires: "California Is Running Out of Inmates to Fight Its Fires" in *The Atlantic* (Dec. 7 2017) and "Incarcerated women risk their lives fighting California fires. It's part of a long history of prison labor" (Oct. 22, 2017) . These articles describe the long-standing practice in California of using prison inmates as firefighters: in the current season, almost 3,000 of the 9,000 firefighters battling wildfires are inmates, who get a few dollars plus two days off their sentences for each day spent fighting wildfires.

The Fort MacMurray wildfires in northern Alberta in 2016 rank as the costliest natural disaster in Canadian history, exceeding the previous record, which was the 2013 flooding in Calgary and southern Alberta. That ranking is based on the estimate by the Insurance Bureau of Canada of $3.58 billion; the Conference Board of Canada also reported on the economic impacts (free; registration required). Statistics Canada measured work days lost and employment insurance claims through their Labour Force Survey instrument, and so were able to differentiate effects by sector, sex and age, as location, in two reports: *Wildfires in northern Alberta: Impact on hours worked, May and June, 2016* (November 2016) and "Wildfires in northern Alberta affected hours and Employment Insurance beneficiaries", a section in the Annual Review of the Labour Market, 2016 .

Another assessment of the total financial impact of the Fort McMurray wildfire estimated the financial impact of the Fort MacMurray fire was $9.9 billion, as reported by the CBC (January 2017) and the *Toronto Star* (January 17). That research, by two economists from MacEwan University in Edmonton, was commissioned by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction , but does not appear to have been published as of December 2017. Their estimates included indirect impacts such as the expense of replacing buildings and infrastructure, lost income, and lost profits and royalties in the oilsands and forestry industries. And they estimate the mental health impacts and cost of suffering of the firefighters as $3.78 million.

Excellent news reports also described the employment situation – including the government and union support for workers : " Fort MacMurray wildfires leaves livelihoods in limbo" in the *Globe and Mail* (updated March 2017); "Fort MacMurray smoke halts major oilsands project" in the *National Observer* (May 7 2016), " Fort McMurray firefighters who slew 'The Beast' now battling emotional demons" from CBC News (July 3 2016) , and "Resilient but tired: Mental effects of wildfire lingering in Fort McMurray" in *The National Observer* (Dec. 18 2017).

An Employment Fact Sheet from ProBono Law website answers FAQ's regarding workers' rights in Alberta as of May 2016 – such questions as: . "If business operations are badly affected and an employer has no work for some or all employees, does the employer have to pay them …?" (No); "An employee's home was badly affected by the fire. Are they entitled to paid or unpaid leave to sort out the personal problems caused by the fire?" (No, employees are not entitled , but some employers do offer such leaves as part of their benefit plans or will offer them if asked.) Future recourse regarding leave provisions may be available as of January 2018, when the Alberta Employment Standards Code is amended to provide new Personal and Family Responsibility Leave of up to 5 days of job protection per year for personal sickness or short-term care of an immediate family member, which includes attending to personal emergencies. And failing that, there is always the hope, as described in the *Toronto Star*, that "Workplaces are adapting to climate change by offering paid extreme weather leave" (November 14).

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Environmental Justice**, **firefighters**, **forest fires**, **Fort McMurray wildfire**, **leaves of absence**, **natural disasters** | **Leave a reply**

Saskatchewan's new Climate Strategy maintains old positions: No to carbon tax, yes to Carbon Capture and Storage

Posted on **December 6, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy was released by the government of Saskatchewan on December 4, maintaining the province's position outside the Pan-Canadian Framework agreement with this introductory statement: "A federal carbon tax is ineffective and will impair Saskatchewan's ability to respond to climate change." A summary of all the strategy commitments appears as a "Backgrounder" from this link. An Opinion column in the *Regina Leader Post* newspaper summarizes it as a "repackaging" of past policies, and "oil over the environment".

The provincial government defends their plan as "broader and bolder than a single policy such as a carbon tax and will achieve better and more meaningful outcomes over the long term" by encouraging innovation and investment – and yes, that Prairie spirit of independent resilience. The strategy includes provisions re protecting communities through physical infrastructure investment, water system management, energy efficiency for buildings and freight, and disaster management. It commits to "maintain and enhance partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities to address and adapt to a changing climate through actions that are guided by traditional ecological knowledge." In the electricity sector, which at 19% is the third largest source of emissions, it proposes to introduce regulations governing emissions from electricity generation by SaskPower and Independent Power Producers; meet a previous commitment of up to 50 per cent electricity capacity from renewables; and "determine the viability of extending carbon capture use and storage technology to remaining coal power plants while continuing to work with partners on the potential application for CCUS technology globally." The Strategy is still open to consultation on the regulatory standards and implementation details, with a goal of implementation on January 1, 2019. Consultation is likely to reflect the state of public opinion on climate change issues as revealed by the Corporate Mapping Project in *Climate Politics in the Patch: Engaging Saskatchewan's Oil-Producing Communities on Climate Change Issues*. The participants in that study "were largely dismissive over concerns about climate change, were antagonistic towards people they understood as urban environmentalists and Eastern politicians, and believed that the oil industry was already a leader in terms of adopting environmentally sound practices." The oil and gas industry is Saskatchewan's largest emitter, at 32% of emissions in 2015. For an informed reaction, see Brett Dolter's article in *Policy Options*, "How Saskatchewan's Climate Change Strategy falls short" (December 11).

On the issue of carbon capture and storage: The Climate Strategy document released on December 4 states a commitment to: "determine the viability of extending carbon capture use and storage technology to remaining coal power plants while continuing to work with partners on the potential application for CCUS technology globally." On December 1, CBC reported that Saskatchewan had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming to "share knowledge, policy and regulatory expertise in carbon dioxide capture, transportation, storage and applications such as enhanced oil recovery." By late 2017 or early 2018, SaskPower is required to make its recommendation on whether two units at the Boundary Dam will be retired, or retrofitted to capture carbon and storage (CCS) by 2020. As reported by the CBC , the research of economist Brett Dolter at the University of Regina has found that conversion to natural gas power generation would cost about 16% of the cost of continuing with CCS ($2.7 billion to replace all remaining coal-fired plants with natural gas plants, compared to $17 billion to retrofit all coal-fired plants with carbon capture and storage.) The final decision will need to consider the economic implications for approximately 1,100 Saskatchewan coal workers, and isn't expected until a replacement for Premier Brad Wall has been chosen after his retirement in late January 2018.

For more details: "Saskatchewan, 3 U.S. states sign agreement on carbon capture, storage" at CBC News (Dec. 1) ; "SaskPower's carbon capture future hangs in the balance" at CBC News (Nov 23) , and "Saskatchewan Faces Tough Decision on Costly Boundary Dam CCS Plant" in *The Energy Mix* (Nov. 28).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **attitudes to climate change**, **Boundary Dam**, **carbon capture and storage**, **Carbon Tax**, **coal-fired electricity**, **First Nations**, **Oil and gas industry**,

Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, **provincial climate change policies**, **Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

Climate change policy in B.C. must deal with controversies – Kinder Morgan, Site C, and more

Posted on **December 4, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In his November 30 article, "Where is B.C. headed on climate action?", Marc Lee of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives begins with a bit of history – November 2017 marks the 10 year anniversary of the passage of B.C.'s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act, followed by B.C.'s carbon tax, the first in North America, in 2008. His overview then discusses climate change policy since the Liberal government and its Climate Leadership Team (CLT) were replaced by the government of the New Democratic Party in Summer 2017. Specific issues raised: the new government may still be considering the development of Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) on the north coast; an inadequate annual increase to the carbon tax of just $5 per tonne per year (instead of the $10 per tonne recommended by the CLT); the need for a public inquiry into fracking (as called for by the CCPA and 16 other organizations); and the need for leadership on more stringent regulation of methane emissions. The author concludes: "The BC government's opposition to Kinder-Morgan's TransMountain pipeline expansion is laudable. But there is much left to be done on climate action in BC… We need an action plan commensurate with the urgency posed by climate change and the aspirations of leadership claimed by BC politicians."

— B.C. Premier John Horgan and Green Party leader Andrew Weaver announce their coalition in June 2017

Although Marc Lee has written about the controversial Site C Dam project previously, he doesn't include it in this overview, although it is still very much a live issue. Following the Report of the Independent Review of the B.C. Utilities Commission (BCUC) on November 1, the government indicated it would decide by December 31 whether to proceed with the project or not. On December 1, the B.C. Green Party, the government's coalition partner, sent an Open Letter to the Premier, arguing for cancellation of Site C on the grounds that it is likely to continue to exceed budget, and that alternative sources of energy are now cheaper. Questions about the job creation forecasts used to justify the original decision have also been raised – most relying on the latest analysis from the University of British Columbia Water Governance Institute. Their latest full report was released on November 23; a 2-page Briefing Note also released argues that terminating Site C and pursuing the alternative scenario put forth by BCUC would create three times as many jobs as the construction and operation of Site C by 2054, albeit with short-term job losses. The longer term scenario forecasts jobs in site remediation, energy conservation, and alternative energy projects, including in the Peace River region. Commentary on the jobs debates has appeared in "Digging for The Truth on Site C Dam Job Numbers " in *DeSmog Canada* (Nov. 16) and in " A BC without Site C best bet for taxpayers " an Opinion piece in *The Tyee* written by Jay Ritchlin of the David Suzuki Foundation, which labels the call for current construction jobs as "a red herring".

Also in *The Tyee:* " Construction Unions Pressing for Completion of Site C" (Nov. 24) , which takes a deep dive into a recent press conference of the Allied Hydro Council of BC, a bargaining agent for unions at previous large hydro projects, and an advocate of the Site C project. The detailed article, outlining ties between the Council and the NDP government, is by Sarah Cox, author of *Breaching the Peace: The Site C Dam and a Valley's Stand Against Big Hydro* (UBC Press, forthcoming Spring 2018). The Allied Hydro Council submission to the BCUC Inquiry is here .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **climate tax**, **New Democratic Party (NDP)**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Site C Dam** | **1 Reply**

Ontario announces initiative re energy efficiency in hospitals, and updates Infrastructure Plan

Posted on November 30, 2017 by elizabethperry493

A press release on November 27 from Ontario's Ministry of Health announced an investment of $64 million through a Hospital Energy Efficiency Program, which will support 180 projects at 98 hospitals across the province, providing more efficient heating, ventilation, air conditioning and lighting. The funds will be directed from the proceeds of cap and trade auctions, and are in addition to the $9 billion for new hospital projects already announced in the 2017 Budget statement, as part of Infrastructure spending.

On November 28, the government released Building Better Lives , an update for 2017 about the Ontario Long Term Infrastructure Plan which was launched in 2014, and which integrates climate change priorities in infrastructure planning for public transit, transportation, schools and hospitals. The government press release cites a study by the Centre for Spatial Economics to defend its program. *The Economic Benefits of Public Infrastructure Spending in Ontario* (March 2017) estimates that in the short-run, gross domestic product rises $0.91per dollar of spending, 4.7 jobs are generated per million dollars spent, and $0.27 of each dollar spent by government is recovered in additional Ontario and federal and government revenues.

Building Better Lives also includes a Technical Appendix with details on the asset management strategies of key ministries and agencies, as well as information about their assets. The Appendix also provides an overview of the three-year review to be undertaken to identify best practices and to transform the asset management process for government ministries. This status report and review is required under the Ontario *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015.*

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **energy efficiency**, **Hospitals**, **Infrastructure Investment**, **Ontario** | **Leave a reply**

Corporate Climate Risk Disclosure needed to protect Pensions

Posted on **November 30, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

"To protect pensions, companies should be required to come clean on climate risk" writes Keith Stewart of Greenpeace Canada in an Opinion piece in the *National Observer* on November 27. Stewart reports that Greenpeace Canada has filed a formal request under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights, for the Ontario government to review the need for mandatory disclosure of climate-related risks in corporations' financial filings. The government's response is expected by the end of 2017. This is the latest of recent and ongoing calls for increased corporate disclosure of the risks posed by climate change, to protect investors and financial stability. The issue has even made it to the conservative *Report on Business* of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* newspaper, in "Business risk from climate change now top of mind for Canada's corporate boards" (November 22) . The article warns that Canada's stock markets are particularly vulnerable to a potential "carbon bubble" in the valuations of fossil-fuel-dependent companies, given that the Toronto Stock Exchange is so heavily weighted with energy and mining companies (20 per cent for that category, as compared with only 2 per cent for clean technology and renewable-energy companies). And that's not the worst: on the TSX Venture Exchange, mining and oil and gas companies account for 68 per cent of the index. (Such a resource sector dependency was part of the reasoning given by the Norweigian Wealth Fund for its proposal to divest oil and gas investments (Nov. 16)).

Another related *Globe and Mail* article provides an excuse for the current state of climate risk disclosure in Canada in "Companies Looking to Report Environmental Data Also Navigate Inconsistent Frameworks" (Nov. 22) . The article states that "There is a dizzying number of best-practice guidelines for climate disclosures" and lists the major ones – with information drawn largely from the Carrots & Sticks database . In fact, Carrots & Sticks lists nine sustainability reporting instruments unique to Canada, in addition to widely-recognized international ones such as the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) Reporting Framework and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises . (Carrots & Sticks is an initiative begun in 2006 by KPMG International, Stichting Global Reporting Initiative, UNEP, and the Centre for Corporate Governance in Africa, with the goal of encouraging and harmonizing financial disclosure guidelines.)

Most recently, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, led by Marc Carney and Michael Bloomberg, released their landmark Final Report and Recommendations in 2016. The following Canadian pension funds have, at least on paper, supported it: Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, OPTrust, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec and the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation. The Canadian Securities Administrators launched a Climate Change Disclosure Review in March 2017 to investigate and consult re Canadian practice, which will issue a report "upon completion of its review".

And across the globe in Australia, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), the regulator of the financial industry, has also announced an industry-wide review of climate-related disclosure practices. On November 29, an Executive Board member of the APRA delivered a speech, "The weight of money: A business case for climate risk resilience" , in which he outlines the Australian perspective on climate-related financial risks, and states: "So while the debate continues about the physical risks, the transition to a low carbon economy is underway, and that means the so-called transition risks are unavoidable: changes to market sentiment, new financial or environmental regulations, or the emergence of new technologies with the potential to prompt a reassessment of the value of a large range of assets, and consequently the value of capital and investments." The speech is summarized in The Guardian.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Australia**, **Canada**, **Carbon Bubble**, **corporate disclosure**, **Financial Risk**, **Pension Fund management**, **Stranded Assets**, **Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure** | **Leave a reply**

Do electric vehicles create good green jobs? An Amnesty International report on Supply Chains says No

Posted on **November 27, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

November brought exciting news about electric vehicles: BYD, one of China's leading electric carmakers, announced that it will open an assembly plant in a yet-to-be-announced location in Ontario in 2018, (though according to the Globe and Mail article, the new plant will only create about 40 jobs to start). Also in mid-November, Tesla revealed a concept design for an electric truck in an glitzy release by Elon Musk , and the Toronto Transit Commission announced its plan to buy its first electric buses, aiming for an emissions-free fleet by 2040. Unnoticed in the enthusiasm for these announcements was a report released by Amnesty International on November 15: *Time to Recharge: Corporate action and inaction to tackle abuses in the cobalt supply chain* which concludes : " Major electronics and electric vehicle companies are still not doing enough to stop human rights abuses entering their cobalt supply chains, almost two years after an Amnesty International investigation exposed how batteries used in their products could be linked to child labour in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)." (That earlier report was *This is what we die for* released in January 2016) .

Under the heading "The Darker side of Green Technology", *Time to Recharge* states: "Renault and Daimler performed particularly badly, failing to meet even minimal international standards for disclosure and due diligence, leaving major blind spots in their supply chains. BMW did the best among the electric vehicle manufacturers surveyed." Tesla was also surveyed and ranked for its human rights and supply chain management; Tesla's policies are described in its response to Amnesty International here. And further, Tesla has come in for suggestions of anti-union attitudes in "Critics Suggest Link to Union Drive After Tesla Fires 700+ Workers" , in *The Energy Mix* (Oct. 23), and in an article in Cleantechnica , and for discriminatory policies in "The Blue-Collar Hellscape of the Startup Industry", published in *In these Times* and re-posted in *Portside*.

The Amnesty International report is a result of a survey of 29 companies, including consumer electronics giants Apple, Samsung Electronics, Dell, Lenovo, and Microsoft, as well as electric vehicle manufacturers BMW, Renault and Tesla. Questions in the survey were based on the five-step due diligence framework set out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas. Detailed responses from many of the surveyed companies are here.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **child labour**, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, **decent work**, **Democratic Republic of Congo**, **Electric Vehicles**, **electronics industry**, **Job Quality**, **mining industry**, **Tesla** | **1 Reply**

Despite another oil spill, Keystone XL pipeline is approved in Nebraska. Resistance is strong and resolute

Posted on **November 23, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On November 16, TransCanada Pipeline shut down the existing Keystone Pipeline to contain a spill in South Dakota, estimated at 210,000 gallons– the third in the area since operations began in 2010. Reports include "South Dakota Warns It Could Revoke Keystone Pipeline Permit Over Oil Spill" in *Inside Climate News* . On November 20, the Nebraska Public Service Commission granted approval to Keystone – but an approval which Anthony Swift at NRDC describes as a "pyrrhic victory" because the original proposed route through Nebraska was rejected, and the new alternative route approved – the Keystone Mainline Alternative route – must now undergo new state and federal environmental approval processes . Official intervenors may also file an appeal in the Nebraska courts within 30 days and may petition the Public Service Commission for a rehearing within ten days. Even TransCanada seems to wonder if the Keystone will ever get built – the official press release states: "As a result of today's decision, we will conduct a careful review of the Public Service Commission's ruling while assessing how the decision would impact the cost and schedule of the project. " Other reaction to the news of the approval: from *The National Observer* ; Alberta's *Calgary Herald*; Council of Canadians ; Bold Nebraska (an alliance of landowners, environmental groups and First Nations), and from *Common Dream*s, " 'This Fight Is Far From Over' Groups Declare as Nebraska Clears Path for Keystone XL Construction" – summarizing the responses of 350.org and the Sierra Club.

As for strong and resolute opposition: In May 2017, CBC reported that leaders of the Blackfoot Confederacy in Canada, the Great Sioux Nation (U.S.) and the Ponca tribe (U.S.) signed a joint declaration of opposition to Keystone XL . In a broader coalition, First Nations, along with non-native groups such as 350.org and Greenpeace USA, have now launched the Promise to Protect campaign which states: **"**We will make a series of stands along the route – nonviolent but resolute displays of our continued opposition to a project that endangers us all. Join native and non-native communities in the Promise to Protect the land, water, and climate. " In light of the resolute and deep resistance, it is important to note an article in *The Intercept* "Nebraska approves Keystone XL Pipeline as opponents face criminalization of protests" (Nov. 20), which reported: "In anticipation of the Keystone XL's construction, legislation was passed in South Dakota in March that allows the governor or a local sheriff to prohibit groups numbering more than 20 from gathering on public land or in schools, and also allows the Department of Transportation to limit access to highways by prohibiting stopping or parking in designated areas." The South Dakota Senate Bill 176 is here.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **First Nations**, **Keystone XL**, **Oil pipelines**, **Oil Spills**, **Protests & Rallies**, **TransCanada** | **Leave a reply**

A just clean energy transition for New York state – proposals include

protection of pension benefits for displaced workers

Posted on **November 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On November 13, the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts published a new study by authors Robert Pollin, Heidi Garrett-Peltier and Jeannette Wicks-Lim, all well-established experts on the job creation benefits of renewable energy. *Clean Energy Investments for New York State: An Economic Framework for Promoting Climate Stabilization and Expanding Good Job Opportunities* examines the benefits of large-scale investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency for New York State, and proposes a Just Transition policy framework to support such clean energy investments. Their analysis is based on an estimate of a 40 percent decline in production activity and employment in fossil fuel industries in New York State as of 2030. They examine the labour market and present detailed statistics about the compensation and benefits, unionization, educational qualifications, gender and race of the small percentage (0.15 percent) of the total state workforce who worked in fossil fuel dependent industries in 2014.

In Chapter 8, they propose a Just Transition program guaranteeing pensions and reemployment, as well as providing income, training and relocation support for workers. They also propose support for fossil-fuel dependent communities, primarily through channeling new clean energy investments to the affected communities. The report cites the model of the Worker and Community Transition program that operated through the U.S. Department of Energy from 1994 – 2004.

Because of the level of detail in the report, (including information about the unfunded pension liabilities of the relevant companies), the authors are able to make very specific policy recommendations and also provide cost estimates. For example, they call on the State government to mandate full funding of pensions via state law, or through coordination with the federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC), to the extent that companies could be prohibited from paying dividends or financing share buybacks, or the state (in cooperation with PBGC) could place liens on company assets when pension funds are underfunded.

The report estimates a total cost of approximately $18 million per year to fund 100 percent compensation insurance for five years, retraining for 2 years, and relocation support for workers. This is based on an average of $270,000 – $300,000 per worker per year, for the estimated 67 displaced workers likely to be eligible.

Interesting context for this report appears in an interview with Robert Pollin in the *Albany Times Union*, "N.Y. must try harder to become a clean energy beacon."

Posted in **Government Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Clean energy industry**, **fossil fuel industry**, **Just Transition**, **New York State** | **Leave a reply**

Progress at COP23 as Canada's Minister pledges to include the CLC in a new Just Transition Task Force

Posted on **November 21, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

An article in the *Energy Mix* reflects a widely-stated assessment of the recently concluded Conference of the Parties in Bonn: "COP23 Ends with solid progress on Paris Rules, Process to Push for Faster Climate Action" : "It was an incremental, largely administrative conclusion for a conference that was never expected to deliver transformative results, but was still an essential step on the road to a more decisive "moment" at next year's conference in Katowice, Poland." A concise summary of outcomes was compiled by the International Institute for Environment and Development, including a link to the main outcome document of the COP23 meetings – the Fiji Momentum for Implementation . Germany's Heinrich Böll Institute also issued a checklist and assessment titled *We will not drown, we are here to fight* . The UNFCCC provides a comprehensive list of initiatives and documents in its closing press release on November 17. And from the only Canadian press outlet which attended COP23 in person, the National Observer: "Trump didn't blow up the climate summit: what did happen in Bonn?" .

What was the union assessment of COP23? The International Trade Union Confederation expressed concern for the slow progress in Bonn, but stated: "The support for Just Transition policies is now visible and robust among all climate stakeholders: from environmental groups to businesses, from regional governments to national ones. The importance of a social pact as a driver to low-carbon economics means we can grow ambition faster, in line with what science tells us. " The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) also expressed disappointment, reiterating the demands in its October ETUC Resolution and views on COP 23 , and calling for a "Katowice plan of action for Just Transition" in advance of the COP24 meetings next year in Katowice, Poland.

The biggest winner on Just Transition was the Canadian Labour Congress, who pressed the Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change outside of formal negotiations at Bonn and received her pledge for federal support for the newly-announced Just Transition Plan for Alberta's Coal Workers – including flexibility on federal Employment Insurance benefits, and a pledge that Western Economic Diversification Canada will support coal communities. Importantly, "Minister McKenna also announced her government's intention to work directly with the Canadian Labour Congress to launch a task force that will develop a national framework on Just Transition for workers affected by the coal phase-out. The work of this task force is slated to begin early in the new year", according to the CLC press release " Unions applaud Canada's commitment to a just transition for coal workers" . The background story to this under-reported breakthrough is in the *National Observer* coverage of the Canada-UK Powering Past Coal initiative, on November 15 and November 16. Unifor's take on the Task Force is here .

This global alliance is the biggest COP23 news story for Canadians, coming near the end of meetings. Canada, along with the U.K. and the Marshall Islands, announced the "Powering Past Coal" global alliance to phase out dirty coal power plants around the world. See the government press release for Canada and the U.K. , and see the Official Declaration, which states:

- "Government partners commit to phasing out existing traditional coal power in their jurisdictions, and to a moratorium on any new traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage within their jurisdictions.
- Business and other non-government partners commit to powering their operations without coal.
- All partners commit to supporting clean power through their policies (whether public or corporate, as appropriate) and investments, and to restricting financing for traditional coal power without carbon capture and storage."

Amongst the 20-some jurisdictions already signed up to the alliance are Canada , the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, the city of Vancouver, and the states of Washington and Oregon. Noticeably absent so far are the major coal polluters – the U.S., Germany, China and India. The stated goal is to grow the alliance to 50 members jurisdictions. T*he Energy Mix* provides a summary and related interviews; Climate Action Network-Canada reacted with "Powering Past Coal Announcement Shows Rise of International Collective Action; Domestic Implementation will Bring it Home" (Nov. 16); DeSmog UK calls the alliance the "start of a journey" ; German news source DW provides an international viewpoint of the alliance, especially focused on the politically-charged debate about coal in Germany.

There were other breakthoughs at COP23, including on Gender Equality, Indigenous Rights, and Agriculture. Delegates adopted the first Gender Action Plan . As reported in "To combat climate change, increase women's participation" in *DW* (Nov. 20), for the first time, there is a plan which sets out specific activities, with a timeline for implementation, and allocation of responsibilities. National governments are responsible for reporting back on progress on these activities in 2019.

The Guardian reported "Indigenous groups win greater climate recognition at Bonn summit" (Nov. 15) citing the improved language from the 2015 Paris Agreement. " The technical document approved at COP23 states: countries "should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities." In response, the Indigenous Environmental Network states: "… while progress has been made on the UNFCCC traditional knowledge Platform for engagement of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' rights are not fully recognized in the final platform document of COP 23. The burden of implementation falls on local communities and indigenous peoples." News and reports released by It Takes Roots, the Indigenous Environmental Network COP23 delegation, are here, including their report in opposition to carbon pricing: *Carbon Pricing: A Critical Perspective for Community Resistance* , released at COP23.

Finally, regarding agriculture: As reported by the International Institute for Environment and Development "After years of fraught negotiations on this issue, the COP23 decision on agriculture requests the subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC to simultaneously address vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and approaches to tackle food security. Breaking the deadlock on issues connecting agriculture and climate change was a big win for COP23."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta Coal Phase-out**, **Canadian Labour Congress**, **Carbon Pricing**, **COP23**, **First Nations**, **Indigenous Environmental Network**, **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, **Just Transition**, **Powering Past Coal Alliance** | **1 Reply**

Alberta unveils its Just Transition plan for coal workers

Posted on **November 14, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On November 10, the government of Alberta released the Recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Coal Communities – 35 recommendations to promote a just transition from coal-mining, necessitated by the government's Climate Leadership Plan to phase-out coal-fired electricity by 2030. The Advisory Panel focuses on three areas: workers, communities and First Nations. The 18 recommendations regarding workers relate to income security and replacement, pension security, retraining and re-employment – and recommend a strong role for unions in planning and process. Some examples: … "Programs and training should be delivered, as much as possible, while workers are currently employed and should include accessible and flexible skills development models. This includes a role for employers to enable access to skills development during employment."… "Employers and unions should play roles in facilitating the training or retraining of impacted workers. This could be reflected in employer cost sharing with government and union participation in planning and delivery of assistance."… Where provisions are inadequate, facilitate the negotiation of severance provisions between employers and unions that represent workers at coal-fired facilities and associated coal mines. Similar negotiations should be facilitated for non-union employees. …Where provisions are inadequate, facilitate the negotiation of early retirement benefits between employers and unions that represent workers at coal-fired facilities and associated coal mines. Similar negotiations should be facilitated for non-union employees. …Immediately assess the direct impact of the transition on the funded status, solvency and operation of defined-benefit pension plans and take steps to ensure these plans are adequately funded. "

In a separate press release , the government announced more details about a $40-million transition fund for workers and communities. As described on the government website , benefits will include financial support for retraining (still under development), on-site employment counselling for individuals, and the provision of facilitators to assist employers, employees and unions to establish a worker adjustment committee to develop a workplace transition plan, using labour market information or commissioned regional labour market studies. In addition, Alberta is calling on the federal government to make changes to the Employment Insurance (EI) program immediately, so that the provincial income support will not reduce their EI income, and to also extend the duration of EI benefits for coal workers.

The Coal Transition Coalition project, an alliance of unions led by the Alberta Federation of Labour, had previously published its recommendations in "*Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta's Coal workers*. The AFL response to the government's announcements on November 10 calls the Transition Plan "a step in the right direction" and credits the Advisory Panel with listening to workers' input. President Gil McGowan warns, however, that "Offering bridging supports to workers on EI and extending the benefit period for workers close to retirement are important elements of the plan, but they depend on the federal government doing their part," … "Many coal-fired units in Alberta are closing due to federal government regulatory changes. They have a responsibility to these workers to help ensure a just transition."

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Alberta Federation of Labour**, **coal-fired electricity**, **Just Transition** | **2 Replies**

Exceptional growth in clean energy jobs forecast for Europe and the U.S.

Posted on **November 13, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

SolarPower Europe, together with consultants EY, published *Solar PV Jobs & Value Added in Europe* in early November, concluding that Europe is poised for a solar jobs revival after several years of policy-driven uncertainty. The report discusses the policy environment, including trade policies, makes job projections, and estimates the socio-economic impact per segment of the value chain, for roof-mounted and ground-mounted solar. The job creation forecast: the the PV sector workforce will grow from 81,000 full time jobs (FTE) in 2016 to over 174,000 FTE by 2021 (an increase of 145% in the next 5 years). As quoted in an article in *PV Magazine*, the President of the European solar industry association states that an additional 45,500 jobs could be created across Europe next year if the trade restrictions on modules and cells from Asia were to be removed. SolarPower Europe proposes an industrial competitiveness strategy for solar in Europe which aims to support 300,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2030. It has also released a Policy Declaration, *Small is Beautiful* which promotes the benefits of small scale, clean, locally owned distributed energy.

In the U.S., the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) released the *2017 Clean Energy Industry Report* on October 27, showing a 3.4% employment growth rate for clean energy between December 2015 to December 2016 (surpassing the economy as a whole). Growth is projected to double again to 7% by the end of 2017. At the end of 2016, clean energy jobs employed 146,000 New Yorkers, distributed as follows: 110,000 jobs in energy efficiency; 22,000 renewable electric power generation (12,000 of which are found in solar energy); 8,400 alternative transportation; 2,900 renewable fuels, and 1,400 in grid modernization and storage. The report also discusses a labour market imbalance where demand exceeds supply of clean energy workers, with employers reporting the most difficult positions to fill are engineers, installers or technicians, and sales representatives.

Finally from the U.S., an article by Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) economists, appeared in the October issue of *Monthly Labor Review* with a summary and analysis of the detailed data of Employment Projections for the entire U.S. economy for 2016-26, released on October 24. The article notes: "Healthcare and related occupations account for 17 of the 30 fastest growing occupations from 2016 to 2026. … "Of the 30 fastest growing occupations, 6 are involved in energy production. Employment for solar photovoltaic (PV) installers is expected to grow extremely fast (105.3 percent) as the expansion and adoption of solar panels and their installation create new jobs. However, because this is a relatively small occupation, with a 2016 employment level of 11,300, this growth will account for only about 11,900 new jobs over the next 10 years. Developments in wind energy generation have made this energy option increasingly competitive with traditional forms of power generation, such as coal and natural gas, and are expected to drive employment growth for wind turbine service technicians. Employment of these workers is projected to grow 96.1 percent. As with solar PV installers, this occupation is small, and its rapid growth will account for only about 5,500 new jobs." Surprisingly, "Faster-than-average employment growth from 2016 to 2026 is projected for a number of oil and gas occupations, including roustabouts, service unit operators, rotary drill operators, and derrick operators. The oil price assumptions in the MA model are expected to cause employment growth in the oil and gas extraction industry, at an annual growth rate of 1.7 percent over the 2016–26 decade. "

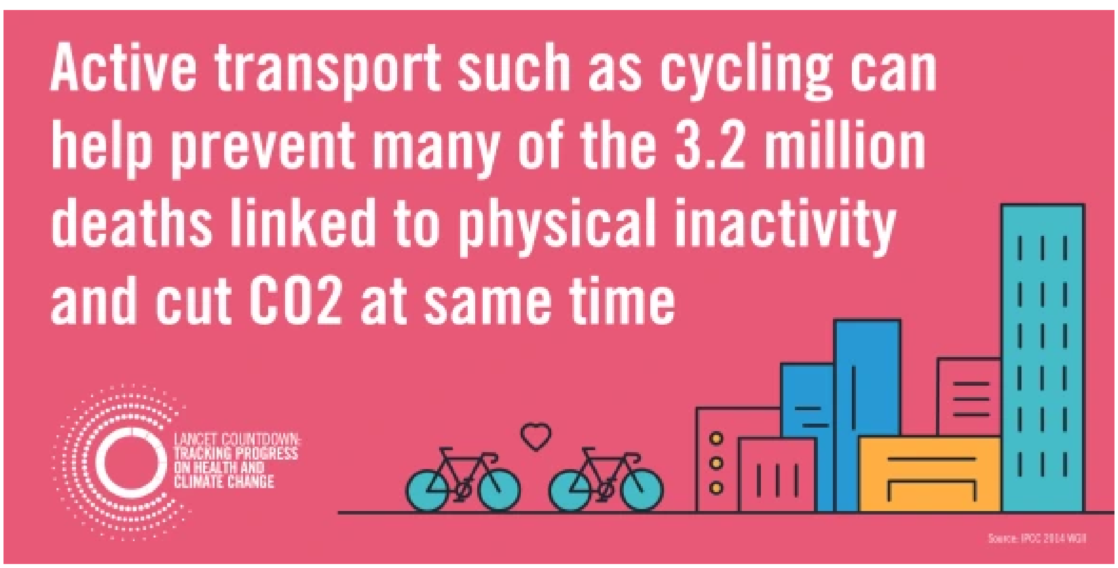
Posted in **Energy Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Clean energy industry**, **Distributed energy**, **employment forecasts**, **Europe**, **Oil and gas industry**, **renewable energy industry**, **Solar energy industry**, **United States** | **Leave a reply**

The Lancet measures the impact of climate change on public health, productivity and more

Posted on **November 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change is a global, interdisciplinary research collaboration which has published an annual review since 2016. The Lancet Countdown's 2017 Report tracks 40 indicators across five areas, and concludes that the human symptoms of climate change are unequivocal and potentially irreversible. Of particular interest, Indicator 1.3 states that "global physical labour capacity in populations exposed to temperature change has decreased by around 5.3% between 2000 and 2016." Other alarming statistics: between 2000 and 2016, the number of vulnerable people exposed to heatwave events has increased by around 125 million; without further action against climate change, over 1 billion people may be at risk of become climate change migrants by the end of the century. The full report is available here (registration required, free).

In addition to the global report, the Lancet Countdown produces country-specific reports; the Briefing for Canadian Policy-makers was written in partnership with the Canadian Public Health Association. It makes several recommendations for Canadian action, including • Phase out coal-powered electricity in Canada by 2030 or sooner, with a minimum of two thirds of the power replaced by non-emitting sources, and any gap made up by lowest-emitting natural gas technology. Track and cost the health benefits of the transition in Canada and globally; • Develop a National Active Transport Strategy for Canada to coordinate improvements to walking, cycling and transit environments. This should receive priority funding, with healthcare cost savings calculated in order to demonstrate the cost offset of the investments. • Enhance support for telecommuting and telehealth options. Within health systems, gather and analyze data on kilometers, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and costs saved by telehealth in order to help drive systems change. • Increase funding for research into the local health impacts of resource extraction, with a focus on impacts on Indigenous populations.• Integrate Health Impact Assessments as a core component of the federal Environmental Assessment process.



Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **air pollution**, **climate change and health**, **Heat Stress**, **Labour Productivity**, **telecommuting** | **Leave a reply**

Quebec launches public consultation on energy transition

Posted on **November 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 17, Transition énergétique Québec (TEQ) announced the launch of a public consultation process, to begin Nov. 6 and continue until Dec. 3, 2017, regarding the province's proposed Master Plan for Energy Transition for the next five years. In addition to compiling public input, TEQ will host thematic workshops focused on residential building, commercial and institutional building, passenger and freight transportation, industry, innovation, bioenergy and land-use planning. The Consultation website is available in French only; the TEQ English website has not yet been updated with any information about the consultation process.

Transition énergétique Québec (TEQ) is a public corporation created in April 2017 as part of Québec's 2030 Energy Policy , to support and promote energy transition and coordinate the implementation of energy policies in Quebec. The current policy document, *Energy in Quebec: A source of Growth* (2016) sets goals to enhance energy efficiency by 15%, reduce the amount of petroleum products consumed by 40% , eliminate the use of thermal coal, increase overall renewable energy output by 25%, and increase bioenergy production by 50%.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Energy policy**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Quebec**, **Quebec Energy Strategy** | **Leave a reply**

Union conference focus: fighting climate change with innovative campaigns

Posted on **November 7, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Labour and climate activists gathered to exchange experiences and plan for future action at the Second Labor Convergence on Climate event, held on September 23-24, under the banner “Building Worker Power to Confront Climate Change.” The meeting was hosted by the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS), which recently released a report on the meetings summarizing the impressive initiatives and projects, including: the Canadian Postal Workers Union proposal Delivering Community Power, which envisions expansion and re-purposing of the postal station network to provide electric vehicle charging stations, farm-to-table food delivery, and community banking ; the International Brotherhood of Teamsters described the San Francisco Zero Waste program that now diverts 80% of municipal waste from landfills into recycling and composting and provides union jobs; Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 1199 described their environmental and climate justice programs, resulting from the impact of disasters like Superstorm Sandy; worker training programs at the Net-Zero Energy training facility built by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 595 in partnership with the Northern California National Electrical Contractors Association; the United Food and Commercial Workers described their experience with the Good Food Purchasing Policy as a tool for protecting and enhancing labor standards for workers in the food industry and advancing climate justice; and the International Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen profiled their successful Green Diesel campaign to win cleaner fuel engines and a visionary strategy called “Solutionary Rail” , profiled in “How we can turn railroads into a climate solution” in *Grist* (March 2017) and in “ Electric Trains everywhere – A Solution to crumbling roads and climate crisis” in *YES Magazine* (May 2017).

Participants at the Second Labor Convergence on Climate included over 130 people – labour union leaders, organizers, and rank and file activists from 17 unions, 3 state federations/central labor councils and 6 labor support organizations, as well as environmental and economic justice activists.

Posted in **Green Economy**, **United States** | Tagged **Electric Vehicles**, **Green Building**, **IBEW**, **Labor Network for Sustainability**, **labour union policies**, **Retraining** | **Leave a reply**

Updated: Keeping up with COP23 in Bonn – what should Canadians know? what should workers know?

Posted on **November 7, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

As anyone who reads the news must know by now, much of the world's climate change community has assembled for the 23rd annual "Conference of the Parties" (COP) in Bonn, Germany – from November 6 to 17. Following the flood of daily press releases and tweets from official meetings, side events, and protests can be overwhelming. Here are some helpful sources of events – most of which also provide Facebook and Twitter updates: official COP23 press releases and documents in English and in French ; Climate Action Network-International (CAN-I) daily coverage in English and French . The International Institute for Sustainable Development formal COP23 coverage of negotiations and side events , with more spontaneous news at their Climate-L site. The official Canadian government statement of what Canada hopes to achieve at COP23 is here, and the government website for Environment and Climate Change Canada produces updates in English and French . Minister McKenna's Twitter feed @ec_minister is a fuller record of Canadian activity .

— CLC Side Event re Just Transition at COP23, Nov. 13 2017

For more opinion and analysis, follow Climate Action Network- Canada newservice CanRaction , which produced a November 9 issue: "Paris Implementation Depends on a Just Transition for

Fossil Fuel Workers" . The *National Observer* has reported on Canadian activity from COP23 here . Follow trade union updates via Twitter at #unions4climate – the only way to find out about side events such as the Canadian Labour Congress event re #Just Transition on November 13. Follow the flood of tweets from all points of view at #COP23. For the progressive U.S. presence, follow #wearestillin on Twitter or visit the We are Still In website.

The meetings, although in Bonn, are officially hosted by Fiji, and will be governed by the principle of "talanoa" – described by the Prime Minister of Fiji as " a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue that builds empathy and leads to decision-making for the collective good." This aspiration for transparency and consultation will be applied to the key points of contention: 1). "the "ratchet" – the means by which the national Paris pledges for emissions reduction will be increased in future years, (referred to in UN-speak as the "facilitative dialogue"; and 2). Issues of adaptation and financing (with adaptation now being re-phrased as "resilience"). As the first COP meeting since the Paris Agreement, the Bonn talks must begin to build the formal implementation structure – referred to as "The Paris Rulebook." For context, read: "The COP23 climate change summit in Bonn and why it matters" in *The Guardian* (a very quick overview laden to links with more information), or "Bonn climate talks must go further than Paris pledges to succeed" . The Heinrich Boll Foundation has published a very complete discussion, which includes the topics of human rights, just transition, and gender climate change, in *The Fiji UN Climate Summit 2017, COP23: what is at stake in Bonn?* .

Below are a few documents relevant to Canada and working people:

Climate Action Network Canada Brief *to the COP23 Meetings:* This policy paper specifies goals from the Canadian point of view, including #4, explicitly about Just Transition: "Canada should work to ensure that global pursuits for just transition and decent work have a prominent place in relevant components of the Paris work programme as well as FD2018. Just transition for workers should be maintained as a permanent theme within the forum on response measures under the Paris Agreement. It is critical to have a dedicated technical space, where good practice or challenging situations can be presented and debated and then find a reflection in the work programme. Future work on this issue should be recommended to SBI/SBSTA as the Paris work programme is developed and implemented. As FD2018 invites parties to enhance NDCs, Canada should incorporate just transition commitments into its NDC and encourage other parties to do the same. NDCs supported by zero-carbon development roadmaps are critical for building a longterm vision for transforming our economy, as well as for driving sustainable investments. Factoring-in employment and just transition will align them with broader social priorities in each country."

The *ITUC Frontlines Briefing Climate Justice: COP 23 Special Edition.* The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is leading a delegation of 130 trade union members from 40 countries at COP, and posting updates from the meetings at #unions4climate on Twitter. The COP 23 Special Edition (which includes special note of the Columbia Institute *Jobs for Tomorrow – Canada's Building Trades and Net Zero Emissions* report) fleshes out the top-level statement of 3 Trade Union Demands for COP23 : "• Raise ambition and realise the job-creation potential of climate action; • Deliver on climate finance and support the most vulnerable• Commit to securing a just transition for workers and their communities. "

"Disclosure of Climate-related Financial Information: Time for Canada to Act" a Policy Brief by the Centre for International Governance Innovation: presented at COP 23 and urging strong implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. It provides a plan on how to integrate climate change into existing risk management and disclosure practices in Canada.

We Mean Business Blog: Watch this blog for news and press releases representing the views and policies of the We Mean Business coalition, which represents over 620 multinational companies which support a low carbon transition. *Making the Paris Vision a Reality* summarizes their policy goals.

UNEP The Emissions Gap Report 2017 . This 8th edition by the UNEP underlines the urgency and scale of the task at COP23 by stating that currently pledged emissions reductions, even if met, would result in no more than a third of the emission reductions needed. "If the climate targets in the Paris Agreement are to remain credible and achievable, all countries will need to contribute to significantly enhancing their national ambitions, augmenting their national policy efforts in accordance with respective capabilities and different circumstances, and ensuring full accounting of subnational action." The UNEP reviews recent studies to score the countries which are on track to meet their 2030 NDC targets – Brazil, China, India and Russia. Those "likely to require further action in order to meet their NDCs, according to government and independent estimates" include Canada, along with Argentina, Australia, the European Union, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, the Republic of Korea and the United States. Much of the UNEP report is based on data from The Climate Action Tracker ; the *New York Times* interactive summary also relies on the Climate Action Tracker in the November 6 article, "Here's how far the world is from meeting its climate targets" .

United States Fourth National Climate Assessment . Most attention went to the surprise that the Trump administration didn't suppress this report , which represents a comprehensive, authoritative documentation of climate change science worldwide, with an emphasis on U.S. statistics and experience . It was released by the U.S. government, and in direct opposition to the Trump administration stance, stated: "This assessment concludes, based on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Labour Congress**, **Climate change policy**, **COP23**, **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

New York marks Superstorm Sandy 5-year Anniversary in a big way:

Climate Jobs Summit, Clean Energy Jobs Report, and expansion of New York's Green Bank

Posted on **November 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— Hurricane Sandy Oct 29 2012 – photo from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The Climate Jobs Now! Summit was held on October 27, in partnership with the Office of New York Governor Cuomo, Climate Jobs NY , and the Workers Institute, ILR Cornell University. The event was built around the theme, Reversing Inequality and Combatting Climate Change: A New Era for States and Regions, with participants and speakers from New York labour unions, government, and climate advocates. The Closing Panel, "Fulfilling the Promise of a Just Transition for All New Yorkers through Clean Energy and Community Resilience" included John Cartwright, President of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council.   Video of some presentations is available .

Also on October 27, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) released the *2017 Clean Energy Industry Report* , which found that clean energy jobs employed 146,000 New Yorkers at the end of 2016, distributed as follows: 110,000 jobs in energy efficiency; 22,000 renewable electric power generation; 8,400 alternative transportation; 2,900 renewable fuels, and 1,400 in grid modernization and storage. Employment growth in clean energy surpassed the economy as a whole, at 3.4% from December 2015 to December 2016, with projected growth to double again to 7% by the end of 2017.   The report also states that the demand exceeds the supply of clean energy workers, with employers reporting the most difficult positions to fill are engineers, installers or technicians, and sales representatives.   (In June, Governor Cuomo announced funding for Workforce Development & Training Programs at campuses of the State University of New York).

Finally on October 27, a press release from the Governor's office announced that the New York Green Bank is seeking to raise at least an additional $1 billion in private-sector funds to expand the availability of financing for clean energy projects. According to the press release, the Green Bank has had strong interest "from third-party entities like pension funds and insurance companies seeking to use it as an investment vehicle for sustainable infrastructure projects". The additional capital can be invested in projects across the U.S., and the Green Bank is prepared work with other states and NGO's to establish their own Green Banks.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean energy industry**, **Green Finance**, **labour union policies**, **New York State** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council established to guide provincial policy

Posted on **November 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 23 , the British Columbia Government announced the appointment of the Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council, to "provide advice to government on actions and policies that can contribute to carbon pollution reductions and optimize opportunities for sustainable economic development and job creation. This includes working with industry and the federal government to address the competitiveness of emissions-intensive trade-exposed sectors, to help them reduce their emissions and continue to thrive economically." The formal Terms of Reference are here . "B.C. Government sets up Climate Council" in the *Climate Examiner* provides a good summary: "The new body is not intended to craft an entirely new climate change strategy for the nascent government, but rather advise on how to build on the previous climate team's work, particularly with respect to decarbonizing the major sources of emissions in the province: transport, industry and buildings, the minister said. In addition, the council will offer advice on how to achieve a new mid-term emissions reduction target of 40 percent by 2030, legislation for which is to be introduced next spring."

The Advisory Council is a permanent group comprised of 22 members, some of whom advised the Liberal governments' 2016 Climate Leadership Plan; members are appointed for two year, renewable terms. The Co-Chairs are Merran Smith, Executive Director, Clean Energy Canada and Marcia Smith, Senior Vice-President of Sustainability and External Affairs, Teck Resources Limited. A full list of members is available – notably, it includes Lee Loftus, Executive Director of the British Columbia and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trades Council, (a partner organization with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) project); Gavin McGarrigle, BC Area director, Unifor; and D.J. Pohl, president, Fraser Valley Labour Council. Academic and activist members Nancy Olewiler, Professor, School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University; Judith Sayers, Adjunct Professor, University of Victoria; Sybil Seitzinger, Executive Director, Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, University of Victoria; Michelle Molnar, Environmental Economist, David Suzuki Foundation; and Karen Tam Wu, Acting Director, Pembina Institute.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Climate change policy**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Final report on Site C dam leaves B.C. government to decide: continue or terminate the multi-billion dollar project?

Posted on **November 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

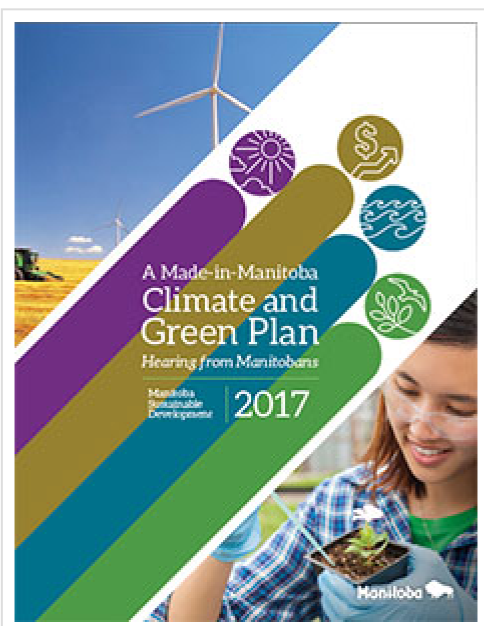
On November 1, the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) released its *Final Report to the Government on the Inquiry Respecting Site C*, the most controversial energy project in the province. (A 20-page Executive Summary is here) . BCUC concurs with previous criticisms that B.C. Hydro's forecast for electricity demand had been "excessively optimistic", and that the project is likely to run late and over budget – possibly costing more than $10 billion. In his Submission to the BCUC in August, Revisiting the Economic Case for Site C, CCPA Economist Marc Lee discussed many of these same concerns, and also raised the issue that the scope of the BCUC inquiry should be expanded to consider Site C's environmental effects and the implications for First Nations . All Submissions and documentation are available at the Inquiry website.

The BCUC Final Report does not make recommendations, but presents detailed information on the costs of three alternatives: continuing and completing the project, terminating it, or suspending it. The report also considers the potential of alternative, renewable energy options of wind, geothermal, and industrial conservation. It concludes that suspending the project and re-starting it later is too expensive an option, leaving the provincial Government to decide: continue, or terminate Site C. The government response states that "we anticipate a decision by the end of the year." CBC News presents some of the range of reaction to the BCUC report in , " 'I think it would be devastating for our whole community': report raises local anxiety about Site C's future" . DeSmog Canada published a detailed summary, along with background information about the many protests and objections, at "Site C Dam Over Budget, Behind Schedule and Could be Replaced by Alternatives: BCUC Report" . (November 1)

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Energy policy**, **Site C Dam** | **Leave a reply**

Made-in-Manitoba Green Plan proposes a $25 per tonne carbon tax

Posted on **October 31, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**



On October 27, the Conservative Government of Manitoba released a discussion paper, *The Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan* , which announces a vision for the province to be Canada's "cleanest, greenest and most climate resilient province." It opens a brief public consultation period till November 30, with proposals organized around four stated "pillars" : climate, jobs, water and infrastructure. Although most of the attention has been focused on the carbon tax proposals, the Discussion Paper proposes dozens of possible initiatives, including electrification of Winnipeg's transit, encouraging biofuels (e.g. by raising the provincial biodiesel mandate from two per cent to five per cent), and improving waste management to reduce methane emissions, among many others. Regarding jobs, the report states: "We need to focus on how to prosper through climate change and create new jobs and growth in the transition to a global low-carbon economy. Environmental services and clean technology are opportunity sectors for Manitoba companies." The report presents potential initiatives to create jobs – (for example, reducing "green tape", encouraging finance and capital markets) and to improve skills and training (e.g. through participation in the U.N. Green Youth Corps, or working with the private sector work "to develop a Clean Growth Talent Plan as part of a new Labour Market Strategy incorporating a focus on climate and sustainability jobs and skills. ")

The section on carbon pricing has attracted most attention because it so clearly misses the criteria laid out outlined by Environment and Climate Change Canada in The Pan-Canadian Approach to pricing carbon pollution (the Backstop plan) and the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change . Manitoba's Discussion Paper proposes a carbon tax of $25 per tonne to remain in place till 2022 (only half of what the federal Framework Agreement calls for), with farm fuel use exempt. In a shift of its earlier position, however, Manitoba acknowledges the federal government's legal right to impose a carbon tax plan on the province, but continues to insist on its uniqueness: "Any carbon pricing system in Manitoba must recognize two essential facts: First, Manitoba is already 'clean' given our hydroelectricity system with 98 per cent of electricity generated from non-carbon emitting sources. Second, Manitobans have already invested billions of dollars in building our clean energy system and are still doing so with the Keeyask Dam and the Bipole transmission line. Adding a $50 per tonne carbon price on Manitobans at the same time Hydro rates are rising is neither fair nor sensible."

A thorough discussion of the proposed carbon tax comes from the Ecofiscal Commission. Headlines reflect the reaction to the $25 per tonne carbon tax: at CBC News: "Manitoba thumbs nose at Ottawa, sets own carbon tax scheme" , and "Proposed Manitoba carbon tax 'will have to go up': Federal environment minister". "Manitoba defies feds, unveils its own carbon pricing plan" (Oct. 27) in the *Winnipeg Free Press* includes reaction from political parties and academics. Also in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, "Details hazy in Made-in-Manitoba Green plan" – which calls the Green Plan "the political equivalent of a Rubik's Cube. It's colourful, intriguing and almost impossible to figure out." That was no doubt a topic at the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment conference in Vancouver on November 3.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Tax**, **Climate change policy**, **Manitoba**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Ontario continues its commitment to nuclear power in newly-released 2017

Long-Term Energy Plan

Posted on **October 31, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 26, Ontario's Minister of Energy released the *2017 Long-Term Energy Plan – Delivering Fairness and Choice*, an update of previous versions in 2010 and 2013. Clean Energy Canada states "Ontario's long-term energy plan provides more direction than details, but it stays the course in building a modern, affordable and flexible energy system." Others, such as the Ontario Clean Air Coalition, have concerns that the continuing commitment to nuclear power generation comes at the expense of development of renewables. While the policy seems to focus on the political task of making energy more affordable and giving consumers more energy options, some noteworthy goals relate to " enhancing net metering by allowing more people the opportunity to produce clean energy and use it to power their homes and lower their electricity bills. " … "Allowing utilities to intelligently and cost-effectively integrate electric vehicles into their grids, including smart charging in homes" … and increased oversight of fees charged by private providers "strengthening protection for vulnerable consumers in condominiums and apartments to protect them from energy disconnection in winter." Key reading from the LTEP: Chapter 6 Responding to the challenge of climate change . The next step is for the Ontario Energy Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator to submit implementation plans to the Minister of Energy for approval.

The LTEP summarizes Ontario's energy policies to date and forecasts demand for the future. For more detail and analysis on those aspects, see the CBC, or "Hydro Prices to keep rising just a bit more slowly" in the *Ottawa Citizen* (Oct. 26) which points out that the province is forecasting almost flat demand for electricity for the next 20 years, as conservation and efficiency savings are traded for increased demand for electric vehicles and transit. (the report assumes 2.4 million electric vehicles will be on the roads by 2035).

Controversy surrounds the role of nuclear power in the plan. The Power Workers Union, which continues to lobby for nuclear power , calls the new LTEP "good news for the environment and the economy" in their press release , stating: "Today's latest provincial Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP) confirms the pivotal role nuclear energy will play in Ontario's clean energy future. Recognizing the significant environmental and economic benefits that this safe, reliable generation delivers, the provincial government remains committed to refurbishing all of Ontario's publicly-owned nuclear reactors and to the four-year extension of the operations of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station to 2024". In contrast, the Ontario Clean Air Coalition reacted with "Ontario doubles down on obsolete nuclear – and you're paying for it" , which states: "Ontario's fixation with obsolete nuclear energy is to say the least puzzling, but what is clear is that this fixation is going to cost us dearly. Please sign our petition calling on Premier Wynne to make a deal with Quebec to lower our electricity costs and to open the way for a modern renewable energy system. " In a similar vein, the David Suzuki Foundation press release states: "Ontario's new Long-Term Energy Plan is both encouraging and worrisome. The former because it recognizes the importance of clean air and addressing climate change; the latter because of its embrace of nuclear power and its lack of a road map to expand renewable energy." … " the province’s continued reliance on nuclear for about half its power is troubling. In addition to concerns around uranium mining and waste disposal, nuclear has not proven to be cost-effective.”

— $13 Billion Darlington Nuclear Plant refurbishment is reportedly over budget

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Energy policy**, **Hydropower**, **Nuclear energy**, **Ontario**, **renewable energy** | **Leave a reply**

AFL-CIO Convention adopts historic Climate Change resolution

Posted on **October 27, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The 2017 Convention of the AFL-CIO took place in St. Louis from October 22 to 25. In a breakthrough, Resolution 55 on Climate Change, Energy and Union Jobs was adopted, putting the AFL-CIO “on the record” as recognizing the threat of climate change and acknowledging the need to move to a sustainable alternative energy system. The resolution also calls for workers impacted by the energy transition to be protected. The floor debate is available on YouTube , showing supportive speeches by members of the Utility Workers, IBEW, LIUNA, USW, the Boilermakers, CWA, AFA, the Montana AFL-CIO and the Southeast Minnesota Area Labor Council. Speaking strongly against the resolution was the General President of the UA, which represents workers in the plumbing and pipefitting trades, including pipeline and energy industry workers. He objected to the exclusion of the UA in the process of drafting the resolution. Resolution 55 was, in fact, a compromise version arrived at by the Executive Council from several resolutions submitted.

From the text of Resolution 55 : " THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will fight politically and legislatively to secure and maintain employment, pensions and health care for workers affected by changes in the energy market; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO supports incentives and robust funding for research programs to bring new energy technologies to market, including renewables, carbon capture and advanced nuclear technologies; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will support the passage of key energy and environmental policies with a focus on ensuring high labor standards, the creation of union jobs and environmental sustainability; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will continue to urge the United States to remain in the Paris Agreement and to work to ensure that all nations make progress on emissions reductions; and BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO believes that the United States Congress should enact comprehensive energy and climate legislation that creates good jobs and addresses the threat of climate change."

The full list of Adopted Resolutions from the 2017 AFL CIO Convention is here. The Labor Network for Sustainability has archived past resolutions by U.S. labour unions to their own conventions here . LNS President Joe Uehlein stated: "The resolution certainly could have gone further to support climate protection but it is an important and historic step for the U.S. labor movement" . And from the full statement of reaction by LNS, *The New AFL-CIO Stand on Climate Change: What Does It Mean for Labor and for the Climate?* , which concludes: "Overall, this resolution represents a powerful statement of labor's stake in protecting the climate. However, it retains many of the assumptions and approaches that have often put unions at loggerheads with concrete climate protection efforts. Whether it actually represents a new beginning or just old wine in new bottles will largely depend on the growing sector of the labor movement that is committed to putting labor "at the center of creating solutions that reduce emissions while investing in our communities, maintaining and creating high-wage union jobs, and reducing poverty."

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **AFL–CIO**, **Labor Network for Sustainability**, **labour union policies**, **Paris Agreement** | **1 Reply**

Quebec Pension fund leads the way in low-carbon investing in Canada

Posted on **October 27, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ) is Canada's second largest pension fund, with $286.5 billion under management for the public and parapublic pension plans of Quebec workers. On October 18, the Caisse burnished its existing reputation as a responsible investor by releasing "Our Investment Strategy to address Climate Change", a detailed strategy document which pledges to factor climate change into every investment decision. The CDPQ will increase its low-carbon investments by 50% by 2020, and reduce the carbon intensity of its portfolio by 25% by 2025 across all asset classes. According to an article in the *Montreal Gazette* , "the Caisse is the first fund in North America, and only the second in the world — after the New Zealand Superannuation Fund — to adopt this type of approach." That article also notes that investment managers' compensation will be tied to the emissions performance of their investments: investment teams will be given fixed carbon budgets, "and their performance will be evaluated and remuneration linked to how well they stick to these budgets." The announcement was also covered by the *Globe and Mail* .

In contrast, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board , entrusted with the funds to support the public pensions of 20 million Canadians (the CPP), continues to invest in oil and gas ventures – and according to Bloomberg Research , is currently involved in a bidding process for an Australian coal operation owned by Rio Tinto . Friends of the Earth Canada is advocating against the bid as part of its ongoing campaign, Time to Climate-Risk-Proof the CPP . The CPPIB describes its investment strategy regarding climate change here .

It is worth noting that the Labor Convergence on Climate event organized by the Labor Network for Sustainability in September included a discussion of how union leaders and rank and file members can work through their pension funds to join the movement to divest from fossil fuels and make green investments .

The role of the banking and investment community is important in policy development also; the case is most recently made in "Three suggestions for for B.C.'s Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council" in the *National Observer* (Oct. 26). The article concludes: "If the Advisory Council wants to see money move to support its policy aspirations they will have to find genuinely committed allies in the asset management and banking community. Action on climate change is great economic opportunity for British Columbia and Canada, and the financial sector must be brought into the discussion in order to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon energy system."

How receptive is the Canadian investment community to considering and disclosing climate change risks and stranded assets? Two reports by the UN-affiliated Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) are relevant to this question. *Fiduciary duty in the 21st century: Canada roadmap* (Jan. 2017) makes recommendations for how Canadian pension fund and investment managers can catch up with the international community and implement the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) . The *PRI Canada country review* (June 2017) describes the current regulatory framework for environmental and social governance disclosure . The Responsible Investment Association has also published the 2016 Canadian Responsible Investment Trends Report .

Actors within Canada include the Canadian Securities Administrators , which began their own review on climate-related financial disclosure practices in March 2017 , but have not yet reported. A group of Canadian Chief Financial Officers launched the CFO Leadership Network in March 2017, to focus on the role CFO's play in integrating environmental and social issues into financial decision making. The Canadian CFO Leadership Network is the Canadian Chapter of The Prince of Wales's Accounting for Sustainability (A4S) CFO Leadership Network; in Canada, it operates in partnership with Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada , with support from The Prince's Charities Canada.

Finally, SHARE (Shareholder Association for Research & Education), is a Vancouver-based organization which actively promotes sustainable and responsible investing. On October 12, it announced that it is participating in an investor-led initiative which has written to the CEO's of sixty of the world's largest banks, including six Canadian banks, calling on them to adopt the landmark recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), released by the Financial Stability Board in December 2016 . Specifically, they call for disclosure in four key areas: climate-relevant strategy and implementation, climate-related risk assessments and management, low-carbon banking products and services, and banks' public policy engagements and collaboration.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **accountants**, **Banking Industry**, **Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ)**, **Canada Pension Plan**, **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)**, **Climate change policy**, **Divestment**, **Pension Fund management**, **Stranded Assets** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian government is falling short of GHG emissions targets, needs a plan to phase out fossil fuel subsidies

Posted on **October 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 3, Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled highly critical audit reports in the House of Commons. From the Commissioner's press release : "the government's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have fallen short of its target and that overall, it is not preparing to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Only five of 19 government organizations had fully assessed their climate change risks and acted to address them." … "Many departments have an incomplete picture of their own risks, and the federal government as a whole does not have a full picture of its climate change risks. If Canada is to adapt to a changing climate, stronger leadership is needed from Environment and Climate Change

Canada, along with increased initiative from individual departments."   The Commissioner also criticized the Department of Finance and Environment and Climate Change Canada for a "disconcerting lack of real results" towards meeting Canada's G20 commitment to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

The CBC reports on reaction and press conference remarks; the National Observer ran two articles, "Watchdog finds Canada 'nowhere near' ready for climate risks" and "Parliamentary watchdogs conducting nationwide climate audits", which reports that, for the first time, Auditors General are conducting climate change audits of all federal, provincial and territorial governments, working together to develop reports for their respective jurisdictions and a summary report of national performance on mitigation and adaptation.

The October 2017 federal audit reports are all available in English and in French. The relevant reports are: Progress on Reducing Greenhouse Gases—Environment and Climate Change Canada ; Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change; Funding Clean Energy Technologies; and Departmental Progress in Implementing Sustainable Development Strategies. The archive of previous reports is here .

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Government Policy**, **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Environment and Climate Change Canada**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Victoria B.C. joins the movement for climate accountability, demanding compensation from Big Oil companies for climate change impacts

Posted on **October 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 12, the Council of Victoria B.C. voted unanimously to send a Climate Accountability Letter to twenty companies, including Exxon, Chevron and Shell, asking them to cover the costs the community is likely to incur to plan for or recover from the impacts of climate change. The motion also included an agreement to call upon fellow local governments across Vancouver Island, British Columbia and Canada to write similar letters. Such letters are part of the Climate Law in our Hands campaign launched by West Coast Environmental Law and almost 50 other groups in January 2017.

Accountability Letters may be seen as largely symbolic, but are a first step in the movement for legal action against these "Carbon Majors", which is the goal of the Climate Law in our Hands campaign. The campaign and the movement is based on the work of Richard Heede, whose 2013 research identified 90 entities (producers of oil, natural gas, coal, and cement) that are collectively responsible for almost two thirds of human-caused greenhouse gases historically. Heede updated his research in July 2017 – naming the 10 oil and gas companies who are responsible for 26% of all fossil fuel emissions since 1988. See the Climate Accountability Institute , where Heede is Director, or see West Coast Environmental Law for a spreadsheet with details about each company, as well as model letters for municipalities who want to join the campaign. Andrew Gage of WCEL compiled an excellent overview of new research and legal developments about Climate Accountability in September .

In September, San Francisco and Oakland, California became the latest and largest cities to sue the Carbon Majors: see "California leads the way: San Francisco and Oakland the latest to sue fossil fuel companies" . (They join the California counties of Marin, San Mateo and San Diego and the city of Imperial Beach). The press release from the City Attorney's Office outlines their case against Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, BP and Royal Dutch Shell : "The lawsuits ask the courts to hold the defendants jointly and severally liable for creating, contributing to and/or maintaining a public nuisance, and to create an abatement fund for each city to be paid for by defendants to fund infrastructure projects necessary for San Francisco and Oakland to adapt to global warming and sea level rise. The total amount needed for the abatement funds is not known at this time but is expected to be in the billions of dollars."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate accountability**, **Climate Activism**, **Climate Change Liability**, **Oakland**, **San Francisco**, **Victoria** | **1 Reply**

Unifor, Government visions for Sustainable Forestry

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Future of Forestry: A Workers Perspective for Successful, Sustainable and Just Forestry was released on October 16 by Unifor's Forestry Industry Council, representing the union's 24,000 members in the forestry sector. The report provides an overview of the size and health of the forestry industry, and after the past several years of declining employment, asks, "What could lie ahead?" The answer given: "Technologies that put forestry resources to uses never previously imagined; transformative innovations in building materials and green construction, and a sustained transition toward higher-value growth products and markets. There is also a coming wave of retirements that means the industry could need upward of 60,000 new workers within the decade."

The report sets out Unifor's aims for each of five focal points in an integrated forestry policy, involving the federal and provincial governments and prioritizing the role of First Nations. The report calls for " sustainable rules for wood harvesting that secure investments and jobs while meeting the highest environmental standards. There must be stable and appropriately priced hydro-electricity; as well, transportation infrastructure, pricing and access need to be modernized. Trade policies need to support high-value forestry exports, maintain stable access to key markets, while ensuring we are not the target of unfair trade measures. And we need to control the export of unprocessed raw logs." A key message is the need to involve workers in a sustained dialogue for policy-making process: "forestry ministers must lead efforts to bring together business, government, labour, Indigenous leaders, environmental organizations and community leaders in a reinstated National Forestry Council."

Related reading: In mid-September, Natural Resources Canada released the 2017 edition of *The State of Canada's Forests Annual Report* and L'État des forêts au Canada.

At the September annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM), their Innovation Committee released *A Forest Bioeconomy Framework for Canada* , with the vision to make Canada "a global leader in the use of forest bio-mass for advanced bioproducts and innovative solutions" including as a source of renewable energy. Note the first of the 4 pillars of the framework: "Communities and Relationships. This section in the Framework advances policies towards "creating green jobs, offering opportunities for rural communities through education and skills training, improving overall quality of life, and enhancing partnerships with Indigenous peoples."

Also at the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers annual meeting, the Minister of Natural Resources announced a call for proposals for the next wave of projects through the Investments in Forest Industry Transformation (IFIT) program, a federal grant program to encourage :

- new or increased production of bioenergy, biomaterials, biochemicals and next-generation building products by the forest sector;
- increased deployment and encouraging broader adoption of first-in-kind innovative technologies, particularly Canadian, across the industry; and
- the creation of innovative partnerships with non-traditional forest sector partners as a way to develop new business models for the sector.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **bioenergy**, **biomass**, **Forestry Industry**, **Sustainable Forestry**, **Unifor** | **Leave a reply**

Long-awaited Clean Growth Strategy of the U.K.-missing the workplace viewpoint

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The British Government released its Clean Growth Strategy on October 12, outlining how it intends to reduce the country's carbon emissions by 57 percent between 2020 and 2032. The Guardian summarizes the main provisions in "Draughty homes targeted in UK climate change masterplan" – describing it as "about 50 policies supporting everything from low-carbon power and energy savings to electric vehicles and keeping food waste out of landfill." Highlights of the plan are £3.6 billion in funds to support energy efficiency upgrades for about a million homes, and subsidies for offshore wind development. Also included: £1 billion is promised to encourage use of electric cars, £100m to fund research on carbon capture and storage (CCS) and £900 million for energy research and development, almost half of which will go to nuclear power. The controversial issue of fracking is omitted completely. For reaction and context, read "UK climate change masterplan – the grownups have finally won" in *The Guardian*, or the Campaign against Climate Change response, which notes that the policies will be insufficient to reduce emissions enough to stay within the UK's carbon budgets after 2023.

The Secretary General of the Trades Union Congress reacted with this statement: "It has a bunch of targets, but lacks the level of public investment in low carbon infrastructure needed to achieve them. And there is a major blind spot towards working people who will create the clean economy.

"It doesn't say how workers will get support to retrain if their job is under threat from the move to a low carbon economy. And it doesn't set out how the government will work in social partnership with trade unions and business – this will be vital to a successful industrial strategy, building carbon capture and storage, and generating green growth."

Posted in **Government Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **energy efficiency**, **labour union policies**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Trade unions in the U.K. actively engaged in climate change policy, advocating for environmental representatives

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Trade Unions in the UK: Engagement with climate change is a new report, based on research conducted between September 2016 and January 2017 by the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group . The report asks: what are the driving forces behind trade union engagement in climate change issues, and what are some of the barriers and difficulties for trade unions? It summarizes the results of interviews with policy officers and environmental activists from the largest 15 unions in the Trades Union Congress (TUC), as well as two smaller but active unions: Transport and Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU). The report is also based on the results of systematic searches of the unions' websites and relevant policy documents (with links to key documents). It reveals an overview of the diversity and context of trade union climate policy, focusing on issues such as environmental representatives, energy supply, airport expansion, fracking and divestment from fossil fuels. The report summarizes the positions on these issues, union by union, but for those who want even more detail, there is a supplementary inventory .

This first-ever report was released in August 2017, and since then, Unison has voted to campaign for pension fund divestment and the TUC adopted an historic motion for public ownership of energy at its September Congress. Also at the Fringe Meeting of the September Congress, the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group presented its discussion paper 'Another world is possible: jobs and a safe climate'. And most recently, the U.K. government at long last released its *Clean Growth Strategy*, to limited union approval.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **environmental representatives**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **Fracking**, **labour union policies**, **Pension Fund management**, **Trades Union Congress (TUC)**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

First Nations, Renewable Energy, and the benefits of community-owned energy projects

Posted on **October 16, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

"These are exciting times in British Columbia for those interested in building sustainable, just and climate-friendly energy systems." So begins the October 12 featured commentary, "BC First Nations are poised to lead the renewable energy transition", published by the Corporate Mapping Project, a research project led by the University of Victoria, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (BC and Saskatchewan Offices) and Parkland Institute. The commentary summarizes the results of a survey conducted for the B.C. First Nations Clean Energy Working Group by academics at the University of Victoria , published in April 2017 . The survey reveals that 98% of First Nations respondents were either interested in, or already participating in a renewable energy projects – 78 operational projects, 48 in the planning or construction phase, and 250 further projects under consideration in B.C. alone. The responses reveal a growing interest in solar photovoltaic (PV), solar thermal, biomass and micro-hydro projects under development—compared to already-operational projects, 61% of which are run-of-river hydroelectricity. Survey respondents identified three primary barriers to their involvement in renewable energy projects: limited opportunities to sell power to the grid via BC Hydro – (mostly because of the proposed Site C hydro project), difficulties obtaining financing, and a lack of community readiness.

Although the discussion focuses specifically on B.C.'s First Nations, the article holds up the model of community-level energy projects beyond First Nations : "Instead of proceeding with Site C, BC has an opportunity to produce what new power will be needed through a model of energy system development that takes advantage of emerging cost effective technologies and public ownership at a community scale. Doing so would enable an energy system that can be scaled up incrementally as demand projections increase. It would also ensure the benefits energy projects are channelled to communities impacted by their development, and help respond to past injustices of energy development in our province….Choosing this path would result in a more distributed energy system, more resilient and empowered communities, a more diverse economy and a more just path towards climate change mitigation."

CBC reported on another survey of First Nations – this one at a national level – in "Indigenous communities embracing clean energy, creating thousands of jobs" (October 11). The article focuses on First Nations renewable energy projects on a commercial scale, stating: "nearly one fifth of the country's power is provided by facilities fully or partly owned and run by Indigenous communities". The article links to case studies and numerous previous articles on the topic, but focuses on the job creation impacts of clean energy: "15,300 direct jobs for Indigenous workers who have earned $842 million in employment income in the last eight years."

The CBC article summarizes a survey conducted by Lumos Energy , a consultancy which specializes in energy solutions, especially renewable energy, "for First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders and communities". Lumos Energy leads the Indigenous Clean Energy Network ; its principal, Chris Henderson, has written the book Aboriginal Power: Clean Energy and the Future of Canada's First Peoples (2013).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Clean Energy**, **First Nations**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **renewable energy**, **Solar energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

The future of wind energy in Alberta

Posted on **October 12, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— From CanWEA website, showing the state of Alberta's wind market as of 2017

The Province of Alberta is reinventing its energy supply with its Renewable Electricity Program, which targets 30% of the province's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030. To take stock of the province's existing strengths, as well as gaps and opportunities related to that goal, the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) commissioned the Delphi Group to study the existing resources, including workforce skills, to support the growth of the wind industry. The resulting report, *Alberta Wind Energy Supply Chain Study* , concludes that if wind energy were to meet 90 per cent of the government's commitment, it would result in an estimated $8.3 billion of investment in new wind energy projects in the province and almost 15,000 job years of employment by 2030. Many of the skills and occupations required to develop wind projects – such as engineering, construction, operations and maintenance – are transferable from the oil and gas sector. CanWEA is urging the government to provide a long-term renewable energy procurement policy which would encourage investment .

The report is summarized by the *Energy Mix,* by the *National Observer* , and in a CanWEA press release. CanWEA also provides current profiles of provincial wind markets – Alberta's is here . CanWEA's annual conference was held in Montreal from October 3 to 5; the closing press release is here.

The *National Observer* story features the wind turbine technician program at Lethbridge Community College, and states that in January 2017, a third of the students who entered the College's wind turbine technician program came from careers in the oil industry.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Canadian Wind Energy Association**, **Clean energy industry**, **Green procurement**, **wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Proposals for a green transition that is just and inclusive in Ontario

Posted on **October 12, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Decent Work in the Green Economy, released on October 11 , combines research on green transitions worldwide with the reality of labour market trends in Ontario, and includes economic modelling of Ontario's cap and trade program, conducted by EnviroEconomics and Navius Research. The resulting analysis identifies which sectors are expected to grow strongly under a green transition (e.g. utilities and waste management and remediation), which will see lower growth (e.g. petroleum refining and petrochemical production), and which will see a transformation of skills requirements (e.g. mining, manufacturing, and forestry). Section 3 of the report discusses the impacts on job quality (including wages, benefits, unionization, and job permanence), as well as skills requirements. The general discussion in Section 3 is supplemented by two detailed Appendices about the employment impacts by economic sector, and by disadvantaged and equity-seeking groups (which includes racialized workers, Indigenous people, workers with disabilities, newcomers, women, and rural Ontarians.) A final Appendix describes the modelling behind the analysis, which projects employment impacts of low carbon technologies by 2030.

The paper calls for a comprehensive Just Transition Strategy for Ontario, and proposes six core elements illustrated by case study "success stories". These case studies include the Solar City Program in Halifax, Nova Scotia, (which uses local supply chains and accounted for local employment impacts), and the UK Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy (which incorporated diversity goals and explicit targets in workforce development and retraining initiatives). An important element of the recommended Just Transition Strategy includes a dedicated Green Transitions Fund, to transfer funding for targeted programs to communities facing disproportionate job loss; to universities or colleges to provide specialized academic programs; to social enterprise or service providers to carry out re-training programs; to directly impacted companies to invest in their employees; and to individuals in transition (much like EI payments).

The authors also call for better data collection to measure and monitor the link between green economy policies and employment outcomes, and better mechanisms for regular, ongoing dialogue. This call for ongoing dialogue seems intended to provide a role for workers (and unions, though they are less often mentioned). The authors state: "No effort to ensure decent work in the green economy will be successful without meaningfully engaging workers who are directly impacted by the transition, to understand where and how they might need support. Just as important will be the ongoing engagement with employers and industry to understand the changing employment landscape, and how workers can best prepare for it." And, on page 39, "Public policy will be a key driver in ensuring that this transition is just and equitable. …. Everyone has a role to play in this transition. Governments, employers, workers, unions and non-profit organizations alike must remember that if we fail to ensure that the green transition is just and inclusive, we will have missed a vital opportunity to address today's most pressing challenges. But if we design policies and programs that facilitate this transition with decent work in mind, they have the potential to benefit all Ontarians."

Decent Work in the Green Economy was published by the Mowat Centre at the University of Toronto, in cooperation with the Smart Prosperity Institute at the University of Ottawa. In addition to economic modelling, the analysis and policy discussion is based on an extensive literature review as well as expert interviews and input from government, industry, labour and social justice representatives. Part of the purpose of the report is to initiate discussion "between those actively supporting the transition to a green economy and those advocating for decent work" as defined by the ILO. Further, the report states: " Importantly, this conversation must address the need for equal opportunities among historically disadvantaged and equity-seeking groups who currently face barriers to accessing decent work."

Posted in **Government Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Disabled workers**, **disadvantaged workers**, **employment impacts**, **First Nations**, **Green Economy**, **Job Quality**, **Just Transition**, **Ontario**, **provincial climate change policies**, **social partners** | **Leave a reply**

Activists celebrate as the Energy East Pipeline is cancelled

Posted on **October 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On October 5, TransCanada Pipelines issued a press release , announcing that it would no longer proceed with the proposed Energy East pipeline and Eastern Mainline projects. Accordingly, the National Energy Board Hearing Process has been closed, although documents remain on its website. Below is some of the reaction that has poured forth, including: "TransCanada terminates Energy East pipeline" and "Disappointment and delight mark the end of Energy East Pipeline" in the *National Observer* (Oct. 5); "Climate Hawks celebrate as TransCanada abandons Energy East pipeline" from *Energy Mix*.   The Council of Canadians had conducted a 5-year campaign against Energy East: their reactions and those of their allies appear in "WIN! Energy East tar sands pipeline defeated!" ; "Voices from the Energy East Resistance" (Oct. 6) and "Diverse Groups Opposed to Energy East Celebrate Project's Cancellation" . The common message is exemplified by Grand Chief Serge Simon of the Mohawk Council of Kanesatake on behalf of the 150 First Nations and Tribes who have signed the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion, who is quoted as saying: "Both the Northern Gateway fight and this Energy East one show that when First Nations stand together, supported by non-Indigenous allies, we win …. "So that's two tar sands expanding mega-pipelines stopped in their tracks but it will be a hollow victory if either Kinder Morgan, Line 3 or Keystone XL are allowed to steamroll over Indigenous opposition and serve as an outlet for even more climate-killing tar sands production." (and for more on that, read "Energy East cancellation resonates for opponents of Trans Mountain expansion in B.C." in the *National Observer*.

Commentators trying to explain TransCanada's decision focus on three principle reasons: the economics of falling oil prices, regional political forces, or the regulatory burden of pipeline approvals in Canada (especially since the Energy East review was required to account for upstream and downstream emissions). From the *Globe and Mail*, an editorial: "The death of Energy East was a Business Decision – Swimming in Politics" , which attributes the decision to Quebec opposition to Energy East, and the likely go-ahead of the Keystone XL pipeline in the U.S. The Editorial states: "Mr. Trump appears to have solved most of the Canadian oil industry's pipeline shortage, making Energy East no longer economically necessary. The American President…. has also temporarily solved one of the Trudeau government's, and Canada's, most challenging political problems." For a view of the political dimensions within Canada, read "Energy East pipeline is dead, fallout in Alberta will be measurable" in *Rabble* (Oct. 6) . Finally, three overviews of the issues:"Regulations alone didn't sink the Energy East pipeline" by Warren

Mabee,Queen's University and ACW Co-Investigator in *The Conversation* (Oct. 15); "Five Things you need to know about the Cancellation of the Energy East Oilsands Pipeline" from DeSmog Canada, and "Energy East's cause of death: Business, politics or climate?", from CBC News, which describes the regional differences via reaction from Canadian provincial premiers.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Energy East pipeline**, **Environmental Assessment**, **National Energy Board**, **TransCanada Corporation** | **Leave a reply**

Nova Scotia introduces Cap-and-Trade legislation

Posted on **October 5, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A press release on September 29 announced that the Nova Scotia government has introduced amendments to the Environment Act, enabling regulations to set caps on GHG emissions, distribute and enable trading of emission allowances within the province, and set a province-wide greenhouse gas emission target for 2030. The province will create a Green Fund to support climate change initiatives and innovations, and money from emissions sales and fines will be deposited there. Next steps include "developing greenhouse gas reporting regulations this fall and consulting with stakeholders on them".

The amending legislation, Bill 15, received first Reading in the Legislature on September 29 as a means to satisfy the requirement of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. However, reaction from the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax urges the federal government to reject the plan, stating that "A carbon pricing system that doesn't actually put a price on carbon, support low-income people, or incentivize clean growth truly misses the point." The EAC also warns of the risks of extreme volatility since the plan is structured to create a carbon market within Nova Scotia alone – covering a population of under a million people and about 20 businesses. In "Time for Ottawa to cry foul over Nova Scotia cap-and-trade proposal" published in the Hill Times and reposted at Pembina (Nov. 2) , the verdict is similarly negative: "Nova Scotia's cap-and-trade system could cause the province to lose its foothold on climate leadership. In order to secure a clean, prosperous economy into the future, the provincial government should consider other approaches."

The Ecology Action website has compiled documents and submissions from the provincial consultations leading up to the September announcement. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia Office published a Backgrounder in May 2017 which outlines its proposals for a stronger cap-and-trade policy.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Nova Scotia**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

The new British Columbia government tackles climate change policy and controversies: Site C, Kinder Morgan, and Carbon Tax neutrality

Posted on **September 28, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

As the smoke from over 100 forest fires enveloped British Columbia during the summer of 2017, a new brand of climate change and environmental policy emerged after June 29, when the New Democratic Party (NDP) government assumed power , thanks to a Confidence and Supply Agreement with the Green Party Caucus. Premier John Horgan appointed Vancouver-area MLA George Heyman, a former executive director of Sierra Club B.C. and president of the B.C. Government Employees and Service Employees' Union, as Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, with a mandate letter which directed Heyman to, among other priorities, re-establish a Climate Leadership team, set a new 2030 GHG reduction target, expand and increase the existing carbon tax, and "employ every tool available to defend B.C.'s interests in the face of the expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline." A separate mandate letter to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, directed the Minister to create a roadmap for the province's energy future, to consider all Liquified Natural Gas proposals in light of the impact on climate change goals, to freeze hydro rates and to "immediately refer the Site C dam construction project to the B.C. Utilities Commission on the question of economic viability and consequences to British Columbians in the context of the current supply and demand conditions prevailing in the B.C. market." In addition, the government "will be fully adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

Some notes on each of these priorities:

Re the B.C. Climate Leadership Plan: The recommendations of the B.C. Climate Leadership Team were ignored by the Liberal government when delivered in 2016. In mid-September 2017, the reasons for that became clear, as reported by the National Observer , DeSmog Canada, Rabble.ca and Energy Mix . According to the *National Observer*, "provincial officials travelled to Calgary to hold five rounds of secret meetings over three months in the boardroom of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP). Representatives from Alberta-based oil giants Encana and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd (CNRL) are shown on the list of participants meeting with B.C.'s ministry of natural gas development." In the article for DeSmog Canada, Shannon Daub and Zoe Yunker state that the Climate Leadership process was a stunning example of institutional corruption: "what can only now be characterized as a pretend consultation process was acted out publicly…. The whole charade also represents an abuse of the climate leadership team's time and a mockery of B.C.'s claims to leadership during the Paris climate talks, not to mention a tremendous waste of public resources." The documents underlying the revelations were obtained under Freedom of Information requests by Corporate Mapping Project of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, of which Shannon Daub is Associate Director.

Re the Carbon Tax: The Budget Update released on September 11 states: "The Province will act to reduce carbon emissions by increasing the carbon tax rate on April 1, 2018 by $5 per tonne of CO2 equivalent emissions, while increasing the climate action tax credit to support low and middle income families. The requirement for the carbon tax to be revenue-neutral is eliminated so carbon tax revenues can support families and fund green initiatives that help us address our climate action commitments." For context, see "B.C. overturns carbon tax revenue-neutrality" (Sept. 22) by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions; for reaction, see the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-B.C. or the Pembina Institute .

Re the **Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline**: On October 2, 2017, the Federal Court of Appeal is scheduled to start the longest hearing in its history, for the consolidated challenges to the National Energy Board and Federal Cabinet approval of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Project. The government has applied for intervenor status, and in August hired environmental lawyer and former B.C. Supreme Court Justice Thomas Berger as an external legal advisor on the matter. West Coast Environmental Law blogged, "See you in court, Kinder Morgan" , which provides a thorough summary of the 17 cases against the TransMountain expansion; WCEL has also published a Legal Toolbox to Defend BC from Kinder Morgan, which goes into the legal arguments in more detail. The NEB website provides all official regulatory documents. Ecojustice is also involved in the complex court challenge.

Re the Site C Dam: In early August, the B.C. government announced a review of the Site C project by the B.C. Utilities Commission. The Preliminary Inquiry Report was released on September 20, calling for more information before passing judgement on whether BC Hydro should complete the project. The Inquiry Panel also finds "a reasonable estimate of the cost to terminate the project and remediate the site" would be $1.1 billion, based on the figures provided by BC Hydro and Deloitte consultants. The Inquiry report is summarized by CBC . Next steps: a series of round-the-province hearings and final recommendations to government to be released in a final report on November 1.

After years of protests about Site C, evidence against it seems to be piling up. A series of reports from the University of British Columbia Program on Water Governance, begun in 2016, have addressed the range of issues involved in the controversial project : First Nations issues; environmental impacts; regulatory process; greenhouse gas emissions; and economics. In April, an overview summary of these reports appeared in Policy Options as "Site C: It's not too late to hit Pause", stating that Site C is "neither the greenest nor the cheapest option, and makes a mockery of Indigenous Rights in the process."   On the issue of Indigenous Rights, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination called for a halt on construction in August, pending a full review of how Site C will affects Indigenous land.

"If Site C is a good project, it's time for Trudeau to trot out the evidence" in *iPolitics* (Sept. 17), calls Site C "an acid test for Trudeau's promise of evidence-based policy" and an environmental and economic disaster in the making. The *iPolitics* article summarizes the findings of a submission to the BC Utilities Commission review by Robert McCullough, who concluded that BC Hydro electricity demand forecasts overestimate demand by 30%, that its cost overruns on the project will likely hit $1.7 to $4.3 billion, and that wind and geothermal are cleaner alternatives to the project. McCullough's conclusions were partly based on his review of the technical report by Deloitte LLP, commissioned by the Inquiry.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **B.C. Carbon Tax**, **British Columbia**, **First Nations**, **Green Party**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **Kinder Morgan pipeline**, **New Democratic Party (NDP)**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Site C Dam**, **Trans Mountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

International action on Just Transition: what's been accomplished, and proposals for the future

Posted on **September 27, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Just Transition – Where are we now and what's next? A Guide to National Policies and International Climate Governance was released on September 19 by the International Trade

Union Confederation, summarizing what has been done to date by the ITUC and through international agencies such as the ILO, UNFCCC, and the Paris Agreement. It also provides short summaries of some transition situations, including the Ruhr Valley in Germany, Hazelwood workers in the LaTrobe Valley, Australia, U.S. Appalachian coal miners and the coal mining pension plan, Argentinian construction workers, and Chinese coal workers. Finally, the report calls for concrete steps to advance Just Transition and workers' interests.

The report defines Just Transition on a national or regional scale, as "an economy-wide process that produces the plans, policies and investments that lead to a future where all jobs are green and decent, emissions are at net zero, poverty is eradicated, and communities are thriving and resilient." But the report also argues that Just Transition is important for companies, with social dialogue and collective bargaining as key tools to manage the necessary industrial transformation at the organizational level. To that end, the ITUC is launching "A Workers Right To Know" as an ITUC campaign priority for 2018, stating, "Workers have a right to know what their governments are planning to meet the climate challenge and what the Just Transition measures are. Equally, workers have a right to know what their employers are planning, what the impact of the transition is and what the Just Transition guarantees will be. And workers have a right to know where their pension funds are invested with the demand that they are not funding climate or job destruction."

The ITUC report makes new proposals. It calls on the ILO to take a more ambitious role and to negotiate a Standard for Just Transition by 2021, carrying on from the *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies forAll* (2015). The ITUC also states "expectations" of how Just Transition should be given greater priority in the international negotiation process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), so that: Just Transition commitments are incorporated into the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of countries; Just Transition for workers becomes a permanent theme within the forum on response measures under the Paris Agreement, and Just Transition is included in the 2018 UNFCCC Facilitative Dialogue. It also calls for the launch of a "Katowice initiative for a Just Transition" at the COP23 meetings to take place in Katowice, Poland in 2018, "to provide a high-level political space". Finally, the ITUC calls for expansion of the eligibility criteria of the Green Climate Fund to allow the funding of Just Transition projects.

Just Transition – Where are we now and what's next? is a Climate Justice Frontline Briefing from the International Trade Union Confederation, with support from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and is based upon *Strengthening Just Transition Policies in International Climate Governance* by Anabella Rosemberg, published as a Policy Analysis Brief by the Stanley Foundation in 2017.

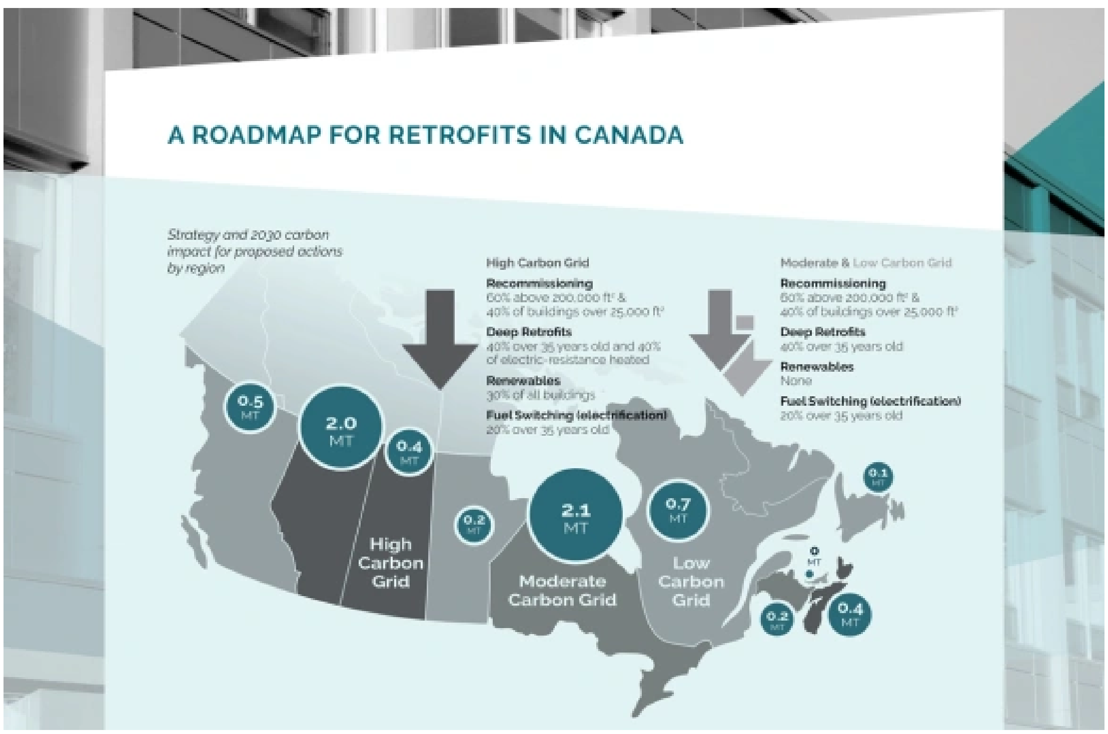
Other Just Transition News: In Calgary in September, the Just Transition and Good Green Jobs in Alberta Conference took place, sponsored by BlueGreen Alberta, with updates on national and provincial developments and with a global perspective from Samantha Smith, Director of the ITUC's Just Transition Centre as the keynote speaker. A companion event, the 3rd Annual Alberta Climate Summit, hosted by the Pembina Institute and Capital Power, also included a session on "Just Transition: Labour and Indigenous Perspectives" which featured Andres Filella (Metis Nation of Alberta), Samantha Smith(Just Transition Centre) and Heather Milton-Lightening (Indigenous Climate Action Network).

In advance of these events, the Alberta government had announced on September 11 the launch of the Coal Community Transition Fund to assist Alberta communities impacted by the mandated coal-phase out in the province. Municipalities and First Nations can apply for grant funding to support economic development initiatives that focus on regional partnerships and economic diversification. Further funding is anticipated from the federal government, with retraining programs also expected after the Advisory Panel on Coal Communities provides its recommendations in a report to the government, expected this fall.

Posted in **Business Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Coal Industry**, **International Labour Organization**, **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, **Just Transition**, **UNFCCC** | **Leave a reply**

A Roadmap for more energy efficient large buildings in Canada

Posted on **September 25, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**



— From http://www.cagbc.org/retrofitroadmap, the website of the Canada Green Building Council

The Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) has released a new report which makes recommendations for retrofitting large buildings as a means to achieving significant reductions in GHG emissions by 2030. The *Roadmap for Retrofits in Canada* report builds on a 2016 document by CaGBC, *Building Solutions to Climate Change: How Green Buildings Can Help Meet Canada's 2030 Emissions Targets* .

The *Roadmap* report begins with analysis of the carbon reduction potential of large buildings in Canada, based on the factors of size, age, energy source, regional electrical grid, and building type. The analysis was conducted by Montreal consultancy WSP. Some conclusions may seem obvious – for example, despite its relatively clean energy grid, Ontario contributes the greatest emissions from buildings because of the concentration of large buildings and the reliance on natural gas for heating and hot water. The level of detail of the analysis, however, reveals more surprising observations , for example: "In all provinces, the "other" asset class category represents the largest opportunity for carbon emissions reductions. This asset class includes warehouses, entertainment venues, leisure and recreation buildings, shopping centres, and colleges and universities."

CaGBC's *Roadmap for Retrofits in Canada* presents its recommendations for action, clustered in 4 categories, (in order of their magnitude of impact):

1. **Recommission buildings** that have yet to achieve high performance status by optimizing existing building systems for improved control and operational performance;
2. **Undertake deep retrofits** in buildings to high-performance standards such as LEED, focusing on energy reduction and ensuring that key building systems such as lighting, HVAC and envelopes are upgraded. Most impact will come from deep retrofits in buildings over 35 years old, and in buildings using electric resistance heating systems in regions with carbon-intensive electricity grids (Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia). Retail buildings are highlighted as an important sector .
3. **Switch to low carbon fuel** sources in 20% of buildings over 35 years old in all regions; and
4. **Incorporate solar or other on-site renewable energy systems**. The report states that this action would bring the highest carbon emissions reductions in Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. It would also be most impactful for buildings with large roof-to–floor space ratios, such as retail, education and institutional buildings.

The *Roadmap* report concludes with public policy recommendations for the building sector, including: Canada's future retrofit code should include a GHG metric along with energy thresholds; each province should develop its own unique roadmap for retrofits, to target areas where investments can yield the highest economic and environmental benefits; and the federal Low Carbon Economy Fund and future public funding programs should make use of a "roadmap" model. The federal government is expected to announce policy measures this Fall – see "Federal Government eyes energy retrofits in buildings" in the *Globe and Mail*. For an excellent summary of the *Roadmap* report, see "Deep retrofits, 'recommissioning' could meet climate targets on their own" (Sept. 22) from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) .

In related news, on September 14, New York Mayor De Blasio proposed what he characterized as a pioneering plan to force landlords to retrofit older, larger commercial and institutional buildings in NYC. "De Blasio Vows to Cut Emissions in New York's Larger Buildings" in the *New York Times* (Sept. 14) states that the proposals are only sketched out and are just beginning to search for political allies. An article in *Inside Climate News* summarizes the issue of energy efficiency building codes in the U.S., and briefly describes initiatives in the cities of New York, Seattle, Dallas, and Washington, D.C.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Energy Efficiency Standards**, **Energy policy**, **Green Building**, **New York City**, **retrofitting** | **Leave a reply**

Ontario, Quebec and California sign formal agreement to link their carbon markets

Posted on **September 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On September 22, Premier Couillard of Quebec hosted Premier Wynne of Ontario and California Governor Jerry Brown in Québec City, where they signed an agreement which formally brings Ontario into the existing joint carbon market of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI). This comes as no surprise: the government had announced its intention to join the WCR in April 2015 as part of its Climate Change Action Plan. When Ontario joins up with Quebec and California, effective January 1, 2018, the carbon market will cover a population of more than 60 million people and about C$4 trillion in GDP. The three governments will harmonize regulations and reporting, while also planning and holding joint auctions of GHG emission allowances. Text of the *Agreement on the Harmonization and Integration of Cap-and-Trade Programs for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions* is here. Here is an introduction to Ontario's cap and trade program, which was announced as part of the For an up-to-date description of the Western Climate Initiative and its importance as a model for sub-national, international co-operation, see "Will Other States Join California's International Climate Pact?" in *The Atlantic* (August 10 2017).

The Western Climate Initiative Inc. is based in Sacramento California, and is now "a non-profit corporation formed to provide administrative and technical services to support the implementation of state and provincial greenhouse gas emissions trading programs" .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **California**, **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Markets**, **Ontario**, **Quebec**, **Western Climate Initiative** | **Leave a reply**

"Historic" climate change resolution is passed unanimously at the 2017

Trades Union Congress in the U.K.

Posted on **September 20, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

According to a September 13 press release from Trade Unions for Energy Democracy : "The annual congress of the UK Trades Union Congress (TUC) has passed a historic composite resolution on climate change that supports the energy sector being returned to public ownership and democratic control. The resolution—carried unanimously—calls upon the 5.7-million-member national federation to work with the Labour Party to achieve this goal, as well as to: implement a mass program for energy conservation and efficiency; lobby for the establishment of a "just transition" strategy for affected workers; and, investigate the long-term risks to pension funds from investments in fossil fuels."   The "composite resolution", Resolution 4, along with discussion and videos of the debate are here . The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) submitted the first resolution; the final composite resolution incorporated amendments by the Communication Workers Union, Fire Brigades Union, the train drivers union ASLEF, and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association.

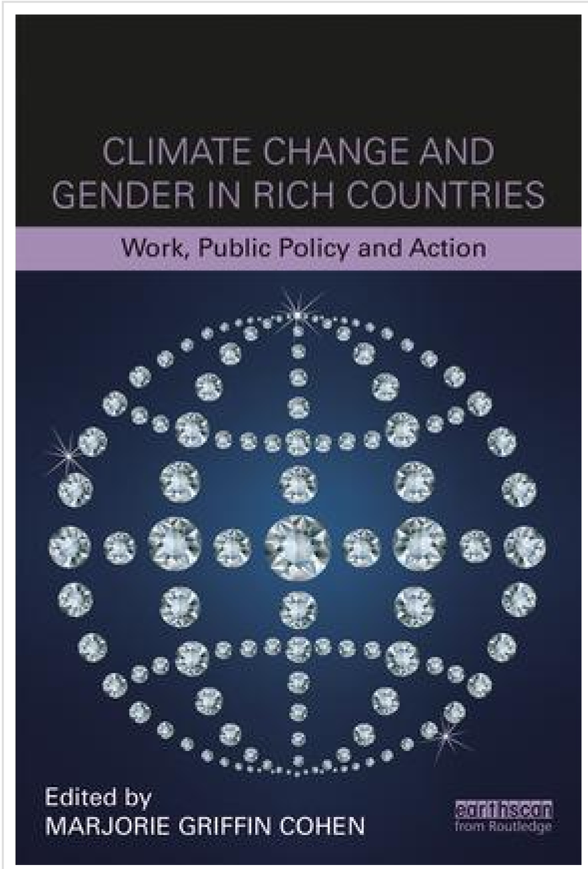
A previous climate change resolution had been defeated at the 2016 annual congress. What was different this time? Speakers in the debate mentioned Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, the chaos of Brexit, and also Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, fresh evidence of the disasters of climate change. Trade Unions for Energy Democracy credits the influence of the Labour Party, and in advance of the vote, Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn received an enthusiastic response to his speech to the Congress. The Labour Party Manifesto, *For the Many, not the Few* , had been released during the 2017 General Election, and highlighted the issue of energy poverty, committing to "take energy back into public ownership to deliver renewable energy, affordability for consumers, and democratic control." It further called for the creation of "publicly owned, locally accountable energy companies and co-operatives to rival existing private energy suppliers." Another influential document, "*Reclaiming Public Service: How cities and citizens are turning back privatization*," was published in June 2017 by the Transnational Institute, providing global case studies of "re-municipalization" of public services, including energy.

The Trades Union Congress 2017 Congress website provides videos, reports, and an archive of documents from the meetings. This blog post summarizes the General Council statement on workers' rights and Brexit.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **energy democracy**, **labour union policies**, **public ownership**, **Trade Unions for Energy Democracy**, **Trades Union Congress**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Why gender matters when dealing with climate change

Posted on **September 19, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**



Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries: Work, Public Policy and Action is a new book released in London by Routledge publishers, as part of its *Studies in Climate, Work and Society series.* Reviewers call it "path-breaking","timely", "exciting", "unique", "excellent and wide-ranging" and judge that it "moves beyond common perceptions of women as vulnerable victims to show there are no universal experiences of climate change. Gender is highly relevant but in complex ways."

Editor Marjorie Griffin Cohen introduces the book by answering the question, **"**Why Gender Matters when Dealing with Climate Change". 18 chapters follow, providing analysis and case studies from the U.K., Sweden, Australia, Canada, Spain and the U.S.. Some of the chapters are: " Women and Low Energy Construction in Europe: A New Opportunity?" by Linda Clarke, Colin Gleeson and Christine Wall; "The US Example of Integrating Gender and Climate Change in Training: Response to the 2008–09 Recession", by Marjorie Griffin Cohen; "UK Environmental and Trade Union Groups' Struggles to Integrate Gender Issues into Climate Change Analysis and Activism", by Carl Mandy; and "How a Gendered Understanding of Climate Change Can Help Shape Canadian Climate Policy", by Nathalie Chalifour.

The book editor, Marjorie Griffin Cohen , is Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, and a Co-Investigator at the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW). She was also an editor of "Women and Work in a Warming World (W4) " which appeared as Issue 94/95 in *Women & Environments International Magazine* (2014/15).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Gender**, **labour union policies**, **Women in Renewable Energy** | **Leave a reply**

Responses to Climate change-related weather disasters in 2017

Posted on **September 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— Photo from B.C. Wildfire Service

The summer of 2017 has seen unprecedented forest fires, heat waves, floods and hurricanes around the world, with flooding and forest fires in Canada. In response, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced the launch of an advisory Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience on August 29, to be chaired by Dr. Blair Feltmate, Head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo. The Expert Panel will be composed of academic, private sector, government, non-government, and Indigenous representatives. CBC summarizes the initiative here .

On September 1, the Insurance Bureau of Canada issued a press release that estimated more than $223 million in insured damage from two storm and flooding events in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec in May. An Internal Review of the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, released in the Spring of 2017, states that the average annual federal share of provincial/territorial response and recovery costs has increased from C$10 million from 1970 to 1995, to $100 million from 1996 to 2010, to $360 million from 2011 to 2016, with the majority of costs caused by flooding.

Before either Hurricanes Harvey or Irma, the U.S. National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) stated, "In 2017 (as of July 7), there have been 9 weather and climate disaster events with losses exceeding $1 billion each across the United States. These events included 2 flooding events, 1 freeze event, and 6 severe storm events. Overall, these events resulted in the deaths of 57 people and had significant economic effects on the areas impacted."

At the end of August, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released a report which states: "The average natural disaster costs the economy C$130 billion and lowers GDP by approximately 2%….. On average, it is estimated that natural disasters increase public budget deficits by 25%." *Building Better: Setting the 2017 Ontario Infrastructure Plan up for success* urges significant investment, stating: "Research shows that investment in infrastructure, such as roads, transportation, communication, utilities and more, have resulted in lowered business costs and increased labour productivity. It is estimated that for every $1 billion in infrastructure spending, 16,700 jobs are supported for one year and the GDP sees a $1.14 billion increase."

In June, the City of Toronto appointed its first Chief Resilience Officer, whose job it is to prepare for catastrophic events and other stresses, with a focus on social issues such as housing and transit, building on existing programs under the city's climate resilience and TransformTO initiatives. The Chief Resilience Officer position is funded by 100 Resilient Cities, an international network whose website houses a collection of Urban Resilience plans from around the world.

And for the last word on this catastrophic summer, read Bill McKibben's opinion in *The Guardian*, "Stop Talking Right Now about the threat of Climate Change. It's Here; It's Happening".

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Flooding**, **Infrastructure Investment**, **natural disasters** | **Leave a reply**

Business think tank calls for Low-carbon policies for Canada

Posted on **September 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Conference Board of Canada acknowledged that Canada must institute a carbon tax and decarbonize its electricity system in its September report, *The Cost of a Cleaner Future: Examining the Economic Impacts of Reducing GHG Emissions* (free, registration required). The report presents a range of economic scenarios, relying on modelling from the Trottier Energy Futures project, and focusing on three issues: carbon pricing; eliminating oil and natural gas from electricity generation; and the investment of trillions of dollars in green technology. On the impact of carbon pricing, one scenario assumes a carbon tax of $80 per tonne in 2025, yielding an average annual cost to Canadian household of approximately $2,000, shrinking the economy by only 1.8%, and cutting employment by 0.1%. The total economic impact is forecast to be small, assuming that carbon tax revenues are reinvested in the economy in the form of corporate and personal income tax cuts and additional public spending on infrastructure. Industries most likely to suffer from reduced competitiveness are chemicals, mining and smelting, and pulp and paper; and "industries with a domestic focus and sensitivity to price changes, such as residential construction, will be hard hit".

Negative press coverage of the report appeared in "Carbon tax to shrink economy by $3 billion, hurt loonie, study warns" in the *Financial Post*. The *Globe and Mail* was more optimistic, with "Canada urged to bite the bullet on shift to low carbon economy" and an OpEd "Can Canada remain an energy superpower?". In the OpEd , Glenn Hodgson of the Conference Board recommends public policy support for a low-carbon energy strategy so that Canada can become North America's most efficient, low-carbon source of oil and gas, while building up the country's expertise in a range of other energy services, including carbon capture and storage, nuclear, and energy storage technologies. Such an outlook coincides with two other Conference Board publications over the summer: *Clean Trade: Global Opportunities in Climate-Friendly Technologies* and *Canadian Green Trade and Value Chains: Defining the Opportunities* (both free with registration). These new reports are the product of the new Low-Carbon Growth Economy Centre at the Conference Board of Canada.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Business attitudes**, **Carbon Tax**, **Energy policy**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction** | **Leave a reply**

Climate bargaining: a proposed model and a hint of urgency for progress

Posted on **September 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A Research Note published in the *Journal of Industrial Relations* in July 2017 outlines how climate change and workplace relations are linked, noting that "The link between climate change and ER is not simply a matter of industrial change, job loss and green jobs' inferior wages and conditions." The article provides a brief review of academic studies on the issue, which notes how much it is on the margins, with the vast majority of research focused on a socio-political approach. The main purpose of the article is the real world responses of the primary actors– unions and employer associations: unions, with policy responses focused on Just Transition, and employers, with their own corporate social responsibility response.

Most importantly, the article then provides examples of "climate bargaining", based on bargaining agreements, union policy documents and union reports from the U.K., Canada and Australia, from 2006 to 2014. With a focus on two "leadership" unions, the Australian National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) of the United Kingdom, the author concludes that “ER and climate change appear to be developing in two forms: embedded institutional and voluntary multilateral responses. Embedded institutional responses seek to integrate environmental commitments into EBAs via green clauses, while voluntary multilateralism moves away from formal clauses within legal frameworks and instead sees unions and employers pursue strategic workplace environmental projects that directly engage management and employees in environmental initiatives…. The voluntary multilateral model appears to offer a more successful and exciting integration of climate change and ER than simply bargaining for green clauses in enterprise agreements. Nevertheless, both approaches highlight the important role of the state in supporting these models via regulation and government-funded programmes.”

“Climate change and employment relations ” was written by Caleb Goods, who was a Co-Investigator in the Adapting Canadian Work & Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project and is now a Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. His previous work includes Why Work And Workers Matter In The Environmental Debate (2016), and *Greening Auto Jobs: A critical analysis of the green job solution* (2014). Go to “Climate change and employment relations” to download the article for a fee; only the abstract is available for free.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Australia**, **collective agreements**, **green clauses**, **labour union policies**, **Trades Union Congress (TUC)** | **Leave a reply**

Pollution cost Canada $2 billion in Lost Labour Output alone

Posted on **September 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The June 2017 report, *Costs of Pollution in Canada: Measuring the impacts on families, businesses and governments* reviews and synthesizes existing studies to produce the most comprehensive assessment of pollution and its costs in Canada to date. Some quick facts: the cost of climate change-related heat waves in Canada is estimated to have been $1.6 billion in 2015; Smog alone cost Canadians $36 billion in 2015. But the report also provides detailed estimates, organized in three categories: 1. Direct Welfare Costs: (Harm to health and well-being such as lower enjoyment of life, sickness and premature death); 2. Direct Income Costs – (Direct out of pocket expenses for families (e.g. medications for asthma), businesses (e.g. increased maintenance costs for buildings) and governments (remediation of polluted sites); and 3. Wealth impacts.

Direct Welfare Costs of pollution, the most studied and understood, are estimated as at least $39 billion in 2015, or about $4,300 for a family of four. The Direct Income Costs that could be measured amounted to $3.3 billion in 2015, but the study cautions that this many important costs could not be measured, and full impacts on income were likely in the tens of billions of dollars. In this category, the study estimates Lost Labour Outputs, using a metric derived from the 2016 OECD study, *The Economic Consequences of Outdoor Air Pollution*. The OECD estimates outdoor air pollution to cost 0.1% of national GDP, which, when applied to Canada's 2015 GDP of approximately $1,986 billion, implies a costs of about $2 billion in lost labour output alone. And finally, Wealth impacts, or costs on value of assets , are said to be the least understood of pollution costs, about which, "We simply do not know how much pollution costs us in terms of lost wealth".

Costs of Pollution in Canada: Measuring the impacts on families, businesses and governments was prepared by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), with funding from the Ivey Foundation; the full report is available in English- only. Summaries are in English and French.Short videos were derived in cooperation with the Conference Board of Canada to focus on key topics: e.g. extreme weather, contaminated sites, and smog .

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **air pollution**, **climate change and health**, **Extreme Weather Events**, **Greenhouse gas emissions**, **health effects of climate change**, **Heat Stress**, **Labour Productivity**, **Pollution**, **toxic chemicals** | **Leave a reply**

Clean Energy Jobs a pathway to decent work for California's disadvantaged workers; plus economic benefits of California's climate policies

Posted on **September 6, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Three recent studies from University of California at Berkeley provide evidence of the job benefits of clean energy industries. The first,"Diversity in California's Clean Energy Workforce", from Berkeley's Center for Labor Research and Education Green Economy Program, claims to be the first quantitative analysis of who is getting into apprentice training programs and jobs on renewables. It states that " Joint union-employer apprenticeship programs have helped people of color get training and career-track jobs building California's clean energy infrastructure". The authors attribute this to the recruitment efforts by unions, as well as the location of many renewable power plants in areas where there are high concentrations of disadvantaged communities. It presents data for the ethnic, racial and gender composition of enrollment in apprenticeship programs in 16 union locals for electricians, ironworkers and operating engineers. The report finds significant variation in racial and ethnic diversity amongst unions,with women's participation minimal, (ranging from 2 – 6%) in all cases. Uniquely, the study also examined the impact of clean energy construction on disadvantaged workers, finding that 43% of entry-level workers live in disadvantaged communities, and 47% live in communities with unemployment rates of at least 13%. Further, it states: "Most large-scale renewable energy plants have been built under project labor agreements. These agreements require union wage and benefit standards and provide free training through apprenticeship programs."

Two other reports were released by the Center for Labor Research and Education, the Center for Law, Energy and the Environment (CLEE) at UC Berkeley Law, and advocacy group Next 10. *The Economic Impacts of California's Major Climate Programs on the San Joaquin Valley: Analysis through 2015 and Projections to 2030* (January) and *The Net Economic Impacts of California's Major Climate Programs in the Inland Empire: Analysis of 2010-2016 and Beyond* (August) examine the impact of climate programs on California's most environmentally vulnerable regions. The "Inland Empire" (defined as the counties of San Bernardino and Riverside) report , examined four key policies: cap and trade, the renewables portfolio standard, distributed solar policies and energy efficiency programs. These policies were found to have brought a net benefit of $9.1 billion in direct economic activity and 41,000 net direct jobs from 2010 to 2016 . Policy recommendations to continue these benefits: "reward cleaner transportation in this region; help disburse cap-and-trade auction proceeds in a timely and predictable manner; and create robust transition programs for workers and communities affected by the decline of the Inland Empire's greenhouse gas-emitting industries, including re-training and job placement programs, bridges to retirement, and regional economic development initiatives."

The three reports were released to be part of the public debate about extending the cap and trade legislation (passed in July) and about California's Senate Bill SB100 , which passed 2nd reading in the legislature on September 5. SB100 would toughen existing targets to 60% renewable electricity by 2030, and require utilities to plan for 100% renewable electricity by 2045 .

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Apprenticeship**, **California**, **Clean energy industry**, **disadvantaged workers**, **employment impacts**, **labour union policies**, **Project Labor Agreements** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition for the coal industry is expensive – but cheaper than failure to address the needs

Posted on **September 5, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

July 2017 saw the release of *Lessons from Previous Coal Transitions: High-level Summary for Decision-makers* , a synthesis report of case studies of past coal mining transitions in Spain, U.K., the Netherlands, Poland, U.S., and the Czech Republic – some as far back as the 1970's. Some key take-aways from the report: "Because of the large scale and complexity of the challenges to be addressed, the earlier that actors (i.e. workers, companies and regions) anticipated, accepted and began to implement steps to prepare and cushion the shock of the transition, the better the results"; "the aggregate social costs to the state of a failure to invest in the transition of workers and regions are often much higher that the costs of not investing from an overall societal perspective." While the level of cost details varies in the case studies, it is clear that costs are significant. For example, the case study of Limburg, Netherlands states that the national government spent approximately 11.6 billion Euros (in today's prices) on national subsidies to support coal prices and regional reconversion, in addition to several 100 million per year in EU funds. "One estimate also suggested that in the Dutch case, all told, regional reinvestment in new economic activities also cost about 300 to 400 000€/per long-term job created." Limburg is also cited as "remarkable for the relatively consensual nature of the transition between unions, company and government." (see page 10).

The Synthesis report and individual case study reports of the six countries are available here . These are the work of the Research and Dialogue on Coal Transitions project, a large-scale research project led by Climate Strategies and the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) , which also sponsors the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project. Future reports scheduled for 2018: a Global report, and a Round Table on the Future of Coal.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **case studies**, **coal mining industry**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

A map of green building jobs in B.C.; Edmonton benchmarks its energy efficiency

Posted on **August 31, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On August 23, the Pembina Institute released an update to the British Columbia *Green Buildings Map,* first launched in 2015 . The updated interactive map of 2017 shows where approximately 20,000 energy-efficient homes and buildings are located throughout B.C.. Pembina's research also states that there are 31,700 people employed in the green building sector – an impressive increase from the 23,200 in 2015, especially given the decline in energy-efficient retrofitting which occurred when the previous provincial government ended its LiveSmart rebate program in 2014.

Related documents recently released: A discussion paper from the Pembina Institute and The Atmospheric Fund, reminding us that net-zero standards for new construction will lead to a significant but insufficient reduction in GHG emissions – retrofitting of existing buildings is also required. The Pan-Canadian Framework committed to the development of a national model code for existing buildings by 2022. *Energy Regulations for Existing Buildings* identifies the opportunities and challenges for the federal government to consider as it works with the provinces to create and implement supporting measures such as financing, incentives, and energy labeling, as well as ambitious and clear building codes and regulations.

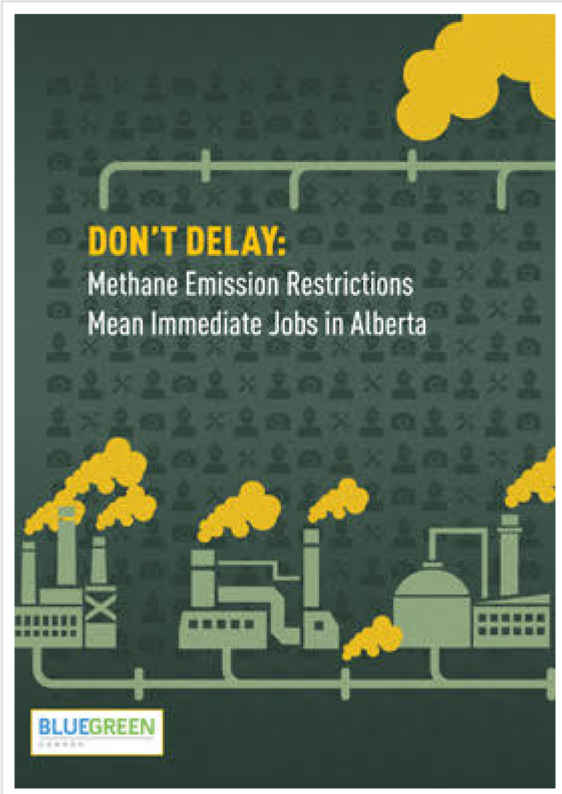
From the Conference Board of Canada in August: *Doing More with Less: Energy Efficiency Potential in Canada*. The report surveys the existing studies about energy efficiency in Canada at the national and provincial level – highlighting the barriers that exist as well as the potential for savings in energy consumption and GHG emissions. It concludes that energy efficiency measures such as incentive programs, retrofits, audits, land-use measures, building standards and renewable subsidies can substantially reduce Canada's energy consumption, with the most promise for energy savings to be found in lighting, space heating and household electronics for residences, and lighting, computer and HVAC equipment in the commercial sector.

And on the ground, the City of Edmonton, Alberta launched a three-year Large Building Energy Reporting & Disclosure pilot program in June. Participants will benchmark the energy performance of the city's largest buildings, using Natural Resources Canada's Energy STAR Portfolio Management tool. The full Program details are here ; a summary is here . At the end of the 3-year pilot, the city will evaluate whether to maintain the program as a voluntary one, or require mandatory reporting.

Posted in **Green Economy**, **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **Building Codes**, **Edmonton**, **Energy Efficiency Standards**, **Green Building**, **retrofitting**, **Skilled Workers** | **Leave a reply**

Methane regulations: a path to lower emissions and more jobs for Alberta

Posted on **August 23, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**



A July 2017 report by Blue Green Canada, argues that the Alberta government should implement methane regulations immediately, rather than wait for the proposed federal regulations to take effect in 2023. Speeding up regulations "could reduce air pollution, achieve our climate targets more cost-effectively, and create thousands of high-paying jobs in a single step", according to *Don't Delay: Methane Emission Restrictions mean Immediate jobs in Alberta* . Blue Green estimates that Alberta's oil and gas operations release $67.6 million worth of methane annually, and recovering it for energy use could create more than 1,500 new jobs in the province – well paid jobs, including work in engineering, manufacturing, surveying, and administration.

Environmental organizations, labour groups and technology companies sent a joint Open Letter to Premier Rachel Notley in August, urging her to view the proposed federal methane regulations as a floor, not a ceiling, and reiterating the argument for economic opportunity: "There are a number of innovative companies in Alberta ready to supply methane capture and detection technologies and services and a large majority of these companies report being poised for strong growth given the right regulatory signals." The letter, from Blue Green Canada, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Iron and Earth, Keepers of the Athabasca, Pembina Institute, Peace River Environmental Society, Progress Alberta, Questor Technology, Unifor, and United Steelworkers is here.

Accelerating the target date for regulations is not the only concern. "Five Ways Alberta Can Raise the Bar on Methane Regulations" at DeSmog Blog, (August 1) makes recommendations for tighter rules for venting and flaring, improved monitoring, and expanded scope. Also in August, the Environmental Law Centre of Alberta released *Methane Reduction under the Climate Change Leadership Plan* , the latest paper in its Climate Change Legal Roadmap series, which makes recommendations for improvements to both the provincial and federal regulations. The task of developing methane regulations in Alberta falls to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), which has said that it is currently reviewing the feedback from its draft regulations, and will release a document for public comment in Fall 2017.

Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan in 2015 called for 45 per cent reduction in methane emissions from the oil and gas industry by 2025. The Pan-Canadian Framework included a commitment to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40 to 45 per cent from 2012 levels by 2025, and in May 2017, the federal government released draft regulations beginning in 2020, with a second phase beginning in 2023.

Earlier, related reports: In April, Environmental Defence released *Canada's Methane Gas Problem: Why strong regulations can reduce pollution, protect health and save money* , which demonstrated that methane emissions are higher than reported by industry: 60% higher in Alberta. Research funded by the David Suzuki Foundation and released in April, found that methane emissions in B.C. are 250% higher than reported. *The Cost of Managing Methane Emissions*, a June blog from the Pembina Institute, sheds light on the GHG savings to be had by instituting regulations.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Emissions Regulations**, **Job Creation**, **Methane Emissions** | **Leave a reply**

A closer look at electric vehicle growth: impact on pollution, and labour conditions in the mines supplying raw materials

Posted on **August 23, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The summer started with several “good news” stories about the surge of electric vehicles, such as “Starting in 2019, Volvo will use electricity to power every new model” from the *Washington Post* (July 5) , quoting Volvo’s CEO : “This announcement marks the end of the solely combustion engine-powered car.” *Bloomberg Business Week*, summarizing the findings of its latest New Energy forecast, stated on July 7, “in just eight years, electric cars will be as cheap as gasoline vehicles, pushing the global fleet to 530 million vehicles by 2040″, and “Electric cars will outsell fossil-fuel powered vehicles within two decades as battery prices plunge, turning the global auto industry upside down and signaling economic turmoil for oil-exporting countries” . On July 6, France announced it would end the sale of gas and diesel cars by 2040 , and on July 26 the U.K. released its Clean Air Plan, which included a ban on the sale of new diesel and gas cars after 2040, with only electric vehicles available after that.

Response to the U.K. announcement is mixed. In “Electric cars are not the solution to air pollution” Professor Frank Kelly, a professor of environmental health at King’s College London and chair of the government’s Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants states that “The government’s plan does not go nearly far enough,” “Our cities need fewer cars, not just cleaner cars.” In his role as a member of the Centre for London’s commission on the future of the capital’s roads and streets , Professor Kelly provides more detail about the problem of particle pollution and states: “London should lead in showing electric cars will not tackle air pollution” in *The Guardian* (August 4). His conclusion: “The safe and efficient movement of people around the city can only be achieved through a clean and expanded mass transit system served by buses, overground trains and the underground system – and as much active transport in the form of walking and cycling as is feasibly possible.”

Others are raising issues about electric vehicles on other grounds, specifically the environmental costs and labour conditions of producing the lithium ion batteries that power them. These are not new concerns: Carla Lipsig Mumme and Caleb Goods raised the flag in June 2015 with “The battery revolution is exciting, but remember they pollute too” in *The Conversation*. In January 2016, Amnesty International published a detailed documentation of the hazardous working conditions and the use of child labour in cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in *This is what we die for: Human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo power the global trade in cobalt* . (Cobalt is also used in mobile phones, laptop computers, and other portable electronic devices). The report is available in English, French and Chinese from this link .

More recently, “Politically charged: do you know where your batteries come from? ” appeared in *The Conversation* (July 26), providing an overview of the geography , politics, and environmental impact of lithium-ion battery raw materials. Briefly, the current major producers of lithium are Australia, Chile, Argentina and China, with Australia and Chile accounting for about 75% of the total. The main environmental concern, especially in Chile, is that the extraction can impact water supply in desert areas. The article also looks at supply chain issues and states : “With almost half of the world’s cobalt ore reserves concentrated in Democratic Republic of Congo for the foreseeable future, and with a large proportion of refining capacity located in China, the supply chain could be more vulnerable.” Not to mention the vulnerability of the miners Amnesty International has documented.

A Canadian viewpoint on the issue of supply: "Clean Energy Spurs Lithium Rush, Demands Response to 'Dirty Mining'" in the *Energy Mix* (August 8). In the article, *Financial Post* columnist Peter Tertzakian states: " it takes the equivalent of 15,000 cell phone batteries to make one battery for an electric car," and "ramping up raw material inputs to build millions of car batteries a year fills the back of the envelope with scalability issues." These supply issues may lead to a growth of "dirty mining" practices. Will Canada be affected by the push for clean energy raw materials? We do not currently produce lithium, although the article states that engineers are trying to isolate it from tar sand/oil sand waste. We are a minor producer of other battery components, graphite and cobalt, and the 3rd largest producer of nickel in the world. According to Bloomberg News in August, the growth of electric vehicles will drive a doubling of demand for nickel by 2050. However, Bloomberg reports that mining giant BHP Bilton will invest in Australia to make it the world's largest producer of nickel for electric vehicle batteries.

A final troubling issue with electric vehicles: disposal. "The rise of electric cars could leave us with a big battery waste problem " according to *The Guardian* (August 10) , which cites the International Energy Agency estimates of 140m electric cars globally by 2030, resulting in a possible 11 million tonnes of spent lithium-ion batteries in need of recycling. Two solutions are profiled in the article: recycling and reuse. The recycling profile features the CEO of Canadian battery recycling start-up company, Li-Cycle, which is pioneering a wet chemistry process which would retrieve all of the important metals from batteries. The proponents of the re-use solution include Aceleron and carmaker Nissan, which has patented a process for re-use. The article states that car batteries can still have up to 70% of their capacity when they stop being good enough to power electric vehicles, so that they can be broken down, tested and re-packaged for functions such as home energy storage.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **air pollution**, **alternative fuel vehicles**, **diesel cars**, **Electric Vehicles**, **France**, **Lithium Ion Batteries**, **mining industry**, **Recycling**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Decarbonizing Canada's economy offers huge construction job opportunities

Posted on **August 23, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A July report asserts that Canada's ability to meet our climate goals will be based on multiple paths to decarbonization, including construction of new electricity-generation facilities using renewable sources, including hydro, wind, solar, tidal, biomass and geothermal energy. In addition, it will require the construction and maintenance of more efficient buildings, and transportation infrastructure. The tradespeople who can build such low-carbon solutions include masons, boilermakers, pipefitters, insulators, electrical workers, glaziers, HVAC, linemen, ironworkers and others .

The July report, *Jobs for Tomorrow: Canada's Building Trades and Net Zero Emissions* makes job creation projections for construction occupations, based on an aggressive emissions reduction target of Net-zero emissions by 2050 (Canada's current national emissions reduction commitment is 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030) . Overall, the report concludes that the Net-zero emissions reduction target could generate nearly 4 million direct building trades jobs, and 20 million indirect, induced and supply chain jobs by 2050. Some examples from the report: building small district energy systems in half of Canada's municipalities with populations over 100,000 would create over 547,000 construction jobs by 2050. Building solar installations would create the next-highest level of construction jobs: 438,350. Building $150 billion of urban transit infrastructure (rapid transit tracks and bridges, subway tunnels, and dedicated bus lanes) would create about 245,000 direct construction jobs by 2050.

Jobs for Tomorrow is much more than a laundry list of job projections. Authors Tyee Bridge, Richard Gilbert, and Charley Beresford were supported by advisers Lee Loftus, President BC Building Trades; Bob Blakely, Canadian Operating Officer, Canada's Building Trades Unions; and Tom Sigurdson, Executive Director, BC Building Trades. As a result, the report provides a depth of understanding of the construction industry, which is put in the context of solidly researched overviews of Canada's current economic and climate change policy. The report was commissioned by Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU), an umbrella organization affiliated with 15 international construction unions, and released by the Columbia Institute, Vancouver. A French version, *Les emplois de demain : Les métiers de la construction du Canada et les émissions nettes zero* is available here .

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Clean energy industry**, **Construction Industry**, **energy efficiency**, **Green Building**, **Green Infrastructure**, **Job Creation**, **Skilled Workers** | **Leave a reply**

The complex challenge of emissions reduction in the movement of goods

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The State of Freight: Understanding greenhouse gas emissions from goods movement in Canada is a detailed examination of the factors driving the increase of emissions from goods movement, and the complex of federal, provincial, and municipal programs and legislation. The report makes a convincing case for the importance of this issue: Freight (defined as road, rail, ship and plane), accounted for 10.5 per cent of total emissions in Canada in 2015; freight is the fastest-growing segment of the transportation sector, and the transportation sector is the second highest source of emissions in Canada – and the largest sectoral source of emissions in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. And simply put: “Any business with a supply chain depends on freight. And nearly everything we purchase as consumers has to be transported to the purchase or delivery point.”

The report focuses most attention on the movement of goods using heavy-duty trucks, and identifies the main actors in that industry, as well as examples of international programs to improve efficiency, including the U.S., California, and the EU. Good companion reading on that issue is the April 2017 Pembina report, *Improving Urban Freight Efficiency: Global best practices in reducing emissions in goods movement*, which provides case studies from New York City, Toronto, Sweden, and London. A 2014 report by Pembina also focuses on Toronto: see *Greening the Goods: Opportunities for low-carbon goods movement in Toronto*.

The State of Freight identifies as the key opportunities to reduce emissions: carbon pricing and the forthcoming federal Clean Fuel Standard; Phase 2 heavy-duty vehicle efficiency regulations ; Continued rollout and adoption of efficiency technologies; Build-out of fuelling infrastructure – biofuels, natural gas , electric and hydrogen; and integration of goods movement into regional and municipal land use planning.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Supply chains**, **Transportation**, **Trucking Industry**, **Urban Emissions** | **Leave a reply**

Review of Australia’s Electricity future seeks political compromise; unions see some hints of Just Transition

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Final Report of the Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market was submitted to the Australian government by its Chief Scientist, Alan Finkel, on June 9

– the government press release is here . Given that Australia currently obtains approximately two-thirds of its electricity from coal-fired generating units, it is controversial territory. The Finkel Review seeks compromise ground: it doesn't recommend a return to Australia's previous emissions trading scheme , nor a carbon tax – instead, it recommends a "clean energy target", where cleaner power generators would get financial rewards relative to the amount of CO2 emitted per megawatt hour. In "Australia: New climate policy same old politics", *Climate Home* states: A "major review of Australian climate policy has been compromised by the malignant politics that has sent Australia to the back of the international pack". Even more critical is "Alan Finkel's emissions target breaks Australia's Paris commitments" in *The Guardian* (June 9), which states that the Finkel recommendations would result in emissions levels 28% below 2005 levels by 2030 for the electricity sector – less than needed, and less than called for in a 2016 report by the Climate Change Authority, *Policy options for Australia's electricity supply sector* . *The Guardian* also published "Finkel review anticipates lower power prices, but weak electricity emissions target", with detail of the recommendations and the political response.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) response to the Finkel report is muted, and focused less on the strength of the emission targets and more on the recommendations for an orderly transition of the sector, and a three year notice period before generator withdrawal. From the ACTU press release: "it is immediately clear that the report states the need for an orderly transition that includes workforce preparedness….The report also recommends a three year notice period before generator withdrawal, which would provide some notice for workers and communities." The ACTU has previously recommended the establishment of the Energy Transition Authority to navigate the transition to a clean energy economy.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Australia**, **Australian Council of Trade Unions**, **electricity sector**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction** | **Leave a reply**

$2 Billion Low-Carbon Economy Fund announced, but Saskatchewan headed in a different direction

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 15, Canada's Federal Environment and Climate Minister announced details of the government's five-year, $2-billion Low Carbon Economy Fund , to support the goals of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. The Low Carbon Economy Fund consists of two parts: the larger, Leadership Fund of $1.4 billion, for projects proposed by provinces and territories that have signed on Pan-Canadian Framework , and the Low Carbon Economy Challenge, which will be launched in fall 2017, to support projects submitted by all provinces and territories, municipalities, Indigenous governments and organizations, businesses and both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. As described in "'Only fair': McKenna on excluding Saskatchewan, Manitoba from $2B carbon fund" , Manitoba and Saskatchewan must sign on to the Pan-Canadian Framework by December 2017 to be eligible to receive any funding .

A CBC report summarizes the response by Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall – who states, ""If this fund, which Saskatchewan taxpayers have helped create, is really about reducing carbon emissions, how does withholding those funds for green initiatives in Saskatchewan help that objective?" Saskatchewan objects to the carbon tax mandate of the Pan-Canadian Framework, and has directed its climate change fight to carbon capture and storage, and more recently, Canada's first geothermal power plant. The press release from SaskPower regarding the geothermal power purchase agreement is here. Read this article from DeSmog blog for a wide-ranging description of Saskatchewan's energy policy and the announcement of its geothermal plant.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Geothermal energy**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

Alberta Oil Sands Advisory Group recommends a roadmap for the 100 megatonne emissions cap

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The provincial government released the consensus report of Phase 1 of the Alberta Oil Sands Advisory Group on June 16 – proposing a process to comply with the the legislated 100 megatonne emissions limit for oil and gas production, as required by the Climate Leadership Plan. The recommendations for early action focus on encouraging lower emission intensity production through technological innovation, and building information and reporting systems to drive improvements. Those information systems could also trigger reviews and possible penalties if emissions approach 80% or 95% of the 100 megatonne limit. According to an article in *Energy Mix*, "The industry is staking its future on the hope that it can simultaneously increase production and reduce production emissions, an approach that is seen as favouring the largest operators in the tar sands/oil sands over smaller companies. " An article in the *Edmonton Journal* provides commentary from the oil industry perspective.

The Executive Summary of the report is here ; the full Report is here . The government will start consultations with key stakeholders immediately, before proceeding with Phase 2 of policy design. The goal is to have regulations in place by 2018.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Oil and gas industry**, **Oil and Gas Regulations**, **Oil Sands** | **Leave a reply**

Transform TO will reduce Toronto's emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050 – Recommendations passed on July 4th

Posted on **June 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— Old and new Toronto City Hall from Flickr

John Cartwright, President of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, wrote an Opinion piece "How Toronto could lead the climate change charge in Canadian cities" , which appeared in the *National Observer* on June 15. The focus of Cartwright's article is the Transform TO plan currently being debated in Toronto City Council after two years of public engagement, expert input and in-depth analysis . Cartwright is member of the cross-sectoral Modelling Advisory Group that informed the Transform TO project. The target is to reduce carbon emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. Given that half of the Toronto's carbon emissions come from buildings, 41 per cent from transportation and 11 per cent from waste, key Transform TO recommendations are: 100% of new buildings to be designed and built to be near zero GHG emissions by 2030; 100% of transportation options- including public transit and personal vehicles – to use low or zero-carbon energy sources, and active transportation to account for 75% of trips under 5 km city-wide by 2050; and 95% of waste to be diverted by 2050 in all sectors – residential, institutional, commercial and industrial.

Details of the plan are presented in Staff Report #1, approved by City Council in December 2016, and Staff Report #2 , approved by the Environment and Parks committee in May, and slated for a Council vote in early July. Technical reports are here .

UPDATE: See this CBC report summarizing the Council vote on July 4th, where the recommendations were passed, but with financial concerns.

An overview is available in *2050 Pathway to a Low-Carbon Toronto Report 2: Highlights of the City of Toronto Staff Report* . Report #2 highlights that Transform TO will provide significant community benefits, such as improved public health, lower operating costs for buildings, and local job creation and training opportunities for communities that have traditionally faced barriers to employment – with an estimate that the planned building retrofits alone would create 80,000 person years of employment.

Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are members of C40 , a network whose goal is to act on climate change and reduce emissions. In cooperation with Sustania and Realdania , C40 compiled case studies from 100 cities (including Toronto and Vancouver) , meant to showcase innovative programs. Their most recent blog, "Mayors lead the global response to Trump's pull out of the Paris Agreement" is a blunt rebuke to Trump and a determination to continue to work at local solutions. Similarly, Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre repeated that the mayors of the world would honour the Paris Agreement, as he welcomed more than 140 mayors and 1,000 international and local delegates gathered to the annual Metropolis World Congress from June 19 to 22.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Cities and Climate Change**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction**, **Municipal Government**, **Toronto** | **Leave a reply**

Parliamentary committee recommends a legislated right to a healthy environment in its review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act

Posted on **June 21, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 15, the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled its report, *Healthy Environment, Healthy Canadians, Healthy Economy: Strengthening the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999,* and the French version, *Un Environnement Sain, des Canadiens et une Économie en Santé : Renforcer la Loi Canadienne sur la Protection de l'environnement (1999)*.

Called a "ground-breaking" report by the David Suzuki Foundation, this review of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)* makes 87 recommendations to modernize the law. The Ecojustice blog , "Much to celebrate in committee report on Canadian Environmental Protection Act" summarizes some of the recommendations, including the introduction of national drinking water and air quality standards; "stronger enforcement provisions to ensure polluters are held to account; improved transparency, public reporting and consultation requirements; and faster timelines to ensure regulatory action is taken swiftly once a toxic threat is identified". Most important, however, is the recommendation that the Act recognize and protect the right of every person in Canada to a healthy environment – a right recognized in 110 other countries.

The reaction from East Coast Environmental Law also notes this right to a healthy environment, and emphasizes the environmental justice implications: " The Report… suggests that the importance of environmental rights to Indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations should be emphasized. … The Report acknowledges that environmental burdens aren't shared equitably by communities across Canada, …… it also makes a number of recommendations that address environmental injustice. For example, it recommends that the Act be expanded to include an obligation to protect the environment in a non-discriminatory way; that it enhance the procedural rights that protect access to information, access to justice, and public participation in environmental decision-making; that it address the inequitable burden of toxic exposure in Canada; and that it recognize the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

The response from the David Suzuki Foundation also summarizes the recommendations, and makes clear that these are not yet law. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and eventually Cabinet, will consider the report, with legislation expected in the fall. Ecojustice calls it " a once-in-a generation opportunity to dramatically improve our most important environmental law."

Environment and Climate Change Canada has compiled links to a history of CEPA . The Standing Committee website is here, with links to witnesses and the 68 briefs received.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Climate change Law**, **Environmental Justice**, **Environmental law**, **Environmental Protection**, **First Nations**, **toxic chemicals** | **Leave a reply**

An agenda for U.S. progressive unions: Resist, reclaim, restructure for climate justice and energy democracy

Posted on **June 21, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Towards a Progressive Labor Vision for Climate Justice and Energy Transition in the Time of Trump is a new discussion paper by Sean Sweeney and John Treat, acknowledging the work of the progressive unions affiliated with the Labor Network for Solidarity and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, and proposing an "ambitious and effective agenda for progressive labor to respond to the converging environmental crises, and to pursue a rapid, inclusive approach to energy transition and social justice." To set the stage, the authors acknowledge and describe the divisions within the U.S. labour movement, especially those around the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines. They applaud Bernie Sanders for breaking new ground in the 2016 Presidential elections by making climate change a central part of the progressive political agenda – notably his call for a just transition for fossil fuel workers and for a national ban on fracking. They label "Green Jobs" as "a Tired Phrase, an Unconvincing Promise", and find glaring problems with the existing blue-green alliance approach, stating that the accomplishments are not unimportant, " but the "green jobs" narrative has failed to engage numerous constituencies of potential allies in the struggle for better health, workplace and environmental protections for all, and for broader social, economic and ecological justice."

In its place, the authors look internationally for inspiration, and propose "an ambitious, pro-active, independent, labor-led program of action" , built on actions which "resist, reclaim, restructure", with Just Transition, Solidarity, and Internationalism as important principles. Some specific examples: "**Resist** : energy-related land seizures, despoliation, and violation of indigenous rights and territories; Resist shale oil and gas drilling and associated infrastructure (pipelines, export platforms, etc.), especially on federal and tribal lands." **Reclaim**: " Fight to reverse state-level "electricity market restructuring" and to reform Investor Owned Utilities; Review the Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act (PURPA) in order to determine whether it should be repealed in order to restore States' power to make their own energy choices; Re-invent regulatory bodies for the power industry, establish mechanisms for meaningful public involvement and democratic decision-making; Investigate and pursue new ways to use union pension funds in order to maximize their impact for a "public goods" approach to energy provision and climate change mitigation; Reinvent public infrastructure, beginning with the postal service in order to drive local renewable energy generation and to provide financial services for working class people who need them." **Restructure**: "Demand energy sector reform to allow for a just transition to renewables under public and community control; Demand establishment of dedicated, priority revenue streams for public renewables and a "just transition fund," to be funded via a Financial Transaction Tax; Reject costly Power Purchase Agreements; Demand adequately funded, modern and available public transit systems, including the development of public fleets of electric vehicles for urban mobility."

Towards a Progressive Labor Vision for Climate Justice and Energy Transition in the Time of Trump was released on June 1 by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, and submitted for discussion to Labor for Our Revolution , a network of unions and labor activists engaged in campaigns to support workers' rights and contribute to building a broader movement for social and economic justice. LFOR endorses the work of Our Revolution , the network which grew out of the Bernie Sanders campaign in the U.S.. Our Revolution states it has three intertwined goals: "to revitalize American democracy, empower progressive leaders and elevate the political consciousness. "

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BlueGreen Alliance**, **Labor for our Revolution**, **Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS)**, **labour environment cooperation**, **labour union policies**, **Trade Unions for Energy Democracy** | **Leave a reply**

U.K. Unions call for Transformative Transition and Energy Democracy

Posted on **June 21, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Public and Commercial Services Union of the U.K. (PCS), with 180,000 civil service members, chose its annual delegate conference in late May to release *Just transition and Energy Democracy*, a thorough discussion of climate change impacts and solutions, which argues that "Far from being a distraction, climate change can reinforce trade union organisation, show their contemporary relevance particularly to young members, and start to place trade unions at the very centre of the crucial and urgent debate about what we mean when we talk of a just transition." The paper argues for energy democracy as a fundamental right, and references a 2016 report *Public ownership of the UK energy system – benefits, costs and processes* , which states that energy democracy is necessary for the development of renewable energy and financially possible to achieve . *Just Transition and Energy Democracy* sets out a framework for the public sector role in this energy transition, and states, “For PCS therefore we advocate that a just transition is also a transformative process for economic and social justice, going beyond market based solutions and negotiation within a framework of green capitalism.” In the transformative scenario a just transition “will address the inherent inequality and injustice of the capitalist system”. Step one in the process would be the creation of a National Climate Service similar to the U.K.’s National Health Service (NHS), to ensure there is a body to create the jobs needed to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The University and College Union (UCU) also debated and carried a resolution concerning climate change and Just Transition at its convention in June, and adopted a resolution to take to the TUC conference in September, enumerating actions, including support for energy democracy.

— Photo by Sophie Brown, from Wikipedia Commons

Reaction of unions to the surprise Labour surge in the U.K. election is summarized in the June/July newsletter of the Greener Jobs Alliance. All cite the importance of the Labour Party manifesto, *For the many, not the few* , which included proposals for energy democracy through publicly owned, locally accountable energy companies and cooperatives. It also proposed an industrial and skills strategy to drive investment in electric vehicles, home insulation, new low carbon technologies for heavy industries like steel, and a ban on fracking.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **climate change and politics**, **Distributed energy**, **energy democracy**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **public ownership**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

NDP-Green alliance promises a new chapter for B.C. government and

climate change policies

Posted on **June 12, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— B.C. Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver and B.C. NDP Leader John Horgan (photo by The Canadian Press/Chad Hipolito)

According to a June 12 press release, the Legislature of British Columbia will be recalled on June 22, when a confidence motion will determine who will lead the government after the cliff-hanger election of May 9. Read "Greens to prop up NDP's Horgan in minority BC government" in the *National Observer* (May 29) for an overview of the alliance reached between the Green Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) as they prepare to form the new provincial government. What have they agreed on? The text of the "Supply and Confidence" agreement, "founded on the principles of good faith and no surprises", is available at the B.C. NDP website . Major points of agreement on climate change issues are: implacable opposition to the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline; an increase in the province's carbon tax by $5 a tonne each year from April 2018, rising to the nationally required $50 a tonne by 2021; a six-month, independent review of the unpopular Site C hydroelectric project (a concession by the Greens, who had wanted to axe it outright); revival of the province's Climate Leadership Team; and an investigation into the safety of fracking. Read also "What does a NDP- Green Alliance mean for Climate Change?" in the *Climate Examiner* (June 8), and for the larger picture beyond climate change-related issues, see " BC NDP-Green agreement offers historic opportunity for game-changing new policies" by Seth Klein and Shannon Daub of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. , or "NDP and Greens Promise Electoral Reform Referendum, Big Money Ban and Higher Carbon Tax" in *The Tyee* (May 30).

The national implications of the coming changes to B.C. energy policy are raised by Kathryn Harris in "A Historic moment for B.C. Politics and our Environment" in the *Globe and Mail* (updated June 1), who states: "At the heart of the Trudeau government's 2016 climate plan lies a political compromise: a commitment to pursue reductions in Canada's own greenhouse gas emissions in exchange for expansion of fossil-fuel exports to other countries via new pipelines. The looming NDP-Green partnership in British Columbia reveals both the political fragility of that compromise and the contradiction of climate leadership funded by fossil-fuel development."

In that controversial pipeline debate: new, required reading from the Parkland Institute: Will the Trans Mountain Pipeline and Tidewater Access Boost Prices and Save Canada's Oil Industry?. Author David Hughes challenges the contention by pipeline proponents (for example, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley) that Alberta would benefit from a "tidewater premium" by reaching global markets, and concludes that "The new BC government would be wise to withdraw the Province's approval for this project." And "Showdown looms for LNG project", an overview article in *The Globe and Mail* indicates the changes likely to come on that file, although the NDP-Green agreement doesn't explicitly address the LNG issue.

The Pembina Institute offers an alternative to the Clark fossil fuel economy, in their *Vision for Clean Growth Economy* for B.C., released in May. It outlines five key priorities and makes specific recommendations for their achievement: 1. Build a strong clean tech sector 2. Position B.C. to be competitive in the changing global economy 3. Make clean choices more affordable 4. Stand up for healthy and safe communities, and 5. Grow sustainable resource jobs.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **BC LNG**, **British Columbia**, **Climate change policy**, **Green Party**, **Kinder Morgan**, **New Democratic Party (NDP)**, **Transmountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

Paths forward for decarbonization in Canada: two new reports

Posted on **June 12, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In June, the Columbia Institute's Centre for Civic Governance released the first annual progress report on the 18 federal and 24 provincial/territorial policies that it had identified in its 2016 report, *Top Asks for Climate Action: Ramping Up Low Carbon Communities* . The 2016 report focuses on local government issues and the policy support they need from the federal, provincial and territorial governments in the areas of capacity building, funding, buildings, transportation and smart growth. The *2017 Report Card* credits the federal government for some accomplishments – such as establishing a national price on carbon – and highlights nine key areas where "room for improvement" remains. These are: 1) establishing scientific GHG targets that will meet Paris Agreement commitments; 2)Establishing a mechanism that will guarantee new infrastructure spending that won't lock Canadians into a high carbon path; 3) Moving faster on eliminating fossil fuel subsidies; 4)Providing more robust tools for retrofitting homes and commercial buildings; 5)Providing all communities with energy, emissions and natural capital baseline data; 6) Prioritizing transit and active transportation over auto-only infrastructure; 7) Giving priority to community and Indigenous -owned renewable energy projects to advance energy democracy in Canada; 8) Developing a national thermal energy strategy; 9) Helping local governments transition to low carbon fleets. A June 5 article in the *National Observer* summarizes the report, and provides response from the federal government.

A second new report, *Re-Energizing Canada: Pathways to a Low-Carbon Future* , takes a more academic approach, but includes many of the same issues. The report, published by Sustainable

Canada Dialogues, is the product of input from Canadian academics and First Nations, establishes a framework of our energy system, and examines the important issues in Canadian energy policy with statistics and analysis. The report identifies governance issues as central to a successful low-carbon energy transition, and states: “we believe that the key barriers to accelerating the low-carbon energy transition are social, political and organizational.” Many of its recommendations relate to governance structures needed for policy harmonization. *Re-energizing Canada* was Commissioned by Natural Resources Canada in Fall 2016, and published by Sustainable Canada Dialogues, a Canada-wide network of over 80 scholars from engineering, sciences and social sciences. It is an initiative of the UNESCO-McGill Chair for Dialogues on Sustainability and is housed in Montreal.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Decarbonization**, **Energy policy**, **Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

---

2 million electric vehicles globally, and less than 30,000 in Canada. How best to encourage more?

Posted on **June 12, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— From Wikimedia Commons

The latest edition of the *Global EV Outlook 2017* was released by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in June, reporting that the global electric car stock, (mainly Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs)), surpassed 2 million units in 2016 – an increase of 60% from 2015. China is the leader with the most vehicles, at 648,770 units, followed by the U.S. at 563,710. China is also the leader in other electrified modes – with over 300,000 electric buses. In terms of market share, Norway, with its its small population of 5.25 million is the leader: its 133,260 units represent a 28.76% market share. Canada, with its population of 36.5 million people, is well behind the pack with an electric vehicle stock of 29,270 units, representing a market share of 0.57%, according to the IEA. (Perhaps not so bad, considering that electric vehicles still only represent 0.2% of all passenger cars worldwide) . Besides tabulating national statistics and trends regarding vehicle stock and charging stations, the report includes a substantial discussion of supportive policies amongst the member countries.

Canada committed to developing a national strategy to increase the number of zero-emission vehicles on Canadian roads by 2018 in the Pan-Canadian Framework agreement, and the policy process is currently under review – as summarized in an article in the *National Observer* . On May

26, the Minister of Transport announced that: " a national Advisory Group has been established to contribute to developing options for addressing the key barriers for greater deployment of these technologies in five areas: vehicle supply, cost and benefits of ownership, infrastructure readiness, public awareness, and clean growth and clean jobs. The Advisory Group includes representatives from governments, industry, consumer and non-government organizations and academia. " One of the members of the Advisory Group is the non-profit Équiterre , which at the end of May released a new report : *Accelerating the transition to electric mobility in Canada* . The report modelled three scenarios for ZEV adoption and concluded that only "the scenario with a legal mandate to sell a certain number of electric vehicles resulted in the market share necessary to drive down greenhouse gas emissions in line with international targets."

Another new report, from the Ecofiscal Commission, *Supporting Carbon Pricing: How to identify policies that genuinely complement an economy-wide carbon price* , provides a detailed case study on electric vehicle subsidies in Quebec, including a consideration of how they interact with other emissions regulations. The Ecofiscal report suggests that the current subsidy system results in a high cost for emissions reduction, and that flexible regulations "might be a more cost-effective approach to increasing ZEV uptake" than a supply-side mandate . Currently, Quebec is the only Canadian jurisdiction with such supply-side regulation; under Bill 104, passed in October 2016, 3.5 % of the total number of vehicles sold or leased by car manufacturers in Quebec must be zero emissions vehicles starting in 2018, and by 2020, the standard will rise to 15.5 %. For an overview of the issue and support for the rebate policy option, see Clare Demerse' article in *Policy Options*, "Rebates should be part of electric car strategy" (June 9) .

Canada has signed on to a new international campaign, EV 30@30, which was announced on June 8 at the 8th Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM8) held in Beijing . The press release for the campaign states a target of at least 30 percent new electric vehicle sales by 2030, and: "The campaign will support the market for electric passenger cars, light commercial vans, buses and trucks (including battery-electric, plug-in hybrid, and fuel cell vehicle types). It will also work towards the deployment of charging infrastructure to supply sufficient power to the vehicles deployed." A large part of the implementation will be through efforts to increase public and private sector commitments for EV fleet procurement and deployment. The program will also establish a Global EV Pilot City program to reach 100 electric vehicle-friendly cities around the World over five years, and encourage research into all aspects of deployment. Full explanation of the 30@30 campaign is here .

Along with Canada, other countries signing on to the EV30@30 campaign include China, Finland, France, India, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. (The U.S., U.K., Korea and South Africa are members of the CEM Electric Vehicle Initiative, but did not sign on to the 30@30 initiative). In addition to participant countries, the following groups support the campaign: C40, the FIA Foundation, the Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI), the Natural Resource Defence Council (NRDC), the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT), The Climate Group, UN Environment, UN Habitat, and the International Zero Emission Vehicle Alliance (ZEV Alliance).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Electric Vehicles**, **Quebec**, **transportation policy** | **Leave a reply**

$1.5 billion will buy new renewable energy projects, good green jobs, and environmental justice in New York State

Posted on **June 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On June 2, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that his state would invest $1.5 billion in renewable energy projects through the Clean Climate Careers Initiative. The program has three elements: "supercharge" clean energy technologies, create up to 40,000 clean energy jobs by 2020, and achieve environmental justice and Just Transition for underserved communities. Both the Governor's press release and one from the Worker Institute at Cornell University Industrial and Labor Relations School attribute the inspiration for the new renewable energy initiative to the "Labor Leading on Climate" program at the Worker Institute.

— Download the report at https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/ilr.cornell.edu/files/InequalityClimateChangeReport.pdf

The Institute has just published *Reversing Inequality, Combatting Climate Change: A Climate Jobs Program for New York State* (June 2017), in which Lara Skinner and co-author J. Mijin Cha argue for an "audicious" job creation plan which would create decent green jobs in the building, energy, and transport sectors. The report provides case studies and specific proposals to reduce GHG emissions – for example, to retrofit all public schools in the state to reach 100 percent of their energy efficiency potential by 2025, reduce energy use in all public buildings by 40 percent by 2025, install 7.5 GW of offshore wind by 2050, rehabilitate New York City public transit, and construct and improve the existing high-speed passenger rail corridor between Albany and Buffalo, and between New York City and Montreal. The report also includes a recommendation to establish a Just Transition Task Force – a recommendation incorporated in Governor Cuomo's plan.

In the plan announced by Governor Cuomo, $15 million has been committed "to educators and trainers that partner with the clean energy industry and unions to offer training and apprenticeship opportunities, with funding distributed to the most innovative and far-reaching apprenticeship, training programs and partnerships. " The state is also committed to the use of a Project Labor Agreement framework for the construction of public works projects associated with the initiative.

A Working Group on Environmental Justice and Just Transition has been appointed and staffed, with a first meeting scheduled for June. It will advise the administration on the integration of environmental justice principles into all agency policies, and to shape existing environmental justice programs. The press release includes endorsements from the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance and unions, including: Greater New York Building Construction Trades Council, New York State AFL-CIO, New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, IBEW Local 3, Transport Workers Union, Utility Workers Union Local 1-2, United Association Plumbers & Pipefitters, and the past Secretary Treasurer of Service Employees International Union.

Governor Cuomo's Renewable Energy initiative was announced one day after Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, and after the Governor had signed an Executive Order reaffirming New York's commitment to the Paris goals, and had launched a Climate Alliance with the states of California and Washington.

Posted in **Green Economy**, **United States** | Tagged **Apprenticeship**, **Environmental Justice**, **Green Job Creation**, **Infrastructure**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Mars**, **New York City Environmental Justice Alliance**, **New York State**, **renewable energy industry**, **retrofitting**, **Solar energy industry**, **Training** | **Leave a reply**

U.N. Working Group makes recommendations to protect human

rights, labour rights in Canada

Posted on **June 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a *Statement at the end of visit to Canada by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights* on June 1. This is a preliminary document – the official mission report will be presented to the 38th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2018, and should be worth watching for. The preliminary Statement provides a summary of the results of fact-finding meetings with government officials, business organizations related to Canada's mining and oil and gas industries, and Indigenous people. Most importantly, it makes a number of recommendations regarding human rights, labour rights, environmental and social impact consultation, and the right to consult for Indigenous people.

Some Highlights:

"Part of the backdrop to our visit were visible protests by indigenous communities to several large-scale development projects, such as the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline, the construction a large-scale hydroelectric dam (Site C Dam), and continued expansion of development projects of extractives industries. Several of these cases have also been repeatedly raised by UN human rights human rights mechanisms, such as the situation of the Lubicon Cree Nation, whose territories are affected by extensive oil sands extraction. In several indigenous territories, extensive mining and oil and gas extraction are accompanied by significant adverse environmental impacts affecting the right to health."

Regarding the established "duty to consult" with Indigenous people regarding mining projects, the Working Group encourages the Canadian government to ratify the ILO Convention No. 169 and for provincial and the federal government to promote more inclusive consultation regarding development projects.

The Working Group also urges the federal government to "follow up" on the April 2017 recommendations by the Expert Panel regarding Environmental Assessment in *Building Common Ground: A New Vision for Impact Assessment in Canada* "to include indigenous peoples in decision-making at all stages through a collaborative process that is developed in partnership with impacted indigenous communities."

Regarding the dam breach and tailings spill at the Mount Polley mine, the Working Group states: "We encourage the British Columbia government to complete expeditiously the impact study, continue to monitor closely the short-term and long-terms impacts of the tailings discharge, and communicate more widely their findings and proposed actions. Moreover, the provincial government should consult more broadly with indigenous communities who may have concerns about the breach and its impact on their lives. We also recommend the British Columbia government to consider establishing an independent body to assume compliance and monitoring of mining regulations, as recommended in the Auditor General's report".

Regarding the Westray Law, the Working Group states: “We heard concerns that the Westray law is not being properly implemented and enforced. We heard that there was a lack of coordination between key government parties, to secure sites of industrial accidents, for further investigation and inspection. We note that the Government of Alberta recently signed a new memorandum of understanding with ten police forces and Alberta Justice, that defines protocols for notification, investigation and communication between departments when there is a serious workplace incident. Other provinces should follow Alberta’s lead”.

Regarding the need to protect the right to peaceful protest: “During our visit, we were told of the criminalization of peaceful protests and the use of security personnel and police to break up and arrest activists who were exercising their democratic right to protest against extractive projects both within and outside Canada. The government should work all relevant stakeholders to ensure more space for peaceful dissent and protest at home and abroad.” And also: referring to Ontario and Quebec, “we would encourage other provincial governments to develop similar Anti-SLAPP legislation. “

In conclusion: The Working Group revives a 2006 proposal for an Ombudsperson with a mandate to investigate allegations of business-related human rights abuse, and “we encourage the federal government to work together with provincial governments to develop a comprehensive national action plan on business and human rights. ”

For Oxfam Canada’s summary of the Working Group, see the Huffington Post article here , and here for the reaction of the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability .

The Working Group Statement was also concerned with human rights abuses overseas by Canadian mining companies: see the analysis of the Working Group statement by Human Rights Watch here, or see “The ‘Canada Brand’: Violence and Canadian Mining Companies in Latin America“, an extensive report in the Osgoode Law Research Paper Series (December 2016).

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Corporate Environment Policy**, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, **duty to consult**, **Environmental Assessment**, **First Nations**, **Human Rights**, **mining industry** | **Leave a reply**

ILO Director-General report identifies key themes in the greening of work, and worker delegates respond

Posted on **June 7, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The 106th Session of the International Labour Conference convenes from

June 5-16 in Geneva – see an overview here . To open the annual Conference, Director General Guy Ryder presented his report, *Work in a changing climate: The Green Initiative* , and for those who question the role of the workplace in the fight against climate change, the report states: "… if climate change is a consequence of human activity, then that activity is, for the most part, work or work-related. It is no coincidence that climate change tends to be benchmarked against pre-industrial levels. And if work is the predominant cause of climate change, then inevitably it must be central to strategies to prevent, mitigate and adapt to it."

The main body of the Director-General's Report describes and updates the accomplishments of the ILO Green Centenary Initiative, which was launched in 2013, "to promote the considerable potential for creation of decent work associated with the transition to a low carbon sustainable development path and to minimize and manage the inevitable dislocation that will accompany it." The report emphasizes the need for research and policy analysis, and announces that the 2018 edition of the ILO *World Employment and Social Outlook Report* will focus on "greening with jobs", with sectoral and country-specific information.

Some important themes: The report emphasizes the need for tripartite responses to climate change, and offers the examples of countries with tripartite consultations: Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru , South Africa, and Brazil, which developed its Intended Nationally-Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement with tripartite involvement.

Global carbon pricing is identified as "an outstanding question of the greatest magnitude –a political game changer in the eyes of some." And, "Independently of the specific merits of taxing carbon, the general message is clear: predictable and appropriate regulation, together with informed tripartite involvement, are key ingredients for successful just transition."

Regarding the greening of the work process, the report states: "The extraordinary process of structural transformation in production systems, made necessary by the fight against climate change, needs also to incorporate two further ingredients which have a proven record in facilitating socially acceptable and beneficial change at work: skills development and social protection."

Canadian Labour Congress Secretary-Treasurer Marie Clarke Walker was elected Vice-President (Workers) on June 5, and is a member of the ILO Governing Body. Luc Cortebeeck, Chairperson of the Workers' Group, presented a Discussion of the Director-General's report on June 7. The 3-page discussion is generally constructive, for example, congratulating the ILO for its climate neutrality goals and its the recognition of the need to aim for zero emissions as soon as possible, and pledging support for Skills for Green Jobs initiatives. However, it highlights differences about the goals for the future, stating: "Such an ambitious assessment on the state of affairs does not seem to be followed by an equally ambitious take on future measures." Further, "The workers' group regrets the absence of references to the importance of piloting in as many countries as possible the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition, as a means to show they are a useful tool for tackling climate change in a socially progressive way." The Workers Group also considers it "vital" that the ILO develop and execute its own economic modelling research regarding the potentially negative distributional aspects of carbon pricing and regulation, and not rely on research by the OECD and other active agencies.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Markets**, **International Labour Organization**, **Just Transition**, **Tripartitism**, **Workplace greening** | **Leave a reply**

The U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement : how did Canada react? How did the labour movement react?

Posted on **June 7, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— From Wikimedia Commons

As anyone alive must know by now, Donald Trump announced that the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement on June 1, 2017. NPR offers an annotated, fact-checked transcript of Trump's announcement here. The Editorial Board of the *New York Times* called it "Our Disgraceful exit from the Paris Accord" ; Bill McKibben called it "Trump's Stupid and Reckless Decision" in a *New York Times* OpEd, and *Vox* headlined: "Quitting the Paris Climate Agreement is a moral disgrace" . Leaders from business, government, and civil society around the world reacted with dismay: see a compilation of global reaction from the *Daily Climate*, or from *The Conversation*, a compilation of analysis by academic experts: "Why Trump's decision to leave Paris accord hurts the US and the world" – including Simon Reich from Rutgers University who states: "many may well claim that June 1, 2017 was the day that America's global leadership ended."

Almost immediately, the states of California, Washington and New York stepped forward into the leadership gap with the June 1 launch of a U.S. Climate Alliance. By June 5, according to a New York press release , 10 more states had joined : Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia. The mayors of hundreds of U.S. cities have also committed to the Climate Alliance, including Atlanta, Washington, D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, Philadelphia, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas, San Jose. The Alliance is committed to achieving the U.S. Paris Agreement goal of reducing emissions 26-28 percent from 2005 levels, and to meeting or exceeding the targets of the federal Clean Power Plan. Read "Bucking Trump, These Cities, States and Companies Commit to Paris Accord" in the *New York Times* and "These Titans of Industry just broke with Trump's decision to exit the Paris accords" in the *Washington Post* (June 1) to see the extent of immediate push-back over the decision.

HOW DID CANADA REACT TO TRUMP'S DECISION? The official government position was stated by Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change : "While Canada is deeply disappointed that the United States has chosen to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, we remain steadfast in our commitment to work with our global partners to address climate change and promote clean growth. It is the right thing to do for future generations and will create good jobs as we grow a clean economy.

Canada will continue to take leadership on climate change.

In September, we will co-host a Ministerial meeting with China and the European Union in Canada to move forward on the Paris Agreement and clean growth…. With or without the United States, the momentum around the Paris Agreement and climate action is unstoppable."

And by June 5, Canada was on the world stage as the official host of World Environment Day .

Other Canadian reaction to Trump's decision: In the mainstream press: "World reacts to Trump's climate move: 'He's declaring war on the planet itself'" in the *Globe and Mail* (June 2); from the CBC, "Trump quitting the Paris accord might not necessarily be the end of the world" . In *Maclean'*s magazine, Catherine Abreu, Director of Climate Action Network Canada, wrote "What Trump's retreat really means for Global Climate Action" (June 2), which provides a concise analysis of the impacts, affirming a theme put forth by others – Trump's move is damaging but not an insurmountable problem, and others are stepping up to the task, and in fact, are galvanized to greater effort.

Other Canadian reaction: From Mitchell Beer in *Policy Options* (June 7), "Trump's Paris Withdrawal, Canada's Opportunity"; Matt Horne's Opinion piece, from a Vancouver point of view, in the *Globe and Mail* (June 4) "Environmental progress is possible despite Trump's climate-change agenda"; from the *Energy Mix:* "World Leaders Respond, U.S. States and Cities Step Up as Trump Blunders Out of Paris Agreement" (June 2) ; "Canadian big city mayors defiant in face of Trump's exit from Paris Accord" in the *National Observer* (June 1), which quotes Canadian mayors assembled at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Big City Mayors' Caucus in Ottawa on June 1; and Denis Coderre, Mayor of Montréal and president of Metropolis, a 140-member world association of major cities : "in spite of this setback, cities will not just stand down; ….Mayors from around the world will be meeting in Montreal from June 19 to 23 at the Metropolis World Congress. … climate change will be at the heart of our deliberations, in collaboration with other networks of cities such as the C40 Climate Leadership Group and ICLEI."

HOW DID UNIONS REACT TO THE TRUMP DECISION? In "Unions respond to US announcement on Paris climate change agreement" (June 2), Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff states: "While President Trump's decision on Paris represents a set-back to united action on climate change, it doesn't change the fact that the rest of the world is moving forward. Canadian government, civil society and industry recognize the need to adapt to a low-carbon economy." The CLC also references the response by the ITUC (included below).

From the AFL-CIO, a brief 2- paragraph response: "Paris Climate Agreement Withdrawal a Failure of American Leadership" (June 1) ; from the Service Employees' International Union, "Trump's wrong decision on Paris won't stop working Americans from pushing for progress on climate change" , and in his blog on June 2, Leo Gerard, United Steelworkers' International President states: "Workers Want a Green Economy, Not a Black Environment" . He refutes Trump's reference to serving Pittsburg not Paris by detailing the pollution problems caused by the steel mill and zinc plants in Pittsburg in the 1940's and '50's, and concludes: The U.S. "has an obligation to lead the world in combatting climate change. Great leaders don't shirk responsibility. " The Labor Network for Sustainability Facebook post of June 1 concludes with: "In taking this step, Trump has abandoned his opportunity to lead, and it is up to the U.S. labor movement to step up and provide support and leadership to communities, cities and states who are committed to solving the climate crisis; to ensure that workers are not left behind, and that we can all make a living on a living planet."

Internationally, the International Trade Union Confederation reacted with: "The clear commitment by governments in the Paris Agreement to give workers, including those depending on the fossil fuel economy, a key role in developing a Just Transition strategy, will be undermined by the US announcement, which will also inhibit industrial and economic transformation in the US." The ITUC statement continues with a statement from the Richard Trumka of the AFL-CIO , which interestingly does not name Donald Trump, but rather blames the decision on the advice of EPA head Scott Pruitt.

From UNI Global Union: "Planet first, Trump last – UNI condemns Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate deal" , which states that "President Trump is on the wrong side of history," … "This latest miscalculated act makes us even more determined than ever to work for people and planet."

And on June 9, in advance of the G7 Environment Summit in Bologna: *Our jobs, Our planet* was released by the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), with the support of trade union confederations from G7 countries. The declaration states: " Today, we reaffirm once again our commitment to support ambitious climate action and the Paris Climate Agreement. Pulling out of the Paris climate agreement from ambitious climate pathways equals abandoning a cleaner future powered by good jobs".

In the U.K., the Greener Jobs Alliance reaction, *Reasons to be Fearful* , is written in the context of the British national elections, scheduled for June 8, and criticizes Prime Minister May for her weak criticism of the Trump decision. This theme is taken up by DeSmog UK, "How the UK's Climate Science Deniers (and Government) Reacted to Trump's Paris Agreement Withdrawal" (June 2) .

The Australian Council of Trade Unions, in response to the Australian government's reaffirmation of its own commitment to the Paris Agreement on June 2, released their position: "Commitment to Paris crucial for ensuring a Just Transition for workers".

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Donald Trump**, **international agreements**, **labour union policies**, **Paris Agreement**, **U.S. Climate Alliance** | **Leave a reply**

Scrap the Infrastructure Bank, says CUPE

Posted on **May 30, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The federal government first announced its plans for an Infrastructure Bank in the Fall 2016 Economic Statement, and fleshed out an implementation schedule and funding in the Budget released in March 2017 . The Infrastructure Bank website here describes: “If approved by Parliament, the Bank would invest $35 billion from the federal government into transformative infrastructure projects. $15 billion would be sourced from the over $180 billion Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, including: $5 billion for public transit systems; $5 billion for trade and transportation corridors; and, $5 billion for green infrastructure projects, including those that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, deliver clean air and safe water systems, and promote renewable power.” It will function as an arms-length Crown corporation “and would work with provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous, and private sector investment partners to attract pension funds and other institutional investors to new revenue-generating infrastructure projects that are in the public interest.” A May 13 press release from the responsible Minister of Infrastructure and Communities announces that the selection process for senior management positions has begun, and the goal is to launch the Bank in 2017. The enabling legislation is buried deep in the enormous Bill C-44, the *Budget Implementation Act* (as Division 18 of Part 4) . Bill C-44 is now in 2nd reading in the House of Commons, and the Finance Committee began a clause-by-clause review of the legislation in the week of May 29.

There is no shortage of criticism and critics of the Infrastructure Bank, from across the political spectrum. In “Where Were They Going Without Ever Knowing the Way? Assessing the Risks and Opportunities of the Canada Infrastructure Bank”, (May 4) economists at the University of Ottawa Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy argue that the case for the infrastructure bank is weak since Canada doesn’t yet have a comprehensive inventory of the status of existing infrastructure. (The May 18 report submitted to Canada’s Climate Change Adaptation platform may answer some of those objections) .

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is leading the union charge of criticism , mostly on the grounds that the infrastructure bank encourages and enables privatization of public projects. Even before the March budget was delivered, CUPE Economist Toby Sanger wrote

Creating a Canadian infrastructure bank in the public interest , published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. After the budget was delivered, CUPE's initial response was published in April . In May, CUPE compiled expert criticisms here , and on May 29, the union issued the call to "Scrap bank of privatization, build infrastructure for Canadians" . CUPE also presented a detailed brief to government committees in May, with ten points of criticism and recommendations for change so that public bridges, roads and waterways remain under public control.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)**, **Energy Investment**, **Green Infrastructure**, **Green Investment**, **Infrastructure Investment**, **labour union policies**, **privatization** | **Leave a reply**

Still advocating for Environmental Rights as Human Rights. Evidence from Alberta, and innovative proposals for Nova Scotia

Posted on **May 29, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Pembina Institute recently compiled three case studies related to energy development in Alberta, in an effort to document the adverse effects on individuals, communities and regions that result from weak environmental laws or regulatory enforcement. The Environmental Law Centre in Alberta also published a series of reports in late 2016, including a module, *Substantive Environmental Rights* , which discusses environmental rights as a human right. Since 2014, the Blue Dot campaign, led by the David Suzuki Foundation and Ecojustice , has been advocating for environmental rights to be enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

Now, from the Pembina Institute comes *The Right to a Healthy Environment: Documenting the need for environmental rights in Canada*. It consists of: Case Study #1: *Individual impacts of intensive hydraulic fracturing activity in rural Alberta* ; #2 *Community impacts of air pollution in urban central Alberta* (related to coal-fired electricity plants), and #3 *Regional impacts of oilsands development in northern Alberta* (which examines the rights of First Nations).

In Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Environmental Rights Working Group of the East Coast Environmental Law Association released their proposed and innovative Nova Scotia Environmental Bill of Rights on April 21 2017. The bill states that the people "have a right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment", and that the "primary responsibility" to protect and conserve that environment falls to the province. It also states that "there is a history of environmental racism in Nova Scotia that has disproportionately and negatively affected historically marginalized, vulnerable, and economically disadvantaged individuals, groups or communities, particularly Indigenous People and African Nova Scotians". The bill is based on the Precautionary Principle, the Polluter Pays Principle, the Non-Regression Principle, the

Intergenerational Equity Principle, and the Principle of Environmental Justice and Equity. Nova Scotians go to the polls in a general election on May 30; a guide to the policy positions of the Liberal, Conservative and NDP parties is here at the CBC website. According to the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax, the provincial NDP party has pledged to support an Environmental Bill of Rights .

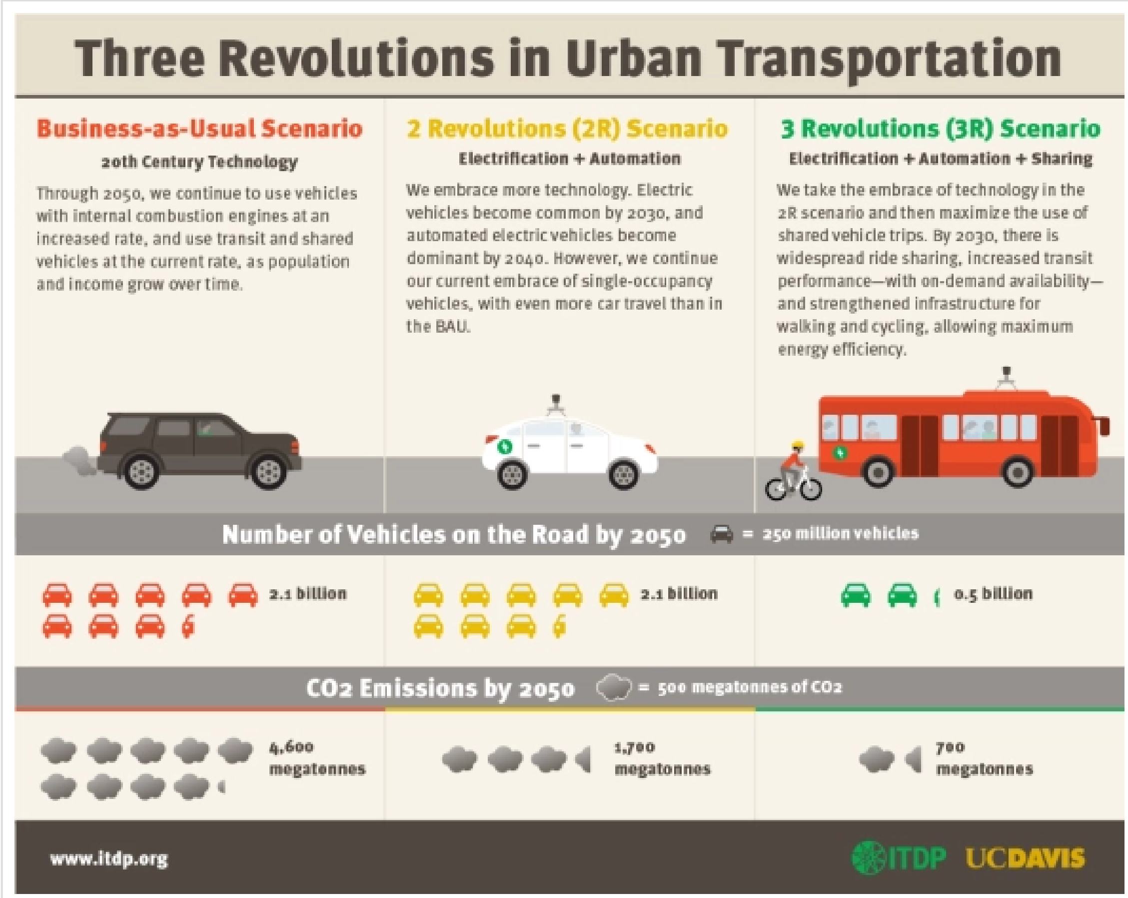
Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Environmental Justice**, **Environmental law**, **Environmental regulation**, **Fracking**, **Human Rights**, **Nova Scotia** | **Leave a reply**

Catching up to the transportation revolution: Canada will have a national electric vehicle strategy by 2018

Posted on **May 29, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On May 26, Canada's Minister of Transportation announced that Canada will develop a national electric vehicle strategy by 2018 in consultation with provincial and territorial governments, as promised in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change agreement. A national Advisory Group has already been established to develop options in five areas: vehicle supply, cost and benefits of ownership, infrastructure readiness, public awareness, and clean growth and clean jobs. The Advisory Group includes representatives from governments, industry, consumer and non-government organizations and academia. In November 2016, the Minister had released a vision document, *Transportation 2030: A Strategic Plan for the Future of Transportation in Canada* , which included all modes of transportation – air, ships, trucks and trains, as well as a section on Green and Innovative Transport . According to the government press release on May 26 , transportation accounts for about 24 percent of Canada's emissions, mostly from cars and trucks. The Pembina Institute states that there are only 21,000 electric cars on the road in Canada in 2017.

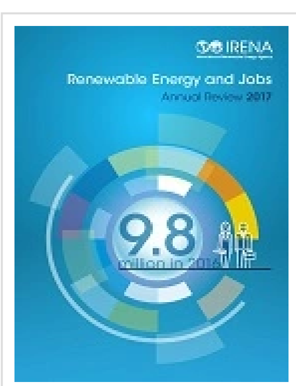
Relevant views of the future: *Expect the Unexpected* , a report from Carbon Tracker Initiative in February 2017, forecasts that electric vehicles will account for over two-thirds of the road transport market worldwide by 2050. "The Transportation Revolution is Closer Than You Think" , a May 22 blog from Climate Works Foundation summarizes several recent studies. And a new report, *Three Revolutions in Urban Transportation* envisions three scenarios up to 2050, and states: " The world is on the cusp of three revolutions in transportation: vehicle electrification, automation, and widespread shared mobility (sharing of vehicle trips). Separately or together, these revolutions will fundamentally change urban transportation around the world over the next three decades." …Our central finding is that while vehicle electrification and automation may produce potentially important benefits, without a corresponding shift toward shared mobility and greater use of transit and active transport, these two revolutions could significantly increase congestion and urban sprawl, while also increasing the likelihood of missing climate change targets. In contrast, by encouraging a large increase in trip sharing, transit use, and active transport through policies that support compact, mixed use development, cities worldwide could save an estimated $5 trillion annually by 2050 while improving livability and increasing the likelihood of meeting climate change targets." *Three Revolutions* was published by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy and Sustainable Transportation Energy Pathways at UC Davis.



Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Electric Vehicles**, **ride sharing**, **Transit Policy**, **Transportation**, **Urban Emissions** | **Leave a reply**

IRENA forecasts 24 million renewable energy jobs worldwide by 2030

Posted on **May 24, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**



In its fourth annual report, *Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2017* , the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) presents statistics on renewable energy employment, both by technology and in selected countries. For this 2017 edition, it includes statistics for large-scale hydropower, and also the results for a workplace survey in the Middle East and North Africa on barriers to women in clean energy labour markets.   The worldwide statistics show that renewable energy employed 9.8 million people in 2016 – a 1.1% increase over 2015. Solar photovoltaic (PV) power was the largest employer, with 3.1 million jobs (an increase of 12% from 2015); global wind employed 1.2 million people (an increase of 7%); large hydro employed 1.5 million people, with around 60% of those in operation and maintenance. However, given that Canada is the world's 2nd biggest hydropower producer (after China), and that Canada is not included in the IRENA numbers, this figure could be questioned. China, Brazil, the United States, India, Japan and Germany accounted for most of the renewable energy jobs.

In general, IRENA reports that the rate of for renewable job growth slowed down in 2015 and 2016, with the exception of the solar PV and wind categories, which have more than doubled since 2012. In contrast, employment in solar heating and cooling and large hydropower has declined. Nevertheless, IRENA predicts that "the number of people working in the renewables sector could reach 24 million by 2030, more than offsetting fossil-fuel job losses and becoming a major economic driver around the world". It also notes that "significant efforts in training and education is needed to provide the labour market with the required skills."

The gender discrimination survey of labour markets in the Middle East and North Africa was conducted jointly by IRENA, the Clean Energy Business Council (CEBC) and Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF). The   survey found that discrimination seems less pronounced in renewable energy employment than in the energy sector at large, but "challenges remain for women in regard to employment and promotion."

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Gender Equality**, **Green Jobs**, **Hydropower**, **renewable energy industry**, **Solar Industry**, **wind energy** | **Leave a reply**

How to phase out Alberta's Oil Sands by 2040, including Just Transition principles

Posted on **May 24, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Gordon Laxer, Professor emeritus at the University of Alberta and founding director of the Parkland Institute, has released a new report, *Act or be Acted Upon. The case for phasing out Alberta's Sands* . He summarized the report in an article, "The case for phasing out Alberta's Tar Sands" , which appeared in *Resilience* on May 23.   The full report reflects the author's long and deep understanding of the political economy of Alberta. His fairly brief discussion of Just Transition principles occurs at the end of the report.

— From Wikimedia, in the public domain. Syncrude Lake Mildred plant, Alberta.

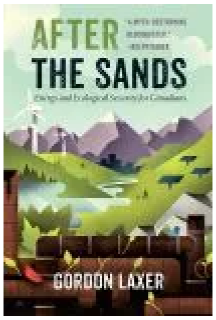
Section 1 of *Act or be Acted Upon* discusses the market forces and policy environment in which the oil sands continues to operate – including a discussion of the cap on emissions put in place in the Alberta government's Climate Leadership Plan , and the issues of divestment and stranded assets. Looking for lessons to be learned, Section 2 examines the international and Canadian progress in banning coal-fired power, with a detailed look at Ontario's experience and Alberta's current efforts. The author emphasizes the importance of the health-based arguments in Ontario's campaign against coal, and suggests two possible motivators for an Alberta campaign against the oil sands: first, the under-reported health effects on residents and workers around Fort McMurray, the Peace River country, and the Aboriginal community of Fort Chipewyan, and second, the devastating wildfire in Fort McMurray in 2016.

Section 3: "Phasing out the oil sands", calls for a permanent moratorium on new projects and a schedule for shutting down older projects that have paid off their capital costs- starting with the Suncor and Syncrude projects which are over 50 years old. Finally, the author calls for replacing the existing emissions cap under the Climate Leadership Plan with "an annually lowering GHG ceiling on all remaining Sands projects until they collectively reach zero by 2040."

The final section of the Green Paper states: "It's vital that phasing out the Sands be accompanied by a well-thought-out plan to provide workers and communities in the Sands with alternative work and retraining…. A just transition is the right thing to do, but it is also needed because if workers involved in the Sands don't see a sure-fire alternative, they will fight hard to hang on to the Sands jobs they currently have, which will hamper the changes Alberta and Canada need to make." Those looking for new approaches to Just Transition will have to hope that Professor Laxer writes another paper – in this one, he goes only so far as to endorse the Just Transition principles set out in the October 2016 paper from the UNFCCC, *Just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs* . To recap, those are: • Develop skills and retraining for green jobs • Develop green enterprises • Promote government programmes to help the unemployed find work •

Provide social protection • Minimize hardship for workers and address their needs • Consult all stakeholders to plan for a just transition.

Recalling the huge federal and provincial government research subsidies in the 1960's that launched the oil sands, Professor Laxer concludes with this: "The same governments now need to devote as much research money in today's dollars to plan useful employment for Sands workers necessitated by the shift to a low-carbon future."



Act or be Acted Upon. The case for phasing out Alberta's Sands is a "Green Paper", commissioned by the Alberta Institute of Agrologists and presented to them in March 2017. Related reading: Gordon Laxer's book from 2015 , *After the Sands. Energy and Ecological Security for Canadians ;* and from the Parkland Institute: *Restructuring in Alberta's oil industry: Internationals pull out, domestic majors double down* (April 2017); *Five things to know about Alberta's oil sands emissions cap* (Feb. 2017); *Extracted Carbon: Re-examining Canada's Contribution to Climate Change through Fossil Fuel Exports* (Jan. 2017).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Alberta Climate Leadership Plan**, **coal-fired electricity**, **Just Transition**, **Oil Sands** | **Leave a reply**

A shorter work week can slow climate change in a post-growth economy

Posted on **May 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Two recent articles have been added to the long-standing discussion of the "degrowth" movement – including about the potential of a shorter work week to make an impact on climate change. In relation to their recently published book, "*Just Cool It! The Climate Crisis and What we can do* , David Suzuki and co-author Ian Hanington posted a blog item on on May 11: "Long work hours don't work for people or the planet" . The article describes "a seemingly endless cycle of toil and consumerism" which has been the norm throughout the 20th century, and says "It's time to pause and consider better ways to live". They reference the U.K. thinktank New Economics Foundation, which in 2010 proposed "21 Hours – the case for a shorter work week" , arguing that a shorter work week would address a number of interconnected problems: "overwork, unemployment, over-consumption, high carbon emissions, low well-being, entrenched inequalities, and the lack of time to live sustainably, to care for each other, and simply to enjoy life." The Suzuki/Hanington article also refers to "Reducing work hours as a means of slowing climate change" published by the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington D.C. in 2013. The author, David Rosnick, used economic modelling to argue that reducing average annual hours by just 0.5% per year through shorter workweeks and increased vacation would "likely mitigate one-quarter to one-half, if not more, of any warming which is not yet locked-in."

Another recent article, "How to kick the growth addiction" was posted at The Great Transition Initiative website and re-posted by *Resilience* on May 17. The article is a transcript of an interview with ecological economist Tim Jackson , the author of the classic book, *Prosperity Without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow*. It provides some insight into Jackson's latest thinking about a "post-growth" economy . He states: "Can we imagine an economy in which enterprise provides outputs that enable people to flourish without destroying ecosystems; where work offers respect, motivation, and fulfillment to all; where investment is prudential in terms of securing long-term prosperity for all humanity; and where systems of borrowing, lending, and creating money are firmly rooted in long-term social value creation rather than in trading and speculation?" The second edition of *Prosperity without Growth* was released in 2017, discussing four pillars of a post-growth economy—enterprise as service, work as participation, investment as commitment, and money as a social good.

Posted in **Green Economy**, **Uncategorized** | Tagged **degrowth**, **hours of work**, **Job Quality**, **post growth economy**, **shorter work week** | **Leave a reply**

Buildings and Infrastructure: the state of Canadian adaptation to climate change

Posted on **May 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The National Infrastructure and Buildings Climate Change Adaptation State of Play Report was released on May 18, providing a gold mine of detail about the current Canadian system of climate change adaptation, and how it affects water infrastructure, transportation systems, telecommunications, and buildings (both private housing and commercial and multi-unit buildings such as hospitals and penitentiaries).

Reflecting the strong influence of insurance concerns in the report, it provides a catalogue, with damage estimates and many photographs, of recent natural disasters, including the Calgary and Toronto floods in 2013, the Fort McMurray fire, as far back as the Eastern Canada ice storms of 1998. The report identifies a wide range of barriers and problems to adaptation progress, but also provides case studies of innovative initiatives, and compiles a list of 62 “opportunities or next steps” for those identified as the key actors – all levels of government, private companies, professional associations, and citizens. Recommendations reflect an understanding of the need for more climate change training and professional education for engineers, consultants, and the insurance industry, and calls on private companies to emphasize and “Better integrate climate change considerations into organizational planning, decision-making and risk management processes.”

Appendices include an extensive bibliography; a table of national and provincial standards and regulations (e.g. for stormwater management); climate risks, and others. The final appendix presents case studies of innovative initiatives, including Toronto Hydro Electrical Distribution Infrastructure Case Study ; British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Provincial Highway Infrastructure Case Study; City of Castlegar Stormwater Infrastructure Case Study (B.C.); Municipality of the District of Shelburne Wastewater Treatment Plant Case Study ; Elm Drive: Low Impact Development Demonstration Site Case Study (Toronto); Fraser Health’s Climate Resilience and Adaptation Program (B.C.); Linking Climate with Water Infrastructure and Social Vulnerabilities Credit Valley Conservation (Ontario).

The report was prepared by Amec Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrastructure of Burlington, Ontario, in collaboration with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority of Mississauga, for the Infrastructure and Buildings Working Group (IBWG) – a joint enterprise of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss and Engineers Canada. It will be one of many inputs to the Infrastructure and Buildings Working Group of Canada’s Climate Change Adaptation Platform in their discussions of their work plan for the next four years.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change impacts**, **Disasters**, **Flooding**, **Fort McMurray**, **Infrastructure**, **Municipal Government**, **Transportation Infrastructure**, **water management** | **Leave a reply**

Federal government releases "Backstop" policies for provinces not already pricing carbon – Comment period open till June 30

Posted on **May 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

As part of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the federal government had outlined the *Pan-Canadian Approach to Pricing Carbon Pollution*, a national carbon pricing system with mandatory benchmarks for each province. Most provinces, representing 97% of the population, already have, or are in the process of designing, their own systems – British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia (in process). On May 18, the Government of Canada addressed the remaining 3% – most notably in the province of Saskatchewan – with the release of its *Technical Paper on the Federal Carbon Pricing Backstop* .

The "Backstop" refers to the fact that the policies will only apply to provinces that do not have a carbon pricing system of their own in place by 2018. The proposal is composed of two parts: a levy on fossil fuels, and a cap and trade system, patterned after Alberta's output-based allocation system, to price pollution from industry. The levy system would include solid, liquid and gaseous fossil fuels: gasoline, diesel fuel, natural gas, coal and coke – and notably, aviation fuel. Rates would initially be set for 2018 to 2022, progressing with \$10 per tonne increments annually from \$10 per tonne of CO2-equivalent (CO2e) in 2018 to \$50 per tonne in 2022. The federal commits to return direct revenues from the carbon levy to the jurisdiction of origin, but there is flexibility about how the provinces can redirect that revenue.

UPDATE: The EcoFiscal Commission released a helpful blog post on May 24: *Explaining Output-Based Allocations* (OBAs), with a promise of a further explainer about the pitfalls of OBAs, to be released soon.

Public comments about the proposals are accepted until June 30, 2017, at Carbonpricing-tarificationcarbone@canada.ca and will be used to design the final carbon system and enabling legislation and regulations. A sampling of reaction (below) gives the government high marks for protecting Canadian competitiveness while reducing emissions.

"Is Canada's carbon-pricing policy striking the right balance?" (May 18) in the *Globe and Mail* is a general affirmation of the federal proposals by three experts from varied points of view: Christopher Ragan (Chair of the Ecofiscal Commission), Peter Robinson (CEO of the David Suzuki Foundation), and Steve Williams (CEO of Suncor Energy). A business response, in a press release from TD Economics, covers similar ground: " Feds Stick to their carbon- pricing guns" (May 18). It states: "Botton Line: Carbon pricing is the most efficient way of reducing emissions, and today's announcement should help Canada achieve meaningful emissions reductions.

However, follow-through post-2022 will be crucial to achieving the 2030 target. The details of the carbon pricing backstop strike a good balance, providing clear incentives for emissions reduction while taking competitiveness issues into account, recognizing that a large industrial base cannot be "turned on a dime" and will continue to face competition from non-carbon priced jurisdictions."

From environmental advocacy groups : In "Five things to know about Ottawa's carbon pricing plan" , Clean Energy Canada highlights the similarities of the Alberta and Saskatchewan economies, and commends the output-based credit system, saying "there's no question that a made-in-Alberta approach will also fit Saskatchewan's economy very well." Clean Energy notes that the open question of distribution of revenues will cause much future debate, as will working out the details of the allocations for heavy industry, due by 2019.

The Pembina Institute response, "Ottawa taking carbon pricing cues from provinces" also commends the output-based allocation system, and concludes: "It's worth taking a moment to celebrate how far we've come as a country – in large part due to the vision and ambition of provincial premiers – and to reflect on how to maintain this momentum despite choppy international waters."

The elephant is the room that everyone is talking about is the anticipated court challenge from the government of Saskatchewan, whose Premier Brad Wall has stated that the federal government lacks the constitutional authority to enact a federal carbon price, and who likened the Technical paper to "a ransom note." The *Globe and Mail* summarizes the tension in "Ottawa, Saskatchewan brace for battle over carbon pricing" . The Pembina Institute has published a Q& A interview with Professor Nathalie Chalifour of the University of Ottawa, who also wrote "The feds have every legal right to set a carbon price" in October 2016 in *iPolitics* .

Saskatchewan's preferred route to emissions reduction was clearly laid out in its *White Paper on Climate Change* released in October 2016, which states: "We should be focusing our efforts on innovation and adaptation, not taxation" – "innovation" largely meaning Saskatchewan's investment in carbon capture and storage. And while CBC reports that Saskatchewan environmental groups are backing the federal Technical paper, there is widespread support for the Premier's opposition. According to a CBC report in March, the Saskatchewan Taxpayers Federation, the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association, and the United Steelworkers Local 5890, sent Prime Minister Trudeau a joint letter outlining how a federal carbon tax would hurt Western Canada. In a CBC report on May 19, 'You can't buy a Prius and move dirt': Critics say carbon tax will punish industry , those two industry groups make the case that "there aren't green alternatives for building roads, hauling trailers and working with heavy machinery."

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**, **provincial climate change policies**, **Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

Bold recommendations from the Expert Panel on Modernization of the National Energy Board – but experts call for more

Posted on **May 16, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In November 2016, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources commissioned an 5-person Expert Panel on the Modernization of the National Energy Board , mandated " to position the NEB as a modern, efficient, and effective energy regulator and regain public trust". After public hearings and submissions, the results are in, in the form of 26 recommendations released on May 15, in their report: *Forward,Together: Enabling Canada's Clean, Safe, and Secure Energy Future* . Chief among the recommendations: replace the current Board with a new organization called the Canadian Energy Transmission Commission, to be based in Ottawa rather than Calgary, with radically increased scale and scope of stakeholder engagement, and especially with an increased role for Indigenous people. The report also calls for a new, independent Canadian Energy Information Agency to provide energy data, information, and analysis. The Panel lays out a detailed vision of a new process, based on 5 core principles of: Living the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Indigenous Peoples; Alignment of Regulatory Activities to National Policy Goals; Transparency of Decision-Making & Restoring Confidence ; Public Engagement Throughout the Lifecycle; and Regulatory Efficiency and Effectiveness.

For summaries and a range of immediate response to the Panel's recommendations, see : "Trudeau- appointed panel recommends replacement of the National Energy Board" in the *National Observer* , which provides summary, reaction, and background based on its ground-breaking, sustained investigations into the NEB process; "Scrap NEB and replace it with 2 separate agencies, expert panel recommends" from CBC Calgary, with a sense of Alberta's reaction; "National Energy Board needs major overhaul, Panel says" in the *Globe and Mail,* which seems to greet the news with a yawn.

For substantive response, see "NEB Modernization Panel report: The good, the workable and the ugly" from West Coast Environmental Law, which states: "environmental lawyers say that the report completely misses the mark when it comes to how projects like oil pipelines should be assessed, and disagree with the Panel's approach to determining whether individual energy projects are in the national interest."

The "Statement by Environmental Defence's Patrick DeRochie on the report from the Expert Panel on National Energy Board Modernization" says: "the Panel's proposal for the Federal Cabinet to determine whether a project is in the national interest before it undergoes an environmental assessment is problematic. Responsibility for environmental assessments must be removed from the energy regulator and be completed before a Cabinet decision." Environmental Defence also states that the NEB's review of the Energy East pipeline must be put on hold until NEB modernization is complete.

From DeSmog Canada, "Trudeau promised to fix the National Energy Board. Here's what his Panel Recommends" summarizes the contents. In "Will a Repackaged National Energy Board Be Able to Meet Canada's 21st Century Challenges? " Chris Tollefson of the Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation frames the report in its larger context, and states: "What the Expert Panel fails to address, however, is the need fundamentally to reform the *assessment* that major energy projects must undergo before we, as a society, allow them to proceed. These assessments must be capable of supporting informed, transparent and defensible social choices about future development. This is quite different from regulatory processes that are principally aimed at mitigating anticipated harms. …. where this Expert Panel has failed, and where the *CEAA, 2012 Expert Report* adds enduring value, is in confronting the legitimacy crisis that pervades decision making around fossil fuel infrastructure development. "

From the Pembina Institute: "NEB Expert Panel report two steps forward, one step back on climate" : "The Expert Panel's recommendations are only as good as the federal government's next steps. It's up to Prime Minister Trudeau and his Cabinet to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform Canada's energy project review landscape by ensuring NEB modernization works in sync with other elements of the federal environmental law reform process. … now is the time to outline a credible pathway that builds upon recommendations from the EA and NEB expert panels to ensure this outcome is achieved."

A public comment period on the Expert Panel report is open until June 14th; click here to participate in French or English. You can read research reports and position papers already submitted to the Expert Panel here. The submissions already received are not available – only Panel-generated summaries of the engagement sessions, which are here.

What next for the recommendations of this Expert Panel, and the other regulatory reviews in process (for example, the Report of the Expert Panel on Environmental Assessment , released on April 5)? According to the Natural Resources Canada press release: "Over the next few months, the Government of Canada will review the expert panel's report in depth along with the reports from the other three environmental and regulatory reviews to inform the development of next steps."

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Environmental Assessment Act**, **Energy policy**, **Environmental regulation**, **National Energy Board** | **Leave a reply**

Federal government about to release its proposals for promised national carbon pricing system as California debates radical changes to its cap-and-trade program

Posted on **May 15, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In advance of a consultation paper by the federal government, expected to be released in the week of May 15, the Pembina Institute released a Backgrounder report , *Putting a price on carbon pollution across Canada* . The Pembina report outlines the current federal and provincial carbon pricing policies in Canada, and makes recommendations for the national benchmark plan promised by 2018. Recommendations include that any benchmark should at least provide guidance on treatment of Export Import Trade Exposed sectors and be designed to minimize carbon leakage and competitiveness impacts; and stipulate that cap-and-trade systems must have a cap decline rate in line with a 30% reduction below 2005 levels by 2030. Pembina places emphasis on the need for a 2020 carbon pricing review, as well as frequent carbon pricing and climate policy reviews to ensure that Canada meets its obligations under the Paris Agreement.

A briefer paper on carbon pricing, also released in May, also summarizes the existing provincial carbon pricing plans – but from a right-wing point of view. From the Fraser Institute: *Poor Implementation undermines Carbon Tax efficiency in Canada* .

Also on the topic of carbon pricing, Pembina posted a blog on May 11 "Time for Premier Brad Wall to focus on carbon price implementation" , in which Nathalie Chalifour, a Professor of Law at University of Ottawa, explains her opinion that the federal government is within its constitutional authority to impose a carbon pricing mechanism on the provinces, despite Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall`s recently stated opinion to the contrary.

Meanwhile, as reported in the *National Observer* (May 4) , "California tables new cap-and-trade plan that jumps ahead of Quebec and Ontario" . Quebec and California have a linked carbon credit market that expires at the end of 2020, and Ontario`s cap and trade plan is schedule to link to the California−Quebec system in 2018. Continued partnership with California will demand that those provinces raise their minimum price per tonne of carbon and abolish offsets, among other changes outlined in the bill currently before the California state Senate . For a full discussion of the proposed legislation, read "California is about to revolutionize climate policy … again" (May 3) in *Vox.* Author David Roberts states: " The changes that SB 775 proposes for the state's carbon trading program are dramatic — and, to my eyes, amazingly thoughtful. I know some environmental groups have reservations (on which more later), but in my opinion, if it passes in anything close to its current form, it will represent the most important advance in carbon-pricing policy in the US in a decade. Maybe ever."

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **California**, **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Tax**, **Ontario**, **Quebec** | **Leave a reply**

Why U.S. unions supported the Washington March for Climate, Jobs and Justice

Posted on **May 15, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The May 5th Newsletter of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy provides an early assessment of "Why U.S. unions marched for the climate" . The article lists some of the many unions who marched in Washington D.C. on April 29 in the March for Climate, Jobs and Justice, highlighting the unique perspective of the National Nurses Union and 1199 SEIU, who see the public health effects of climate change in their daily work. TUED also mentions a meeting convened by Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis and hosted by the American Postal Workers Union, "bringing together roughly 30 labor, community and social movement activists and organizers, to reflect on possibilities for building on the Canadian Leap Manifesto framework to advance the struggle for energy democracy and just transition in the U.S. context."

Finally, the TUED article credits the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) with much of the work in building participation in the March. The latest LNS newsletter reports that over a dozen unions and more than 3000 members marched in Washington, including 100 members from AFSCME's local DC37 in New York. The newsletter also describes marches on the West Coast, where climate change was included in the May 1 messages. The LNS Facebook page has more details and photos.

A joint press release (April 26) includes brief statements from each of the members of the labour steering committee for the march: Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Communications Workers of America (CWA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) (including the local from the EPA), and BlueGreen Alliance.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS)**, **labour union policies**, **Leap Manifesto**, **People's Climate March** | **Leave a reply**

New green jobs policy adopted at the Canadian Labour Congress Convention-Updated with link to Policy document

Posted on **May 15, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

The 28th Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress was held in Toronto from May 8 to 12, 2017 under the theme "Together for a Fair Future". The agenda was packed – including equity issues, younger workers, putting an end to precarious work, and the fight to implement a $15 minimum wage. Executive officers were elected, and Hassan Yussuff was acclaimed as President for a second mandate – all serving from 2017 to 2020. On May 10th, the Convention addressed the issue of climate change, and heard from a Green Jobs Panel, consisting of Sharan Burrow of the ITUC, Sheila Watt-Cloutier from Inuit Circumpolar Council, Matt Wayland of the IBEW, and Patrick Rondeau of the FTQ, with Rick Smith of the Broadbent Institute moderating. Although no documents have been posted to the CLC website yet, a Unifor press release states: " … As one of the greatest challenges facing workers in Canada the Convention adopted a plan, outlined in the Green Jobs for a Fair Future policy, to guide the country through a necessary just transition to a green economy. Unifor's delegation voted overwhelmingly to support the position paper and delegates pledged to take action for just transition…The policy paper calls on the CLC to lobby and work towards green jobs in home and building retrofits, expand public transit, ensure responsible resource development, and at the core, just transition for workers whose lives are already dramatically changed by climate change."

Updated on May 29: By permission of the CLC, the 20-page policy statement is available here at the ACW Digital Library. It lays out detailed proposals and establishes a Climate Change Task Force to carry the initiatives forward until 2020, with extensive lobbying for policy changes at the federal government level. Proposals include expansion of renewable energy, building retrofits, expanded transportation and transit infrastructure, and labour market policies to promote a Just Transition for workers and communities who are affected by the shift from oil and gas to clean energy. The document also announces an initiative for the CLC and local labour councils to create and train a network of environmental representatives at the workplace level, based on the occupational health and safety model.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)**, **environmental representatives**, **Green Jobs**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Unifor** | **Leave a reply**

Union calls for a legal responsibility on employers to address a crisis in U.K. air pollution

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council (BWTUC) is the Southwest London arm of the Trades Union Congress and a founding supporter of the Greener Jobs Alliance. The BWTUC has undertaken a campaign against toxic air, and argues that employers are the root cause of diesel emissions – from their transport fleets as well as the individual journeys to and from work made by workers. As part of its campaign against what it calls the "number one public health issue", BWTUC will help local unions to carry out monitoring of pollution levels where they work, and is also producing online training modules which will be available at the Greener Jobs Alliance website after a May 27 launch. Finally, it is advocating for a Clean Air Act, as stated in the Greener Jobs Alliance Top 10 Election Demands : #10: " Introduce a Clean Air Act to tackle air pollution once and for all. Place a clear legal responsibility on employers and businesses to address air quality and develop a network of low emission zones in pollution hot spots."

The U.K. government has addressed the issue of roadside air pollution in *Improving air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities: Draft UK Air Quality Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide* (May 2017). Unlike the BWTUC, the government clearly sees pollution as an individual, not employer, responsibility. "The UK Government is clear that any action to improve air quality must not be done at the expense of local businesses and residents. Therefore local authorities must work closely with local people to create an approach which works for them. Everyone has a role to play in helping to address NOx by considering how they can reduce emissions through their day-to-day activities, for example by choosing cleaner vehicles." The government does propose incentives for low carbon fuel vehicle fleets, and for clean busses for commuting, but the plan is controversial and inadequate – see "UK's new air pollution plan dismissed as 'weak' and 'woefully inadequate'" and "Air pollution plan: sacrificing the nation's health to save an election campaign", both of which appeared in *The Guardian* on May 5.

According to a BWTUC press release , the people of Battersea/Wandsworth have a lot at stake: "In 2016 Putney High St had the dubious distinction of being the most polluted road in the whole of Europe. By law hourly levels of Nitrogen Dioxide must not exceed 200 micrograms per cubic metre more than 18 times in one year. In fact, the hourly limit was exceeded over 1,200 times in 2016. In January 2017 the standard was breached 11 times in one day." …. "In April, the Wandsworth Guardian quoted a report that showed 29 schools in the borough located in areas exceeding the safe legal limit."

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **air pollution**, **diesel cars**, **labour union policies**, **Trades Union Congress (TUC)**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

66% of Canada's energy in 2015 came from renewable sources, and other facts

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A Canadian Press story in early May highlighted that renewable energy accounted for 66% of energy generated in Canada in 2015, and appeared widely – for example, in the *Globe and Mail* (May 2) and the *Toronto Star* . The information behind the news was drawn from *Canada's Adoption of Renewable Power Sources – Energy Market Analysis May 2017* by the National Energy Board , which provides much more detail about each type of renewable energy, and notes the factors influencing their adoption rates (including costs, technological improvement, environmental considerations, and regulatory issues). The NEB also compares Canada to other countries, and perhaps most interestingly, includes a section on Emerging Technologies , which highlights tidal power, off-shore wind, and geothermal. Canada has no existing production capacity for either off-shore wind or geothermal, although the report outlines proposed developments.

Some highlights from the *Canada's Adoption of Renewable Power Sources*: the 2015 proportion of 66% renewables in our energy mix is an increase from 60% in 2005; only five countries (Norway, New Zealand, Brazil, Austria, and Denmark) produce a similar or larger share of electricity from renewable sources; China leads the world in total hyroelectricity production – Canada is second; over 98% of Canada's solar power generation capacity is located in Ontario.

Other useful NEB publications: *Canada's Renewable Power Landscape* (October 2016), which documents historical growth rates for renewable power in Canada, and each province and territory, and for the latest in energy projections, see *Canada's Energy Future 2016: Update – Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2040* . These projections, which include fossil fuels as well as renewables, were published in October 2016 and therefore don't reflect the policies of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Geothermal energy**, **Hydropower**, **Offshore Wind**, **Oil and gas industry**, **renewable energy industry**, **solar**, **tidal energy** | **Leave a reply**

Trends in international climate legislation since the Paris Agreement, built on a new public database

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A new database , launched in May, compiles national climate change legislation for 164 countries in the world, as well as a integrated climate litigation database for 25 countries, including Canada. U.S. litigation is available in a separate database hosted by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University . The entire project is the work of the Grantham Institute at the London School of Economics and the Sabin Center.

The database was the foundation of a new report, *Global Trends in Climate Change Legislation and Litigation 2017* , the sixth in a series that began in 2010. The report highlights the global stock of climate laws, the pace of law-making, the focus of legislation, and climate legislation in least developed countries . The second part of the report, for the first time ever, examines trends in litigation , describing the number of climate litigation cases in 25 jurisdictions, the objectives of the cases, who the plaintiffs and defendants were , and the outcomes of litigation so far.   A press release states: "These developments in climate legislation and policies since Paris should be taken in context. The 14 new laws and 33 policies add to a stock of more than 1,200 climate change or climate change-relevant laws worldwide: a twentyfold increase in the number of climate laws and policies over 20 years when compared with 1997 when there were just 60 such laws in place. … Most countries now have the legal basis on which further action can build."   The summary of the report by *The Guardian* highlights this optimistic note.

The report is the work of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, and the Sabin Center on Climate Change Law at the Columbia Law School, with the support of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the British Academy. It was launched at the UNFCCC meetings in Bonn on May 9.

The database is available to the public, and "users are welcome to download, save, or distribute the results electronically or in any other format, without written permission of the authors." Acknowledging that the database is not yet comprehensive, contributions are also invited: "Please send your comments (attaching supporting documents if possible) to: gri.cgl@lse.ac.uk."

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate change Law**, **Climate Legislation**, **International** | **Leave a reply**

Net-Zero and Net-Positive Green Building: Vancouver's New Policy, and a Pilot Project in Waterloo, Ontario

Posted on **May 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On May 1, the Green Building Policy for Rezoning took effect in the city of Vancouver, mandating that new commercial and multi-unit residential buildings be built to standards modeled after the international Passive House standards, with airtight design, exceptional insulation, and good ventilation. The Policy, originally approved in November 2016, is part of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan and its Zero Emissions Building Plan . Matt Horne, the city's Climate Policy Manager, writes in an OpEd in the *Vancouver Sun* that the new rules will result in buildings which emit half as much carbon pollution, with slightly lower construction and operating costs. Vancouver's new rezoning policy is in line with the province-wide standard for energy efficiency in new construction, the B.C. Energy Step Code , which came into force in April, 2017 in an effort to upgrade municipal building codes across the province.

The Pembina Institute praises Vancouver's new Rezoning policy and its benefits for workers in "Vancouver's green buildings policy is good news for homeowners and renters" : "Constructing new energy-efficient homes and offices will be a boon to Vancouver's green building sector. In B.C., the sector already employs over 23,000 people, and the industry is ready to respond to increased demand. New trades training is being offered by such institutions as the British Columbia Institute of Technology, which recently launched a new hands-on High-Performance Building Lab. Passive House Canada now trains hundreds of people a year, including designers, builders, and government staff. Energy-efficient buildings are one of B.C.'s biggest opportunities for real and lasting job creation." A February article in the Globe and Mail, "The Economic Case for Retrofitting Buildings" echos this "ready to work" idea in the context of retrofitting: "we have the know-how and technology to be a key player in meeting a steep challenge. Building efficiency isn't just low hanging fruit, it's the fruit that's ripened and ready to fall into our lap."

Evolv1 is a net positive building project in Waterloo Ontario, being described as a "game-changer","groundbreaking", and "iconic". Evolv1 will generate more energy than it needs for its own operation from 1.5 acres of solar panels on the roof and carport, allowing it to power the building's 14 electric vehicle charging stations and sell any remaining excess to the provincial electricity grid. The building is also aiming for LEED Platinum certification through the use of triple-glazed glass, very high levels of insulation, digitally-controlled LED lighting with occupancy and light level sensors, natural light, a three-storey green wall to improve air quality, and a geo-exchange system that extracts heat from the ground for winter heating and returns excess heat to the ground in the summer. Finally, the building will have direct access to the city's light rail transit system to reduce the environmental impact of commuters. Completion is scheduled for 2018. The project is being built by Cora Group construction, in partnership with Sustainable Waterloo Region and the University of Waterloo, as well as anchor tenant, consultants EY Canada. The Cora Group website provides illustrations.

Evolv1 was highlighted in the *Waterloo Region Record* in "An office building so green it actually produces energy" (Feb. 17), and in the May issue of the Natural Resources Canada Newsletter, *Heads-Up*. Sustainable Waterloo released its own press releases about the project: "Raising the Standard" , and a description of the vision for the project.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **energy efficiency**, **green buildings**, **LEED**, **net positive building**, **passive house**, **retrofitting**, **Skilled Workers**, **Vancouver**, **Waterloo Ontario**, **zero emissions building** | **Leave a reply**

Another federal government consultation: Canada’s Energy Future

Posted on **May 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources quietly launched a new consultation process on April 21, called Generation Energy, building on the previous engagement on clean technology in the natural resources sector . (The report from the clean technology process was released in December 2016). Now, Canadians are being invited to share their ideas about how Canada should make, move, and use energy in the future – a very broad scope. Participation is through a web portal at http://www.generationenergy.ca/ which accepts submissions and allows comments, with a Forum of experts and stakeholders to discuss the ideas and themes generated in October.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **consultations**, **Energy policy** | **Leave a reply**

After the March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate: What next?

Posted on **May 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— From Edmonton, photo by Abdul Malik, posted on People’s Climate Movement Facebook page

The March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate drew thousands to Washington D.C., and cities around the world, including communities across Canada. Coverage in Canada, so far, seems limited to brief overviews – see the CBC and here and the Energy Mix.   For the most complete photos and posts from across Canada, as well as video from Washington, go to the People's Climate Movement Canada Facebook page – where the group is hosting a conference call on May 3 for a discussion of "what's next?".

A report in *Vox* brings together photos and video of the Washington crowds, while noting that, compared to the Science March on April 22, the Climate March was "more explicitly anti-Trump, more intersectional, and more social justice oriented." Organizers are quoted as claiming more than 150,000 people attended, including 43 labor union buses, indigenous people and communities of color, and a big faith and youth contingent. Other U.S. reports are at *Think Progress* ; *Inside Climate News* , and mainstream media, which generally focussed on crowd estimates and photos of "the best signs": "Climate March draws thousands of Protesters Alarmed by Trump's Environmental Agenda" in the *New York Times* , and the *Washington Post* report , which was republished in the *Toronto Star* .

As for that obvious question of "what's next?", read "It can't just be a march it has to be a movement. What's next for climate activists" (April 30) in the *Washington Post* or "The Climate March's Big Tent Strategy Draws a Big Crowd: But will it make a difference?" in *The Atlantic* (Apr. 30), which states: "Whether the protest will eventually result in political success is an open question. Due to the hyperpolarized politics of climate change, it may ultimately depend on other factors—whether the Democratic Party can harmonize a political message, for instance. And the lack of any one unifying climate policy may prove troublesome when it comes time for the movement's leaders to govern again.

But protests are not only about legislative success. …Rather it is for people to register their mass discontent and mobilize around a movement's shared goals. For the moment, the People's Climate Movement seems to have accomplished that. "

— From Sudbury Ontario Climate March, posted at People's Climate March Facebook page

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Activism**, **People's Climate March** | **Leave a reply**

Solar Job Training report and growth forecasts for solar and wind energy

Posted on **May 1, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Solar job growth is strong in the U.S., according to *The Solar Training and Hiring Insights report* , released by the Solar Training Network , a program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Initiative and administered by The Solar Foundation. The report aggregates data from several sources, including an extensive survey of more than 400 solar installers, as well as smaller case studies and in-depth interviews with dozens of solar employers, trainers, and workforce development boards in the U.S. Amongst the findings: Solar employers expect to add 26,258 positions in 2017, a 10% growth in the workforce; the largest growth in the industry has occurred in installation, with 93,199 installation-related jobs added between 2010 and 2016; average wage range for an inexperienced, new installer was \$10 – \$23, progressing to \$20 – \$48 for a crew-leader; 77% of industry respondents did not have formal mentorship or apprenticeship programs. The report also provides insight into the prevalence and structure of in-house training programs, and employer attitudes to such issues as the importance of experience and certification in hiring decisions.

The *2016 U.S. Wind Industry Annual Market Report*, released on April 19th by the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), states that wind power added jobs at a rate more nine times greater than the overall economy in 2016; domestic wind-related manufacturing jobs grew 17% to over 25,000 factory jobs in the U.S. According to the Association spokesman, "bigger, better technology enables new wind turbines to generate 50 percent more electricity than those built in 2009 and at 66 percent lower cost … With stable policy in place, we're on the path to reliably supply 10 percent of U.S. electricity by 2020." Further, "The average modern wind turbine installed here in the U.S. creates 44 years of full-time employment over its lifetime." The report also emphasizes the importance of jobs and revenues to rural economies, where wind projects are concentrated. Other reports re wind energy: also from the AWEA, a white paper, *Wind brings jobs and economic development to all 50 states* ; from Navigant Consulting, *Economic Development Impacts of Wind Projects* released in March 2017 states that "the U.S. wind industry will drive over $85 billion in economic activity over the next four years while wind-related employment will grow to reach 248,000 jobs in all 50 states in 2020." The Navigant forecasts measure the impact of the extension of the Production Tax Credit (PTC) programs in the U.S.

Posted in **Green Economy**, **United States** | Tagged **Green Jobs**, **Solar energy industry**, **Training**, **wind energy** | **Leave a reply**

ILO report about Indigenous People's role in the green economy; Canadian First Nations and clean energy

Posted on **May 1, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

An April report released by the ILO, *Indigenous peoples and climate change: From victims to change agents through Decent Work* rejects the characterization of Indigenous people as "victims". The report states that indigenous peoples, numbering over 370 million worldwide , "are at the vanguard of running modern green economies", and "if they have access to decent work opportunities; if they are empowered to participate in decision making; if their rights are protected; and if policies address their social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities while honing their positive potential as partners, workers, entrepreneurs and innovators, indigenous peoples will become empowered agents of change who can play a vital role in spurring green growth and combating climate change."

As if to prove the points of the ILO report, a press release on April 24 announced the results of a survey conducted by the University of Victoria Environmental Studies for B.C. First Nations Clean Energy Working Group and Clean Energy B.C. . *First Nations and Renewable Energy Development in British Columbia* reports the results of a survey conducted from October 2016 to February 2017, showing that 47% of the 105 First Nations respondents are involved in the clean energy industry in some way – from ownership to receiving royalties. There are currently 78 operating projects, (in which they have invested over $35million), plus 49 projects under development and an additional 249 projects that they want to build, ranging from wind farms to solar installations to run of river power generation. 61% of First Nation respondents said the biggest barrier for their projects is the lack of opportunity to sell power to B.C. Hydro, because the utility has stopped buying power from independent producers, projecting a surplus of power from the controversial Site C dam. (DeSmog Canada compiles the latest news and research about the Site C project here.)

First Nations across Canada are also active investors in green energy, according an article in the *Toronto Star* April 26, "Six Nations of Grand River lead the charge on green energy" . The article mentions projects in Quebec and Manitoba, and highlights the Ontario Six Nations of the Grand River solar and wind projects as exemplary – most recently, the Oneida Business Park in Ohsweken, Southwestern Ontario, which was awarded Aboriginal Project of the year by the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association in summer 2016.

Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation (SNGRDC) manages the Six Nations' economic interests in 17 renewable energy projects and numerous economic development opportunities. It employs over 100 people. SNGRDC's current green energy portfolio is capable of producing over 900 MW of renewable energy through its direct or indirect involvement in 10 solar, 6 wind and one hydroelectric project(s). Consultation is currently underway about another investment in a solar project near the now-decommissioned Nanticoke coal-burning power plant – which will consist of 175,000 to 210,000 solar photovoltaic panels on 4 parcels of land either owned or leased by Ontario Power Generation. The Grand River Employment and Training (GREAT) administration is involved to promote employment of First Nations workers in the contruction phase.

In January 2016, the Whitesand First Nation also received an OSEA award for their sustained efforts to launch a 3.64 MW combined heat and power biomass plant, which will provide electricity to three communities of the Far-north.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Clean Energy**, **First Nations**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **Site C Dam**, **Solar energy industry**, **wind energy** | **Leave a reply**

Case studies of Community and human rights impacts of Renewable energy companies, and a ranking of multinationals in Ag/Food, Apparel and Mining

Posted on **April 26, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

An April 2017 report from the London-based advocacy group, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre asks, “What adverse impacts can renewable energy projects have on communities around the world?” *Renewable Energy investor briefing: Managing risks & responsibilities for impacts on local communities* (April 2017) is directed at financial and investment professionals who are considering investment in renewable energy projects- in this report, comprised of wind and small-to-medium hydro, but excluding solar . It starts from the premise that Just Transition principles are essential, then explains the international human rights responsibilities of companies. The report also provides examples of the kinds of questions that should be asked in shareholder meetings and before investment decisions are made, and gives examples of best practice policies – for example, inclusion of community benefits agreements. One of the main issues it discusses is the right to free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples, which is an ongoing topic monitored by the BHRC.

The report provides case studies, including six positive examples, including: the Ixtepec community-owned wind project in Mexico; the Jeffreys Bay Wind Farm in South Africa; and a cluster of wind projects in Jämtland, Sweden, for which OECD guidelines are being used in negotiations between the company and affected Indigenous people. The full suite of case studies is presented in a searchable database which allows searching by company name, issue, country, and more. There are no Canadian projects included in the 2017 report, although a profile of Ontario Power Generation is available as part of the Centre’s ongoing database of human rights in the energy sector .

In March 2017, the Centre also launched an updated and expanded Corporate Human Rights Benchmark website , which ranked 98 of the world's largest publicly traded companies, from the Agriculture, Apparel, and Extractive industries. The Benchmark is intended to drive a "race to the top" and is directed at business, government, and " to empower civil society, workers, communities, customers, and the media with better public information to reward, encourage, and promote human rights advances by companies and make well-informed choices about which companies to engage with." A 50 page summary report is here . There are six thematic measurement categories, including " Company Performance: Human Rights Practices" which includes rankings related to living wage, freedom of association and right to bargain collectively, health and safety, amongst others.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Agriculture**, **Apparel Industry**, **Community benefits**, **Corporate Environment Policy**, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, **Human Rights**, **Indigenous Peoples**, **Labour Rights**, **mining industry**, **renewable energy industry**, **Supply chains** | **Leave a reply**

How the B.C. Insulators Union fights climate change and promotes green awareness in the construction industry

Posted on **April 25, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change research project has released two papers relating to the built environment, and more specifically, the accomplishments of one labour union in British Columbia to promote major climate change improvements in the construction industry. *Evaluating the Impact of the BC Insulators' Union Campaign to Promote Improved Mechanical Insulation Standards in BC's Construction Industry* (April 2016) described the campaign by BC Insulators union Local 118 to encourage municipalities in B.C. to require higher insulation standards in their building requirements and procurement contract tenders. To do this, the union "funded independent, technical research papers, commissioned best practice manuals with detailed guidelines on installing MI and initiated an extensive and carefully organized public education campaign to pressure industry and government to raise standards. It approached municipalities, building contractors, government officials, property developers, industry professionals and trade organizations to alert them to the importance of reducing the energy footprint of buildings. It pressured governments to raise MI standards in procurement of new and refurbished buildings and implement tougher requirements in their building codes. And it introduced climate change literacy into the curriculum of the apprenticeship system it oversees."

The climate literacy curriculum is the subject of a new report released in April 2017: *Promoting Climate Literacy in British Columbia's Apprenticeship System: Evaluating One Union's Efforts to Overcome Attitudinal Barriers to Low Carbon Construction* describes the 'Green Awareness' course the union provides as part of the apprenticeship training for all mechanical insulation trades workers in British Columbia. The two-module course was introduced in 2011 and is taught over the course of the first two years of the four-year program. After conducting a review of the 'Green Awareness' course content, the research team performed qualitative interviews with a cohort of 2nd and 4th year apprentices to determine how effective the training had been. These findings indicate the need for further refinements in the content and delivery of the 'Green Awareness' course material. The authors conclude that incorporating climate change-related course content into the training process is an important step in fostering climate literacy within the industry and should be encouraged in other trades. They caution, however, that its degree of impact will be limited unless more sweeping changes are made to the organization and culture of the construction industry itself.

Both papers were authored by John Calvert and Corinne Tallon. The evaluation of the climate literacy program was presented at the International Labour Process Conference (ILPC), Sheffield, United Kingdom, April 4 – 6, 2017.

BC Insulators

Heat and Frost Insulators Local 118

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Apprenticeship**, **B.C. Insulators Union**, **British Columbia**, **Construction Industry**, **Insulation**, **Labour Training**, **labour union policies** | **Leave a reply**

Ontario’s Climate Action Plan: beyond job creation to job quality for building trades workers

Posted on **April 25, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A report released on April 19th aims to contribute to a strong, future-proofed green jobs strategy for Ontario. *Building An Ontario Green Job Strategy: Ensuring the Climate Change Action Plan creates good Jobs where they are needed most* focuses on the building sector provisions within *Ontario’s Climate Change Action Plan* (June 2016) – which are estimated at 28 – 31% of the budget allocations of the Action Plan.

Building an Ontario Green Job Strategy states: “Ontario’s investment of C$1.91 billion to $2.73 billion in retooling buildings, as outlined in the Climate Change Action Plan of 2016 , could create between 24,500 to 32,900 green jobs over the five-year funding plan with a further 16,800 to 24,000 jobs created from the reinvestments of energy cost savings into the economy.” Job creation forecasts were calculated using three job multipliers, including that from the 2012 report by Heidi Garrett-Peltier, *Analysis of Job Creation and Energy Costs Savings* , published by the Institute for Market Transformation and the Political Economy Research Institute at University of Massachusetts.

Beyond the evidence of the job creation potential of energy efficiency investments, the report also makes significant recommendations to ensure job quality. Amongst the recommendations for the provincial government: Conduct a high-carbon jobs census and low-carbon skills survey so that workforce planning will work from an accurate base; make use of existing training programs and facilities; push for rigorous standards (specifically, run a pilot project of a Canadian Building Performance Institute, modelled after the U.S. BPI, to oversee credentialling and certification for trades), and consider an Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard; investigate support for domestic industries (avoiding any WTO sanctions by following a Sustainable Energy Trade Agreement model); work to implement carbon border adjustments to avoid carbon leakage ; and design programs to stand the test of time and changes to the governing party.

Building an Ontario Green Job Strategy recognizes that the Ontario *Climate Change Action Plan* included language about Just Transition, but it recommends strengthening and clarifying that language. It also holds up two models for tendering and procurement processes: Community

Benefits Agreements (CBA), which ensure that infrastructure investments result in social and economic benefits to the community and citizens of the immediate neighbourhood – with a case study of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project in Toronto, and High Road Agreements, where contractors are assessed against an established set of sustainable contracting standards and community benefits- with a case study of a Portland Oregon retrofit project.

The report was written by Glave Communications for the Clean Economy Alliance , Environmental Defence, and Blue Green Canada , "with the participation of the United Steelworkers, UNIFOR, Clean Energy Canada, the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, the Labour Education Centre, the Columbia Institute, Canadian Solar Industries Association, Ontario Sustainability, the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, and Evergreen."

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Community benefits**, **employment impacts**, **energy efficiency**, **Green Building**, **High Road Jobs**, **Just Transition**, **Ontario**, **retrofitting** | **Leave a reply**

How Trump's budget will rob coal workers and communities of federal aid for transition and retraining

Posted on **April 25, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

An April Issue Brief from the Center for American Progress examines the Trump actions to date and concludes that "The Trump Budget Cuts Hit Coal Communities and Workers Where It Hurts" . In a concise, well-documented overview, the paper explains the widely-accepted facts about the decline of the coal industry – that it is caused not by over-reaching environmental regulation, but by market forces and declining productivity, especially in the Appalachian coal mines. But the thrust of the report is to estimate in detail how the Trump budget proposed for 2018 would eliminate $1.13 billion in federal funding for 7 of the 12 Obama-era programs, undoing the current efforts to diversify the economies of coal mining communities and provide workforce training.

In 2015, then-President Barack Obama launched the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization, or POWER, Initiative, which funded efforts by 12 federal agencies to align, scale up, and target federal economic and workforce development assistance to coal communities and coal economy workers . Coordinated by the Department of Commerce, the Initiative included the Appalachian Regional Commission, which had been established in 1965 to invest in economic and workforce opportunities in Appalachia, and the National Dislocated Worker Grants program, part of the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, which channeled funding to state workforce development agencies to provide employment and training services.   The CAP issue paper was co-authored by Jason Walsh, who was a senior policy adviser in the White House under President Obama, involved in the design and coordination of the POWER Initiative.

A new report from Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy asks "Can Coal make a Comeback?"   and with detailed statistics and discussion of coal in the context of the global energy industry, answers the question as "No".   The paper concludes with some examples of local economic diversification programs, stating: "There is a lot the federal government can do to help accelerate locally driven economic diversification efforts… But this all requires a clear-eyed assessment of the outlook for the coal industry and a commitment to put sustainable solutions ahead of politically expedient talking points."

The Columbia paper also calls for the federal government to help provide retirement and healthcare security by passing the Miners' Protection Act . But an April 19 article in the *New York Times* "Retired Miners Lament Trump's Silence on Imperiled Health Plan"(April 19) describes the uncertainty for the miners and the political horsetrading in Congress – part of the government funding showdown due April 30. The fates and possibly the lives of more than 20,000 retired miners rests on extending federal funding to the health benefits fund, depleted by coal industry bankruptcies . For the best explanation see " Mine wars: The struggle for coal miners' health care and pension benefits comes to a head" in *The Conversation*, published April 26 and updated April 30th with the news that Congress had extended health care benefits until May 5. This will be the latest of several extensions, without a resolution to the issue.

In addition to the economic analysis of the Columbia University report, the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) published a brief on April 21, "U.S. Coal Phase-out, Blow by Blow: Plant Closings and the Likely Corresponding Effect on Specific Companies and Mines"— which "focuses on how the scheduled closures, conversions or curtailments of 46 coal-fired generating units at 25 electricity plants in 16 states stand to affect the U.S coal-mining industry through 2018, including the loss of nearly 30 million tons of coal demand."   It does not estimate job losses or community impacts.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Coal Industry**, **Donald Trump**, **United States** | **Leave a reply**

Architects speak out for climate change mitigation and public advocacy

Posted on **April 18, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On April 17, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) issued a press release , announcing eight principles governing how architects can mitigate climate change, and urging the U.S. government "to protect policies designed to conserve energy and reduce carbon in the built environment". An excerpt from the AIA statement "Where we stand on Climate Change" : " We know that carbon neutral design and construction is a growth industry. Employers from roughly 165,000 US companies doing energy efficiency work expect employment to grow 13 percent over the coming year, adding 245,000 more jobs. …. In Philadelphia alone, 77 percent of the city's buildings need energy retrofits, supporting the creation of 23,000 jobs. …. We call on policymakers to protect financing and incentives to help communities design, build and retrofit their building stock."

The AIA's Energy Leadership Group had also recently issued a commentary which summarizes and updates their long history of attention to sustainability. "As stewards of the built environment, architects and our collaborators must be leaders in providing a powerful response to climate change. In order to achieve carbon neutral design as standard practice by 2030, we need to urgently shift our practices to apply passive design techniques, energy efficiency measures, embodied carbon reduction strategies, and renewable energy in all of our projects. By implementing these techniques, architects provide our clients with increased value, through benefits to human health and productivity, energy cost savings and resilience.

Architects must also expand our roles beyond design practice, by engaging in public policy to ensure the design, preservation, and construction of sustainable communities and high-performance buildings. This requires our active participation and leadership in the development, evaluation, and use of codes, standards, evidence-based rating systems and financial mechanisms."

— Bibliotheque du Boise, Montreal, from the RAIC website

Most recently in Canada, in August 2016, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) joined with 11 other organizations in an Open Letter to the federal government, with recommendations for a national plan for improving the energy efficiency of Canada's buildings.

Illustrating what is possible in sustainable designs, the Bibliothèque du Boisé in suburban Montreal was announced as the winner of the 2017 Green Building Award, given by the RAIC and the Canada Green Building Council. The annual award recognizes outstanding achievement in buildings that are environmentally responsible and promote the health and wellbeing of users. The building's sustainability strategies include "an innovative integration of mechanical systems: a passive heating system uses the heat accumulated in a glass prism for redistribution through a geothermal loop. Low-flow ventilation through the floors reduces the number of ducts required. The building relies mostly on natural light, combined with task lighting, for energy savings: 75 percent of the library's floor area receives natural light. The project emphasized the use of certified wood, low-emitting materials, and recycled or regional materials."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **architects**, **Architecture**, **energy efficiency**, **Green Building** | **Leave a reply**

EU Industry pledges no new coal plants as Australians mobilize to fight the giant Adani coal project

Posted on **April 18, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Union of the Electricity Industry (EURELECTRIC), representing 3500 companies across Europe, released a statement on April 5, pledging that no new coal-fired plants will be built in the EU after 2020. "The European electricity sector believes that achieving the decarbonisation objectives agreed in the Paris Agreement is essential to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the global economy. EURELECTRIC's members are committed to delivering a carbon neutral power supply in Europe by 2050, and to ensuring a competitively priced and reliable electricity supply throughout the integrated European energy market." Poland and Greece remain outside the agreement, and apparently outside the mainstream.

The Guardian calls the EU position a "death knell for coal", and in a separate piece, summarizes the decline of coal-fired electricity around the world. "Coal in 'freefall' as new power plants dive by two-thirds" (March 22) quotes a new report by Greenpeace , Sierra Club USA, and Coalswarm : *Boom and Bust 2017: Tracking The Global Coal Plant Pipeline*. Its findings show a 62 percent drop in new construction starts, and an 85 percent decline in new Chinese coal plant permits. A senior Greenpeace official states: "2016 marked a veritable turning point". "China all but stopped new coal projects after astonishing clean energy growth has made new coal-fired power plants redundant, with all additional power needs covered from non-fossil sources since 2013. Closures of old coal plants drove major emission reductions especially in the U.S. and UK, while Belgium and Ontario became entirely coal-free and three G8 countries announced deadlines for coal phase-outs."

Yet in Australia, environmentalists are waging an epic environmental battle against a giant, $16.5-billion coal mine adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef, proposed by Indian energy conglomerate Adani. Government supporters, including the Prime Minister and politicians in Queensland, have argued that the mine would bring jobs and would not increase GHG emissions globally because Australian coal is cleaner than any other that India would be able to source from other countries; see an article in Climate Home for the rebuttal to that. Voices in opposition include Bob Brown, a former Green Party leader, who states : “This is the environmental issue of our times and, for one, the Great Barrier Reef is at stake. The Adani corporation’s dirty coalmine is an impending disaster with effects which will reach far beyond Australia.” Or read: “It’s either Adani or the Great Barrier Reef – are we willing to fight for a Wonder of the World?” in *The Guardian*. Thirteen community groups, claiming to represent 1.5 million Australians have joined the Stop Adani Alliance since its launch in March, and the Australian Conservation Foundation is behind another high-powered campaign . For context, see “The coal war: Inside the fight against Adani’s plans to build Australia’s biggest coal mine” from the *Sydney Morning Herald*. For a catalogue of “the ten most-absurd things about the Adani mine ” , see “Australia’s Climate bomb: the senselessness of Adani’s Carmichael coal mine” in *The Conversation* (April 12).

UPDATE: An April 24 analysis of the bleak prospects of the Carmichael Mine proposed by Adani for Australia “Adani: Remote Prospect: Carmichael Status Update 2017” .

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Australia**, **Coal Industry**, **coal-fired electricity**, **EU**, **European Union** | **Leave a reply**

Two Marches in April: for Climate action and Science-Based Policy

Posted on **April 18, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In releasing its most recent working paper , the Labor Network for Sustainablity (LNS) states : “On the eve of the second Peoples’ Climate March, we offer this as a contribution to the conversation that we must continue in earnest and move us to bold, decisive and immediate action." Comments are invited, as is participation in Labor Contingent of the People's Climate March in Washington D.C. on April 29. According to 350.org, , more than 100,000 people have already RSVP'ed for the Washington March alone, as of April 13. See information about the March in Toronto or Vancouver.

The LNS paper, *Jobs for Climate and Justice: A Worker alternative to the Trump Agenda* , describes a Jobs for Climate and Justice Plan – a four-part strategy to defeat the Trump ideas, and develop a climate-safe and worker-friendly economy. Author Jeremy Brecher states that "protecting the climate requires a massive and emergency mobilization" comparable to the industrial transformation of World War 2. The paper suggests ideas to create new climate-friendly jobs and protect the workers and communities who are threatened by climate change, and while most of these have appeared in earlier LNS publications , the sheer number of positive, concrete examples of worker initiatives across the U.S. makes this an inspiring document .

According to an article in Common Dreams, "The Fights to Protect Science, People and Planet Are Inherently Connected" (April 6) . A blog post from Legal Planet, "The War on Science continues" also makes clear how the Trump administration disregard for science is impacting climate change research, and how closely intertwined the two issues are. So on April 22, Earth Day, watch for or join the March for Science "the first step of a global movement to defend the vital role science plays in our health, safety, economies, and governments". "….. We are advocating for evidence-based policy-making, science education, research funding, and inclusive and accessible science."

The main Science March is set for Washington D.C., but there are sister marches around the world, including in 18 cities across Canada . The Canadian organizers, Ottawa-based Evidence for Democracy , state: "*The politicization of science, which has given policymakers permission to reject overwhelming evidence, is a critical and urgent matter. It is time for people who support scientific research and evidence-based policies to take a public stand and be counted".* This is not just an American issue. Canadians remember the muzzled scientists of the Harper era, and can see current examples – Evidence for Democracy published a report on April 6, *Oversight at Risk:*

The state of government science in British Columbia – the first of several planned surveys of provincial government scientists . Some results: 32 per cent said they cannot speak to the media about their research; 49 per cent think said political interference reduces their department's ability to create policies and programs based on scientific evidence.

Posted in **Government Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **community action**, **Just Transition**, **Muzzled Scientists**, **People's Climate March**, **scientists** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. Election 2017: focusing on energy and the environment amid all those scandals

Posted on **April 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The sitting Liberal government of British Columbia, led by Premier Christy Clark, is facing an election on May 9, amid allegations of corruption – most recently, in "How Teck Resources benefits from being the largest BC Liberal donor" from West Coast Environmental Law (April 6). The *Energy Mix* reports that the Supreme Court of B.C. will begin a review of the government's ties to Kinder Morgan, the company behind the Trans Mountain pipeline, on May 3rd . There are also wider, older allegations of "cash for access" and donation scandals – for examples, see the Dogwood Institute reports .

The election is full of contentious issues – follow " B.C. in the Balance", a special series of election reports by *The Tyee* , or DeSmog Canada , or the CBC Vancouver website for ongoing coverage. Context is provided by a CCPA-BC Policy Note (April 4), which summarizes the results of a recent survey of B.C. residents' concerns: affordable housing and the cost of living (26%), the environment (24%), and jobs and the economy (15%).

For a climate change-related viewpoint, West Coast Environmental Law has published a comparison of the climate change-related elements of the platforms of the three parties, and a scorecard .

The Liberal party platform, released on April 10, states: " To keep B.C.'s economy strong and growing, today's BC Liberals will get Site C built – employing thousands, and guaranteeing a 100-year supply of clean, affordable, reliable power. And the platform outlines key actions to strengthen forestry, secure new mining investments, and grow B.C.'s energy sector, including LNG." The Pembina Institute reaction speaks for most environmentalists in opposing the government's continuing focus on LNG development: "The platform released today continues … doubling down on an LNG industry that would be responsible for 20 million tonnes of B.C.'s carbon pollution in 2050. B.C.'s legislated 2050 target for carbon pollution is 13 million tonnes. Clearly, LNG is not a climate solution."

Irene Lanzinger, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour and member of Green Jobs BC is critical of the Liberal record on green jobs, in an April 13 article in *The Tyee* , and points to the Green Jobs BC priorities for green job growth: clean energy, transit, building retrofits and forestry.

The Green Party platform includes a statement on Building the New Economy, and the platform on climate leadership . The Green Platform is most notable for its pledge to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by $10 per tonne per year, reaching $50 per tonne by 2021. (as recommended by the shelved 2016 Climate Leadership Plan). David Suzuki praises the Green platform but states: "Missing from this announcement are details of a funding framework for public transit infrastructure investment and a firm commitment to expand the use of low-impact renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and tidal power to achieve the province's energy needs." According to West Coast Environmental Law, neither the Green nor NDP platform makes any statement about fossil fuel subsidies.

The NDP platform is here , and was welcomed by the Pembina Institute on its release: "We are pleased to see the commitment to implementing the recommendations of the premier's Climate Leadership Team, which plot a course to significantly reduce B.C.'s carbon pollution — in particular, the pledge to adopt the proposed 2030 target and sector-by-sector targets for emissions."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BC LNG**, **British Columbia**, **Green Party**, **NDP**, **Political parties and policies** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian GHG emissions decreased by 2.2% from 2005, according to the latest report to UNFCCC

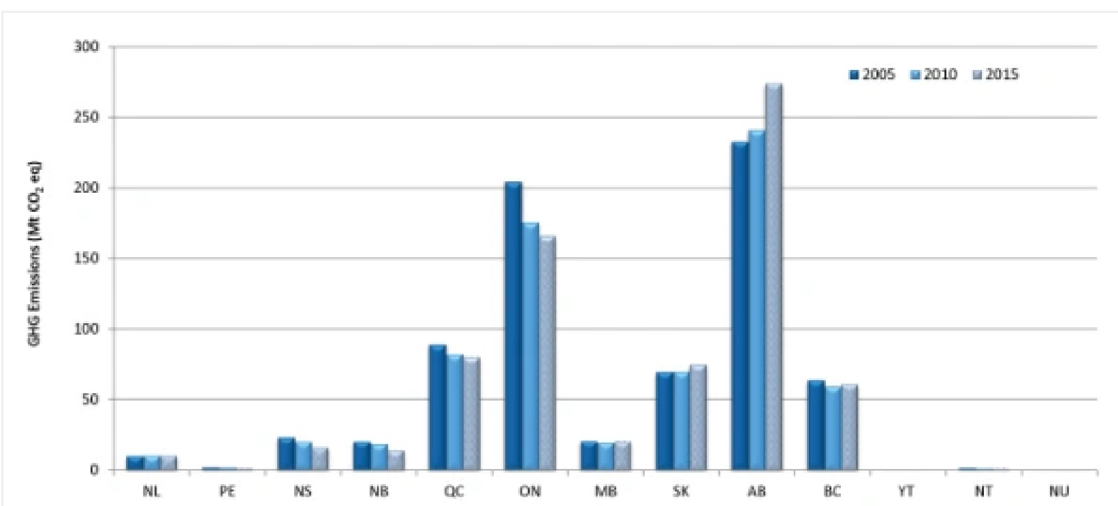
Posted on **April 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) posted the National Inventory Reports of greenhouse gas emissions from most countries of the world in the second week of April 2017, including *Canada's National Inventory Report 1990–2015: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada*. The full 3-part report, available only at the UNFCC website, is an exhaustive inventory emissions of GHG's, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, perfluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride, and nitrogen trifluoride, reported for the country and for each province and territory. Statistics are given for five economic sectors, as defined and required by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) : Energy, Industrial Processes and Product Use, Agriculture, Waste, and Land Use, and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF). An Executive Summary is posted at Environment and Climate Change Canada, and includes statistics using Canadian economic sector definitions.

A few highlights: In 2013; Canada represented approximately 1.6% of total global GHG emissions. Canada remains one of the highest per capita emitters, although that is decreasing since 2005 and was the lowest yet in 2015, at 20.1 tons. In 2015, Canada's GHG emissions were 722 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – a net decrease of 2.2% from 2005 . The Energy Sector (as defined by IPCC, consisting of Stationary Combustion Sources, Transport, and Fugitive Sources) emitted 81% of Canada's total GHG emissions; Agriculture emitted 8%; Industrial Processes and Product Use emitted 7%; the Waste Sector emitted 3%.

Using Canadian economic sector definitions, our Oil and Gas sector showed a 20% increase in emissions from 2005 to 2015; Transportation increased by 6% in that time.

Nationally, we posted a 31% decrease in emissions associated with electricity production. The permanent closure of all coal generating stations in the province of Ontario by 2014 was the determinant factor.



— From: *National Inventory Report 1990 – 2015 Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada*; Figure S-9 Emissions by Province in 2005, 2010, and 2015

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada**, **Greenhouse gas emissions**, **Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Cap-and-Trade proposals for Nova Scotia – and beyond?

Posted on **April 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A discussion paper released in early March by the government of Nova Scotia proposes the structure of a cap-and-trade system for the province, as required by the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* . Nova Scotia is a reluctant participant in the national carbon pricing regime of the *Framework*, having walked out of one of the federal-provincial meetings on the topic in October 2016.

The Discussion paper, *Nova Scotia Cap and Trade Program Design Options ,* proposes a plan which covers only those sectors required by the *Framework*, and grants free allocations to them, including Nova Scotia Power and the suppliers of fossil fuel. Sectors not included represent about 10% of emissions, and would be allowed to sell offsets into the system. Fugitive emissions will not be included. As stated in the Discussion paper, the system will not align itself with any other provinces. Yet, days after the release, and in apparent contradiction to the Discussion paper, the CBC reported that the Premier is still in discussion with the provinces of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island about a regional system : see "Welcome to join: Atlantic cap and trade system explored" .

An excellent summary of the features and failings of the plan appears in a post from the Environmental Law blog from Dalhousie University. It states that the proposed plan seems designed to meet the minimum GHG emission reductions obligations under the Pan-Canadian Framework, while also minimizing any impact on Nova Scotia's economy. "We are clearly far from getting our C&T system right. To do so, would take time, careful analysis and a public dialogue on priorities and values rather than starting assumptions that all we care about is trying to preserve the status quo for as long as we can." Unfortunately, the deadline for public submissions was March 31, less than a month after the release.

"Political Manipulation Could Derail Nova Scotia's Cap and Trade System" in the *Halifax Examiner* is also highl*y* critical. Author Brendan Haley decries the lack of time and opportunity for public input, and states that political expediency seems to be motivating the design of the carbon pricing system . The Ecology Action Centre also has concerns over the proposed system – their position paper is here .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Markets**, **Nova Scotia** | **Leave a reply**

Reports re environmental regulation arrive to positive response – next up in May: the Expert Panel on modernizing the National Energy Board

Posted on **April 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Government of Canada launched four reviews of government environmental and regulatory processes in June 2016, and recently, the appointed Expert Panels have begun to deliver their reports. The Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans was released on February 24 – to a welcoming review by West Coast Environmental Law: "We are pleased that the Committee has listened – to First Nations, to conservation and community groups, to scientists and concerned citizens across the country – and has recommended reinstating the *Fisheries Act*'s key prohibition on habitat alteration, disruption and disturbance .

The Report of the Expert Panel on Environmental Assessment was released on April 5, and is open for public comment – only until May 5 at www.letstalkea.ca/. The report, *Building Common Ground: A New Vision for Impact Assessment in Canada*   incorporates a fundamental idea in its title: what is now "environmental assessment" should become "impact assessment". The Panel recommends that: an Impact Assessment Commission should be established as an independent, arm's length government agency, "with a broad leadership mandate to conduct project, region-based and strategic-level assessments. …. The Commission would also be mandated to generate its own independent science so that assessments are evidence-based and agency-led… and the Panel should commit to ensuring that the projects are not developed without the early involvement of potentially affected Indigenous peoples and the public. "

One of the first responses to the Expert Panel comes from Chris Toellofson at the Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation (CELL) , who states: "the Panel deserves kudos for both for its ambitious commitment to process, and the innovative and balanced way it has charted the law reform road ahead." The article continues with a thorough summary and analysis of the report, including: "Our biggest concern with the Report is that it has mainly focused on procedures, values and governance – and has therefore not engaged with some of the substantive legal tests that must be embedded in a federal assessment law to give it real traction. For example, the Report does not address the need for assessments to include "worst case scenario" modeling, and only briefly touches on the need for "alternatives" assessment. These legal requirements, as our experience in the Northern Gateway, Kinder Morgan, and Pacific NorthWest LNG reviews underscore, can be of critical importance, both scientifically and legally."

West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL) also responded positively though briefly, calling the report "not perfect but a step in the right direction", and calling on the government to translate the recommendations into law quickly. WCEL had convened a Federal Environmental Assessment Reform Summit meeting in Ottawa in May 2016, attended by approximately 30 of Canada's leading environmental assessment experts, academics, lawyers and practitioners. The summary of those discussions was published in August 2016, and offers a context for any review of the recommendations of the government`s Expert Panel report.

Next up in May: the Report of the Expert Panel regarding the Modernization of the National Energy Board , scheduled to be delivered to the Minister of Natural Resources on or around May 15, 2017.   Anticipating that release, Ecojustice published a blog, *Modernizing the National Energy Board : Let's get it right* on April 4, which states : "Today, the NEB is riddled with systemic failures. Some of the most glaring problems include, no flexible timelines for reviews, lack of inclusive public participation, and limitations on public hearings such as no cross-examination and no meaningful consideration of climate change impacts…The NEB, as we've come to know it, is dominated by industry insiders and conventional industry perspectives. As a result, it fails to objectively evaluate the need for, and the consequences of, new oil and gas projects. As we transition to a decarbonized energy system in which we are less likely to build new oil and gas infrastructure, the NEB's role — chiefly concerned with regulating oil and gas and in particular interprovincial and international pipelines — should diminish. In other words, the NEB should get out of the business of environmental assessment…. The NEB's function should be limited to technical matters traditionally within its regulatory expertise (related to pipeline safety, for instance). It could also turn its attention to technical plans for decommissioning and remediating energy infrastructure, such as pipelines, that are redundant in a decarbonizing economy."

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Canadian Environmental Assessment Act**, **Environmental Protection**, **Environmental regulation**, **Fisheries Act**, **Fisheries Industry**, **National Energy Board** | **Leave a reply**

How the government's new procurement program could cut emissions and grow clean tech jobs

Posted on **April 11, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

One of the commitments stated in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change was to "modernize procurement practices, adopt clean energy and technologies, and prioritize opportunities to help Canadian businesses grow, demonstrate new technologies and create jobs." In Budget 2017, the government announced measures to support technological innovation; the section entitled " A Nation of Innovators" includes the allocation of $50 million to launch **Innovative Solutions Canada** , a procurement program modelled on the U.S. Small Business Innovation Research program . On April 7, Clean Energy Canada stepped up on this issue with a policy primer to suggest best practices from around the world: *The Power of Procurement: How the government can drive growth, cut carbon and create jobs*

The Power of Procurement cites a 2016 OECD report which states that in Canada, the procurement of goods and services by the federal government alone accounts for approximately 13% of Canada's GDP. With Canada`s current Green Procurement Policy established in 2006, and with our clean tech export market share declining, Canada has a lot of catching up to do. The Clean Energy Canada report offers five Best Practices for consideration as the federal government fleshes out its new Innovative Solutions Canada program . Included in the Best Practices: a focus on low-carbon as a clearly defined parameter in decisions; lifecycle costing which includes the purchase price, installation cost, operating costs, maintenance and upgrade costs, and residual value; target-setting for specific outcomes; and support for commercialization and exporting capability for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), which dominate Canada's cleantech sector.

Posted in **Government Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **Canadian Federal Budget**, **Clean Technology**, **Green Innovation**, **Green procurement** | **Leave a reply**

Is Europe on track to meet its Paris commitments? Is Canada?

Posted on **April 3, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Carbon Market Watch released a policy briefing report in March which found that only Sweden, Germany and France are making successful efforts towards meeting their Paris Agreement targets.   *EU Climate Leader Board: Where Countries Stand On The Effort Sharing Regulation – Europe's Largest Climate Tool* ranked the EU nations for their actions towards meeting the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR), currently under negotiation to set binding 2021-2030 national emission reduction targets for sectors not covered in the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS), including transport, buildings, agriculture and waste.   "Only three member states on track to meet Paris goals", appeared in the *EurActiv* newsletter, summarizing the report and pointing to many failings by member nations, including some "who exploited loopholes in United Nations forestry rules to pocket carbon credits worth €600 million".   The *National Observer* noted the Climate Market Watch report in "Here`s How Europe ranks in the race against climate change" , and asks "Where does that leave Canada?" . As part of its own answer, the article cites a report in The *National Post* newspaper on March 30: "Secret briefing says up to $300-per-tonne federal carbon tax by 2050 required to meet climate targets" . The article is based on a briefing note to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in November 2015, obtained through a Freedom of Information request. The briefing note tells the Minister that in order to meet Canada's 2030 emissions targets, a carbon price of $100 per tonne would need to be in place by 2020, with a price as high as $300 per tonne by 2050. The current national price for those provinces who agreed to the the Pan-Canadian Framework is $10 per tonne, rising to $50 per tonne by 2022.

Another answer to the question, "where does that leave Canada?" might be the report released by Environment and Climate Change Canada: *Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators: Progress Towards Canada's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Target* , which shows that Canada could be emitting at least 30% more GHG emissions than promised by 2030. The report, however, is based on the policies in place as of November, 2016 – before the current Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. The government is downplaying its own report, calling it only a set of "plausible outcomes", rather than a forecast.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Climate change policy**, **European Union**, **Paris Agreement** | **Leave a reply**

Ontario investing in transit, vehicle R & D

Posted on **April 3, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On March 31, the Government of Ontario announced that it will invest $13.5 billion in the GO Regional Express Rail project – expanding the existing GO commuter rail system in the Toronto-Hamilton area by building 12 new stations and increasing the frequency of service. This expansion will also include creating a "transportation hub" at the western terminus of the Toronto subway, according to a subsequent announcement on April 3 . The goal is to increase the number of weekly trips across the GO train network from 1,500 today to roughly 6,000 by 2025. The federal government will also contribute more than $1.8 billion to the GO Transit Regional Express rail project, using funds from the Harper-era New Building Canada Fund – Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component. A further $200 million has been committed to 312 projects across Ontario through the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund . Click here for a list of Ontario projects. Click here for the corporate explanation of the Regional Express Rail project.

Newmarket – a bedroom community of the Toronto area – announced on March 27 that it will be part of the Pan-Ontario Electric Bus Demonstration and Integration Trial, joining another GTA suburb, Brampton, already enrolled. Newmarket will purchase six electric powered heavy-duty transit buses – four from New Flyer Industries of Winnipeg, Manitoba and two more from Nova Bus, of St. Eustache, Quebec. Overhead-charging stations will be designed and manufactured by Siemens and ABBGroup. The local utility, Newmarket-TayPower Distribution Limited, will purchase and operate an on-route charging station. The initiative is the result of a partnership between the municipality, the utility, and the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC) , incorporated in August 2014 to support industry-academic collaborations to develop next generation technologies for Canadian transit and transportation systems.

In another press release , the government of Ontario announced a joint partnership with the federal government and Ford Motor Company of Canada, providing Ford with a conditional grant of up to $102.4 million to establish an advanced manufacturing program at its Windsor plant.

According to the press release, "the investment will create 300 new jobs at Ford operations in Ontario and protect hundreds more." Ford will also establish a Research and Engineering Centre in Ottawa, employing engineers and scientists to focus on infotainment, in-vehicle modems, gateway modules, driver-assist features and autonomous vehicles.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **commuting**, **electric buses**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Ford Motor Co.**, **Ontario**, **Vehicle emission standards** | **Leave a reply**

Return of oil and gas jobs? New pipelines and new technology are essential conditions

Posted on **April 3, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The headline of a *Calgary Herald* story on March 30 warns: " Another 8,700 oil jobs are at risk if prices drop below US$50 for a sustained period, according to new study" . Based on a labour market study by Enform consultancy, the *Herald* states that this possible job loss would follow the loss of 52,500 direct jobs between 2015 and 2016, without even taking into account the job turmoil caused by the 2017 mergers and acquisitions in the Canadian oil sands: Canadian Natural Resources and Shell ; Cenovus Energy and Conoco Phillips; and most recently, Enbridge and Spectra Energy .

The original Enform study on which the newspaper article is based provides much more detail. *Labour Market Outlook 2017 to 2021 for Canada's Oil and Gas Industry* was prepared by PetroLMI, a Division of Enform, and was partly funded by Canada's Sectoral Initiatives program. It reports that the oil and gas industry directly employed an estimated 174,000 workers at the end of 2016, (down by 25 per cent from the industry peak of over 226,000 in 2014). It forecasts job growth for two different scenarios – oil prices well above or well below US$50 per barrel from 2017- 2021 . The "modest recovery" scenario, (prices above US $50) is forecast to support an annual average of 554,000 direct and indirect jobs in the next five years; the "Delayed Recovery" is forecast to support 508,000 jobs. The report provides detailed statistics by subsectors, occupations, and regions. The report also notes the shrinking labour pool, as workers are discouraged from remaining or entering the sector, and as older workers retire. Although the forecast expects limited job recovery in the next two years, it concludes that the peak employment levels will not return. "Heading towards 2021 and beyond, accessing world markets via new pipelines will be critical for full job recovery. Equally important will be investing in technology, innovation and a highly-skilled and technical workforce to sustain the productivity and efficiency gains achieved in the last few years. These things will be critical if the industry is to compete globally and make a transition through carbon regulations." See the full suite of forecasts for the oil and gas industry, including the LNG industry, here .

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **labour market forecasts**, **Oil and gas industry**, **oil and gas pipelines**, **Oil Sands Jobs** | **Leave a reply**

Opposition to Trump's Executive Order targeting the Clean Power Plan

Posted on **April 3, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Labor Network for Sustainability in the U.S. released a new paper, "*Trump's Energy Plan: A Brighter Future for America's Workers?"* , which urges the labour movement to "unwrap the package" and examine the proposals in Trump's *America First Energy Policy* , released on the first day after his Inauguration. LNS reviews and refutes the major planks in that policy, including the "bring back the coal industry" claim, and states, "Our hard-hit coal miners and communities deserve a plan that will enable them to find decent livelihoods in the future, not one that lures them with illusions that it will bring the coal industry back." LNS has previously published its plan, *The Clean Energy Future: Protecting the Climate, Creating Jobs, Saving Money* , written by Synapse Economics .

The most recent installment of the *America First Energy Policy* was released on March 28: the *Presidential Executive Order on Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth* , replete with the illusory promise to bring back coal jobs. Summaries and explanations are easy to find: from the Office of the White House Press Secretary ; the Brookings Institute ; "The Giant Trump Order is Here. What it is, what it does" in *The Atlantic*; "Trump just gutted U.S. policies to fight climate change" from Think Progress . Dismay and outrage is also widespread, summed up by Vox :"This is it. The battle over the future of US climate policy is officially underway". Even the mainstream *Washington Post* brings out the battle imagery in its headlines: "The standoff between Trump and green groups just boiled into war" (March 30) , and "The assault on climate science is evil, and evil must be fought"   (March 31).

Although disguised in the language of job creation for coal miners, the Executive Order goes beyond the attack on the Clean Power Plan and coal-fired power plants – empowering the Cabinet to review and rollback other Obama-era policies, including limits on methane leaks, a moratorium on federal coal leasing, and the use of the social cost of carbon to guide government actions. The Editorial Board of the New York Times sums up the scale of the attack: "President Trump risks the Planet" (March 28) .

The claim of "bringing back coal jobs" has been disproved repeatedly and convincingly. Typical is the press release from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis , which sees "zero employment impact" from Trump's measures, stating, "Market forces overwhelmingly favor natural gas-fired electricity generation and renewable energy, and the trend away from coal will continue"…. Coal is simply being outpaced. It is an industry in decline, and the fundamentals are inescapable." "A simple way to see why Trump's climate order won't bring back many coal jobs" in *Vox* refers to the Department of Energy *Annual Energy Outlook 2017* , which projected that without the Clean Power Plan, U.S. coal consumption would rebound only as far as the historically low levels of 2015, when there were approximately 63,000 coal miners in America. Today, there are approximately 50,000.   Compare this to the solar workforce, which created 51,000 jobs in 2016 alone – to bring the total number to 260,077 U.S. solar workers, according to the Solar Foundation's *National Solar Jobs Census*. Even the CEO of Murray Energy, the largest privately-owned coal company in the U.S., acknowledged in a report in *The Guardian*, that coal jobs are not coming back.

What the Trump Executive Order could do, according to modelling by consulting firm the Rhodium Group, is to limit U.S. greenhouse gas emission reduction to around 14 percent below 2005 levels by 2025 – a far cry from the Paris Agreement pledge of 26 %, and effectively ceding climate leadership to the European Union and China. The Sierra Club USA provides a thorough discussion of the environmental impacts in *Donald Trump Orders EPA to Unwind Clean Power Plan in Setback for "Vitally Important" Clean Air*   (March 28) .   The reaction of major environmental groups such as Environmental Defence Fund, Earthjustice, and Natural Resources Defence Council is summarized in "Environmental groups vowing to fight Trump's Climate Actions "   in the *National Observer* (March 29).

Is there any cause for hope? Yes, according to analysis by *Inside Climate News* in "Hundreds of Clean Energy Bills Have Been Introduced in States Nationwide This Year" (March 27). This provides a state-by-state summary of bipartisan clean energy legislation, stating: "At least eight states—California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont—are considering legislation to dramatically boost their reliance on clean power in the coming decades. These bills specifically call for increasing the mandate to obtain electricity from sources like wind and solar, a common form of escalating quota called a renewable portfolio standard (RPS). Currently, 29 states in the nation, along with Washington, D.C., have them and eight others have voluntary targets."

Voices of Business are also challenging the Trump agenda. In "Climate change is real: Companies challenge Trump" in *The Guardian* (March 29) , the CEO of the We Mean Business coalition calls the transition to a low-carbon economy "inevitable", and the Executive Order "regrettable ". Further, he states: "This announcement undermines policies that stimulate economic competitiveness, job creation, infrastructure investment and public health." Similar sentiments appear in the *Business Backs Low Carbon USA* statement signed in November 2016 by over 1000 companies and investors. The statement calls for the U.S. economy to be energy efficient and powered by low-carbon energy, and re-affirms "our deep commitment to addressing climate change through the implementation of the historic Paris Climate Agreement." The list of over 1000 companies is here .

Finally, and giving everyone a voice: the People's Climate March on Washington D.C. on April 29 , organized by the coalition which emerged from the 2014 March in New York City and around the world. The Labor Network for Sustainability will be leading a labour contingent in Washington – see their Facebook page for information , and see the People's Climate March website for locations of sister marches.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Business positions on climate change**, **Clean Energy**, **Clean Power Plan**, **Climate change policy**, **Coal Industry**, **Donald Trump**, **Energy policy**, **United States** | **Leave a reply**

Climate change has consequences for mental health in the workplace

Posted on **April 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance is a report released at the end of March by the American Psychological Association, Climate for Health, and ecoAmerica. The goal is to raise public awareness of the issue and to provide "climate communicators, planners, policymakers, public health professionals, and other leaders the tools and tips needed to respond to these impacts and bolster public engagement on climate solutions." Although it doesn't directly address workplace issues, much of the discussion is relevant. For example, the report catalogues the acute mental health impacts that result from the horror and disruption of natural disasters or extreme weather events such as Hurricane Katrina – depression, disrupted social relationships, domestic violence, and heightened intergroup aggression. The report also highlights women as being at higher risk: "because, on average, women have fewer economic resources than men, women may also be more affected, in general, by the stress and trauma of natural disasters." (p.39).

Extreme weather and disasters focus attention, but there are also chronic impacts resulting from longer- term climate changes – the key example given is a proven increase in violence and inter-personal aggression associated with higher temperatures. Certain occupational groups are highlighted for their high risk to climate-related anxiety, including first responders to natural disasters, but also including health care-givers, and those directly employed in natural settings – conservation officers, park rangers.

The final section of the report deals with tips to build resilience at the individual and community level. It urges that training be provided for first responders so that they can identify and deal with appropriate compassion for the victims of natural disasters.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **climate change and health**, **climate change and mental health**, **Climate Resilience**, **Heat Stress** | **Leave a reply**

Clean energy investment declining in Canada; and a profile of Calgary's clean energy economy

Posted on **March 31, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Clean Energy Canada has released the 2017 edition in its Tracking the Energy Revolution series, on March 30. *The Transition Takes Hold* analyzes clean energy markets around the world, with an emphasis on investment trends. The report states that global clean energy investment in 2016 totalled C$348 billion, with China, the U.S. and India collectively responsible for half of that amount. This C$348 billion global clean energy investment represents a 26% decrease from 2015; in Canada, investment fell by 53%, from C$4 billion to C$2 billion. The decrease, for the second year in a row, sees Canada fall from 9th to 11th place in the world for clean energy investment. To provide context, the report states that Canada already derives 80% of its power from emissions-free sources, and that fact, coupled with relatively stable demand for electricity, limits the need or opportunity for new investment. The opportunities for growth clearly lie in export markets.

The Transition takes Hold provides some estimates for employment in clean energy, based mostly on the 2016 Renewable Energy and Jobs publication by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Since Canada is not an IRENA member, the report states only that in 2015, Canada was home to 10,500 jobs in wind and 8,100 in solar PV – but no source for that information is provided. Based on figures from the U.S. Department of Energy, the report states that the solar industry created one out of every 50 new jobs in the U.S. in 2016, with wind turbine technician as the country's fastest-growing occupation.

At the local level, and providing a window into the growing green culture of Alberta, is *Calgary Region's Green Energy Economy: Summary Report* , published by the Calgary Economic Development department. It states that the city's green energy economy was responsible for generating $1.78 billion in gross domestic product, and employed approximately 15,470 jobs in 2015, equal to 1.8% of all workers in the Calgary Economic Region. The report points out that "Calgary is a well-established 'talent hub' of high-value added, service-oriented workers that are experienced in the energy industry", with the suggestion that the traditional energy sector provides a talent pool for the growing green sector. For this report, the green energy economy is categorized into four sub-sectors: renewable power supply and alternative energy; energy storage and grid infrastructure; green building and energy efficiency; and green transportation, and for each sub-sector, the report provides statistics as well as "on the ground" information about existing companies , supply chains, policies and programs . Green building and energy efficiency account for the largest GDP and number of jobs. Interesting Appendices include a SWOT analysis, and a brief comparative look at policies of other cities around the world. Research and analysis was conducted by The Delphi Group.

— Calgary Skyline by Kevin Cappis. Creative Commons 4.0 license.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Calgary**, **Clean energy industry**, **Clean Energy Investment**, **Green Building**, **renewable energy industry** | **1 Reply**

Canada's Budget 2017: A closer look at what matters for a green economy

Posted on **March 31, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Canada's federal budget statement, titled *Skills, Innovation and Middle Class Jobs*, was released on March 22, with a stated commitment to the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, and support for already-announced climate initiatives . Some specific allocations: $11.4 million over four years for a national coal phase-out, beginning in 2018; $17.2 million over five years for a national clean fuels standard, starting in 2017; $5 billion to green infrastructure and an additional $5 billion for public transit infrastructure over 11 years. Disappointingly, the Budget extends the Mineral Exploration Tax Credit for another year, thus failing to end fossil fuel subsidies.

Reflecting their own particular interests, most unions issued immediate reactions: see the Canadian Labour Congress ; Canadian Union of Public Employees ; United Steelworkers ; Unifor . In the *Toronto Star*, Paul Wells called the Budget "a list of decisions to be made later", and most commentators remarked on the many deferred deadlines. A March 22 blog by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood of the CCPA provides a thorough summary of the provisions relating to climate change policy, noting that the phrase "climate change" is used 50 times, but "when it comes to putting Canada on a pathway to deep decarbonization, Budget 2017 comes up short. Significant investments in key areas, such as public transit and clean technology, should not be dismissed out of hand, but the funds are heavily backloaded and too small given the scale and urgency of the climate challenge." Mertins-Kirkwood also notes that there are no direct measures to support Just Transition programs, although provisions to improve skills training , workforce development, and small changes to the Employment Insurance program may indirectly contribute to that goal.

Two thoughtful analyses of the Budget have since been released: on March 24, the Canadian Labour Congress released its *Detailed Analysis of Budget 2017*, providing an overall assessment, but including a substantial consideration of provisions relating to a green economy. CLC Highlights: “The Canada Infrastructure Bank will be resourced with $2.8 billion over five years; legislation creating the Bank is anticipated in spring 2017. In the weeks and months following the budget, the Government of Canada will work on a framework to apply a green lens and an employment-based community benefit lens to infrastructure projects, which may become part of the bilateral infrastructure agreements.” Regarding “Transition to a Green Economy”: “In Budget 2017, investments in 2017-18 and 2018-19 under the $2 billion Low-Carbon Economy Fund …are scaled back and re-allocated for future years. Budget 2017 offers $2 billion for a Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, administered through Infrastructure Canada. The budget allocates $220 million to reduce the reliance of rural and remote communities on diesel fuel, and to support the use of more sustainable, renewable power solutions. An array of investments are made in order to support the development of the clean tech industry in Canada. In 2016, Canada joined other G-20 countries in re-committing to phase out fossil-fuel subsidies by 2025. The budget contains two modest proposals to scale back fossil fuel subsidies, but no specific concrete commitments are made to comply with the 2025 deadline. Budget 2017 provides funds to accelerate the coal phase-out in Alberta, but it is unclear whether there will be funding to deal with the impacts on workers and communities. There is no explicit mention in Budget 2017 of just transition measures, or the government’s proposed just transition task force.”

On March 27, the Pembina Institute released *Budget 2017: Ready, set implement* which offers its reaction and further suggestions on three issues. Acknowledging the scale of investment and the importance of consultation, particularly with First Nations, Pembina declares, ” in our view, it’s not unreasonable that the $2 billion Low Carbon Economy Fund has been altered to extend over five years.” Regarding “Next steps on the National Carbon Price”, Pembina applauds the details provided re the national carbon price backstop — “set to begin at $10 per tonne of carbon pollution in 2018, and to escalate by $10 per year until 2022.” Pembina also highlights the announcement of a federal government consultation paper with technical details of the national carbon price, promised in 2017. It urges that the national carbon benchmark price be linked to inflation, be subject to a review in 2020, and that the government design a fair and transparent framework for that review well in advance.

Finally, in “Accelerating decarbonization of goods movement”, Pembina notes the Budget’s commitments to new clean fuel standards and heavy-duty truck retrofit regulations, as well as the allocation of $2 billion over 11 years in a new National Trade Corridors Fund to address congestion and inefficiencies in rail and highway corridors, especially around the Greater Toronto Area . They re-state their proposal for North America’s first low-carbon highway between Windsor and Quebec City, based on building out an “alternative fuelling infrastructure — like electric vehicle fast-charging, compressed natural gas or hydrogen stations — for personal and commercial transportation along the route.”

Posted in **Government Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **Carbon Pricing**, **Climate change policy**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **Infrastructure Investment**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Transportation Infrastructure**, **Vehicle emission standards** | **Leave a reply**

Reaction from Canada, California as Trump attacks Obama fuel emissions standards

Posted on **March 19, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The rest of the world is driving towards new technologies, but U.S. state governments are rolling back EV incentives and on March 15, Donald Trump took the U.S. a further step away from reducing transportation emissions. Following pressure from U.S. auto companies, and in the name of creating American jobs and reviving American manufacturing, the White House announced that the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will re-open the evaluation of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) standards for light-duty vehicles manufactured in 2022- 2025 . Never mind that the EPA, in the waning days of the Obama presidency in January 2017, had already issued its official Determination to leave the standards in place, stating that they "are projected to reduce oil consumption by 50 billion gallons and to save U.S. consumers nearly $92 billion in fuel cost over the lifetime of MY2022-2025 vehicles", with minimal employment impacts. The *New York Times* compiles some of the U.S. reaction to the announcement, quoting Harvard's Robert Stavins, who states that rolling back the Obama-level regulations would make it impossible for the United States to meet its obligations under the Paris Agreement. A sample of U.S. concerns appear in: "Trump Fuel economy rollback would kill jobs and cost each car-buyer $1650 per year " by Joe Romm in *Think Progress* ; *DeSmog Blog* "Trump Takes Aim at Fuel Efficiency Requirements, Prompting Concern US Automakers Will Lag on Innovation" ; and the *Detroit Free Press*, reporting on a lead-up Trump speech in Ypsilanti, Michigan , "Trump visit puts UAW politics in crosshairs" http://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2017/03/14/trump-visit-puts-uaw-politics-crosshairs/99165906/ (March 14). The *Detroit Free Press* states that autoworkers were bused in to the Trump event by their employers, with Fiat Chrysler and General Motors offering their workers a day's pay as well. No immediate reaction to the announcement came from the United Autoworkers union, although the *DFP* article states: "UAW President Dennis Williams has repeatedly said he disagrees with Trump on health care, immigration, the environment and most other major issues. But Williams supports Trump's desire to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) ….."

In Canada, where Unifor represents autoworkers, president Jerry Dias spoke out in " Auto workers union takes aim at Trump's examination of fuel standards " in the *Globe and Mail* (March 16), and in a CTV News report . He states that " he would fight any attempt to roll back environmentally friendly regulations in the auto industry following Trump's announcement". Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change was in Washington on March 15th, meeting with EPA head Scott Pruitt, but her reaction was guarded and diplomatic, as reported in "As Trump eyes reprieve for gas guzzlers, Canada looks to China " in the *National Observer* and in "Trump targets fuel-efficiency standards" in the *Globe and Mail* (March 16). Traditionally, Canadian fuel emissions standards have been harmonized with the U.S. , as a result of the strongly integrated auto industry. For example, at the end of February, Canada released its proposed regulations for heavy-duty vehicles, and according to the International Council on Clean Transportation, Canada continued to follow the U.S. model. Similarly, Ontario announced a Memorandum of Understanding on auto manufacturing with the state of Michigan on March 13, pledging cooperation on regulatory standards as well as technology and supply chain management.

Harmonization will be more difficult after Trump's announcement on March 15, just as Canada and Ontario are reviewing their own revisions to fuel emissions regulation . Ontario reacted to the Trump announcement with a pledge to continue to cooperate with California and Quebec in the Western Climate Initiative – read "Ontario plans to team up with California against Trump on climate change" in the *National Observer* (March 16). California won the right to set its own fuel emission standards in the 1970's, and today, fifteen other states voluntarily follow California's tougher standards, including Georgia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and the New York metropolitan area – translating into more than 40% of the U.S. population. "The Coming Clean-Air war between Trump and California" in *The Atlantic* surveys this latest conflict between California and the Trump administration . A press release from Governor Gerry Brown called the fuel standards announcement "a cynical ploy" that puts politics ahead of science, and pledged that California will fight it in court.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Automobiles**, **CAFE**, **California**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction**, **Infrastructure**, **Ontario**, **UAW**, **Unifor**, **Vehicle emission standards** | **Leave a reply**

New U.S. medical consortium forms to bring the message mainstream: climate change is harming our health

Posted on **March 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Eleven medical societies in the United States, representing over 400,000 medical practitioners, have joined together to form The Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health . Their launch document on March 15 was *Medical Alert! Climate Change is harming our health* , directed at the general public to sound the alarm that climate change health impacts are here and now.

— From the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health website

The report gives only a nod to the threats in the workplace, given its goal to reach a general audience. It warns that "anyone can be harmed by extreme heat, but some people face greater risk. For example, outdoor workers, student athletes, city dwellers, and people who lack air conditioning (or who lose it during an extended power outage) face greater risk because they are more exposed to extreme heat. People with chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and those who work or play outside, are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.. ..” The report also touches on the other major health-related impacts, such as spread of infectious diseases borne by ticks and mosquitos, air pollution, effects of forest fires, polluted air and food, mental health burden, etc.

The Consortium states that “most physicians are aware of the adverse health effects of climate change and feel a responsibility to inform the public, patients and policymakers about them. A majority of survey respondents report they are already seeing health harms from climate change among their own patients – most commonly in the form of increased cardiorespiratory disease (related to air quality and heat), more severe and longer lasting allergy symptoms, and injuries attributed to extreme weather.”

The goal of the consortium is to educate, and to advocate for reduced fossil fuel consumption and increased clean energy. Their website offers a library of publications   related to the growing literature on climate change and health. The website also compiles resources from their member societies, such as the American College of Physicians and the American Academy of Pediatrics, about how to green medical workplaces.   In this, they join a number of existing associations such as Practice Greenhealth   and Healthcare without Harm, an international organization with Canadian membership.

In Canada, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment , which was established in 1994,   shares a similar mission for policy advocacy, and maintains an active blog and Facebook presence. The Canadian Medical Association has a number of policy and position documents on environmental impacts on health; their most recent policy statement on *Climate change and Health* was issued in 2010, yet still seems remarkably relevant.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment**, **climate change and health**, **health care professionals**, **Occupational Health and Safety**, **outdoor workers**, **Public Health** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. Cleantech start-up companies show dramatic growth and a confident future

Posted on **March 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In mid-March, the B.C. Cleantech CEO Alliance released *British Columbia Cleantech: Status Report 2016* , the result of a survey conducted by consultants KPMG in Fall 2016.   The new Status Report shows "dramatic growth" since the previous report in 2011, supporting the Alliance branding of B.C. cleantech as "the next pillar of the Canadian economy".

Between 2011 and 2016, "the number of Cleantech companies is up 35% to 273, the number of BC-based employees is up 20% to 8,560, average wages have increased by 24% to $84,000 and the amount of equity raised is also up 25% to $6 billion." The sector employs highly trained workers, such as engineers, designers, and sales and marketing professionals, resulting in that high average salary. 91% of companies are located in the Greater Vancouver area.

The survey respondents were only those early-stage companies whose primary purpose is developing new technologies – respondents were distributed as follows: 20% energy generation; 16%   transportation; 12 % Building efficiency; 12% Resource recovery and waste management; 11% industrial efficiency; 11% water and waste water; 7% transmission and storage; 4% sustainable agriculture, and a miscellaneous 7% remainder. Given the early stage of these companies, the key focus in the survey was on the sources of finance and the business climate for entrepreneurs. Results show that there is a heavy reliance on federal and provincial government incentive programs – for example, 75% of respondent companies had applied to the Scientific research and experimental development (SR&ED) program and over half had applied to the federal Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP).

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Clean energy industry**, **Clean Technology**, **Communications Technology**, **Green Finance**, **Tax Incentives**, **Vancouver** | **Leave a reply**

How will Canada's 2017 Budget support the environment and green

job creation?

Posted on **March 16, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The shocking budget cuts proposed by the Trump administration on March 16 will make it easier for Canada's Finance Minister to shine when the Canadian Budget for 2017 is unveiled on March 22. Once made public, the Budget document will be available here .   Amongst the "10 Things Unions are looking for in Budget 2017" , released by the Canadian Labour Congress on March 15,   #6 is "Green Job Creation". Mirroring the language of the Clean Growth Century initiative, the CLC states: "Canada needs to envision the next hundred years as a Clean Growth Century, and we know it can be done in a way that is economically and socially responsible, without leaving behind workers and their communities. Budget 2017 should kick off ambitious programs to expand renewable energy generation, support home and building retrofits and dramatically increase the scale and quality of public transit in Canada." Many other proposals were outlined in the CLC's Submission to the House of Commons Finance Committee in the pre-Budget consultations , including: green bonds; expanded access to Labour Market Development Assistance programs and skills development for workers in the oil and gas, mining, steel production, and manufacturing industries; and renewable energy policies to improve access to renewable energy and facilitate local, renewable energy projects and reduce dependency on diesel in remote and First Nations communities.

The Green Budget Coalition represents sixteen of Canada's largest environmental and conservation organizations. Their Submission regarding the 2017 Budget (November 2016) includes economic proposals – including an end to fossil fuel subsidies, and a carbon tax set at a realistic level based on the Social Cost of Carbon. With their strong, green focus, the Green Budget Coalition also includes specific proposals regarding conservation issues – freshwater resources, oceans and fisheries, habitat protection, and air quality. One specific, unique proposal relating to air quality – because of the link between radon and lung cancer, a federal income tax credit for individuals and small-scale landlords of 15 percent of the cost of radon mitigation work. Each recommendation is written by an expert member of the coalition, with specific, costed proposals and an indication of the federal government department needed to take the lead on action.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is well-known for its Alternative Budget,

which takes a broader approach to the inequalities of the economy . Some of its main recommendations in the 2017 edition: a federal minimum wage of $15 an hour, indexed to inflation; a national pharmacare program; improved access to child care; elimination of post-secondary education tuition; and investment in First Nations housing, water, infrastructure and education.   The full report is titled *High Stakes, Clear Choices*. Proposals relating to Just Transition are mainly outlined in the section on Employment Insurance (page 60) , which frames it as "a major opportunity to move unemployed, underemployed, and low-paid workers into better jobs as a part of a strategic response to meeting our climate change targets. We can expand access to EI training programs with a focus on labour adjustment and transition. That way, Canadian workers could benefit from the transition to a green economy by accessing new, green jobs created by public investment programs and sector strategies." Other (costed) proposals regarding the environment and climate change (page 63) : an end to federal fossil fuel subsidies; reinstatement of energy efficiency incentive programs;   assessment of the environmental impact of energy, tar sands, mining developments; and reinstatement of water programs at Environment and Climate Change Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)**, **Carbon Tax**, **Climate change policy**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **Green Job Creation**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

Despite strong Strategy, Vancouver needs fuel-switching policies to meet its ambitious renewable energy goals for 2050

Posted on **March 16, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— English Bay, Vancouver B.C. Creative Commons License, originally posted to Flickkr by JamesZ_Flickr

Vancouver is a green policy leader amongst Canadian municipalities, but on March 14, a new report from researchers at Simon Fraser University Energy and Materials Research Group asks *Can Cities Really Make a Difference? Case Study of Vancouver's Renewable City Strategy* . The report focuses on the building and transportation policies of the Renewable City Strategy , using CIMS, a hybrid energy-economy model which incorporates elements of consumer choice. Applauding Vancouver for its leadership to date, the authors conclude that current policies are likely to achieve only a 30 percent reduction on projected 2050 emissions, and fail to meet the Strategy's target of 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, an 80 percent reduction in GHG emissions on 2007 levels.

The report calls for stronger, politically-challenging "fuel-switching" for buildings and vehicles as the necessary next stage in emissions reduction. Amongst the specific actions suggested: No fossil fuel heating installations after 2030 for all new build residential buildings – instead, electric-powered heat pumps, solar hot water, electric thermal heat, or other zero emissions equipment. For vehicles, a gradual reduction of parking allocations for gasoline or diesel, starting in 2025, with no spaces remaining on city land for conventional cars by 2040 . Businesses would have to demonstrate exclusive use of renewably-powered fleet vehicles to qualify for a business license after 2030. Read the press release from Simon Fraser for an excellent summary; also the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, one of the sponsors of the research here . As for the Globe and Mail summary , report co-author Marc Jaccard has tweeted that it "misses my main point", that municipal government needs the support of other government levels.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Electric Vehicles**, **energy efficiency**, **Green Building**, **Municipal Government**, **renewable energy**, **Vancouver** | **Leave a** reply

Ontario Teachers Pension Plan invests in clean technology

Posted on **March 14, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan acknowledges that " Climate change risks have global impacts that affect multiple sectors and companies. On the other hand, climate change will also present new investment opportunities, such as innovative technologies." The embodiment of that approach came with the OTPP announcement on March 9 that it has partnered with Anbaric, a developer of clean energy transmission and microgrid projects from Wakefield Massachusetts. According to the *Boston Globe* newspaper , Ontario Teachers will invest $75 million initially to gain a 40 percent stake in Anbaric, creating a new management company, called Anbaric Development Partners . Potential exists to invest a further $2 billion in clean energy projects. The OTPP press release states, "Ontario Teachers' investment in Anbaric creates an attractive launching pad for generating innovative energy jobs and boosting local economies while replacing our deteriorating and outdated fossil fuel-oriented grid with new and sustainable energy alternatives. This includes sophisticated high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission technology and microgrid projects that will bring renewables online with greater efficiency." The Ontario Teachers Pension Plan controlled $171.4 billion in net assets at December 31, 2015 on behalf of the province's 316,000 current and retired teachers.

As a sophisticated, global investor, it has examined the risks of climate change, and in Fall of 2016, published *Climate Change: Separating the real risks for investors from the noise* , which, like the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board , seems to acknowledge the reality and complexity of climate risk, while rejecting divestment of fossil fuel assets. The report states that "Investors need a toolbox of solutions to help manage physical and regulatory risks across their portfolios, both in the short and longer term. Portfolio carbon footprints are only one tool, and they have limitations. Divestment should be the outcome of a well informed and thoughtful investment process, rather than a wholesale approach to a single sector. " And further – " Engagement with policy makers and companies provides investors with key pieces of information and could be the impetus for governments and companies to be more proactive in climate change mitigation or adaptation. "

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Clean Energy**, **Divestment**, **Fossil Fuel Divestment**, **Ontario Teachers Pension Plan**, **Pension Fund management** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition proposals for Australia's Coal Industry workers

Posted on **March 14, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Outside of the United States, it seems that there is general recognition that the coal industry is in decline, and that this demands a planned response to transition both the energy mix and the communities and workers. The Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) in Paris, for example, is coordinating a Coal Transitions Project, bringing together researchers from Australia, South Africa, Germany, Poland, India and China, to publish reports examining past experiences in the six countries in March 2017, culminating with a global report and a consideration of the future of coal by 2018.

Australia's coal production has a long and highly-political history – summarized in "The long-term future of Australian coal is drying up" in *The Conversation* (October 2015), or "Australia's Addiction to Coal" in the *New York Times* (November 14, 2016) . Amidst this highly political climate, the current government established a Senate Inquiry into the Retirement of Coal Fired Power Stations in October 2016, to examine "the transition from ageing, high-carbon coal generation to clean energy" in light of the Paris Agreement commitments on emissions reductions , and the Agreement's provisions re just transitions. The deadline for the Inquiry's Final Report has been extended to the end of March; an *Interim Report* was released at the end of November 2016, with Chapter 4 devoted to options for managing the transition for workers and communities. Submissions to the Senate committee are here, listed by author. Three noteworthy examples: the Australian Psychology Association reviews the "flow-on psychosocial impacts on individuals, families and whole communities" of mass closures, but argues for the possibility of building "vibrant, diversified, energy sustainable communities with good local jobs, and capable of lifting the prospects of all citizens". The submission states: "Community-led transitions that identify the community's needs and resources, involve the community in the formulation and control of change, and strengthen the local people's capacity for action, are critically important components of planned transitions. "" The Appalachian Transition and Renew Appalachia are cited as models of community building.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) submitted a thorough, 30-page proposal: *Sharing the challenges and opportunities of a clean energy economy: Policy discussion paper. A Just*

Transition for coal-fired electricity sector workers and communities. Amongst the recommendations: establish a "national independent statutory authority", named Energy Transition Australia (ETA), within the environment and energy portfolio, and reporting to the Minister and parliament. The ETA would be overseen by a tripartite advisory board comprised of industry, unions and government, with a mandate to oversee a planned and orderly closure of Australia's coal fired power stations; "manage an industry-wide multi-employer pooling and redeployment scheme, where existing workers would have an opportunity to be redeployed to remaining power stations or low-emissions generators; and develop a labour adjustment package to support workers obtain new decent and secure jobs, including by providing funding for workers to access job assistance support, retraining, early retirement and travel and relocation assistance."

Finally, a submission by Professor John Wiseman of the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute lists and synthesizes many of the recommendations from recent Just Transition publications, including *Life After Coal: Pathways to a Just and Sustainable Transition for the Latrobe Valley* (October 2016). This report by the Environment department of the province of Victoria focuses on the four Hazelwood coal-fired power plants, scheduled to close as early as April 2017.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Australia**, **Coal Industry**, **coal-fired electricity**, **community action**, **Job displacement**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

Union Proposals for a Just Transition for Alberta's coal workers

Posted on **March 14, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The phase-out of the Alberta's coal -fired electricity generation is in the works, with regulations begun by the Harper government and continued by the current provincial government in its Climate Leadership Plan . Approximately 3,000 workers at 18 coal-fired electricity plants and their associated mines will be affected by the end of the phase-out in 2030. In September 2016, consultant Terry Boston submitted recommendations to the government on how to transition the electricity supply; for public consultation about transition issues for workers and communities, an Advisory Panel on Coal Communities was established, and is scheduled to release its report "in early Spring 2017".

On March 3, the union-based Coal Transition Coalition unveiled its detailed policy recommendations for the Advisory Panel. *Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta's Coal Workers* , aims to influence discussion early on in the planning process, to ensure that issues such as pensions, severance, labour-retention strategies and

— Coal Transition Coalition logo

economic diversification are built in from the start. *Getting it Right* chronicles government policies and the coal mines to be affected, then describes in detail four case study examples of coal transitions in the U.S. and the Rhuhr Valley in Germany . These case studies form the basis of the "Lessons learned" section, which in turn form the basis of the recommendations.

The Coalition's recommendations emphasize the advantage of a long-lead time available, the importance of unique, community-led plans, and the importance of public and political acceptance of the Transition programs. Income replacement and severance benefits are a central concern – calling for enhanced federal Employment Insurance program benefits, and a provincial pension bridging trust fund with adequate reserves to help workers just shy of retirement in 2030. The Coalition also recommends that the province conduct an audit of existing pensions and their coverage and gaps, and prepare a plan to ensure pensions are fully funded and mandated to meet their obligations. The report cites a separate report commissioned by the Alberta Federation of Labour, *Pension And Benefit Plans In A Just Transitions Strategy For The Alberta Coal-Fired Electricity Industry* (November 2016)), which is not available online.

The core recommendation is to establish an Alberta Economic Adjustment Agency , free of political interference, to develop "a just transition plan that places the interests of affected workers, their families and communities as its highest priority". Programs would be funded through an Alberta Economic Adjustment Trust Fund, governed by an independent board of trustees to guard against any political or industry interference, and financed through contributions "on the order of $10 million to $20 million per year" leading up to 2030. The report is silent on who will provide the funding.

The Coal Transition Coalition is led by the Alberta Federation of Labour and includes the following unions: Canadian Energy Workers Association, CSU 52, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Ironworkers Local 720 , Unifor, United Steelworkers, and United Utility Workers Association.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Alberta Federation of Labour**, **Coal Industry**, **coal-fired electricity**, **Just Transition** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition policies lacking in federal and provincial climate policies in Canada

Posted on **March 7, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In February, the Adapting Work and Workplaces (ACW) project released three preliminary working papers in a series called *Evaluating government plans and actions to reduce GHG emissions in Canada* . The first report, *Federal progress through June 2016* (July 2016) and the second, *Provincial and territorial progress through October 2016* (November 2016) provide specific summaries of climate policies in their respective jurisdictions since November 2015, and in general, they conclude that "Despite missteps, oversights and political backtracking, Canada's climate policy has evolved to be relatively comprehensive and broadly supported". Significantly, the papers point out that "a large ambition gap remains between governments' GHG targets and their actual emission reduction policies. …. the emissions-intensive production of oil and gas resources has largely escaped stringent, targeted GHG mitigation measures. Indeed, through direct and indirect subsidies, Canadian governments continue to promote oil and gas expansion despite its incompatibility with those same governments' climate objectives."

Just Transition policies is the focus of the third preliminary working paper in the ACW series. It springs from the idea that just transition policy is a crucial and urgent, but under-developed, aspect of Canadian governments' climate plans. It characterizes "just transition" as a concept developed by the labour movement. "It is a social justice framework for facilitating the low-carbon transition in a way that minimizes negative employment impacts and ensures equitable outcomes for worker." In defining "just transition", the paper differentiates it from "climate justice", stating, "A just transition is one of the goals of climate justice advocates, but the two concepts are distinct. Climate justice goes beyond workers, for example, to demand the poor are not disproportionately hurt by policies such as carbon pricing."

The report reviews the latest climate plans published by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, discovering and describing: 1. Policies that provide income supports to laid-off workers; 2. Policies that provide skills training and re-training for the low-carbon economy, and 3. Policies that directly create new jobs, especially in the communities and regions adversely affected by climate policies. The conclusion: all Canadian jurisdictions "get a failing grade" on all three subjects. The paper calls for improved income support programs, since policy seems to favour training and retraining over income support in the existing federal unemployment insurance program, as well as in provincial climate policies which allow for reinvestment of carbon revenue, such as Alberta and Ontario. Workforce development policies seem to receive the most attention – while still lacking in most provinces. Finally, job creation policy is judged to be "hands-off", with governments assuming that new investment in clean energy industries will be sufficient.

All three preliminary reports were authored by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, in association with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. A final, consolidated report is anticipated by Spring 2017.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction**, **Job Creation**, **Just Transition**, **provincial climate policies**, **Retraining** | **Leave a reply**

Renewable Energy legislation in Massachusetts earmarks funds for Just Transition, Environmental Justice

Posted on **March 6, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

We are used to looking to California for leadership in climate change policy – and the Senate bill SB58, California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program continues that reputation. Although only in rough draft form as it was introduced in February, it proposes to accelerate the target for sourcing electricity from renewable energy to 50 per cent by 2025, and 100% by 2045. Inside Climate News has a summary of the renewable energy legislation; for a detailed view of the importance of California as a standard-bearer for climate change action, read "In the Face of a Trump Environmental Rollback, California Stands in Defiance" (Feb. 21) in *Yale Environment 360*.

Massachusetts is less often recognized for its leadership, despite its commitment in the Global Warming Solutions Act, 2008 to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions 80 per cent from 1990 levels by 2050 . In addition, *An Act to transition Massachusetts to 100 per cent renewable energy* (S.1849) was introduced into the legislature in January 2017, requiring the state to achieve 100 percent renewable electricity generation by 2035, and phase out the use of fossil fuels across all sectors, including heating and transportation, by 2050. Advocacy group Environment Massachusetts provides a summary here . The text of the Act calls for a Council for Clean Energy Workforce Development, specifying that it include representatives from organized labour, as well as universities and community colleges, renewable energy businesses, occupational training organizations, economic development organizations, community development organizations, and "organizations serving Environmental Justice Populations". A Workforce Development Fund would also be authorized, with "At least half of the funds spent from the clean energy workforce development account on an annual basis shall be spent on programs and initiatives that primarily benefit (1) fossil fuel workers displaced in the transition to renewable energy, (2) residents of gateway municipalities …., or (3) residents of areas identified as

Environmental Justice Populations under the Environmental Justice Policy of the executive office of energy and environmental affairs. “

Posted in **Government Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **California**, **Energy policy**, **Environmental Justice**, **Just Transition**, **Massachusetts**, **renewable energy** | **Leave a reply**

Bank of Canada sees risks of climate change; Insurers urge end to fossil fuel subsidies

Posted on **March 5, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On March 2, in a speech in Montreal, the Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada weighed in on the economic and financial risks of climate change, and the role of the Bank (BoC) . In *Thermometer Rising—Climate Change and Canada’s Economic Future* , the Deputy Governor drew on 2011 estimates from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) when he acknowledged that in Canada alone, “ in the absence of action to address global warming, we would face annual costs of between $21 billion and $43 billion by the 2050s”. Touching on the role of carbon pricing and green finance such as green bonds, he also states: “enhanced transparency and analytical tools are also needed” to enable investors to exploit green investment opportunities. However, “In contrast to some other central banks, the Bank of Canada is not directly responsible for regulating banks, insurance companies and similar financial institutions. …. We do not regulate financial markets and thus do not have the mandate to establish standards of transparency and disclosure in support of green finance…. We do, however, have a broader set of responsibilities to support financial stability, including identifying, analyzing and assessing both imminent and emerging systemic risks. We bring this risk assessment into our discussions with other agencies that control the relevant policy levers.”

Private financial institutions and companies are trying to influence those policy levers – specifically, about fossil fuel subsidies. In a Public Statement addressed to the governments of G20 countries, a group of 16 investment and insurance companies managing more than USD $2.8 trillion in assets states: “Subsidies and public finance supporting the production and consumption of fossil fuels are a key concern to the finance sector. They increase the risk of stranded fossil fuel assets, decrease the competitiveness of key industries, including low-carbon businesses, and negate the carbon price signals many of us have been calling for. They are also notoriously inefficient from and economics standpoint. They create a significant burden on government budgets, perpetuate income inequality by benefiting the richest consumers while failing to meet the energy needs of those lacking energy access, and damage public health by increasing air pollution.” The Statement then calls on the G20 governments to commit to “a clear timeline for the full and equitable phase-out by all G20 members of all fossil fuel subsidies by 2020, starting with the elimination of all subsidies for fossil fuel exploration and coal production.”

What would be the impact of removing fossil fuel subsidies? The most recent estimate comes from the Overseas Development Institute and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Global Subsidies Initiative in *Zombie Energy: Climate Benefits of Ending Subsidies to Fossil Fuel Production*. It concludes that if subsidies to fossil fuel production were removed across the globe, the world's GhG emissions would be reduced by 37 Gt of carbon dioxide by 2050. The authors call this " likely a low-end estimate", partly because it relies on what they say is a "conservative estimate of global production subsidies in G20 countries" : $70 billion U.S. annually. For more on this longstanding issue, see the Global Subsidies Initiative webpage on fossil fuel subsidies.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Bank of Canada**, **Climate Risk**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies** | **Leave a reply**

Alberta reinvesting carbon levy revenues in clean energy programs

Posted on **March 5, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Alberta announced a new Residential and Commercial Solar rebate program on February 27, funded with $36 million from revenues from the province's carbon levy. The government estimates that the program will stimulate up to 900 jobs in the solar sector, while reducing GHG emissions and cutting installation costs for residences by 30 per cent and for businesses and non-profits by 25 per cent. In combination with a December 2016 change to the Micro-generation Regulation , which increased the allowable capacity of micro-generation systems to five megawatts, the rebate program is meant especially to encourage solar commercial and community operations . The Pembina Institute reaction highlights the aspect of microgeneration and distributed energy; DeSmog Blog gives more details and context about the overall growth of solar in Alberta. Iron and Earth , the workers' organization promoting the transition from oil and gas to renewables, calls the announcement a "great first step" on their Facebook page , and notes their previous call to the Alberta government for increased access to solar skills training programs.

On Febrary 28, the government issued an invitation for Albertans to register for a Residential No-Charge Energy Savings Program , encouraging all households, regardless of income, to upgrade to more energy-efficient products, including LED lights, high efficiency shower heads, and smart thermostats. Installation and product costs will be borne by the province and financed, again, through carbon levy revenues.

Finally, on March 3, Alberta announced matched funding of $10 million from the province and the federal government for a Calgary-based Alberta Carbon Conversion Technology Centre (ACCTC) . The facility will "test breakthrough technologies that convert CO2 from harmful emissions into applications for everyday use." It will be owned and operated by InnoTech Alberta , a subsidiary of Alberta Innovates; the goal is to support "Alberta-based technology developers, as well as attracting global companies and world-class researchers to the province". The Pembina Institute calls it "a plug and play technology sandbox" and "an excellent way to create partnerships and accelerate our learning with respect to new technologies, in order to develop emissions solutions and create economic opportunities." The Alberta Clean Technology Industry Alliance also approves. The investment follows a February 13 meeting to expand and renew the Alberta – Canada Collaboratory on Clean Energy Research and Technology Memorandum of Understanding.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **carbon capture and storage**, **Carbon Tax**, **Clean Technology**, **energy efficiency**, **Green Innovation**, **Solar energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Fossil fuel approvals, job creation, and the gap in Canada's emissions goals

Posted on **March 3, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Assessing the Federal Government's Actions on Climate Change was released by the Green Economy Network in February (with a 4-page Executive Summary here) . It estimates the job creation value of four fossil fuel projects under active consideration – Petronas LNG in B.C., Kinder Morgan TransMountain Pipeline, Enbridge Line 3, and Keystone XL Pipeline – using figures from the proponents of those projects, and concludes that the estimated total investment of $60.3 billion would result in 380,900 direct, indirect, and induced person job years of employment over 5 years, many of which would be in the U.S. The investment would also increase Canada's annual GHG emissions by 89.9 megatonnes. In comparison, GEN estimates the job creation and emissions impacts of that same $60.3 billion investment if it were directed to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and transit, as recommended in its *One Million Climate Jobs Plan* . GEN concludes that the green investments would create 784,570 person job years of employment over five years while reducing annual GHG emissions by up to 190 Mt after ten years.

In its discussion of the government's *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* , the Green Economy Network notes that "it is unclear how the emissions from federally approved fossil fuel infrastructure projects are factored into the PCF". Regarding the Pan-Canadian Framework considerations of employment and Just Transition issues , the report further states: "Calculations for job creation from each of the proposed measures are completely absent". Though the term "Just Transition" gets a mention, "there are no specific measures outlined to ensure that workers and their families are supported in the transition to a low-carbon economy." … "The Framework also misses a significant opportunity to demonstrate how major public infrastructure projects can be designed to include Just Transition measures, including skills training and integrating mandatory requirements for contractors to sponsor apprenticeships, which will aid in increasing apprenticeship completion rates and ensure that our workers have the skills that they need." GEN makes recommendations to improve these deficiencies.

The Green Economy Network represents the concerns and solutions of an alliance of approximately 25 labour unions, environment and social justice organizations in Canada. Their signature One Million Jobs campaign is part of an international campaign which includes the U.K. and South Africa.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Climate change policy**, **employment impacts**, **Green Job Creation**, **Job Creation**, **Just Transition**, **Keystone XL**, **Kinder Morgan pipeline**, **One Million Jobs Campaign**, **Pan Canadian Framework**, **Petronas LNG** | **Leave a reply**

Ontario releases its strategy for a Circular Economy

Posted on **March 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On March 1, the government of Ontario announced the final version of its *Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario: Building the Circular Economy* , arguing for the importance of a circular economy, given that the waste sector is responsible for 6% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario, yet the current recycling rate is only 25%. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change states: "Ontario has an opportunity to reduce emissions coming from waste, decrease our reliance on virgin materials, enhance environmental protection and bring new economic growth, job opportunities and savings to consumers and taxpayers."

What is a circular economy? The Strategy states that it aims "to eliminate waste, not just from recycling processes, but throughout the lifecycles of products and packaging. A circular economy aims to maximize value and eliminate waste by improving the design of materials, products and business models. A circular economy goes beyond recycling. The goal is not just to design for better end-of-life recovery, but to minimize the use of raw materials and energy through a restorative system." Recognizing that a circular economy involves fundamental changes for producers and consumers, the Strategy document lays out a visionary goal of a 100% waste-free economy, with an interim goal for diversion of 30 per cent by 2020, 50 per cent by 2030, and 80% by 2050.

The Strategy document includes specific steps to be taken in the next 10 years, under the *Waste Free Ontario Act, 2016* and its two parts, the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016, and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016. The *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016*, established an "outcomes-based producer responsibility regime", which makes producers environmentally accountable and financially responsible for recovering resources and reducing waste associated with their products and packaging. It also established the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority to operate a data Registry and oversee producer performance by conducting compliance and enforcement activities. The *Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016* will authorize the gradual replacement of the existing recycling programs, with changes to the Used Tired Program already underway, and consultations for a Food and Organic Waste Action Plan scheduled for 2017.

For further reading: Canadian readers will be familiar with a report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2013, *Closing the Loop: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Zero Waste in BC* , and can keep up to date with the blog from Canada's National Zero Waste Council. International news reports are monitored at *The Guardian* newspaper in its Circular Economy section. An overview of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan is available from the European Commission website here , and see "First year verdict: how much progress has the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan made?" . The Alliance for Circular Economy Solutions (ACES) has a European focus, and in December 2015 published *Unemployment and the circular economy*, which shows how the development of the circular economy in Europe could impact the jobs market in Italy, Poland and Germany. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation has a global focus with a broad range, and normally releases reports at the Davos meetings of the World Economic Forum. At the January 2017 meetings, it released the latest in a series of reports on the plastics industry: *The New Plastics Economy: Catalysing Action*

Posted in **Uncategorized** | **Leave a reply**

Brexit is seen as a turning point for UK Climate Change Policy

Posted on **March 2, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On February 22, the new Greener UK coalition released a manifesto, calling on the UK government to use the Brexit process as an opportunity to restore and enhance environmental protections in the UK. The Manifesto for a Greener UK follows the release on February 14 of a House of Lords report, *Brexit: Environment and climate change*. For a discussion of the basic issues of concern, read "Brexit will be a pivotal moment for the UK's environment" (December 2016), and read also Greener UK's Pledge for the Environment, which has been signed by over 145 Members of Parliament from all parties. Greener UK has also prepared a Briefing Note for Members of Parliament: *The repeal bill and a greener UK: Maintaining a greener UK as the UK exits the EU.* Follow developments on the Inside Track blog, published by Green Alliance.

One of the key proposals of the February Manifesto is that Britain should continue to show climate leadership, to co-operate with the EU on energy and climate change, and to affirm ongoing investment and deployment of clean energy infrastructure. It also calls for a new Environment Act for England, "building on the upcoming 25 year plan with measurable milestones for environmental restoration and high standards for pollution and resource efficiency". Greener UK has published policy documents supporting each of the four priorities of the Manifesto: Food and Farming ; Fisheries and Marine ; Climate and Energy ; and Environment and Wildlife Laws .

Greener UK was launched in December 2016, coordinated by Green Alliance . Greener UK consists of 13 major environmental organizations with a combined membership of 7.9 million, and includes: Campaign for Better Transport, ClientEarth, Campaign to Protect Rural England, E3G, Friends of the Earth, Green Alliance, Greenpeace, National Trust, RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, The Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust and WWF.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Agriculture**, **Brexit**, **Climate change policy**, **Environmental Protection**, **Fisheries Industry**, **Green Alliance**, **Green Economy**, **United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. Municipalities urged to take fossil fuel giants to court

Posted on **March 1, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In January, West Coast Environmental Law and over 50 other environmental, health, human rights, women's rights, and faith-based organizations sent an Open Letter to local municipalities in British Columbia, urging them 1.) to write to fossil fuel companies, demanding accountability for the climate change costs being borne by citizens , and 2.) To consider participating in a class action lawsuit against the big polluters. As part of their new initiative, called   Climate Law in Our Own Hands , West Coast Environmental Law is offering legal research and support to interested local governments, as well as template letters and fossil fuel company addresses to facilitate the letter-writing campaign. WCEL argues that fossil fuel companies will only start working towards climate change solutions when they are held to account to pay their fair share for the damage being caused.   According to one of the Open Letter signatories, Sierra Club B.C. , "The Province of BC has estimated that Metro Vancouver Municipalities will need to spend $9.5 billion between now and 2100 to address rising sea-levels (about $100 million per year on average)." The list could continue to add wildfires, the destruction of forests by the mountain pine beetle, drought, and extreme weather.

WCEL is not new to this issue, but rather have been active since the 2015 landmark Urgenda case in the Netherlands , when they released their report *Taking climate justice into our own hands* , which included a draft *Climate Compensation Act* . The new website, Climate Law in Our Own Hands maintains a blog about legal actions around the world, including a November 2016 report about 420 "grannies" in Switzerland who are working with Greenpeace Switzerland to launch a legal challenge against the Swiss government for inadequately addressing threats to their health and future generations from climate change. Other high profile court cases underway include the challenge to stop Arctic drilling by Norweigian youth and Greenpeace in Norway , and the ongoing cases led by Our Children's Trust   against the U.S. federal and state governments. The federal case, *Juliana v.United States* first launched in 2015, and most recently (November 10, 2016) has been permitted to proceed to trail, after Judge Ann Aiken issued an opinion and order denying the U.S. government and fossil fuel industry's motions to dismiss . The 21 plaintiffs, mostly teenagers, are suing for the constitutional right of future generations to live in a healthy and safe environment.

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation**, **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **climate change damages**, **Climate Justice**, **Climate Legislation**, **fossil fuel industry**, **Municipal Government**, **Our Children's Trust**, **Urgenda Climate Case** | **Leave a reply**

A fair economy and a fair transition need input from Labour, business and civil society

Posted on **February 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Clean Growth Century Initiative has launched a series of OpEd's with a February 20 post, *A New Economy and a Fair Transition for Workers* authored by Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress; Robert Walker, Vice President, ESG Services and NEI Investments; and Steven Fish, Executive Director, Canadian Business for Social Responsibility. They write: *"*Canadian workers — and not only those in the fossil fuel sector — have seen a rise in job insecurity and a decline in good-quality employment in recent years. By implementing a clean growth shift, Canada can and must improve prosperity in a broad-based way. Anything less risks a breakdown of the political conditions that lead to climate action." The authors call for policy development that will address both climate change and economic inequality, and that involves communities, labour organizations, businesses and civil society. This statement also appears as part of the IRPP *Policy Options* Special Issue for February "Public Policy towards 2067".

Posted in **Uncategorized** | **Leave a reply**

Low Carbon Fuel Standards vs. Renewable Fuel Standards

Posted on **February 20, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A new report from Smart Prosperity (formerly Sustainable Prosperity) contrasts the advantages and features of a Renewable Fuel Standard – in force federally and in five provinces – with a Low Carbon Fuel Standard, in force in Canada only in British Columbia . The discussion is timely, given that the federal government and the province of Ontario are both considering Low Carbon Fuel Standard policies. In " How a Low Carbon Fuel Standard could reduce your GHG footprint without you even noticing", Smart Prosperity answers "what it is" and "what it does" questions; its Policy Brief discusses the complex questions of policy design, " particularly around regional impacts, equity concerns, cost effectiveness, and innovation impacts". Read also the Ontario Discussion paper: *Developing a modern renewal fuel standard for gasoline in Ontario* . The federal government posted a clean fuel standard Backgrounder about its goals (November 2016), which include using life cycle analysis of fuel production, and extending coverage beyond transportation fuels. Other jurisdictions which use a LCFS include California, Oregon, and the state of Washington.

UPDATE: On February 23, Friends of the Earth released a discussion paper, *Working Towards A Clean Fuel Strategy for Canada:Key Questions .* The subtitle says a lot: *How to make a Canadian Clean Fuel Strategy more than a cosmetic exercise to sanitize the image of the oil industry*. Noting that Environment and Climate Change Canada has provided only vague information so far in its consideration of the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, Friends of the Earth states its concern that an inadequate policy could greenwash the use of fossil fuels and thus prolong their use , rather than supporting a just transition off fossil fuels and stimulating the development of alternative fuels. The discussion paper is a thorough review of past experience with biofuel and ethanol policies .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **alternative fuels**, **Biofuels**, **British Columbia**, **Low Carbon Fuel Standard**, **Ontario**, **renewable fuel standard**, **Vehicle emission standards** | **Leave a reply**

European Union votes on reforms to Emissions Trading System

Posted on **February 20, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

On February 15, the European Parliament adopted draft reforms of the EU's emission trading system (ETS), the centrepiece of European emissions reduction policy – choosing the less ambitious proposal of a reduction on the cap on emissions of only 2.2% per year until at least 2024. Climate Action Network Europe's Letter to Policymakers ahead of the vote outlined the arguments and proposals for environmentally-ambitious change, including a higher price on carbon and inclusion of the cement, aviation and shipping industries. Its reaction after the vote stated: "It is shocking that the Parliament chose to bow to the interests of polluting industries instead of protecting citizens from a catastrophic climate breakdown. The Parliament has completely failed the first test of its commitment to the Paris Agreement. The proposed reforms will keep the carbon market ineffective for a decade or more. We urge progressive EU governments to finally turn the ETS into a functioning tool and create a stimulus to ditch old models and move to green economy." One of the three reforms urged by 31 environmental organizations in an Open Letter to the MEP's in November 2016 had been the establishment of the Just Transition Fund for communities and regions which need support to transition away from coal. The reforms will be debated next at the Council of Environment Ministers on 28 February; the EU's 28 governments must negotiate further to finalize the legislation.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Markets**, **European Emissions Trading System**, **European Union** | **Leave a reply**

Energy Efficiency and Community Energy: Incentives in Alberta, a Success Story in B.C.

Posted on **February 20, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Getting it Right: A More Energy Efficient Alberta is the final report of the government's Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel , and " a road map for creating jobs, diversifying the economy and saving Albertans money" according to the government press release on January 23 . All programs will be coordinated through the newly-created agency, Energy Efficiency Alberta ; three programs are already underway, using revenue from the Alberta carbon levy to provide incentives or rebates for energy-saving appliances and equipment, solar panels, and retrofitting . The Energy Efficiency Alberta mandate also extends to community-owned renewable energy systems and non-utility scale community energy systems; the Panel report proposes short-term and long-term financial incentives to support community wind and other renewable energy installations, along with complementary technologies such as storage and smart grid applications.

The *Getting it Right report* also includes a goal of increased "capacity development", which "can take the form of post-secondary education and training, professional development and training activities, conferences and other events" to improve energy-related skills. The report includes an appendix of the energy-related research programs in Alberta universities. Summaries of the public discussions are here ; a submissions library here constitutes an impressive collection of information about energy efficiency.

In British Columbia: a success story of a community-owned solar farm in the city of Kimberly, highlighted in Clean Energy Review. Sunmine is " BC's largest solar project, Canada's largest solar tracking facility, and the first solar project in B.C. to sell power to the BC Hydro grid." Citizens of the city approved the project in a referendum in 2011; city administrators managed the planning and financing; and the mining company Teck provided the land and infrastructure of its reclaimed Sullivan Mine Concentrator site, plus $2 million. Since it began operation in 2015, Sunmine has won numerous awards, including Community of the Year Award by Clean Energy BC in 2015, and in 2017, the Clean 50 award for outstanding contributions to clean capitalism. A short video about the Sunmine project by Green Energy Futures is here .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta**, **community-owned energy**, **Distributed energy**, **energy efficiency**, **Kimberly B.C.**, **Solar energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

National Energy Board Modernization – Hearings are underway

Posted on **February 19, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Public hearings by the Expert Panel on the Modernization of the National Energy Board began in Saskatoon in January and will conclude in Montreal at the end of March (the schedule is here). With transparency and accountability a key concern about the NEB, it is surprising that no transcripts or submissions will be made available online, only government- prepared summaries . Fortunately, press reports are providing the public with some information: an important example, a report by Andrew Nikoforuk from the Vancouver hearings appeared in *The Tyee* on February 9, summarizing the testimony of Marc Eliesen, a former chair of Ontario and BC Hydro and a critic of the NEB since the 2014 Trans Mountain Pipeline hearings. As quoted in "Time to Reform Our 'Captured' National Energy Board, Says Expert" , Mr. Eliesen reiterated his earlier criticism that the NEB a "captured regulator" that no longer operates in the public interest. "The attitudinal bias that stems from a close interaction between NEB board members, NEB staff and the energy industry, means the goals and aspirations of the Alberta energy sector have become those of the board." Eliesen recommended that all current NEB board members should be replaced by people from a broader range of expertise, not just the oil and gas industry. He also recommended that the NEB's head office be moved from Calgary back to Ottawa. In "How to Fix the National Energy Board, Canada's 'Captured Regulator'" , *DeSmog Blog* (Feb 8) also summarized Eliesen's testimony, as well as that of Eugene Kung, staff counsel at West Coast Environmental Law.

Proposals for improving the discredited NEB have come from a Pembina Institute report: *Good Governance in the era of low carbon: a Vision for a modernized National Energy Board* . From Pembina: "significant reforms to the NEB Act, and to the operating culture and practices at the Board, are required." The report lays out 9 essential conditions to transform energy regulation, including : "Energy regulators must be independent of bias and interferences from government and non-government stakeholders. …Energy regulators should proactively and predictably support involvement of all interested parties and the public as a fundamental component of evidence gathering, decision-making and monitoring." Environmental Defence has also weighed in with "Six key ways to modernize energy regulation in Canada", and has also called for the restart of the Energy East Pipeline review process to wait until new rules for the NEB are in place. (the previous Energy East Review was declared void in January 2017). The report and recommendations of the Expert Panel on Modernization of the National Energy Board is scheduled for submission to the Minister of Natural Resources by mid-May 2017.

A whiff of the bias that so many have noted at the NEB continues, in one of the "related documents" provided at the Expert Panel website: the Interim Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, titled *Pipelines for Oil: Protecting our Economy, Respecting our Environment* (Dec. 2016). It begins: "Petroleum pipelines, like highways, railways and power line corridors, are long established in Canada. They are instrumental to the quality of life and the standard of living we enjoy in Canada today. Pipelines have no equal when it comes to the safe, reliable and cost-efficient movement of petroleum over long distances. They are critically important to the creation of wealth in Canada and their use and development are in the public interest and the greater good of all Canadians." It pronounces on the concepts of social license, the public good, confidence in the regulatory process, then proposes an oil transportation strategy which includes pipelines and tankers. From the conclusion: "The Committee believes that new pipelines will act as a lifeline to the Canadian economy, which has been hard hit in the oil and gas sector. Pipelines to the east and west coasts will ensure that Canadian oil producers get the full value of this resource on world markets, reduce refineries' dependence on oil imports and improve public safety. The Committee has made recommendations to Natural Resources Canada, Transport Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Committee believes that these recommendations will help form a strategy to improve public confidence and break the paralysis preventing the construction of pipelines in Canada."

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **National Energy Board (NEB)**, **oil and gas pipelines** | **Leave a reply**

U.K. Trade Unionists consider their response to Climate Refugees

Posted on **February 19, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— Fort McMurray Alberta 2016

A sold-out conference on February 11 in the U.K. brought trade unionists and environmental and human rights groups together to consider the plight of climate refugees. "Climate Refugees – The Climate Crisis and Population Displacement: Building a Trade Union and Civil Society Response" was led by the UK's Campaign Against Climate Change and Friends of the Earth UK , and supported by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) , Fire Brigades Union, Unite, Unison, National

Union of Teachers, and others. The existential threat of natural disasters (including the fires at Fort McMurray in Alberta) was cited, and delegates were told that in the past six years over 140 million people have been displaced through climate-related disasters – one person every second.

The goal of the conference was "to dispel myths about refugees, debate the need for the need for a global response based on justice and solidarity including the need for legal protection for those being displaced by the climate crisis, and discuss how we can build a powerful movement that can demand stronger government leadership on this fundamental issue." The Conference agenda is here , and includes a sign-up opportunity for those who want to be updated on related news ; a summary of some presentations is here .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate refugees**, **Fort McMurray wildfires**, **labour union policies** | **Leave a reply**

LiUNA's Canadian Pension Fund invests in clean energy

Posted on **February 19, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Labourers International Union of North America (LiUNA) , under the leadership of Terry Sullivan in the U.S., is known for its support of the recent Trump-government decisions to proceed with the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone Pipeline .   Taking a greener position, on February 6, the pension fund of LiUNA in Canada committed to provide $200-million in investment funding for NRStor, a Canadian energy storage company, which among other projects, plans to market the Tesla Powerwall in Canada. See the NStor press release   or a *Globe and Mail* article (Feb. 6) which quotes LiUNA international vice-president Joe Mancinelli: "We believe energy storage is a key enabler of our future energy system, and welcome the opportunity to invest capital into low-carbon assets on behalf of our pension fund." The LiUNA Pension Fund of Central and Eastern Canada is a multi-employer fund with $5.7-billion in assets under management.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **energy storage**, **labour union policies**, **Labourers' International Union (LiUNA)**, **Pension Fund management** | **Leave a reply**

Wind and Solar industry groups report healthy growth

Posted on **February 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

— Photo from U.S. Energy.gov. Creative Commons license.

Wind installations in Canada have grown by 18% in the last 4 years, according to the latest statistics released in February by the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA). There are now 285 wind farms, made up of 6,288 wind turbines in Canada, representing about $1.5 billion in investment. Most wind projects are in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and Nova Scotia. The greatest growth occurred in Nova Scotia in 2016, mostly driven by the province's community feed-in tariff program. An article by the UBC Sauder School of Business summarizes the results with emphasis on British Columbia: "B.C. Lags during banner year for wind power" .

The American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) also released new statistics, on Feb. 9, showing that wind has surpassed hydropower dams to become the largest source of renewable electric capacity in the U.S., and the fourth largest overall. Texas is the undisputed leader in wind energy, with 25% of the national capacity and nearly 25% of the jobs – including at 40 wind manufacturing facilities in the state. The industry report points out that "Of the $13.8 billion invested by the U.S. wind industry last year, $10.5 billion was invested in low-income counties", making rural and Rust Belt America among the greatest beneficiaries of wind power development.

The European industry body, WindEurope, released its latest statistical report on February 9th, showing "The cost of wind power continues to plummet, and this is particularly the case for the European offshore sector, which has met and exceeded its 2020 price targets by a substantial margin, and five years early. " In "Off-shore wind moves in to energy's mainstream", the *New York Times* provides an overview, mostly of Europe, and observes, "Offshore wind still represents only a tenth of new generation in the sector, …but investment in the industry nearly tripled in the five years to 2015."

Finally, the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) published its annual statistics report in the first week of February; the 4-page statistical overview is here . It reveals that China is leading the way in installed wind power (34.7% of global installed power) , followed well behind by the United States (16.9%) , Germany (10.3%), and India (5.9%) . Canada ranks 7th with 2.4% of global installed capacity.

SOLAR INDUSTRY: According to the 2017 edition of the *Solar Jobs Census* released by the Solar Foundation on February 7, more than 51,000 solar industry jobs were added in the U.S. in 2016 – bringing the total number of Americans working in the industry to 260,000. A Bloomberg News summary of the report , "U.S. Solar Industry clamors for workers as employment climbs by 25% ", quotes the Executive Director of the Solar Foundation : "Solar manufacturing, installation, and operation now "employ more [Americans] than Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Apple combined…These are well-paying, family-sustaining jobs with low barriers to entry, with average wages at US$26 per hour for solar installation."

The U.S. Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) is also bullish on the industry in its 4th Quarter "US Solar Market Insight" report , conducted by GTM Research and the SEIA. It shows a record-breaking number of solar installations in 2015, so that the U.S. now hosts more than 1.3 million solar photovoltaic installations with enough capacity to power 8.3 million households. The report states: "While U.S. solar grew across all segments, what stands out is the double digit gigawatt boom in utility-scale solar, primarily due to solar's cost competitiveness with natural gas alternatives."

For a comprehensive overview of employment statistics for all sectors of the renewable energy industry, see the Jobs in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fact Sheet, released by the Environmental and Energy Institute (Washington, D.C.) in February. The Fact Sheet compiles statistics from many sources, though it relies heavily on the U.S. Department of Energy report, *U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER)* (January 2017), and the *Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review* (2016) from International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Solar energy industry**, **wind energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Are we deceiving ourselves about clean energy progress?

Posted on **February 17, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In a new discussion paper released in January by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), authors Sean Sweeney and John Treat argue that momentum has not really shifted away from fossil fuels, and the optimistic, "green growth" narrative is overstated. Analysing a wide range of major data sources about the global energy system, the authors conclude that optimism in a clean energy revolution is "misplaced, misleading, and disarming. It must therefore be rejected, and replaced with a more sober perspective that draws hope and confidence not from a selective and self-deceiving interpretation of the data, but from the rising global movement for climate justice and energy democracy, armed with clear programmatic goals and a firm commitment to achieve them."

The authors of *Energy Transition: Are we winning?* give credit to unions and activists for their demands to extend public control and social ownership to power generation, and for opening up a global debate about the need for just transition measures. However, they call for the union movement to address its "ambition deficit" towards the deep restructuring of the global economy required for ambitious deployment of renewable energy. Energy systems controlled by ordinary people in partnership with well-run and accountable public agencies are needed to truly move the world away from fossil fuels.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **Uncategorized** | Tagged **energy democracy**, **labour union policies**, **renewable energy**, **Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED)** | **Leave a reply**

Provincial updates: Climate Plan for B.C.; Ontario issues Green Bonds

Posted on **February 5, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In British Columbia: On February 2, with a provincial election approaching in the Spring, the Leader of the B.C. New Democratic Party announced a new Clean Growth Climate Action plan , based on "The core principle that we must mitigate financial impacts of the federal government's carbon pricing increases on low and middle income families, which the Plan proposes to provide relief for 80% of B.C. families." … After family rebates are paid, the plan proposes to "invest the remaining carbon tax revenues in good jobs building public transit, expanding clean and green technology industries, and building energy efficient construction in every B.C. community." A complete summary, along with reaction from environmental experts, appears in "BC NDP climate plan 'shows real action,' say environmentalists" in the *National Observer* (Feb. 3). Reaction from the Pembina Institute : "We are pleased to see the commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Premier's Climate Leadership Team… — in particular, the pledge to adopt the proposed 2030 target and sector-by-sector targets for emissions. "

In Ontario: On February 3, Ontario announced the success of an $800 million green bond issue with a maturity date of January 27, 2023. This is the third issue of Green Bonds by the province- the first, in 2014, financed the Eglinton Crosstown LRT; proceeds from the third issue will go "to help build clean transportation and environmentally friendly infrastructure projects in communities across the province." For an overview of the province's Green Bond program, see the Ministry of Finance website. Annual newsletters summarize progress and provide details of the first two issues: 2015 edition and the 2016 newsletter released in December 2016.

Ontario also announced tweaks to the payment caps of its Electric Vehicle Incentive program on February 1, and pledged to continue annual reviews of the program (next in Fall 2017). The EVIP provides incentives of $6,000 to $14,000 to support the purchase or lease of eligible battery-electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. The Electric Vehicle Charging Incentive Program provides up to an additional $1,000 to EVIP recipients toward the purchase and installation of fast-charging equipment for the home or workplace.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **Green Economy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Climate change policy**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Green Bonds**, **New Democratic Party**, **Ontario** | **Leave a reply**

Workplace resistance to the Trump agenda, and tracking the changes

Posted on **February 5, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The deliberately-executed distraction and turmoil of President Trump's policies in the U.S. threaten and weary us all, at the same time that well-planned resistance is most necessary. Long-time activist Frances Fox-Piven wrote in *The Nation* in January, before the Inauguration, "Throw sand in the gears of everything", reflecting on past resistance movements in U.S. history, including civil rights and the Vietnam War. She asks, " So how do resistance movements win—if they win—in the face of an unrelentingly hostile regime? The answer, I think, is that by blocking or sabotaging the policy initiatives of the regime, resistance movements can create or deepen elite and electoral cleavages". Fox Piven puts strong hope in the actions of state and local governments, as well as citizen action. She also points to the defining protest which finally turned government policy on the Vietnam War: soldiers refused to followed orders.

In "Where's the best place to resist Trump? At Work" (*Washington Post* ,Jan. 31; re-posted to Portside) the authors argue that " From solidarity strikes to slowdowns and sit-ins, workplace revolt is a key strategy in opposing the new administration". Describing some of the early anti-Trump protests, they state: "These actions are indispensable, and may form the seeds of a new movement, but people should not ignore one of the most powerful means of resistance and protest that they have: their roles as workers." Federal workers are not the only ones with the power to resist and disrupt, though federal workers are leading the way with courageous initiatives such as information leaks and alternative Twitter accounts. The longshoremen in Oakland, California for example, declined to report for work on Inauguration Day : see "Want to Stop Trump? Take a Page From These Dockworkers, and Stop Work" in *In These Times* (Jan. 23). Or read "Some New York Taxi Drivers Are Striking In Protest Of Trump's Refugee Ban" in Buzzfeed (Jan. 29).

Resistance by federal workers is described in "In Show of Internal Dissent, Federal Workers Rising Up Against Trump" a February 1 article from *Common Dreams*. Another ongoing, public form are the many "rogue" Twitter accounts, started by the National Parks Service ,and now including very active accounts at alt_EPA (with over 300,000 followers), alt_Interior , alt_NOAA , alt_DOL , and more. Ironically, they form a goldmine of activist information. But beware of trolling accounts and imposter accounts.

Other web sources to follow U.S. developments, especially those related to climate change and environmental regulations, are: Climate Central ; Common Dreams ; Democracy Now: Donald Trump Coverage ; Inside Climate News; Think Progress ; and 350.org . Also notable, Deregulation Tracker , where the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law (Columbia Law School) is monitoring changes to legislation and regulations, and the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative , which is monitoring, documenting, and analyzing changes to approximately 25,000 federal websites using proprietary software that allows them to track changes to the language and code. *Climate Central* published "The EPA Has Started to Remove Obama-era Information" (Feb. 2) based on the EDGI monitoring.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Climate Activism**, **Donald Trump**, **Environmental Protection Agency**, **government workers**, **Protests & Rallies**, **strikes**, **whistleblowing** | **Leave a reply**

Low-carbon technologies to the rescue: Solar PV, Electric Vehicles, CCS, and a replacement for cement

Posted on **February 5, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Expect the Unexpected: The Disruptive Power of Low-carbon Technology is a new report by the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London and the Carbon Tracker Initiative. The report models energy demand by combining up-to-date solar PV and electric vehicle cost projections with climate policies based on the UNFCC Nationally Determined Contributions statements. The results are contrasted with the current "Business as Usual" scenarios of the major fossil fuel companies, and demonstrate how Big Oil underestimates the impact of solar and EV technologies. *Expect the Unexpected* forecasts peak oil and gas by 2020, with electric vehicles accounting for over two-thirds of the road transport market by 2050, and states that Solar PV "could supply 23% of global power generation in 2040 and 29% by 2050, entirely phasing out coal and leaving natural gas with just a 1% market share."

The report and addresses the question, "What contribution can accelerated solar PV and EV penetration make to achieving a 2°C target?" It provides various scenarios, but concludes that decarbonisation of heavy industry (specifically iron and steel, cement, chemcials) will also be required and essential. On this front, the report states that Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is unlikely to be financially viable in power generation, but " In non-power sectors such as heavy industry, however, CCS is likely to have a much more important role because there are currently few viable low-carbon alternatives for achieving deep decarbonisation. Furthermore, if CO2 can be utilised in other industrial processes, this added value will serve to improve the viability of CCS."

One such low-carbon alternative for cement production – albeit one which is still in development – is reported in a recent article by University of Victoria's Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions . Based on the premise that most of the CO2 produced in cement manufacture is not in the kiln-heating process, but rather by the chemical reaction of turning limestone into quicklime, researchers at McGill University in Montreal have developed a building product called Carbicrete, which replaces Portland cement with steel slag (a waste product) as its main binding agent. Read details in "Solving the Thorny problem of Cement Emissions" (Feb. 1).

Use this link to view The *Expect the Unexpected* main report, a technical report, and an interactive dashboard allowing readers to manipulate elements of climate policy, technology price, and energy demand are available here.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Budget**, **cement industry**, **Clean Energy**, **Clean Technology**, **economic modelling**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Low-Carbon Investment**, **Solar PV Manufacturing** | **Leave a reply**

Trudeau welcomes Trump's Keystone pipeline decision – can we really have it both ways?

Posted on **February 4, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources delivered its report on *The Future of Canada's Oil and Gas Industry* in September 2016; see the WCR coverage from September here. On January 19, the Government released its Official Response to the Committee Report, with this introductory statement: "It is clear to our Government that in order for the energy sector to continue to be a driver of prosperity and play a part in meeting global demand for energy, resource development must go hand in hand with the environmental and social demands of Canadians." Not surprising then, that when Donald Trump opened the door for construction of the Keystone Pipeline on January 24, Justin Trudeau and his cabinet members welcomed the news .

Yet author Marc Lee reinforces what others have stated in his January 25 article in *CCPA Policy Notes*. "Canada can't have it both ways on environment" demonstrates that "the amount of fossil fuel removed from Canadian soil that ends up in the atmosphere as carbon dioxide—has grown dramatically. " Although not technically "counted" in our own emissions reporting under the Paris Agreement, the emissions from Canada's fossil fuel exports, counted in the countries where they are burned, is greater than Canada's total GHG emissions within the country. Lee goes on: "Based on our share of global fossil fuel reserves, Canada could continue to extract carbon at current levels for between 11 and 24 years at most (the smaller the carbon budget, the less the damages from climate change). This means a planned, gradual wind-down of these industries needs to begin immediately."

Marc Lee's article summarizes a more complete report he authored for the Corporate Mapping Project, jointly led by the University of Victoria, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Parkland Institute. *Extracted Carbon: Re-examining Canada's contribution to climate change through fossil fuel exports* updates a 2011 CCPA report, *Peddling GHGs: What is the Carbon Footprint of Canada's Fossil Fuel Exports?* in the context of the Paris Agreement and Canada's contribution to the global carbon budget. It concludes that "Plans to further grow Canada's exports of fossil fuels are thus contradictory to the spirit and intentions of the Paris Agreement. Growing our exports could only happen if some other producing countries agreed to keep their fossil fuel reserves in the ground. The problem with new fossil fuel infrastructure projects, like Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plants and bitumen pipelines, is that they lock us in to a high-emissions trajectory for several decades to come, giving up on the 1.5 to 2°C limits of Paris." It follows that "Canadian climate policy must consider supply-side measures such as rejecting new fossil fuel infrastructure and new leases for exploration and drilling, increasing royalties, and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies."

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **Carbon Budget**, **Clean Energy**, **Climate change policy**, **Energy policy**, **Fossil Fuel Subsidies**, **GHG emissions**, **Keystone XL**, **Oil and gas industry**, **Paris Agreement** | **Leave a reply**

Health Impacts of Cap and Trade policies on California's disadvantaged communities

Posted on **February 4, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Acting on a December 2016 Executive Order of Governor Gerry Brown, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment released the first in a series of reports which will examine the impact of the state's climate change programs on communities designated as "disadvantaged". The February report, Tracking and Evaluation of Benefits and Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Limits in Disadvantaged Communities: Initial Report measuring the effects of the Air Resources Board's Cap-and-Trade Program, which regulates greenhouse gas emissions from industrial facilities and other sources. The report is largely based on 2014 emissions data, and warns that "limited data does not yet allow for comprehensive analysis of the impacts of Cap-and-Trade on disadvantaged communities". Initial findings however, are that major industrial facilities are disproportionately located in disadvantaged communities; there is a moderate correlation between GHG and other air pollutants, with refineries showing the strongest correlation. California maintains a planning and enforcement tool, CalEnviroScreen, the " first comprehensive, statewide environmental health screening tool" in the U.S. In late January, California Air Resources Board announced the appointment of its first Assistant Executive Officer for Environmental Justice, with a mandate to ensure that environmental justice and tribal concerns are considered in air pollution policy-making and decision- making.

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **air pollution**, **California**, **Cap and Trade**, **Climate change policy**, **Environmental Justice**, **oil and gas refineries** | **Leave a reply**

Public sector pension administrators are recognizing climate risk, protecting pensions of public employees in Ontario and New York City

Posted on **February 4, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

OPTrust administers the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Pension Plan, with almost 87,000 members and retirees. On January 31, it became a leader in Canadian pension plan administration by releasing two documents: *Climate Change: Delivering on Disclosure,* a position paper, and *OPTrust: Portfolio Climate Risk Assessment,* a report by Mercer consultants, which provides an assessment and analysis of the fund's climate risk exposure . The OPTrust press release states: "For pension funds, climate change presents a number of complex and long-term risks. In Canada alone, pension funds manage well over $1.5 trillion in assets, which brings a real responsibility to collectively seek innovative approaches to modeling carbon exposure and its impact across portfolios." The position paper, *Delivering on Disclosure*, includes a call for collaboration amongst other financial actors to develop standardized measures for carbon disclosure. It is noteworthy that OPTrust is governed by a 10-member Board of Trustees, five of whom are appointed by the union, OPSEU, and five by the employer, the Government of Ontario.

In a February 2 press release affecting the pension plans of New York's public employees, teachers, firefighters and police, the Office of the Controller of New York City announced: "the Trustees of the New York City Pension Funds … will conduct the first-ever carbon footprint analysis of their portfolios and determine how to best manage their investments with an eye toward climate change. In the 21st century, companies must transition to a low-carbon economy, and a failure to adapt to the realities of global warming could present potential investment risks." The New York City pension system has been a leader in addressing climate change risks, including an initiative called the Boardroom Accountability Project , which began in 2014 to give investors the ability to ensure boards are diverse and "climate-competent".

On this point, a January 2017 report from Vancouver-based Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE) found that "… companies in Canada's most carbon-intensive sectors are not demonstrating 'climate competency' in the boardroom." The report, *Taking Climate on Board: Are Canadian energy and utilities company boards equipped to address climate change?* urges greater transparency from boards at publicly-traded corporations, stating "Investors need boards to demonstrate that they are "climate-competent" – that they understand and prioritize climate change risks to long-term value, including the physical, legal, reputational, stranded asset and regulatory risks related to climate change." The report is based on a review of the public disclosures from 52 companies across Canada's energy and utilities sectors, using 3 measures: board skills and experience, oversight, and risk disclosure. It concludes that "more companies are starting to talk about climate change in their reporting, but only three boards disclosed any expertise amongst their members on the issue, and no board included climate change knowledge in its board competency matrix." The full report is here. (On another note, SHARE has walked the walk by filing shareholder resolutions with Enbridge Inc., and met with TD Bank regarding their environmental and social aspects of their investments in the Dakota Access Pipeline. See "The Dakota Access Pipeline and Indigenous Rights.")

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Climate Risk**, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, **Dakota Access Pipeline**, **government workers**, **Municipal Government**, **New York City**, **Ontario**, **Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)**, **Pension Fund management**, **Shareholder Activism**, **Stranded Assets** | **Leave a reply**

Clean Energy creates more jobs than fossil fuels, with a wage premium

Posted on **February 3, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Following on the January 2017 report *US Energy and Employment* from the U.S. Department of Energy, more evidence of the healthy growth of the clean energy industry comes in a report by the Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps and Meister consultants. *Now Hiring: The Growth of America's Clean Energy and Sustainability Jobs* compiles the latest statistics from diverse sources, and concludes that "sustainability" accounts for an estimated 4.5 million jobs (up from 3.4 million in 2011) in the U.S. in 2015. Sustainability jobs are defined as those in energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as waste reduction, natural resources conservation and environmental education, vehicle manufacturing, public sector, and corporate sustainability jobs. Statistics drill down to wages and working conditions – for example, average wages for energy efficiency jobs are almost $5,000 above the national median, and wages for solar workers are above the national median of $17.04 per hour. Comparing clean energy with the fossil fuel industry, the report states that the 1.4 million jobs in energy efficiency construction and installation alone is more than double the number of workers in fossil fuel mining, extraction and electric power generation combined. *Now Hiring* states that for every $1 million invested in building retrofits and industrial efficiency, 8 direct or indirect jobs are created; in comparison, 3 are created by a comparable investment in the fossil fuel industry. This final comparison of job multiplier effect is based on "Green versus brown: Comparing the employment impacts of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fossil fuels using an input-output model" by Heidi Garrett Pelletier at PERI, and appears in the February 2017 issue of *Economic Modelling*.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Clean energy industry**, **economic modelling**, **employment impacts**, **energy efficiency**, **fossil fuel industry**, **Job Quality** | **1 Reply**

Climate science and facts in the Trump Administration -protecting the public right to know

Posted on **January 24, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

For those who rely on U.S. climate change research and science, two recent incidents in the Trump transition are noteworthy. First, the U.S. Department of Energy released a Directive for Scientific Integrity, approved January 4, 2017, which states: "The cornerstone of the scientific integrity policy at DOE is that all scientists, engineers or others supported by DOE are free and encouraged to share their scientific findings and views. " Department of Energy personnel "will not suppress or alter scientific or technological findings or intimidate or coerce any covered personnel, contractors or others to alter or censor scientific or technological findings or conclusions." It also directs the DOE to appoint a "Scientific Integrity Official within the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Energy to serve as an ombudsperson for matters related to scientific integrity." Canadians, who recall the muzzled scientists of the Harper era , will applaud the policy, even as we continue to fight for scientific rigour in environmental assessments . A recent DeSmog blog explains.

Every day brings new developments in Washington: President Trump has effectively gagged staff at the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Agriculture. In response, a Scientists March on Washington is being organized, according to

Climate Central (Jan. 25). The preliminary website states: " There are certain things that we accept as facts with no alternatives. The Earth is becoming warmer due to human action. The diversity of life arose by evolution. Politicians who devalue expertise risk making decisions that do not reflect reality and must be held accountable. An American government that ignores science to pursue ideological agendas endangers the world."

A reassuring development for researchers, in light of the Trump order to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency website: Volunteer scientists, computer programmers, librarians and citizens have been hard at work since December, gathering and archiving environmental and climate change data produced by the U.S. government, in advance of the Trump inauguration. "Guerilla archiving" events, beginning at the University of Toronto , have also taken place at University of Pennsylvania, San Francisco, and Los Angeles (on Inauguration Day!) in the coordinated task of identifying and gathering the URL's of important sources of information which will likely become vulnerable to removal in the Trump government. Read "Climate Data Preservation Efforts Mount as Trump Takes Office" in *MIT Technology Review* (Jan. 20) for an up to date summary and links to some of the many players in this complex effort. A December blog by The Project Archivists Responding to Climate Change (ProjectARCC) group explains the major players and indicates the scale of the effort.

Briefly, many of the collected web sites are being stored in the servers of the End of Term Web Archive, a collaborative effort of established actors such as the Internet Archive , (which already stores 279 billion web pages!), Library of Congress, the U.S. Government Publishing Office, University of California Digital Library, and others. Over 10,000 URL's of federal climate data websites have already been nominated for archiving, according to the public list available here , though none of the "in process" web pages are available to view yet . For those concerned by the scrubbing of the White House website of all mentions of "climate change", a separate White House archive , housing the Obama version, is available here .

The University of Pennsylvania's Program in Environmental Humanities is housing a separate DataRefuge project, in part to back up environmental data sets that standard Web crawling tools can't collect. The Climate Mirror is a distributed effort conducted by volunteers to mirror and back up data in locations outside the U.S. – an effort also underway at the Internet Archive. Quartz has published "Hackers downloaded US government climate data and stored it on European servers as Trump was being inaugurated" (Jan. 21) .

Most of the work is being done by volunteers, who are eager for help and donations. The Environmental Data and Governance Initiative has a clear set of requests for help, including a list of upcoming archiving events in Ann Arbor and New York City. There is a well-developed process to nominate vulnerable sites, which requires the help of knowledgeable researchers, as well as a need for programmers and IT nerds to work on scripts to help harvest data sets and web pages not easily accessed. The Free Government Information website (another volunteer group) has also published "2016 End of Term (EOT) crawl and how you can help" . Success will ensure that environmental data and facts survive in the public realm.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Climate Activism**, **Climate Science**, **Donald Trump**, **freedom of information**, **Muzzled Scientists**, **public information** | **Leave a reply**

California reaffirms commitment to Cap-and-Trade policies, based on economic evidence

Posted on **January 24, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

California's climate leadership position in the U.S. was solidified on January 20, 2017 – coincidentally Inauguration Day in Washington- when the California Air Resources Board released its *2017 Scoping Plan Update: The Proposed Plan for Achieving California's 2030 Greenhouse Gas Target* . Proposals include a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 – the most ambitious target in North America, according to a Reuters report . The plan also extends the cap-and-trade program to 2030, based on economic modelling which concludes that cap-and-trade is the lowest cost, most efficient policy approach and provides certainty that the state will meet the 2030 emissions goals even if other measures fall short. The *Scoping Plan* also call for an 18 percent reduction in the carbon intensity of transportation fuels burned in the state, and for 4.2 million zero-emission vehicles on the road. The proposals, a hearings schedule, and technical appendices are all available at the ARB website .

Another economic analysis evaluating cap-and-trade was published in January by Next10. *The Economic Impacts of California's Major Climate Programs On The San Joaquin Valley* , analyses the costs and benefits, including job gain and loss, of three programs: Cap- and- trade, the Renewables Portfolio Standard, and energy efficiency programs, specific to the to the San Joaquin Valley economy. The authors chose to examine the San Joaquin as a "a bellwether of the state's transition to a low-carbon economy" since its geography and dependence on agriculture make it vulnerable to climate change effects , and vulnerable also to climate policies because "it faces more socioeconomic challenges than the state as a whole". After examining the data and using advanced modeling software, they found that the three programs brought over $13 billion in economic benefits to the Valley, mostly in renewable energy, and created over 31,000 jobs just in the renewable energy sector alone. Research and analysis was done by academics at the Center for Law, Energy and the Environment (CLEE) at UC Berkeley Law and UC Berkeley's Donald Vial Center on Employment in the Green Economy .

Posted in **Environmental Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **California**, **Cap and Trade**, **energy efficiency**, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction** | **Leave a reply**

Kinder Morgan, Keystone pipelines move closer to reality as Canada is

warned about its carbon budget

Posted on **January 23, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Prime Minister Trudeau set off an outcry in Alberta with these comments at the start of his cross-country tour in Peterborough, Ontario : "You can't make a choice between what's good for the environment and what's good for the economy. We can't shut down the oilsands tomorrow. We need to phase them out. We need to manage the transition off of our dependence on fossil fuels." In Calgary on January 24, Trudeau defended his remarks in a town hall meeting in Calgary, summarized in "Calgary crowd cheers and boos Trudeau in showdown with oilsands supporters" in the *National Observer* (Jan. 25) .

On January 11, British Columbia's Premier Clark waived B.C.'s original five objections and approved the Kinder Morgan pipeline project (albeit with 37 provincial conditions) . Alberta's Premier Rachel Notley responded with: "Working families shouldn't have to choose between good jobs and the environment. World-class environmental standards and a strong economy that benefits working people must go hand-in-hand. The Kinder Morgan pipeline offers us an historic opportunity to demonstrate that these values can – and must – go hand in hand." Reaction to B.C.'s decision from West Coast Environmental Law is here ; or read "Did Christy Clark just betray British Columbia?" from Stand.earth, which continues to organize resistance to Kinder Morgan.

As anticipated, President Donald Trump wasted no time in approving the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines, signing Executive Orders on January 24. Negotiations and further state-level approvals are still ahead, but Canada's Trudeau government welcomed the news, according to a CBC report which quotes Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr : "it would be very positive for Canada — 4,500 construction jobs and a deepening of the relationship across the border on the energy file." In a joint response by Greenpeace USA and Greenpeace Canada, Mike Hudema of Canada stated: "The question for Canadians is: will the Prime Minister continue to align himself with a climate denying Trump administration, or will he stand with the people and with science and start living up to his own commitments to the climate and Indigenous rights?"

According to a January report by Oil Change International (OCI), "Ultimately, the carbon mathematics is such that the Canadian government simply cannot have it both ways . There is no scenario in which tar sands production increases and the world achieves the Paris goals." *Climate on the Line: Why new tar sands pipelines are incompatible with the Paris goals* continues with: "Cumulative emissions from producing and burning Canadian oil would use up 16% of the world's carbon budget to keep temperatures below 1.5 degrees, or 7% of the budget for 2 degrees. Canada has less than 0.5% of the world's population." " There is no future in expanding tar sands production. Instead, the government should begin serious efforts now to diversify the economy, supporting a just transition for workers and communities." Andrew Nikoforuk summarized the report in *The Tyee* (Jan. 10); CBC Calgary interviewed experts in its analysis, "Could the oilsands really be phased out? Here are the possibilities" (January 21).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia**, **Canada**, **Climate change policy**, **Kinder Morgan**, **Oil and gas industry**, **Oil pipelines**, **Oil Sands**, **Paris Agreement** | **Leave a reply**

Finally, the National Energy Board Modernization process is underway

Posted on **January 23, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The Review process for the Modernization of the National Energy Board has begun. The Terms of Reference are here, summarized on the website as focussing on " governance and structure; mandate and future opportunities; decision-making roles, including on major projects; compliance, enforcement, and ongoing monitoring; engagement with Indigenous peoples; and, public participation." Twelve Discussion Papers are available to guide input. Comments can be submitted online here , with a deadline of March 31, 2017; cross-country "engagement sessions" for the public will begin in Saskatoon on January 25, and end in Montreal on March 29. The Expert Panel will deliver its report to the Minister of Natural Resources, with a May 15 deadline.

See an article in the *National Observer* (Jan. 16) , which notes that the process launch comes amidst legal challenges: Two First Nations of Northern Ontario have named the National Energy Board and the government of Canada as defendants in their suit against TransCanada pipeline, for failing to consult with them before allowing work on a 30-kilometre stretch of the pipeline that runs through their traditional territories (details here) . A second court challenge was filed on January 10 by community group Transition Initiative Kenora, asking that the entire Energy East consultation process be voided and re-started, because of the conflict of interest allegations of the Charest Affair in Fall 2016. (more details about the court challenge from Energy Mix here or from Ecojustice here)

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Energy East pipeline**, **Energy policy**, **First Nations**, **National Energy Board (NEB)**, **oil and gas pipelines**, **public consultation** | **Leave a reply**

The Women's March was a huge success. Next up – Sustained Resistance

Posted on **January 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Unionists were among the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who joined in the Sister Marches for the Women's March in Washington on January 21, 2017 . The Canadian Labour Congress statement of "Why we March" is here . Unifor's President Jerry Dias endorsed the March and called for a "united mobilization effort" against the Trump agenda. The March was an undeniable success, and the Washington organizers, quoted in a Globe and Mail report, recognized: "This is more than a single day of action, this is the beginning of a movement – to protect, defend and advance human rights, even in the face of adversity. "

Jeremy Brecher of Labor Network for Sustainability tackles this issue for U.S. labour unions in "How Labor and Climate united can trump Trump" . After cataloguing some of the worst threats under a Trump administration , he calls for "an alliance of unions and allies willing to fight the whole Trump agenda" and states: "Such a "big tent" needs to include unions that are not part of the AFL-CIO, such as SEIU, Teamsters, and National Education Association. Some unions may choose not to join because they are unwilling to take a forthright stand against the Trump agenda; it would be both absurd and catastrophic for that to prevent the rest of the labor movement and its allies from taking on a fight that is about the very right of unions to exist."

The United Resistance, led by the NAACP, Greenpeace USA, and the Service Employees International Union, is chief among these new alliances, pledging to "stand together" on the issues of civil rights, immigrants, women's reproductive rights, social equality, action on climate change, public health and safety, public dissent, and access to information. Their inspirational video is here , as well as a list of the alliance members. The AFL-CIO is not listed as a member of the United Resistance, though their recent blogs oppose Trump's nominees, and they promoted the Women's March. For more about the United Resistance, see "More than 50 Organizations Launch United Resistance Campaign as Trump's Cabinet Hearings Begin" in *Common Dreams* (Jan.10).

In a second article , *SOCIAL SELF-DEFENSE: Protecting People and Planet against Trump and Trumpism* , Jeremy Brecher borrows a term from the Solidarity movement in Poland 40 years ago, and takes a larger, more global focus. He writes that "Social Self Defense includes the protection of the human rights of all people; protection of the conditions of our earth and its climate that make our life possible; the constitutional principle that government must be accountable to law; and global cooperation to provide a secure future for people." "Social Self-Defense is not an organization – it is a set of practices to be engaged in by myriad organizations, hopefully in close coordination with each other." Although the article highlights a number of examples, such as the growing Sanctuary movement in the U.S., and case studies of alliances, including *Vermont Labor Council Initiates Social Self-Defense* , the overriding impact is to emphasize the scale of the task: "These actions appear to be on the way to being the greatest outpouring of civil resistance in American history."

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Donald Trump**, **environmental activism**, **environmental rights**, **Human Rights**, **labour environment cooperation**, **labour union policies**, **Protests & Rallies**, **Women's March 2017** | **Leave a reply**

Recommendations to change the U.S. Social Cost of Carbon, and possible impact for Canada

Posted on **January 22, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The U.S. National Academies of Science Press released an important report in January 2017, suggesting changes to the methodology of the Social Cost of Carbon (SCC), an economic metric used to measure the net costs and benefits associated with the effects of climate change-including changes in agricultural productivity, risks to human health, and damage from extreme weather events. U.S. government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency are required by law to estimate SCC when proposing regulations such for vehicle emission standards or energy efficiency standards for appliances. One of the most recent, thorough, and important applications of the U.S. Social Cost of Carbon appears in the 2015 *Regulatory Impact Analysis Report for the Clean Power Plan Final Rule*. The U.S. updated the SCC to $37 U.S. per tonne of carbon dioxide in September 2015, a value often criticized as too low, and economists continue to differ about the methodology. A study by researchers at Stanford University, published in *Nature Climate Change* (2015) estimated a more accurate SCC of $220 per tonne – six times higher.

The January report from the National Academy of Science, *Valuing Climate Damages: Updating Estimation of the Social Cost of Carbon Dioxide* , suggests restructuring the Integrated Assessment Models framework used to ensure greater transparency, and recognizes new research which should be incorporated into the models (e.g. the effect of heat waves on mortality) . It also recommends a regular 5-year updating schedule, "to ensure that the SC- CO2 estimates reflect the best available science." For a summary of proposed changes and the political context, see "Scientists have a new way to calculate what global warming costs. Trump's team isn't going to like it" in the *Washington Post* . Noting that the new report has no legal force, *The Post* article quotes expert reviewer Richard Revesz, Dean emeritus of the New York University School of Law: "If the metric is revised, then the incoming administration would have an obligation to explain why it's departing from the current approach… Any changes made without adequate scientific justification would likely be struck down in court." But see also "How Climate Rules might Fade away" in *Bloomberg Business Week*.

What are the implications for Canada? Canada, like the U.K., Germany, France, and other countries, already uses its own Social Cost of Carbon, pegged at a $28 per tonne in 2012, according to Canada's *Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement* issued with the vehicle emissions regulations for passenger cars and light trucks. The Leaders Statement from the North American Leadership Summit in Summer 2016 , ties Canada more closely to U.S. and Mexico, when it pledges to " … align analytical methods for assessing and communicating the impact of direct and indirect greenhouse gas emission of major projects. Building on existing efforts, align approaches, reflecting the best available science for accounting for the broad costs to society of greenhouse gas emissions, including using similar methodologies to estimate the social cost of carbon and other greenhouse gases for assessing the benefits of policy measures that reduce those emissions."

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Clean Power Plan**, **Emissions Regulations**, **Ghg emissions reduction strategies**, **Social Cost of Carbon**, **Vehicle emission standards** | **Leave a reply**

Energy Efficiency: measures of job creation and carbon reduction

Posted on **January 20, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), a long-time advocate and researcher about the value of energy efficiency , published a blog on January 10, 2017, arguing that energy efficiency creates at least 1.9 million full- and part-time jobs across the United States, almost 10 times as many as oil and gas extraction. The blog is largely spent in summarizing a December 2016 report, *Energy Efficiency Jobs in America: A comprehensive analysis of energy efficiency employment across all 50 states* , which sees an optimistic future in 2017. Based on surveys of employers from approximately 165,000 U.S. companies, the report states that energy efficiency employers are expecting employment growth of approximately 245,000 jobs (a 13% growth rate) in 2017. *Energy Efficiency Jobs in America* also calls for state and federal policies to support or enhance this growth, including: Advancing energy efficiency standards set by the U.S. Department of Energy for appliances and equipment. • Strengthening building codes at the state and local levels to capture all cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities at the time of design and construction • Accelerating energy efficiency improvements in devices and buildings that use electricity or natural gas through utility programs, state policies such as energy efficiency resource standards, or by investing in all cost-effective energy efficiency resources, and • prioritizing the role of energy efficiency in developing and/or strengthening clean energy standards at the state level. *Energy Efficiency Jobs in America* was released by two U.S. advocacy associations: Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2), and E4TheFuture.

The ACEEE, perhaps best known for its annual *Energy Efficiency Scorecards* , released a White Paper in December, advocating energy efficiency initiatives to reduce carbon emissions. In *Pathway to Cutting Energy Use and Carbon Emissions in Half* , the ACEEE analyzed 13 "packages" of energy efficiency measures which, when combined, could reduce energy use by 34% and carbon emissions by 35% by 2040. Improvement in industrial energy efficiency – factories, commercial buildings, transmission and distribution systems, and power plants – was seen to have the largest potential impact at 20.8%.

Posted in **Energy Policy**, **United States** | Tagged **Building Codes**, **employment impacts**, **energy efficiency**, **Energy policy**, **Ghg emissions reduction strategies** | **Leave a reply**

What can Europe learn from Canadian experience with Just Transition?

Posted on **January 20, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

A January 12th article by Béla Galgóczi, Senior Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute, argues that Europe is falling behind in ambition and results for its green economy, and identifies new leaders as Canada, and certain States in the United States. In *The Just green Transition: Canada's proactive approach* , the author compares Canada's carbon tax policies with the European Emissions Trading Scheme, but focusses mainly on the discussion about Just Transition. He observes: "The rhetoric about green jobs seems to be of a more honest and realistic nature in Canada than in Europe" and "even if trade unions are in a generally weaker position in that country [i.e. Canada] or in the US than in Europe, their engagement in climate policy is more pronounced. Unions in North America are very active in mobilising for low carbon economy objectives with campaigns and workplace greening policies, and they even have collective bargaining clauses on greening." As evidence of union engagement, the article notes the ongoing work of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project , including the database of green collective bargaining clauses.

A recent example of union initiative appears in *Green Jobs for Tomorrow: Submission by the Canadian Labour Congress to the Working Group on Clean Technology, Innovation and Jobs*, one of four Federal-Provincial working groups mandated by the Vancouver Declaration in 2015 to investigate national climate change policy issues. In its submission, the CLC makes 10 recommendations for climate change policy, and states: : “We believe the lynchpin of meaningful sustained climate action is retraining, re-employment and relocation for affected workers.” The CLC lays out the elements of a Just Transition policy, including: increased investment to create green jobs, improved access to Employment Insurance training programs, and increased Employment Insurance benefits for displaced workers, as well as improved labour market information systems. To support these goals, the CLC calls for the government to create a National Workplace Training Fund, and, using the model of the industry Sector Councils abolished by the Harper government in 2012, a national Labour Market Partners Council to facilitate ongoing dialogue and collaboration between key stakeholders: governments, unions, employers, and educators.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)**, **Climate change policy**, **European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)**, **Just Transition**, **labour union policies**, **Retraining**, **sector councils** | **Leave a reply**

Carbon pricing in Canada: Recent research, and implementation in Alberta and Ontario

Posted on **January 9, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Research about carbon pricing continues in the effort to implement the Pan-Canadian Framework. In November, *Carbon Pricing and Intergovernmental Relations in Canada* was released by the Institute for Research on Public Policy, evaluating the federal government’s national carbon pricing plan to that point (i.e. before the announcement of the Pan-Canadian Framework), with an emphasis on the flexibility required for provincial differences. It then discusses the intergovernmental coordination in other policy fields in Canada (income taxes, goods and services taxes, and environmental standards) as a possible model for carbon pricing.

As part of the Pan-Canadian Framework in December , the comprehensive *Final Report of the Working Group on Carbon Pricing Mechanisms* was released, providing an overview of Canadian and international practice, as well as a discussion of principles for design and implementation.

Finally, a report about British Columbia, the home of Canada’s first carbon tax. A December report modelled the impact of the 2016 provincial Climate Leadership Plan and a federal carbon price on GHG emissions. It concludes that even if all provincial policies were implemented, B.C.’s emissions will exceed the targets for 2020 and for 2050. The report provides a breakdown of emissions by sector and forecasts that the largest single source of emissions in 2050 will be from shale gas operations and liquefied natural gas projects. *Modelling the Impact of the Climate Leadership Plan and Federal Carbon Price on British Columbia’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions* was commissioned by Clean Energy Canada, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions and the Pembina Institute, with analysis by Navius Research.

In the meantime, two provinces have moved ahead with previously announced policies. Alberta's carbon levy came into effect on January 1, 2017, cushioned by the government press release of December 31 titled "Carbon levy supports diverse, green economy and jobs" which summarized the details. The levy will be charged on transportation and heating fuels – diesel, gasoline, natural gas and propane – at a rate of $20 per tonne, increasing to $30 per tonne in 2018. As further explained on a government website , farmers and First Nations are generally exempt; a 33 per cent small business tax rate cut will help offset costs for small businesses, and the direct and indirect costs to consumers are estimated. Rebates started flowing for a majority of Alberta households on January 5, with a payment of $200 per year for a single adult earning up to $47,500 per year , and $300 for a couple earning up to $95,000 per year. In addition to the government explanation, see "What you need to know about Alberta's Carbon Levy" from the Pembina Institute , or a CBC interview with Andrew Leach , generally considered the architect of Alberta's climate plan . "The Cost of Carbon Pricing in Alberta and Ontario", by professors Trevor Tombe and Nic Rivers, appeared in *Maclean's magazine* (Jan. 4). It explains the differences in the two approaches and explains the methodology for their estimate that "Overall, for the average Alberta and Ontario household in 2017, direct costs will likely be on the order of $150 to $200 annually and indirect costs will add an additional $80 to $100 or so." The conclusion: "heated political rhetoric that suggests carbon pricing will lead to skyrocketing price increases throughout the economy is misplaced at best and misleading at worst."

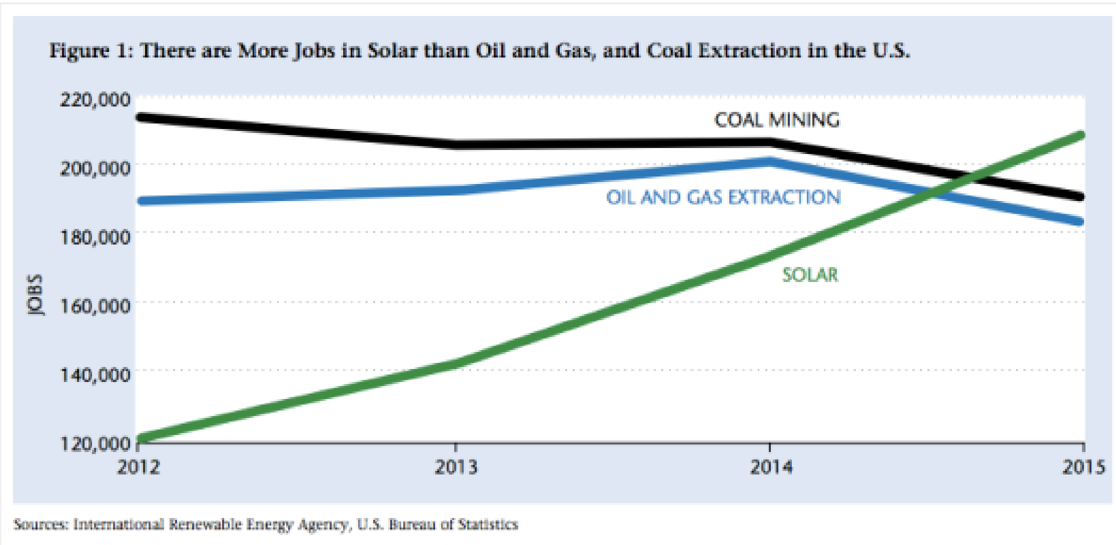
Media rhetoric seems to have been directed at Alberta, rather than Ontario, where the cap and trade system, a cornerstone of the Climate Action Plan , also took effect on January 1, 2017. The government's Explainer is here , and estimates that "it will cost the average Ontario household about $13 more per month to fuel a car and heat a home in 2017". The government also estimates proceeds of $1.9 billion per year , which must be re-invested to reduce GHG emissions, such as social housing retrofits, public transit, and electric vehicle incentives. See details of the related Green Investment Fund here. The 2016 Annual Greenhouse Gas Progress Report (November 2016) of Ontario's Commissioner of the Environment offers an explanation of how the system works, and discusses pitfalls, solutions, the need for transparency, and the likelihood that the system will deliver the scale of GHG reductions promised.

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Alberta**, **British Columbia**, **Cap and Trade**, **Carbon Pricing**, **Carbon Tax**, **Ontario**, **Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change** | **Leave a reply**

Clean Energy is unstoppable – and China is in the lead

Posted on **January 9, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

January 2017 began with an attention-getting report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance: "Solar Could Beat Coal to Become the Cheapest Power on Earth" . Similarly, the *Renewable Infrastructure Investment Handbook* published by the World Economic Forum states: " renewable energy technology, especially solar and wind, has made exponential gains in efficiency in recent years, enough to achieve economic competitiveness and, in an increasing number of cases, grid parity." A January 5 post by Clean Energy Canada, "Clean Energy is too good a deal for Trump to Pass up " , documents the economic and political forces driving clean energy in the U.S., and offers this chart comparing the number of jobs in solar to the fossil fuel industries.



— from Clean Energy blog post, "Clean Energy is too good a deal for Trump to pass up" (January 5, 2017)

And in an unprecedented move for a sitting President of the United States, Barack Obama has written "The Irreversible Momentum of Clean Energy" in *Science* (Jan. 9), with an overview of his energy policy legacy, and making the case that market forces in the U.S. will carry it on.

A general consensus is that the clean energy train has left the station, and China is driving that train. A January 2017 report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) is the latest to document the growing dominance of China in the renewable energy industry in "*China's Global Renewable Energy Expansion: How the World's Second-Biggest Economy Is Positioned to Lead the World in Clean-Power Investment.*" The report states: "The change in leadership in the U.S. is likely to widen China's global leadership in industries of the future, building China's dominance in these sectors in terms of technology, investment, manufacturing and employment. " According to the IEEFA, Chinese global investment in clean energy exceeds $100 billion annually, (more than twice that of the U.S.), and is expanding beyond Asia to Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and South America. It cites the International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook 2016 report (Nov. 2016) to state that China holds 3.5 million of the 8.1 million renewable energy jobs globally. Small wonder when five of the world's six largest solar-module manufacturing firms, and five of the ten top wind-turbine manufacturing firms are owned by Chinese companies. Between 2015 – 2021, "China will install 36% of all global hydro electricity generation capacity … 40% of all worldwide wind energy and 36% of all solar."See a summary of the details of the IEEFA report in "China cementing Global Dominance of Renewable Energy and Technology" in *The Guardian* ; the *Globe and Mail* summary "U.S. and Canada falling behind China in race for renewable energy" (Jan. 6) rather badly understates the case .

The trend seems set to continue. On January 5, the Chinese National Energy Agency announced its plans for the next phase of energy investment: see "China Aims to Spend at Least $360 Billion on Renewable Energy by 2020 " in the *New York Times*.

In Canada, the latest major report tracking clean energy investment was published by Clean Energy Canada in June 2016. *Tracking the Energy Revolution* reported reduced investment in 2015 (from $12 billion to $10 billion), although renewable generation capacity grew by 4% in that time. Even before the announcement of the Pan-Canadian Framework, Clean Energy Canada called this a "pivotal time" for renewables, and sets an optimistic tone. That boosterism is also apparent in "Challenge 2017: Rays of hope shine on solar industry despite 'Trump digs coal' mantra" in the *Financial Post* (Jan. 3) – a mostly anecdotal story of Canadian solar manufacturers, and "Canada can cash in on a cleantech boom", in the *Toronto Star* (Jan. 5). *The Star* article applauds a recent clean energy-focused trade mission to China by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the clean-tech incentives announced in the December 2016 Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, and recent federal and provincial policies that set aggressive targets for renewable energy use in government buildings and operations.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Canada**, **China**, **Clean Energy**, **Clean Energy Investment**, **Solar energy industry** | **Leave a reply**

Environmental Rights in Alberta and in Canada: do we have the rights we need? A legal discussion and some practical examples

Posted on **January 9, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In December 2016, the Environmental Law Centre in Alberta published a series of reports to review the current state of environmental rights in the province, drawing on examples and information from other jurisdictions. These reports are intended as educational materials; the website is open for comments and input. The first report, *Do we have the rights we need?* , identifies deficiencies: "Narrow standing tests for legal reviews and hearings; gaps and insufficiency in cost awards to support participation and informed decision making; failures to adequately recognize and manage cumulative environmental effects; insufficient review or hearing options for policies, regulation and administration of environmental decision making; and insufficient tools for engaging public participation in enforcement."

While most Environmental Rights discussions are about procedures for establishing and enforcing rights, the report *Substantive Environmental Rights* relates to the right to a specific environmental condition, such as a "healthy", "healthful" or "clean" environment. This report discusses definitions, which can be set in statutes or regulations. The report includes a helpful comparative table of language from other Canadian jurisdictions.

Third Party Oversight and Environmental Rights reviews and analyzes the use of administrative third party oversight bodies in various frameworks and other jurisdictions. The report makes recommendations for the design of a third party environmental oversight system for Alberta, where currently the provincial Auditor General does not have a specific environmental mandate, but conducts financial audits or process/system audits of various environmental matters.

The latest report, published on December 19, *Citizen Enforcement* considers the question of who can enforce environmental laws and what types of enforcement mechanisms are available to them – in Alberta, but also Ontario, Quebec, Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and the U.S. The report concludes that citizen enforcement in Alberta relies primarily on the use of private prosecutions and the ability to request an investigation of an alleged violation, and recommends additional citizen-based enforcement tools to bolster enforcement capacity and to ensure accountability.

As for practical examples of the need for citizen involvement in environmental assessments and decision-making, Canadians need look no further than the federal government's current review of the Environmental Assessment Processes . "EA Review – Report back from a public workshop" at Evidence for Democracy describes one person's experience at the Environmental Assessment public consultations and summarizes the main concerns of attendees – including the need for transparency, community and traditional knowledge, and open and independent science. In two recent articles in DeSmog Blog, scientists describe how their input has been ignored in past environmental assessments and decisions, including the TransMountain pipeline expansion decision. Read "Canadian Scientists Say They're Unsure What Trudeau Means When He Says 'Science' " (Dec. 15) and "Open Science: Can Canada Turn the Tide on Transparency in Decision-Making?" (Dec. 20) . Yet there is an eagerness amongst young Canadian scientists to become involved; an Open Letter to the Prime Minister in November, signed by 1,800 young scientists and researchers, calls on the government to return scientific integrity to the environmental assessment process, and outlines five ways to do that, including the use of best available evidence, making information and data available to the public, evaluating cumulative impacts of projects and eliminating conflicts of interest. See "Five Ways to Fix Environmental Reviews: Young Scientists to Trudeau" in *DeSmog Blog* (Nov. 15 2016) .

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation** | Tagged **Alberta**, **Canada**, **Canadian Environmental Assessment Act**, **Environmental law**, **environmental rights**, **scientists** | **Leave**

a reply

2017: what lies ahead?

Posted on **January 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Because 2017 is Canada's 150th anniversary, dozens of progressive organizations, including unions, have proposed an agenda for " Canada's Clean Growth Century" , under the slogan "Out with the old and In with the new". Read their proposals for a green economy, including Just Transition, here . Clean Growth Century Facebook page is here.

For Canadians watching the environmental performance of the Trudeau government, one of the most important markers will be the outcomes of the Review of Environmental and Regulatory Processes, which is reviewing the National Energy Board, the *Fisheries Act* and the *Navigation Protection Act*, and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* . The report of the Expert Panel is scheduled for March 31, 2017. Discussions and implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change will roll along, debating carbon pricing policies – with the first "deliverable" said to be an assessment of best practices to address the competitiveness of emissions-intensive, trade-exposed sectors.

Other articles that look ahead to the coming year's events around the world – acknowledging but not dwelling on the Trump-effect, include: 2017 Climate Calendar: Key dates at *Climate Change News* ; "In 2017, disruptive forces will shape climate action" for an international overview with a European perspective ; and "Where is environmental movement going in 2017?" from *Environmental Health News*, which looks at the Flint water crisis and Standing Rock pipeline protests and predicts "expect the push for environmental justice to center more around the issue's intersections with racial, economic and environmental equality."

" Four Critical Energy Issues to watch in 2017" highlights U.S. policies, including the end of the U.S. coal leasing moratorium; repeal of the Clean Power Plan; continued support for renewables, especially wind power; and continued massive transformation in the U.S. electricity sector, led by state initiatives. And given President-elect Trump's previous statements, one might add the approval of the Keystone Pipeline as a fifth likely development.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada**, **Climate change policy**, **Energy policy**, **Environmental Justice** | **Leave a reply**

Small steps for the miners behind electric vehicles and smart phones

Posted on **January 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

Cobalt is a key ingredient in the lithium-ion batteries that power smartphones, laptops and electric cars. 60% of the world's supply is mined in Congo, according to "The Cobalt Pipeline" (September 2016), a *Washington Post* special report which documented the appalling working conditions of the "artisanal miners". Occupational health and safety concerns for miners was also expressed in "The Battery Revolution is exciting, but Remember they Pollute too", by Carla Lipsig Mumme and Caleb Goods in *The Conversation* (June 2015).

In a December 20 article, the *Washington Post* reports on two new initiatives to curb "the worst forms of child labor" and other abusive workplace practices in the supply chain for cobalt. The first, the Responsible Cobalt Initiative, is being led by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for Metals, Minerals and Chemicals Importers and Exporters, and supported by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with members pledging to follow OECD guidelines which call for companies to trace how cobalt is being extracted, transported, manufactured and sold. Apple, HP, Samsung SDI and Sony have signed on.

The second initiative, the Responsible Raw Materials Initiative (RRMI) has been launched by the Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition , a nonprofit group sponsored by more than 110 electronics companies, and "dedicated to improving the social, environmental and ethical conditions of their global supply chains." The EICC states that it "engages regularly with dozens of non-member organizations including civil society groups, trade unions and other worker's groups, academia and research institutions, socially responsible investors, and governmental and multilateral institutions." Ford Motor Company is a member of the Responsible Raw Materials Initiative, by virtue of being the first auto manufacturer to join the EICC. (Press release is here (February 2016). Ford has sought to brand itself as a leader in ethical supply chain management ; see their report, *Going Further towards Supply Chain Leadership* . Tesla, the most high-profile electric vehicle manufacturer, is said to be considering membership in the RRMI. According to a report from *Energy Mix* (June 24, 2016) "Tesla's Ambitions Demand 'Unprecedented Quantities' of Key Minerals" , including lithium, nickel, cobalt, and aluminum to produce vehicle batteries. As of January 2017, *Energy Mix* also reported that Tesla started mass production at its lithium-ion battery Gigafactory in Nevada, which will be the world's largest when it is complete in 2018 .

— Tesla Gigafactory, Nevada. Photo from the Tesla website .

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **cobalt**, **decent work**, **Electric Vehicles**, **Ford Motor Co.**, **Lithium Ion Batteries**, **mining industry**, **Supply chains**, **Tesla** | **Leave a reply**

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board lags international financial community on recognition of climate change risks and stranded assets

Posted on **January 8, 2017** by **elizabethperry493**

In what the WWF has called "a landmark moment for responsible investment in Europe" , the European Parliament voted in November 2016 to mandate that all workplace pension administrators must consider climate risk and risks "related to the depreciation of assets" -stranded assets- in investment decisions. It also requires greater transparency about investment policies. Individual governments of the EU now have two years to pass into national law this updated version of the existing Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORP) Directive. Currently, the directive would affect occupational pension plans affected covering approximately 20% of the EU workforce, mostly in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany . A September 2016 Briefing Note from the European Parliament details the administrative/political evolution of the Directive; a December article from Corporate Knights or Go Fossil Free or Reuters provide summaries.

In December 14, 2016, the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure, chaired by Michael Bloomberg, released its report and recommendations to the Financial Stability Board, a G-20 organization chaired by Mark Carney. An article by the two men appeared in *The Guardian*, capturing the gist of the work: "We believe that financial disclosure is essential to a market-based solution to climate change. …. A properly functioning market will price in the risks associated with climate change and reward firms that mitigate them. As its impact becomes more commonplace and public policy responses more active, climate change has become a material risk that isn't properly disclosed." The Task Force calls for companies to make voluntary disclosure of climate risks to their business, to help investors, lenders and insurance underwriters to manage material climate risks, and ultimately to make the global economic and financial systems more stable. A 60-day public consultation period began with release of the report; an updated report, incorporating that input, will be released in June 2017. The Task Force report was summarized in "Climate disclosure framework creates a better environment for investors" in the *Globe and Mail* ; *Bloomberg News* also reported on another recommendation, "Carney Panel Urges CEO Compensation Link With Climate Risk " , stating that the time has come for organizations to provide detailed reporting of how manager and board member pay is tied to climate risks. (See a Dec. 1 Reuters article about Royal Dutch Shell's moves to link CEO bonuses to GHG reduction).

In Canada, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, which administers the assets of the national public pension fund, seems to be standing on the sidelines. A recent article in the *Globe and Mail* was written by the director of the CPPIB Sustainable Investment department , which is described in more detail in their 2016 *Report on Sustainable Investing* . The report states (page 11) " CPPIB has established a cross-departmental Climate Change Working Group to consider how physical risks, as well as technological, regulatory and market developments will impact climate change-related risks, and create opportunities, in the future. …. This review, which will take some time, is being done from a long-term perspective in light of how the gradual transition to a lower-carbon global economy might unfold…. On the topic of divestment and climate change, research has shown that investors with longer horizons tend to be more engaged with the companies that they invest in, and CPPIB is a case in point. As responsible owners, we believe that in many cases selling our shares to investors who might be less active in terms of considering material risks, including climate change, would be counterproductive." In light of this very slow approach, Friends of the Earth (FOE) has been frustrated in its divestment campaign for the CPPIB in 2016 ; FOE maintains a petition website, Pensions for a Green Future, which calls for the CPPIB to, among other things, "report immediately to its 19 million members on the carbon footprint and exposure to climate solutions of our CPP investment portfolio" and "to replace climate polluting investments with those in green energy, technologies and infrastructure that support Canada's commitment to act to avoid 1.5°C of warming." The CPPIB discloses the companies it is invested in here .

In contrast to the CPPIB, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), the second largest pension fund manager is Canada, is highlighted in a new report by the World Economic Forum as " one of the most important institutional investors in wind power" for its investment of close to $2.5 billion (US) in both onshore and offshore wind projects in Europe and North America, starting in 2013 with a tentative investment in the Invenergy , and now including the London Array wind farm in the outer Thames estuary. The Caisse statements on environmental and social responsibility are here ; it is a signatory to the U.N. Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), a member of the Carbon Disclosure Project and the Carbon Water Disclosure Project, and endorses the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative , which monitors the oil and gas industry .

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec**, **Canada Pension Plan**, **Climate Risk**, **compensation policies**, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, **CPPIB**, **environmental responsibility**, **European Union**, **Pension Fund management**, **pension plans**, **Quebec**, **Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure** | **Leave a reply**