

Work and Climate Change Report

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

YEARLY ARCHIVES: 2020

Montreal's Climate Action Plan plants trees, discourages non-electric cars

Posted on **December 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Montreal's Climate Plan for 2020 – 2030 **was announced** on December 10. The city's Executive Summary of the 46 proposals is [here](#), and the *Montreal Gazette* newspaper **summarizes** the plan in these words: "The city of Montreal will plant 500,000 trees, ban non-electric cars downtown, remove parking around métro stations, adopt the most stringent regulations in Canada for greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, and impose a "climate test" on itself when it makes decisions." Specifically, the plan calls for greenhouse gas emission reduction by 55 per cent by 2030 (compared with 1990 levels), with the city's own operations carbon neutral by 2040, and the city as a whole carbon neutral by 2050. The *Montreal Gazette* **article** also summarizes reaction and criticism of the plan by politicians and environmentalists – mostly centred around a lack of financial detail.

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Landmark New York State divestment will begin with Canadian oil sands investments

Posted on **December 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The New York State Comptroller's office [announced on December 9](#) that it will begin a systematic review of the holdings of the New York State Common Retirement Fund in early 2021, with the ultimate goal to achieve decarbonization of all investments by 2040. The New York State Common Retirement Fund is the third largest pension fund in the U.S., valued at \$226 billion, and provides retirement benefits for 1.1 million state and municipal workers.

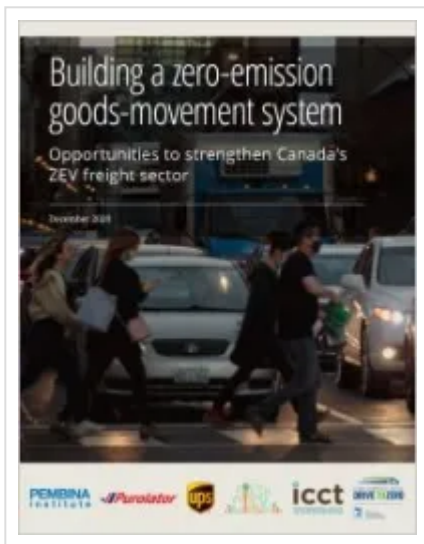
The review will examine all investment holdings over a period of four years, beginning with what are judged the riskiest – oil sands investments such as Imperial Oil, Canadian Natural Resources, Husky Energy, Suncor Energy, and Cenovus Energy – followed by companies in oil and gas, fracking, oil services and pipelines. Details of the companies to be reviewed are in a [Backgrounder by Divest NY](#); details are also provided in the [press release from the Comptroller's Office](#). As described in [“New York State Just Set a New Standard for Fossil Fuel Divestment”](#) in *Gizmodo*: “With the state of New York and [New York City](#) now ready to divest, it puts enormous pressure on polluting companies. As the beating heart of capital, the city and state's pension funds—which together total around \$500 billion—no longer going to fossil fuels sends a huge signal to Wall Street and the fossil fuel industry. But it also turns up the heat on other institutional investors, notably California's pension funds, which are the largest in the nation, to catch up.”

Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org and divestment leader, wrote an Opinion piece in the *New York Times* [“You should have listened, New York Tells Big Oil”](#). McKibben characterizes this divestment decision as a victory in an 8-year battle, and the latest development in the declining economic and political power of Big Oil.

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A Call for Skills Training to support the transition to zero-emissions freight vehicles

Posted on [December 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The transportation sector represents a quarter of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions, and of that, movement of freight currently represents 42% nationally. ***Building a zero-emission goods-movement system: Opportunities to strengthen Canada's ZEV freight sector*** reviews current Canadian policies to promote zero-emission freight vehicles at the municipal, provincial and national level, and identifies ten “opportunities” to reduce emissions. A unique contribution of this report: one of the “opportunities” recognizes the need for technical training for EV infrastructure installation and vehicle maintenance. Further, it sees a role for joint, cost-shared government/employer programs.

*“Investments in labour market programs to support good paying jobs and this new energy system are essential for the successful deployment and maintenance of zero-emission vehicles in commercial fleets, especially as the sector moves to scale up from pilot to mass adoption.” “Examples of existing programs include the **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program**, which provides training and certification for electricians installing electric vehicle supply equipment in North America, or the **Electric Vehicle Maintenance Training program** offered at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Currently these training programs are concentrated in British Columbia. At a minimum, an investment of \$36 million over five years is needed to expand and create new skills-training programs to support the deployment of zero-emission trucks in high-potential and high-demand markets across Canada. Similar to existing labour market programs, a cost-sharing model could be applied between government and employers.”*

Although it was only launched in 2020, this is not the first time the BCIT EV Maintenance program has been recognized. (Details of the part-time course are [here](#)). According to **“Will there be someone to fix the electric vehicle you just bought?”** (*National Observer*, Oct 2020), the program was financed with \$325,000 in provincial funding through CleanBC, and followed a pilot program developed in cooperation with the green-fleet technicians of the City of Vancouver. The *National Observer* article provides an overview of policy initiatives regarding electric vehicles in general (not specifically freight vehicles), and notes the **Green Budget Coalition recommendations** made in October 2020, which included a call for \$10 million “for ZEV

automotive technician training program, modelled on the provincially-supported EV Maintenance Training Program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.”

The labour market recommendations are significant, but form a small part of the message in [*Building a zero-emission goods-movement system*](#). The report discusses the ZEV policy landscape into four categories: long-range strategic planning and regulations; incentives (financial and non-financial) for vehicle procurement and widespread deployment; charging infrastructure; and fleet-capacity development. A [Technical Appendix](#) offers an inventory of federal and provincial policies, as well as those in six major Canadian cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. This condenses information published by the Pembina Institute in [*The next frontier for climate action: Decarbonizing urban freight in Canada*](#) (Feb. 2020). Both reports are part of a Pembina-led initiative called the [Urban Delivery Solutions](#), a national network which includes businesses (including UPS, Purolator and Canada Post) and researchers (including the [International Council on Clean Transportation](#)), as well as environmental organizations.

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Favourable reaction by Canadians to an updated Climate Plan -including a carbon tax rising to \$170 per tonne by 2030

Posted on **December 14, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On December 11, the federal government [released](#) its highly-anticipated new climate plan, [A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy](#), announcing 64 policy measures costing \$15 billion. The Plan addresses energy, energy efficiency, infrastructure, transportation emissions, the Clean Fuel Standard, an adaptation strategy – and a centrepiece policy to increase the carbon tax by \$15 a tonne each year for the next eight years, as summarized by the CBC in [“Ottawa to hike federal carbon tax to \\$170 a tonne by 2030”](#). Taken with the proposed [Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act](#) currently before Parliament, which formalizes Canada’s target of net-zero emissions by the year 2050, [A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy](#) lays out the most specific path forward for Canada since the 2016 Pan-Canadian Framework in 2016.

A Backgrounder is [here](#), and specific initiatives are explained in Annex documents [here](#). One missing piece, as pointed out in [Unifor’s reaction to the new Plan](#): the previously-promised Just Transition Act. Also missing: the slightest notice by the international press, even the normally climate-vigilant [Guardian in the U.K.](#) Reaction within Canada was strong, and ranged widely

(compiled by the CBC [here](#)). In the mainstream media, the conservative-leaning *Globe and Mail* approved in its Editorial: “**Justin Trudeau goes all in on the carbon tax. It’s the right thing – for the environment, and the economy**”. Political writer Paul Wells uses similar language and confesses to “startled admiration” in “**On climate, at last, Justin Trudeau is all in**” in *Maclean’s* magazine . The *National Observer* published “**Trudeau goes it alone with new climate plan, proposes carbon price hike**”, drawing the contrast with the 2016 Framework, which was drafted in consultation with all the provinces. *The Energy Mix* is less approving in “**With \$170/Tonne Carbon Price, \$15b In New Spending, Canada’s 2030 Carbon Target Still Falls Far Short**” (Dec. 14), which summarizes reaction from environmental groups.

Reaction from Labour and Environmentalists:

Like **Unifor** , the **Canadian Labour Congress highlights** the need for more transition measures in the new Plan, and states: “Labour will be looking to the federal government to make good on its commitment to supporting local job creation, skills training, apprenticeships and decent wages for workers, especially to those historically underrepresented in the skilled trades sector, including Indigenous workers, racialized workers and women.... Canada’s unions welcome the government’s emphasis on domestic manufacturing, including developing Canadian supply chains for low-emission building materials, clean tech, and aerospace and automotive investments, and leveraging the power of public procurement. Additionally, unions are noting the crucial commitments made today towards bringing Indigenous communities into the process.”

The **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Canada** (IBEW) commends the Plan and states: “The highly skilled members of the IBEW are trained and ready to take on these important jobs, and the government’s commitment to investing in green buildings and retrofits, electrified public and private transportation and grid modernization will require exactly the sort of knowledge and skills that IBEW members demonstrate on the job every day.”

From the **Climate Action Network Canada**, which includes both labour and environmental groups: “... this plan does not change the fact that Canadian governments continue to double down on fossil fuels, subjecting workers and our economy to the ever-increasing volatility of oil and gas markets.... It’s good to see policies that can, if implemented quickly and with the greatest stringency possible, take Canada’s climate ambitions further than our current insufficient Paris pledge – reducing emissions up to 40% below 2005 levels by 2030. It is also good to see a significant investment of \$15B in climate action. However, these numbers pale in comparison to commitments being made by our closest trading partners in the EU and the U.S. (under a new Biden administration)”.

Similarly, from **Environmental Defence**: “The climate action plan released today has a more comprehensive suite of climate policies than in the past and we welcome the meaningful escalation of the retail portion of the carbon price. We’re also pleased about the portion of the \$15 billion investment that is not in effect yet another fossil fuel subsidy. But that amount, which is a small fraction of what other countries are doing on a per capita basis, clearly cannot get the job done. In fact, Canada should be investing \$270 billion if it was following the level of ambition of the US or EU.” **West Coast Environmental Law** agrees with these points, and also states: “While

we applaud much of this climate plan, the government continues to ignore the reality that climate leaders don't build oil pipelines. The recent analysis released by [Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer](#) confirms that the Trans Mountain pipeline will lose money if any climate action is taken, let alone the action promised in this plan. If Canada is serious about acting on climate change, the government must cancel this ill-conceived project once and for all."

Economists applaud carbon tax initiative

The federal government announcement includes a 4-page [Annex document about its carbon pricing proposals](#). The carbon tax will rise by \$15 per tonne after 2022 until 2030, when it will reach \$170 per tonne. The government is banking on a favourable decision by the Supreme Court of Canada when it [rules on the constitutionality of the existing federal carbon tax](#) in 2021. In a politically shrewd change from current practice, carbon rebates will be distributed to households on a quarterly basis, and as now, most households will receive more in rebates than they pay out.

Mainstream economic voices support the carbon tax: The [Canadian Institute for Climate Choices](#) calls the plan "a big deal", and says: "The government's emissions projections under a carbon price that rises by \$15/tonne per year is consistent with analysis from the [Parliamentary Budget Office](#), [Clean Prosperity](#), [Canada's Ecofiscal Commission](#), and our own principal economist, [Dave Sawyer](#). This is a policy that can deliver on the emissions reductions it promises." [Clean Prosperity](#) states "This is a bold, brave, and wise move that will set Canada on the path to decarbonization. It sends a clear message to investors around the globe that Canada is serious about climate action..... This was not an easy choice, but it's the right choice. The government is wisely adopting a low-cost policy option that is good for the economy." And Merran Smith, [speaking for Clean Energy Canada](#), calls it a "comprehensive and honest plan.... historically and globally significant. The plan will retool and position Canada's economy to be increasingly competitive in a low-carbon world."

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Reports documenting the state of global climate change released in advance of the Climate Ambition Summit

Posted on **December 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The online [Climate Ambition Summit](#) on December 12 marks the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, to be co-hosted by the U.N. and the United Kingdom and France, in partnership with Chile and Italy. It calls itself "a monumental step on the road to the UK-hosted COP26 next

November in Glasgow..... countries will set out new and ambitious commitments under the three pillars of the Paris Agreement: mitigation, adaptation and finance commitments. There will be no space for general statements.”

In the weeks before the meeting, intergovernmental agencies have released a number of reports documenting the urgency of the issue:

State of the Global Climate 2020 from the World Meteorological Organization – a detailed discussion of global climate change impacts related to temperature, ocean temperature, precipitation, storms, GHG emissions and Covid-19. **The highlight:** “The average global temperature in 2020 is set to be about 1.2 °C above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) level. There is at least a one in five chance of it temporarily exceeding 1.5 °C by 2024”.

The ***Production Gap Report*** measures the gap between the aspirations of the Paris Agreement and countries’ planned production of coal, oil, and gas. This year’s report concluded that countries plan to increase their fossil fuel production over the next decade – and singled out Canada, Australia and the U.S. in this regard. The takeaway message: **“the world needs to decrease production by 6% per year to limit global warming to 1.5°C”**. The report also outlines six areas of policy action needed in COVID-19 recovery plans, including reduced government support for fossil fuels, restrictions on fossil fuel production, and commitment to direct stimulus funds to green investments. The *Production Gap Report* is produced jointly by the Stockholm Environment Institute, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Overseas Development Institute, and E3G, as well as the United Nations Environment Programme.

The ***Emissions Gap Report*** published on December 9 by the United Nations Environment Programme documents global greenhouse gas emissions: GHG’s have grown 1.4 per cent per year since 2010 on average, with a more rapid increase of 2.6 per cent in 2019 due to a large increase in forest fires. Even with a brief dip in carbon dioxide emissions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the world is still heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century. Hope lies in a low-carbon pandemic recovery which could cut 25 per cent off the greenhouse emissions expected in 2030. The report analyses low-carbon recovery measures so far, summarizes the scale of new net-zero emissions pledges by nations and looks at the potential of the lifestyle, aviation and shipping sectors to bridge the gap. It concludes with a chapter titled **The Six Sector Solution to Climate Change**, which argues that reducing emissions in the sectors of Energy, Industry, Agriculture and Food, Forest and Land Use, Transportation, and Buildings and Cities has the potential to limit emissions enough to hold the world temperature increase to 1.5 degrees.

The ***2020 Arctic Report Card*** was published on December 8 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), written by 133 scientists from 15 countries. It finds that the Arctic as a whole is warming at nearly three times the rate of the rest of the world, owing to feedback loops between snow, ice and land cover. The report summarizes trends that are growing more extreme and have far-reaching implications for people living far outside the region. A Canadian view of this report appears in **“Scientists Plead for Action as Soaring Temperatures Show Arctic in Crisis”** in *The Energy Mix* (Dec. 11).

Ocean Solutions that Benefit People, Nature and the Economy is a report released by the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy in December as part of the launch of a new campaign, Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. Canada is among the 14 nations who are members of the Panel; the Secretariat is at the World Resources Institute. The report “builds on the latest scientific research, analyses and debates from around the world—including the insights from 16 Blue Papers and 3 special reports commissioned by the Ocean Panel: ‘The Ocean as a Solution to Climate Change: Five Opportunities for Action’, ‘A Sustainable and Equitable Blue Recovery to the COVID-19 Crisis’ and ‘A Sustainable Ocean Economy for 2050: Approximating Its Benefits and Costs’.” A compilation of the many reports of the Panel is [here](#).

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U.K. launches Green Jobs Taskforce aiming for 2 million green jobs by 2030

Posted on **December 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **Climate Ambition Summit** on December 12 marks the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, to be co-hosted by the U.N. and the United Kingdom and France. In advance of the Summit, the U.K. has made high-profile announcements, including ***A Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*** (Nov. 18), which aims for the creation of 250,000 green jobs, and on December 3, an announcement that it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions “by the fastest rate of any major economy” – with **an ambitious new target of at least 68% reduction compared to 1990 emissions levels, by 2030**.

Green Jobs Taskforce

Receiving less attention was another announcement on November 12: the launch of a Green Jobs Taskforce. The **press release** announces that the Taskforce sets “a clear ambition to support 2 million green jobs by 2030 to set the direction for the job market as we transition to a high-skill, low carbon economy.” The Green Jobs Taskforce met for the first time on November 12 under the leadership of the Minister of Business, Clean Energy and Growth, and the Minister of Skills; it includes representation from workers (the TUC Deputy General Secretary), as well as representatives from business and the skills sector. Specifically, the Taskforce is meant to “focus on the immediate and longer-term challenges of delivering skilled workers for the UK’s transition to net zero”:

1. Ensuring we have the immediate skills needed for building back greener, such as in offshore wind and home retrofitting.

2. Developing a long-term plan that charts out the skills needed to help deliver a net zero economy.
3. Ensuring good quality green jobs and a diverse workforce.
4. Supporting workers in high carbon transitioning sectors, like oil and gas, to retrain in new green technologies.”

Reaction from the Greener Jobs Alliance (GJA) points out the discrepancy between the 250,000 jobs target in the Ten Point Plan and the 2 million jobs discussed in the Taskforce announcement. GJA also calls for:

- “a skills policy that is properly funded and built on a long-term strategy of quality apprenticeships and upskilling of the current and future workforce
- co-ordinated local, regional, national and sector frameworks in the development of jobs for the future
- full union engagement in policy development and delivery to ensure a just transition at different levels and sectors of the economy
- introduction of a legal right to appoint trade union green reps in the workplace.
- **restoration of support for the Unionlearn fund**
- comprehensive changes to procurement and supply chain policies to ensure the potential for local employment growth is maximised, and that is based on union recognition and decent terms and conditions of employment
- a Green New Deal which supports local recovery models as part of an industrial strategy that is clearly aligned with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Green Jobs](#), [Green skills training](#), [industrial strategy](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Closure of Australia’s Hazelwood coal-fired station: a case study 3 years after

Posted on **December 9, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

After the Hazelwood coal fired power station closure: Latrobe Valley regional transition policies and outcomes 2017-2020 is a Working Paper published in November by the Centre for Climate and Energy Policy, Crawford School of Public Policy, in Australia . Although the paper is a detailed case study, the findings are summarized by the authors thus: “Prior to its sudden closure in March 2017, Hazelwood was the most carbon-intensive electricity generator in Australia. The debate over the future of Hazelwood became an icon in the nation’s ongoing political struggle over climate and energy policy. Employment and economic outcomes in the three years since closure indicate promising initial progress in creating the foundations required to facilitate an equitable

transition to a more prosperous and sustainable regional economy. The Hazelwood case study provides support for a number of propositions about successful regional energy transition including that well managed, just transitions to a prosperous zero-carbon economy are likely to be strengthened by proactive, well integrated industry policy and regional renewal strategies; respectful and inclusive engagement with workers and communities; and adequately funded, well-coordinated public investment in economic and community strategies, tailored to regional strengths and informed by local experience.”

Corresponding author John Wiseman, along with co-author Frank Jotzo, previously wrote [Coal transition in Australia: an overview of issues](#) (2018). Jotzo was also a co-author on [Closures of coal-fired power stations in Australia: local unemployment effects](#) (2018). Their latest 2020 Working paper offers a thorough list of references to Australia’s Just Transition literature.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [coal transition](#), [Hazelwood](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Parliamentary Budget Office repeats the message: TransMountain pipeline is inconsistent with Canada’s zero emissions target

Posted on [December 9, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A Report from the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released on December 8 examines the financial viability of the Trans Mountain Pipeline, and includes updated employment and economic impact forecasts. **The press release** summarizes the findings, including that the Trans Mountain pipeline has increased in value from \$4.4 billion when the federal government purchased it in 2018, to \$5 billion, using net present value calculations. However, that value is conditional on global demand for oil, on construction delays and costs, and – the crux of the matter – “the profitability of the Trans Mountain assets is highly contingent on the climate policy stance of the federal government. Consistent with **modelling from the Canada Energy Regulator (CER)**, if policy action on climate change continues to become more stringent, it is possible for the Trans Mountain assets to have a negative net present value.” In other words, as 350.org says: “two government agencies have said the exact same thing. The Canada Energy Regulator and the Parliamentary Budget Officer have made it clear that Trudeau has to choose between building Trans Mountain and confronting the climate emergency. It’s past time that Trudeau was honest:

does he want to build a pipeline or tackle the climate crisis? He simply can't do both." (The 350.org sign-on online campaign is [here](#) ; B.C.'s Dogwood Institute also has an online petition to Chrystia Freedland to [Rethink TransMountain](#))

Discussion of the PBO report appears in the National Observer in "[Budget officer provokes fresh round of suspicion over Trans Mountain profitability](#)" (Dec. 9) , and in *The Energy Mix* and [the CBC](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Oil pipelines](#), [TMX](#), [Transmountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New coalition urges legislative changes to counter environmental racism

Posted on **December 9, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

"[Canada's Big Chances to Address Environmental Racism](#)" appeared in *The Tyee* on November 26. The "Big Chances" referred to are three legislative initiatives for Canada, all of which were recommended in the September [2020 Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics](#), which stated, "Environmental injustice persists in Canada. A significant proportion of the population in Canada experience racial discrimination, with Indigenous, and racialized people, the most widely considered to experience discriminatory treatment."

The three recommended initiatives :

1. Recognition of the right to a healthy environment: as recognized in more than 150 countries, and under consideration as part of the modernization of the [Canadian Environmental Protection Act](#).
2. Implementation of the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#): includes the recognition of Indigenous legal systems and free, prior and informed consent for resource projects on Indigenous land. On December 3, the federal government introduced [Bill C-15](#) *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* . A [dedicated website](#) provides a summary of the provisions, including the fact that the new legislation, if passed, would not impose any retroactive Duty to Consult.
3. Private member's [Bill C-230](#), *An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to redress environmental racism*, first introduced by Member of Parliament Lenore Zann in the House of Commons on February 26 2020. Second Reading occurred on December 8, with a substantive [debate, transcribed here](#), but without a vote. A summary of Bill C-230, as well

as bilingual resources for a social media and letter-writing campaign, are offered at the [ENRICH project website](#).

The article in *The Tyee* was co-written by representatives of a new Canadian coalition which seeks to raise awareness and funds which can be used to support existing agencies fighting environmental racism. These groups include the [Black Environmental Initiative](#), [Amnesty International Canada](#), the [Canadian Association of Black Lawyers](#), and the [Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health \(ENRICH\)](#) project at Dalhousie University. Another member of the coalition is Professor Dayna Scott, who submitted this [Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development](#) in 2016 during its review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Read more about the new coalition in “[Dalhousie University professor forming coalition to address environmental racism across Canada](#)” in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* (Dec. 1) or in [Saltwire](#).

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Fall Economic Statement paves the way for a Green Recovery: energy efficiency, care economy, electric vehicle infrastructure, and nature-based solutions

Posted on [December 7, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 30, Canada's Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland presented the government's Fall Economic Statement to the House of Commons, [Supporting Canadians and Fighting COVID-19](#). At over 200 pages, it is the fullest statement to date of how the government intends to finance a green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, but Canadians must still wait for a full climate change strategy, promised “soon”.

The [government press release](#) summarizes the spending for health and economic measures, including, [for employers](#), extension of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Canada, the Emergency Rent Subsidy and Lockdown Support, and new funding for the tourism and hospitality sectors through the new [Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program](#). In Chapter 3, [Building Back Better](#), the Economic Statement addresses the impacts of Covid-19 on the labour market and employment. It includes promises to create one million jobs, invest in skills training, reduce inequality, attack systemic racism, support families through early learning and child care, support youth, and build a competitive green economy. Most budget allocations will be

channeled through existing programs, but new initiatives include “the creation of a task force of diverse experts to help develop “an Action Plan for Women in the Economy”; launch of “Canada’s first-ever Black Entrepreneurship Program”; and a task force on modernizing the Employment Equity Act to promote equity in federally-regulated workplaces. Under the heading, “*Better working conditions for the care Economy*” comes a pledge: “To support personal support workers, homecare workers and essential workers involved in senior care, the government will work with labour and healthcare unions, among others, to seek solutions to improve retention, recruitment and retirement savings options for low- and modest-income workers, particularly those without existing workplace pension coverage.”

Climate change provisions and a Green Recovery:

Another section in **Chapter 3** is entitled *A Competitive, Green Economy*, which reiterates the government’s commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and reiterates the importance of the **Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act**, currently before Parliament. Funding of \$2.6 billion over 7 years was announced to go towards grants of up to \$5000 for homeowners to make energy-efficient improvements to their homes, and to recruit and train EnerGuide energy auditors. A further \$150 million over 3 years was announced for charging and refuelling stations for zero-emissions vehicles, and \$25 million for “predevelopment work for large-scale transmission projects. Building strategic interties will support Canada’s coal phase-out.

Under the heading of Nature-based solutions, proposed investments address the goal of 2 billion trees planted with a pledge of \$3.19 billion over 10 years, starting in 2021-22. A further \$631 million over 10 years is pledged for ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection, and \$98.4 million over 10 years, starting in 2021-22, to establish a new “Natural Climate Solutions for Agriculture” Fund.

Reactions from unions, think tanks:

Among those reacting quickly to the Economic Statement, the **Canadian Labour Congress** **stated** generally “While today’s commitments on key priorities remain modest and reflect past promises, the government has signalled it will make further investments as the recovery begins to take shape.” Unifor issued two press releases, **the first** stating “This fiscal update shows that Canada’s workers are being heard, and must continue to advocate for the lasting changes required to secure a fair, resilient and inclusive economic recovery”, but a second complains “**Canada’s fiscal update fails to support all airline workers**”. The Canadian Union of Public Employees similarly issued two statements on December 1: “**Liberals’ economic update offers more delay and disappointment**” and “**Canada’s flight attendants union disappointed by the federal economic update**”.

Bruce Campbell reacted in *The Conversation* (Dec. 7) that “The pace of government action to date does not align with the urgency of the twin climate and inequality crises. Nothing it has done so far is threatening to the corporate plutocracy and its hold on power.” Several experts from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives contributed to a blog, “**A fiscal update for hard times: Is it enough?**”, with the answer from Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood re the climate change provisions: “Planting trees, retrofitting buildings and increasing ZEV uptake doesn’t go far enough without a

clear timeline for winding down oil and gas production.” [Climate Action Network-Canada](#) agrees with Mertins-Kirkwood when it states: “ today’s update includes a summary of new and existing spending that we hope will provide an important foundation for Canada’s new national climate plan that we expect in the coming weeks. As part of a larger package, along with Bill C-12, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, and the pending new national climate plan, today’s fiscal update provides the backbone to guide Canada through some of the most important global transitions in generations.”

Other reactions: “[Feds’ fall economic statement shortchanges climate](#)” (*Corporate Knights*, Dec. 2) quotes one observer who calls it a “meek” effort, and offers a comparison of the allocations in the Fall statement with [earlier proposals](#) from *Corporate Knights* and the [Task Force for a Resilient Recovery](#) in September . The Energy Mix also cites the Task Force for a Resilient Recovery in its [analysis of the energy efficiency provisions of the Economic Statement](#) , stating, : “the recommended by C\$2.6 billion allocated for a seven-year program raises questions about how seriously the Trudeau government is prepared to confront the climate crisis. In mid-September, the Task Force for a Resilient Recovery called for a \$26.9-billion program over five years.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress](#), [climate change policies](#), [Covid 19](#), [CUPE](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

2020 Lancet Countdown report on Health and Climate Change finds Canadians most at risk from extreme heat and air pollution

Posted on [December 4, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change](#) has been a landmark report since its first edition in 2015 (earlier reports are [here](#)) .Compiled by an international team from more than 35 institutions including the World Health Organization and the World Bank, it documents the health impacts of climate change, and discusses the health and economic implications of climate policies. The global [2020 Countdown Report](#) was released on December 2. Along with troubling statistics comes one core message:

“The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change represent converging crises. Wildfires and tropical storms in 2020 have tragically shown us that we don’t have the luxury of tackling one crisis alone. At the same time, climate change and infectious disease share common drivers. Responding to climate change today will bring about cleaner skies, healthier diets, and safer places to live—as well as reduce the risk factors of future infectious diseases.”

The Countdown project produces [country-specific reports](#) , with the [Canada Briefing](#) written by Drs. Claudel Pétrin-Desrosiers and Finola Hackett, and endorsed by the Canadian Medical Association. The Canadian briefing presents updated information on two major issues: extreme heat and air pollution. Some highlights:

- a record 2,700 heat-related deaths occurred among people over the age of 65 in Canada in 2018;
- there were 7,200 premature deaths related to fine particulate air pollution from human-caused sources in Canada in 2018;
- the work hours lost due to exposure to extreme heat was 81% higher in 2015-2019 than in 1990-1994 in Canada, with an average of 7.1 million extra work hours lost per year.

Although previous Canadian reports have called for carbon pricing, the 2020 report offers six recommendations which prioritize retrofitting and energy efficiency policies, along with funding for low-emissions transportation and active transportation. The report also calls for: "...a recovery from COVID-19 that is aligned with a just transition to a carbon-neutral society, considering health and equity impacts of all proposed policies to address the climate and COVID-19 dual crises, directly including and prioritizing the disproportionately affected, including Indigenous peoples, older persons, women, racialized people, and those with low income."

Courtney Howard, past president of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment writes "[COVID-19 recovery is an opportunity to tackle worsening climate crisis: New report](#)" (*The Conversation*, Dec. 3). The Canadian Medical Association announcement of the report is [here](#) ; and the CMA also [released a recent survey](#) of its members, showing that 95% of respondents recognized the impacts of climate change, and 89% felt that health professionals have a responsibility to bring the health effects of climate change to the attention of policy-makers . The World Health Organization sponsored the survey as part of a global initiative – the Canadian results will be included in a global WHO report scheduled for release in January 2021.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [climate change and health](#), [Covid 19](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [Heat Stress](#), [physicians](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Costs of climate change in Canada go beyond wildfires and floods: a call for urgent action to build resiliency

Posted on [December 3, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Tip of the Iceberg: Navigating the Known and Unknown Costs of Climate Change in Canada was released on December 3 by the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices, providing eye-popping evidence of the damage of climate change. Using data from the Canadian Disaster Database (CDD) and the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) – (provided graphically [here](#)) – the report states that insured losses for catastrophic weather events in Canada totalled over \$18 billion between 2010 and 2019, with the Fort McMurray wildfire of 2016 the largest single weather-related insurance loss event in Canadian history, with nearly \$4 billion in insured losses and broader costs of almost \$11 billion when property, infrastructure, business interruption, and other indirect economic losses are included. The report also notes the growing trends: the number of catastrophic events has more than tripled since the 1980s, and the average cost per weather-related disaster has soared by 1,250 per cent since the 1970s.

The main message of this report is directed at policy-makers, and goes beyond costing out the catastrophic losses. It warns that other types of climate change damages are more gradual and less dramatic in extreme events, and that Canada lags the U.S. and other OECD countries in assessing the overall and complex impacts of climate change. The report harkens back to 2011 as the last examination of the broad range of national costs to Canada, in ***Paying the Price: The Economic Impacts of Climate Change for Canada***, a report by the now-defunct National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, archived in the ACW Digital Library .

The main message of the report appears in this 6-page **Executive summary** , in the **three overarching recommendations**, and in these selected quotes:

“The imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions tends to dominate the debate over Canada’s progress in addressing climate change. Yet, as a climate solution, adaptation—ensuring human and natural systems can adjust to the spectrum of effects of climate change— will have a critical impact on the well-being and prosperity of all who live in Canada in the decades ahead. Current adaptation policies and investments in Canada fall far short of what is needed to address the

known risks of climate change, let alone those that are still unclear and unknown. This has to change.....

.....It's essential to transition from a state of ad hoc responses to a changing climate and weather-related disasters to one of building resilience. This includes continual learning about what works, what doesn't, and how to plan for uncertainty. Instead of waiting for more information, the uncertainty inherent in climate change requires acting decisively on what we already know while also developing improved foresight."

The Canadian Institute for Climate Choices intends to follow up from The Tip of the Iceberg with other reports over the next two years, focused on health, infrastructure, macroeconomics and the North.

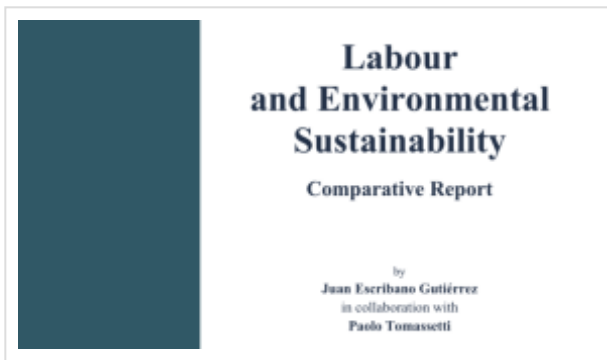
Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Adaptation](#), [Canada](#), [climate change policies](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [Fort McMurray wildfire](#), [natural disasters](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green bargaining in Europe: theory, legal structures, and case studies of 6 countries

Posted on [December 1, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Agreement – A Green Mentality for Collective Bargaining is a European project to investigate the role of social dialogue and collective bargaining in promoting sustainable development and the transition to a low-carbon economy. ***Labour and Environmental Sustainability : Comparative Report*** is their newly published overview, which is accompanied by separate, detailed reports for each of the six countries studied: France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK.. The **Agreement website** has further resources and bibliographies.

Written mostly by lawyers, the ***Comparative Report*** reviews the theoretical concepts influencing labour unions' positions on environmental issues – with a key section titled "Treadmill of Production and Just Transition: Two Contrasting Patterns?". The ***Comparative Report*** also reviews the legal



structure of collective bargaining and the forms of social dialogue in each country, and for each country, discusses topics which might be included in collective bargaining – for example, linking pay to environmental performance; health and safety considerations; inclusion of environmental issues within labour-management bodies. The conclusion:

“It is up to the social partners to promote environmental sustainability as a goal for collective bargaining or to continue with the traditional inertia that divides labour and environmental regulation..... Collective agreements could take a leading role in driving the just transition towards a low-carbon economy, but in practice they do not regard this mission as a priority. Environmental clauses in collective agreements are still exceptional and lack momentum.”

The **U.K. Study** states:

“Based on extensive review of policy documents and qualitative interviews with key informants, our research confirms that UK unions have attempted to seize upon the possibilities inherent in a voluntarist system of industrial relations, in so far as broadening the scope of what are deemed to be union issues or issues that could be negotiated or bargained with management. However, despite the fact that many workplace initiatives have been reported throughout the UK, relatively few comprehensive agreements on environmental sustainability have been concluded... . The authors call for “.... (1) the statutory recognition of environmental union representatives together with rights to facility time and pay (rights that unions have advocated for a long time), as well as (2) expansion of the statutory scope of bargaining to include issues of environmental nature. Finally, for Just Transition processes to be operationalized in practice, UK unions should have more input in policy development. For this to be possible, (3) social dialogue must be institutionalized in a more meaningful way at the regional and national level.”

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Europe**, **green bargaining**, **green collective bargaining**, **labour and the environment**, **social dialogue**, **United Kingdom** | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated Net-zero strategy for Greening Canadian government

operations includes work from home provision

Posted on **November 27, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Treasury Board of Canada **released a statement** on November 26, updating the **Greening Government Strategy** which governs operations and procurement by the federal government. Because the government is the largest owner of real property in Canada and the largest public purchaser of goods and services (more than \$20 billion in 2019), the strategy promises to make an actual impact on GHG emissions, as well as provide a model strategy for Crown Corporations and other employers. According to the press release, “the new strategy includes, for the first time, commitments to achieve net-zero emissions from national safety and security (NSS) fleet, green procurement and employee commuting. In addition, Crown Corporations are being encouraged to adopt the Greening Government Strategy or an equivalent strategy of their own that includes a net-zero by 2050 target.”

The full Green Government Strategy is [here](#) , and includes goals for buildings and retrofits, clean energy, waste management, water, as well as employee engagement and transparent reporting of GHG emissions reductions. Highlighted changes below come under the heading “Mobility”, and will impact employee commuting, work-from-home, and business travel:

- The Centre will encourage employees to use low-carbon forms of transportation to reduce emissions from employee commuting and will track these emissions by the 2021 to 2022 fiscal year.
- The government will facilitate opportunities for flexible work arrangements, such as remote work, by enabling remote computing telecommunications and by supporting information technology (IT) solutions.
- The government will promote and incentivize lower-carbon alternatives to work-related air travel. Departments will contribute to the Greening Government Fund (GGF) based on their air travel emissions. The GGF aims to incentivize lower-carbon alternatives to government operations by providing project funding to federal government departments and agencies to reduce GHG emissions in their operations.
- Emissions from other travel related to operations, such as major events hosted and ministerial travel, may be offset by departments.
- Purchase of carbon offsets for events, conferences and travel may also be used as an eligible expense for grants and contribution program recipients.
- Regarding vehicle fleets, 75% per cent of new light-duty unmodified fleet vehicle purchases will be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) or hybrids, with the objective that the government’s light-duty fleet comprises at least 80% ZEVs by 2030. Priority is to be given to purchasing ZEVs.
- All new executive vehicle purchases will be ZEVs or hybrids.

An update of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory of emissions from federal operations was also released, showing a decrease of 34% from 2005 levels from real property and conventional

fleet operations. The [details from the Inventory are here](#) .

More detailed information about each of the priorities is available from the [Greening Government Centre website](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [commuting](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [federal government](#), [government workers](#), [Green Employers](#), [Green procurement](#), [telecommuting](#), [work from home](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A study of Canadian manufacturing plants demonstrates the economic damage of extreme hot or cold weather

Posted on **November 26, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Researchers at the [Sustainable Prosperity Institute](#) at the University of Ottawa released a Working Paper on November 24, forecasting how manufacturing productivity will be affected by weather extremes. Based on longitudinal data from 53,000 manufacturing plants across Canada, the authors find that the productivity of the plants is reduced in extreme weather – both hot or cold. They highlight the importance of labour input as a main contributor to the productivity loss.

The authors' summary appears in a blog, [Estimating the impact of climate change on the Canadian economy](#), which explains that the typical manufacturing plant in Canada currently experiences 4 extreme cold days and 14 extreme hot days per year, but under a scenario of high GHG emissions by the end of the century, that typical plant would experience one extreme cold day, but over 80 extreme hot days each year. They state: "Using medium and high greenhouse gas scenarios for 2050s and 2080s, we find that the annual losses of manufacturing output due to extreme temperature would go from 2.2% today to 2.8-3.5% in mid-century and to 3.5-7.2% in end of century." The authors claim to be the first to estimate the effect of extreme temperatures on establishment performance in Canada, and the first to estimate the potential economic impact of climate change in a cold environment. The full results and discussion appear in a 50-page Working Paper, "[Manufacturing Output and Extreme Temperature: Evidence from Canada](#)" by economists Philippe Kabore and Nicholas Rivers.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [extreme cold weather](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Labour Productivity](#), [manufacturing industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

No new pipeline construction needed in Canada, and domestic fossil fuel consumption peaked in 2019

Posted on **November 25, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The key takeaway from a new flagship government report is that no new pipeline construction is needed in Canada, and the current pipelines under construction – the TransMountain Expansion, Keystone XL, and Enbridge Line 3 Replacement- are sufficient to accommodate all future crude oil production. The new report, ***Canada's Energy Future 2020: Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2050***, is the latest annual report by the Canada Energy Regulator CER- (formerly the National Energy Board) and discusses the future of all energy commodities under two scenarios – a Reference case and an Evolving Scenario, which includes a carbon price of \$75 per tonne in 2040 and \$125 per tonne in 2050.

Under the Evolving Scenario of increased policy intervention, Canada's domestic fossil fuel consumption peaked in 2019 and by 2050, it will be 35% lower than the 2019 level. However, the report states that even under the Evolving Scenario, fossil fuel consumption is forecast to make up over 60% of Canada's fuel mix in 2050. It is worth noting that these CER reports have been criticized in the past for overestimating fossil fuel demand – for example, by the Pembina Institute in 2019, in "**Why Canada's Energy Future report leads us astray**". In 2020, **Pembina calls for changes** to the modelling assumptions for future reports, saying "the scenarios modelled in the report are still not aligned with commitments set out in the ***Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act***. This model of Canada's energy future is not consistent with the future that Canada has committed to in the Paris Agreement." Further, it points out "Canada's Energy Future 2020 report does not reflect the range of recent scenarios for global oil demand, such as those recently released by the International Energy Agency and BP, where demand is predicted to fall by 50 to 75 per cent over the next 20 to 30 years in order to achieve net-zero emissions."

Other reactions to the CER report focus on the forecast of declining need for pipelines , summarized in "**No Future Need for Trans Mountain, Keystone XL Pipelines, Canadian Energy Regulator Report Shows**" (The Energy Mix, Nov. 25), and even echoed in the

conservative [*Financial Post*](#) . Followers of David Hughes will recognize this argument that he has made many times, most recently in [*Reassessment of Need for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project*](#) , published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives at the end of October .

The press release and summary from the Canada Energy Regulator report is [here](#), with data sets and interactive tables [here](#) and an archive of past annual reports [here](#). Beyond fossil fuel projections, this year's Report includes a discussion of the transition to a Net-Zero Emissions energy system, focusing on personal passenger transportation, oil sands production, and remote and northern communities. It also briefly notes the impact of the Covid pandemic, stating "Canadian end-use energy demand will fall by 6% in 2020 compared to 2019, the biggest annual drop since at least 1990. Energy to move people and goods will fall the most due to less travel and increased remote work and learning." (A [report published by the World Meteorological Office](#) on Nov. 23 provides preliminary estimates of a reduction in the annual global emission between 4.2% and 7.5% because of Covid).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Energy policy](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Keystone XL](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Oil Sands](#), [Transmountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

IndustriALL sets out union goals for decent work in the battery supply chain, organizing in Green Tech

Posted on **November 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

IndustriALL Global Union represents workers along the entire battery supply chain, (except in China) through its international affiliates in mining, chemicals, energy, electronics, and the automotive sector. Canada's Unifor is an affiliate. "[Due diligence across the battery supply chain](#)" (November 2020) describes that expanding and complex supply chain, from mining to processing to end-use products for batteries, and outlines the union's aim to research and map it. IndustriALL's aim is to "create a social dialogue scheme or platform with key stakeholders to achieve decent work for all throughout the supply chain. IndustriALL is the only global union who can coordinate unions around the world and contribute to the policy to achieve decent work around the battery supply chain. The international trade union movement becomes more important than ever." A separate post, "[Developing a global trade union battery supply chain strategy](#)" (

November 20) outlines further specifics about the union's strategy and announces: "IndustriALL has applied for funding for a project starting in January 2021 on the battery supply chain across the industrial sectors. In a pilot project IndustriALL intends to collaborate with companies, NGOs and other associations to find out how such an approach can help to genuinely improve the situation workers along the entire battery supply chain."

GreenTEch Manifesto for Mechanical Engineering

IndustriALL Global Union convened an online seminar on green technology in the mechanical engineering sector in early November 2020 – [summarized here](#). The seminar was the occasion to launch a **GreenTech Manifesto**, which defines "Green technology" (GreenTech) as " any technology that promotes one or more of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN summit in 2015, specifically clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, green industry, innovation and infrastructure, responsible consumption and production and climate action."

At a previous IndustriALL workshop on Mechanical Engineering and GreenTech in December 2018, the President of Austrian trade union PRO-GE and co-chair of the sector, said: "As mechanical engineers and trade unionists, technology is the most important contribution we can make to mitigating climate change. We need hydro, we need wind, we need solar, we need biomass. And we need strong unions to ensure that energy transition is just."

The new Greentech Manifesto states: "IndustriALL Global Union and its affiliates need to be alert and present so that green jobs become good jobs with appropriate working and living conditions. To this end the participants at this IndustriALL Global Union GreenTech virtual workshop resolve to: § facilitate exchange between affected affiliates in the sector over new trends, especially focusing on GreenTech, digitization and related developments § organize training for trade union organizers and works councils to develop new methods, strategies and services to approach and recruit new employees at green workplaces § involve especially young workers and women in our work § intensify our efforts to increase trade union power in the affected sectors through organizing and recruiting."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Engineering](#), [green technology](#), [IndustriALL](#), [international labour action](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's legislation for net-zero emissions lacks urgency and enforcement mechanisms

Posted on **November 20, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

On November 19, Canada's Environment Minister introduced Bill C-12, [***the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act***](#) in the House of Commons. If passed, it would establish in law the already-promised national net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2050, and require the Minister to establish a national greenhouse gas emissions target and plan for 2030 within six months of the Act coming into force. Requirements for public consultation and progress reports are included, along with a provision for an advisory body which would also be required to conduct "engagement activities". A summary of provisions appears in [**the government's press release**](#) and in press reports from [**the CBC**](#) and [**the Toronto Star**](#). Initial reactions to the legislation abound on Twitter, mostly noting that 2030 is a disappointingly slow first target date. In [**an article in Behind the Numbers**](#), Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood calls the legislation "much ado about nothing", and says "the bill's failure to require a new emissions reduction target before 2030 means the federal government can continue delaying the kinds of transformational climate policies we require to meet the scale of the climate change threat. A new 2025 target would have put real pressure onto the present government rather than shirking responsibility to a future one." Legal group Ecojustice calls the legislation [**"a significant first step"**](#), and West Coast Environmental Law calls the legislation [**a "critical juncture for Canada"**](#). WCEL pledges to work towards improving the Bill in the course of the parliamentary debate.... "to be effective, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act will need to prioritize immediate climate action by setting a 2025 target, and ensure that all the targets we set are as ambitious as possible. It also needs stronger requirements to ensure those targets are actually met."

The House of Commons [**website here**](#) will link to the Debates on Bill C-12, and chronicle its passage through the legislature. Already, the new Leader of the Green Party, Annamie Paul, has issued a reaction titled, [***A failure of leadership: Government's climate bill squanders "the opportunity of a lifetime" for a green economic recovery***](#). Former leader Elizabeth May is quoted in the same press release saying "Having worked on the climate issue for over thirty years, watching one government after another kick the problem down the road, today is the tragic low-point. The window on holding to a livable climate will close, forever, before this legislation holds anyone to account."

Posted in [**Government Policy, Uncategorized**](#) | Tagged [**climate change and politics, Climate change policy, greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets**](#) | [**Leave a reply**](#)

Unions not impressed with the new U.K. 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution – updated

Posted on **November 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The ***10-point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*** was released by U.K. Premier Boris Johnson on November 18, promising to “mobilise £12 billion of government investment, and potentially 3 times as much from the private sector, to create and support up to 250,000 green jobs.” Some of the marquee goals: to ban the sale of new gas and diesel vehicles by 2030; £1bn to insulate homes and public buildings, (using the existing green homes grant and public sector decarbonisation scheme); and a previously announced pledge to quadruple offshore wind capacity by 2030.

The Guardian provides a **factual summary of new plan**; the full list of 10 areas for “increased ambition” include: advancing offshore wind; driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen; delivering new and advanced nuclear power; accelerating the shift to zero emission vehicles; green public transport, cycling and walking; ‘jet zero’ and green ships; greener buildings; investing in carbon capture, usage and storage; protecting our natural environment; and, green finance and innovation. *The Guardian* also published a highly **negative summary here**, along with a kinder editorial: “**The Guardian view on Johnson’s green jobs plan: the right way to start**”. The editorial states “it is reassuring that Mr Johnson has chosen the path of believing in climate science and recognising that action affords economic opportunities.....That latter point is crucial. The prime minister is right to frame the response in terms of job creation. The cause of environmentalism in British politics has suffered from the misperception that it is a middle-class lifestyle affectation or a device to raise taxes. The reality is that the transition to a green economy is not a matter of choice, since the alternative is ruinous ecological calamity. “

That Guardian editorial warns of Mr. Johnson’s past pattern of lofty rhetoric lacking follow-through, and compares the pledged investment of £12bn, (much of which has been announced previously) to the €40bn green recovery package announced by Germany, the €30bn for green stimulus in France, and the \$2Trillion plan promised by US president-elect Joe Biden. UNITE The Union echoed many of the same doubts in its reaction, “**10-point plan for a green revolution is “half-baked offer”** “, and also in a **another response regarding the nuclear energy proposals**, which calls for “more flesh on the bones”.

The U.K. **Trades Union Congress (TUC) reaction** calls the 10-point Plan a “slow start” for a green recovery, and says “The prime minister should step up his ambition on jobs. TUC research shows that fast-tracked spending on green infrastructure could create 1.24 million good jobs by 2022.” (That research, published in June 2020, is [here](#). The TUC also recently published ***Voice and Place: How to plan fair and successful paths to net zero emissions***, which presents union

voices and case studies from five regions: the North; the North West; the Midlands; Yorkshire and Humberside; and Wales, and sets out recommendations for national, regional and local policies.

Update: The November/December 2020 issue of the [Greener Jobs Alliance Newsletter](#) provides its own summary of the 10-point Plan, and links to reactions from other unions, including the education unions, GMB and RMT.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Recovery](#), [industrial strategy](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [UNITE the Union](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ørsted and U.S. Building Trades reach a national agreement for workforce planning in Offshore Wind

Posted on **November 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A November 18 [press release](#) from the North America Building Trades Unions (NABTU) and [Ørsted Offshore North America](#) announces a “Landmark MOU for U.S. Offshore Wind Workforce Transition” , which “represents a transformative moment for organized labor and the clean energy industry. This framework sets a model for labor-management cooperation and workforce development in the budding offshore wind industry.”

According to the NABTU [press release](#), “The partnership will create a national agreement designed to transition U.S. union construction workers into the offshore wind industry in collaboration with the leadership of the 14 U.S. NABTU affiliates and the AFL-CIO.” The newly-announced MOU is based on the model of an agreement developed by the Rhode Island Building Trades for the Block Island Wind Farm project – the first offshore wind installation in the U.S. which came online in December 2016, and is now operated by Ørsted .

No text of the new agreement is available yet, but the press release specifies:

“As part of this national framework, Ørsted, along with their partners, will work together with the building trades’ unions to identify the skills necessary to accelerate an offshore wind construction workforce. The groups will match those needs against the available workforce,

timelines, scopes of work, and certification requirements to fulfill Ørsted's pipeline of projects down the East Coast, creating expansive job opportunities in a brand-new American industry for years to come and raising economics for a just transition in the renewable sector.....Ørsted and NABTU, along with their affiliates and state and local councils, have agreed to work together on long-term strategic plans for the balanced and sustainable development of Ørsted's offshore wind projects."

North America's Building Trades Unions is an alliance of 14 national and international unions in the building and construction industry that collectively represent over 3 million skilled craft professionals in the United States and Canada. Previous NABTU model national agreements are available [here](#) . Labour-affiliated BlueGreen Alliance [issued a press release](#) immediately, "lauding" the agreement between NABTU and Ørsted . BlueGreen is also a partner in [New England for Offshore Wind](#) , a civil society coalition which advocates for regional collaboration in New England, and urges state Governors to make commitments to power one-third of New England with offshore wind by 2022.

The Block Island Wind Farm has been described as "a case study in high-quality job creation" by the Center for American Progress in [Offshore Wind Means Blue-Collar Jobs for Coastal States](#) (April 2018). [Massachusetts Offshore Wind Workforce Assessment,\(2018\)](#) is a detailed study by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Centre, focusing on job-related issues, and highlighting the experience of Block Island.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Block Island wind farm](#), [Building trades unions](#), [Construction Industry](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Labour Training](#), [Offshore Wind](#), [Retraining](#), [Skilled Workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Vancouver approves Climate Emergency Action Plan and promises a Climate Justice Charter

Posted on **November 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 17, Vancouver City Council approved a [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#), a roadmap for the city to cut carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, with a focus on the biggest local sources – fossil fuels use in vehicles (39% of city emissions) and in buildings (54%). According to the official [Summary](#), goals for 2030 include 50% of the km driven on Vancouver's roads to be by zero emissions vehicles, and 40% less embodied emissions from new buildings and construction projects compared to 2018. The plan will cost \$500 million over the next five years, according to [reporting from Business in Vancouver](#) .

Detailed documentation is available [here](#) , and the 318-page staff proposal presented to City Council on November 3rd is [here](#) . As reported by *Business in Vancouver* and *The Georgia Straight* , all 19 action items proposed by staff did not survive debate. The most contentious issues related to plans for a “walkable city” and a proposal for congestion pricing for the city centre. Staff were directed to prepare a report for Council by 2022 on that issue. *The Georgia Straight* reproduces all the motions from the debate, indicating next steps, and how the final approved plan differs from the staff proposals.

Consultation process included a Climate and Equity Working Group

The Climate Emergency Action Plan drew on a citizen consultation process, described in detail in the [staff proposal document](#) . One of the key features of the consultation process: a Climate and Equity Working Group (as described in Appendix N at page 251) which included “a rich mix of perspectives including new immigrants, people with disabilities, people with low income, urban Indigenous. The majority of participants were racialized people.” However, the report also notes that the process lacked voices from some Indigenous nations, as well as seniors, youth LGBTQ2+ community, and “While the majority of participants were women, there was no voice specific to gender equity. These gaps need to be addressed in future engagement as part of implementation work and in the reformation of the Climate and Equity Working Group.” The Emergency Action Plan approved by Council on November 17 promises: “Our equity work on climate policies and programs will be shaped by the forthcoming Climate Justice Charter, the Equity Framework, the Reconciliation Framework, the Healthy City Strategy, Vancouver’s Housing Strategy, and the Women’s Equity Strategy.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Action Plan](#), [Climate Justice](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Gender](#), [green buildings](#), [Municipal Government](#), [Transit Policy](#), [transportation policy](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Wind and solar PV will surpass coal and natural gas by 2024, according to latest IEA forecast

Posted on **November 18, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The International Energy Agency released another of its flagship reports in November: *[Renewables 2020: Analysis and Forecast to 2025](#)*. This comprehensive report focuses in turn on each of: renewable electricity, renewable heat, solar pv, wind, Hydropower, bioenergy, CSP and geothermal, and transport bioenergy. Overall, the report forecasts global energy demand is set to decline by 5% in 2020, and although all other fuels will decline, overall renewable energy demand will increase by 1%, and renewables used for generating electricity will grow by almost 7% in 2020. The report provides statistics and comments on the [impacts of Covid recovery policies](#).

Some highlights: “The renewables industry has adapted quickly to the challenges of the Covid crisis.... Supply chain disruptions and construction delays slowed the progress of renewable energy projects in the first six months of 2020. However, construction of plants and manufacturing activity ramped up again quickly, and logistical challenges have been mostly resolved with the easing of cross-border restrictions since mid-May.” As a result, the IEA has revised its [May 2020 forecast](#) of global renewable capacity additions upwards, and forecasts a record expansion of nearly 10% in 2021 for new renewable capacity, led by India and the EU. Other eye-catching statements: “Solar PV and onshore wind are already the cheapest ways of adding new electricity-generating plants in most countries today... Overall, renewables are set to account for 95% of the net increase in global power capacity through 2025.....Total installed wind and solar PV capacity is on course to surpass natural gas in 2023 and coal in 2024. Solar PV alone accounts for 60% of all renewable capacity additions through 2025, and wind provides another 30%. Driven by further cost declines, annual offshore wind additions are set to surge, accounting for one-fifth of the total wind annual market in 2025.”

The [Renewables 2020 website is here](#) ; a 9-page Executive Summary [is here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Offshore Wind](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Lobbying Joe Biden for climate action, and what it means for Canada

Posted on **November 18, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Despite the chaos in post-election politics of the United States, Joe Biden is the legitimate President-elect of the United States, and [his climate change platform](#) was an important factor in his victory. As his Transition team prepares for inauguration in January 2021, environmental and climate change groups are among those advocating for appointments and policies. Prominent among these: [The Climate Mandate](#), a joint initiative of the [Sunrise Movement](#) and [Justice Democrats](#) . On November 11, Climate Mandate issued a statement saying: “We can unite our nation by solving the crises we have in common: COVID-19, climate change, systemic racism and an economic recession. Joe Biden must command the federal government with fierce urgency and bold creativity.... This is Biden’s FDR moment”. A top demand of the Climate Mandate movement: the creation of a Climate Mobilization Office – “with wide-reaching power to combat the climate crisis — just as we mobilized to defeat the existential threat of Nazi Germany in WWII.” The CMO “will convene and coordinate across the President’s Cabinet agencies and, ultimately, hold every federal department accountable to the national project of stopping climate change. The Office of Climate Mobilization will deeply embed this mission into all of our spending, regulations, policies, and actions.” Top picks suggested to lead the Climate Mobilization Office: [Washington Governor Jay Inslee](#), [Gina McCarthy](#) , now Head of the Natural Resources Defence Council and former head of the Environmental Protection Agency, or [John Podesta](#),

founder of the American Center for Progress and a counsellor to President Obama and Chief of Staff to President Clinton.

Other names which appear in the [Climate Mandate wish list](#) include Bernie Sanders , their top pick for Secretary of Labor; environmental justice champion Mustafa Santiago Ali to lead the Environmental Protection Agency; and two union officials: Mary Kay Henry, International President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), as an alternate choice for Secretary of Labor, and Sara Nelson, International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA as a second choice for Secretary of Transportation.

The [Climate 21 Project](#) is a second group with proposals for Joe Biden. A group of more than 150 people, Climate 21 Project is co-chaired by Christy Goldfuss, a former Obama official and now with the Center for American Progress, and Tim Profeta, director of the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University. The Summary of their Recommendations regarding the transition is [here](#) , accompanied by eleven memos for each of the relevant departments and agencies .

Finally, Greenpeace USA [released](#) its Just Recovery Agenda on November 17, directed at Joe Biden. Broader than climate and environmental issues, “the Just Recovery Agenda includes more than 100 concrete policy recommendations spanning both legislation and executive action aimed at creating a world in which everyone has a good life and where our fundamental needs — including dignified work, healthcare, education, housing, clean air and water, healthy food, and more — are met.” [Detailed policy proposals are here](#) .

Here are a few general reactions and assessments of the climate future since Biden’s election: [“Initial Thoughts on the Impact of the 2020 Federal Elections on National Climate Policy”](#) by Joel Stronberg (Nov. 5); [“Election likely hardens political limits of Biden climate agenda”](#) by Amy Harder in *Axios* (Nov. 5); [“State Climate Leadership Is Coming to the Nation’s Capital in 2021”](#) in a Center for American Progress blog (Nov. 9) and [“How Joe Biden plans to use executive powers to fight climate change”](#) in *Vox* (Nov. 9); and [“Trump Rolled Back 100+ Environmental Rules. Biden May Focus on Undoing Five of the Biggest Ones”](#) in *Inside Climate News* (Nov. 17) .

Canada greets Joe Biden and his climate plans

The *National Observer* maintained a [Special Report section](#) about the U.S. election, including an overview of reactions in [“Ottawa welcomes president-elect Joe Biden as climate fight ally”](#) (Nov. 9) -including comments from politicians (Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson and former Minister Catherine McKenna, as well as Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, and New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs) along with policy experts Blair Feltmate and Sara Hastings-Simon. A good summary of the most important climate issues appears in [“The Biden presidency could change the terms of the climate debate in Canada”](#) by Aaron Wherry at CBC (Nov. 10).

In [“Five ways the Biden presidency could change Canadian climate policy for the better”](#) in CCPA’s *Behind the Numbers* (Nov. 12), Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood gives an overview, stating:

“For the past four years, a recalcitrant U.S. administration provided cover for Canadian politicians to water down and delay climate policies. With Biden in the White House, the situation may be reversed. Even if the new president only achieves a portion of his ambitious climate agenda, Canada risks falling behind in the transition to a net-zero carbon economy. Biden’s plan could energize Canada’s international climate agenda, could accelerate the growth of Canada’s clean economy, curb fossil fuel infrastructure, strengthen Canada’s carbon pricing system, and strengthen Canadian environmental regulations.”

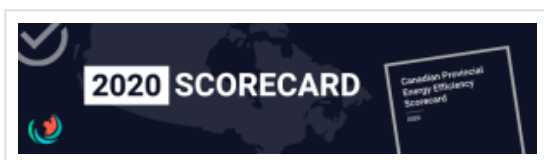
Whether Canada can compete with U.S. clean technology industry if the U.S. starts to ramp up its spending is a topic raised in **“Biden’s victory raises the clean growth stakes for Canada”** (Nov. 7) by Sara Hastings-Simon and Rachel Samson of the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices. In **“What Joe Biden’s Climate plan means for Canada”** in *The Conversation* (Nov. 12), Robert O’Brien of McMaster University focuses on the prospects for the oil and gas industry and the Keystone XL pipeline, flowing from Biden’s remark that “I would transition from the oil industry, yes.” O’Brien considers the implications for Indigenous communities, workers and communities in that transition. Will Greaves of University of Victoria focuses on the oil and gas industry and protection of the Arctic in **“What a Biden Presidency means for Climate Change and Canada”** in *Policy Options* (Nov. 10) .

Another analysis, from a trade perspective, appears in *Behind the Numbers* : **“Biden’s Buy American Plan should inspire – not scare – Canada”** (Oct 25) . Author Scott Sinclair argues that Buy American policies are not likely to go away, and if you can’t beat ‘em, you should learn from them. “ Canadians can no longer afford to disregard or neglect considerable potential of government purchasing for job creation, improved working conditions and environmentally sustainable development. Given our current trade treaty constraints, ambitious “Buy Sustainable” purchasing policies offer the best way forward for Canadian workers and the environment.”

Posted in [Government Policy, United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Green Recovery, United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

British Columbia tops in Canada’s Energy Efficiency Scorecard

Posted on **November 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Efficiency Canada has released its [2020 Energy Efficiency Scorecard](#), self-described as “a comprehensive benchmarking of provincial energy efficiency policies.” The 2020 edition is the 2nd produced, and has expanded to include new information on Indigenous energy efficiency, heating fuel savings, building code adoption activities, active transportation, and geo-targeted efficiency. A complex website offers [a database](#) with policy summaries sorted by province and by policy areas: energy efficiency, enabling policies, buildings, transportation, and industry. Provincial fact sheets describe and rank each province, with [British Columbia](#) retaining its rank as #1 in Canada, followed by [Quebec](#); [Nova Scotia](#); [Ontario](#), which dropped from third place in 2019 to fourth rank; [Prince Edward Island](#) (highlighted as most improved province); [Manitoba](#); [New Brunswick](#) in 7th place; [Alberta](#) (slipped from 6th to 8th place); [Newfoundland and Labrador](#) at 9th, and in last place, [Saskatchewan](#). The [press release](#) notes that “All provinces have significant room to improve. On a scale with 100 available points, the highest score this year is 58 and the lowest 17.”

Efficiency Canada is housed at Carleton University’s Sustainable Energy Research Centre. The website also offers two highly useful reports: [Less is More: A win for the economy, jobs, consumers, and our climate: energy efficiency is Canada’s unsung hero](#) (co-published by Clean Energy Canada and Efficiency Canada in 2018) and [The Economic Impact of Improved Energy Efficiency in Canada Employment and other Economic Outcomes from the Pan-Canadian Framework’s Energy Efficiency Measures](#), prepared for Clean Energy Canada by Dunsky Consulting in April 2018.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [energy policies](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ambitious focus on electric vehicles in Quebec’s 2030 Plan for a Green Economy

Posted on [November 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On November 16, the government of Quebec released its [**2030 Plan for a Green Economy**](#) (in French), with an [**official English-language Summary**](#). The plan is costed at \$6.7 billion over the next five years, with targets to reduce GHG emissions by 37.5% below 1990 levels by 2030, and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. The bulk of funding and attention focuses on electrification of transportation. Already a leader in electric vehicle incentives, Quebec will have the most ambitious goal for electric vehicles in Canada – by 2030, 1.5 million electric vehicles on the road, along with 55% of city buses and 65% of school buses, 100% of governmental cars, SUVs, vans and minivans, and 25% of pickup trucks. Sales of new gasoline-powered vehicles will not be permitted as of 2035.

Although emissions from transportation account for 40% of the province's total emissions, two articles posted by CBC note that the measures announced will be insufficient to meet the GHG emissions reduction targets: [“Quebec’s push to go electric won’t get province to emission reduction targets, experts say”](#), and [“How Quebec’s climate change plan protects suburbanites from tough choices”](#).

The new 2030 Plan for a Green Economy is part of a suite of complementary policy statements, including [**Joining Forces for a Sustainable Energy Future: 2018 – 2023 energy transition, innovation and efficiency master plan**](#); [**Strategy for developing the Battery Sector**](#) (French only); and [**Development of critical and strategic minerals in Quebec**](#). The complete [**2030 Plan for a Green Economy**](#) is available in French only.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [electric buses](#), [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

An oath for climate scientists: speak truth to power, and take personal action for climate change

Posted on **November 10, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[**Scientists for Global Responsibility**](#), a U.K.-based organization, has launched a new initiative with an [Open Letter in *The Guardian*](#) on November 7, stating: “Science has no higher purpose than to understand and help maintain the conditions for life to thrive on Earth. We may look beyond our planet with wonder and learn, but this is our only viable home.” The [online campaign](#) asks the world’s climate scientists to sign an Oath, modelled on the Hippocratic Oath for physicians, by which they “pledge to act in whatever ways we are able, in our lives and work, to prevent catastrophic climate disruption.”

The website continues:

“To translate this pledge into a force for real change, we will:

explain honestly, clearly and without compromise, what scientific evidence tells us about the seriousness of the climate emergency.

not second-guess what might seem politically or economically pragmatic when describing the scale and timeframe of action needed to deliver the 1.5°C and 2°C commitments, specified in the Paris Climate Agreement. And, speak out about what is not compatible with the commitments, or is likely to undermine them.

to the best of our abilities, and mindful of the urgent need for systemic change, seek to align our own behaviour with the climate targets, and reduce our own personal carbon emissions to demonstrate the possibilities for change.

With courtesy and firmness, we will hold our professional associations, institutions and employers to these same standards, and invite our colleagues across the scientific community to sign, act on and share this pledge.”

Scientists for Global Responsibility have been active in previous climate-related activism – for example, a campaign seeking fossil fuel divestment by the U.K. Universities’ Superannuation Scheme (USS), as summarized in [“Is your pension fund wrecking the planet?”](#) (March 2020) of [Responsible Science](#). That journal was launched in 2019; they also communicate through social media (@ResponsibleSci on Twitter) , webinars and conferences, and have a long history of [published reports](#) addressing all aspects of ethical issues in science and technology. Founded in 1992, the history of SGR is [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change science](#), [Muzzled Scientists](#), [Professional Ethics](#), [scientists](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Methane emissions in Canada-Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan finalize equivalency agreements despite new evidence of under-reporting

Posted on **November 9, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On November 5, Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change issued [a press release](#) announcing that the federal government has finalized equivalency agreements for methane

regulations from the oil and gas industry with Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, for the next five years. “These equivalency agreements represent a flexible approach that enables provinces and territories to design methane regulations that best suit their respective jurisdictions while meeting equivalent emissions-reduction outcomes to the federal regulations.” These equivalency agreements have been in the works for months, during which time Environmental Defense Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, and other groups **have lobbied** for regulations to be tightened and for the reporting procedures to be improved.

These same groups were critical of the federal **Emissions Reduction Fund, announced** on October 29, to reduce methane and GHG emissions. This \$750-million fund will provide “primarily repayable funding” to eligible onshore and offshore oil and gas firms to encourage them to invest in greener technologies. Details are at the **government portal for the Emissions Reduction Fund**. The Pembina Institute **endorsed the Fund** on the grounds that it could reduce emissions while improving health and creating jobs. More critical comments from Environmental Defense Canada are included in the *Toronto Star* report, “**Justin Trudeau offers \$750 million to oil and gas companies to slash methane emissions, but critics warn it isn’t enough**” (Oct. 29).

Updated: Scientific evidence shows under-reporting of methane emissions worse than thought

An **interview with Dale Marshall**, National Climate Program Manager at Environmental Defence Canada, appeared in *The Energy Mix* on November 16. Marshall criticizes the Equivalency Agreements, especially in light of a new article just published in *Environmental Science and Technology*, the scientific journal of the American Chemical Society. “**Eight-Year Estimates of Methane Emissions from Oil and Gas Operations in Western Canada Are Nearly Twice Those Reported in Inventories**” was written by Canadian government scientists, and provides damning evidence of the problem of under-reporting. The scientific article was summarized **in lay terms in the *National Observer*** on November 12.

Canada set its **regulations for methane emissions from the oil and gas industry** in 2018, targeting a reduction by 40% to 45% below 2012 levels by 2025. It **appears that Canada will miss its target**, with modelling showing the reduction likely to be closer to 30%. The Pembina Institute has published **fact sheets** on methane regulations, and the International Energy Agency posted an overview of Canada’s methane emissions regulations and levels in February 2020 **here**. The dangers of methane and the problem of underreporting fugitive emissions have been summarized in a January 2020 report from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), ***Fractures in the Bridge: Unconventional (Fracked) Natural Gas, Climate Change and Human Health***.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Fracking Regulations, greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, Methane Emissions, Oil and gas industry, Oil and Gas Regulations** | **1 Reply**

Climate Youth in the Courts: Victory in Ontario, dismissal in Canadian court, and an appeal to the Supreme Court of Norway

Posted on **November 6, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Environmental Law Centre of Alberta has been monitoring climate litigation cases worldwide, but events have overtaken their latest summary blog [Climate Litigation in Canada and Beyond –Where Are We in 2020?](#) (Nov. 9) , which discusses the dismissal of the [LaRose case](#) in the Federal Court of Canada (more on that below). On November 12, Justice Carole Brown of the Superior Court of Ontario issued [a landmark decision](#) , allowing the case of Mathur et al. to proceed to trial under [Canada's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#). The case is thoroughly described in [a Backgrounder from the Ecojustice](#), who represent the seven youth. Their claim is that their rights were violated when the Ontario government under Doug Ford passed the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act in 2018, weakening GHG emissions reduction targets for the province. According to Ecojustice, “The lawsuit aims to strike down Ontario's current 2030 target as unconstitutional and enshrine the right to a safe, healthy climate as part of the right to life, liberty and security of the person in Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This would require the Government of Ontario to set a new target in line with the scientific consensus, and revise its policies accordingly.” The decision to allow the case to proceed is a first for Canada.

Federal Court of Canada dismisses an earlier youth-led case, [LaRose vs. Her Majesty the Queen](#)

On October 27, Justice Michael D. Manson of the Federal Court of Canada dismissed the case of [LaRose vs. Her Majesty the Queen](#), and [in the words of law professor Jason MacLean](#), slammed the door on big, “holy grail” climate cases in Canada. The LaRose case [was filed](#) in 2019 by 15 youth who used the Public Trust doctrine under [section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) to argue that the federal government is violating their rights to life, liberty and security of the person, and failing to protect essential public trust resources. Further, they call on [section 15 of the Charter](#) regarding equality, alleging that youth are disproportionately affected by the effects of the climate emergency. Although Justice Manson agreed that “the negative impact of climate change to the Plaintiffs and all Canadians is significant, both now and looking forward into the future,” he declined to allow the case to proceed because the questions raised “are so political that the Courts are incapable or unsuited to deal with them.” Lawyers for the case will appeal. The legal organizations supporting the LaRose case reacted to the decision: the Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation (CELL) [here](#) , and U.S.-based Our Children's Trust [here](#) . Our Children's Trust also maintains a timeline and compilation of documents [here](#).

The *LaRose* case was summarized in “**Kids facing effects of climate change are taking their governments to court**” in *The Conversation* (Nov. 2019), with an explanation of the public trust doctrine. After the decision, a brief summary appeared in “**Federal judge tosses youth climate case against Ottawa**” (National Observer, Oct. 27). In “**Why the youth climate court case failed and what’s next for Canadian climate policy**” (*The Conversation*, Nov. 3) Jason MacLean, Assistant Professor of Law at the University of New Brunswick, summarizes the case and concludes that the federal court’s decision “slams the door”, but also looks for broader hope in the prospects for more specific, smaller climate cases – referring to “**The Unsexy Future of Climate Litigation**” (Journal of Environmental Law, 2018) for his framework, and citing the current example of the **Grassy Mountain coal mine project** in Alberta as an example of such a specific case.

Previous attempts by Canadian youth to fight for climate rights in courts include **ENvironnement JEunesse**, which is currently under appeal after being denied the right to proceed by the Quebec Superior Court in 2019 .

Rebellion is a new documentary episode by The Nature of Things, a flagship production of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It profiles some of the youth involved in the Canadian court fights.

Youth in Norway take their climate case to the Supreme Court

In a case known as *People vs. Arctic Oil* , **Young Friends of the Earth Norway** (also known as Nature and Youth) have challenged their government’s 2016 decision to license oil drilling in the Barents Sea of the Arctic. Their challenge, now before the Supreme Court of Norway in November, **is being described** by Greenpeace Norway (a co-plaintiff), as internationally precedent-setting, potentially as important as the Urgenda decision in the Netherlands. The New York Times **reported on November 5** that it is being called “the case of the century” in the Norwegian press. The court case **finished in mid-November**, with a decision expected in early 2021.

The Sabin Center Climate Case Litigation Database offers **an archive of all official documents** in the Norwegian case, and Greenpeace Norway provides a chronology and a layman’s **summary of the case decisions in English**. The Greenpeace website also provides the new information that the government’s decision to issue oil licenses was based on incorrect economic analysis and that “Ministry of Petroleum and Energy has been sitting on updated calculations they did not present to the Parliament, which shows that the profitability of the oil fields is questionable.”

Posted in **Climate Change Law and Litigation** | Tagged **climate change and youth, climate change litigation, Environnement Jeunesse, LaRose case, Mathur case, Urgenda Decision, Youth and climate, youth litigation** | [Leave a reply](#)

Links between Pandemics, biodiversity, and climate change

Posted on **November 3, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The experts of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (**IPBES**) released **their Report** of an earlier workshop on October 29, warning that “the risk of pandemics is increasing rapidly, with more than five new diseases emerging in people every year, any one of which could potentially spark a pandemic.” The problem, as stated in the report: “The majority (70%) of emerging diseases (e.g. Ebola, Zika, Nipah encephalitis), and almost all known pandemics (e.g. influenza, HIV/AIDS, COVID-19), are zoonoses – i.e. are caused by microbes of animal origin. These microbes ‘spill over’ due to contact among wildlife, livestock, and people..... Pandemics have their origins in diverse microbes carried by animal reservoirs, but their emergence is entirely driven by human activities. The underlying causes of pandemics are the same global environmental changes that drive biodiversity loss and climate change. These include land-use change, agricultural expansion and intensification, and wildlife trade and consumption. These drivers of change bring wildlife, livestock, and people into closer contact, allowing animal microbes to move into people and lead to infections, sometimes outbreaks, and more rarely into true pandemics that spread through road networks, urban centres and global travel and trade routes.”

Prevention 100 times cheaper than reactive policies

The **IPBES Report** asserts that pandemics are not inevitable. The authors advocate a dramatic shift in policy to prevention, rather than the current reactive scramble to treat diseases through vaccines etc. – an approach which brings enormous human suffering, and economic costs. The report estimate the economic costs of the reactive approach at “likely more than a trillion dollars in economic damages annually.” – likely 100 times the costs of prevention.

Given that the IPBES is an intergovernmental body linked to the United Nations, it is perhaps not surprising that one of their key recommendations is to establish a high-level intergovernmental council on pandemic prevention, which would provide decision-makers with scientific research, economic impact estimates, and a global monitoring mechanism. They also suggest an international accord or agreement with mutually agreed upon targets. Finally, they suggest specific measures, such as taxes or levies on meat consumption, which would impact consumption patterns, and reduce the globalized agricultural expansion and trade that have led to pandemics.

The **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)** was established in 2012, with 137 member states as of 2020 (including Canada and the U.S.) . In 2019, the IPBES published a landmark report, **Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services** . A key IPBES scientist, Cambridge Professor Partha Dasgupta, was named by the government of the United Kingdom to lead an **Independent Review on the Economics of Biodiversity**, in preparation for the **15th UN Biodiversity Conference** ,

now postponed till May 2021. The ***Dasgupta Review Interim Report*** was published in April 2020. (discussed in “**Halt destruction of nature or suffer even worse pandemics, say world’s top scientists**” in *The Guardian* (April 2020) .

Also in 2020, the 13th annual edition of the ***Living Planet Report*** was published by the WWF, linking pandemics to ecosystems, and reiterating the message that “unsustainable human activity is pushing the planet’s natural systems that support life on Earth to the edge.” In addition to compiling data about the loss of natural species, the report offers nature-based solutions to prevent ecological collapse and to mitigate climate change – especially in the companion report, ***Too Hot To Handle: A Deep Dive into Biodiversity in a Warming World*** .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Economic impacts, ecosystems, nature-based solutions** | [Leave a reply](#)

International studies offer hope to reach Paris targets through Green Recovery plans

Posted on **November 2, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

An October report, ***Assessment of Green Recovery Plans after Covid-19*** , modelled Green Recovery plans globally and for the EU, Germany, Poland, Spain, the UK, USA, Japan and India. In all cases, the Green Recovery Plan produced the best results measured for GDP growth, employment impacts and emission reductions . The report assessed two paths to recovery, both of which have equal cost to government: 1. a ‘return to normal’ approach by reducing VAT rates and encouraging households to resume spending; and 2. a ‘Green’ Recovery Plan that included a smaller reduction in VAT, but included public investment in energy efficiency and in upgrading electricity grids; subsidies for wind and solar power; a car scrappage program with subsidies for electric vehicles; and a tree planting program. The report was commissioned by the **We Mean Business** coalition and conducted by Cambridge Econometrics in the U.K.

Another report was announced in an October 28 **press release: *Technical Report: The Case for a Green and Just Recovery***, commissioned by the C40 Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force. This report (with details of **methodology here**), estimates that investing COVID stimulus funds in green solutions would create 50 million jobs, prevent 270,000 premature deaths, and deliver \$280bn in economic benefits globally. Expressing concern that, “to date, only 3 – 5% of an estimated US\$12 – \$15 trillion in international COVID stimulus funding is committed to green initiatives”, the C40 Task Force issued **a Call to Action** for national governments, international institutions, businesses and world leaders. Noting that timing is consequential, the Task Force calls for “decisive climate action before COP26” , to embrace the principles of the Global Green New

Deal coalition – turning away from “business as usual”, ending all public investments in fossil fuels, and pledging to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

The [**C40 Mayors’ Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery**](#) was launched in July, with support from civic society, labour unions and youth activists. A detailed [**Implementation Guide**](#) was released in June with specific strategies.

An optimistic view: Green Stimulus Funds can take us to 1.5C

Finally, “[**How the coronavirus stimulus could put the Paris Agreement on track**](#)” appeared in *Carbon Brief*, summarizing “[**Covid-19 recovery funds dwarf clean energy investment needs**](#)”, an academic article published in the journal *Science* – (restricted access). The authors of the article argue that if just a fraction of Covid-19 fiscal stimulus – around 10% – was invested every year, it would be sufficient to fund the clean energy transition. “Together with the \$300bn annual increase into low-carbon energy, investments into fossil fuels need to be reduced by \$280bn per year for a Paris compliant pathway”. The optimistic conclusion: “In very concrete terms, our analysis shows that the more ambitious goal under the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to 1.5C is still within reach. Decisive leadership, swift action and sound use of scientific advice seems to be a good recipe for coping with both the Covid-19 crisis and our warming climate.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Covid-19](#), [Green Recovery](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Costs and job impacts of Green Recovery and Just Transition programs for Ohio, Pennsylvania

Posted on **November 2, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

[***Impacts of the Reimagine Appalachia & Clean Energy Transition Programs for Ohio: Job Creation, Economic Recovery, and Long-Term Sustainability***](#) was published by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) in October, written by Robert Pollin and co-authors Jeannette Wicks-Lim, Shouvik Chakraborty, and Gregor Semieniuk. To achieve a 50 percent reduction relative to 2008 emissions by 2030, the authors propose public and private investment programs, and then estimate the job creation benefits to 2030. “Our annual average job estimates for 2021 – 2030 include: 165,000 jobs per year through \$21 billion in spending on energy efficiency and clean renewable energy; 30,000 jobs per year through investing \$3.5 billion in manufacturing and public infrastructure. 43,000 jobs per year through investing \$3.5 billion in land restoration and

agriculture. The total employment creation through clean energy, manufacturing/infrastructure and land restoration/agriculture will total to about 235,000 jobs. “

There are almost 50,000 workers currently working in the Ohio fossil fuel and bioenergy industries, with an estimated 1,000 per year who will be displaced through declining fossil fuel demand. As he has before, Pollin advocates for a Just Transition program which includes: Pension guarantees; Retraining; Re-employment for displaced workers through an employment guarantee, with 100 percent wage insurance; Relocation support; and full just transition support for older workers who choose to work past age 65. The report estimates the average costs of supporting approximately 1,000 workers per year in such transition programs will amount to approximately \$145 million per year (or \$145,000 per worker).

Pennsylvania report

Using an identical structure, the same authors modelled a Green Recovery program for Pennsylvania, released as a preliminary document, ***Impacts of the Reimagine Appalachia & Clean Energy Transition Programs for Pennsylvania***. They estimate that, “as an average over 2021 – 2030, a clean energy investment program scaled at about \$26 billion per year will generate roughly 174,000 jobs per year in Pennsylvania.”

The authors estimate that oil and natural gas consumption in Pennsylvania will fall by 40 percent by 2030, and coal will fall by 70 percent, resulting in the loss of 2,870 fossil fuel-based jobs per year between 2021 – 2030. Given the demographic composition of the workforce, they estimate that 1,056 workers in the industry will voluntarily retire – leaving 1,814 workers per year who will experience displacement (0.03 percent of the total workforce). Just Transition measures similar to those called for in Ohio are presented, with the statement that “the overall costs of providing these displaced workers with generous just transition support will be trivial relative to the size of Pennsylvania’s economy. The just transition program should be financed jointly by federal and state government funding sources.” More detailed costing is promised when the final study for Pennsylvania is released.

The Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at University of Massachusetts has published related studies in a “Green Growth” series, available [from this link](#). States studied are Colorado (2019) , Maine (August 2020), New York (2017), and Washington State (Dec. 2017). In September 2020, PERI released ***Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures***, in which Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty modelled the impact of a \$6 trillion, 10-year economic stimulus program for clean energy and infrastructure across the U.S.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy Investment](#), [employment impacts](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Job Creation](#), [Just Transition](#), [Ohio](#), [Pennsylvania](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Two reports forecast millions of new jobs based on Sierra Club proposals for green investment

Posted on **October 21, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

A study **released by the Economic Policy Institute** in Washington D.C. on October 20 examines the employment impacts of trade and investment policies proposed by the Alliance for American Manufacturing, in combination with a modified version of policies proposed **by the Sierra Club** – \$2 trillion over 4 years invested in infrastructure, clean energy, and energy efficiency improvements. The EPI report, ***Rebuilding American manufacturing—potential job gains by state and industry, Analysis of trade, infrastructure, and clean energy/ energy efficiency proposals***, concludes that the combined trade policy reforms and clean economy investments would result in 6.9 million direct and indirect jobs by 2024. Noting that 91.6% of clean energy and energy efficiency investments are for manufactured products, the authors further forecast what industries and sub-sectors would benefit, with state-by-state statistics. They conclude that, of the 6.9 million forecast jobs, 2.5 million would be widely distributed across the U.S. in the manufacturing industry, with 36.4% concentrated in high-wage jobs.

The **Sierra Club proposals** underlying the EPI scenario were made to the U.S. Congress during their deliberations on the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*, in April 2020. These proposals were also analyzed by Pollin and Chakraborty in a report published in September by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at University of Massachusetts Amherst. The Pollin Chakraborty report, ***Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures***, used a 10 year time frame, investing \$683 billion per year in infrastructure, clean energy and energy efficiency, as well as agriculture and land restoration programs and, notably, the “Care economy, public health, and postal service”. Their resulting projection of 16 million new jobs appears in **the platform of the THRIVE Agenda**, an economic renewal plan for the U.S. created in September 2020 by the **Green New Deal Network** and endorsed by more than 100 climate justice, civil rights and labour organizations.

Final note: Robert Pollin, Noam Chomsky, and C.J. Polychroniou released a new book in September, ***Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet***, published by Verso Press.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **employment impacts, Job Creation, Manufacturing, United States** | **Leave a reply**

Green Hydrogen in Canada – Alberta sets a goal of 2040 for exports

Posted on **October 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Clean Energy Canada released a new report on hydrogen as a clean energy source, providing a history of policy and development in Canada and around the world, and a call to action. ***A New Hope*** states that “.. Canada is among a small group of countries with the highest potential for exporting clean hydrogen, thanks to a clean power system (82% of Canada’s electricity grid is already non-emitting) and plenty of access to water (required for electrolysis). But the time to act is now. Already, 18 economies comprising more than 75% of global GDP are developing and rolling out hydrogen strategies. Some, like the EU and South Korea, have dedicated post-pandemic recovery funds to make it happen. Germany’s priming of the hydrogen market with a €9-billion (\$13.7-billion) strategy could lead to a snowballing competitive market—and increasingly cheaper clean hydrogen.” The EU ***Hydrogen Strategy for a climate neutral Europe*** was released in July 2020.

“Green, Blue or Grey? Colour-coded hydrogen holds keys to Canada’s energy transition” appeared in *The National Observer* in August, and gives an excellent overview of the policy landscape for hydrogen in Canada – the perspective of the **Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association** and the Canadian government, which has promised a Hydrogen Strategy – but no date is set. The article cites a very thorough consultant’s report circulating amongst government officials: ***2019 Hydrogen Pathways : Enabling a Clean Growth Future for Canadians*** .

The Pembina Institute had also published ***Hydrogen on the path to net-zero emissions Costs and climate benefits*** (July), a 6-page overview of the terminology (blue, green or grey hydrogen?), the production process, transportation and storage, and its many possible applications across industry, transportation, power and buildings sectors.

Alberta seems to be heeding the call: in September, the Alberta Industrial Heartland Hydrogen Task force released ***Towards Net-Zero Energy Systems In Canada: A Key Role For Hydrogen***, and on October 6, the Alberta government released its **Natural Gas Vision and Strategy**, part of its Recovery Plan for petrochemicals, LNG production , plastics recycling, and hydrogen. Along with the **October 6 press release**, the Plan states “.... Alberta is already a leader in hydrogen production and has strong carbon capture and storage infrastructure in place. Combined with a number of projects being built across the province, Alberta has the potential to be a strong global competitor through the creation of a hydrogen economy.” The goals stated in the Plan: 1. “Large-scale hydrogen production with carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) and deployment in various commercial applications across the provincial economy by 2030; and 2. Exports of clean hydrogen and hydrogen-derived products to jurisdictions across Canada, North America, and globally are in place by 2040.”

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta, Clean Technology, green hydrogen** | [Leave a reply](#)

LNG, fossil subsidies as issues in B.C. election on October 24

Posted on **October 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

British Columbia will vote on October 24, and climate and environmental issues are prominent in the Party Platforms of the ruling **New Democratic Party (NDP)**, the **Green Party**, and to a much lesser extent, the **Liberal Party**, which lacks any specific emissions reductions targets, and endorses LNG development.

The NDP is running on its record and its 2018 CleanB.C. Plan; Sarah Cox wrote a detailed review in *The Narwhal* in September, “**So there’s going to be a fall election in B.C.: has the NDP kept its environmental promises?**”. A key NDP commitment is to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, but according to David Hughes at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (and many others), that won’t be possible with the current NDP policy to support the LNG industry – explained, for example, in ***BC’s Carbon Conundrum Why LNG exports doom emissions-reduction targets and compromise Canada’s long-term energy security*** (July). A related report, ***Subsidizing Climate Change: how BC gives billions to corporate polluters*** was published by Stand.earth in September, reporting that B.C. is second only to Alberta in subsidies to the oil and gas industry, at \$557 million in 2018 (the last year for which data is available). The Dogwood Institute also reports on this in “**Tax-payer funded climate change**” (Oct. 2) and “**BC NDP candidates quiet as oil and gas subsidies soar**” (Oct. 7). The NDP platform promises only “a comprehensive review of oil and natural gas royalty credits”. And on another hot-button issue, the Site C Dam – *The Narwhal* summarizes two critical reports that call for it to be scrapped in **an October 15 article**, and even the right-wing C.D. Howe Institute published ***Site C – the case is getting weaker***.

For quick summaries and comparisons of all party platforms, see *The Tyee* “**Where they Stand: Climate Change**”, or an **Explainer** on climate and environmental issues in *The Narwhal* (October 19).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **British Columbia, climate change and politics, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, LNG Jobs** | [Leave a reply](#)

European Journal of Industrial Relations Special Issue on Climate Change and Just Transition

Posted on **October 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“Trade Unions, Climate Change and Just Transition” is the theme of the December 2020 special issue of the [*European Journal of Industrial Relations* \(Volume 26 #4\)](#). In the introduction, EJIR editor Guglielmo Meardi acknowledges the paucity of academic industrial relations research on the issues of climate change, and states: “This Special Issue, edited with passion and experience by Linda Clarke and Carla Lipsig-Mummé, helps to fill the void. Its articles map the dilemmas of trade unions with regard to climate change and disentangle the issues raised by the idea of a Just Transition to a carbon-neutral economy. They show evidence of variation and influence in trade union actions on climate change and will certainly inspire more research on the complex problems they present.”

All article abstracts are available [here](#) ; access to the full articles is restricted to subscribers. The following list links to the authors’ abstracts: “[Future conditional: From just transition to radical transformation?](#)” by Linda Clarke and Carla Lipsig-Mummé; “[Just Transition on the ground: Challenges and opportunities for social dialogue](#)”, by Béla Galgóczi; “[Trade union strategies on climate change mitigation: Between opposition, hedging and support](#)”, by Adrien Thomas and Nadja Doerflinger; “[Unions and the green transition in construction in Europe: Contrasting visions](#)”, by Linda Clarke and Melahat Sahin-Dikmen; “[Innovating for energy efficiency: Digital gamification in the European steel industry](#)”, by Dean Stroud, Claire Evans and Martin Weinle; and “[From Treadmill of Production to Just Transition and Beyond](#)” by Paolo Tomassetti.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change research](#), [Green Building](#), [industrial relations](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental justice in Canada: A labour union call to action, and evidence from the UN Special Rapporteur

Posted on [October 19, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

“[We will not rest, we will not stop: Building for better in a post-pandemic recovery](#)” appeared in the Labour Day issue of *Our Times* magazine, written by Yolanda McClean and Christopher Wilson, executive officers of the [Coalition of Black Trade Unionists \(CBTU\)](#). Set in the context of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, the article states: “The calls to intensify the struggle against Canada’s police violence, economic apartheid and environmental racism are resounding. ...Anti-Indigenous, anti-Black and systemic racism extend beyond our political structures to our education and healthcare systems, to our corporations, workplaces, communities and, yes, to our labour movement. (On this point, the authors refer to “[Dear White Sisters & Brothers](#),” an Open Letter by unionist Carol Wall which appeared in the Summer 2020 issue of *Our Times*).

Wilson and McClean call upon the labour movement, stating: “A labour vision for a post-pandemic recovery must confront structural racial inequalities and advocate for the inclusion of BIPOC communities — economically, politically and socially.” As positive examples, the article cites the Ontario Federation of Labour, which joined with the CBTU in a [joint statement](#) in July, stating: “As allies, we must act now and support the call to defund the police”. Wilson and McClean also highlight the CBTU’s [“Green Is Not White”](#) Environmental Racism research project, and its associated webinar [“What Can Unions Do to Stop Environmental Racism?”](#), produced by the CBTU, the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, and York University’s Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW).

UN Special Rapporteur reviews toxic chemicals in Canada and concludes: Environmental injustice persists in Canada

The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics, Mr. Baskut Tuncak, officially visited Canada in May/June 2019, and presented his resulting [Report](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Council in early September 2020. The report states clearly that “Environmental injustice persists in Canada. A significant proportion of the population in Canada experience racial discrimination, with Indigenous, and racialized people, the most widely considered to experience discriminatory treatment.” The report focused on the extractive industries (defined as “mining of metals and oil sands”) in Canada and abroad – noting that over 50% of the world’s multinational mining companies are based in Canada. The report also discusses oil and gas pipelines, and chemical industries (including pesticides in agriculture). After documenting many specific examples, the Rapporteur concludes with recommendations for legislative and regulatory changes.

Excerpted highlights from the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics :

“...Contamination from extractive industries, including the massive tailing ponds in Alberta, and the possibility of seeping into local water supplies, is of concern.

... despite compliance with the Fisheries Act, 76% of metal mines have confirmed effects on fish, fish habitat or both. Among these mines, 92% confirmed at least one effect of a magnitude that may be indicative of a higher risk to the environment.

....The health risks posed to Indigenous peoples by the multibillion-dollar oil sands industry are another example of concerns. Fort McMurray, Fort MacKay and Fort Chipewyan (Fort Chip) paint a disturbing picture of health impacts of the oil sands (i.e. tar sands) that were not properly investigated for years, despite increasing evidence of health impacts on local communities.

... the situation of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation in Sarnia is profoundly unsettling. Deeply connected with their land, residents on the reservation invaded by industry as far back as the 1940s are now surrounded on three sides by over 60 industrial facilities that create the physiological and mental stress among

community members ...It is one of the most polluted places in Canada, dubbed “chemical valley.”

...Workers are unquestionably vulnerable regarding their unique and elevated risks to chemical exposures. In Canada, occupational diseases and disabilities due to such exposures pose a major challenge to fulfilment of workers’ rights. Recent estimates show over 2.9 million workers are exposed to carcinogens and other hazardous substances at work, which is a gross underestimation.. ”

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Environmental Justice, environmental racism, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, labour union policies, mining industry, Occupational Health and Safety, Oil Sands, Ontario Federation of Labour, toxic chemicals** | [Leave a reply](#)

Employment and Job loss experience of Canada’s oil and gas, coal workers

Posted on **October 19, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

In September 2020, Canada’s oil and gas industry employed approximately 160,100 workers – a 0.9% increase from August 2020, but a 14% drop from September 2019. In that same one-year period, employment in the services sub-sector decreased by 29%; the pipelines sub-sector decreased by 30% and the exploration and production sub-sector increased by 3%. These statistics are based on Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, made available on the **[Employment and Labour Force Data Dashboard](#)** provided by **PetroLMI**, a labour market agency specializing in the oil and gas industry, jointly funded by government-industry. Their September 2020 blog is [here](#), summarizing the current trends ; an archive of PetroLMI reports re the trends and forecasts [is here](#) – most recently, **[The LNG Opportunity in Canada: Employment Prospects and Requirements](#)** (June 2020).

In addition to providing regular labour force data by industry, on September 22 Statistics Canada released two studies in its Economic Insights series: **[How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from the Oil and Gas” Industry](#)** and **[How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from coal mining](#)**. Both studies use data, (including age), from Statistics Canada’s Longitudinal Worker File, covering the period 1995 to 2016, for workers permanently laid off from those industries..

Job loss experience for oil and gas workers

[How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from the Oil and Gas” Industry](#) reports that “job loss leads to substantial and persistent earnings declines”, although “three years or five years after being displaced, a significant fraction of workers

displaced from this sector earn more than they did in the year prior to job loss.” Data show that re-employment has become progressively more difficult, and for workers laid-off in 2015 or 2016, less than two-thirds found paid employment in the following year, with most moving outside the oil and gas industry – construction being the most common sector for re-employment. CBC produced a summary of the Statistics Canada report in [an article here](#) , augmenting it with personal stories and commentary from economists.

Coal workers’ job loss experience

Similar analysis (the reports are authored by the same Statistics Canada economists) appears in ***[How Do Workers Displaced from Energy producing Sectors Fare after Job Loss? Evidence from coal mining](#)*** . Contrary to the trend for oil and gas workers, finding employment within a year of lay-off became easier for coal workers more recently: 67% for workers laid-off in 1995 compared to 89% for those laid-off in 2005 . However, regarding earnings loss, the report compares coal data with all industries, and states: “These numbers imply that about half of workers laid-off from coal mining and from other industries during the 2004-to-2011 period saw their annual wages and salaries drop by at least 30% in the short term. Since coal miners are paid higher-than-average wages the median declines in annual wages and salaries of coal miners displaced from 2004 to 2011 amounted to roughly \$14,800 (in 2016 dollars) in the short term, more than twice the median declines (of about \$6,100) experienced by other laid-off workers.” Conclusions are similar to those in the report on oil and gas workers: a transition to “green jobs” has not materialized, and “ for many coal miners and other workers, job loss leads to substantial and persistent earnings declines”, but, “the financial consequences of job loss are not uniform for all displaced workers. Three years after job loss or five years after job loss, a significant fraction of displaced workers earn more than they did in the year prior to job loss.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Coal Industry](#), [coal phase-out](#), [Job displacement](#), [layoffs](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [unemployment](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Saskatchewan respondents rank comparable salary and preserving home equity as most important factors in a Just Transition

Posted on **October 16, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A **provincial election campaign** is underway in Saskatchewan – a province with a strong oil and gas production industry, and where 72% of electricity comes from coal and gas. Although the conservative-leaning **Saskatchewan Party** led by Scott Moe is favoured to win the election on October 26th, a new report published by the Saskatchewan Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis on October 14 reveals that there is strong concern about climate change, and

surprising support for a shift to renewable energy in the province. [*Transition Time? Energy Attitudes in Southern Saskatchewan*](#) was written by professors from University of Toronto, in collaboration with Emily Eaton, Associate Professor at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan. It reviews the energy politics of the province briefly, and reports the responses of over 500 residents to a survey of five broad issues: climate change, transition, regional differences, energy production, and SaskPower.

While over 40% of respondents were worried about climate change, 50% disagreed that “it is necessary for Canada to phase out oil and gas production as our contribution to mitigating climate change”. 65% of respondents agreed that “Canada can continue to develop fossil fuels such as oil sands in Alberta and still meet its climate commitments” (only 18% disagreed). Regarding carbon pricing, 47% strongly disagreed that Saskatchewan needs a price on carbon emissions. (Saskatchewan is one of the provinces currently [fighting the federal carbon tax](#) in the Supreme Court).

Yet in a contradictory way, 60% of respondents supported a phase out of oil, gas and coal production in Saskatchewan – with 23% favouring a 10-year timetable for such a phase out. Even in oil-producing areas, half of the population agreed with phasing out fossil fuels, and 30% within 10 years or less. Respondents rated comparable salary and benefits, and maintaining equity in house/property values as the most important considerations in a Just Transition- more important than support and training to transition to new roles, and employment opportunities in your current community. Saskatchewan was one of the provinces visited by the federal Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, and the views of Saskatchewan citizens were reported in the Task Force’s 2019 report, [*What we Heard*](#).

The discussion which concludes the paper states that “it is clear that there is an urgent need for honest climate change leadership in the province. The fossil fuel industries have attempted to obstruct a transition to zero-carbon economies by suggesting that climate change can be tackled while continuing to produce fossil fuels, a belief widely held in Saskatchewan and propagated by both the government and the official opposition.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updating carbon pricing in Canada: PBO Report , Supreme Court case, and provincial opt-outs

Posted on **October 16, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 8, the Office of Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released its latest report on carbon pricing, [***Carbon pricing for the Paris target: Closing the gap with output-based pricing***](#) . The report concludes that the government's existing and announced policies and measures – including a carbon tax which rises to \$50 per tonne in 2022 and an [**Output-Based Pricing System \(OBPS\)**](#) will not be sufficient to allow Canada to meet its emissions target under the Paris Agreement – 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. The PBO models three complex scenarios to estimate that the level of the carbon price necessary to achieve the Paris target ranges from \$67 per tonne to between \$81 and \$239 per tonne.

A [**critique by Clean Prosperity**](#) , a Toronto NGO focused on carbon tax research and education, finds two of the PBO scenarios “unrealistic” and calls for a fourth approach, which transitions the industrial output-based pricing system to economy-wide pricing plus a border carbon adjustment. Clean Prosperity concludes: “The bottom line is that carbon pricing works and should continue to increase after 2022 at roughly the same level as today in order to help us meet our Paris targets.” Clean Prosperity promises to release its own modelling of such an approach “in the near future”.

The report was released while a constitutional challenge to the federal carbon pricing system is [**still before the Supreme Court**](#), and does not reflect the September 20 [**announcement**](#) that “The Government of Canada will stand down the federal carbon pricing system for industry in Ontario and New Brunswick as of a date in the future.” (that date and formal change to the systems to be determined in consultation with each province.)

Smart Prosperity (a University of Ottawa research centre) posted a [**blog**](#) and a report [***Ontario's Options: Evaluating How Provincial Carbon Pricing Revenues Can Improve Affordability***](#) on October 8 . Smart Prosperity has published a number of relevant working papers, including : [***Environmental Taxes and Productivity: Lessons from Canadian Manufacturing***](#) (April 2020); [***Border Carbon Adjustments in Support of Domestic Climate Policies: Explaining the Gap Between Theory and Practice***](#) (Oct. 2019) and [***Do Carbon Taxes Kill Jobs? Firm-Level Evidence from British Columbia***](#) in March 2019. Canada's Ecofiscal Commission also researched and published numerous reports ([**archived here**](#)) before it closed its doors in November 2019.

Posted in [**Uncategorized**](#) | Tagged [**B.C. Carbon Tax**](#), [**Carbon Pricing**](#), [**Carbon Tax**](#), [**output based pricing**](#) | [**Leave a reply**](#)

Covid recovery clouds World Energy Outlook, but IEA calls for

unprecedented changes to avoid lock-in to 1.65 degree temperatures

Posted on **October 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The IEA ***World Energy Outlook 2020***, the flagship publication of the International Energy Agency, was released on October 12, stating, “The Covid-19 pandemic has caused more disruption to the energy sector than any other event in recent history, leaving impacts that will be felt for years to come.” The report is a comprehensive discussion and analysis of those impacts, and attempts to model the crucial next 10 years of recovery. Modelling is provided for all energy sources – fossil fuels, renewables, nuclear – under four different scenarios, including a longer-than-expected Covid recovery and a **Sustainable Development Scenario**. Key highlights:

Solar is “king”: In 2020, global energy demand is forecast to fall by 5% overall: 8% in oil, 7% in coal and 3% in natural gas demand. Under the heading “Solar becomes the new King of electricity”, the report states: “Renewables grow rapidly in all our scenarios, with solar at the centre of this new constellation of electricity generation technologies. Supportive policies and maturing technologies are enabling very cheap access to capital in leading markets. With sharp cost reductions over the past decade, solar PV is consistently cheaper than new coal- or gasfired power plants in most countries, and solar projects now offer some of the lowest cost electricity ever seen.”

Questionable future for new Liquefied Natural Gas projects: For natural gas, “different policy contexts produce strong variations”. For the first time, the business as usual scenario for advanced economies shows a slight decline in gas demand by 2040. And “An uncertain economic recovery also raises questions about the future prospects of the record amount of new liquefied natural gas export facilities approved in 2019.” In certain scenarios, “the challenge for the gas industry is to retool itself for a different energy future. This can come via demonstrable progress with methane abatement, via alternative gases such as biomethane and low-carbon hydrogen, and technologies like carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS).”

Peak oil within sight despite growing importance of plastics manufacturing: The era of growth in global oil demand comes to an end within ten years, but the shape of the economic recovery is a key uncertainty. The report notes “The longer the (Covid) disruption, the more some changes that eat into oil consumption become engrained, such as working from home or avoiding air travel. However, not all the shifts in consumer behaviour disadvantage oil. It benefits from a near-term aversion to public transport, the continued popularity of SUVs and the delayed replacement of older, inefficient vehicles.” The analysis also considers the impact of plastics manufacturing on oil demand.

Inequities will persist or be made worse. “Reversing several years of progress, our analysis shows that the number of people without access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa is set to rise in 2020. Around 580 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lacked access to electricity in 2019....and

in addition, “a rise in poverty levels worldwide in 2020 may have made basic electricity services unaffordable for more than 100 million people who already had electricity connections”.

Structural change, not Covid, will bring lasting CO2 emissions decline: The economic downturn related to Covid has brought a temporary decline of 2.4 gigatonnes in annual CO2 emissions, although an accompanying decline in methane emissions is not clear. And emissions are expected to rebound. “The pandemic and its aftermath can suppress emissions, but low economic growth is not a low-emissions strategy. Only an acceleration in structural changes to the way the world produces and consumes energy can break the emissions trend for good.”.... “if today’s energy infrastructure continues to operate as it has in the past, it would lock in by itself a temperature rise of 1.65 °C.”

Finally, the report concludes by advocating a future path built on its **Sustainable Development Scenario** , calling for “unprecedented” actions, not just from government and business, but from individuals.

“Reaching net zero globally by 2050.... would demand a set of dramatic additional actions over the next ten years. Bringing about a 40% reduction in emissions by 2030 requires, for example, that low-emissions sources provide nearly 75% of global electricity generation in 2030 (up from less than 40% in 2019), and that more than 50% of passenger cars sold worldwide in 2030 are electric (from 2.5% in 2019). Electrification, massive efficiency gains and behavioural changes all play roles, as does accelerated innovation across a wide range of technologies from hydrogen electrolyzers to small modular nuclear reactors. No part of the energy economy can lag behind, as it is unlikely that any other part would be able to move at an even faster rate to make up the difference.

To reach net-zero emissions, governments, energy companies, investors and citizens all need to be on board – and will all have unprecedented contributions to make. The changes that deliver the emissions reduction in the SDS are far greater than many realise and need to happen at a time when the world is trying to recover from Covid-19.”

The full *World Energy Outlook 2020* is only available for purchase. An overview, FAQ’s, and related reports including modelling details and a methane tracker are all available [here](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [energy future](#), [energy industry](#), [Energy Infrastructure](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

\$320 million federal aid to Newfoundland oil and gas industry, yet layoffs continue

On October 8, both Suncor and Husky Energy **announced new layoffs** in their Newfoundland oil and gas operations. A week earlier, there was an **announcement by Irving Oil** that it would not proceed with the purchase of the Come by Chance oil refinery -yet another blow to the floundering Newfoundland industry. **"Here's what could happen if the Come By Chance refinery shuts its doors"** (CBC, Oct 8) estimates potential job losses of 1,400 jobs when spin-off impacts are considered, if the plant is closed. TradesNL, an umbrella organization of 16 building and construction trades unions in the province, which **released this reaction** to the news.

Unifor has been **lobbying for government aid** for months – and on September 16, the union organized a **public rally** calling for government support. On September 25, the federal minister of Natural Resources answered the calls for help by announcing a \$320 million aid package, to be targeted at safety, maintenance and upgrades, and at stimulating employment. In a **press release**, Unifor states: "Unifor expects to see some of the funding be directed at long-overdue maintenance onboard the Terra Nova and Hibernia offshore facilities where 750 members of Unifor Local 2121 work." The decisions on how the \$320 million will be spent will be guided by a **new Oil and Gas Industry Recovery Task Force**, appointed by the provincial government on September 25 to "focus on immediate actions required to sustain the offshore industry in Newfoundland and Labrador and provide suggestions for how best to utilize the \$320 million in funding from the Federal Government to maximize value for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians." To date, only the two co-Chairs have been appointed.

On September 24, the provincial government **also announced** "the establishment of a new offshore exploration initiative to provide companies with the incentive to drill more wells in the best prospects. This is a policy measure that will allow all future bid deposit forfeitures to be reinvested as received, resulting in an injection of hundreds of millions of dollars in support of growth in our offshore petroleum industry." The press release was accompanied by this statement from Siobhan Coady, Minister of Finance:

"The value of the oil and gas industry to our province cannot be overstated, nor can it be replaced by any other sector in our economy. Upwards to 30 per cent of our GDP, 13 per cent of our labour compensation and 10 per cent of all employment is attributed to this industry. We will support this industry in any way that we can, because it supports our province."

The ends to which the government and industry are prepared to go are hinted at in a recent blog by WWF on October 1: ***Canada Provides Funding for Oil And Gas Development In Newfoundland and Labrador amidst Federal Scientists' Critique of Flawed Environmental Assessment.***

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Newfoundland and Labrador, offshore oil and gas industry, Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Canada Investment Bank announces \$10 Billion plan for green infrastructure

Posted on **October 8, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The federal government's **Throne Speech** on September 23 set out priorities for economic recovery, with environmentalists and **labour commentators generally supportive**, on the condition that actual programs are launched and funded. The first step in that journey occurred on October 1, with a **press release from the Prime Minister's Office** and another **from the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB)**, announcing its Growth Plan, which will invest \$10 billion to build new green infrastructure over the next 3 years. Project investments will begin this year, focus on these five priority areas:

Clean power to support renewable generation and storage, and to transmit clean electricity between provinces, territories, and regions, including to northern and Indigenous communities. (\$2.5 billion)

Internet connectivity improvement for approximately 750,000 homes and small businesses in underserved communities (\$2 billion)

Large-scale building retrofits to increase energy efficiency (\$2 billion)

Agriculture irrigation projects to strengthen productivity (\$1.5 billion)

Accelerating the adoption of zero-emission buses and charging infrastructure (\$1.5 billion)

Slightly fuller descriptions are provided for each initiative in a **Background** from the Bank.

An **article** in *The Energy Mix* summarizes generally favourable reaction from environmental leaders, and a Climate Action Network CAN-Rac **statement** states: "There is still a long road ahead of us, with much more work to be done – we trust that this is only the first of many such announcements." Labour leaders are less enthusiastic because of the CIB public-private investment structure. The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) responded on October 2 with "**Privatization won't build sustainable infrastructure**", which opposes privatization, and calls for a recovery which invests in publicly-owned infrastructure, and which prioritizes social infrastructure in areas such as child care, long-term care and social housing.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Infrastructure**, **Green Investment** | **Leave a reply**

Energy efficiency policies could create 1.3 million job years in the U.S.; jobs require skills standards

Posted on **October 7, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) released three reports in September. ***Growing a Greener Economy: Job and Climate Impacts from Energy Efficiency Investments*** considers policy proposals for investments in homes and commercial buildings, electric vehicles (EVs), transportation infrastructure, manufacturing plants, small businesses, states, and cities. Those investments are projected to achieve 660,000 added job-years in the U.S. until 2023, and 1.3 million added job-years over the lifetime of the investments and savings. In addition, the proposed programs would result in 910 million tons of lifetime reduced carbon dioxide emissions and \$120 billion in lifetime energy bill savings for consumers. A 3-page ***Fact Sheet*** summarizes findings.

A second ACEEE report released in September identifies the skills required to ensure a workforce prepared to build and maintain highly energy efficient buildings. ***Training the Workforce for High-Performance Buildings: Enhancing Skills for Operations and Maintenance*** is summarized ***in this blog***. The report includes a literature review and responses to a survey of 111 building owners/managers, operators, tradespeople, technicians, and service providers. 92% of survey respondents ranked operations and maintenance (O&M) skills as most critical. The report provides an insight into the job duties and tasks, as well as an overview of the state of education and training in the U.S., and case studies of exemplary training programs. The main recommendation: utilities, program administrators, and policymakers should establish skill and credentialing standards. ***Training the Workforce for High-Performance Buildings: Enhancing Skills for Operations and Maintenance*** is available ***from this link*** (registration required).

Finally, ***Programs to Promote Zero-Energy New Homes and Buildings*** identifies and analyzes twenty programs in British Columbia, Washington, D.C., and 12 other U.S. states. British Columbia's Zero Energy Challenge is briefly highlighted- an incentive program and juried design competition for buildings built to the highest standard of the B.C. Building ***Energy Step Code***. (Much more detail is available at the ***Net-Zero Ready Energy Challenge website*** and the ***BC Energy Step Code website***, which includes case studies). The ACEEE report highlights as "particularly notable" the Energy Trust of Oregon commercial program, NYSERDA multifamily and commercial programs, and Efficiency Vermont programs addressing single-family housing, multifamily housing, modular housing, and commercial buildings.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BC Step Code, employment impacts, energy efficiency, Green Building, Green skills training, Skilled Workers** | **Leave a reply**

Working from home: health and safety concerns but no clear environmental benefit

Posted on **October 7, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Working from home has become a necessity for many during the pandemic, and the popular press has documented many examples of the trend – recently, for example **“Twitter’s plans to work from home indefinitely have prompted a wave of copycats.”** (Washington Post , October 1) . It is a complex issue which raises questions about the climate change potential of a permanent shift in working arrangements for knowledge workers, as well as the equity impacts and the health and safety impacts .

Researchers study the complexities and trade-offs, find little improvement in GHG’s

An October article by engineering professors O’Brien and Yazdani Aliabadi of Carleton University in Ottawa updates the state of research about: **“Does telecommuting save energy? A critical review of quantitative studies and their research methods”** (published in *Energy and Buildings* in October) . The authors consider the complexity of simultaneous analysis of “home office energy use, the Internet, long-term consumer choices, and other so-called rebound effects” on GHG emissions. They conclude that: “current datasets and methods are generally inadequate for fully answering the research question. While most studies indicate some benefit, several suggest teleworking increases energy use – even for the domain that is thought to benefit most: transportation.” The authors point to the need for future research which considers the impact of energy-saving trends already under way, including urban design, building energy efficiency, and electric vehicles for community.

Unions see workplace impacts, including lack of health and safety protections

In July, Canada’s National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) published **Working from Home: Considerations for Unions**, a 23-page overview to make unions aware of the important issues, including climate change impacts: using these headings: Use of technology ; Impacts on productivity ; Work-life balance ; Accessibility and equity ; Cost savings ; Environmental impact ; Health and safety ; Worker and community solidarity. The report, which uses the acronym “WFH” throughout, includes a useful bibliography of Canadian-focused articles. In October, NUPGE followed up with a detailed report, **Workers’ Health and Safety Protections and Working from Home** , which “considers how OHS and Workers’ Compensation (WC) laws

apply to WFH and identifies potential legal gaps. By surveying Canadian legislation, case law, government guidelines, and analogous examples, this paper seeks to help workers and unions identify potential areas of concern for workers' health and safety protection in WFH arrangements." It highlights the situation in Ontario, where section 3(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSa) specifically excludes telework, and contrasts Ontario with British Columbia, which offers more protection in its Workers' Compensation Act by defining "workplace" broadly, as "any place where a worker is or is likely to be engaged in any work and include[s] any vessel, vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in work." NUPGE's report also includes a thorough bibliography, and concludes by referring to the recommendations of the [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety online Fact Sheet](#), which recommends "the employer and the teleworker should have a written agreement to avoid complications, to ensure that both parties know who is responsible for what, and to ensure that the worker's health and safety protections are not reduced."

Another union-led discussion of this issue appeared on October 1, when the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) published a [Legal Guide to Telework](#) which briefly outlines the threats, and states: "To guarantee that such arrangements reconcile the need for flexibility (for both workers and employers) and safeguarding of labour rights and protections, the introduction and implementation of teleworking arrangements should be accompanied by key principles outlined in this discussion guide." Regulation and collective bargaining protections are seen as key. Specifically, the Guide calls for voluntary arrangements for employees, with an option of a physical space for workers who prefer it; regulation of working hours and the "right to disconnect" (already legislated in France and Italy) ; work equipment and costs should be the responsibility of the employer; safeguards for worker privacy; and respect for the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining for teleworkers.

Related articles: *Work and Climate Change Report* previously reported on articles related to the workers' perspective in "[Canadians report mixed feelings about working from home – but is it good for the environment? for workers?](#)". Tanguay and Lachapelle from Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) provide the Canadian context using data from the 2017 Statistics Canada General Social Survey in "[Remote work worsens inequality by mostly helping high-income earners](#)" (*The Conversation*, May 10), and a U.S. update appears in "[Telework mostly benefits white, affluent Americans – and offers few climate benefits](#)" (*The Conversation*, July 2020) . In "[Working from Home: Post-Coronavirus Will Give Bosses Greater Control of Workers' Lives](#)" (Jacobin, June 4) author Luke Savage cites examples of Canadian workplace policies from the Bank of Montreal and Shopify, and sums up the dangers of a permanent shift to working from home: "With every home an office and every office a home, the residual boundaries between work and private life will be gone for good. Still worse, the whole or even partial demise of the physical office space could become a catalyst for a deeper precarization of work wherein many workers are effectively remote contractors, their homes operating like quasi-franchises over which employers can exercise discretionary control with minimal restriction.... Socialists have long argued that bosses and markets exert far too much power and control over our time, our private lives, and our individual autonomy. Unless we resist the burgeoning shift to remote work, both are about to devour an even bigger share of all three."

Annual review of Jobs in Renewable Energy, with gender analysis

Posted on **October 2, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The 2020 Annual Review of ***Renewable Energy and Jobs*** was released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) on September 20 , showing a total of 11.5 million jobs globally in renewable energy in 2019 – led by 3.8 million jobs in the Solar photovoltaics (PV) sector, (a third of all renewable jobs) and 1.2 million in wind power. Asia accounted for 63% of total jobs in renewables, and China alone accounted for 38%. The report provides statistics regarding the subsectors, country case studies and geographic analysis, gender analysis, and growth trends. In addition, this year's review includes a special feature highlighting the importance of education and training policies to avoid skills shortages as renewable energy continues to expand. IRENA's [press release](#) summarizes the highlights.

The 2020 Annual Review continues the gender analysis begun with their 2019 publication, ***Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective*** . The 2020 Review repeats the gender balance comparison between renewables and the fossil fuel industry, as first reported in the 2019 report: 32% of renewables jobs held by women, as compared to 22% in fossil fuels .

Related reports include ***Wind Energy: A Gender Perspective*** (2020) by IRENA, and the ***Status Report on Gender Equality in the Energy Sector***, published in September by the International Energy Agency (IEA) and C3E. The report summarizes statistics on women in management, women on Boards of Directors, and women in STEM, covering a full range of energy companies, such as Exxon, Shell, and Encana as well as Canadian Solar, Eskom, and Vattenfall. C3E is an abbreviation for “Clean Energy, Education and Empowerment” and is part of the **Equal by 30** campaign, launched in 2018 at the 9th Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) in Copenhagen. Members include Canada, Italy, Sweden, Finland, UK, USA, Japan, Germany, France, and more than 80 energy companies.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Gender Equality](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's Just Transition Task Force as a model for energy and climate

policy discussion

Posted on **October 1, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Positive Energy** research program at the University of Ottawa released two new reports in September. First, **Addressing Polarization: What Works? A Case Study of Canada's Just Transition Task Force**, written by Brendan Frank with Sébastien Girard Lindsay. According to the



authors (p.26): “The primary aim of this case study was to identify specific attributes and processes of the Just Transition Task Force potentially conducive to depolarization over energy and climate issues in Canada To do so, we assessed whether the Task Force’s consultation process aligned with principles of procedural justice—consistency, neutrality, accuracy of information, correctability, representativeness and ethical commitment.” Unlike many other studies, this analysis took labour union views into consideration, insofar as it included a review of ENGO and labour organizations’ responses to Task Force activities.

The authors conclude:

“Several elements of the Task Force’s approach are worth building on and studying further to reduce the risk of polarized opinion over energy and climate issues in Canada. Specifically, this research suggests that anyone designing or leading similar task force processes should pursue opportunities to go beyond the technocratic dimensions of the policy problem, engage with stakeholders in both formal and informal settings, ensure that the composition of the task force is geographically and vocationally reflective of the groups it is consulting, and, crucially, avoid any perceptions of partisanship or politicization. Lastly, given the complexity of Canada’s climate and energy files, it is important to consider the timing of the consultations and situate any policy problem a task force is commissioned to address within the broader policy, political and economic context.”

A **two-page Brief** summarizes the findings and implications for decisionmakers. The authors also wrote “**Canada’s Just Transition Task Force can offer lessons for a green recovery**” (*The National Observer*, Sept.18), which emphasizes “Most important were the neutral, non-partisan

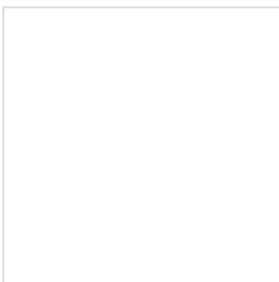
approach and the demonstration of ethical commitment of Task Force members, aided by a dynamic, iterative approach to consultations that took regional realities into consideration.”

Public Opinion on Oil and Gas and the Retraining of oil and gas workers

A survey was conducted as part of the Positive Energy research in Fall 2019, measuring public opinion on the present and future of the oil and gas industry in Canada, the role of federal and provincial governments, and issues related to transition. The authors summarized the findings in **“What Canadians think about the future of oil and gas”** in *Policy Options* (September 17), and in a 4-page Brief titled ***Polarization over Energy and Climate in Canada: Oil and Gas – Understanding Public Opinion.*** Some highlights: there is overwhelming agreement amongst Canadians that oil and gas is important to the current economy, regardless of party affiliation, ideology, region, gender or age. Agreement regarding the future importance of the industry diminishes according to the age of the respondent. When asked if phasing out oil and gas is necessary and whether a phase-out is unfair to people in producing provinces, opinion is fragmented overall and polarized along partisan and ideological lines (but not along regional, age or gender lines). **Overall, there is strong agreement (70%) with the statement: “Canada needs to invest tax dollars into retraining workers as the country addresses climate change.** Positive Energy has conducted surveys of public opinion since 2015, [compiled here](#) . **“On Energy and climate we’re actually not so polarized”** appeared in *Policy Options* in January 2020, reporting on attitudes to carbon tax and pipeline construction, among other topics.

The Positive Energy project at the University of Ottawa is now in its second phase, and has published a number of studies previously, including these, which flew under the radar when released in the early days of the pandemic. ***Addressing Polarization: What Works? The Alberta Climate Leadership Plan*** (March 2020) finds that while the Climate Leadership Plan was polarizing within Alberta, “it opened a policy window across the country. Many of Canada’s subsequent energy and climate policies would not have been possible without it.” The authors conclude that the Climate Leadership Plan was a success in terms of agenda setting and policy development, but a failure of implementation and communication.

What is Transition: The Two Realities of Energy and Environmental Leaders in Canada (March 2020), summarized in **“Can Language drive polarization in the fight against climate change?”** in *The Hill Times* (April 2020) . Of this study, it is worth pointing out that the 40 energy and environmental leaders interviewed about their use and interpretation of the term “transition” did not include any labour leaders. (“interviewees were drawn from the energy and environmental communities, including from industry, policy, regulatory, non-government, research and Indigenous organizations”) .

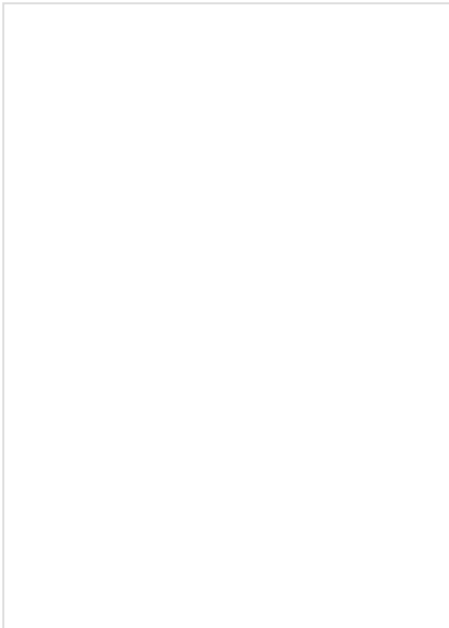


The [Positive Energy website](#) provides access to their publications since 2015.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta Climate Leadership Plan](#), [Canadian Climate Policy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Just Transition Task Force](#), [provincial climate policies](#), [public opinion](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

North Sea offshore oil workers rank job security as most important factor in a Just Transition

Posted on **October 1, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Three environmental groups in the U.K. have released a new report on September 29: ***Offshore: Oil and gas workers' views on industry conditions and the energy transition***. The report summarizes the views of 1,383 workers in the North Sea oil and gas industry (representing 4.5% of the workforce), as provided in a survey conducted in the summer of 2020 by [Friends of the Earth Scotland](#), [Greenpeace UK](#), and the less well-known, London-based [Platform](#). In addition to the worker's responses, the report summarizes the economic and working conditions of North Sea offshore oil and gas workers, includes case studies of the personal experiences of eight workers, and makes recommendations for government action. In the final call to action, the three environmental groups invite energy workers, unions, and others to participate in a planned consultation process across the UK, with workshops where energy workers can draft policy demands for a transition that works for them.

Almost 35% of respondents identified themselves as union members, – the two largest unions being [RMT-OILC](#) (52.5%) and [Unite](#) (36%). In response to the report, RMT issued [this press](#)

[release](#), which states: “The skills and expertise of offshore oil and gas workers are key to a Just Transition.... To hear this strong, pro-worker, pro-trade union message from influential environmental groups is a significant moment in the debate which operators, contractors and Governments must listen to and act on. We applaud Platform, FoE Scotland and Greenpeace for taking this initiative and RMT will continue to work with them and like-minded NGOs in the fight for action to protect offshore jobs and skills from an unjust transition.”

Workers reveal an appetite for change, fueled by a desire for more job security

Selected survey results show:

- 42.8% of oil and gas workers have been made redundant or furloughed since March 2020;
- Satisfaction with health and safety standards was most commonly rated 3/5;
- 81.7% said they would consider moving to a job outside of the oil and gas industry- only 7% said they would not.
- The most important consideration for those willing to transition outside the oil and gas industry was job security (58%). Second most important, at 21%, was pay level.
- When asked what part of the energy sector they would be willing to retrain for and move to, 53% chose Offshore wind 53%; 51% Renewables ; 38% Rig decommissioning ; 26% Carbon capture and storage . 20% would also consider moving outside the energy sector.

Based on these responses, the report makes recommendations for three key areas of action: 1. Consultation with workers: “a representative section of the workforce should be involved in participatory policy-making, where workers are able to help determine policy, in addition to engagement with trade unions”; 2. Immediate government intervention and regulation to “improve job security and working conditions for workers in the oil and gas sector, to boost morale, improve quality of life, and mitigate the risk of workers leaving the energy sector altogether”; and 3. “Address barriers to entry and conditions within the renewables industry, including creating sufficient job opportunities.”



Platform is a U.K.-based environmental and social justice collective with campaigns focused on the global oil industry, fossil fuel finance and climate justice and energy democracy. Readers may remember that Platform partnered with Friends of the Earth Scotland and Oil Change International, to publish ***Sea Change: Climate Emergency, Jobs and Managing the Phase-Out of UK Oil and Gas Extraction*** , released on May 2019 and highlighted by WCR [here](#) .

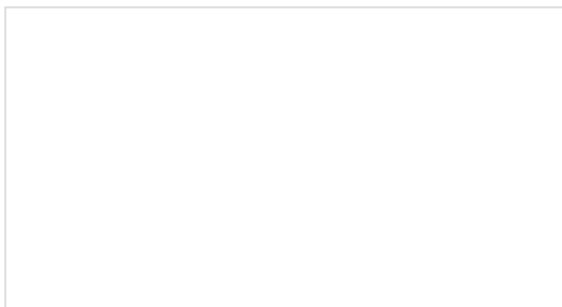
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Canada Pension Plan continues to risk Canadians' retirement savings – this time, fracking investments in Colorado

Posted on **September 30, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board continues to display a hypocritical disregard for its own **sustainability principles**, as reported in “**CPPIB's fracking operation in U.S. raises questions**” in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* on September 27. The *Globe and Mail* describes the fracking activities and political donations of Crestone Peak Resources, a company 95% owned by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, and formed out of the ashes of Encana. The article reports that Crestone spent more than US\$600,000 to support pro-business candidates who opposed tougher regulation of fracking in the 2018 Colorado state elections. Friends of the Earth Canada were involved in the *Globe and Mail* investigation and has posted **unique information here** .

The Energy Mix also published “**Canadians Don't Want This: Fracking Company Owned By Canada Pension Plan Spent \$600,000 To Influence Colorado State Elections**” (September 30). The article quotes Professor Cynthia Williams, Osler Chair in Business Law at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, who states: “It's a “perfectly correct statement of corporate law” to say that CPP and Crestone are separate companies”, ... But it's “an imperfectly correct answer to the ethical questions about CPPIB using its heft, based on the involuntary monetary contributions of millions of citizens and other people working in Canada, to try to shape politics to support its oil and gas investments, in Colorado, even as the Government of Canada has committed to working to transition to a low-carbon economy.”



Professor Williams is the author of ***Troubling Incrementalism: Canadian Pension Plan Fund and the Transition to a Low-carbon Economy*** , published in September by the **Canada Climate Law Initiative**. The report discusses CPPIB investments in fossil fuels in the last six years in detail, including fracking companies in Ohio and the Crestone company in Colorado, as well as oil sands expansion in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The report concludes by calling on CPP Investments to fundamentally re-evaluate its role, stating:

“Our view is that CPP Investments should be, and could be, making a substantial contribution to Canada’s future economy by supporting new technologies, new companies, and the just transition to a low-carbon economy. We argue that doing so would be more consistent with its statutory mandate to manage the assets of the CPP Fund in the best interests of the twenty million Canadian contributors and beneficiaries than is its current approach. It would also be more consistent with its common-law fiduciary duties, which require intergenerational equity.”

What can Canadians do to move their pension funds away from fossil fuels?

Friends of the Earth Canada offers an online letter to Heather Munroe-Blum (Chair, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board) and Mark Machin (CEO), with five recommendations arising from the Crestone investigation. FOE is also conducting open **informational meetings about the CPP investments** throughout Canada in October.

Shift Action is a project of Tides Canada which advocates for environmentally-responsible pension management. Their **press release** (Sept. 29) cites the Crestone investment, highlights the **nearly \$12 billion** invested in Chinese coal mines and other fossil fuel companies (double its clean energy investments), and warns: “The CPP is betting Canadian retirement savings against the unstoppable transition to a clean energy economy, and fueling the global climate crisis in the process.” In **an interview** published in *The Energy Mix*, Shift Action’s Executive Director, Adam Scott urges Canadians: “One of the best ways to have an impact in this crisis is to make sure the funds that are invested on your behalf are invested in solutions to climate change, not in the problem. There’s a **tool on our website** that makes it easy for all Canadians to send a note to their pension funds asking what they’re doing on climate risk and how they’re investing.” Shift Action published a detailed guide to engagement in June 2019, ***Canada’s Pension Funds and Climate Risk: A Baseline For Engagement***. It concludes with tips which include: “Each of Canada’s major pension plans has a different structure for governance and accountability. Beneficiaries should understand this structure and have a clear sense of their pension plan’s sponsors and governance model. Beneficiaries should engage with all relevant points of contact, for example a union pension representative or a government appointed pension trustee.”

And finally, for pension fund trustees, the **Canada Climate Law Initiative** flagship initiative is the **Canadian Climate Governance Experts** program, which offers “pro bono sessions on effective corporate governance to address climate-related financial risks and opportunities to corporate boards of directors and Canadian pension fund boards.”

“Historic” investments in electric vehicles for Canada: Unifor and Ford, Fiat Chrysler agreements (updated)

Posted on **September 28, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a September 28 [press release](#), the Canadian union for auto workers, Unifor, reports that members at the Ford Motor Company voted 81% overall in favour of new three year collective agreements “that include \$1.95 billion in investments to bring battery electric vehicle (BEV) production to Oakville and a new engine derivative to Windsor, along with other significant gains.... . This agreement is perfect timing and positions our members at the forefront of the electric vehicle transformation, as the Oakville plant will be a key BEV supplier to the North American and European Union markets”. Under the heading, “Making History in Challenging Times”, the [Ford Bargaining Report Summary](#) reports that the retooling is scheduled to begin in 2024, with the first BEV vehicles forecasted to roll off the assembly line in 2026, “and hopefully sooner.” Also, “Through this conversion, Oakville will become the first mass production BEV plant in Canada – and one of only a few currently in North America. Ford’s investment is also the biggest single facility investment in the auto sector since 2015 in Canada.”

The [Bargaining Summary](#) highlights changes in wages, pensions, and all topics, including that the company and union agreed on the advantages of having a union Workplace Environmental Representative, and that additional training will be offered to the workplace environmental representatives “related to Global Plant Action”. Unifor and Ford also agreed to develop an Anti-Racism Action Plan, and to establish a new Racial Justice Advocate position which will offer support to those who face anti-Black and anti-Indigenous discrimination.

Media coverage of the agreement appeared in the *Toronto Star* on **September 20**, pointing out that the federal and provincial governments will also contribute to the re-tooling of the Oakville plant. On September 22, the Star also published “[Justin Trudeau’s Liberals are betting that electric vehicles can recharge the economy. But a vision is not a plan](#)”, summarizing some of the policy context of the decisions. And beyond the benefit to the auto manufacturing sector, on September 17, Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources was making the case that “[Mining gives Canada a competitive advantage in electric vehicle market](#)” arguing that “we are the only nation in the western hemisphere with an abundance of cobalt, graphite, lithium and nickel, the minerals needed to make next-generation electric batteries.”

\$1.5 billion investment for EV production in Fiat Chrysler agreement

Following the agreement with Ford Canada, Unifor announced the ratification of 3-year contract with Fiat Chrysler (October 19 [press release](#)), including a \$1.5 billion commitment to electric vehicle production at the Windsor Ontario plant. Jerry Dias states: “This year’s Auto Talks will go down in history as a transformational moment for the Canadian auto sector. Years of government neglect, job loss and worker despair is quickly turning to optimism, hope and a very bright future.”

He repeated this message in an October 20 OpEd in the *Toronto Star* “**A new green auto strategy for Canada**”

The **Unifor summary document** includes all the agreement provisions, and includes the full text of the Product and Investment Commitment Letter, describing the plans for Windsor:

“In addition to the continued production of the current Pacifica and Voyager/Grand Caravan products, including the PHEV, AWD and ICE models, FCA confirms the intention to install a new multi-energy vehicle architecture (including Plug-In Hybrid Electric (PHEV) and/or Battery Electric (BEV) capability) and at least one new model on that architecture, contingent on the necessary agreements in partnership with the Company, the Union, and both Federal and Provincial governments which includes the implementation of this collective agreement and government financial support for the associated investments. With that joint commitment, the Company’s intention is to add the necessary assembly tooling and equipment to manufacture electrified vehicles for future models, currently planned from the 2025 model year. The total impact of this investment and product plan is estimated at 5,700 secured or new jobs by 2024 returning to a 3 shift operation. Potential workforce increase of 2,000 employees over today’s active on-roll employment. Investment related to Windsor Assembly: CDN \$1.35B to \$1.50B.”

In addition to the headline-grabbing investment commitment for new Electric Vehicle production, the agreement also enhances training for Workplace Environmental Representatives, and increases the frequency of the existing union-management business review meetings. “The parties agree to review company product plans and business forecasts, including on electric, autonomous, connected vehicle and component parts development.”

Labour’s perspective on electric vehicles

Unifor’s Road Map for a Fair, Inclusive and Resilient Economic Recovery, published in the summer, states: “The government must also take the lead in supporting zero-emission vehicle manufacturing and preparing the economy for electrified transportation through targeted subsidies and investment in battery technology innovation. A long-overdue National Auto Strategy, for instance, would help merge Canada’s innovation agenda, trade policy, skills training and infrastructure development to foster a modern supply chain for EV components and parts, leading to final assembly. This need not only apply to light duty, passenger vehicles but other modes of surface transportation, including mass transit, commercial trucking and logistics, student transportation, taxis and light rail. Once in place, such a strategy could serve as a rubric for all transportation sectors and industries.”

These points are also made by Angelo DiCaro, Research Director for Unifor, in an essay titled “**Canada’s auto sector revival will take more than wishful thinking. We need a plan**”, featured in the August/September issue of *The Monitor*, and at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives website. DiCaro reiterates the call for a national auto strategy, and sketches out key steps for a national Electric Vehicle strategy, starting with Step 1, a “comprehensive mapping of existing capacities and materials needed to forge a complete supply chain for EVs and component parts in

Canada”, followed by setting domestic production targets for vehicle assembly and component manufacturing.

“Union workers are strong allies for electric vehicles, as Canada’s Unifor demonstrates”

appeared in the industry newsletter *Electrek* in June 2020, quoting favourable statements re EV manufacturing from both Unifor and the United Auto Workers(UAW) in the U.S. The UAW published their report, ***Taking the High Road: Strategies for a fair EV Future*** in January, making specific policy recommendations, and stating: “The UAW rejects the idea promoted by climate change deniers that fuel efficiency and environmental regulations lead to closed plants and lost jobs. Fuel-efficient vehicles, clean energy, clean manufacturing, renewable energy and other advanced technologies are an opportunity to create new middle-class jobs with good pay, good benefits, and economic security.”

More recently, the American Center for Progress released ***“Electric Vehicles Should Be a Win for American Workers”*** on Sept. 23 . It concludes: “Federal funding to incentivize consumer demand, drive manufacturer investments, and build out electric vehicle infrastructure should be made contingent on key job quality and domestic content standards. In structuring funding, policymakers must be realistic about present EV capacity while also ensuring that taxpayer dollars do not subsidize low-road employers or erode job quality standards in the broader industry. By designing federal policies that encourage both rapid vehicle electrification and the creation of high-quality, good-paying domestic jobs throughout the EV ecosystem, policymakers can satisfy the priorities of climate and labor advocates and ensure economic prosperity for future generations. In a period of significant economic and environmental challenges, the transition to EVs presents a powerful and positive opportunity to improve conditions for both American workers and the climate.”

Electric vehicle policy in Canada

In response to the news of the Unifor/Ford agreement, Clean Energy Canada published a Media Brief: ***“What is a zero emission vehicle standard and why does Canada need one?”*** . It notes **research from the International Council on Clean Transportation** that found that Canada is the 12th largest vehicle producer in the world but is responsible for only 0.4% of global EV production. Assessing that Canada has a EV supply problem, Clean Energy Canada recommends a ZEV standard as the solution, rather than a voluntary standard or consumer incentives. “A ZEV standard is a supply-focused policy that requires a gradually rising percentage of vehicles sold by auto manufacturers to be zero-emission (i.e. battery-electric, plug-in hybrid or hydrogen fuel cell vehicles). While purchase incentives help drive demand, ZEV standards secure supply.” Currently, only British Columbia and Quebec have ZEV standards in place – with B.C. having passed the ***Zero Emissions Vehicle Act*** in May 2019, requiring automakers to meet increasing annual levels of EV sales reaching 10% of new light-duty vehicle sales by 2025, 30% by 2030 and 100% by 2040. On July 30, B.C. followed up with **new ZEV regulations under the Act** which set phased-in annual targets and other compliance requirements, as well as a ZEV advisory council to be comprised of industry, ENGOs, local governments, First Nations, infrastructure providers and academics, to provide input into the ministry’s EV programming and policies .

The [Clean Energy Media Brief](#) links to many supporting documents, including a recent academic discussion, “[Which plug-in electric vehicle policies are best? A multi-criteria evaluation framework applied to Canada](#)” which appeared in the June 2020 issue of *Energy Research and Social Science*.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [electric vehicle battery manufacture](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Fiat Chrysler](#), [Ford Motor Co.](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Lithium Ion Batteries](#), [Unifor](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Canada’s Speech from the Throne sketches out its plans for Covid recovery in pale green

Posted on **September 24, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Liberal government opened the new session of Parliament on September 23 with a Speech from the Throne titled [A Stronger and More Resilient Canada](#). Acknowledging the perilous moment of history in which it was delivered, Catherine Abreu of [Climate Action Network Canada](#) states: “Today the Government of Canada delivered the most progressive speech from the throne heard in a generation. The promises made acknowledged the inequalities and vulnerabilities that have been laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic and spoke to the scale of action needed to confront them. Of course, we’ve heard similar promises before from this government. It is the policy and investment decisions made in the coming months that will determine whether the spirit articulated in this historic speech is turned into meaningful action.”

Stating that “this is not the time for austerity”, the Speech emphasizes measures to deal with the impact of Covid-19. General summaries by the [CBC here](#) and the *Toronto Star* are [here](#); Trish Hennessy of [the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#) summarizes and critiques the speech with a focus on inequality, the workplace, and health care. The Canadian Union of Public Employees response appears in “[Promises are good Proof is better](#)”. The [Canadian Labour Congress reaction](#) is supportive of the Speech and highlights provisions of greatest impact to workers, including the government’s promise to create one million jobs through “direct investments in the social sector and infrastructure, immediate training to quickly skill up workers, and incentives for employers to hire and retain workers.” Other key promises: the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy will be extended through to summer 2021; modernization of the Employment Insurance system will address the growth of the self-employed and gig workers; and yet again, “significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system “.

From the [Speech from the Throne](#): The section titled, [Taking action on extreme risks from climate change](#)” :

“...Climate action will be a cornerstone of our plan to support and create a million jobs across the country..... The Government will immediately bring forward a plan to exceed Canada’s 2030 climate goal. The Government will also legislate Canada’s goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

As part of its plan, the Government will:

Create thousands of jobs retrofitting homes and buildings, cutting energy costs for Canadian families and businesses;

Invest in reducing the impact of climate-related disasters, like floods and wildfires, to make communities safer and more resilient;

Help deliver more transit and active transit options;

And make zero-emissions vehicles more affordable while investing in more charging stations across the country.

The Government will launch a new fund to attract investments in making zero-emissions products and cut the corporate tax rate in half for these companies to create jobs and make Canada a world leader in clean technology. The Government will ensure Canada is the most competitive jurisdiction in the world for clean technology companies.

Additionally, the Government will:

Transform how we power our economy and communities by moving forward with the Clean Power Fund, including with projects like the Atlantic Loop that will connect surplus clean power to regions transitioning away from coal;

And support investments in renewable energy and next-generation clean energy and technology solutions.

Canada cannot reach net zero without the know-how of the energy sector, and the innovative ideas of all Canadians, including people in places like British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Government will:

Support manufacturing, natural resource, and energy sectors as they work to transform to meet a net zero future, creating good-paying and long-lasting jobs;

And recognize farmers, foresters, and ranchers as key partners in the fight against climate change, supporting their efforts to reduce emissions and build resilience.

The Government will continue its policy of putting a price on pollution, while putting that money back in the pockets of Canadians. It cannot be free to pollute.

This pandemic has reminded Canadians of the importance of nature. The Government will work with municipalities as part of a new commitment to expand urban parks, so that everyone has access to green space. This will be done while protecting a quarter of Canada's land and a quarter of Canada's oceans in five years, and using nature-based solutions to fight climate change, including by planting two billion trees.

The Government will ban harmful single-use plastics next year and ensure more plastic is recycled. And the Government will also modernize the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

When the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration was closed by a previous government, Canada lost an important tool to manage its waters. The Government will create a new Canada Water Agency to keep our water safe, clean, and well-managed. The Government will also identify opportunities to build more resilient water and irrigation infrastructure.

At the same time, the Government will look at continuing to grow Canada's ocean economy to create opportunities for fishers and coastal communities, while advancing reconciliation and conservation objectives. Investing in the Blue Economy will help Canada prosper."

Reaction to climate change provisions:

From *The Tyee*, "[What's in This Throne Speech Stew?](#) Straight from the pandemic cookbook, it's light on green garnishes. No election on the menu." Reporters at *The National Observer* agree in "[Liberal throne speech targets COVID-19 over climate](#)" (Sept. 23), stating: "Though the Trudeau Liberals promised an "ambitious green agenda" ahead of the throne speech, the vision for the coming months unveiled Wednesday focused more on COVID-19 and its economic fallout."

Their compilation of reaction from green groups echoes the cautious optimism in a [Greenpeace Canada statement](#) and from [West Coast Environmental Law](#) – which commends "promising signals" but asks "how the climate goals set out in the Throne Speech tally with the federal government's continued support for climate-destructive projects such as the Trans Mountain pipeline and tankers project."

In the lead up to the Throne Speech, many green groups had lobbied with their specific proposals : a few examples include an [Open Letter to Ministers coordinated by the Climate Action Network](#); the [One Earth One Voice campaign](#); and the Draft Throne Speech offered by [Greenpeace Canada](#).

The National Observer highlighted the proposals of the Smart Prosperity Institute in an Opinion Piece by Mike Moffatt and John McNally , "[Want a green, inclusive recovery? You can't rush that](#)" (Sept. 24). They condense the arguments from an earlier blog post, "[Making a green recovery inclusive for all Canadians](#)" which lays out specific green recovery proposals but warns that a "full recovery" cannot begin until Covid-19 has been brought under control: "The risks of infection from bringing people together, potentially leading to future lockdowns, are too great."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Climate Policy](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Covid 19](#), [Green Recovery](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations and research from Scotland's Just Transition Commission

Posted on **September 16, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The **Just Transition Commission in Scotland** released an *Interim Report* in February 2020, and has continued to provide research as it works towards its Final Report and recommendations for a green and fair transition. In August, the Commission released *Just Transition: Comparative Perspectives*, which provides both theoretical discussion and case studies of JT experiences in Canada, Germany, Peru, Norway and the U.S.. In a section on Lessons Learned, the report states that the experiences of Norway's oil and gas industry, and of Peru, are the most relevant to the Scottish situation.

In July, the Just Transition Commission released its *Advice for a Green Recovery* from Covid-19. Subsequently, Government's measures were announced in early September, in *Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2020-2021*. The government's press release highlights "nearly £1.6 billion to directly support up to 5,000 jobs and tackle fuel poverty". Specific commitments include £100 million for a Green Job Fund; £60 million to help industrial and manufacturing sectors decarbonise, grow and diversify; boosting youth employment opportunities in nature and land-based jobs by expanding apprenticeship and undergraduate schemes in public agencies"....; and £70 million to improve refuse collection infrastructure, improve recycling, and achieve a circular economy. The plan received **lukewarm reaction** from Friends of the Earth Scotland.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Recovery**, **Just Transition**, **Scotland** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Citizens Climate Assembly report reveals a window on public opinion

Posted on **September 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 10, after meetings which spanned 5 months and the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the **Citizens' Climate Assembly** issued its final, 556-page report, *The Path to Net-Zero*, with over 50 recommendations on how the U.K. should reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The 108 member group, ages 16 to 79, was selected to be representative of the country in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, education, rural versus urban, geography and level of concern

about climate change. Their recommendations, summarized by *The Guardian* [here](#) and by *Carbon Brief* [here](#), were built on agreed-upon principles that included urgency and fairness – “Fair to people with jobs in different sectors. Fair to people with different incomes, travel preferences and housing arrangements. Fair to people who live in different parts of the UK”. In general, participants preferred protecting and restoring nature over technological solutions, and stressed the value of ‘co-benefits’ of improved health and local community and economic benefits. Specific recommendations included measures to decarbonize transport (including a ban on SUV’s and a frequent flyer tax for air travelers) and a reduction in meat and dairy consumption by between 20% and 40%.

The recommendations will be tabled and debated in the U.K. House of Commons, and the six select committee chairs that commissioned the report will provide responses. A [press release](#) by the Assembly describes the process further.

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Scientists actually DO know how climate change contributes to California’s wildfires

Posted on **September 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Despite Donald [Trump’s off-hand dismissal of climate scientists](#) on his visit to California’s apocalyptic wildfires, there are plenty of scientists who ACTUALLY *DO* know how climate change contributes to these disasters. Below are some recent examples of this well-established relationship and impacts.

“[Climate change is increasing the likelihood of extreme autumn wildfire conditions across California](#)” appeared in *Environmental Research Letters* in August. One of the co-authors, Daniel Swain, writes an ongoing blog, [Weather West](#), which chronicles and explains “California weather and climate perspectives” from his perch at the University of California at L.A. Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. The Union of Concerned Scientists have also posted an [Infographic: Wildfires and Climate Change](#), which summarizes trends, impacts and costs, including health costs.

Some mainstream media is giving voice to climate scientists

⋮

“How Can We Plan for the Future in California?” by transplanted Canadian climate scientist Leah Stokes, appeared in *The Atlantic* (Aug. 23). She is also interviewed by *Democracy Now* in **“This is climate change : West Coast Fires Scorch Millions of Acres & Blot Out the Sun”** (Sept. 10).

“The Burning West” special feature compilation of articles from *Inside Climate News*, which includes **“California and Colorado Fires May Be Part of a Climate-Driven Transformation of Wildfires Around the Globe”** (Aug. 22) and **“10 Days of Climate Extremes: From Record Heat to Wildfires to the One-Two Punch of Hurricane Laura”** (Aug. 29), and **“A Siege of 80 Large, Uncontained Wildfires Sweeps the Hot, Dry West”** (Sept. 9), which catalogues the fire events to date.

“A Climate Reckoning in Fire-Stricken California” in the *New York Times* (Sept. 10, updated Sept. 14)

“These Are Climate Fires”: Oregon Firefighter Ecologist Says Devastating Blazes Are a Wake-Up Call” in *Democracy Now* (Sept. 14)

“Climate change is worsening California’s hellish wildfires” in *Yale Climate Connections* (Aug. 24).

“California wildfires getting bigger, moving faster than ever” in the *Toronto Star* (Sept. 10)

“Climate grief is burning across the American West” in *Wired* (Sept. 14)

Wildfire Impact on workers

On the Front Lines: Climate Change Threatens the Health of America’s Workers was released in July by the Natural Resources Defense Council, and documents the “myriad threats” posed by wildfires, explaining “Increases in wildfires will put more emergency responders and recovery workers in dangerous situations and expose more outdoor and indoor workers to unhealthy wildfire smoke.” The report also explains some of the mental health aftermath and provides dozens of links to scientific research.

“Pandemic, Wildfires & Heat Wave: Undocumented Farmworkers Face “Triple Threat” as West Coast Burns” in *Democracy Now* (Sept. 14).

“A Human Tragedy”: Wildfires Reveal California’s Reliance on Incarcerated Firefighters” in *Democracy Now* (August 25).

“In the US West Scorched by Wildfires, We Can Barely Breathe. It’s Going to Get Worse” from the Union of Concerned Scientists (Sept. 14) – an overview which briefly discusses outdoor workers and relies on **a 2016 article from Climate Change** to conclude: “All told, there are

roughly 4.8 million outdoor workers across the western US who are exposed to wildfire smoke in an average year.”

“[California Bill Clears Path For Ex-Inmates To Become Firefighters](#)” at NPR (Sept. 11) , describing [AB2147](#) , a Bill which lets prisoners who had worked in California’s prisoner-firefighting program petition the courts to dismiss their convictions after completing their sentences.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [California](#), [climate change and health](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green skills training for recovery

Posted on [September 14, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Many green recovery proposals have recognized the importance of energy efficiency and retrofitting. Below, some examples from voices within the Canadian building sector itself, focusing on green skills training:

Workforce 2030 is a practical initiative launched in Toronto on July 23 – a cross-sectoral coalition of employers, educators, and workers in Ontario’s building sector, coordinated by [The Atmospheric Fund \(TAF\)](#) and [Canada Green Building Council \(CaGBC\)](#). John Cartwright, President of Toronto and York Region Labour Council, and a member of the 14-person Advisory Council states: “Workforce 2030 is a collaboration that will increase the capacity of the skilled trades to meet the low-carbon standards required in the built form of tomorrow. We need to continuously improve low-carbon skills for the entire sector, deepen our commitment to high-quality training, and grow our workforce through equity and inclusion.” The [Statement of Principles](#) outlines values of collaboration, accountability, and equity. More details are [here](#).

Canada’s Green Building Council published [Ready, Set, Grow: How the green building industry can re-ignite Canada’s economy](#) in May 2020. Some of its proposals are endorsed in Efficiency Canada’s [Pre-budget submission to the Government of Canada](#) (August 5) – specifically, a call to allocate \$500 million (\$1000 per employee) to access existing training programs, and a further investment of \$1 billion to attract and train new people to create energy efficient and green building careers. The pre-Budget submission states: “The multiple benefits of energy efficiency can help Canada manage both demand and supply shocks from COVID-19 while improving the operation of our buildings to reduce virus transmission.” Its recommendations also include \$1.5 billion in government funding to expand green building workforce training.

In September, Efficiency Canada released [Tiered Energy Codes: Best Practices for Code Compliance](#) , which “explores the evolution of energy codes, reviews compliance regimes, and provides high-level recommendations to assist in the compliant expansion of advanced tiered energy codes nationwide.” As the paper explains, codes and practices vary widely across jurisdictions in Canada. The report points to the British Columbia Step Code, B.C. Hydro projects,

and Toronto Ontario as best practice models. Regarding training, it focuses on the training needs of builders and building inspectors, rather than on the skilled trades.

The Pembina Institute published recommendations for British Columbia, in ***Accelerating B.C.'s economic recovery through building retrofits Submission to the Government of British Columbia*** (July 28). One of its Guiding Principles is : “Build the workforce: Partner with public and private organizations to deliver subsidized training programs, develop design guides, conduct integrated design sessions (charrettes), create data tools (e.g. remote energy audits), etc. Provide retraining support for impacted economic sectors to join the retrofit economy workforce.”

Much more detail is provided by Pembina in ***Training up for deep retrofits*** (July), which enumerates what green skills are needed, how governments can help, and where existing training opportunities are currently available in Canada. The Pembina Institute is one of the partners in the ***Reframed Initiative***, which works with designers, builders, owners, financiers, and policy-makers to scale up deep retrofits.

The Toronto Atmospheric Fund, partner in Workforce 2030, submitted a formal ***Presentation to the federal Pre-Budget Consultations***, calling for the federal government to invest at least \$50 billion over five years in climate-focused clean stimulus measures, including at least \$27 billion in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings, with at least \$2 billion over 5 years to support deep retrofits that maximize carbon reduction and community benefits.

On July 22, the ***Task Force for a Resilient Recovery released its Interim Report*** , costing out five key policy directions for the next five years, with a total price tag of just under \$50 billion. The Task Force lists key actions and actors to achieve five broad goals: “Invest in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings; Jumpstart Canada’s production and adoption of zero-emission vehicles; Go big on growing Canada’s clean energy sectors; Invest in the nature that protects and sustains us; Grow clean competitiveness and jobs across the Canadian economy . As part of #1, investment in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings, the Task Force calls for “investing \$1.25 billion in workforce development for energy efficiency and climate resiliency, including for enhancing access to training programs and for developing new approaches.” The Task Force Final Report is scheduled for release on September 16 at their ***website*** .

Seven renewable energy co-ops send a 9-page ***Letter*** to federal ministers on June 24 , titled “Federal Post COVID 19 Recovery Stimulus to Unlock Community Investment in Clean Energy”. While their suggestions focused on clean community power , they also called for incentive grants of \$100 million over 5 years for community- financed mass, deep retrofits of community, institutional, and multi-residential buildings. Participating co-ops include the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-op (OREC)/CoEnergy, SES Solar Co-operative Ltd. in Saskatoon, Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative in Calgary area, Colchester-Cumberland Wind Field Inc. in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, the Solar Power Investment Co-operative of Edmonton, Wascana Solar Co-op in Regina, and SolarShare in Toronto.

Posted in ***Uncategorized*** | Tagged ***Green Building, Green Recovery, Green skills training, Skilled Workers, skills training*** | ***Leave a reply***

Labour union proposals for Green Recovery

Posted on **September 14, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canadian Labour Congress

To coincide with Labour Day and in advance of the federal government plan, expected to be released in the Throne Speech on September 23, the Canadian Labour Congress unveiled its new social media campaign, “Forward Together: A Canadian Plan” with a [press release](#) which says: “We need the government to reject calls for austerity and make real investments in our future. The only way to fix what’s broken is to invest,” “Workers are key to the recovery. The federal government can help alleviate a lot of anxiety by investing in jobs, making long-term care part of public health care, supporting a child care strategy, and implementing national pharmacare.”

Media coverage related to this launch focussed on the employment impacts and the CLC recommendations to expand employment insurance: for example, in the [Opinion piece by CLC President Hassan Yussuff](#) in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and in [“Canada’s Top Labour Leader on Building a Better Life for Workers after the Pandemic”](#), published by *The Tyee*. Yet this focus doesn’t match up with the CLC pre-Budget Submission to the federal government in August, [Forward Together: A Good Jobs and Climate Budget](#).

That formal document states : “Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget” and makes the first of its five recommendations: “Budget 2021 should set out a plan, with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables, for achieving Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions targets, committing \$81 billion over 5 years to expand renewable energy, home and building retrofits, public transit, and Just Transition measures supporting workers and their families.”

Under the heading “*Climate Action and Just Transition*”, the CLC states: “Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget. The CLC recommends that the federal government adopt a five-year plan setting out a bold plan with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables for accomplishing a systematic shift in Canada’s energy system, its transportation networks, and housing and building stock. Expanded public investments in renewable energy production, green building construction, and public transportation offer major opportunities for skills training and the large-scale creation of good jobs. Along with its partner organizations in the [Green Economy Network](#), the CLC calls for investments of \$81 billion over 5 years in order to develop renewable energy, home and building retrofits, and low-emissions public transportation in urban centres.

The CLC recommends that the federal government establish a Crown corporation mandated to overhaul and transform Canada’s energy industry in collaboration with provinces and territories. It would identify renewable energy projects and ensure that existing and new manufacturing sources

increase capacity to supply parts, equipment and new technology to meet Canada's renewable energy needs. Through direct investment and procurement policy, the federal government should support continued conversion of idle plant for the manufacture of medically-necessary and green economy products and equipment. Consistent with this, it should invest in the conversion of the General Motors Oshawa facility to produce zero-emission vehicles to electrify the Canada Post fleet.

Budget 2021 must significantly expand investments in Just Transition measures to assist workers, their families and their communities affected by climate change policy to access training and employment services, relocation, childcare and housing assistance to adjust to new jobs, and support for older workers to transition to retirement.

Following the experience of the European Union, the federal, provincial and territorial governments should establish a guarantee that all young people under the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This could include a focus on providing decent jobs in land remediation and restoration, climate adaptation, and energy efficiency. It should also include green skills training and learning opportunities through partnerships with public education and training providers, with an emphasis on women, marginalized, low-income and at-risk youth."

Green Recovery proposals have been made by other Canadian unions and union-affiliated groups are described in a previous WCR post, [***Update: Summer Proposals for Canada's Green Recovery focus on public infrastructure, retrofitting***](#) .

United States unions endorsing a THRIVE Agenda:

Although the U.S. labour unions are famously independent-minded and following different paths, but on September 10, a new initiative launched. The **THRIVE Agenda** is an economic renewal plan created by the [**Green New Deal Network**](#) and endorsed by more than 100 climate justice, civil rights and labour organizations – including the American Federation of Teachers, American Postal Workers Union, Amalgamated Transit Union, Communication Workers of America, Railroad Workers United, Service Employees International, United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) as well as the Labor Network for Sustainability. Notably, it is also **endorsed by prominent Congressional leaders** including Senators Bernie Sanders, Ed Markey, Elizabeth Warren, Chuck Schumer, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, among many others.

The THRIVE Agenda proposes “to revive our economy while addressing these interlocking crises of climate change, racial injustice, public health, and economic inequity with a plan to create dignified jobs for millions of unemployed workers and support a better life for the millions more who remain vulnerable in this pivotal moment.” A **6-page Resolution document** offers details of the goals, condensed into “8 Pillars” which include: Pillar 5: “Combating environmental injustice and ensuring healthy lives for all; Pillar 6 “Averting climate and environmental catastrophe”; Pillar 7

“Ensuring fairness for workers and communities affected by economic transitions” and Pillar 8 “Reinvesting in public institutions that enable workers and communities to thrive”.

The THRIVE Agenda claims that their proposals would create nearly 16 million new jobs and sustain them over the next critical decade, based on modelling by Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty, published by the University of Massachusetts Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) in September 2020. Their report, ***Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures*** models the costs and job creation benefits of economic recovery proposals made by various groups in the U.S.

For recent context on the political stance of U.S. unions: “**Unions fracture over climate**” is a long-read from *Politico*’s newsletter, The Long Game , published on Sept 1 and **re-posted to Portside** on Sept. 6. It argues that “Environmental protection and union jobs are a fault line among Democrats, which will only be magnified nationwide if Joe Biden defeats President Donald Trump in November. The article includes quotes from union members from building trades in California, SEIU in New Jersey, United Mine Workers, and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. Also, “**The Green New Deal Just Won a Major Union Endorsement. What’s Stopping the AFL-CIO?**” (Aug. 20) and “**Why Every Job in the Renewable Energy Industry Must Be a Union Job**” (Sept. 3) both appeared in *In these Times*.

United Kingdom Trades Union Congress

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) released a series of reports over the Spring and Summer with recommendations for economic recovery. Most recently, on September 13, ***A plan for public service jobs to help prevent mass unemployment*** calls for direct government investment to create 600,000 jobs in health care, social services, local government, education, and public administration. In June, they released ***Rebuilding after recession: A Plan for Jobs*** , which calls for government action, including sectoral recovery panels composed of unions, employers and government, and a new government -funded jobs guarantee, with increased training rights for workers who lose their jobs. The ***Rebuilding after Recession report*** was based on economic research conducted by Transition Economics , titled ***Can an infrastructure stimulus replace UK jobs wiped out by COVID19 crisis?*** That study concluded that “1.24 million jobs across the UK can be created in the coming two years through a two year emergency clean infrastructure stimulus, reabsorbing workers who have lost employment due to the COVID19 crisis. Our analysis recommends 19 infrastructure projects totalling £85 billion public investment.” An earlier report from TUC, ***A Better Recovery*** had been released in May, and in June, the TUC in Wales released ***A Green Recovery and a Just Transition***

International Trade Union Confederation

The International Trade Union Confederation **announced a new campaign** , “A New Social Contract for Recovery and Resilience” , to be focused on the World Day for Decent Work on

October 7. The ***Social Contract statement***, released in July, is a broad statement of principles which address “the convergent challenges of the pandemic, climate change and inequality”.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **BlueGreen Alliance, Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), Green Recovery, labour union policies, Trades Union Congress (TUC) | [Leave a reply](#)**

Job creation is a co-benefit of reducing air pollution

Posted on **September 11, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

1.5 million jobs in Canada in 2050 by meeting Net-Zero emissions targets

The Healthy Recovery Plan released by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) on July 14 quantifies the potential health benefits related to improved air quality in Canada, makes detailed recommendations for green recovery stimulus, and estimates the job creation benefits of those recommendations: notably decarbonization of electricity generation and public transit by 2040, and decarbonization of vehicles, residential and commercial buildings, and healthcare by 2050.

The report presents original research, conducted for CAPE by Navius Research, which simulated the health benefits of climate actions that meet Canada’s emissions reduction targets, using Health Canada’s own **Air Quality Benefits Assessment Tool**. Navius estimates that by meeting its climate targets, Canada will save 112,000 lives between 2030 and 2050 due to air quality improvements alone. Navius Research also simulated key economic impacts of an emissions scenario in line with Canada’s climate target of net-zero emissions by 2050, and found that clean jobs could increase from 210,000 full-time equivalent positions in 2020 to 1.5 million in 2050.

U.K. Employers group calls for air pollution reduction as part of a green recovery.

Polluted air in the U.K. is responsible for the loss of 3 million working days each year, according to research commissioned by the British **Clean Air Fund**, and conducted by CBI Economics, part of the British employers’ group, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). ***Breathing life into the UK Economy*** quantifies the economic benefits if the UK were to meet air quality guidelines recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). The report estimates that improved health of workers would translate into a £1 billion gain for the economy in the first year, a £600 million gain to businesses from reduced absenteeism, and a £900 million increase in wages each

year. The report also includes estimates for individual urban areas (London, Manchester, Bristol, and Birmingham). Air pollution is a high profile issue in British politics, with [U.K. unions campaigning since 2017 for a legal obligation on employers](#) to address air pollution from their activities. The Clean Air Fund [press release](#) which accompanied the release of the report quotes the CBI position: “Not only is there a clear moral responsibility to address air pollution and the impact it has on human health and the environment, there’s also a striking economic rationale. That is why the CBI has been absolutely clear that a focus on green recovery should be central to our COVID-19 response.... From mass energy efficiency programmes to building new sustainable transport infrastructure, the green economy offers incredible opportunities for the UK. Improving air quality should be a key part of the UK’s journey to net zero.”

Dangers of air pollution for road workers increases in summer

“[Asphalt roads make city air pollution worse in summer, study finds](#)” appeared in *The Guardian* (Sept. 2), summarizing U.S. research that found a 300% increase in emissions of secondary organic aerosols (SOA) when asphalt was exposed to hot summer conditions. The [full academic article](#) appeared in *Science Advances* in September. Dr Gary Fuller, air quality expert at Imperial College London is quoted in *The Guardian*: “We have historically thought of traffic pollution as coming from vehicle exhausts. This has been the focus of policy and new vehicles have to be fitted with exhaust clean-up technologies. ..With heavier and heavier vehicles, the combined total of particle pollution from road surface, brake and tyre wear is now greater than the particle emissions from vehicle exhaust but there are no policies to control this.” Also quoted, Drew Gentner of Yale University and one of the study’s co-authors : “Hotter, sunnier conditions will lead to more emissions. Additionally, in many locations, asphalt is predominantly applied during the warmer months of the year.” Bad news and added danger for construction workers.

A more general discussion of the extent and impacts of pollution was published by the European Environment Agency (EEA) on September 8. [Healthy environment, healthy lives: how the environment influences health and well-being in Europe](#) reports that environmental pollution caused more than 400,000 premature deaths in the EU per year, and 13% of deaths in Europe were the result of environmental pollution, with air pollution the leading cause.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [climate change and health](#), [construction occupations](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Job Creation](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Labour and climate justice activists advocate for recovery

proposals which include the Care Economy

Posted on **September 10, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The **THRIVE Agenda** is an economic renewal plan for the U.S., created by the **Green New Deal Network** and endorsed by more than 100 climate justice, civil rights and labour organizations – including the American Federation of Teachers, American Postal Workers Union, Amalgamated Transit Union, Communication Workers of America, Railroad Workers United, Service Employees International, United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) as well as the Labor Network for Sustainability.

The website states: The THRIVE Agenda presents a bold new vision to revive our economy while addressing these interlocking crises of climate change, racial injustice, public health, and economic inequity with a plan to create dignified jobs for millions of unemployed workers and support a better life for the millions more who remain vulnerable in this pivotal moment.” A 6-page **Resolution document** fleshes out these goals, and a framework of “8 Pillars” itemizes them. Regarding climate change, Pillar 5 is: “Combating environmental injustice and ensuring healthy lives for all; Pillar 6 is “Averting climate and environmental catastrophe”; Pillar 7 is “Ensuring fairness for workers and communities affected by economic transitions” and Pillar 8 is “Reinvesting in public institutions that enable workers and communities to thrive” .

Modelling job creation in infrastructure, clean energy, agriculture and the care economy.

The THRIVE Agenda claims that their proposals “would create nearly 16 million new jobs and sustain them over the next critical decade”, based on modelling by Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty. Their report, **Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures** , published by the University of Massachusetts Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) in September 2020, models the costs and job creation benefits of economic recovery proposals made by various groups in the U.S., including **Making the Grade** by the BlueGreen Alliance (2017, re infrastructure), and **Sierra Club proposals** to Congress (April 2020). The report offers projections in four categories: Infrastructure; Clean Energy; Agriculture and land restoration programs; and notably, the “Care economy, public health, and postal service”. The Care Economy modelling is based on proposals in the Joe Biden’s **Plan for Mobilizing American Talent and Heart to Create a 21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce** released in July 2020.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **care economy, climate change activism, labour environment cooperation** | **Leave a reply**

Canadian Labour Congress calls for “a climate-action budget” for post Covid recovery

Posted on **September 8, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

To coincide with Labour Day, the Canadian Labour Congress unveiled its new social media campaign, “Forward Together: A Canadian Plan” with a [press release](#) which says: “We need the government to reject calls for austerity and make real investments in our future. The only way to fix what’s broken is to invest,” “Workers are key to the recovery. The federal government can help alleviate a lot of anxiety by investing in jobs, making long-term care part of public health care, supporting a child care strategy, and implementing national pharmacare.”

The CLC campaign comes in advance of the federal government’s recovery plan, scheduled for release in the Throne Speech of September 23, and urges Canadians to contact their members of parliament. The campaign launched was amplified by member labour unions, and covered in mainstream press: for example, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* published an [Opinion piece by CLC President Hassan Yussuff](#) ; *The Tyee* published [“Canada’s Top Labour Leader on Building a Better Life for Workers after the Pandemic”](#); the CBC posted [“Workers’ group marks Labour Day with push for changes in Liberals’ throne speech”](#). In all of these articles, the focus was on the employment impacts of Covid-19 and recommendations to expand employment insurance.

CLC’s Pre-Budget Submission to the Government prioritizes Climate Action and Just Transition

This coverage doesn’t match up with the CLC’s associated pre-Budget Submission to the federal government in August, [Forward Together: A Good Jobs and Climate Budget](#). It states : “Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget” and makes the first of its five recommendations: “Budget 2021 should set out a plan, with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables, for achieving Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions targets, committing \$81 billion over 5 years to expand renewable energy, home and building retrofits, public transit, and Just Transition measures supporting workers and their families.”

In the full text of the Submission, under the heading *“Climate Action and Just Transition”*, the CLC states: “Budget 2021 must be a Climate Action budget. The CLC recommends that the federal government adopt a five-year plan setting out a bold plan with clear targets, benchmarks and timetables for accomplishing a systematic shift in Canada’s energy system, its transportation networks, and housing and building stock. Expanded public investments in renewable energy production, green building construction, and public transportation offer major opportunities for skills training and the large-scale creation of good jobs. Along with its partner organizations in the [Green Economy Network](#), the CLC calls for investments of \$81 billion over 5 years in order to develop

renewable energy, home and building retrofits, and low-emissions public transportation in urban centres.

The CLC recommends that the federal government establish a Crown corporation mandated to overhaul and transform Canada's energy industry in collaboration with provinces and territories. It would identify renewable energy projects and ensure that existing and new manufacturing sources increase capacity to supply parts, equipment and new technology to meet Canada's renewable energy needs. Through direct investment and procurement policy, the federal government should support continued conversion of idle plant for the manufacture of medically-necessary and green economy products and equipment. Consistent with this, it should invest in the conversion of the General Motors Oshawa facility to produce zero-emission vehicles to electrify the Canada Post fleet.

Budget 2021 must significantly expand investments in Just Transition measures to assist workers, their families and their communities affected by climate change policy to access training and employment services, relocation, childcare and housing assistance to adjust to new jobs, and support for older workers to transition to retirement.

Following the experience of the European Union, the federal, provincial and territorial governments should establish a guarantee that all young people under the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This could include a focus on providing decent jobs in land remediation and restoration, climate adaptation, and energy efficiency. It should also include green skills training and learning opportunities through partnerships with public education and training providers, with an emphasis on women, marginalized, low-income and at-risk youth."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Covid-19](#), [Just recovery](#), [Just Transition](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New report offers sector-based strategies for greening California with high road jobs

Posted on [September 4, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Center for Labor Research](#) at the University of California, Berkeley, was commissioned by the California Workforce Development Board under [legislated mandate](#) to provide strategies "to help industry, workers, and communities transition to economic and labor-market changes related to statewide greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals." The demand-side practices of community benefits agreements and project labour agreements were singled out for special

attention. The resulting 636-page report, ***Putting California on the High Road: A Jobs and Climate Action Plan for 2030***, was presented to the Legislature on September 3. The official **summary is here**; coverage in the *Los Angeles Times* is **here**.

The *High Road* report is built on the framework of **California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan**, which has target of a 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 from 1990 levels. It incorporates existing academic research, economic models, and industry studies to present information about current labor conditions and the impact on jobs of California's major climate measures. Most importantly, it provides strategic guidance and best practice examples for policymakers, agencies and institutions with a goal to "generate family-supporting jobs, broaden career opportunities for disadvantaged workers, deliver the skilled workforce that employers need to achieve California's climate targets, and protect workers in declining industries."

Construction sector and blue-collar jobs are key

The Scoping Plan and the new report are organized into sectors based on the state's major sources of greenhouse gas emissions: Transportation, Industry, Energy, Natural and Working Lands (including Agricultural Lands), Waste, and Water. The report notes the out-sized importance of the construction sector and of blue-collar work – defined as occupations in construction, production, transportation, maintenance, repair, and similar occupations, and specifically emphasizes that "blue collar" does not equate to "low skilled". This has important policy implications, including the need for industry-based training, and emphasis on addressing job quality, because: "The quality of blue-collar jobs varies tremendously, even within the same industry, depending on the degree of subcontracting and outsourcing, ease of employment law enforcement, unionization rates, and other factors. These differences in job quality within industries and between high and low road employers are often difficult to discern from government data, which also is not able to capture wage theft and other employment violations. Examples are given of many sectors where greening of jobs may have resulted in lower emissions but not necessarily in job quality.

Recommendations

There are dozens of sector-specific recommendations, both demand-side and supply-side including:

Expand the use of Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs) on climate investments involving large-scale construction projects;

Use inclusive procurement policies for public procurement of large capital equipment, contracts for public services, and in grant programs;

Include responsible employer standards in all climate incentive programs. Include skill standards to ensure safe and proper performance in programs receiving public or ratepayer funds;

Incorporate wage and benefits standards and verification of compliance with all employment and labor law, including health and safety standards, into incentive program requirements.

Use metrics to measure the impact of climate policies on job growth, job quality, and job access.

Support existing apprenticeship programs and, where conditions are favorable, create new apprenticeship programs.

Support curriculum upgrades and teacher training for emerging technologies in occupations critical to the transition to a carbon-neutral economy.

Recommendations regarding Just Transition are: Short term: “Fully explore alternatives to plant closures when there are other strategies available that will achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions and local pollution abatement. Longer term: Convene an interagency task force to develop concrete, specific plans for short-term and long-term transition.”

The full report is 636 pages long, with Lead Author Carol Zabin, Director of the Green Economy Program at the Labor Center, University of California Berkeley. Co-authors include J. Mijin Cha , author of Chapter 4 on Just Transition. Much of the research was undertaken in 2018, relying on data from 2017, though the report is dated June 2020, and was only publicly released in September 2020. Previous related reports from the Green Economy Program are [listed here](#). Other relevant articles by J. Mijin Cha include “[Environmental Justice, Just Transition, and a Low-Carbon Future for California](#)” in *Environmental Law Reporter* 2020 and “[A just transition for whom? Politics, contestation, and social identity in the disruption of coal in the Powder River Basin](#)” in *Energy Research & Social Science*, Volume 69, 2020. Both academic articles have restricted access to the full text.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [California](#), [community benefits agreements](#), [Construction Industry](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Job Quality](#), [Just Transition](#), [Project Labor Agreements](#), [Training](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

NRDC report details climate change threats to workers’ health and champions workers’ action

Posted on [September 2, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[***On the Front Lines: Climate Change Threatens the Health of America’s Workers***](#) was released on July 28 by the Natural Resources Defense Council, with input from the BlueGreen Alliance, American Federation of Teachers, Communications Workers of America, and Service Employees International Union in the U.S. (press release [here](#) and a blog summary [here](#)). The

authors analyse the extensive existing literature and include first-hand stories from outdoor and indoor workers to describe the physical, mental health, and wage-related impacts of heat stress, wildfires, drought, floods, hurricanes, and the spread of infectious diseases. Over 200 reports and articles are cited. The report calls for amendments to the Occupational Safety and Health Act in the U.S.- including a federal heat standard – with sufficient budgeting and staff for effective enforcement, with a broader overall call: “Adapting to our new climate means overhauling existing safeguards to respond to an intensified set of occupational hazards; extending occupational health and safety protections to all workers; and ensuring workers have the training, job security, flexibility, and empowerment they need to collectively demand protection from climate change. Because climate disruption is sure to create cascading failures through multiple sectors and to bring some nasty surprises, occupational health and safety activists and professionals must also build a better way to track, analyze, and quickly act on existing and emerging health threats to workers.”

“Every worker health and safety accomplishment came about by agitating and organizing”

Although the report also calls on legislators, regulators and employers to act, the emphasis is on the role of collective action by workers, noting that “Every worker health and safety accomplishment came about by agitating and organizing.” The report also stresses the need to protect workers’ right to organize: “Legislators at all levels of government must honor the right of workers to a safe and healthy workplace by strengthening and enforcing legal protections for unionization and collective bargaining. To stay safe on the job, workers and their representatives must have adequate knowledge, training, and freedom from retaliation to help shape and improve occupational health programs, refuse hazardous work, report workplace injuries and illnesses, and file complaints with state or federal inspectors.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [indoor air quality](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [outdoor workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Can new Conservative Party Leader Erin O’Toole appeal to Canadians with his Climate Change platform?

Posted on **August 31, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Erin O’Toole, Member of Parliament for Durham Ontario, was elected as the new Leader of Canada’s Conservative Party in the early hours of August 25. General press reaction emphasized his hawkish stance on relations with China, the strength of social conservative forces within his

party, and his stated intention to carve out a middle ground to fight the next election. A sampling of articles: [“Erin O’Toole works to sell Tories as big tent party”](#) in the *Globe and Mail* (Aug. 25) ; [“Erin O’Toole and the search for a new Canadian centre”](#) by Paul Wells in *Maclean’s* (August 24); [“Erin O’Toole promises to fight for West, human rights”](#) (Aug. 26) in the *National Observer*; [“Will Erin O’Toole Confront Conservatives’ Covid Sickness”](#) in *The Tyee* (Aug. 31); and [“The inside story of how Erin O’Toole won the Conservative leadership race”](#) in the *Toronto Star* (Aug. 29) .

On the issues of Climate Change and Energy Policy:

The Narwhal offers this Explainer: [“Where new Conservative Leader Erin O’Toole stands on climate change, carbon tax, oil and LNG”](#) and, from Bruce Lourie in *The National Observer*: [“O’Toole’s climate plan has a carbon price — just don’t call it a tax”](#) by (Aug. 26). Also from *The National Observer* : [“Memo to O’Toole: The road down the middle is paved with a credible climate plan”](#) (Aug. 31) .

It is yet to be seen what will happen to O’Toole’s climate change platform when votes are on the line in an election campaign. As a leadership candidate, he published this [Climate Change Plan](#) and this [Action Plan for Alberta and the West](#) – the latter promising to repeal Bill C-69; pass a National Strategic Pipelines Act; scrap the tanker ban; and implement a national LNG Export Strategy. No wonder he won the endorsement of Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta.

From his [Climate Change platform statement](#): “I will respect the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories by scrapping Trudeau’s carbon tax. If provinces want to use market mechanisms, other forms of carbon pricing, or regulatory measures, that is up to them. The federal government will be there to support them.” “The world will still be using oil and natural gas for a long time. The question is whether they will come from free countries like Canada with strong environmental protections, or dictatorships with no environmental protections or respect for human rights” ... “Domestic energy production – including oil and gas – is an important part of making our country more self-reliant and more resilient in future, as we cannot afford to become reliant on energy from countries like Russia....” And from O’Toole’s stated priorities: “Working with industry on a plan to get to net zero emissions in the oil and gas industry through the use of technologies like electrification generated from sources such as nuclear and wind and carbon capture, with the government providing incentives similar to those that were used to stimulate the early development of the oilsands.”

In [Bruce Lourie’s assessment](#): “The six priorities are hit-and-miss, and revert back to traditional technological solutions in the energy sector while missing many of the important economy-wide measures to help the regions of Canada without oil, as well as addressing the bulk of Canada’s climate change challenges. No mention of the auto sector or transportation at all, or building efficiency (the single most cost-effective measure), and no mention of the agricultural sector...”

Workforce 2030 coalition launches to encourage low-carbon skills training for Ontario building sector

Posted on **August 28, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Workforce 2030 was launched in Toronto on July 23 – a cross-sectoral coalition of employers, educators, and workers in Ontario’s building sector. **The press release** states: “Workforce 2030’s goal is to accelerate workforce capacity by collectively impacting government policy, business practices, and education.” The **Statement of Principles is here**, outlining values of collaboration and accountability, and equity.

From John Cartwright, member of the Advisory Council and President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council: “Workforce 2030 is a collaboration that will increase the capacity of the skilled trades to meet the low-carbon standards required in the built form of tomorrow. We need to continuously improve low-carbon skills for the entire sector, deepen our commitment to high-quality training, and grow our workforce through equity and inclusion.”

The Coalition is “catalyzed” by **The Atmospheric Fund (TAF)** and **Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC)**, which hosts the **Workforce 2030 website** and whose research reports are highlighted there. The coalition will be organized into working groups, with the following themes: Green Recovery Stimulus: Advocating for Workforce Capacity Investments; Workforce Capacity for Tall Timber Residential New Construction; Low-carbon Workforce Readiness: In-depth skills gaps assessment and industry co-developed action plan; Equitable and Inclusive Recruitment and Training; and Workforce Capacity for Retrofits.

The 14-person Advisory Board includes Julia Langer, (CEO, The Atmospheric Fund (TAF)); Akua Schatz, Canada Green Building Council; John Cartwright, President, **Toronto and York Region Labour Council**; Sandro Perruzza, CEO of **Ontario Society of Professional Engineers**; Rosemarie Powell, Executive Director, **Toronto Community Benefits Network**; Steven Martin, Business Manager, **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 353**; Mike Yorke, President, **Carpenters District Council of Ontario**; and Corey Diamond, Executive Director, **Efficiency Canada**, among others.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Green Building, Green skills training, Labour Training, labour union policies, Ontario, retrofitting** | **Leave a reply**

Over 60,000 Green jobs in Toronto in 2019

Posted on [August 28, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The City of Toronto Office of Economic Development and Culture recently released estimates showing that there were 60,700 jobs in Toronto's Green sector in 2019, with 38% of those in Sustainable Transportation and 21% in Green Building. The other sectors included in the report of jobs and GDP: Bioeconomy, Clean Energy, and Resource Management. For the green sector as a whole, employment growth rate was 3.9%, compared to the city's overall employment growth of 1.9%. The report also provides data on five-year average weekly wages (2015-2019), showing the highest wages earned were in the Clean Energy subsector, at C\$1,384. A summary appeared in the [Toronto Green Industries Blog](#) on June 23; the full economic results are available at the [City of Toronto website](#), which also provides related reports on green industry in the city, including the 2019 report, [Best Practices on Growing Green Clusters](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green Jobs](#), [Toronto Ontario](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

BlueGreen, AFL-CIO endorse Joe Biden as president

Posted on [August 27, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The U.S. BlueGreen Alliance made its first-ever political endorsement on August 26: for the presidential ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. [BlueGreen's press release](#) states that "Biden's manufacturing, environmental justice and sustainable infrastructure and clean energy plans align well with the organization's [Solidarity for Climate Action](#) platform." That overall platform, released in 2019, has been fleshed out most recently in June, with [Manufacturing Agenda: A National Blueprint for Clean Technology Manufacturing Leadership and Industrial Transformation](#). It offers practical discussion of its vision: "With this agenda, the BlueGreen Alliance and our partners put forward a bold program of action to transform the U.S. manufacturing and industrial sectors at the scale and speed our economic and climate challenges demand. By taking the lead in manufacturing the clean technology needed to dramatically reduce the emissions driving climate change, and by upgrading, retooling and cutting emissions across critical industry, we can also rebuild American competitiveness in the global economy, reinvest in hard hit communities, and secure and create good-paying local jobs across America. "

The AFL-CIO has also endorsed the Biden/Harris ticket, though not on the grounds of its climate change platform. President Richard Trumka's speech at the Democratic National Convention Labor Council was re-posted by *Portside* as ["Trumka to DNC Labor Council: Our Democracy Is at Stake"](#) (Aug. 19) .

And a commentary from Kate Aronoff in *The New Republic*: ["Biden's Setting Himself Up to Get Blamed for Lost Blue-Collar Jobs"](#) (August 21) is critical of the establishment Democratic policy :

“A transition off of fossil fuels isn’t some far-off theoretical policy debate: It’s happening now in the most unjust way possible. Failing to reckon with that reality sets up Democrats in 2022 and 2024 to take the blame for the industry’s decline. This is all easy to avoid, but Democrats have to be willing to build a generous safety net instead of catering to deficit hawks. And they have to start a frank conversation within the Democratic coalition about the fact that fossil fuel jobs are already disappearing—even without robust climate policy.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BlueGreen Alliance](#), [climate change and politics](#), [labour union policies](#), [Natural Gas](#), [UA Plumbers and Pipefitters](#), [United Steelworkers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Launch of a new research program on Just Transition in the U.S.

Posted on [August 27, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In early August, Resources for the Future and the Environmental Defense Fund launched a new research initiative examining Just Transition policies and programs in the U.S., introduced and described [here](#). A series of reports and blogs are promised, with a final synthesis report, though timing is not announced. Also in the works, case studies of three US communities in which coal was their economic base: southeastern Ohio (in partnership with Ohio University); Colstrip, Montana (in partnership with Montana State University); and Tonawanda, New York. Some of the questions the research will address: “How is the existing system of interlocking federal workforce development programs structured, and how effective has it been? What have been the environmental and economic effects of clean energy deployment policies? What role can environmental remediation policies play in facilitating a just transition while also addressing the legacy of environmental racism?”

The first report, released on August 11, is [***Economic Development Policies to Enable Fairness for Workers and Communities in Transition***](#), summarized in this [blog](#). The report describes programs and assesses their effectiveness on local economic development, with programs grouped into two broad categories differentiated by geographic and/or economic scope. Those examined include programs by the Appalachian Regional Commission, and federal departments including the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development, the Department of Interior’s Secure Rural Schools, the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration, the Department of Defense’s Office of Economic Adjustment, and the Small Business Administration. In common with many other studies, the report concludes that “Coordination across government agencies and with local stakeholders is a vital part of an economic development program’s success.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Just Transition](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Lawyers fighting for climate change through litigation and legislative reform

Posted on **August 27, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Global Trends in Climate Litigation: 2020 Snapshot, published on July 3, is the latest annual review by researchers at the Grantham Institute in the U.K. .It covers the period of May 2019 to May 2020, reporting on the statistics (e.g. 26 new climate change cases brought outside the U.S. in 2019), and analyzing trends in the strategies and types of arguments used in climate litigation. The report particularly focuses on the role of human rights arguments (as pioneered in the **Urgenda case**, but also used in many of the youth-led court challenges); how litigation has been blended with direct protesting in some countries; and the variety of strategies being used to bring lawsuits against corporate emitters of greenhouse gases, the 'Carbon Majors'. Although the report concludes that litigation has not resulted in widespread climate policy change so far, it discusses key developments such as the final resolution of the Urgenda case in December 2019, which demonstrates the enormous potential of litigation: "Depending on the lawsuit and strategies employed, litigation might impact on government policy, company profits, share prices and broader public framings around climate change. However, litigation as a governance strategy is costly and risky, and it takes place alongside other political and social mobilisation efforts." A summary of the Grantham study appeared in *The Energy Mix* (August 24), headlined: "**Litigation drives global policy change on climate, study shows**". A related academic analysis is available as an NBER Working Paper: Eskander, Fankhauser, and Setzer . "***Global Lessons from Climate Change Legislation and Litigation***" a paper presented at the 2nd Annual NBER Environmental and Energy Policy and the Economy Conference, June 2020.

The ***Global Trends 2020 Snapshot report*** is based on two publicly available databases of case law and legal documents: **Climate Change Laws of the World** database maintained by the Grantham Institute in the U.K. (with 374 court cases in 36 countries, including 23 from Canada but excluding the U.S.; and the **Climate Case Chart** database maintained by the Sabin Center at Columbia University in the U.S. (featuring 1,213 U.S. climate lawsuits). The Sabin Center also maintains **a smaller database of non-U.S. cases**, which includes 24 Canadian cases.

Advocating for Legislative Reform:

As noted in the Grantham *2020 Snapshot* report, 80% of global climate litigation occurs in the United States. In addition to litigation, Canadian legal activists also focus on legislative reform: for example, West Coast Environmental Law, Ecojustice, Équiterre, working with Climate Action Network Canada, Environmental Defence and the Pembina Institute **released their latest proposals for climate accountability**, in the form of a June report, ***A New Canadian Climate Accountability Act: Building the legal foundation to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050***. It

proposes five “pillars” for a new statute that would include. long-term, ambitious GHG reduction targets for 2030 and 2050; 5-year carbon budgets; 5-year impact reports tabled before Parliament to assess the risks of current and predicted climate impacts; and an arm’s-length expert climate advisory committee to monitor and report on progress. The recently-formed Canadian Institute for Climate Choices supported this goal with its own report in June, [Marking the Way: How Legislating Climate Milestones Clarifies Pathways to Long-Term Goal](#) . The [press release](#) provides a summary of the report; it is accompanied by case studies of the existing climate accountability legislation in the provinces of [British Columbia](#) and [Manitoba](#), as well as the [U.K](#) and [New Zealand](#), considered model jurisdictions.

U.S. Lawyers offer Model Laws for Decarbonization:

In 2019 [Legal Pathways to Deep Decarbonization in the United States](#) was published by the Washington-based [Environmental Law Institute](#), in which 59 legal experts offer over 1,000 recommendations for federal, state, local and private action to drastically reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. A 161-page [Summary of Legal Pathways](#) was published in an effort to take the message outside the “expert” community – besides succinct summaries of the recommended legal changes, it includes an index by actor – providing recommendations for action by “Companies, Associations, NGOs, and Other Private Entities”. Now, a new website seeks to enable more activism: the [Legal Pathways to Deep Decarbonization website](#), hosted by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University and the Commonwealth Law School of Widener University, with provides a compilation of actual laws, and model laws drafted and peer-reviewed pro bono by volunteer lawyers. All can be downloaded and customized for other jurisdictions. Some examples: regarding energy efficiency in buildings: the existing [St. Louis’ Building Energy Performance Standard 2020](#). So far, model laws posted on the website deal chiefly with green transportation, for example: [Legislation Mandating Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Reduction as Part of Metropolitan Transportation Planning](#). For more on this project, read “[Lawyers wanted to help decarbonize the U.S. economy](#)” in *Resilience* (August 27) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate accountability](#), [climate change legislation](#), [climate change litigation](#), [Decarbonization](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Lawyers](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How human rights approaches can aid climate activism and litigation

Posted on [August 24, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Climate change, justice and human rights](#) is a collection of ten essays, released by Amnesty International Netherlands in August 2020 (published in English). It is a thoughtful and critical

discussion of the opportunities and problems of taking a human rights lens to climate change. “The language, policies and (campaigning) strategies around climate change and human rights are still in development, leading to new insights, (re) definitions, and new challenges for human rights and environmental activists.” The opening essay, “*Amnesty’s approach to climate change and human rights*” discusses whether Amnesty should become involved in climate change, and if so, how. It concludes “Simply framing the crisis as a human rights crisis will by itself make only a modest difference. However, with determination, sound strategy and humility we can use our strengths to support and be guided by those who are at the front line of the climate crisis, and who have been leading the struggle for climate justice for a long time.” Specifically, when options for tactics were presented at a People’s Summit in 2019, participants voted for: Changing public opinion (25%); Civil disobedience (19%); Litigation (17%); Divestment (14%); Mass demonstrations (9%); Consumer boycotts (9%); or something else (7%). Not all of these are tactics commonly used by Amnesty International, but the report discusses how they determine to go forward.

Besides the considerations of Amnesty’s future direction and tactics, the essays look at the concept of climate justice, and finally, at specific policies areas, in chapters such as “*Climate change and the human rights responsibilities of business enterprises*” by Sara Seck, Associate Professor, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University; “*The use of human rights arguments in climate change litigation and its limitations*” by Annalisa Savaresi, one of two Executive Directors of Greenpeace Netherlands; “*The climate crisis and new justice movements: supporting a new generation of climate activists*” by Anna Schoemakers, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Law at Stirling University, UK; and “*Human rights and intergenerational climate justice*” by Bridget Lewis, Senior Lecturer at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change activism](#), [climate change litigation](#), [environmental responsibility](#), [Human Rights](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Total, Exxon announce stranded assets but some Canadians aren’t listening

Posted on [August 24, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Just as the long-predicted weather disasters are [coming to pass](#) before our eyes, so too are the stranded assets of the oil and gas industry. In July, French fossil fuel multinational [Total announced](#) “asset impairment charges” caused by low oil prices, and “in line with its new [Climate Ambition](#) announced on May 5, 2020 , which aims at carbon neutrality, Total has reviewed its oil assets that can be qualified as “stranded”, meaning with reserves beyond 20 years and high production costs, whose overall reserves may therefore not be produced by 2050. The only

projects identified in this category are the Canadian oil sands projects **Fort Hills** and **Surmont**.” Total also cancelled its membership in the **Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)**, as had **Teck Resources in May 2020** as part of the cost-cutting which saw it **withdraw from the Frontier mine project** in February.

As reported by **Bloomberg News on August 5**, a regulatory filing to the SEC by Exxon announced that low energy prices render as much as 20% of its oil and natural gas reserves as stranded assets, without book value. The massive **Kearl oil-sands mine** near Fort McMurray Alberta was the only operation specifically named in Exxon’s filing, and a separate filing of Exxon subsidiary Imperial Oil Ltd also singled out Kearl’s reserves as “imperiled”.

The Energy Mix summarized and commented on these developments in “**Colossal fossil Total declares \$9.3b in stranded assets in Alberta tar sands/oil sands**” (July 31) and “**Exxon rips up \$30 Billion rebuilding plan, could declare stranded assets at Kearl Lake**” (Aug. 19).

A different future?

In sharp contrast to the companies’ announcements: the Alberta office of Price Waterhouse has posted a rosy consultants’ view in a series titled: **Energy Visions 2020: What’s ahead for Canada’s oil and gas industry**. Part 1, “**The Evolving Role of oil and gas in the Energy Transition**” acknowledges the current low demand, but hones to that persistent industry view: “Given the cyclical nature of the industry, we anticipate that within five years we’ll have moved into a period of recovery and growth. By then the current oversupply will likely have been drained.”

PWC’s prescription for Canadian oil and gas producers: “to differentiate themselves from global competitors, they’ll have to continue to focus on important differentiators aligned with environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) measures... Canadian oil and gas companies are already global leaders on some ESG principles. These include demonstrating high employee health-and-safety standards, a record for empowering and investing in the communities in which they operate, support for reasonable government carbon pricing and a commitment to new technologies to reduce emissions. But the challenge remains around how our industry communicates this story to investors.”

Part 2, “**Finding Opportunity for Canada in the Global Energy Transition**” states: “Canadian energy companies have the opportunity to proactively address climate issues, take advantage of new opportunities where possible and find ways to create additional value for their communities, employees and shareholders.... We can and must raise our profile by highlighting all the positive achievements we’ve made in producing our energy more efficiently by using new technologies...”. Post Covid, “there may be opportunities for those companies that have the desire and balance-sheet strength to pursue new capital-intensive energy investments. Companies for which diversification isn’t an option must stay focused on their core business and continue to execute more efficiently, digitally and diversely than any global competitor.....We can expect that federal government support for all industries will come in some form of infrastructure investment, and the adoption of alternative energies will likely be part of the government’s infrastructure agenda.”

Finally, Part 3, “**New World, New Skills: Preparing your workforce for the Energy Transition**” discusses “The Transformation Imperative”, but focuses on automation and artificial intelligence as the disruptors. The report offers the general advice that employers need to create an “upskilling” organizational culture for their employees, while acknowledging that millennials rank the oil and gas as their least attractive career destination.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

25 million jobs forecast by electrifying American buildings, industry, and vehicles

Posted on [August 20, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Mobilizing for a Zero-Carbon America was released in July as the launch to a new project called **Rewiring America**. The report details a strategy which would create 25 million jobs over an intense transition period of three to five years, and 5 million jobs in the subsequent maintenance phase. Likening the intense mobilization phase to World War 2, the authors call for electrification of almost everything: “The grid would need to be expanded because almost everything would run on electricity, and making it so would require a great many workers.....That will need millions of miles of new and upgraded transmission and distribution to get to the end user. Finally on the demand side, we’ll need to electrify our 250 million vehicles, 130 million households, 6 million trucks, all of manufacturing and industrial processes, and 5.5 million commercial buildings covering 90 billion square feet. ” The transition can be done using existing technology and American workers. Indeed, work such as retrofitting and electrifying buildings will by necessity have to be done by American workers in America. No outsourcing. The jobs will be created in a range of sectors, from installing solar panels on roofs to electric vehicles to streamlining how we manufacture products. They will also be highly distributed geographically. Every zip code in America has hundreds, if not thousands, of buildings ripe for electrification in the years to come.” The full report ***Mobilizing for Zero-carbon America*** is [here](#) ; the Executive Summary is [here](#) .

The report was summarized and analyzed by David Roberts at Vox, in “**How to drive fossil fuels out of the US economy, quickly**” (Aug. 6). Roberts, a well-respected climate journalist, states: “Griffith’s work is among the most interesting contributions to the climate discussion in ages”. Roberts’ article is a detailed examination of the data, modelling, and political context of the report, and contends that the job projections are not as important as the underlying argument that it is possible to eliminate 70 to 80 percent of US carbon emissions by 2035 through rapid deployment of five existing electrification technologies: wind and solar power plants, rooftop solar, electric vehicles, heat pumps, and batteries.

Update: Summer Proposals for Canada's Green Recovery focus on public infrastructure, retrofitting

Posted on **August 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the mainstream press zeroing in on the implications of [Mark Carney's return to Ottawa policy circles](#), and [rumours of a "deepening rift"](#) between Prime Minister Trudeau and Finance Minister Morneau over covid-recovery plans, perhaps the moment for a Green Recovery has arrived. Here are highlights of some proposals made since the last WCR compilation in [a June 17 post](#).

Proposals from the labour movement:

Unifor released its [#Build Back Better campaign](#) in June, detailed in a 58-page document, [Unifor's Road Map for a Fair, Inclusive and Resilient Economic Recovery](#). There are five core recommendations, with detailed discussion of each: 1. Build Income Security Programs that Protect All Workers; 2. Rebuild the Economy through Green Jobs and Decarbonization; 3. Expand and Build Critical Infrastructure 4. Rebuild Domestic Industrial Capacity; and 5. Strong, Enforceable Conditions on Corporate Support Packages. Recommendation #2 "Rebuild the Economy through Green Jobs and Decarbonization", understandably advocates for the sectors which Unifor represents – auto manufacturing, energy, forestry, transit etc. and calls for, among other things, targeted industry support programs, and a federal Just Transition fund (for example, for orphan well clean up and methane reduction initiatives and expansion of the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund. On the issue of transit, Unifor also calls for the federal government to convene special committee, bringing together municipalities, labour unions, private and public transit agencies, academics, urban planners and transit rider groups to develop a National Public Transit Strategy. The [Road Map](#) also calls for a National Auto Strategy to support zero-emission electric vehicle manufacturing, a national charging infrastructure, and a call to develop a joint government-union accredited green jobs training system. Unifor calls on the government to institute a tripartite model for advisory groups and oversight bodies so that labour unions are involved in any initiatives to develop climate/green transition policy frameworks.

[#Build Back Better](#) also addresses issues affecting all workers, such as income security, equity, and pension security. Key to these appear in Recommendation #5. "Strong, Enforceable Conditions on Corporate Support Packages", which states: "Government must require an environmental sustainability plan, restrict wage reductions for non-executive workers and establish job protection guarantees to prevent layoffs due to restructuring and offshoring. Any capital investment enabled by government support must include Canadian content when equipment is

purchased or capital investments are made. Support packages must include a union neutrality clause and prevent recipients from accessing employee pensions for short-term liquidity.”

Rebuilding our Economy for All describes the priorities of the British Columbia Federation of Labour, as submitted to the provincial Economic Recovery Task Force in May. The sixth of eight priorities states: “We must make up for lost time in addressing the climate crisis, with an accelerated and inclusive path to a green economy”, but doesn’t suggest any specifics beyond the existing Clean BC program . Priority 7, “Use public investment to restart the economy” translates into mid-term goals to electrify the transit fleet, launch conservation programs and habitat restoration projects; undertake remediation of industrial sites; replace all government vehicles at end of life with e-vehicles; develop and install zero-emission vehicle infrastructure throughout BC.; and continue to expand public, commercial, and residential building retrofits.

The Ontario Federation of Labour also produced an economic recovery plan in June, ***The New Normal: Building an Ontario for All – Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs***. The document calls for investment in public infrastructure, but makes only one brief mention of climate, calling for the government to : “Develop, support, and resource a climate action plan that focuses on green jobs, carbon emission reductions, and the impact on equity-seeking communities – with clear mandates for industry.”

The Canadian Labour Congress released ***Labour’s Vision for an Economic Recovery*** in May, which with an emphasis on health and safety, and job and income security. It touched on climate-related priorities by calling for “Green industrial policy and sector strategies, anchored in union-management dialogue”, and endorsed the **Just Recovery for All principles**. On July 17, the CLC issued a **statement of support for the ‘Safe Restart’** agreement reached between the federal, provincial and territorial governments, commending the provision of sick leave entitlements so that every worker can take time off when they are sick and need to self-isolate. Also in July, the CLC made six **recommendations for reforms to the Employment Insurance system** to ensure a smooth transition from CERB to EI benefits.

Labour and Green Groups pulling together

It is worth noting that the environmental movement has included job and worker concerns in its proposals for Green Recovery, beginning with the **Just Recovery for All** campaign in May . Other examples: ***Green Strings: Principles and Conditions for a Green Recovery from COVID-19 in Canada*** , published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in June lists seven “strings”: Support only companies that agree to plan for net-zero emissions by 2050; Make sure funds go towards jobs and stability, not executives and shareholders; Support a just transition that prepares workers for green jobs; Build up the sectors and infrastructure of tomorrow; Strengthen and protect environmental policies during recovery; Be transparent and accountable to Canadians.



The Green Budget Coalition, representing twenty-four leading Canadian environmental organizations, presented a **Discussion Paper for their pre-Budget recommendations** at the end of June, with their final submission promised for September. Their focus: 1) Stimulus investments for clean transportation industries; 2) Building retrofit jobs 3) Nature-based climate solutions 4) Conservation and Protected Areas, including Indigenous Protected Areas and Guardian programs.

The David Suzuki Foundation has included “Transform the Economy” as one of the three pillars of its **Green and Just Recovery campaign**. Blog posts with accompanying online petitions have been published on “**Pandemic and climate crises unmask inequalities**” in May, and “**Four Day Workweek can spur necessary Transformation**” in August.

Other Proposals of Note, with a focus on Retrofitting:



The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released its **Alternative Federal Budget Recovery Plan** in July, stating: “The AFB Recovery Plan is a collective blueprint for how Canada can get through this crisis in the short, medium, and long term. It closes the chapter on the old normal.”..... “COVID-19 exposed the impossibility of a healthy economy without a healthy society. The status quo is no longer an option. This is our chance to bend the curve of public policy toward justice, well-being, solidarity, equity, resilience, and sustainability....”. The CCPA calls for “immediate action to implement universal public child care so people can get back to work, reform employment insurance, strengthen safeguards for public health, decarbonize the economy, and tackle the gender, racial, and income inequality that COVID-19 has further exposed.” Within this broad framework there is a section titled Climate Change, Just Transition and Industrial Strategy” (pages 50 – 54), which points out that “Governments at all levels have taken unprecedented action to respond to COVID-19 and that same level of ambition and speed must also be applied to the zero-carbon transition...A just recovery from COVID-19 will not be a return to the status quo of an exploitative fossil fuel-based economy.” In the short-term, the Recovery Plan repeats calls for a Just Transition Act for displaced workers and affected communities, (first announced in 2019), a

Just Transition Commission, a Strategic Training Fund and a Just Transition Transfer. Furthermore, the Recovery Plan calls for a clear regulatory phase-out of oil and gas production for fuel by 2040 (modeled on the national phase-out of coal power by 2030), beginning immediately so that recovery funds are not invested into the stranded assets of the oil and gas industry. In the medium term, the Recovery Plan calls again for a National Decarbonization Strategy to achieve a net zero-carbon economy through public investments in industries such as electricity generation, public transit, forestry and building and home retrofitting, especially in Canada's North. This Decarbonization Strategy would allow for \$250 million per year to establish a new Strategic Training Fund; \$10 billion per year to establish a youth Green Jobs Corps. Amongst the long-term recommendations for rebuilding: high impact green infrastructure projects under direct public ownership, with social enterprises and other forms of cooperative, community-based ownership also encouraged.

On July 22, the **Task Force for a Resilient Recovery released its *Interim Report***, costing out five key policy directions for the next five years, with a total price tag of just under \$50 billion. The Task Force lists key actions and actors to achieve five broad goals: “Invest in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings; Jumpstart Canada’s production and adoption of zero-emission vehicles; Go big on growing Canada’s clean energy sectors; Invest in the nature that protects and sustains us; Grow clean competitiveness and jobs across the Canadian economy”. As part of #1, investment in climate resilient and energy efficient buildings, the Task Force calls for “investing \$1.25 billion in workforce development for energy efficiency and climate resiliency, including for enhancing access to training programs and for developing new approaches.” Under the policy goal of investing in nature, the Task Force includes a call for \$400 million investment “to connect unemployed and underemployed Canadians with opportunities in the nature economy, and to boost the planning and implementation capacity of local governments, Indigenous groups, conservation agencies, forestry and agriculture operations, NGOs and tourism bodies.” The Task Force Final report is promised for September 2020.

The Labour Council of Toronto and York Region, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 353, and the Carpenters District Council of Ontario have signed on as foundation partners in a new coalition of employers, educators, and unions, formed to fast-track green building as an economic and jobs solution to re-start the economy. The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) is the seed funder for the coalition, called **Workforce 2030**. It is based on the recommendations of the Canada Green Building Council, ***Ready, Set, Grow: How the green building industry can re-ignite Canada’s economy***, published in May. The TAF proposals are outlined in their submission to the government, [here](#).

Efficiency Canada, another founding partner of the Workforce 2030 coalition, released its ***Pre-budget Submission to the government*** on August 5. It calls for \$1.5 billion to expand green building workforce training, \$10.4 billion over three years to expand provincial and municipal energy efficiency portfolios, \$13 billion to capitalize a building retrofit finance platform implemented through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; \$2 billion for large-scale building retrofit demonstration projects; and additional incentives to provinces that adopt higher energy performance tiers of the 2020 model national building codes, with a plan to achieve a 90% compliance rate.

Ontario Teachers' pension fund invests in Abu Dhabi oil pipelines

Posted on **June 24, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP), has outdone the May decision of [AimCo in Alberta to invest in the Coastal GasLink pipeline](#), with its announcement on June 23d that it is part of a consortium which has invested \$10.1 billion in a gas pipeline network under development by the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. Details appear in the [Globe and Mail](#) and [Energy Mix](#) on June 23. The consortium partners are Toronto-based Brookfield Asset Management, New York-based Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), and investors from Singapore, South Korea, and Italy. The [Ontario Teachers Pension Plan](#) is quoted by the *Globe and Mail*, stating: "This strategic transaction is attractive to Ontario Teachers' as it provides us with a stake in a high-quality infrastructure asset with stable long-term cash flows, which will help us deliver on our pension promise."

Advocacy group Shift Action for Pension Wealth and Planet Health responded [with a scathing statement](#), which says:

"Investments like the OTPP's in fossil fuel infrastructure are betting the hard-earned retirement savings of thousands of Ontario teachers against the long-term safety of our climate... Ensuring the growth of pensions in the long-term requires ending investments that lock-in fossil fuels and redeploying massive pools of finance into climate solutions like renewable energy and clean technology."

Shift also links to a 25-page [Toolkit for OTPP members](#) on the risks of fossil fuel investment of their pension funds. (May 2020). The OTPP Statement on Responsible Investing for 2019 is [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Oil and gas industry](#), [Ontario](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#), [teachers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta Pension fund invests in Coastal GasLink pipeline, the latest risky fossil fuel investment

Posted on **June 23, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Carbon Tracker, the group which originated the term “stranded assets, published two new reports about the financial risks of fossil fuel investment in June: ***It’s Closing Time: The Huge Bill to Abandon Oilfields Comes Early*** and ***Decline and Fall: The Size & Vulnerability of the Fossil Fuel System*** on June 4 . Banking giant Goldman Sachs also released a new report, ***Carbonomics: The Future of Energy in the age of climate change*** , which sees a fundamental shift from fossils to renewable energy investments.

Yet even as the drumbeat of fossil fuel decline continues, the public sector pension funds of Alberta and South Korea purchased a majority ownership stake in the Coastal GasLink pipeline from TC Energy on May 25, using the retirement savings of millions of individuals. **“Alberta and South Korea’s pensions just bought the Coastal GasLink pipeline: 8 things you need to know”** in *The Narwhal* (June 10) analyses the situation and cites a report from **Progress Alberta : Alberta’s Failed Oil and Gas Bailout** , with this subtitle provided: “How AIMCO invested more than a billion dollars of pensioners and Albertans money into risky oil and gas companies with more than \$3 billion in environmental liabilities and how the people running those companies got rich through huge salaries, share buybacks, dividends and conservative political connections.” Besides exposing the political shadows and environmental liabilities of many AimCo energy investments, the report makes recommendations, including for a public review of the investment performance and governance of Aimco; to divest from risky fossil fuel investments; to allow pension plans whose funds are being managed by AIMCo to appoint representatives to its board ; and to allow pension funds the freedom to leave AIMCo.

The recommended reforms are necessary because of the changes made by the Kenney government in November 2019, described by WCR **here** and by Alberta unions in: **Union leaders tell UCP: ‘The money saved by Albertans for retirement belongs to them, not to you!’** **Alberta’s Failed Oil and Gas Bailout** report urges: “The mismanagement of pensions and the Heritage Fund today offers opportunities for unions, political parties, civil society groups and organizers to engage and activate people who otherwise might never get involved in political collective action. People’s retirements and Alberta’s savings fund from its fossil fuel wealth are at stake.”

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Alberta Federation of Labour, Coast GasLink pipeline, LNG, Pension Fund management** | **Leave a reply**

**International Energy Agency roadmap
for a sustainable recovery forecasts
job growth led by retrofitting
and electricity**

Posted on **June 19, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The International Energy Agency, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund, released a roadmap which would require global investment by governments of USD 1 trillion annually between 2021 and 2023 to create jobs and accelerate the deployment of clean energy technologies and infrastructure. The ***World Energy Outlook Special Report: Sustainable Recovery***, released on June 18th states: “Through detailed assessments of more than 30 specific energy policy measures to be carried out over the next three years, this report considers the circumstances of individual countries as well as existing pipelines of energy projects and current market conditions.” The report data and analysis will form the basis for the IEA Clean Energy Transitions Summit on July 9 2020, where decision-makers in government, industry and the investment community will meet to discuss policy options for economic recovery post Covid-19.

From the report: “ Our new IEA energy employment database shows that in 2019, the energy industry – including electricity, oil, gas, coal and biofuels – directly employed around 40 million people globally. Our analysis estimates that 3 million of those jobs have been lost or are at risk due to the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis, with another 3 million jobs lost or under threat in related areas such as vehicles, buildings and industry. “ The recommendations promise to save or create approximately 9 million jobs per year, with the greatest number in building retrofitting for energy efficiency, and in the electricity sector. The *Sustainable Recovery Plan* also seeks to avoid the kind of rebound effect which occurred after the 2008/2009 recession, claiming that it would stimulate economic growth while achieving annual energy-related greenhouse gas emissions which “would be 4.5 billion tonnes lower in 2023 than they would be otherwise”, decreasing air pollution emissions by 5%, and thus reducing global health risks.

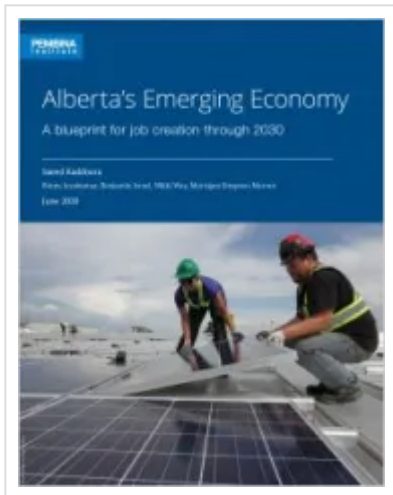
Under the heading of “Opportunities in technology innovation”, the report examines four specific technologies: “hydrogen technologies, which have a potentially important role in a wide range of sectors; batteries, which are very important for electrification of road transport and the integration of renewables in power markets; small modular nuclear reactors, which have technology attributes that make them scalable as an important low-carbon option in the power sector; and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), which could play a critical role in the energy sector reaching net-zero emissions. We also compare the near-term job creation potential of some of these measures.” The IEA is preparing an *Energy Technology Perspectives Special Report on Clean Energy Technology Innovation*, which will be released in early July 2020.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **carbon capture and storage, Clean Technology, Covid 19, energy efficiency, Energy policy, green hydrogen, Green Recovery, Job Creation, retrofitting** | [Leave a reply](#)

Pembina proposes a low-carbon blueprint to create 67,2000 jobs

in Alberta

Posted on **June 19, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



A report released on June 15 calculates that, with supportive government policies, 67,200 jobs could be created in Alberta by 2030 in four key areas: renewable electricity; transit and electric vehicle infrastructure; energy efficiency in buildings and industry; and environmental cleanup and methane reduction in the oil and gas industry. ***Alberta's Emerging Economy: A blueprint for job creation through 2030*** was funded by the **Alberta Federation of Labour** and written by researchers at the Pembina Institute. It provides detailed data for each of the four sectors, along with well-informed policy discussion. Notably, the number of jobs forecast represents a significant diversification of the labour market for the province: 67,200 jobs is equal to 67% of the total workforce of the mining, and oil and gas extraction industry in 2019.

Alberta's Hydrogen initiative

Alberta's Emerging Economy does not consider the potential jobs from new technologies such as carbon capture and storage, or hydrogen production. Fundamental to understanding that technology is the difference between “grey hydrogen”, “blue” hydrogen and “green” hydrogen”- explained by an expert at the International Energy Agency [here](#) , or in *Green Tech Media* in ***“The Reality Behind Green Hydrogen’s Soaring Hype”***.

On May 14, the **Alberta Industrial Heartland Hydrogen Task Force** was launched as “an independent working group created to develop a framework to implement a hydrogen economy in the region” and “produce a public report detailing the approach and steps needed to advance a zero-emission fuel economy in Alberta's Industrial Heartland.” The Task Force includes local mayors from Alberta and Saskatchewan (including Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson). The full list of Task Force members and advisors [is here](#) , and is organized by **Transition Accelerator** – itself launched in 2019, by the University of Calgary research group CESAR. A recent report in their “The Future of Freight” series, ***Implications for Alberta of Alternatives for Diesel*** advocates for “blue hydrogen” production (hydrogen made from natural gas by steam-methane reforming (SMR) coupled to carbon capture and storage (CCS)).

Hydrogen production is described in the *Globe and Mail* on June 14, "[Ottawa, Alberta develop new hydrogen strategies](#)". An overview in *Corporate Knights* magazine on May 14 claims "[Hydrogen can make Canada an energy superpower again](#)". It concludes:

We live in Alberta, so know the danger in including the words 'national' and 'energy' in the same sentence. But picture a Canada where hydrogen is the focus of a pan-Canadian strategy that would have all provinces working together for a net-zero emission energy future that revitalizes our economy and again positions Canada as an energy superpower.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [green hydrogen](#), [Job Creation](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Global reports call for renewables to lead a green recovery from Covid-19

Posted on [June 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

[Renewable Power Generation Costs in 2019](#) was released on June 2 by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), showing that "more than half of the renewable capacity added in 2019 achieved lower power costs than the cheapest new coal plants." The analysis spans around 17,000 renewable power generation projects from around the world, and includes discussion of job impacts in the industry. A [statistical dashboard is searchable by country](#), including Canada, and by jobs statistics.

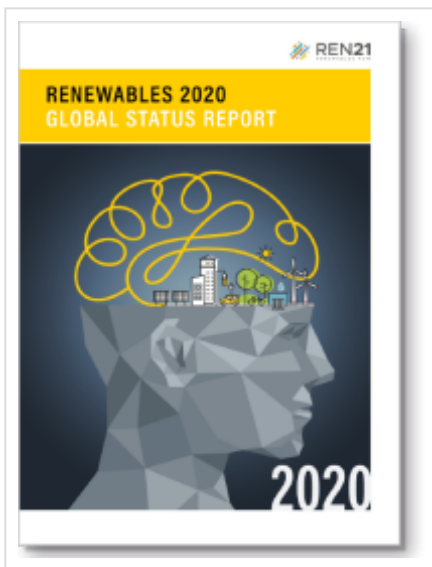
The report emphasizes the importance of renewables in a global economic recovery strategy, stating:

"Renewables offer a way to align short-term policy action with medium- and long-term energy and climate goals. Renewables must be the backbone of national efforts to restart economies in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. With the right policies in place, falling renewable power costs, can shift markets and contribute greatly towards a green recovery."

On June 10, the [Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment](#) report was released by the U.N. Environment Programme, with a [press release](#) with a similar message: "As COVID-19 hits the fossil fuel industry, the GTR 2020 shows that renewable energy is more cost-effective than ever – providing an opportunity to prioritize clean energy in economic recovery packages and bring the world closer to meeting the Paris Agreement goals. In 2019, the amount of new renewable power capacity added (excluding large hydro) was the highest ever, at 184 gigawatts, 20GW more than in 2018." The 80-page [Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment](#) is an annual report commissioned by the UN Environment Programme in cooperation with Frankfurt School-

UNEP Collaborating Centre for Climate & Sustainable Energy Finance, produced in collaboration with Bloomberg NEF, and supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety.

The argument for the cost advantage of clean energy is demonstrated with detailed modelling for the United States by researchers at the University of California Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy. Their new report, ***2035: The Report: Plummeting solar, wind and battery costs can accelerate our clean electricity future*** “uses the latest renewable energy and battery cost data to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of achieving 90% clean (carbon-free) electricity in the United States by 2035. “The 90% Clean case avoids over \$1.2 trillion in health and environmental costs, including 85,000 avoided premature deaths, through 2050”... and “ supports a total of 29 million job-years cumulatively during 2020–2035. These jobs include direct, indirect, and induced jobs related to construction, manufacturing, operations and maintenance, and the supply chain. Overall, the 90% Clean case supports over 500,000 more jobs each year compared to the No New Policy case.”



Another report, ***Renewables 2020 Global Status Report*** was released by REN21 on June 16, with a 36-page summary of **Key Findings**. The report provides detailed global statistics re capacity and investment trends, and also discusses the considerable impact of the coronavirus. There is much good news – for example, over 27% of global electricity now comes from renewables, up from 19% in 2010.... The share of solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind power has grown more than five times since 2009”. But there is also an urgent call to end fossil fuel subsidies and for other policy actions under the heading: “Momentum in renewable power hides a profound lag in the heating, cooling and transport sectors”. The report states:

“It would be short-sighted to celebrate advances in the power sector without acknowledging the alarmingly low shares and slow uptake of renewables in the heating, cooling and transport sectors. Renewable shares in heating and cooling are low (10.1%) and struggle to increase, even as the sector accounts for more than half of total energy demand. Similarly, energy demand in transport – which accounts for a third of total energy demand – is growing the fastest by far, yet renewable shares barely exceed 3.3%. Ongoing dependence on fossil fuels for heating, cooling

and transport is related to a lack of policy support for renewables in these sectors. There is still no level playing field. Many countries continue to uphold fossil fuel subsidies, which in 2018 increased 30% from the year before. Global fossil fuel subsidies totalled USD 400 billion, more than double the amount that governments spent on renewable power. The massive support for fossil fuels hinders the already difficult task of reducing emissions and must be brought to a halt. “In 2019, a record 200 gigawatts (GW) of renewable power capacity was added, more than three times the level of fossil fuel and nuclear capacity. Over 27% of global electricity now comes from renewables, up from 19% in 2010.– a remarkable rise attributed largely to continued cost declines for these technologies.”

On June 11, the U.S. Solar Energy Industry Association released its [Solar Market Insight Report](#) for the 2nd Quarter of 2020, forecasting a 31% drop in solar installations in 2020 over 2019, mostly as result of Covid-19. The SEIA [press release](#) estimates that 72,000 workers in the U.S. have lost their jobs . The [Executive Summary](#) discusses the impact of the coronavirus extensively; only the Executive Summary is available for free. The report analysis is done by Wood MacKenzie consultants, and the full report is pricey.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Recovery](#), [International](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Solar energy industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Lessons for Canada’s EV policy in new IEA EV Global Outlook report

Posted on **June 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 15 , the International Energy Agency released [Global EV Outlook 2020](#) , a



comprehensive annual report which provides historical analysis and projections to 2030, along with policy recommendations. It states that global electric car sales in 2019 were 2.1 million – a 6% growth from 2018, but at a slower rate than previous years – partly explained by the Covid-19 pandemic. The report discusses electric vehicle and charging infrastructure deployment, ownership cost, energy use, carbon dioxide emissions and battery material demand, as well as the performance and costs of batteries. Further, it updates its life-cycle analysis re end-of-life

treatment for batteries. It also includes case studies on transit bus electrification in Kolkata (India), Shenzhen (China), Santiago (Chile) and Helsinki (Finland). The press release summary is [here](#) .

Ben Sharpe and Jesse Pelchat argued that “**Canada is falling behind on transition to electric vehicles**” in *Policy Options* (May 1), summarizing the findings of a report by the International Council on Clean Transportation, ***Canada’s role in the electric vehicle transition*** (March 31). They state that “One of the most impactful things governments in Canada can do to stimulate manufacturing of zero-emission cars and trucks is to ramp up the effort to deploy policies aimed at growing the domestic market for these vehicles” – an argument expanded by Clean Energy Canada in ***Catching the Bus : How Smart Policy Can Accelerate Electric Buses Across Canada*** (June 11).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta dissolves Energy Efficiency agency, weakens oil and gas approval process

Posted on [June 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Bill 22, The Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act passed first reading in the Alberta legislature on June 11. The latest in Alberta’s environmental roll-backs, Bill 22 is a 14-point omnibus bill which eliminates the need for cabinet approval for oil and gas projects, and dissolves the Energy Efficiency Alberta agency, begun in 2017. Alberta’s Environment Minister has said it will be wound down by September and most staff re-assigned to the **Emissions Reduction Alberta** agency, which focuses on large-scale industry such as the oil and gas industry. The changes are summarized in an article in [in The Energy Mix](#) (June 14) and in [The Globe and Mail](#) . Efficiency Canada reacted with a critical press release on June 12, titled “**Alberta cuts successful job-creation engine in the midst of recession**” – which asserts that Energy Efficiency Alberta **created** more than 4,300 private-sector jobs between 2017 and 2019”. The **Pembina Institute reaction** also cites the job losses which will come from the decision, and states: “This move reinforces the negative image that the Government of Alberta was attempting to change when the EEA was installed as a major pillar of Alberta’s climate plan.”

The government justifies its decision [in a blog](#) which doesn’t mention the job creation success of the agency.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [energy efficiency](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Returning to work after Covid-19 – by transit or by cycling?

Posted on **June 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) in Canada **reported** on May 12 that a Probe Research poll found that 78% of Canadian respondents support \$5 billion in emergency government funding for public transit services, and 91% agree that governments have a responsibility to ensure access to safe, reliable, and affordable public transit. Yet when asked whether they would use public transport after Covid-19, city-dwellers in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the U.K. and the Brussels metropolitan area, expressed “lukewarm enthusiasm for public transport, due to a fear of the risk of infection”. The European survey also was conducted in mid-May, by YouGov poll, and according to [an article in Politico Europe](#), preference was for “active transportation” such as walking and cycling, with a majority supporting new zero-emissions zones, banning cars from urban areas, and maintaining the gains in road space dedicated to bikes and pedestrians that were implemented during the Covid-19 crisis.

In Canada, the cycling issue is explored in [“Bike lanes installed on urgent basis across Canada during COVID-19 pandemic”](#) by CBC (June 7), highlighting a movement to establish permanent, protected cycling lanes – which is one of the demands of the [2020 Declaration for Resilience in Canadian Cities](#), a statement championed by Jennifer Keesmaat, former City of Toronto Chief Planner. (a list of over 100 signatories [is here](#)). Other proposals from the *Declaration* include a moratorium on the construction and reconstruction of urban expressways; congestion pricing policies, with 100% of the revenues dedicated to public transportation expansion, and electrification of the public transit fleet.

[Catching the Bus : How Smart Policy Can Accelerate Electric Buses Across Canada](#) is a policy report released by Clean Energy Canada on June 11, but unfortunately researched before the transformational impacts of Covid-19. In an updated introduction, Clean Energy Canada argues that emergency financial relief for transit agencies should be the government’s top priority, but points out that transit procurement cycles run approximately 12 to 18 years, so that “investment decisions today will last for decades.” According to a [blog by the Amalgamated Transit Union](#), the pandemic has resulted in a 75-85% decrease in ridership, with over 3,000 layoffs announced by mid-May and more expected. The ATU [has called on the federal government](#) to provide a \$5 billion stimulus investment just to stave off the bankruptcy of transit agencies – the ATU position on electrification is stated in a [February blog here](#) .

[Clearing the Air: How electric vehicles and cleaner trucks can reduce pollution, improve health and save lives in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area](#) was released on June 3, a joint project by Environmental Defence, the Ontario Public Health Association, and the University of Toronto’s Transportation and Air Quality Research Group. The report considers the impact of electrification of passenger cars, urban buses, and freight trucks, with the main purpose of demonstrating the considerable health effects of lower pollution. Policy prescriptions for buses are

scanty, though the report estimates that electrifying all public transit buses in Canada would provide social benefits of up to \$1.1 billion per year. The report and a series of interactive maps of the region are [here](#) .

Of these recent reports, only the [2020 Declaration for Resilience in Canadian Cities](#) addresses the issue of transit equity, so evident in the pandemic world as low-wage and essential workers may not have the luxury of replacing their transit commute with a passenger car. *Work and Climate Change Report* summarized Canadian initiatives pre-Covid in “[Transit Equity and Free Transit: addressing social justice, climate justice and workplace justice](#) (Feb.10) . Also pre-Covid in November 2019, [an interview](#) with University of Toronto professor Steven Farber discusses how transit policy is a social justice issue. Farber also spoke at the [ATU Transit Equity Summit](#) in December 2019 .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [commuting](#), [Covid 19](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Transit Policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updating Job proposals for a Green Recovery: Canada, U.S., Europe

Posted on [June 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Green Recovery proposals in Canada:

The *Work and Climate Change Report* has [previously highlighted](#) proposals for a Green Recovery from Covid-19, including [Labour’s Vision for Economic Recovery](#) by the Canadian Labour Congress, the [Just Recovery for All](#) coalition campaign and the [Task Force for a Resilient Recovery](#) . Another very focused campaign is [Inclusive Recovery](#) , which states that Canada’s federal government is planning to invest over \$187 billion dollars on infrastructure projects over the next ten years as part of its Green Recovery funding. The [Inclusive Recovery](#) campaign, organized by the Toronto Community Benefits Network, Toronto & York Region Labour Council, the Labour Education Centre, and other unions and social service agencies, is [seeking support and endorsement of a joint letter](#) to the Federal government calling on them “to integrate and expand community benefit expectations in publicly funded infrastructure projects”.

On June 4, *Corporate Knights* magazine published “[Building Back Better: A roadmap to the Canada we want](#)” , which consolidates the already-published articles and roundtable discussions from its [Green Recovery series](#). The resulting “roadmap” , written by consultants Ralph Torrie and Céline Bak, with Toby Heaps, argues that “ By 2030, Canada could create more than five million quality job-years of employment by greening the power grid, electrifying transport and upgrading our homes and workplaces to be more comfortable and flood resilient.” In estimating the cost, that job-creation number goes even higher: “the federal investment in the programs we have proposed would total \$106 billion, crowding in an additional \$730 billion in private and other sector investment, creating 6.7 million years of employment – more than twice the jobs that have been

lost due to COVID-19”, and continues: “These investments would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 237 million tonnes from 2018 levels. That would meet our Paris Climate Agreement commitments and put us on a path to a carbon-free economy within a generation.” In a postscript, the authors state: “The best chance we have for the green economy to prevail is by marrying the green economy movement with social justice movements, which on a practical level means Building Back Better with vastly enhanced supports for eldercare, childcare and living wages, and as we’ve noted repeatedly throughout the series, by supporting thriving Indigenous communities.”

Green recovery studies: United States

The Sierra Club in the U.S. released a new report in June, ***Millions of Green Jobs: A Plan for Economic Revival***. It lays out estimates and a policy options for the “multiple, mutually reinforcing crises” of Covid-19, economic inequality, and global heating, and importantly, states that “All investments in this economic renewal plan must uphold the following environmental, labor, and equity standards” – which include Buy America and domestic procurement policies to stimulate manufacturing. Also included: “All construction and related contracts should require community benefit agreements; a mandatory “ban the box” policy to ensure fair employment opportunities for all; hiring preferences for low-income workers, people of color, people with disabilities, and returning citizens; and contracting preferences for businesses led by women and people of color.” Using job creation estimates produced by Robert Pollin, the report argues for “family-sustaining jobs for over 9 million people every year for the next 10 years while building an economy that fosters cleaner air and water, higher wages, healthier communities, greater equity, and a more stable climate. That includes supporting over 1 million manufacturing jobs each year.” The report offers a sectoral breakdown of the 9 million jobs per year, in infrastructure for clean water, clean transportation, and clean energy; renewable energy; energy efficiency; and regenerative agriculture.

Millions of Green Jobs: A Plan for Economic Revival is based on a technical report released in May 2020: ***Job Creation Estimates Through Proposed Economic Stimulus Measures: Modeling Proposals by Various U.S. Civil Society Groups; Macro-Level and Detailed Program-by-Program Job Creation Estimates***, written by Robert Pollin and Shouvik Chakraborty at the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Another data-driven report from researchers at the University of California Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy is ***2035: The Report: Plummeting solar, wind and battery costs can accelerate our clean electricity future***. It “uses the latest renewable energy and battery cost data to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of achieving 90% clean (carbon-free) electricity in the United States by 2035.” Two central cases are simulated using state-of-the-art capacity expansion and production-cost models from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. “The 90% Clean case avoids over \$1.2 trillion in health and environmental costs, including 85,000 avoided premature deaths, through 2050”... and “supports a total of 29 million job-years cumulatively during 2020–2035. Employment related to the energy sector increases by approximately 8.5 million net job years, as increased employment from expanding renewable

energy and battery storage more than replaces lost employment related to declining fossil fuel generation. The “No New Policy” case requires one-third fewer jobs, for a total of 20 million job-years over the study period. These jobs include direct, indirect, and induced jobs related to construction, manufacturing, operations and maintenance, and the supply chain. Overall, the 90% Clean case supports over 500,000 more jobs each year compared to the No New Policy case.”

A [dedicated website](#) offers downloads of the [report](#) and an interactive “Data Explorer” which includes a jobs component.

Green Recovery plans: Europe

Influential consultants McKinsey published “[How a post-pandemic stimulus can both create jobs and help the climate](#)” on May 27, written by McKinsey partners from Frankfurt, London, Paris, Stockholm, as well as San Francisco. The report focuses on 12 potential stimulus measures with a strong emphasis on European experience, and estimates the jobs created per Euro spent, as well as total jobs created, for each of its twelve low-carbon strategies. The McKinsey report highlights the 2017 econometric study of the U.S., “[Green vs. Brown](#)” by Heidi Garrett-Pelletier, which concluded that “on average, 2.65 full-time-equivalent (FTE) jobs are created from \$1 million spending in fossil fuels, while that same amount of spending would create 7.49 or 7.72 FTE jobs in renewables or energy efficiency. Thus each \$1 million shifted from brown to green energy will create a net increase of 5 jobs.”

In the U.K., the Local Government Authority released [Local green jobs – accelerating a sustainable economic recovery](#), on June 11. It predicts that “Soaring demand for green jobs will require a diverse range of skills and expertise to roll-out clean technologies”. Specifically, the report forecasts that by 2030, an estimated 693,628 low-carbon jobs and “between 2030 and 2050, the low-carbon workforce in England could increase by a further 488,569, taking the total level of jobs to more than 1.18 million by 2050.”

In its own interest, the LGA argues for increased funding at the local level, to “fast-track green jobs” with concentrated action to introduce national skills programmes for training and retraining.

[Local Green Jobs](#) is supplemented by an [interactive regional breakdown of statistics by local authority](#), and a supportive [policy framework](#) document.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green Recovery](#), [renewable energy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental rollbacks during Covid-19 in Canada and the U.S.

Posted on [June 11, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

This post was updated on June 17 to include new developments in Alberta and Ontario.

On June 3, Canadian journalist Emma McIntosh compiled and published a Canadian list of environmental rollbacks, and continues to update it as changes continue in almost every province. **“Here’s every environmental protection in Canada that has been suspended, delayed and cancelled during COVID-19”** in the *National Observer*, is a compilation built by scouring news reports and legislative websites. Although it includes all Canadian provinces, the Alberta and Ontario governments are highlighted as the worst offenders, including changes to **Alberta’s environmental monitoring in the oil sands** and **weakening of air quality monitoring**. The inventory was updated to include Bill 22, ***The Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act***, which passed first reading in the Alberta legislature on June 11. A 14-point omnibus bill, Bill 22 eliminates the need for cabinet approval for oil and gas projects, and dissolves the Energy Efficiency Alberta agency, begun in 2017. Alberta’s Environment Minister has said it will be wound down by September and most staff re-assigned to the Emissions Reduction Alberta agency, which focuses on the oil and gas industry. Efficiency Canada reacted with a critical press release on June 12, titled **“Alberta cuts successful job-creation engine in the midst of recession”** – which states that “The agency **created** more than 4,300 private-sector jobs between 2017 and 2019”.

In Ontario, early on, the government suspended part two of the provincial Environmental Bill of Rights, **excusing the government from notifying or consulting the public on environment-related projects**, changes or regulations. Changes were also made to zoning requirements, to speed the development approval process. Unexpectedly, the government restored the protections on June , although it has been vague about its reasoning, and more importantly, has not revealed what projects were approved during the suspension period. **“Doug Ford government restores environmental protections it suspended amid COVID-19”** (June 15). The article notes that since Premier Doug Ford took office in 2017, “Ontario has **cancelled** 227 clean energy projects, **wound down** conservation programs, **weakened** endangered species protections and has **taken away powers** from the province’s environmental commissioner.”

In Newfoundland

Although it is not noted in the *National Observer* inventory yet (updating is ongoing) – Newfoundland joined the ranks of major actors on June 4, when the government press release announced a **“New Regional Assessment Process Protects the Environment and Shortens Timelines for Exploration Drilling Program Approval”**. This action reverses a 2010 decision and places authority for exploration approval back with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB), rather than the federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA). Calling the drilling of offshore exploration wells a “low impact activity”, the press release promises a faster approval process which “allows the province to become more globally competitive while maintaining a strong and effective environmental regulatory regime.” A June 4 press release from the federal government endorses the move, according to their press release: **“The Government of Canada announces new regulatory measure to improve review process for exploratory drilling projects in the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore”**.

It is notable that the **Just Recovery for All campaign** launched in Canada on May 25 calls for a fair and just recovery from COVID-19 through relief and stimulus packages, and includes as one of

its six principles:

“Bailout packages must not encourage unqualified handouts, regulatory rollbacks, or regressive subsidies that enrich shareholders or CEOs, particularly those who take advantage of tax havens. These programs must support a just transition away from fossil fuels that creates decent work and leaves no one behind.”

In the United States

Donald Trump’s environmental rollbacks during the Covid-19 pandemic have been well-reported, with the *New York Times* maintaining an ongoing register in “[The Trump Administration Is Reversing 100 Environmental Rules. Here’s the Full List](#)” (last updated on May 20) and more recently, on June 4, “[Trump, Citing Pandemic, Moves to Weaken Two Key Environmental Protections](#)”. This article notes his Executive Order allowing agencies to waive required environmental reviews of infrastructure projects, and a new rule proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency which weakens air pollution controls under the Clean Air Act regulations.

[Greenpeace USA issued a response](#) highlighting the racist intent of these changes, and DeSmog Blog published a blog “[Trump EPA’s Refusal to Strengthen Air Quality Standards Most Likely to Harm Communities of Color, Experts Say](#)”.

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Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Covid 19](#), [Environmental Assessment](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Newfoundland](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadians report mixed feelings about working from home – but is it good for the environment? for workers?

Posted on [June 11, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Angus Reid Institute is a Canadian non-profit public opinion research foundation. Their recent survey of Covid-related experiences is summarized at their [June 11 press release](#), with the full 11-page report was released under the title [So long, office space? Two-thirds of Canadians who work from home expect it to continue after pandemic](#).

Of the 30% of Canadians who have been working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic, only 36 % expect to return full-time to their workplace after the pandemic subsides – others expect to split working time between workplace and home, and 20% expect to work primarily from home.

The survey measured productivity and mental health impacts of working from home, showing mixed results re mental health: 15% said it had been “terrible”, 16% said it had been “great”, and 68% ranking it as “okay” – notably, 20% of women 18 to 34 years old rank it as “awful”. The survey also reports on the job loss experiences of respondents since the March beginning of lockdown, with a high of 31% experiencing job loss in May, and 28% in June. Responses concerning job loss, economic outlook, and incidence and attitudes to government financial assistance are available by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics.

Is working from home good for the planet? or for workers?

An earlier WCR post in May, “[Working from home may not save as much energy as we think](#)” summarizes an article from *Environmental Research Letters* which found little empirical evidence that working from home benefits the environment or climate change. Initially some environmentalists saw a [possible \(though temporary\) upside in a reduction of GHG emissions](#) from commuting, and the concept is being embraced by corporate management – for its own reasons. The complexity of the issue is discussed in “[Office work will never be the same](#)” in Vox (May 27), which argues that flexibility *may* benefit the privileged white collar workers who can work from home, but also opens the door to increased workplace surveillance with its greater dependence on technology (not to mention the equity question for those who don’t have the option). In “[Working from Home: Post-Coronavirus Will Give Bosses Greater Control of Workers’ Lives](#)” (June 4) in *Jacobin*, author Luke Savage cites examples of Canadian workplace policies from the Bank of Montreal and Shopify, and quotes an unnamed Canadian unionist . Savage concludes with this warning:

“With every home an office and every office a home, the residual boundaries between work and private life will be gone for good. Still worse, the whole or even partial demise of the physical office space could become a catalyst for a deeper precarization of work wherein many workers are effectively remote contractors, their homes operating like quasi-franchises over which employers can exercise discretionary control with minimal restriction.

Socialists have long argued that bosses and markets exert far too much power and control over our time, our private lives, and our individual autonomy. Unless we resist the burgeoning shift to remote work, both are about to devour an even bigger share of all three.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [office workers](#), [remote work](#), [telecommuting](#), [Working Conditions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

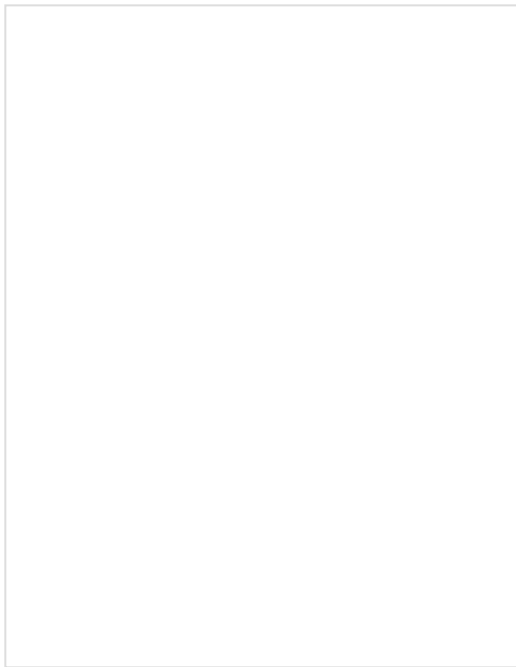
Export Development Canada continues to undermine climate change goals, using Covid-19 recovery to fund Coastal GasLink pipeline

Posted on June 10, 2020 by [elizabethperry493](#)

Reforming Export Development Canada: Climate-Related Risk Management and the Low Carbon Transition is an important new report released on June 9, commissioned by advocacy groups Above Ground and Oil Change International. The report analysis was conducted by consultancy Horizon Advisors, who calculate that the crown corporation Export Development Canada (EDC) has provided roughly \$45 billion in support for the oil and gas sector since 2016, compared to \$7 billion for clean technology. “These investments not only undermine Canada’s international climate efforts but also increase EDC’s exposure to carbon risks.” The report recommends that the government amend the Export Development Act to bar EDC from supporting any fossil fuel energy projects, including new fossil fuel infrastructure such as pipelines, and that the agency should “stress-test its investment decisions against Canada’s climate targets.”

The ***Reforming Export Development Canada*** report is not the first time EDC has been examined for its fossil-friendly investment strategy and criticized for undermining Canada’s climate change progress. Oil Change International and Above Ground published ***Risking it All: How Export Development Canada’s Support for Fossil Fuels Drives Climate Change*** in 2018, which documents investments of more than \$10 billion a year to oil and gas between 2012 and 2017 (twelve times more support than it offered for clean technologies).

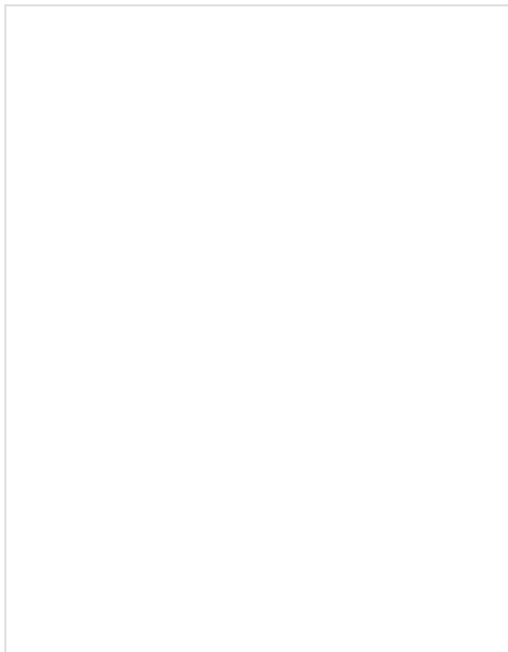
Fossil fuel companies cashing in on Covid-19 Recovery Funds in Canada and worldwide



Dianne Saxe, the former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, cited the 2018 ***Risking it All*** report in her **April 2020 Opinion piece** in the *National Observer*, reacting to the federal \$750 million Emissions Reduction funding as part of the Covid-19 Recovery stimulus. Environmental Defence voiced similar suspicions in their **April response** : “... hidden inside this new law were changes that will make it easier for Canada’s export credit agency, Export Development Canada, to funnel billions more towards domestic oil and gas operations — without public scrutiny.”

And sure enough, following the recovery stimulus announcement, in May **EDC signed an agreement to loan up to \$500 million to Coastal GasLink pipeline** – the same pipeline project which Wet’suwe’ten First Nations had blockaded, causing RCMP arrests which triggered Canada-wide solidarity protests and crippling rail blockades in Ontario and Quebec in the winter of 2020. (And despite objections from the Wet’suwe’ten Hereditary chiefs, **reported in the Toronto Star**). **“Meet Export Development Canada , the secretive crown agency financing the big oil bailout”** (May 27) is a blog by Environmental Defense Canada, calling out EDC investments and calling for greater transparency.

Oil Change International and Friends of the Earth U.S. address this ongoing issue



in ***Still Digging: G20 Governments Continue to Finance the Climate Crisis*** , released on May 27. From the Oil Change International Press release: “G20 countries have provided at least \$77 billion a year in public finance to oil, gas and coal projects since the Paris Climate Agreement was reached. This government-backed support to fossil fuels from export credit agencies, development finance institutions, and multilateral development banks is more than three times what they are providing to clean energy. China, Japan, Canada, and South Korea are the largest providers of public finance to oil, gas, and coal, together making up over two-thirds of the G20 total.” The report is **endorsed** by Environmental Defense Canada and Climate Action Network Canada , among many others.

From ***Still Digging***, a warning:

“with the health and livelihoods of billions at immediate risk from Covid-19, governments around the world are preparing public spending packages of a magnitude they previously deemed unthinkable..... The fossil fuel sector was showing long-term signs of systemic decline before Covid-19 and has been quick to seize on this crisis with requests for massive subsidies and bailouts. We cannot afford for the wave of public finance that is being prepared for relief and recovery efforts to prop up the fossil fuel industry as it has in the past. Business as usual would exacerbate the next crisis—the climate crisis—that is already on our doorstep.”

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Coastal GasLink, Covid 19, Export Development Canada, First Nations, Fossil Fuel Subsidies, Oil and gas industry, oil and gas pipelines, Pandemic** | **Leave a reply**

Linking the crises of Covid-19, environmental justice, and police

violence – updated

Posted on **June 5, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

“Why Racial Justice is Climate Justice” in *Grist* (June 4) compiles the comments of five environmental justice leaders in the U.S., and links the incidence of Covid-19 with the environmental injustices of the past.

*“We now know that coronavirus — much like police brutality, mass incarceration, and climate change — is **not colorblind**. It’s not that the **virus itself differentiates by race**, but, as with other crises, the factors that make communities of color more susceptible to it are shaped by the United States’ long history of discriminatory policies and practices.*

*Many of the places that have been dealt the harshest blow by COVID-19 are simultaneously dealing with other serious threats to residents’ well-being. Even under the cover of the pandemic, **environmental rollbacks and pipeline plans** continue to threaten the health of people of color.”*

Robert Bullard, often acknowledged as the founder of the environmental justice movement and now a distinguished professor at Texas Southern University, Houston, also makes the connection in **“The Coronavirus Pandemic and Police Violence have Reignited the Fight against Toxic Racism”** in *The Intercept* (June 17), where he describes his efforts to revive the **National Black Environmental Justice Network** ; In **“Q&A: A Pioneer of Environmental Justice Explains Why He Sees Reason for Optimism”** , Bullard reflects on the past and offers optimistic views on the current demonstrations: “you see young people out there from different economic groups, different ethnic groups and racial groups, there is an awakening unlike any that I’ve seen on this earth in over 70 years.” Bullard is also quoted as one of the panelists in **an Environmental Justice Roundtable** from the journal *Environmental Justice* (June 5) in which he states:

“This moment in time is just as important as the birth of our movement Environment is where we live, work, play, worship, learn, as well as the physical and natural world. So that means housing and transportation. It means energy. It means employment. It means health. It means all of that. Intersectionality is the word of the day. These things interlace all of our institutions, whether we are talking about unions, black colleges and universities, small businesses, faith-based institutions, or any other type of institution.”

One recent study which links the environmental links to Covid-19 death rates was **conducted by the T.H Chan School of Public Health** at Harvard University – **summarized by the New York Times** in April). Two subsequent blogs from Data for Progress expand that focus to include the links to race and environmental justice: on May 6, **“In Georgia, Coronavirus and Environmental Racism Combine”**, and on May 19 **“The Bronx Is An Epicenter for Coronavirus and Environmental Injustice”** . Among the alarming statistics: “Data from the New York City Department of Health finds that the asthma hospitalization rate for children in the Bronx is 70 percent higher than the rest of NYC and 700 percent higher than the rest of New York State, excluding New York City.” (In Canada, we have no such detailed data, and data collection and

transparency has been **widely criticized in Ontario**. On May 27, the **CBC reported on the “hot spots”** of Covid incidence in the Greater Toronto area, corresponding to low income neighbourhoods with high density.)

“Q&A: A Human Rights Expert Hopes Covid-19, Climate Change and Racial Injustice Are a ‘Wake-Up Call’ – transcribing an interview with Philip Alston, recently-retired UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and now professor of law at New York University . He states: “The optimistic way is to see Covid-19 as a trial run for what’s on the way with climate change in the sense that it really is a crisis that has affected vast numbers of people that has shown up the importance of being prepared and the importance of listening to the warning signals, and the potential for totally disproportionate impact on different groups of the population—whether by gender, class, race and so on. Covid-19 could provide some sort of wake-up call to those of us who are pretending that climate change is going to be manageable and we don’t really need to do anything until it actually starts to hit ever more dramatically..... A much more pessimistic way of looking at it is to wonder if Covid-19, followed by the George Floyd pandemic of racial violence and inequality, is going to lead to a sort of crisis fatigue.”

Yet **“Climate activists have a lot to learn from listening”** in the *National Observer* (June 9) is a thoughtful call for a shift in tactics and approach: “The climate change movement is learning to listen. If we can learn to listen to people’s concerns about their health, and respond by talking about health first — and then about how action on climate is important to protect it — we may yet win.”

How does environmental justice relate to racial justice?

Despite the **denialism of dinosaurs such as Rex Murphy**, most Canadians realize that, as explained in *The Tyee*, **“Canada Has Race-Based Police Violence Too. We Don’t Know How Much”** (June 2). A current example is **the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet** still under investigation after she fell to her death from a high rise apartment, in the company of Toronto police. The winter of 2020 saw demonstrations across Canada in support of **Indigenous protestors at the Wet’suwet’en blockades** of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, facing police violence and intimidation, documented in **“No Surrender”** in *The Intercept* . In their 2018 book ***Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State*** , authors Jeffrey Monaghan and Andrew Crosby examined four prominent movements in Canada, including the climate-related struggles against the Northern Gateway Pipeline and the anti-fracking protests surrounding the Elsipogtog First Nation. A June 3 article, **“How Militarizing Police Sets up Protesters as ‘the Enemy’”** is highly relevant for Canadian climate and social justice activists – re- published by *The Tyee* from an article in *The Conversation*.

“‘This is about Vulnerability’: Ingrid Waldron on the links between environmental racism and police brutality” in *The Narwhal* (June 3) summarizes an interview with Professor Ingrid

Walton, associate professor at Dalhousie University in Halifax, head of the **ENRICH Project** that tracks environmental inequality among communities of colour in Nova Scotia, and the author of the 2018 book, ***There's Something in the Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous and Black Communities***. In the interview, Walton raises the January 2020 closure of the Northern Pulp mill in Pictou, Nova Scotia as an example of environmental racism – the Mi'kmaq First Nations community had been calling for decades to stop the discharge of toxic effluent into Boat Harbour, but Walton argues that action took so long because “closing the mill was a risk for white people in power who were profiting from these industries. ...With police violence, it's similar. It's different, but it's similar in that the physical and emotional impacts on Black bodies are not the kinds of things white people care about.”

Emilee Gilpin, journalist and managing director of the **First Nations Forward Special Reports series** at the *National Observer*, writes an eloquent Opinion piece: **“If life before this was ‘normal,’ I don’t want to go back”** (June 1) . Emphasizing the need for solutions, she concludes:

“I want to live in a world where the murder of innocent Black boys and men is not a normalized reality, where Indigenous women do not get murdered or go missing and turned into a statistic, where reconciliation means reparation, where people aren’t shot with rubber bullets and tear gas for demanding accountability and change, and where every system of power is representative of the society it’s meant to serve.....I want to live in a world that listens and respects the natural world, rather than trying to dominate, colonize and control it. ...”

“Indigenous and Black people in Canada share social exclusion and collective outrage” in the *National Observer* (June 10) links environmental justice, the natural world, and health, and concludes: “While the momentum of what is being called Black Spring continues, it is important to address the constant trespasses against Indigenous rights. It is past due that we set our ambitions toward rectifying the damage being done to the environment and its impact on the health outcomes of First Nations Peoples.”

In the U.S.

“As Protests Rage Over George Floyd’s Death, Climate Activists Embrace Racial Justice” (June 3), and **“Louisville’s ‘Black Lives Matter’ Demonstrations Continue a Long Quest for Environmental Justice”** (June 21) both appeared in *Inside Climate News*, providing examples of practical actions in the U.S..

In **“Racism, police violence and the climate are not separate issues”** in *The New Yorker*, Bill McKibben states: “The job of people who care about the future—which is another way of saying the environmentalists—is to let everyone breathe easier. But that simply can’t happen without all kinds of change. Some of it looks like solar panels for rooftops, and some of it looks like radically reimagined police forces. All of it is hitched together.” His article reports on an interview with Nina Lakhani, an environmental-justice reporter for *The Guardian*, who discusses her new book, ***“Who Killed Berta Cáceres?: Dams, Death Squads, and an Indigenous Defender’s Battle for the Planet”*** – the indigenous environmental activist in Honduras, killed for her opposition to a hydroelectric dam in 2015.

In “**Defunding the Police Is Good Climate Policy**” , Kate Aronoff in *The New Republic* (June 4) argues “there’s plenty of common cause to be found in calls to defund the police and invest in a more generous, democratic, and green public sphere, well beyond the scope of what any carbon-pricing measure can accomplish. For green activists, that will mean seeing decarbonization less as a narrow battle for line items that incentivize renewables than as a contest to shape who and what society values in a climate-changed twenty-first century; many, including in the Sunrise Movement, are already making these connections.”

Aronoff refers to a call to action by the youth-led Sunrise Movement : “**The Climate Justice Movement must Oppose White Supremacy Everywhere — By Supporting M4BL**” (May 29).

It concludes: “Much as we support defunding fossil fuel companies to invest in the future of humanity, we must also support the defunding of white supremacist institutions — including the police and prison-industrial complex — to invest in healing and reparations for Black communities. That is what it means to fight for racial justice, and nothing less.”

Geoff Dembicki discusses the Sunrise Movement in his June 18 article in *Vice*, “**Why ‘Defunding the Police’ Is Also an Environmental Issue**”, which argues that “Defunding the police isn’t a distraction from organizing mass numbers of people to fight the climate emergency. It’s part of the same theory of change and political vision.” (Dembicki also penned a relevant article profiling Extinction Rebellion U.S., which appeared in *Vice* in April, “**A Debate Over Racism Has Split One of the World’s Most Famous Climate Groups**” . The statements of other groups are reviewed in “**Responding to protests, green groups reckon with a racist past**” in *Grist* (June 1) ,including the [League of Conservation Voters](#), [Earthjustice](#), [350.org](#), and the [Sierra Club](#) , all of whom issued statements condemning the killing of George Floyd and vowing to work towards racial justice. Others were signatories to an **Open Letter** sent to leaders of the U.S. House and Senate from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights . The letter begins: “we urge you to take swift and decisive legislative action in response to ongoing fatal police killings and other violence against Black people across our country.” Environmental groups signing on include: Greenpeace USA, League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Parks Conservation Association, NextGen America, and the Sierra Club.

“**Black environmentalists talk about climate change and anti-racism**” in the *New York Times* (June 3) summarizes interviews with three U.S. environmental activists: Sam Grant, executive director of [MN350.org](#), (Minnesota affiliate of 350.org); Robert Bullard, and Heather McGhee, a senior fellow at Demos, a nonpartisan research and advocacy group.

“An anti-racist climate movement ... should be led by “a real multiracial coalition that endorses environmental justice principles” and its goals should seek to uplift the most vulnerable. That means,... the creation of green jobs, rather than cap-and-trade policies that allow companies to keep polluting in communities of color as they have been able to do for decades..... Success is measured by the improvement in the environmental and economic health of the people who have borne the brunt of our carbon economy.”

An interview by Yale Environment 360 titled “**Unequal Impact: The Deep links between Racism and Climate Change**” (June 9) asked Elizabeth Yeampierre (co-chair of the [Climate Justice](#)

[Alliance](#), and executive director of [UPROSE](#)) “What would you hope the climate movement and the environmental justice movement take away from this moment and apply going forward?” Her reply: “ I think it’s a moment for introspection and a moment to start thinking about how they contribute to a system that makes a police officer think it’s okay to put his knee on somebody’s neck and kill them, or a woman to call the police on an African-American man who was bird-watching in the park..... These institutions [environmental groups] have to get out of their silos and out of their dated thinking, and really need to look to organizations like the Climate Justice Alliance and Movement Generation and all of the organizations that we work with. There are so many people who have been working with each other now for years and have literally put out tons of information that there’s no need to reinvent the wheel. It’s all there.”

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [environmental racism](#), [First Nations](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [3 Replies](#)

Alberta oil and gas voices calling for innovation while Newfoundland’s Hibernia workers face layoffs on June 12

Posted on [June 4, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Alberta’s Minister of Energy, Sonya Savage outraged many Canadians with her comments on May 25 that [the Covid-19 pandemic offers a “great time to build pipelines”](#) because of the lack of protestors , and [construction on the TransMountain pipeline](#) began in Kamloops B.C. on June 2. Yet, Max Fawcett, former editor of Oil and Gas magazine writes in a CBC Opinion piece, “[Alberta could be fighting its last pipeline battle](#)” (May 27), stating:

“It will be difficult for a government that prides itself on its willingness to fight for one vision of the oil and gas industry to adapt to this rapidly changing landscape.....It will be tempting for it to continue railing against the federal government, environmental activists, and all of its other enemies, foreign and domestic. And if Biden wins the White House, and follows through on his pledge to cancel Keystone XL’s presidential permit, that temptation may prove overwhelming.

But the ground has shifted under the Government of Alberta’s feet, just as it has for all of us, due to COVID-19.

The sooner it comes to terms with that, and helps the rest of Alberta do the same, the better.”

Fawcett also criticized the Alberta government of Jason Kenney in **“Still waiting for Alberta to get the memo on climate-conscious investing”**, commenting on the implications of the Norway’s Government Pension Fund decision to divest from Canadian oil and gas companies because of their excessive climate impacts. Fawcett calls for Alberta to tell a “more honest story”.

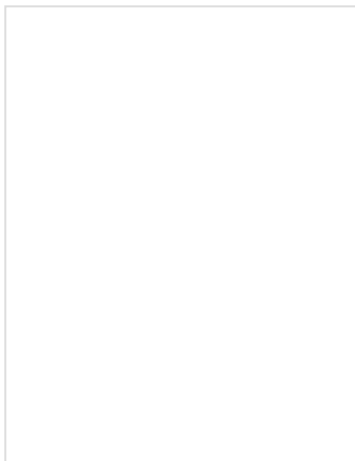
Notably, voices from Canada’s oil sands industry “Establishment” are also speaking out and signalling a shift in attitude. On June 1, as part of the *Climate Knights* Planning for a Green Recovery series, Mark Little, the CEO of Suncor Energy and Laura Kilcrease, CEO of the government agency **Alberta Innovates** wrote an OpEd titled, **“Canada’s oil sands are best positioned to lead the energy transformation”**. Harkening back to the 1970’s in Canada and citing a **2019 BNP Paribas** report on the declining future of oil , they acknowledge the inevitable coming transition with this:

*“While Canadian oil and gas will remain a significant part of the global energy mix for some time, we have to take advantage of new opportunities that offer attractive growth prospects. The temporary economic lockdown triggered by the 2020 pandemic is giving us a glimpse into a not-too-distant future where the transformation of our energy system could **disrupt** demand on a similar scale. Disruption breeds opportunity and forward-looking companies and countries will need to step up and lead.*

Now is the time to take a big step forward. As the history of the oil sands reveals, disruption and transformation are nothing new for Albertans and we’re optimistic that the Canadian energy industry is up to the challenge and best positioned to invest in and lead energy transformation.”

Industry response to the joint OpEd appears in **“Suncor, Alberta Innovates op-ed a game-changer as oil and gas industry finally embraces energy transition”** appeared in EnergiMedia (June 2). noting “ it cannot be a coincidence that the same day the op-ed was published, Alberta finance minister Travis Toews **told** Postmedia that the Alberta government is preparing an economic recovery plan that will focus on diversifying “various industry sectors that we know have a great future in the province, certainly energy and agriculture as you would expect.”

Layoffs in June as Newfoundland’s Hibernia and offshore oil industry in crisis



On June 3, CBC reported **“Hibernia layoffs about to begin ‘with heavy hearts,’ drilling company says”**, summarizing the announcement by Hibernia Management Development Corporation (HMDC) that it will suspend drilling operations starting June 12, as a cost-cutting measure in response to a collapse in oil prices. The 18-month suspension of drilling **had already been announced in April**, even before the negative impacts on demand by the COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of layoffs may approach 600 members of **Unifor Local 2121**, which represents workers at the Hibernia offshore installation and also at the affected Terra Nova FPSO vessel. According to Article 32 of **the current collective agreement**, six months’ written notice was required “In the event of platform closure, partial platform closure, technological change or restructuring, which will involve permanent reduction of regular rotation employees....”

These developments are the latest in a series of setbacks which constitute a crisis for the oil and gas industry in Newfoundland, summarized in **“How a pandemic and production war thrashed one of N.L.’s 4 producing oil fields”** (May 20). The political lobbying for federal funds is described in **“N.L. oil industry, former premier, rally behind MP Seamus O’Regan in quest for federal help”** (May 14) and a Canadian Press article **“N.L. warns of exodus of oil and gas industry without more federal help”** (May 26).

On June 4, the provincial government of Newfoundland announced a **“New Regional Assessment Process Protects the Environment and Shortens Timelines for Exploration Drilling Program Approval”** which reverses a 2010 decision and places authority for exploration approval back with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB), rather than the federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA). Calling the drilling of offshore exploration wells a “low impact activity”, the press release promises a faster approval process which “allows the province to become more globally competitive while maintaining a strong and effective environmental regulatory regime.” This comes a week after the government-appointed Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council released their long-delayed report, ***A Home for Nature*** which proposes 32 protected areas and a framework for ecological protection on land and offshore.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Newfoundland, offshore oil and gas industry, Oil and gas industry, Transmountain Pipeline** | [Leave a reply](#)

Marjorie Griffin Cohen, author of “Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries”, awarded the Charles Taylor Prize

Posted on **May 29, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Professor Emeritus at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, was awarded the 2020 Charles Taylor Prize for Excellence in Policy Research, **as announced on May 28**.

Marjorie's research has focused on the intersection of gender and sexuality issues, as well as climate and labour policy. Amongst her many publications, Marjorie authored "**Does Gender Matter in the Political Economy of Work and Climate Justice?**" in 2011 as part of the Work in a Warming World research project, the predecessor to the **Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces project**. Along with John Calvert, she also authored "Climate Change and Labour in the Energy Sector", as a



chapter in **Climate@Work** in 2013. In 2017, Marjorie edited the path-breaking **Climate Change and Gender in Rich Countries**, published by Routledge.

Over her career, Marjorie has served on several boards and commissions in British Columbia, including as the first Chair of the B.C. chapter of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in B.C. (which she helped to establish). The Charles Taylor Prize, normally awarded at the Broadbent Institute Progress Summit, could not be delivered in person, but Marjorie's **acceptance speech is available on YouTube**. In it, she discusses her work as the Chair of the B.C. Fair Wages Commission from 2017-2018, which contributed directly to the increase in the provincial minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

Notably, the same **YouTube video** also includes a speech by Catherine Abreu, Executive Director of **Climate Action Network – Canada**, who was awarded the 2020 Jack Layton Progress Prize for her international leadership on climate policy and action.

Both awards represent welcome recognition of the increasing importance of climate change research in public policy.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change research, Gender, Marjorie Griffin Cohen** | **1 Reply**

EU €750 billion Recovery Plan announced to mixed reaction

Posted on **May 28, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a speech before the European Parliament on May 27, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced an updated seven-year €1 trillion budget proposal and a €750 billion recovery plan for the European Union, focused on a green and digital economy. [Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the next generation](#) describes the major structure of the plan, accompanied by a [5-page Fact Sheet](#) which highlights "Next Generation EU", the new recovery instrument.

The EU recovery strategy affirms a commitment to a European Green Deal and promises:

- "A massive renovation wave of our buildings and infrastructure and a more circular economy, bringing local jobs;
- Rolling out renewable energy projects, especially wind, solar and kick-starting a clean hydrogen economy in Europe;
- Cleaner transport and logistics, including the installation of one million charging points for electric vehicles and a boost for rail travel and clean mobility in our cities and regions;
- Strengthening the Just Transition Fund to support re-skilling, helping businesses create new economic opportunities.
- Also, recovery goals include a short-term European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme (SURE) will provide €100 billion to support workers and businesses;
- A Skills Agenda for Europe and a Digital Education Action Plan will ensure digital skills for all EU citizens;
- Fair minimum wages and binding pay transparency measures will help vulnerable workers, particularly women";

Some European reactions to the proposals are compiled in the summary article ["Do no harm': EU recovery fund has green strings attached"](#) in *Euractiv*. More negative views come from Climate Action Network Europe, which calls the proposals "greenwashing" and in a more detailed [press release](#) states: "Despite repeated commitments by the European Commission to make the European Green Deal the blueprint of the recovery, the proposal still allows for money to be spent on supporting fossil fuels and is lifting climate spending targets in regional development funding, while the climate emergency would need a rapid phase-out of these polluting fuels and strong climate earmarking."

Friends of the Earth Europe had earlier released their own proposals for a European recovery plan, [here](#), and reacted to the EU announcement on May 27 with [EU Recovery Package falls short of Building Back Better](#) – which states:

“today’s package would not prevent investments in new fossil fuel infrastructure nor put conditions on bailing out polluting industries like airlines – leaving a gaping hole in achieving the aims of the European Green Deal. Nor are there conditions related to compliance with human rights, not paying out dividends, or buy-back of shares for companies that receive funding. The plan gives significant political support to the development of hydrogen, without stipulating that this comes from renewable electricity alone. This could open the door to more climate-damaging fossil fuels in our energy system. The Commission will direct welcome financial support to renovating buildings, creating jobs and cutting carbon; this will need to be backed by legislation to reduce energy poverty and ensure every home in Europe meets minimum efficiency standards. Friends of the Earth welcomes an increase in funds for the Just Transition Fund, and the focus on jobs and skills.”

In “[‘Defining moment’ as EU executive pushes for €500bn in grants](#)” (May 27) The Guardian summarizes the proposals and focuses on the political fight ahead amongst EU members: For example, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, (a group called the “frugal four”), who want recovery funding to take the form of loans, not grants. The potential financial and political wrangling is also the focus of the *New York Times* article, “[A €750 Billion Virus Recovery Plan Thrusts Europe Into a New Frontier](#)” . *The Energy Mix* reported on North American reaction to a version of the EU proposals leaked by Bloomberg, in “[EU’S massive green recovery plan includes 15-GW renewables tender, support for green hydrogen](#)” (May 24).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [EU](#), [European Union](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

CLC, TUC publish visions for post-Covid just economic recovery; new campaign launches

Posted on **May 25, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On May 25, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) posted [Labour’s Vision for Economic Recovery](#) . Rejecting austerity-thinking, the CLC guiding principles call for government action which focuses on getting Canadians back to work and fully employed in decently paid, productive jobs, based on labour market planning, coordination and concerted government action. Priorities include protection for worker health and safety, including mental health, in the return to work. The CLC also introduces a call for a Green Youth Job Guarantee: “Following the experience of the European Union, the federal, provincial and territorial governments should establish a guarantee that all young people under the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.... This could include a Green Youth Corps providing decent jobs in renewable energy, land remediation and restoration, climate adaptation,

building retrofits and sustainable transportation. Additionally, it should include green skills training and learning opportunities. The Green Youth Corps would target marginalized, low-income and at-risk youth in urban centres, as well as in rural and isolated communities.”

Labour’s Vision also calls for public investment in physical, social and green infrastructure, and on renewal and expansion of public services. “Green industrial policy and sector strategies, anchored in union-management dialogue, should provide the framework for expanded investment in manufacturing capacity, skills training and workforce development.” ***Labour’s Vision*** concludes: “...” It is time to address the precarity, poor working conditions and wage discrimination in sectors dominated by women, including care work, retail and health services. This work is essential to the health and well-being of our communities and economy.” More broadly, it calls for reform of Canada’s long term care sector, accelerating universal pharmacare, and fair taxation.

The CLC, along with other unions and social justice and climate action groups, endorsed the ***Just Recovery for All*** campaign launched on May 25. The campaign calls for a fair and just recovery from COVID-19 through relief and stimulus packages based on these six foundation principals: Put people’s health and well-being first; Strengthen the social safety net and provide relief directly to people; Prioritize the needs of workers and communities; Build resilience to prevent future crises; Build solidarity and equity across communities, generations, and borders; and Uphold Indigenous rights and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

Regarding the **“Prioritize the needs of workers and communities”** principal, the campaign expands with:

“Support must be distributed in a manner consistent with Indigenous sovereignty, a climate resilient economy, and worker rights, including safe and fair labour standards and a right to unionize. Improved conditions for essential service workers must be maintained beyond this crisis.

Bailout packages must not encourage unqualified handouts, regulatory rollbacks, or regressive subsidies that enrich shareholders or CEOs, particularly those who take advantage of tax havens. These programs must support a just transition away from fossil fuels that creates decent work and leaves no one behind.”

In answer to the question “Why did you call it a “just recovery” and not a “healthy”, “resilient”, or “green” recovery?”, ***Just Recovery for All*** explains: “We were inspired by principles and organizers in the US and internationally who started the idea of principles for a “Just Recovery” we wanted to align ourselves with global allies. We also wanted to lead with the idea that justice – fairness and equity – needed to be part of the focus of the work coming out of COVID.”

Those who have endorsed the Just Recovery campaign are listed [here](#), with union endorsements from the Canadian Labour Congress, ACTRA, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, CUPE Local 3903, Confederation des syndicats nationaux, Federation de la sante et des services sociaux, Syndicate de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Quebec, and Toronto and York Regional Labour Council, as well as climate/union coalitions including Blue Green Canada, Green

Economy Network, Good Jobs for All. A [COVID-19 Yellow Pages](#) lists and summarizes many of the Canadian campaigns currently underway by endorsing organizations.

In the U.K., the Trades Union Congress (TUC) published [A Better Recovery](#) on May 20 – like the CLC, rejecting austerity economics and proposing an “investment for growth” approach for post Covid recovery. The report highlights six principles: Decent work (with a higher minimum wage and new collective bargaining rights); Economic stimulus for Just Transition and a low-carbon economy; social security reforms including a job guarantee; rebuilding public services with good jobs in care work; equality at work; new internationalism. Other TUC articles re Covid-19 are [here](#).

Business is offering advice re Economic Recovery too

Just as unions are advocating for their versions of economic recovery, so are businesses. One such Canadian campaign launched in mid-May and now numbers more than 280 Canadian companies and business organizations. The [Resilient Recovery](#) campaign is a collaboration between Clean Energy Canada and the Canada Cleantech Alliance—calling for direct and immediate investment in Canadian clean energy and clean tech companies.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce established a [Canadian Business Resilience Network](#) to coordinate over 450 chambers of commerce, boards of trade, and business and industry association. In addition to serving their membership, they aspire to “Provide a consistent and reliable flow of accurate, up-to-date, authoritative information; and “Work closely with government to ensure the right supports are in place, and to be a conduit for information from the government to the private sector.” On May 21, they released [Reopening Canada’s Economy, A National Guide for Business](#), “designed to provide guidance, or access to guidance, for business owners and senior managers responsible for re-establishing their operations while ensuring the health and safety of operators, staff, customers and the general public is at the forefront.”

Internationally, on May 19 the [Science Based Targets initiative](#), the UN Global Compact, and the We Mean Business coalition issued a joint press release titled: “[Over 150 global corporations urge world leaders for net-zero recovery from COVID-19](#)” . Their [signed statement](#) urges governments “to prioritize a faster and fairer transition from a grey to a green economy by aligning policies and recovery plans with the latest climate science.....We must move beyond business-as-usual and work together in solidarity to deliver the greatest impact for people, prosperity and the planet.” The 150 companies who signed on to the statement are from 33 different countries, but only two are Canadian: Arc'teryx Equipment , SkyPower Global .

(The [Science Based Targets initiative](#) is a collaboration between CDP, the UN Global Compact, World Resources Institute and WWF, and independently assesses and validates corporate climate targets against the latest climate science. It includes 885 companies which are taking some science-based climate action and 373 companies whose targets have been approved by the SBTi.)

Proposals for Canada's Covid-19 recovery promised from a Task Force for a Resilient Recovery

Posted on **May 19, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A **press release** on May 19 announced the launch of a **Task Force for a Resilient Recovery**, funded by private foundations and led by two research organizations: the **Smart Prosperity Institute** and the **International Institute for Sustainable Development**. The Task Force promises to develop “actionable recommendations on how governments can help get Canadians back to work while also building a low-carbon and resilient economy” and will release their final report at the end of July 2020.

The Resilient Recovery website is available in **English** and **French**. The websites already include the proposals of the two research organizations: from the Smart Prosperity Institute – a 25-page “manual” which provides a **Framework** based on nine criteria, clustered in three categories: 1. does the measure stimulate timely, lasting economic benefits and jobs? 2. does the measure help the environment and support clean competitiveness? 3. is the measure equitable, implementable and feasible?

From the **International Institute for Sustainable Development**, a discussion which endorses the May 4 report from the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University, ***Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?***.

Who is involved in this Task Force?

Members are **listed at the website**. In addition to Stewart Elgie of the Smart Prosperity Institute and Richard Florizone of the IISD, there are fourteen, including Elizabeth Beale, former President and CEO of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council; Barbara Zvan, former Chief Risk & Strategy Officer for the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan; Don Forgeron, President and CEO of the Insurance Board of Canada; Bruce Lourie, President, Ivey Foundation; James Meadowcroft, Professor, Carleton University; and Merran Smith, Executive Director, Clean Energy Canada. The initiative is funded by the Jarislowsky Foundation, Ivey Foundation, McConnell Foundation, Schad Foundation, and the Echo Foundation.

Notably, this Task Force is unrelated to the **May 11 statement which appeared in The Hill** (May 11) from Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff and Chamber of Commerce president Perrin Beatty. Describing their co-operative efforts in the Covid-19 crisis, they continue: “we are calling on the federal government to strike a task force to develop recommendations on

how to reboot the economy. The sheer scale of these decisions requires a variety of perspectives, not least of which will be accommodating the varied needs of the vastly diverse sectors. When it comes time for recovery, we will need broad engagement with governments, labour, businesses both large and small across sectors, public health experts, Indigenous groups, non-profits and academics.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canadian Labour Congress \(CLC\)](#), [Covid 19](#), [Green Recovery](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Disaster capitalism in Alberta – oil and gas producers exempted from emissions reporting, testing for methane leaks

Posted on **May 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Although the Green Party of Canada has stirred up the hornet’s nest of oil politics in Canada by the **“Oil is Dead” statement in May**, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney **continues to reject that idea**, in word and deed. Since the onset of Covid-19, Alberta environmental rollbacks **have been described** as a textbook case of “disaster capitalism” and the government has been accused of **“out-Trumping Trump** . In April, the Alberta government made amendments to the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, *Water Act*, *Public Lands Act* and the newly implemented *Technology Innovation and Emissions Regulations* – providing exemptions to oil and gas operators from reporting air quality emissions from smokestacks, tailings ponds, transportation and dust until Dec. 31, 2020. Amendments to the *Oil and Gas Conservation Act* and the *Pipeline Act* could allow the **Orphan Well Association to use federal and provincial emergency relief funds** to produce and sell oil from abandoned wells and operate abandoned pipelines. Professor Shaun Fluker summarizes the changes in a University of Calgary Faculty of Law blog post, **“COVID-19 and the Suspension of Energy Reporting and Well Suspension Requirements in Alberta”** (April 10). A broader analysis by two academics from the University of Guelph appears in **“Disaster capitalism: Coronavirus crisis brings bailouts, tax breaks and lax environmental rules to oilsands”** (April 29, The Conversation), and Sharon Riley has written an in-depth article , **“8 environmental responsibilities Alberta can skip”** (*The Narwhal*, April 27). Randy Christensen of Ecojustice has also written a brief article, **“Warning: disaster capitalism”**, which argues that “the governments of Alberta and Ontario have now made moves that are more far-reaching and potentially riskier” than the Trump **EPA roll-backs announced in March**. The reference to Ontario is based on the Ontario government’s **April 1 regulation** which temporarily suspends public consultation under Ontario’s Environmental Bill of Rights. And Newfoundland could also be considered for the list, according to **“Newfoundland offshore drilling: a case of bending environmental impact rules”** (*National Observer*, April 3) .

On May 6, the [Edmonton Journal](#) and the [Toronto Star](#) reported further exemptions by the Alberta government: from the Star: “A decision by the Alberta Energy Regulator in May, means that Imperial Oil, Suncor, Syncrude and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. don’t have to perform much of the testing and monitoring originally required in their licences – including monitoring of most ground and surface water; most wildlife and bird monitoring, and a reduction of air quality monitoring – with the suspension of testing for methane leaks.” *The Star* article argues that many of the changes correspond closely to the demands made by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) in March in a 13-page letter sent to federal ministers: [Covid-19 Crisis Response – Actions Required regarding federal Policy and Regulations](#). Keith Stewart of Greenpeace Canada is [quoted in The Star](#), saying he “isn’t aware of any other jurisdiction in the world that has gone as far as Alberta to roll back environmental protections during the pandemic, including the United States under President Donald Trump.”

On May 7, *Vice* published “[What the hell is going on in Alberta?](#)”, with this opening statement: “It’s safe to say Alberta is in crisis.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Covid 19](#), [Emissions Regulations](#), [Methane Emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Only 24% of Canadians willing to give up flying to fight climate change – compared to 41% globally

Posted on [May 12, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On Earth Day, public opinion polling company Ipsos Global Advisor released a survey titled, [How does the world view climate change and Covid-19?](#). The survey was conducted during March and April and so includes Covid-19 questions, along with measuring the top environmental concerns of respondents, and their willingness to act to combat climate change. Top-line results show that: 71% globally agree that climate change is as serious a crisis as Covid-19 and 65% globally support a ‘green’ economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Sadly, however, there has been no increase since the 2014 survey in the number of people willing to make sacrifices to combat climate change, and the changes they are willing to make are mostly low effort and low impact.

How do Canadian opinions compare to other countries?

Only 64% of Canadians agree with the statement that “In the long term, climate change is as serious a crisis as Covid-19 is” – compared to a 71% global agreement, and 87% in the highest country, China. Only Australia and the United States have a lower rate than Canada. Similarly, only 61% of Canadians supported the statement: “In the economic recovery after Covid-19, it’s

important that government actions prioritize climate change”, compared to 81% in India and 65% globally.

Globally, the top-ranked environmental concerns reported are global warming/climate change; air pollution; waste; deforestation; water pollution; depletion of natural resources. For Canadians, when asked “what are the top environmental issues you feel should receive the greatest attention from your local leaders?”, 44% responded “global warming/climate change” – the third highest response in the world after Japan and South Korea. A similarly high concern (44%) was recorded for the amount of waste we generate. Other concerns ranked surprisingly low – for example, air pollution (23%); water pollution (22%); future energy sources and supplies (20%); emissions (16%); depletion of natural resources (15%); deforestation (15%); flooding (7%).



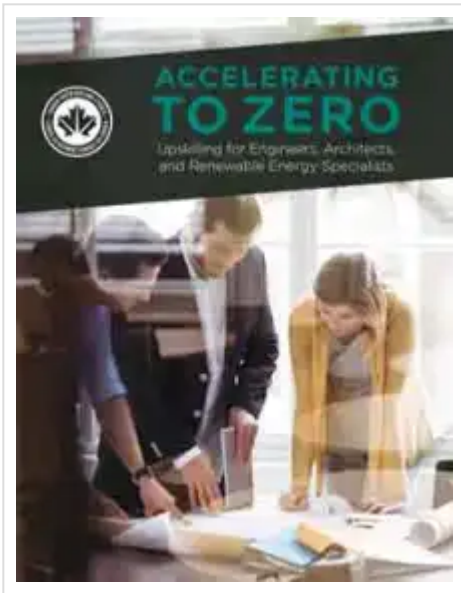
The final section of the report reports on understanding of climate change and what changes respondents are willing to make to combat climate change. Globally, people are most willing to 1. avoid products which have a lot of packaging; 2. Avoid buying new goods in favour of mending or buying used; and 3. Conserve energy at home. The three behaviour changes least favoured: 1. Not flying; 2. Eating less meat; 3. Eating fewer dairy products. Canadians are the least likely in the world to give up flying, with only 24% willing to make that change – well below the global average of 41%. Similarly, only 28% are willing to eat less meat (28% – only 1% more than Australians and Americans) and 22% to eat less dairy.

The Ipsos summary and press release are [here](#).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **behaviour change, climate change activism, Consumer Behaviour, Covid 19, public opinion polls** | [Leave a reply](#)

How to improve zero carbon skills amongst architects, engineers and renewable energy specialists

Posted on **May 12, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



The Canadian Green Building Council released a new report on April 30, ***Accelerating to Zero: Upskilling for Engineers, Architects, and Renewable Energy Specialists***. The **Executive Summary** states: “To better understand what these key professions require in zero carbon education and training, this study was designed to: • Establish Canada’s first professional industry baseline of zero carbon building skills and knowledge among engineers, architects, and renewable energy specialists; • Identify knowledge and skills gaps, as well as a preferred learning approach for engineers, architects, and renewable energy specialists for the design, construction and operation of zero carbon buildings; and, • Recommend ways that education and training providers, accreditation and professional bodies, and policy decision-makers can support zero carbon building education and training for engineers, architects, and renewable energy specialists.”

The report is based on 318 survey respondents who self-reported their perceived knowledge and practical experience for the competencies derived from the CaGBC’s Zero Carbon Building Standard. The report makes seven recommendations for actions by professional associations and educational and training organizations, including: updating education and training curricula; use of common terminology across the field; incentivizing members of professional organizations and accreditation agencies to achieve zero carbon competencies; development of a wider variety of learning platforms to suit a variety of learning preferences; making zero carbon building competencies part of the core public sector training curriculum, and supporting the adoption of zero carbon building codes and related training and education.

Accelerating to Zero: Upskilling for Engineers, Architects, and Renewable Energy Specialists is a 48-page report; it was accompanied by a brief **press release** and a 7-page **Executive Summary**. It includes a bibliography, including the related CAGBC 2019 reports ***Making the Case for Building to Zero Carbon***, and ***Trading Up: Equipping Ontario Trades with the Skills of the Future***. Not mentioned, but highly relevant is the 2017 study by John Mumme and Karen Hawley, ***The Training of Canadian Architects for the Challenges of Climate Change***, published by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project in 2017.

B.C.'s Covid-19 economic recovery plans, and safety, WCB coverage for workers

Posted on **May 12, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“What Kind of Recovery Economy Is BC Planning to Build?” appeared in *The Tyee* (May 6) discussing the **British Columbia Economic Recovery Task Force**, appointed in early April. The article points out that the 19-member Task Force lacks any representation from environmental advocacy groups – although **Laird Cronk**, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour was appointed, along with the leaders of major business and community organizations, in addition to the Premier, cabinet ministers, and senior



civil servants. The province also consults with their **Climate Solutions Advisory Council**, and on May 11, released **the Final Report of the Emerging Economies Task Force**, appointed in 2018. The **press release** affirms that it “will also be a valuable resource to help inform the province’s COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery”, despite the fact that it was submitted to the government in March 2020, and so pre-dates the Covid-19 crisis. One of its five strategic priorities of the Emerging Economies report is titled “Leveraging B.C.’s Green Economy”.

Worker safety as the economy re-opens

On May 6, Premier Horgan **announced** Phase 2 , a cautious re-opening the economy. Responsibility for the safe opening and operation of workplaces is delegated to WorkSafe B.C., whose **media release** states: “As employers prepare to resume operations, they will need to have a safety plan in place that assesses the risk of COVID-19 transmission in their workplace, and develops measures to reduce these risks. This planning process must involve workers as much as

possible to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed — this includes frontline workers, supervisors, Joint Health and Safety Committees, and/or worker representatives.” WorkSafeB.C. will issue industry-specific guidance and promises consultation with workers and employers; their general resources for Covid-19 return to work is [here](#).

The B.C. Federation of Labour [reacted](#) on May 11 to the announcement that the Workers Compensation Board will add COVID-19 to [Schedule 1](#) of the *Workers Compensation Act*, thereby granting “presumptive coverage” and expediting workers’ claims. According to the B.C. Fed, there were 317 COVID-19-related WCB claims in B.C. as of April 29. The B.C. Fed [had advocated](#) for the enhanced WCB protection, as well as for the enhanced sick leave protections and \$1,000 tax-free provincial Emergency Benefit for Workers, announced in March.

Related Note: On May 7, the [Vancouver Just Recovery Coalition](#) released [a statement](#) signed by community, advocacy groups and unions, stating: “As our federal, provincial and municipal governments begin to strategize on their post-COVID recovery and rebuilding strategies, we need to prioritize those most impacted, ensuring that our economic recovery lessens existing inequalities, respects Indigenous rights, and tackles the climate emergency. The pre-COVID status quo was failing too many people. ”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Covid 19](#), [Just recovery](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Pandemic](#), [Workers Compensation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian academics, experts describe plans for a Green Recovery after Covid-19

Posted on [May 11, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

An April 28 Opinion piece in the *New York Times* makes an eloquent statement which summarizes global calls for a green recovery from the pandemic. In “[A Time to Save the Sick and Rescue the Planet](#)” António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, writes: “Addressing climate change and Covid-19 simultaneously and at enough scale requires a response stronger than any seen before to safeguard lives and livelihoods. A recovery from the coronavirus crisis must not take us just back to where we were last summer. It is an opportunity to build more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies — a more resilient and prosperous world.” He proposes a 6-point plan, stating: “As we spend trillions to recover from Covid-19, we must deliver new jobs and businesses through a clean, green transition. Investments must accelerate the decarbonization of all aspects of our economy....Where taxpayers’ money rescues businesses, it must be creating green jobs and sustainable and inclusive growth. It must not be bailing out

outdated polluting, carbon-intensive industries....Fiscal firepower must shift economies from gray to green, making societies and people more resilient through a transition that is fair to all and leaves no one behind.....Looking forward, public funds should invest in the future, by flowing to sustainable sectors and projects that help the environment and climate. Fossil fuel subsidies must end and polluters must pay for their pollution.”

Calls for a Green Recovery in Canada

The state of the federal government's Green Recovery planning is described in an article in *La Presse* “**Trudeau misera sur une «relance verte» après la crise**” (April 22, French only), summarized in English by the *Energy Mix* as “**Guilbeault, McKenna and Wilkinson assigned to chart post-Covid green recovery**” (April 26). It states that “planning for the “green reboot” is still in its earliest stages” – giving experts time to weigh in on strategies.

One of the latest Green Recovery visions came on May 7, when a group of 50 academics sent an **Open Letter** to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and three ministers, called “Springing Canada Forward”. It sets out key principles “to guide investments that can future-proof our economies against climate catastrophe. Investments should link job creation and green infrastructure. They should include funding for both initial capital and long-term operations. COVID-19 has acutely highlighted that social inequalities threaten Canada’s resilience. Thus, investments should include principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and be consistent with Indigenous rights. Finally, to support an evidence-based approach, pilot projects, experimentation, rigorous testing and evaluation should be built into all major post-COVID investments.” Specifically, the Open Letter calls for leveraging the existing programs of the Infrastructure Canada (with its formal “**climate lens**”) and the national Housing Strategy, thus calling for a transition to low-carbon energy, green infrastructure investment, and a national program of whole house energy retrofits.

In a surprisingly detailed statement regarding workers’ issues, the Open Letter states:

“Facilitating the development of a climate-literate construction workforce should be a key part of Canada’s recovery investments en route to a low-carbon economy. High-quality, low-carbon construction requires a workplace culture that emphasizes reducing energy consumption. Major investments in developing new and upgraded climate-related construction skills is a key opportunity to expand equity, diversity and inclusion in the workforce while promoting greener practices and technologies. If climate literacy is an integral part of workers’ training, the industry can establish new skill requirements to ensure that newly trained workers can find the good quality jobs they expect and have the capacity to effectively contribute to Canada’s climate objectives. Upskilling workforces must address violence against women and open the road to take advantage of the important contributions that Indigenous workers and women can make to the green new economy.”

The Open Letter is summarized by the National Observer in “**Use pandemic to ‘future-proof’ against climate crisis, academic group urges**” (May 8).

Other Expert statements on Canada’s Green Recovery

The Institute for Climate Choices is publishing articles in an ongoing COVID-19 Recovery series, beginning with “**Climate policy in the long shadow of Covid-19**” by Dave Sawyer . Other articles include: “**Well and good**” (a reaction to the federal relief funding for orphan well clean-up in the oil sands); “**When Disasters collide**” (Apr. 8) and “**When Disasters Collide: the Sequel**” (Apr. 14) .

The journal *Policy Options* is publishing articles under the category, **The Coronavirus pandemic: Canada’s Response** . A few examples from the dozens of articles: “**Economy and climate need more than stimulus**” written by Brendan Haley, published in *Policy Options* (April 27) , which states: “... the clean economy sector requires patient, long-term capital focused on earning returns from productivity improvements and environmental benefits. For a real recovery, capital needs to be funnelled towards building things instead of short-term speculation.” Haley reiterates Jim Stanford’s April call in “**We’re Going to need a Marshall Plan to rebuild after Covid-19**” (April 2) and continues: “... The Canada Infrastructure Bank could lead a national clean energy investment strategy. But it would need to take a more transformative view of green infrastructure, which includes zero-carbon buildings and other decentralized energy technologies. If the Infrastructure Bank is not the right vehicle, policy-makers should create new institutions, ... Expending the policy effort to create a Canadian climate investment bank makes good sense if the objective is to lay the foundation for the next decades of economic prosperity rather than solely providing short-term stimulus.” Most recently, “**A Deep Retrofit of Homes and Buildings is the megaproject Canada needs**” by Tom-Pierre Frappé-Sénéclauze (May 8).

“**The Canada we want: How a green recovery can help us bounce back stronger**” in *Corporate Knights* (April 15) introduces their “Build Back Stronger” series of articles which will be published from April 22 to June 3, [here](#) . Among them, “**Building Back Better with a green renovation wave**” – a roadmap for retrofitting policy, by Ralph Torrie and Celine Bak ; “**To invest in a green power infrastructure, we’ll need to re-boot Canada’s electricity markets**” by Pierre-Olivier Pineau.

Dan Woyanilowicz lays out a framework for “**How Canada can build back better**” (April 17) at the Clean Energy Canada website, envisioning three stages: 1. our current relief stage, 2. a stimulus stage (with the goal is to kickstart the economy), and 3. a recovery stage (characterized by “continued government efforts to rebuild the economy, building on and expanding stimulus efforts to ensure sustained and sustainable economic activity.”) He concludes:

“The COVID-19 pandemic, like climate change, isn’t a “black swan” event but a “gray rhino” (“highly obvious, highly probable, but still neglected dangers”). Risk expert Michele Wucker, who came up with the “gray rhino” metaphor, notes that “it matters immensely that decision-makers view risks as gray rhinos instead of obsess in vain about black swans, because we can see gray rhinos in front of us, but black swans by definition only appear in the rearview window. That means we have a chance to do something about gray rhinos. And, in fact, most so-called black swans happen because people ignored the gray rhinos.

The gray rhino of climate change clearly stands before us.”

Working from home may not save as much energy as we think

Posted on **May 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“A systematic review of the energy and climate impacts of teleworking” appeared as an “accepted manuscript” for *Environmental Research Letters* in April. Written by four academics from the University of Sussex, the article aims to identify the conditions under which teleworking can lead to a net reduction in overall energy consumption, and the circumstances where the benefits from teleworking are outweighed by the unintended impacts” (rebound effects)- such as greater private travel or increased non-work energy consumption by home workers. It does not consider the large research about other impacts of telecommuting or homework – such as gender effects, or health and mental health impacts.

The authors identified and examined the results of 39 academic studies from around the world, some dating back to the 1990’s. Of those, 26 suggest that teleworking reduces energy use, and 8 suggest that teleworking has a neutral impact, or even possibly causes an increase in energy use. The authors provide a thorough discussion of the topic, and note great variation in methodology and scope. They also note that most research focusses on the U.S., with some from the EU and only three from the Global South. From Canada, only 2 studies were included: (1. Bussière and Lewis (2002) . **“Impact of telework and flexitime on reducing future urban travel demand: the case of Montreal and Quebec (Canada), 1996-2016**, and 2. Lachapelle, Tanguay, and Neumark-Gaudet. (2018). **“Telecommuting and sustainable travel: Reduction of overall travel time, increases in non-motorised travel and congestion relief?”**) .

Both Canadian studies were part of the group which was ranked as average or poor in methodology, and which found neutral or mixed impacts. Relying on the “more rigorous studies that include a wider range of impacts” the authors conclude that, despite a widely-held positive verdict on teleworking as an energy-saving practice, “the available evidence suggests that economy-wide energy savings are typically modest, and in many circumstances could be negative or non-existent.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [commuting](#), [telecommuting](#), [Working Conditions](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. proposals for a green recovery after Covid-19

Posted on **May 7, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

A widely-reported study by economists at Oxford University seeks to identify fiscal policies which will best lead the world to post-Covid economic recovery, while also leading to a net-zero economy. ***Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?*** was published on May 4 as a Working Paper by the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University, (forthcoming as an article in the Oxford Review of Economic Policy). Lead authors Cameron Hepburn and Brian O'Callaghan are joined by economic heavy-weights such as Nicholas Stern and Joseph Stiglitz, among others. The paper states: "The climate emergency is like the COVID-19 emergency, just in slow motion and much graver. Both involve market failures, externalities, international cooperation, complex science, questions of system resilience, political leadership, and action that hinges on public support. Decisive state interventions are also required to stabilise the climate, by tipping energy and industrial systems towards newer, cleaner, and ultimately cheaper modes of production that become impossible to outcompete."

The authors identified over 700 fiscal stimulus policies used since the 2008 financial crisis – both climate-friendly and not – and distilled these down to 25 archetypal policies. They then surveyed the reactions of 231 senior economists and financial experts from over 50 countries to these archetypal policies, and identified the five "with high potential on both economic multiplier and climate impact metrics: clean physical infrastructure, building efficiency retrofits, investment in education and training, natural capital investment, and clean R&D. In lower- and middle income countries (LMICs) rural support spending is of particular value while clean R&D is less important."

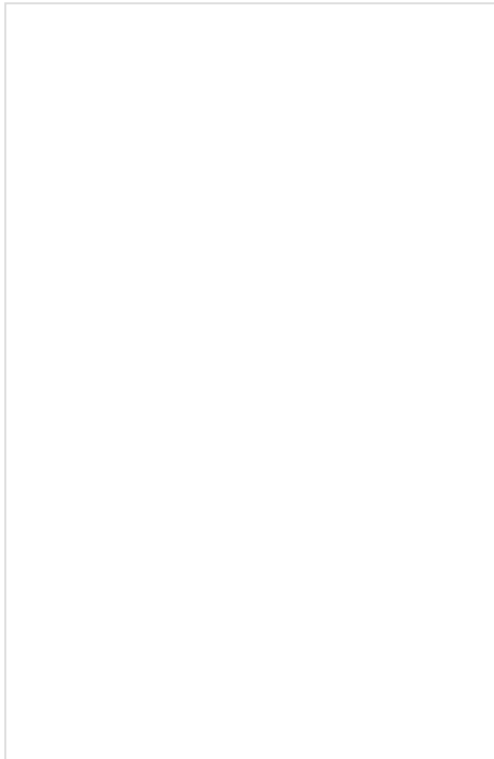
An informal summary of this report, written by the two lead authors, appears as "**Leading economists: Green coronavirus recovery also better for economy**" at Carbon Brief (May 5). Other coverage includes "**Green Stimulus can repair global economy and climate, study says**" (The Guardian, May 5);

Also on May 4, the Smith School released a companion Working Paper "**A net-zero emissions economic recovery from COVID-19**" which discusses the differences between the 2008 financial crisis and the economic damage of the Covid-19 pandemic. It builds on the paper by Hepburn et al., and makes 10 specific recommendations for a U.K. green stimulus package, with strategies clustered around:

1. Large-scale investment (including Transforming energy generation, storage and distribution; transforming industrial energy usage, especially in the energy-intensive industrial sectors (steel, cement, ceramics, chemicals, pulp and paper) ; high-speed broadband internet connectivity to embed working from home practices ; investment in nature-based solutions for disaster resiliency.

2. Accelerate investment in high-sustainability impact technologies
3. Incentivize individual-level change – in transportation, home energy efficiency, and job training for green economy jobs
4. Make Bailouts conditional on a legal commitment and a pathway and timeline to net-zero emissions, particularly for fossil fuel intensive industries such as airlines.

The paper concludes with proposals for institutional structures to implement these policies, including a Climate Change Emergency Committee and a Net Zero Delivery Body in the U.K. , and perhaps most remarkably, proposes an international Sustainable Recovery Alliance (SRA) to be launched at COP 26. The purpose: to act “As a flexible “coalition of the willing” outside of the UNFCCC architecture, the group would promote a shared vision of a sustainable recovery.”



And on May 6, the existing U.K. Committee on Climate Change issued [a press release](#) announcing its Letter to the Prime Minister, setting out six key principles to for a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The principles call for fairness to be embedded as a core principle, a shift to new behaviours such as cycling and working from home, the possibility of raising carbon taxes, and, “Support for carbon-intensive sectors should be contingent on them taking real and lasting action on climate change, and all new investments need to be resilient to future climate risks.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [Covid 19](#), [economic policy](#), [green stimulus](#), [Pandemic](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Dutch government announces measures to comply with Urgenda Supreme Court decision; Ontario government seeks to dismiss youth-led climate case

Posted on **May 6, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Urgenda Climate Case** against the Dutch Government was the first in the world to establish that a government has a legal duty to its citizens to prevent dangerous climate change. The case began in 2013, with a District Court ruling in 2015 that the government must cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by the end of 2020. Following appeals by the government, in a December 2019 decision **hailed** as a landmark, the Dutch Supreme Court ordered the government to reduce emissions by 15 megatonnes in 2020. A timeline with links to all the decisions in the case is maintained by the Urgenda Foundation **here**.

Now finally, in April 2020, the Dutch government announced how it will comply, accepting 30 of the measures proposed in Urgenda's "**54 Climate Solutions Plan**". Most importantly, the government ordered a 75% reduction in capacity at the country's three coal-fired power stations; the full list of actions is summarized in "**Climate action under duress: how Dutch were forced into emissions cuts**" (*The Guardian*, May 4), which also describes the long and contested route to this precedent-setting achievement.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights noted in **a press release** after the Supreme Court decision in December 2019 :

"The recognition by the highest Dutch court that the Netherlands' human rights obligations provide a legal basis to compel stronger and more rapid action by the Government is vitally important. This landmark ruling provides a clear path forward for concerned individuals in Europe – and around the world – to undertake climate litigation in order to protect human rights, and I pay tribute to the civil society groups which initiated this action. more ambitious climate action, in all parts of the world, is a human rights obligation rather than simply a policy choice."

Ontario's Youth-led climate case

The importance of the Urgenda decision may offer encouragement for the citizens around the world who are seeking to force governments to act on climate change. In Ontario on April 15, Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General filed a motion asking the courts to dismiss a youth-led lawsuit, as described in "**Ford government files motion to strike down youth-led climate lawsuit**" (April 16). Seven young people are being represented in the case, **Mathur et. al. v. Her**

Majesty in Right of Ontario . According to the ***Case Background***er by Ecojustice, one of the representatives: “The lawsuit aims to strike down Ontario’s current 2030 target as unconstitutional and enshrine the right to a safe, healthy climate as part of the right to life, liberty and security of the person in Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This would require the Government of Ontario to set a new target in line with the scientific consensus, and revise its policies accordingly. “

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate litigation](#), [The Netherlands](#), [Urgenda Climate Case](#), [Urgenda Decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

“Staggering” decline of fossil fuels reported by International Energy Agency

Posted on **May 5, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The complexity of the global energy landscape has been changed profoundly, according to the International Energy Association’s flagship publication, the ***Global Energy Review*** , released on April 30. It forecasts a minimum 6% decline in global energy demand for 2020, (9% in the United States and 11% in the European Union), stating, “The projected 6% decline would be more than seven times the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on global energy demand, reversing the growth of global energy demand over the last five years. The absolute decline in global energy demand in 2020 is without precedent, and relative declines of this order are without precedent for the last 70 years.” The accompanying [press release](#) describes the decline of fossil fuels as an “historic shock to the entire energy world” and “staggering”, especially for coal, oil and gas. The IEA forecasts that renewables will be the only energy source to grow in 2020.

Here are a few of the many recent news articles which sum up the dire impacts on oil and gas in Canada:

In **“For oil and its dependents, it’s code blue”** (The Tyee, April 18), Andrew Nikofooruk predicts that the “great price collapse of 2020 will topple companies and transform states”.

“Fossils Expect Permanent Losses, Renewables Keep Growing As Pandemic Crashes Global Energy Demand” in *The Energy Mix* (May 3);

“What rock-bottom natural gas prices mean for Canada’s aspiring LNG industry” in *The Narwhal* (May 1);

“‘We are in crisis mode’: Newfoundland calls on Ottawa to fund oil and gas exploration” in the *Globe and Mail* (April 29);

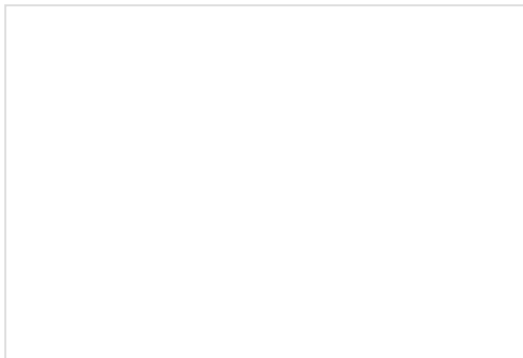
And Canadian Press stories reprinted by the *National Observer* on May 1 include: “**Precision Drilling down almost 3000 employees due to oil and gas downturn**” (May 1); “**Oil and gas drilling forecast revised to 49-year low**”; “**Teck Resources leaves energy group CAPP citing cost cutting**” ; and “**Alberta oil and gas company reports include a loss of \$1.3 billion for Vermillion Energy**” (April 29) .

Fatih Birol, Director of the International Energy Agency has promoted clean energy in several public statements, including a March 14 commentary: “**Put clean energy at the heart of stimulus plans to counter the coronavirus crisis**”, which states, “Governments are drawing up stimulus plans in an effort to counter the economic damage from the crisis. These stimulus packages offer an excellent opportunity to ensure that the essential task of building a secure and sustainable energy future doesn’t get lost amid the flurry of immediate priorities ” The IEA promises a *World Energy Outlook* special report in June “that will quantify how clean energy policies and investments can create jobs, support economic recoveries and achieve emissions reductions. The report’s findings and recommendations will inform the high-level discussions at the **IEA Clean Energy Transitions Summit** on 9 July.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Covid 19](#), [Energy policy](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Coal-mining closures and energy transitions – impacts on women, youth, and communities

Posted on **May 5, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In April 2020, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) published a Working Paper which analyses the research to date on mine closures – with an emphasis on coal mine closures.

Distributional impacts of mining transitions: learning from the past states that few studies have dealt with the distributional impacts, and those which do exist focus on developed countries (largely the U.K., but some from Canada – including the closure of iron mines in Schefferville Quebec in the 1990’s). Authors Strambo and Aung focus on the financial, psychological and

labour-related impacts of mining closure, with a special attention to gender and youth impacts. Their report also discusses the effectiveness of implemented policy responses and initiatives in supporting these two social groups.

Strambo and Aung, along with Atteridge, wrote a related report, ***Navigating Coal Mining Closure and Societal Change: Learning from Past Cases of Mining Decline***, published by the SEI in July 2019. It is an extensive, broader bibliographic review and analysis which includes a detailed explanation of the search methods used. It concludes:

“Economic and employment impacts of closure are much more thoroughly documented in the literature than social and political impacts. On economic impacts, more attention needs to be paid to the distributional impacts of mine closure, because a smooth and “just” transition requires design measures that target the specific vulnerabilities of different groups in mining areas. Reducing social inequality is likely to be a particularly important success factor in post-mining transitions, especially in developing countries, where mining regions have often been characterized by high wealth concentration and very limited (if any) benefits in terms of human or social development ... Political and social impacts of closure have also been understudied.”

The SEI also recently published two Papers related to gender aspects of just energy transitions: ***Assessing the gender and social equity dimensions of energy transitions***, which synthesized findings from 67 peer-reviewed academic articles, mostly related to rural women in Asia and Africa. A brief 5-page synthesis report, ***Ensuring just and equitable energy transitions*** summarizes the state of international research.

In January 2020, the **Stockholm Environment Institute** was ranked as the world’s top think tank on environmental policy issues in the annual ***2019 Global Go To Think Tanks Index***, by the University of Pennsylvania. SEI, headquartered in Sweden but with seven international locations, is a prominent member of **Think Sustainable Europe**, a network of think tanks created in late 2019. It also hosts the secretariat of the UN-affiliated **Leadership Group for Industry Transition**.

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

Bargaining for the Common Good- including climate justice and just recovery

Posted on **May 4, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

“Bargaining for Climate Justice” appears in the March 2020 special issue of *The Forge*, a publication launched in September 2019 by and for community and labour organizers. The article is written by Todd Vachon, Saket Sonni, Judith LeBlanc and Gerry Hudson, and updates their earlier article, **“How Workers Can Demand Climate Justice”**, which appeared in *American Prospect* in September 2019. Both articles describe the new movement of **Bargaining for the Common Good**, defined as: “an innovative approach for bringing unions and allies together to shape bargaining demands that advance the mutual interests of workers and communities alike. BCG campaigns seek to increase investment in underserved communities and confront structural inequalities—not simply to agree on a union contract.”

The origins of the BCG movement are described in **“Going on Offense During Challenging Times”** (in *New Labor Forum*, 2018) which explains: “Bargaining for Common Good aims to avoid transactional relationships between community and labor by building lasting alignments between unions and community groups, not merely temporary alliances of convenience.” **“Bargaining for Climate Justice”** describes how the element of climate justice fits in to the broader concerns of BCG, and updates it with the example of the February **strike by janitors in Minneapolis**, members of SEIU Local 26, as well as the concept of “bargaining for a just recovery”, expanding it from climate-related disasters such as hurricanes and pipeline spills, to the most recent disaster: the current pandemic. The authors state:

“To date, BCG campaigns have been launched around issues of education, racial justice, public services, immigration, finance, housing, and privatization. But they are in many ways perhaps best suited to taking on the overarching existential issues such as global pandemics and human-caused climate change that intersect with and often exacerbate all of these other issues.”



The **Center for Innovative Workplace Organization at Rutgers University** in the U.S. has established a program to promote concrete initiatives around all aspects of Bargaining for the Common Good – building alliances, convening conferences and regional meetings (now delivered through webinars), and compiling resources such as a **“Common Good” Toolkit**. That Toolkit includes examples of bargaining demands related to Climate Justice.

A review of Just Transition academic research, and the contribution of think tanks, advocacy groups and unions – corrected

Posted on **April 29, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Correction: The research paper listed below, *[Who is included in a Just Transition? Considering social equity in Canada's shift to a zero-carbon economy](#)* by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and Zaee Deshpande , **was co-published** by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change Project (ACW) in August 2019. It is one of several co-publications by these two organizations on the theme of Just Transition.

The **Smart Prosperity Institute** published a Working Paper in April as the latest in its Clean Economy Series. *[A systematic review of the key elements of a just transition for fossil fuel workers](#)* is written by three academics from the University of British Columbia, and sets out to answer the question: “What elements of a just transition for fossil fuel workers and their communities do scholars in different academic fields identify?” The research is intended to “provide policymakers, environmental and trade union organizations who are already invested in creating just transition strategies insight on the kinds of issues they can target in their efforts.”

The paper is the result of a systematic literature review of academic articles, along with “government commissions and international organizations”, published between 2000 and 2019, and focused on a just transition for fossil fuel workers and their communities. The authors found a total of 520 documents and selected 33 for analysis, representing varied locations— most from the United States, some international, six from Australia , and the remainder from other countries. From Canada, only the federal Task force on Just Transition in 2018 was included in the analysis. The authors note that most articles concern OECD countries and coal workers; they were unable to find articles focused solely on Saudi Arabia, Brazil, India, or oil and gas workers. They conclude: “Collectively, the articles we reviewed identify 17 key elements (or strategies) of just transition ranging from requirements of long-term planning to importance of retraining. Moreover, these 17 elements vary in terms of the type of justice they further (distributional, procedural, recognition & restorative justices), spatial scales, and timeframe.”

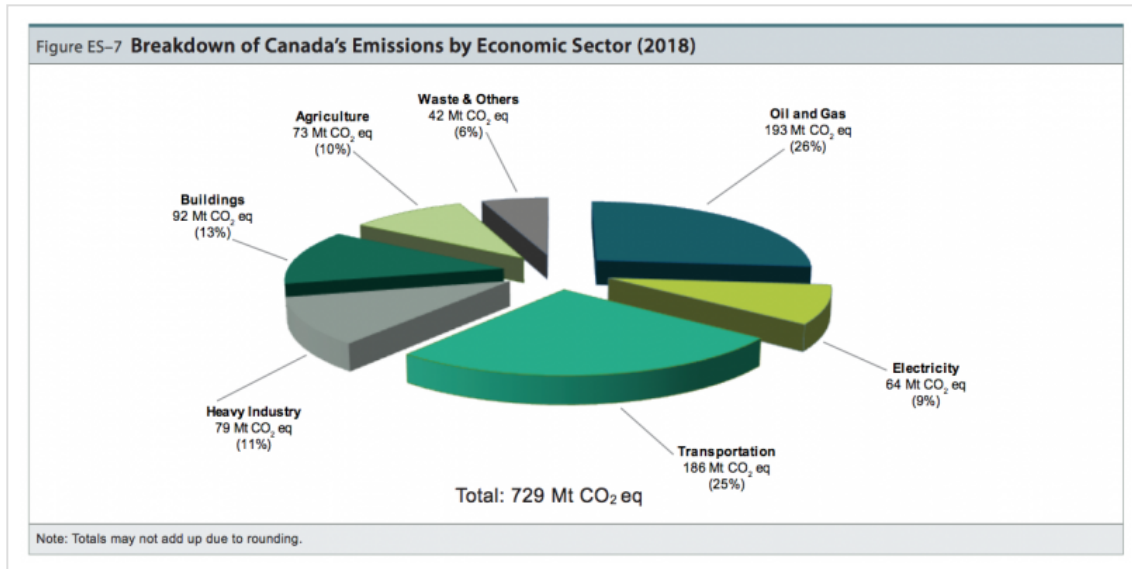
A systematic review of the key elements of a just transition for fossil fuel workers is a solid academic treatment of a huge and ever-growing literature. However, it does not recognize the considerable contributions of advocacy organizations, think tanks, nor labour unions – all of which have been active globally and in Canada.

Below are a few of those documents which add important viewpoints to the Just Transition policy debate in Canada: (in reverse chronological order)

- ***Winding Down BC's Fossil Fuel Industries Planning for climate justice in a zero-carbon economy*** (March 2020) by Marc Lee and Seth Klein, published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives;
- ***"What's in a just transition? A roundtable on the meaning of the movement"*** published as a special issue of *Briarpatch Magazine* in May/June 2019;
- ***Alberta's Coal Phase-out: A Just Transition?*** published by the Parkland Institute in November 2019;
- ***Who is included in a Just Transition? Considering social equity in Canada's shift to a zero-carbon economy.*** by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and Zaee Deshpande, co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change Project (ACW), August 2019;
- ***Communicating Climate Change and Energy in Alberta – Alberta Narratives Project*** published by U.K. based Climate Outreach (2018) focused on oil sands workers ;
- ***Just Transition and Beyond Just Transition: Canada in Action. Roundtable Summary Report*** (2018) by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project ;
- ***Making Decarbonization Work for Workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy*** (2018) and ***Evaluating government plans and actions to reduce GHG emissions in Canada: Just Transition policies*** by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood published jointly by ACW and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2017;
- ***Planning for the Transition in a Carbon Constrained World: Lessons from the Literature for Saskatchewan*** (2017) published by the Saskatchewan Environment Society;
- ***Getting it Right: A Just Transition Strategy for Alberta's Coal workers*** by the Alberta Federation of Labour (2017);
- ***Just Transition: Creating a Green Social Contract for BC's Resource Workers*** published by the CCPA B.C. in 2015, and examining forestry, mining, and fossil fuel workers and communities.
- And as far as 2000, the Canadian Labour Congress position paper, ***Just Transition For Workers During Environmental Change*** .

Canada's report to the UNFCC shows an increase in GHG emissions

Posted on **April 29, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



As required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), Canada submitted its *National Inventory Report* on April 14, available [from the U.N. website](#). The ***Executive Summary*** at the Canadian government website announces that the Canada's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were 729 million tons of CO₂ and equivalent in 2018, (the latest figures available). This is an increase of 15 million tons from 2017, and a reduction of only 1 million tons from 2005 – making Canada's Paris Agreement target of a 30% reduction from 2005 levels a very challenging goal. The Executive Summary attributes the 2018 performance to "higher fuel consumption for transportation, winter heating and oil and gas extraction." The Toronto Star summarizes the official report in "[Canada's emissions count jumped 15 million tonnes in 2018 from previous year, report shows](#)" (April 15); a [summary](#) also appeared in *The National Observer*, focused on British Columbia. The federal [Green Party press release](#) points out that Canada has missed the February deadline to submit its new target for Nationally Determined Contributions, and calls for Canada to reduce our GHG's to 60 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. (In comparison, the latest [EU target under debate](#) is a 55% reduction by 2030).

The full *National Inventory Report* presents statistics since 1990, and analyses trends by region and according to industries – including energy, industrial processes, agriculture, land use (forestry) and waste management. It also measures emissions in 2018 by important gases, including carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) accounted for 80% of Canada's total emissions. Nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions (76% of which come from agriculture) accounted for 5% in 2018, a 2.4% decrease from 1990 levels. Synthetic gases (HFC's, PFC's, SF₆ and NF₃) constituted slightly less than 2% of national emissions.

Canada's other big polluter: methane

According to Canada's *National Inventory Report*, methane accounted for 13% of Canada's total emissions in 2018, an increase of 1% since 1990. 43% of those emissions are attributed to fugitive sources in oil and natural gas systems and another 31% from agriculture. The International Energy Agency also tracks methane emissions from the oil and gas industry [here](#) , and in February 2020 [summarized and critiqued Canada's new policies to reduce methane emissions](#) attributable to the oil and gas industry. Methane (CH₄) is a growing concern for global GHG emissions – as reported in an article in *Scientific American* "[Methane levels reach an all-time high](#)" (April 12) , which summarizes recent reports by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Emissions reduction targets](#), [GHG emissions](#), [Methane Emissions](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Blue skies from locked-down economies are fleeting – we still need strong policies to reduce carbon emissions

Posted on [April 24, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A statement from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Earth Day estimates that the pandemic will result in a six per cent drop in carbon emissions in 2020 , but warned "COVID-19 may result in a temporary reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, but it is not a substitute for sustained climate action". The full [WMO Statement on Global Climate Change](#) continues "We need to show the same determination and unity against climate change as against COVID-19. We need to act together in the interests of the health and welfare of humanity not just for the coming weeks and months, but for many generations ahead."

Scientists are speaking out against the "good news" approach of highlighting clear skies as a silver lining in the Covid crisis. Kate Marvel, a climate scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Columbia University, writes "[I am a mad scientist](#)" , calling for bolder climate change action, and stating :

"I'm angry at the very idea that there might be a silver lining in all this. There is not. Carbon dioxide is so long-lived in the atmosphere that a small decrease in emissions will not register against the overwhelming increase since the start of the Industrial Revolution. All this suffering will not make the planet any cooler. If the air quality is better now, if fewer people die from breathing in pollution, this is not a welcome development so much as an indictment of the way things were before. "

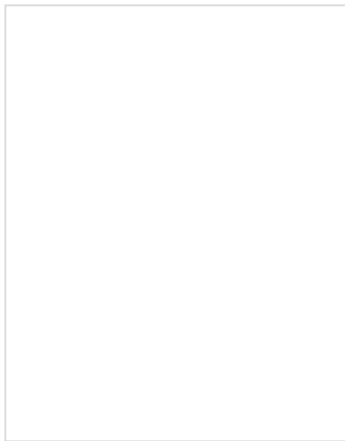
U.K. financial consultants MSCI express similar thoughts from an economic viewpoint in “[Will coronavirus reduce emissions long term?](#) “. “This modeled decline in 2020 emissions does not necessarily indicate a structural change to our current world economy. The estimated emission levels are still comparable to those observed over the past five years, and the economy could readily rebound, returning emissions to prior levels. China already increased its industrial output when their quarantine began to slowly lift. Once Europe and the U.S. lift lockdowns and reopen borders, travel, commuting and economic output could return to “normal” levels. Thus, the projected decrease in global emissions could be short-lived. If so, the risk climate change poses to countries, companies and investors has not dissipated. A much more visible and immediate crisis has simply overshadowed it.”

Researchers from the Stockholm Environment Institute are interviewed in “[COVID-19 pandemic raises new questions about the health impacts of air pollution](#)” and explain how encouraging pictures of blue skies do not reflect the complexities of air pollution. The article, importantly, also seeks to counter the mis-impression that reduced economic activity is necessary to reduce air pollution, by pointing to the more important policy measures in many countries, including Canada, which have been improved air quality and human health without compromising economic growth.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [Covid 19](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Ecofiscal Commission issues final annual report

Posted on [April 23, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



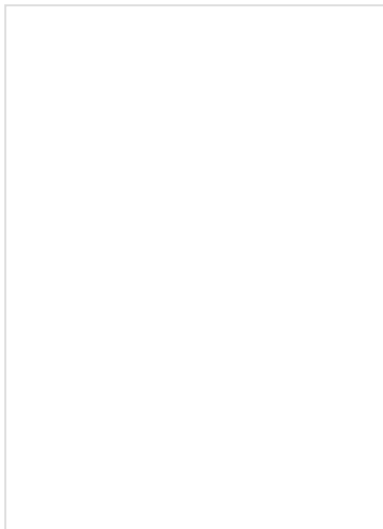
In November 2019, Canada’s Ecofiscal Commission announced that their five-year mandate was coming to an end with the release of their final research report, [Bridging the Gap: Real Options for Meeting Canada’s 2030 GHG Target](#), which recommended quadrupling of Canada’s carbon tax by 2030. On April 22, the Commission released their [2019 Annual Report](#), with research summaries of their work, and metrics which attest to their strong influence on Canada’s policy

debate over their five years of operation. With a mission to: “identify and promote practical fiscal solutions for Canada that spark the innovation required for increased economic and environmental prosperity”, the Commission’s major focus was on carbon pricing – expressed in research, publications, educational events, and in 2019, in supporting the constitutionality of carbon pricing in the court cases brought by Saskatchewan and Ontario. Although not stated explicitly, the final Letter from Director Chris Ragan implies that the resources of the Commission will be archived – the Ecofiscal Commission website is [here](#). Many of the principal authors at the Ecofiscal Commission are finding a new home as part of the new government [Institute for Climate Choices](#) , [announced](#) in April 2019 – for example, Don Drummond, Stewart Elgie, Richard Lipsey, Mike Moffatt and Nancy Olewiler. Chris Ragan (formerly Executive Director of the Ecofiscal Commission) and Mel Cappe are both members of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Climate Choices.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [climate change research](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Renewable energy as a vehicle for sustainable economic recovery – creating up to 30 million jobs globally by 2030

Posted on [April 23, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The first-ever [Global Renewables Outlook](#) report by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was released in April, following up on their 2019 report, [Global Energy Transformation: A Roadmap to 2050](#) . At 292 pages, [the full report](#) provides detailed statistics on the sectors within the renewable energy industry, demand forecasts, economy-wide impacts of

energy transformation – including job impacts – and regional analysis for ten broad global regions (Canada is lumped in with the U.S. and Mexico as “North America”). It addresses the pathways of electrification, system flexibility, renewable energy, green hydrogen, and innovation relating to energy and industry decarbonization. The official Summary Report (54 pages) is [here](#).

Summaries and commentary appear in “[Renewables Agency urges \\$110-Trillion Green Infrastructure Investment to Supercharge Recovery, Boost Resilience](#)” in *The Energy Mix* and in “[Green energy could drive Covid-19 recovery with \\$100tn boost](#)” (April 20) in *The Guardian*. A compilation of the regional fact sheets and infographics is [here](#).

Although headlines will focus on the price tag of \$1 Trillion for investment, the “Jobs and Skills” section is also notable. It considers two scenarios: “Planned Energy (PE)” and “Transforming Energy” (TE) and forecasts job numbers by subsector, as well as broad occupational demands. Some examples: in the TE scenario, the report forecasts close to 30 million renewable energy jobs by 2030 and 42 million by 2050. Regional-level forecasts are also provided: for example, renewable energy jobs in North America are forecast to represent 23.0% of total energy jobs under the TE scenario by 2030 and 35.3% by 2050.

Coming as it does during the Covid-19 crisis, [Global Renewables Outlook](#) joins the chorus advocating investment in renewables as the vehicle for a sustainable economic recovery:

“With the need for energy decarbonisation unchanged, such investments can safeguard against short-sighted decisions and greater accumulation of stranded assets. COVID-19 does not change the existential path required to decarbonise our societies and meet sustainability goals. Economic recovery packages must serve to accelerate a just transition. ... The time has come to invest trillions, not into fossil fuels, but into sustainable energy infrastructure.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Jobs](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Criticism of oil and gas stimulus funds in Canada’s Covid Economic Response Plan

Posted on [April 22, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canadians were generally relieved and positive when Prime Minister Trudeau announced the energy-related provisions of the [federal Covid-19 Economic Response Plan](#) on April 17, with

this statement: “Just because we’re in a health crisis, doesn’t mean we can neglect the environmental crisis.” The economic stimulus included \$1.72 billion to clean up orphan or inactive wells in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, which the government claims “ will help maintain approximately 5,200 jobs in Alberta alone.” The second initiative is \$750 million to create an “Emissions Reduction Fund” to help oil and gas companies meet **federal methane-reduction standards**. The announcement is summarized in a **CBC report** and an **article in the *National Observer*** , which also summarizes some of the generally positive reactions from environmental groups. Press releases by **Stand.earth** and **Clean Energy Canada** reflect that generally-held relief that the government had resisted the extensive lobbying from Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) – as outlined in **a memo leaked by Environmental Defence Canada** – and appeared to have listened to the **voices of Canada’s clean energy advocates**.

An April 17 **press release from Climate Action Network Canada** embodies a more cautious reaction:

“While we acknowledge and appreciate what this cash infusion achieves – stimulating the economy through well-paying work, while repairing ecosystems damaged by oil and gas operations – we expect to see the federal government hold companies accountable by making enforcement of existing regulations meant to require those companies to clean up orphaned materials and restore land and waterways a condition of its support to the government of Alberta. We will be watching how fiscal measures available through Export Development Canada (EDC) and Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) will further support the government’s stated commitment to using COVID-relief public money to move Canada further along its path to a more sustainable and resilient net-zero economic future.”

Many of these same concerns appear in an Opinion piece by Dianne Saxe, the former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, “**Canada’s murky bail-out deal for oil and gas will cost us all**” (in the *National Observer*, April 21) . Saxe begins with: “it is shameful that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is using your tax dollars to bail out the oil and gas exploration and production industry, perhaps the wealthiest and most polluting industry in human history.” She credits the “one good program” to be the \$200 million loan to Alberta’s Orphan Well Association because it is structured as a loan, to be repaid under the oversight of a special committee which will include local and Indigenous representatives. As for the \$750 million Emissions Reduction funding, Saxe criticizes the terms as unclear, and objects to the roles of the Alberta government, the Export Development Corporation and the Business Development Bank of Canada whose previous oil-friendly financial record she documents.

Finally, Saxe objects to the lost opportunity – suggesting other, more impactful ways to spend the economic funds, and stating:

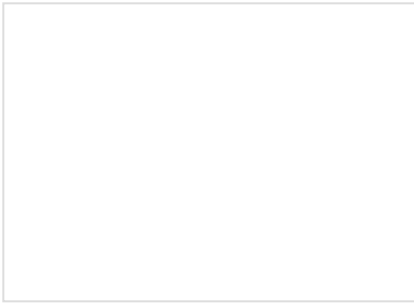
“These multi-billion dollar bailouts are one of the most expensive and polluting ways of protecting jobs. As well as their mountain of debt, the oil and gas extraction industry creates a puny 2.7 jobs per million dollars of output, while pumping out 704 tonnes of greenhouse gases for each full-time job.”

This job creation estimate is based on research by Eric Miller, in an unpublished presentation: ***The Pandemic from an Ecological Economics perspective: Assessing consequences and appraising policy options*** (March 31 2020). More related resources are [here](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [employment impacts](#), [Energy policy](#), [Job Creation](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [orphan wells](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

342,000 jobs by 2040 in zero electric vehicle production in Canada

Posted on **April 16, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A report published by the International Council on Clean Transportation in March, “***Simulating zero emission vehicle adoption and economic impacts in Canada***”, was researched by Navius Research of Vancouver. Using economic modelling, Navius forecasts that, even with current policies in place, the ZEV economy in Canada will grow to \$43 billion of GDP and 342,000 workers by 2040. With stronger policies, that job creation potential could approach 1.1 million people by 2040.

The employment forecast accompanies a White Paper by the International Council on Clean Transportation which analyzes sales and production trends for conventional and electric vehicles in Canada. It finds that Canada is the 12th largest vehicle producer in the world, but it’s production of electric vehicles is 80% lower than the global average, at only 0.4% of the total. The report, ***Canada’s role in the electric vehicle transition*** states that the most important action Canada can take to encourage production is grow its domestic electric vehicle sales market. It also recommends: “Supply-side policies such as research and development funding, loan guarantees, and tax breaks for manufacturing plants are warranted” and “domestic manufacturing requirements for the procurement of public transit vehicles can serve to increase production of electric buses in Canada.” In addition, “Canada can build on its early leadership in developing and producing hydrogen fuel cell technology—especially for heavy-duty vehicles. ... hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are likely to play a critical role in Canada’s on-road freight sector...”

In February 2020, the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC) **announced** the creation of North America’s first-ever cluster of post-secondary institutions

dedicated specifically to researching battery electric and fuel cell electric buses. Canadian manufacturers already producing electric buses include New Flyer Industries, Nova Bus, GreenPower Motor Company, and The Lion Electric Company, as well as U.S. -owned Proterra.

Environmental benefits of electric vehicles and heat pumps

A technical study led by researchers from the Exeter University, University of Nijmegen, and Cambridge University used life cycle analysis to show that in 53 out of the 59 regions studied, electric-powered vehicles and heat pumps generated less carbon dioxide than cars and boilers powered by fossil fuels. The only exceptions came in the heavily coal-dependent regions of Poland. “**Net emission reductions from electric cars and heat pumps in 59 world regions over time**” appeared in *Nature Sustainability* in late March, and is summarized in *The Guardian* as “**Electric cars produce less CO2 than petrol vehicles, study confirms**” (Mar. 23). The Guardian article emphasizes that this study is proof against a campaign of disinformation which has slowed the acceptance of these two technologies – and which they address in an accompanying primer, “**How Green are Electric Cars?**”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [employment impacts](#), [heat pumps](#), [life cycle analysis](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Green Building Council updates Zero Carbon Building Standards; government review continues

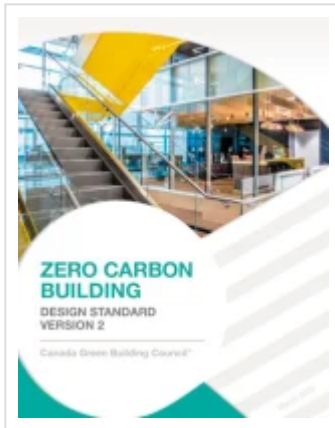
Posted on **April 16, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A **public review of Canada’s Building Codes** (building, energy, and fire) was open from January 13 to March 13, 2020, under the National Research Council of Canada . The Canadian Green Building Council and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada sent a **joint letter** with three recommendations : First, that “the code requirements should address not only energy efficiency, but also the carbon emissions associated with construction and operations.” 2. Add operational GHG intensity metrics : “The National Model Energy Code for Buildings (NECB) and the National Building Code (NBC) should include the addition of operational GHG intensity metrics in order to better align code outcomes with the objectives of the Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.” 3. Develop embodied carbon metrics: “The next update to the code should include embodied carbon reduction targets using a comparative approach where proposed buildings are compared to a baseline version of the same building.”

The Pembina Institute also made a Submission, summarized in a **press release** on March 13 , and available in full, [here](#). Like the CGBC, the Pembina submission calls for GHG intensity

metrics in addition to energy efficiency metrics, and goes further in calling for a cap, rather than targets, for the embodied carbon associated with buildings. In a [separate OpEd](#) on April 15, the Pembina Institute calls for government to “ramp up” all green-building funding models over the next five years, with the goal of retrofitting half of Canada’s building stock by 2030.

Zero Carbon Building Standard v.2 released by Canadian Green Building Council



In the meantime, while government deliberates over the changes to the country’s building codes, the Canadian Green Building Council [released](#) Version 2 of its Zero Carbon Building Standard on March 10, updating the previous version from 2017. The ZCB Standard version 2 itself has two components: ZCB-Design, for new buildings as well as the retrofit of existing structures, and ZCB-Performance, which provides a framework for annual verification that buildings have achieved zero carbon. The Zero Carbon Building Standard 2 technical documents are [here](#). Updates from version 1 are highlighted in the [press release](#), and relate to: 1. Embodied Carbon: (Projects must now reduce and offset carbon emissions for the building’s life-cycle including those associated with the manufacture and use of construction materials.); 2. Refrigerants: (v.2 “encourages” best practices to minimize potential leaks of refrigerants); 3. Energy Efficiency: (more stringent energy efficiency and airtightness requirements), and 4. Innovation: (requires projects demonstrate two innovative strategies to reduce carbon emissions).

The Canadian Green Building Council published its landmark study in February 2019, [***Making the Case for Building to Zero Carbon***](#). It demonstrates that that zero carbon buildings can provide a positive financial return over a 25-year life-cycle, inclusive of carbon pollution pricing, and requiring only a modest capital cost premium.

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Banks, fossil fuels, and a collapsing oil and gas industry

Posted on [April 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Rainforest Action Network is one of the advocacy groups which monitor fossil fuel investment on an ongoing basis: their **[Fossil Fuel Report Card for 2020: Banking on Climate Change](#)** was released on March 18. As it does every year, the report calculates how much money has been invested in fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015 – in 2020, that has reached \$2.7 Trillion. The report also names and ranks the banks behind the fossil fuel financing, which continue to be dominated by the big U.S. banks: JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi, and Bank of America. Canada's RBC ranks 5th in the world, having invested \$141 billion since the Paris Agreement, with TD ranking 8th, ScotiaBank 10th and Bank of Montreal ranked 16th.

Against this entrenched position in support of fossil fuels comes the plummeting price of oil and an industry in crisis. An April 1 **[blog by the International Energy Agency](#)** explains the five key dimensions – including the Covid-19 crisis – which explain that “The global oil industry is experiencing a shock like no other in its history”. The panic setting in to the industry is captured in the *Wall Street Journal* article on April 14, **[“Thirst for Oil Vanishes, Leaving Industry in Chaos”](#)**. The Carbon Tracker Initiative published **[“COVID-19 and the energy transition: crisis as midwife to the new”](#)** which states: “Fossil fuel demand has collapsed and may never surpass the peaks of 2019. By the time the global economy recovers, all the growth may be met by renewable energy sources..... And once the peak is passed, the fossil fuel sector as a whole will face an eternal scrappy battle for survival, struggling with overcapacity and stranded assets, with low returns and high risks.”

Forbes is even more blunt in **[“After COVID-19, The Oil Industry Will Not Return To “Normal”](#)** (April 5), which states: “Canada and the United States are in a bind. There is a temptation to bail out oil, if only to keep people employed and ensure that these over leveraged companies don't drag banks underwater.... Financial support for oil workers is an imperative, but support for the oil sector is a waste of money, whether the Saudis and Russians stay their course or not. Investments in shale and the Canadian oil sands are bound to become stranded assets, even if we return to “normal.” Oil's days were numbered before coronavirus, and they will be numbered after it.”

The Canadian picture

Andrew Nikoforuk provides a Canadian view in **[“The other emergency is crashing oil and gas prices”](#)** in *The Tyee* (Mar. 18). A **[Globe and Mail article](#)** on March 19 (updated Mar. 20) outlines political calculations and lobbying, and predicts that the federal government will offer a multi-billion dollar post-Covid-19 rescue package to the oil and gas industry (although determined lobbying is also **[pushing for investment in clean energy instead](#)**. Jim Stanford addresses the issue in **[“We're going to need a Marshall Plan to rebuild after Covid-19”](#)** (in *Policy Options*, April 2), and writes: “With the price of Western Canada Select oil falling to close to zero (and no reason to expect any sustained rebound to levels that would justify new investment), it is clear that fossil fuel developments will never lead Canadian growth again. However, the other side of this gloomy coin is the enormous investment and employment opportunity associated with building out renewable energy systems and networks (which are now the cheapest energy option anyway). This effort must be led by forceful, consistent government policy, including direct regulation and public investment (in addition to carbon pricing). Another big job creator, already identified by Ottawa and Alberta, will be investment in remediation of former petroleum and mining sites.” By

April 9, the *Globe and Mail* published “**Climate, clean tech could take centre stage in federal economic recovery plans**” . The Narwhal argues “**Doubling down on Alberta’s oil and gas sector is a risk Canadians can’t afford to take**” (April 14).

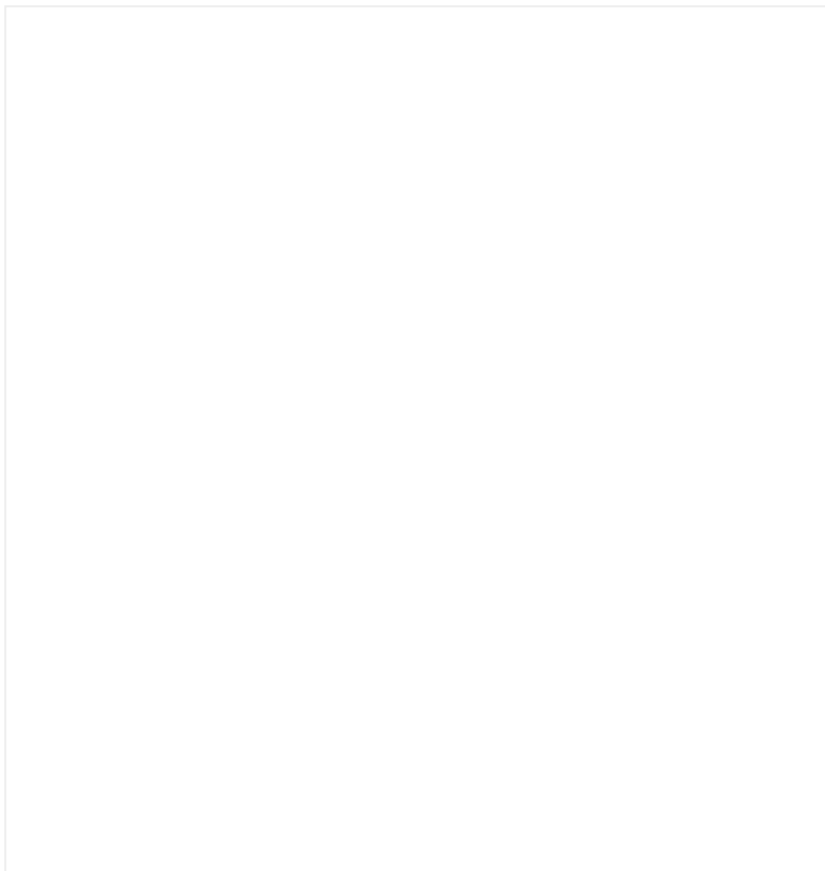
Despite this, in what *Common Dreams* calls “a shameful new low”, the Alberta government **announced** a \$1.5 Billion cash infusion to “kickstart” the Keystone XL Pipeline on March 31. Ian Hussey of the Parkland Institute reacted with “**Alberta’s Keystone XL investment benefits oil companies more than Albertans**” (April 2). Bill McKibben reacted with outrage in “**In the Midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Construction Is Set to Resume on the Keystone Pipeline**” in *The New Yorker* . Other reactions, circling back to the role of Canadian banks: “**Reckless Keystone XL Decision by TC Energy Endorsed by JPMorgan Chase, Citi and Canadian Peers**” (Rainforest Alliance Network); and “**Bank of Montreal, RBC, Blackrock Among the Backers for Alberta’s ‘Reckless’ Keystone XL Subsidy**” (*The Energy Mix* , April 5) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [financial institutions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to decarbonize global industry and achieve Paris targets

Posted on **April 15, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

“**Technologies and Policies to Decarbonize Global Industry: Review and Assessment of Mitigation Drivers through 2070**” is an important research paper written by an international collaboration of 30 experts, including Chris Bataille of Simon Fraser University, British Columbia. Just published in the academic journal *Applied Energy*, the paper argues that “Fully decarbonizing the global industry sector is a central part of achieving climate stabilization, and reaching net zero emissions by 2050–2070 is necessary to remain on-track with the Paris Agreement’s goal of limiting warming to well below 2 °C.”



- The importance of industry is apparent from this infographic from **Energy Innovation**

“Technologies and Policies to Decarbonize Global Industry” is a detailed and technical article which identifies and evaluates supply-side technologies such as energy efficiency, carbon capture, electrification, and zero-carbon hydrogen as well as promising technologies specific to each of the three top-emitting industries: cement, iron & steel, and chemicals & plastics. The paper also considers demand-side approaches including material-efficient design, waste reduction, substituting low-carbon for high-carbon materials, and circular economy interventions.

The discussion related to policy focuses on those which encourage innovative technology, as well as carbon pricing with border adjustments, and energy efficiency or emissions standards. It highlights the policies of China and India as well as low and middle-income countries, and concludes with a brief discussion of the need for a just transition, which closely resembles the ideas in ***Low and zero emissions in the steel and cement industries: Barriers, technologies and policies*** an Issue Paper written by Chris Bataille for the OECD Green Growth and Sustainable Development Forum in November 2019.

Regarding Just Transition, **the article** states:

“These principles will require policymakers to shape decarbonization policies to provide adequate timeframes for industrial transition and include workers and community

representatives at all stages of the policy development and implementation process. A just transition will also require a better understanding of how social safety nets, such as unemployment insurance and government-supported training programs, should be utilized, where they fall short, and how they can be improved. The transition to green industry will be an iterative process, but it must be accelerated to address our growing list of social, economic, and environmental challenges.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [cement industry](#), [Decarbonization](#), [Just Transition](#), [Low-Carbon Transition](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [steel industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Communicating climate change in the world of Covid-19 – strategies from social scientists, and the role of journalism

Posted on [April 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

As stated in an editorial, [“The Guardian view on the climate and coronavirus: global warnings”](#) (April 12) , “Could the renewed shock of human vulnerability in the face of Covid-19 make way for an increased willingness to face other perils, climate chaos among them? Impossible to say at this stage, perhaps. But with the postponement of crucial UN biodiversity and climate conferences, it has never been more important to keep up the pressure. There is no exit strategy from our planet.”

What do the social scientists recommend?

Much attention has been focused on the pivot which climate activists must make to replace protests with virtual organizing – for example, in [“How To Be A Climate Activist During The Coronavirus Pandemic”](#) (HuffPost Mar. 20). But does the messaging also need to change? [“Communicating climate change during the coronavirus crisis – what the evidence says”](#) (April 14) offers advice in a blog based on extensive social science research into climate change communication, conducted by [Climate Outreach](#),

“A few things are clear: a key starting point must be emphasising communal values of compassion and mutual support. It’s also critically important to challenge assumptions about what we think we know, and to ensure climate advocates don’t open themselves up to ‘ambulance chasing’ accusations.”

Although moments of life-changing shift (such as the “shock of human vulnerability” cited in The Guardian editorial) have proven make people more open to changing behaviours, Climate Outreach notes that after traumatic events, people also have a need to get back to normal. With a clear possibility that human society may be entering a period of months and years of disruption on many fronts – health, economy, and even food supply – the blog argues that two futures are possible: an increased emphasis on communal values and the public good, or a society accepting of authoritarian values which erect barriers against perceived threats. The conclusion: “This points ever more strongly to the importance that climate campaigners emphasise the communal values of compassion and mutual support in a time of crisis.”

Climate Outreach plans to publish a practical, evidence-based guide on how to communicate about climate change during the ongoing Covid-19 crisis by the end of May, using the model of **their previous guides**, such as their **#Talking Climate Handbook** (Dec. 2019).

A recent review of the research on behavioural adaptation to climate change also identifies the importance of collective behaviours over individual action – the original article, “**From incremental to transformative adaptation in individual responses to climate-exacerbated hazards**”, appears in *Nature Climate Change* (Feb. 2020); a brief summary appears [here](#). The authors, from Ohio State University, found that that most academic studies have examined coping strategies of individuals or households in the face of isolated hazards such as floods or fires. Lead author Robyn Wilson is quoted [here](#), saying “If we want to really adapt to climate change, we’re talking about transformational change that will truly allow society to be resilient in the face of these increasing hazards. We’re focused on the wrong things and solving the wrong problems.”

Climate change media amid the Covid-19 crisis



As he does regularly as part of the **Covering Climate Now** global initiative, author Mark Hertsgaard, executive director of CCN, compiles major climate change stories. On March 25, he wrote “**COVID-19 and the media’s climate coverage capabilities**”, which states: “the media’s snapping to attention on coronavirus throws its coverage of the climate crisis into sharp relief. The press has never treated the climate story with anywhere near this level of attention or urgency.” On April 8, he continued his critique in “**Silence of the climate watchdogs**” which states :

“The solution is not for newsrooms to stop covering the coronavirus story. It is to expand their definition of what qualifies as a coronavirus story to include profiteering from the pandemic, whether financially or politically. That’s exactly the kind of impropriety the press’s watchdog

function is supposed to expose and inhibit, and there are plenty of dogs capable of fulfilling that function. It's high time more of them start barking."

The *Columbia Journalism Review* hosts the **Covering Climate Now** global initiative. Its **Spring issue** is titled **The Story of Our Time**, written principally by and for journalists. It provides insights into the state of climate journalism, and also reflects their personal and professional experiences—for example, "**Good Grief**" by Emily Atkin, who recounts how her own frustrations in the mainstream media led her to start her own independent news outlet, **Heated** in 2019, with the byline "for those who are pissed off about climate change".

The introduction to **The Story of Our Time** sums up the recurring themes throughout all the articles and reflects the militancy of a growing number of climate journalists:

"We have reached a turning point for journalism and the planet. Old ideas that had dampened our attention to climate change—that the subject was too polarizing or too complicated or a money-loser—have been proven wrong. Old forms of storytelling—fast, without helping readers draw crucial connections—are not what's needed to confront the crisis we face. We owe it to our audience, and our conscience, to be more thoughtful. Climate change is the story of our time. Journalism will be judged by how it chronicles the devastating reality."

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Activism**, **climate change communication**, **Climate change in the Media**, **Covid 19**, **Pandemic** | [Leave a reply](#)

The toll of Australia's Black Summer of bushfires

Posted on **April 14, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Australia's Summer of Crisis was published by the Climate Council of Australia in March, describing the economic and climate change impacts of the bushfires of 2019/20. Although the bushfires were widespread, the report focuses on the two most severely affected areas of the country: New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. It estimates that there was a 10-20 percent drop in international visitors, so that the tourism sector alone will lose at least \$4.5 billion.

Bushfire-related insurance claims in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria totalled an estimated value of \$1.9 billion. The report also estimates the unprecedented climate impacts – between 650 million and 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide spewed into the atmosphere (Australia's annual emissions are around 531 million tonnes). The report states that the hot dry conditions which fuelled the fires will only worsen, and calls urgently for an end to fossil fuel production and export, and a plan to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions to net zero.

Health impacts

“Unprecedented smoke-related health burden associated with the 2019–20 bushfires in eastern Australia”, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (March 12) estimated that bushfire smoke was responsible for more deaths than the fires, and extraordinary health impacts. The researchers estimate there were 417 excess deaths, 1124 hospitalisations for cardiovascular problems and 2027 for respiratory problems, and 1305 presentations to emergency departments with asthma. The article is summarized by [The Guardian here](#), which also reports that the authors have obtained funding for follow-up studies through the Centre for Air Pollution, Energy and Health Research (CAR), funded by Australia’s National Health and Medical Research Council. The [CAR website](#) offers fact sheets and research summaries about bushfire impacts.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [Australia](#), [climate change impacts](#), [Climate change policy](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New European and global alliances launch, calling for Just Recovery economic plans after Covid-19

Posted on [April 14, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In an [Open Letter](#) signed in the first week of April, the environment and climate change Ministers of eleven European Union countries call for the European Green New Deal to be central to the post-pandemic economic recovery plans of the EU. By April 14, that initiative was boosted by the launch of a larger Green Recovery Alliance, including over 70 Members of the European Parliament and civil society groups, including CEO’s, business associations, NGO’s, think tanks, and the [European Trade Union Confederation](#). In its 4-page [Green Recovery Call to Action](#), the Alliance acknowledges the urgency of the Covid-19 health crisis, and states:

“After the crisis, the time will come to rebuild. This moment of recovery will be an opportunity to rethink our society and develop a new model of prosperity. This new model will have to answer to our needs and priorities. These massive investments must trigger a new European economic model: more resilient, more protective, more sovereign and more inclusive. All these requirements lie in an economy built around Green principles. Indeed, the transition to a climate-neutral economy, the protection of biodiversity and the transformation of agri-food systems have the potential to rapidly deliver jobs, growth and improve the way of life of all citizens worldwide, and to contribute to building more resilient societies.....” **“Projects such as the European Green Deal, and other national zero carbon development plans have a huge potential to build back our economy and contribute to creating a new prosperity model. We therefore consider that we need to prepare Europe for the future, and design recovery plans, both at the local, national and at the EU level, enshrining the fight**

against climate change as the core of the economic strategy. *The time has come to turn these plans into actions and investments that will change the life of citizens and contribute to the quick recovery of our economies and our societies.” [emphasis by the WCR editor].*

This European initiative is consistent with a worldwide movement for a **Just Recovery from Covid-19**, co-ordinated by 350.org. In the U.S., this is allied with the **People’s Bailout movement**, **described in a previous WCR post** , and sharing the same five principles. The #Just Recovery **Open Letter** states:

“ We, the undersigned organisations, call for a global response to COVID-19 to contribute to a just recovery. Responses at every level must uphold these five principles:

1. Put people’s health first, no exceptions.
2. Provide economic relief directly to the people.
3. Help our workers and communities, not corporate executives.
4. Create resilience for future crises.
5. Build solidarity and community across borders – do not empower authoritarians.”

Both the European and Global movements are described in “**Pairing ‘Green Deal’ With ‘Just Recovery’ in EU, Groups Embrace Tackling COVID-19 and Climate Emergency in Tandem**” in *Common Dreams* (April 10). The newsletter *Euractiv* describes the European initiative in “**Green recovery alliance’ launched in European Parliament** (April 14) .

Posted in **Government Policy, Green Economy** | Tagged **Covid 19, economic policy, European Union, Green Economy, Green New Deal Europe, Pandemic** | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean energy can drive Canada’s economic recovery

Posted on **April 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The oil and gas industry is in an unprecedented crisis, as explained in an April 1 blog by the International Energy Agency: “**The global oil industry is experiencing a shock like no other in its history**” . Yet on March 31, in what *Common Dreams* calls “**a shameful new low**”, the Alberta government **announced** a \$1.5 Billion cash infusion to “kickstart” the Keystone XL Pipeline. Ian Hussey of the Parkland Institute reacted with “**Alberta’s Keystone XL investment benefits oil companies more than Albertans**” (April 2). Bill McKibben reacted with outrage in “**In the Midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Construction Is Set to Resume on the Keystone Pipeline**” in *The New Yorker* . McKibben subsequently surveys the situation in Canada and the U.S. in “**Will the Coronavirus Kill the Oil Industry?**” in the *New Yorker* .

As the Canadian federal government continues to formulate its economic recovery plan Covid-19, loud calls are coming to invest in clean energy, not oil and gas

The International Energy Agency provides factual rationale for the push for a cleaner recovery, in **“Put clean energy at the heart of stimulus plans to counter the coronavirus crisis”**. On April 3, an **Open Letter from Canada’s clean energy sector associations** was sent to the federal government, calling for a “Resilient Recovery”, and emphasizing the job creation potential of the clean economy sector – (estimated pre-Pandemic as employing 559,400 Canadians by 2030) .

Also on April 3, a virtual rally of 56,000 people was organized by Stand.earth as part of a **Bail out People not Polluters campaign**, **summarized by the Energy Mix**. Quotes **published by Stand.earth** sum up the arguments:

“... Canadians will not accept a sweetheart deal for oil company execs and shareholders to protect Big Oil’s bottom line, and prop up a sunset industry. We need every single public dollar available to save lives, support communities and rebuild a cleaner, more resilient future....Because that other crisis—climate change—hasn’t gone anywhere. In this moment, when the global economy has been shuttered in humanity’s collective battle against COVID-19, governments must seize the opportunity to change course when it starts back up again. To put people back to work building massive solar and wind farms, not pipelines. To invest in the jobs of the future, not the jobs of the past.”

Earlier Canadian “No Bailout” voices are summarized in a **previous WCR article** , which highlights the Open Letters sent to the federal government by civil society groups and academics. A selection of more recent calls include: **“Morneau, provinces must apply climate lens to COVID-19 recovery efforts”** in *iPolitics* (April 9); **“Pandemic response should mobilize around low carbon solutions”** by Mitchell Beer in *Policy Options* (Mar. 26) ; **“Let’s come out of COVID-19 with a new economy”** an Opinion piece by Merran Smith and Dan Woynillowicz in *The National Observer* (April 8) ; **“Green stimulus offers Canada a way forward for escaping the next recession”** (March 26) and **“Ottawa’s bail-outs need to help airline and oil and gas sectors grow greener”** (April 8), both by Sustainable Prosperity.

Last word to Jim Stanford, in **“We’re going to need a Marshall Plan to rebuild after Covid-19 ”** in *Policy Options* (April 2):

“.... With the price of Western Canada Select oil falling to close to zero ... it is clear that fossil fuel developments will never lead Canadian growth again. Politicians and their “war rooms” can rage at this state of affairs, but they can’t change it: they might as well pray for a revival in prices for beaver pelts or other bygone Canadian staple exports. However, the other side of this gloomy coin is the enormous investment and employment opportunity associated with building out renewable energy systems and networks (which are now the cheapest energy option anyway). This effort must be led by forceful, consistent government policy, including direct regulation and public investment (in addition to carbon pricing). Another big job creator, already identified by Ottawa and Alberta, will be investment in remediation of former petroleum and mining sites.”

New climate change research network launches, saying climate won't wait for the pandemic to end

Posted on [April 9, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new network of university researchers launched on April 2: the [International Universities Climate Alliance \(IUCA\)](#). The network will showcase climate change research from 40 universities in 18 countries, with a wide range of disciplinary expertise, including engineering, economics, law, social science and planning, as well as climate science.

With a website tag line, "Collaborating for Climate Impact", the IUCA states in its [official press release](#):

"Alliance members are to work together to identify the most effective ways to communicate research-based facts related to climate change to the public. Members will engage in work across climate change science, impact, mitigation strategies and adaptation."

The network is spearheaded by the University of New South Wales, Sydney, and also includes the California Institute of Technology, Cornell University, the University of Edinburgh, King's College London, the Sorbonne, and from Australia, University of Melbourne and Monash University as well as the UNSW. From Canada, only [McGill University](#) in Montreal is included so far in the full list of member universities, [here](#). A deliberate strategy was to include universities from emerging economies in the group.

The decision to launch now, amidst the "information saturation" of Covid-19 was explained in a [press release from the University of New South Wales](#):

"This new platform is needed now more than ever as the world grapples with providing a coordinated approach to tackling climate change. ...Notwithstanding current urgencies around the COVID-19 pandemic, the alliance members decided not to delay the formation of the alliance due to the pressing and ongoing need to accelerate climate change mitigation and improve decision making."

That theme is expanded in a related press release on April 1, titled simply: [Climate change mitigation can't wait for Covid-19 to play out](#).

An expanding role for experts

The experts in the new [International Universities Climate Alliance \(IUCA\)](#) may benefit from the important and highly visible role of scientific experts in the fight against the pandemic. Lesson #1 in Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood's blog, [6 lessons for climate action from Canada's COVID-19 response](#) is "Listen to scientists." He argues: "At every stage of this pandemic, the public narrative and the associated policy response has largely been guided by epidemiologists and public health officials. ...Yet climate scientists are still sidelined in the public discourse and climate policy is still guided more by short-term political considerations than physical evidence. The climate crisis demands a more central role for climate science."

Another recent comment in "[After the Coronavirus, Two Sharply Divergent Paths on Climate](#)" from Yale350 (April 7) states: "Some policy experts are optimistic that victory over the coronavirus will instill greater appreciation for what government, science, and business can do to tackle climate change. But others believe the economic damage caused by the virus will set back climate efforts for years to come." The article outlines the two approaches, with a general view that the politics of the U.S. may continue to conspire against informed fight against climate change, while the EU will continue to follow a more evidence-driven path.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [climate change research](#), [Covid 19](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour's role in pandemic response – now and in the future

Posted on [April 8, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

As the world reacts to the urgent and terrible demands of the global pandemic, the labour movement is also on crisis footing as it fights for health and income protection for workers in the short term. An [earlier WCR post](#) describes the [Covid-19 Resource Centre maintained by the Canadian Labour Congress](#), which compiles links and documents by Canadian unions – much of it focused on the immediate information needed by individual workers. Unions are also advocating at the national and provincial levels for improved income supports, employment insurance, guaranteed sick leave for the short term crisis, as well as for sustainable long term economic solutions. The



Workers' Action Centre and the Fight for \$15 and Fairness in Ontario issued **a press release** on March 26, in response to the federal benefits announcement. The complete statement of demands appears in ***Covid-19: Health Emergency Labour Protections: Urgent comprehensive action is needed to protect workers, communities***. Such lobbying and organizing has resulted in a number of emergency-related changes to legislated employment standards across Canada, as described by Michael Fitzgibbon in **"The Right to Refuse in a COVID-19 World"** in the Canadian Law of Work Forum (March 27).

In the United States, the Labor Network for Sustainability provides information on rank and file reactions to Covid-19. On April 2, Jeremy Brecher's Strike column, **"Strike for your Life"** summarizes how U.S. and Italian workers are protesting and walking out due to lack of workplace protections. Brecher's column cites many U.S. examples, expanding on Steven Greenhouse's article in the *New York Times*: **"Is Your Grocery Delivery Worth a Worker's Life?"** (Mar. 30). Brecher also summarizes and cites **"The Italian workers fighting like hell to shut down their workplaces"** (Mar. 24). Other overviews of U.S. union actions are: **"Walkouts Spread as Workers Seek Coronavirus Protections"** in Labor Notes (Mar. 26); **"The Strike Wave Is in Full Swing: Amazon, Whole Foods Workers Walk Off Job to Protest Unjust and Unsafe Labor Practices"** in *Common Dreams* (Mar. 30); and **"The New Labor Movement"** (Axios, April 1).

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has compiled **Pandemic News from Unions** around the world, including their own documents and those of international affiliates. The ITUC also published **12 governments show the world how to protect lives, jobs and incomes** (updated March 30), which ranks the policies of Argentina, Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and the UK on their pandemic policies related to paid sick leave, income support, wage support, mortgage, rent or loan relief, and free health care.

After the pandemic subsides

Larry Savage and Simon Black, professors at Brock University, are pessimistic that short term gains will survive a return to "business as usual" in Canada. In **"Coronavirus crisis poses risks and opportunities for unions"** in *The Conversation*, they reference Naomi Klein's theory in *The Shock Doctrine* to argue: "Moving forward, unions are likely to find it incredibly difficult to negotiate gains for their members who will be expected to "share the pain" of an economic recession not of their making" – even public sector workers such as health care workers. To avoid being branded as selfish, Savage and Black urge unions to: "become champions of converting new temporary income supports, social protections and employment standards into permanent measures designed to rebuild Canada's tattered social safety net.... oppose bailouts of big corporations that don't also bail out workers and give employees more say over how industries deemed "too big to fail" are run.... continue to lead the resistance to service cuts and demands to privatize health-care services.."

Other recent articles also emphasize the importance of protecting the voice of workers in the post-pandemic world. Thomas Kochan, Professor and Co-Director of the MIT Sloan Institute for Work and Employment Research has written that "By working together in these ways in this time of

crisis, business and labor might just lay the groundwork for building a new social contract that fills the holes in the social safety net and forges relationships that will serve society well in the future.” His article, “**Workers left out of government and business response to the coronavirus**” appeared in *The Conversation* (U.S. edition) (March 20).

The National Labor Leadership Initiative at the Cornell University ILR School convened an online forum titled “Labor’s Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic “(Mar 31) . The purpose of the forum, and a continuing initiative, is to facilitate the long-term vision of the labour movement. The April [press release](#) quotes participant Erica Smiley, Executive Director of Jobs with Justice who states: “This is a moment for us to think about what the new normal is, because I frankly don’t want to get back to the old normal. It wasn’t working for most of us.” The press release also reflects the immediate impacts of the current crisis on a range of workers in the U.S.: “Seven TWU members who work in the NYC public transit system have died from the virus, while their co-workers still go to work every day to keep the system running, without adequate assurances that they will be kept healthy and safe. The IATSE members whose work powers the entertainment and festival scene including Austin’s South by Southwest, one of the first major cancellations of the pandemic, are now out of work indefinitely. Teachers and paraprofessionals have rushed to transition their curricula to online formats, even while coping with the emotional impact of missing their students and the school environment. Nurses are on the frontlines and tending to patients without adequate PPE.”

The Global Stage

The ILO’s Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV) published “**COVID-19: what role for workers’ organizations?**” arguing that [ILO Recommendation 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience \(R205\)](#) is an effective instrument for governments, employers and workers organizations to address the COVID-19 pandemic. “This recommendation was adopted with an overwhelming majority of all – governments, employers and workers. It is an international law instrument and Governments are expected to respect its guidance: Workers Organisations can request that it is taken into account.” The ILO maintains an ongoing collection of documents monitoring [Covid-19 and the World of Work](#) .

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation takes up the theme of a social contract: “As many governments scramble to pay for sick leave, provide income support or other measures, they have found themselves putting in place the building blocks of a social contract. Let’s keep these in place.” (in “**New Social Contract can rebuild our workplaces and economies after COVID-19**” in *The Medium*, (March 18)) . To flesh out that objective, the ITUC will convene virtual and in-person meetings on 24 June, on the theme, “Climate and Employment Proof our Future — a vision for a post-pandemic world”.

In the meantime, the ITUC and the International Organisation of Employers have issued a [Joint Statement on COVID-19](#) which issues an urgent call for coordinated policies, including :

Business continuity, income security and solidarity are key to prevent the spread and protect lives and livelihoods and build resilient economies and societies.

We stress in the strongest terms the important role that social dialogue and social partners play in the control of the virus at the workplace and beyond, but also to avoid massive job losses in the short and medium term. Joint responsibility is needed for dialogue to foster stability.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Covid 19](#), [ILO](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [labour union policies](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Pandemic](#), [social dialogue](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian unions providing Covid-19 Resources for members

Posted on [March 31, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Although unions are not unaware of the long-term perspective of the Covid-19 pandemic – as for example, in “[New Social Contract can rebuild our workplaces and economies after COVID-19](#)” by Sharan Burrow of the ITUC – the main focus for Canadian unions seems to be to actively respond with policy advocacy and practical information



resources for their members. The Canadian Labour Congress has built a dedicated [Covid-19 Resource Centre](#) which includes policy positions and demands, as well as fact sheets useful for individuals – for example, regarding [legislated sick leave provisions](#) in each province, or [community information regarding domestic violence](#) resources.

The CLC has also compiled an exhaustive collection of links to the Covid-19 information of individual unions across Canada and the U.S., [here](#) . Although there are differences among unions, most are compiling and updating resources and links which provide specific information for their members, especially regarding their health and safety rights and the financial supports available in the crisis. Some examples: [Amalgamated Transit Union](#) ; [Canadian Union of Postal Workers](#) ; [Public Service Alliance of Canada](#) ; [United Steelworkers](#); and [Unifor](#) .

Other unions such as [NUPGE](#) or the [Vancouver District Labour Council](#) are focused on advocacy and demands for government action for front line workers. [Toronto and York Region Labour Council](#) and the [B.C. Federation of Labour](#) provide both. Check the complete listings at the CLC website for the wide range of information available, and also check the list of [advocacy](#)

and organizing resources at the [Broadbent Institute](#), constantly updated by Dr. Jennifer Robson.



Another important resource for frontline workers: Ontario's [Fight For \\$15& Fairness campaign](#) for Health Emergency Labour Protections (HELP). Their demands for emergency health leaves and reforms to EI requirements in the Covid-19 situation are outlined [here](#) and [here in French](#).

These demands are also endorsed by the [Decent Work and Health Network](#) in their [press release](#). Like [Fight For \\$15& Fairness](#), the DWHN is sponsoring a petition, as well as organizing [a Zoom-based webinar](#) for health workers in COVID-19, on April 1.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Coronavirus](#), [Covid 19](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Pandemic](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green stimulus, worker health and safety ignored as U.S. authorizes \$2 Trillion in Coronavirus crisis

Posted on [March 30, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On March 27, the U.S. Congress passed the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act \(CARES\)](#) – at \$2 trillion, the largest stimulus in U.S. history. For individual taxpayers, it offers a one-time \$1,200 payment, plus \$500 more for each child under age 17; it also expands unemployment insurance amounts and duration. Details of the provisions are summarized in [FAQ's from the New York Times](#), and in [Forbes](#). General reaction to what is clearly a compromise Bill appears in “[‘Far More to Do,’ Say Progressives After House Approves and Trump Signs Corporate-Friendly Coronavirus Relief Act](#)” (Mar. 28). Pramila Jayapal, Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), issued [a press release](#) which states that Democrats are already formulating policies for the next legislative package, and gives a point-form summary of the *CARES Act*, describing provisions related to Worker-Centered Industry Assistance, the airline industry, and transit industry:

“The bill requires businesses receiving federal assistance to maintain existing employment levels to the extent possible and prohibits stock buybacks or dividends for the length of any loan provided by the federal government plus one year and restricts any increases to executive compensation for two years. The bill also provides direct payroll payments to keep millions of airline workers on the job and receiving paychecks, while also prohibiting airline companies from stock buybacks and dividends for the entire life of a federal grant, plus one year.”

Regarding Transit Agencies: “The bill provides \$25 billion to transit agencies, which have all seen a drastic drop in revenues as social distancing has been implemented. This funding is to be used to protect the jobs of the employees of the transit agencies, funding their paychecks during this public health emergency.”

Worker Health and Safety in the CARES Act

The [article in Common Dreams](#) quotes the president of the Economic Policy Institute, who states that the CARES Act “also egregiously fails to include explicit protections for worker safety during this epidemic in industries seeking federal relief.” On this issue, *Labor Notes* published a compilation of worker actions over health and safety concerns in [“Walkouts Spread as Workers Seek Coronavirus Protections”](#) (Mar. 26). Anxious and sick workers at food delivery service Instacart and at Amazon announced their plans to strike over health and safety on March 30, as described in [“Amazon and Instacart Workers Are Striking for COVID-19 Protections”](#) in *Slate*, and also in [‘The Strike Wave Is in Full Swing’: Amazon, Whole Foods Workers Walk Off Job to Protest Unjust and Unsafe Labor Practices](#) (Mar. 30).

Other workers are also walking out on March 30, as described in Vice : [“General Electric Workers Launch Protest, Demand to Make Ventilators”](#) , demanding that their idle plants be converted to the socially-useful work of making ventilators.

A selection of notable readings about Covid-19, workers, and the climate crisis in the U.S.:

Jeremy Brecher, Research Director of Labor Network for Sustainability has written three articles so far in his [new column, Strike](#). Brecher offer his own views and commentary, but also links to important reports and statements from unions, advocacy groups, and such U.S. press outlets as Vox, Grist, Politico, and the Washington Post, among others. The first Commentary, [“In Coronavirus Fight, Workers Are Forging an Emergency Green New Deal”](#) (Mar. 16) describes the impact and challenges of Covid 19 in workplaces, and the initiatives taken by many U.S. unions. Article #2, [“An Emergency Jobs Program for an Emergency Green New Deal”](#) (March 24) proposes what he calls a “Green Work Program” (GWP) for the U.S. , based on the principles of a jobs guarantee: “A GWP will provide jobs for all who want them in their own communities performing socially useful work. It will be established by federal legislation, funded by the federal government, and run under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor or another federal agency. It will be primarily administered by local and municipal governments, nonprofits, social enterprises, and cooperatives. In contrast to the WPA, it is a permanent program, though its size can be expected to vary depending on economic conditions and social needs.” Brecher’s #3 commentary

is **“Momentum Builds for Green New Deal Jobs”**, which appeared on March 30, summarizing major policy proposals for a Just Recovery.

Naomi Klein updates her thoughts about disaster capitalism in a new **video** at *The Intercept*, explaining how governments, especially the Trump administration in the U.S., are exploiting the coronavirus outbreak “to push for no-strings-attached corporate bailouts and regulatory rollbacks.” The most egregious example of this regulatory rollback came on March 26 in an EPA press release **“EPA Announces Enforcement Discretion Policy for COVID-19 Pandemic”**, critiqued by *Inside Climate News* in **“Trump’s Move to Suspend Enforcement of Environmental Laws is a Lifeline to the Oil Industry”** (Mar. 27). *The Intercept’s* **Coronavirus coverage** emphasizes this aspect of the crisis.

David Roberts, **“A just and sustainable economic response to coronavirus, explained”** appeared in *Vox* (Mar. 25).

Meehan Crist in **“What the Coronavirus means for climate change”** an Opinion piece in the *New York Times* on March 27.

Bill McKibben now writes an **Opinion series for the New Yorker** magazine, emphasizing climate change connections. Recent articles include: **“If We’re Bailing out Corporations, they should bail out the planet”** (Mar. 20), and **“The Coronavirus and the Climate Movement”** (Mar. 18).

Progressives and climate activists: An **Open Letter to Congress for a Green Stimulus Plan** appeared in *Medium* on Mar. 22 (with approximately 1200 signatures by Mar. 24). Amongst the signatories are high-profile activists such as 350.org co-founder Bill McKibben; former EPA administrator Gina McCarthy; Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis, co-founders of The Leap, as well as prominent academics. It is aligned with the **5 Principles for Just COVID-19 Relief and Stimulus** proposed by environmental, labour, and other progressive groups, including the Climate Justice Alliance(CJA). In a March 24 press release, **“Seven Congressional Leaders Join 500+ Progressive Organizations To Demand People’s Bailout In Response To Coronavirus Crisis”**, CJA announces that Senators Ed Markey and Tammy Duckworth, and Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Mark Pocan, Debbie Dingell, Pramila Jayapal, and Barbara Lee endorse joined their **People’s Bailout campaign**, based on the 5 Principles.

Thomas Hanna and Carlos Sandos Skandier : **“We can’t let this economic crisis go to waste”** an Opinion Piece in *Open Democracy* (March 16), which argues ..”During this, or any future, economic crisis, public support and funding to stricken industries must be conditioned on public ownership and control within the overall perspective of a Green New Deal and a just transition for workers and communities affected by the required shifts to renewable energy and less carbon intensive modes of transportation and production. This means not simply injecting public money into banks, oil and gas companies, and airlines in order to stabilize and resurrect their existing business so they can continue financing, extracting, and burning fossil fuels at a pace that will blow our chances of keeping temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius by 2036.”

....

“How to Make the Airline Bailout Work for Workers, Not Just CEOs” from *Inequality.org* (March 17) endorses the proposals from Sara Nelson of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, including direct payroll subsidies for airline workers. The article in *Inequality* includes a table which shows how much the five biggest U.S. carriers spent on stock buybacks between 2010 and 2019 – including American Airlines, which spent \$12.5 billion on buybacks, to increase the value of executive stock-based pay. Sara Nelson makes her case in an interview in *In These Times* (Mar.19) : **“Our Airline Relief Bill Is a Template for Rescuing Workers Instead of Bailing Out Execs”** . She concludes:

“This virus is a very clear metaphor for what we always say in the labor movement, which is “An injury to one is an injury to all.” It doesn’t matter whether you’re rich or poor, or where you come from. If a virus exists and we don’t do something about it, then we’re all at risk. “

Posted in **Government Policy, United States** | Tagged **Climate change policy, Covid 19, economic policy, Pandemic, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada enacts Economic Stimulus Plan for COVID-19 amid calls for sustainable investment, not bail outs

Posted on **March 26, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With almost one million new employment insurance claims made so far during the COVID crisis and a **grim new forecast by TD Economics** just published, a special sitting of Parliament on March 25 passed a economic stimulus package for Canada. As described in **“Feds rejig benefits to get aid to workers affected by COVID-19”** in the *National Observer* (Mar. 26), the new measures will combine and augment the two **previously announced** benefit programs into one, the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit** . The core of the new benefit program will use General Revenues rather than the EI Fund, to provide “a \$2,000-a-month payment for up to four months to workers whose income drops to zero because of the pandemic, including if they have been furloughed by their employers but technically still have jobs.” It is promised that the money will reach Canadians by mid-April, with an additional increase to the Child Care Benefit of \$300/month/child beginning in May. The Ministry of Finance summary is [here](#) ; the fine print is in the **Notice of Ways and Means Motion** [here](#) .

In response to the government’s stimulus, David Macdonald has written **“Unemployment may hit 70-year high, but new EI replacement will help”**, which appears in *Behind the Numbers* from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (March 26). Macdonald identifies the four industries at the highest risk of immediate job losses from the pandemic: passenger airlines; arts, recreation, culture and sport; retail sector; and accommodation and food services (which alone employs 987,000 workers in normal times). He then analyses how the benefits announced on March 25 will

impact the approximately 2 million most vulnerable occupations within those industries. The article also forecasts alarming unemployment scenarios across Canada, and specifically in Canada's cities, where service workers form a high percentage of the labour force. Some conclusions: unemployment in Calgary could rise from the already high 8.0% to a probable rate of 15.3%, excluding any further oil price shocks; Ottawa could rise from its February 2020 low 4.4% to 11.6% in the worst-case scenario; Toronto could see an increase from 5.4% to 12.4% in the worst case; Montreal from 5.2% to 13.4%, and Vancouver 4.7% to 13.8%.

Calls for Sustainable investments, not bail outs

In reacting to the March 25 emergency stimulus measures, Julia Levin of Environmental Defence Canada raises the biggest elephant in the room: concern that money will be used to bail out the troubled oil and gas industry . **Environmental Defence warns :**

“We applaud all of the federal parties for working together to take this positive step to pass legislation which will help those struggling” “But hidden inside this new law were changes that will make it easier for Canada’s export credit agency, Export Development Canada, to funnel billions more towards domestic oil and gas operations — without public scrutiny.”

Others who have spoken out against short-term bail outs:

Civil society and labour unions: **“No New Money For Oil and Gas Companies—Give It To Workers—Say Large Collection of Groups Representing More Than One Million Canadians”** , an Open Letter to the federal government in advance of the March 25 announcement. It states: “Giving billions of dollars to failing oil and gas companies will not help workers and only prolongs our reliance on fossil fuels. Oil and gas companies are already heavily subsidized in Canada and the public cannot keep propping them up with tax breaks and direct support forever. Such measures benefit corporate bottom lines far more than they aid workers and communities facing public health and economic crises. “

265 Canadian Academics: As reproduced in the *National Observer*, **another open letter** to the Prime Minister from academics and advocacy groups (with a **list of the 265 signatories here**)

“A bailout for the oil and gas industry? Here’s why experts say it’s not a long-term solution” by Sharon Riley in *The Narwhal* , which notes that the oil and gas industry has called for a postponement of increases to the federal carbon tax and “a federal Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) modeled after the U.S. program developed in 2008 to purchase positions in distressed companies.” The experts who argue against it include Jeff Rubin (former chief economist with CIBC World Markets), Gord Laxer, (Professor Emeritus University of Alberta), Chris Severson-Baker (Pembina Institute), and Ian Hussey (Parkland Institute). In **“Bail out Workers, Not Fossil Fuels, Climate Advocates Tell Trudeau”** in *The Tyee* (March 20), Geoff Dembicki discusses the same issues.

“COVID-19 crisis is a tipping point. Will we invest in planetary health, or oil and gas?” (Mar. 24) by Dr. Courtney Howard, Board member of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the

Environment.

“Coronavirus and the economy: We need green stimulus not fossil fuel bailouts” by Kyla Tienhaara, Canada Research Chair in Economy and Environment at Queen’s University, published in *The Conversation* (Mar. 24). She argues that “Stimulus measures should either provide substantial environmental benefits such as greenhouse gas emissions reductions or re-orientate the economy to low-carbon activities, such as care work and the arts.... bailouts to the fossil fuel industry and airlines would be monumentally counterproductive.”

Tim Gray of Environmental Defence offers some specific alternatives in **“How Canada can build an environmentally sustainable future after the COVID-19 Crisis”** (March 23).

These same arguments are playing out internationally – Naomi Klein has released **a new video at *The Intercept***, explaining how the Trump administration and other governments across the globe are “exploiting” the coronavirus outbreak “to push for no-strings-attached corporate bailouts and regulatory rollbacks.” She urges working people worldwide to resist such efforts and demand real support from political leaders during the ongoing crisis.” In the U.S., the Climate Justice Alliance is part of that resistance, as described in ***Demand A People’s Bailout that Protects Workers while Ensuring Safe and Sustainable Energy*** .

Posted in **Government Policy, Green Economy** | Tagged **economic policy, Oil and gas industry, pandemic response, unemployment** | **Leave a reply**

Can the fight against COVID-19 help the climate change fight?

Posted on **March 17, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

With the world reeling under the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, some are trying to make sense of our disrupted world, and find lessons and hope for the fight against climate change.

One thoughtful and useful article is **“Can COVID-19 create a turning point in the fight against climate change?”**, which appeared in *Medium* on March 13. Acknowledging that the pandemic is distracting attention and resources from the climate fight, author Kaveh Madani argues that “The COVID-19 crisis is teaching us some lessons and implementing some reforms that are essential for success in mitigating the climate crisis.” Specifically, economic and financial reforms; reduction of GHG emissions; the move to “virtual life”, including teleworking; reduction of aviation travel and consumerism; the importance of science; the interconnectedness of our global world, and conversely, the importance of individual action.

Another widely-cited article appeared in *Fast Company*, “[What would happen if the world reacted to climate change like it’s reacting to the coronavirus?](#)”. The article quotes May Boeve, executive director of 350.org, who finds hope in the fact that: “We’ve seen that governments can act, and people can change their behavior, in a very short amount of time... And that’s exactly what the climate movement has been asking governments and people to do for years in the face of a different kind of threat—the climate crisis.” The downside? The response to the climate threat has not been as swift and strong, which she attributes to the perception that it is a “somewhat distant problem, despite the growing number of climate-related disasters that happen every year”, and because “in the climate crisis, powerful companies have a lot to lose if the world acts decisively, and with the virus, though many people are losing money, there’s no similarly massive opposition to trying to address the problem.”

Two articles on March 15 in *The Energy Mix* explore how the Coronavirus has disrupted the oil and gas industry, and how that may help the climate fight. “[Coronavirus Triggers OPEC+ Breakup, Drives Deepest Oil Price Dive in 29 Years](#)” (March 15) summarizes the geopolitics and oil price collapse; “[Oil War and Covid-19 Create Risk, Opportunity for Clean Energy](#)” (March 15) summarizes the opinions of several market analysts who argue that “It doesn’t make sense to reduce your investment in renewables if the oil price crashes ...It’s more logical to reduce your investment in oil.” Amongst possible benefits: governments would reduce fossil fuel subsidies and redirect funding to health priorities, and investment redirected to clean energy would strengthen that sector.

Finally, Avi Lewis of The Leap wrote a *Globe and Mail* Opinion piece, “[In the midst of converging crises, the Green New Deal is the answer](#)” in which he argues: “In the midst of all these terrifying and converging disasters, this is perhaps the greatest opportunity – to shatter the shackles of austerity thinking and see the potential for government to do big things, like actually lead a democratic and inclusive response to the climate emergency at the speed and scale that science and justice require.”

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [International](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [1 Reply](#)

Scotland’s Just Transition

Commission releases interim report and recommendations

Posted on [March 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On February 27 , the **Scottish Just Transition Commission** released its *Interim Report* , emphasizing the urgency for the Scottish Government to begin planning for transition immediately, and offering some positive examples of initiatives underway. The Commission calls for a government commitment to develop a Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan- specifically, an “assessment of workforces most likely to be affected by the transition (including those indirectly affected through supply chains), and the most immediate and pressing skills requirements needed to support the net-zero transition”. The Commission’s interim recommendations also include: a call to “Place equity at the heart of the Climate Change Plan update”; ensure that there is transition support for the Agriculture sector; establish a Citizens Assembly on climate change, operating independently of the Scottish Government; promote Scotland’s approach to just transition at COP 26 meetings in Glasgow in 2020; expand on the success of energy efficiency initiatives with funding support; begin planning for low-carbon infrastructure, noting that future government infrastructure investment should avoid locking in emissions and inequality; place the climate emergency at the heart of spending decisions; and improve modelling and research to help understand the transition.

Perhaps most controversial is the final recommendation:

*“The oil and gas industry currently provides and supports a large number of high quality jobs meaning any transition for the sector and its supply chain in the decades ahead will need to be carefully managed. Strategies such as Roadmap 2035 from Oil and Gas UK have begun to set out **the role industry believe they can play** in a net-zero economy. ... To further support the deployment of CCUS and hydrogen, Government should consider supporting a programme of focussed research in collaboration with industry, with the aim of delivering a reduction in the costs of deploying these energy solutions in a way that secures a just transition for workers and stakeholders. “*

The **Scottish Just Transition Commission** was launched in September 2018, chaired by Professor Jim Skea, and including two unionists amongst its membership: Richard Hardy, the National Secretary for Scotland and Ireland at labour union **Prospect** , and Dave Moxham, Deputy General Secretary of the **Scottish Trade Union Congress** . The Commission has issued a Call for Evidence in 2020, with a final report and recommendations expected in 2021. In the meantime, the Commission states that 2020 will be used to “consider a range of cross-cutting themes such as finance, skills and technology innovation”, and have commissioned a report on international just transition experiences. The Interim Report also references several existing reports, including one

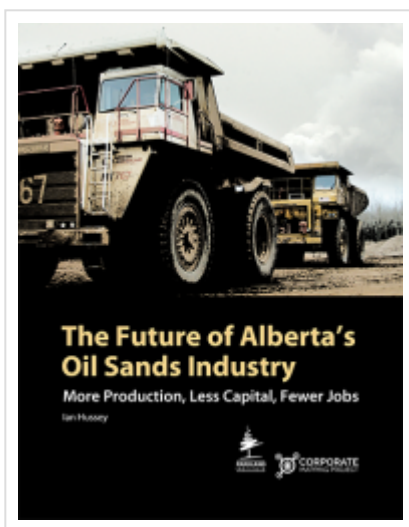
commissioned by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust: ***The State of the Coalfields 2019: Economic and social conditions in the former coalfields of England, Scotland and Wales*** (July 2019), published by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheeld Hallam University, in Sheffield.

Reaction is summed up by Friends of the Earth Scotland in its favourable statement, “**Time to move beyond rhetoric on just transition, say Unions and environmentalists**”. Reaction from the Scottish Trade Unions Congress is [here](#) ; Prospect’s reaction is [here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Just Transition](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Scotland](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Fewer jobs will be needed in Alberta’s oil sands according to Parkland report

Posted on **March 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The latest of several reports by the [Parkland Institute](#) and Corporate Mapping Project was released on March 10: ***The Future of Alberta’s Oil Sands Industry : More Production, Less Capital, Fewer Jobs*** . Author Ian Hussey argues that a managed decline of the industry is needed, and that it is now in its mature phase – with 53,119 jobs lost between 2014 through 2019. With this maturity comes fewer construction projects, and technological change is driving down operational employment. Although most people are aware of the adoption of driverless trucks, Hussey also discusses horizontal multi-well drilling pads; supervisory control and data acquisition, remote monitoring, and information technology and analytics; and replicated designs and modularization. In sum,

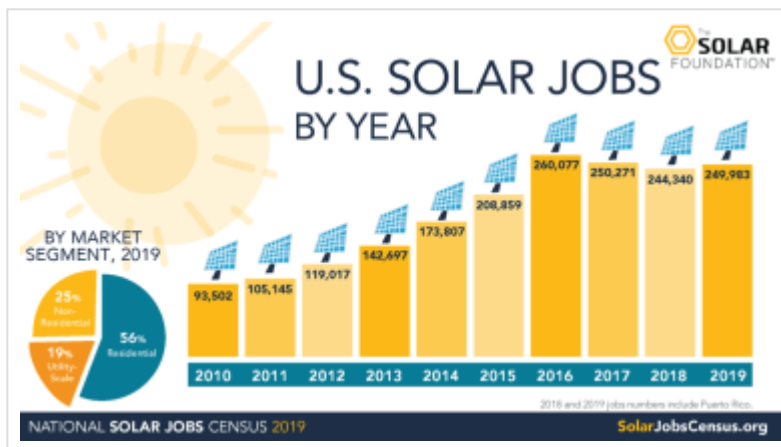
“Despite the growth in production, fewer and fewer employees are needed. In 2019, overall productivity per employee in Canada’s oil and gas industry was 47% higher than in 2011, and productivity in the oil sands was 72% higher in 2019 than 2011. This indicates that the jobs that have been lost in recent years are likely not coming back. Production is at an all-time high and has increased 23% since 2014, while jobs have declined by 23% since 2014.”

The report also profiles the “Big Five” oil and gas companies operating in Alberta: Suncor Energy, Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL), Imperial Oil, Cenovus Energy, and Husky Energy – providing statistics on their production, reserves, profits and shareholder returns, and capital spending.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Solar industry rebounds to almost 250,000 workers in 2019

Posted on **March 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 10th annual **National Solar Jobs Census** for the United States **was released** by the non-profit Solar Foundation in mid-February. It reports a resurgence in solar industry employment in 2019, following two years of job losses in 2017 and 2018. The report states that 249,983 U.S. workers spent the majority of their time in solar-related activities in 2019, and an additional 94,549 workers spent some portion of their time on solar-related work, for a total of 344,532 workers. The full Report is downloadable (with free registration) from [this link](#), with a [summary here](#). It provides state-by-state statistics re job totals and sectors within the solar industry, and profiles the solar industry in California (where the Title 24 mandate went into effect in 2019, requiring all new residential homes to be built with solar PV), and the South-east U.S. The report also forecasts future trends, and provides discussions of demographics and workforce development, reporting that a majority of employers have difficulty recruiting and hiring. (Through its Solar Training Network, the Solar Foundation published **Strategies for Solar Workforce Development: A Toolkit for the Solar Industry** in 2018).

Some highlights from the 2019 National Solar Census:

- About the industry: Approximately 93% of U.S. solar establishments work in solar PV electricity generation. 16% of firms work on solar heating and cooling, (e.g. solar water heaters); 7% work on projects related to concentrating solar power (CSP).
- About the demographics: Diversity remains almost the same as in 2018: women represented 26% of the solar workforce, Latino or Hispanic workers represented 17%, Asian workers comprised 9%, and black or African American workers comprised 8%.
- About wages: for entry-level unlicensed (non-electrician) solar installers the median wage was \$16.00 (the U.S. national median wage for all occupations is \$18.58). The median wage for entry-level licensed (electrician) installers was \$20.00.
- Wages for production workers start at \$15.00 for entry-level employees, (national median wage for production workers is \$16.85). Wages reached \$36.50 for senior-level production employees.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Green Jobs](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Just Plan to wind down B.C.'s Fossil fuel industry by 2050

Posted on **March 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Winding Down BC's Fossil Fuel Industries: Planning for climate justice in a zero-carbon economy was released on March 4 by the B.C. office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, as part of the Corporate Mapping Project. Authors Marc Lee and Seth Klein begin with an overview of the province's fossil fuel industries (including locations, production and reserves) noting that all fossils produce one-quarter of B.C.'s GHG emissions, (most of which is from Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)). Calling the government's current strategy of promoting LNG production through clean electricity "untenable", the report proposes a four-point phase-out plan

for all fossils over the next 20 to 30 years, including: 1. Establish carbon budgets and fossil fuel production limits; 2. Invest in the domestic transition from fossil fuels and develop a green industrial strategy; 3. Ensure a just transition for workers and communities; 4. Reform the royalty regime for fossil fuel extraction.

To design a Just Transition plan, the authors cite as “helpful” the examples of the Alberta coal phase-out and the 2018 coal phase-out agreement in Spain, as well as the existing Columbia Basin Trust example of community transition. In the long time frame of 20 to 30 years, they see the retirement of many existing workers, so that attrition will accomplish much of the job shedding. Although they say that Just-transition strategies “must include efforts to maintain employment in areas where jobs are likely to be lost” – implying reinvestment in resource-based communities – they also recognize the built-in gender bias of such a strategy and advocate investment in public sector jobs – such as child care and seniors services.

To secure Just Transition funding

The report states:

“...BC should aim to invest 2 per cent of its GDP per year ... or about \$6 billion per year in 2019, an amount that would grow in line with the provincial economy. Assuring such levels of investment should give comfort to workers currently employed in the fossil fuel industry. Revenues from higher carbon taxes and royalty reforms (described below) would be an ideal source of funds, and/or governments could borrow (through green bonds) to undertake high levels of capital spending on decarbonization initiatives. In contrast, the 2019 BC Budget lists total operating and capital expenses for CleanBC over the next three years at, cumulatively, only \$679 million, less than one-tenth of a percent of BC’s GDP.”

Managing Income loss for transitioned workers:

The authors state: “On average, fossil fuel workers make 28 per cent more than workers in the rest of the economy, although this includes gasoline station workers who earn comparably low wages. Replacing more than \$5 billion of income over the course of the wind-down period is therefore a central challenge”.... By assuming a 20 to 30 year time frame, they calculate a job substitution of 500 to 700 jobs per year, and state: “ There is no reason to believe that such a transition should be a problem if the right policy supports are implemented and a proactive green investment strategy is pursued to create alternative employment options.” Earlier in the report, the authors estimate that, assuming the province invests 2 per cent of its GDP annually (about \$6 billion in 2019) in green job creation, at least 42,000 direct and indirect jobs would be created in a range of opportunities.

The CCPA offers an 8-page [Executive Summary](#) of the report, and an [even briefer version](#) , written by co-author Marc Lee, was published in the *Vancouver Sun* on March 8.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Just Transition](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta's government continues to prop up oil and gas industry with new Blueprint for Jobs, penalties for protesters

Posted on **March 11, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As Teck Mines and other private sector **investors rush away from oil and gas** investment in Alberta and **the price of oil collapses**, the Alberta Legislature resumed on February 24, with a **Budget** and a new economic plan: ***A Blueprint for Jobs: Getting Alberta Back to Work***. The Blueprint is built on five pillars: "Supporting businesses; Freeing job creators from senseless red tape; Building infrastructure; Developing skills; Selling Alberta to the world." Announced in a **March 2 press release** as the first step in the *Blueprint*: a \$100 million loan to the **Orphan Well Association**, promising to generate up to 500 direct and indirect jobs by financing reclamation of abandoned mining sites. The press release also promises a future "suite" of announcements "covering the entire lifecycle of wells from start to finish". As *The Narwhal* reports in "**Alberta loans industry-funded association \$100 million to 'increase the pace' of orphan well cleanup**" (March 2), this latest loan follows a 2017 loan of \$235 million, as the industry-levies which fund the Orphan Wells Association fail to keep pace with the environmental mess left behind by bankrupt mining companies.

The Alberta Federation of Labour released a statement in response to the **Alberta Budget**, "**Kenney's Budget breaks promises, delivers opposite of what Albertans voted for last year**". The AFL charges that the budget will result in more than 1,400 job cuts, especially in education (244 jobs lost), agriculture (277 jobs lost), and community and social services (136 jobs lost). Further, "Today's budget increases the deficit by \$1 billion because of this government's short-sighted overreliance on resource revenues, while cutting billions in revenue from corporations." A similar sentiment appeared from an opposite corner: **an Opinion piece** in the mainstream *Toronto Globe and Mail* states: "The cost of Mr. Kenney's inaction on economic diversification will be high. Alberta has the advantage of being home to many skilled clean-tech and renewable-energy workers already, but the speed at which the world is innovating in that area means that a lagging Alberta will result in the emigration of some of our best and brightest entrepreneurs."

Updated:

The Alberta Federation of Labour released another **statement on March 16**, condemning the Budget proposal as an "ideological budget that does not fit the times". Further, it is "no longer worth the paper it's written on. The revenue side of the budget is in tatters because oil is now trading nearly \$30 per barrel less than projected", and because of the Covid-19 crisis, the planned cuts to health care "will hurt, not help our province." The AFL is demanding that the Budget be

scrapped, but the CBC reported on March 16, “[Alberta government plans to accelerate budget process, add \\$500M to health spending](#)”, reporting that the government dramatically curtailed study and debate , and on March 17, CBC reported “[Alberta legislature approves \\$57-billion budget in race against COVID-19 spread](#)”.

For those concerned about the erosion of the democratic process under the threat of the pandemic, this is a worrying sign.

And not the first worrisome sign in Alberta: the first order of business in the new Session was [Bill 1, The Critical Infrastructure Defence Act](#) , introduced by Premier Kenney. As described in a *National Observer* article [here](#) , the Bill proposes to discourage citizen protest by making it easier for police to intervene in blockades, and proposes individual fines for protesters of up to \$10,000 for a first offence, and up to \$25,000 for each subsequent day a blockade or protest remained in place. The [Alberta Federation of Labour released a statement](#) on March 6 calling on the government to withdraw the Bill immediately, stating that the justification (ie protection of rail lines) is misleading, and “The legislation is clearly designed to stop or discourage all collective action that goes against the UCP agenda, including potential labour or worker action.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate Activism](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#), [orphan oil wells](#), [reclamation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Positive examples of climate action needed to bring unionists into the climate fight, says veteran activist

Posted on [March 10, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

“The Climate Movement Doesn’t Know How to Talk with Union Members About Green Jobs”

appeared in *The Intercept* on March 9, transcribing an interview with Jane McAlevey, a veteran labour activist in the U.S. and now a senior policy fellow at the University of California Berkeley’s Labor Center. One interview question: “What do you think organizers should be doing right now to make sure a climate-friendly platform can win in a presidential race where Trump will argue that ending fossil fuel investment means lost jobs?” In response, McAlevey urges activists to allay workers’ fears about the future with examples of positive changes – citing as one of the best examples the “New York wind deal” when, “unions won a far-reaching climate agreement to shift half of New York State ’s total energy needs to wind power by 2035. They did it by moving billions of subsidies away from fossil fuels and into a union jobs guarantee known as a project labor

agreement.” (A [previous WCR post](#) summarizes the campaign which culminated in the New York *[Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#)* in the summer of 2019). Ultimately, McAlevey calls for “spade work” which educates workers about the climate crisis and reassures them by providing positive solutions. Citing the deeply integrated nature of the climate and economic crises, she concludes: “We have to build a movement that has enough power to win on any one of these issues that matter to us..... We’re relying on the people that already agree with us and trying to get them out in the streets. We can’t get there with these numbers.”



The Intercept interview is one of many since Jane McAlevey's published her third book in January 2020. *[A Collective Bargain: Unions, Organizing, and the Fight for Democracy](#)* discusses the climate crisis, but is a much broader call to arms for the U.S. labour movement. A very informative review of the book by Sam Gindin appears in *The Jacobin*, [here](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and politics](#), [labour activism](#), [Labour and Greens](#), [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Australia Senate Committee Report shows a green economy is possible

Posted on **March 9, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On 31 July 2019, the Australian Senate established a [Select Committee into the Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas](#), with a mandate to inquire and report on new industries and employment opportunities that can be created in regions and rural areas. The terms of reference were broad and included “lessons learned from structural adjustments in the automotive,

manufacturing and forestry industries and energy privatisation ; the importance of long-term planning ; measures to guide the transition into new industries and employment; and the role of vocational education providers, in enabling reskilling and retraining.”

Public consultations were conducted in seven locations and **174 submissions** were received from academics, policy experts, government representatives and unions, between July and September. The **Report of the Select Committee** was released in early December 2019, but because Senators were unable to set aside politics and arrive at consensus recommendations, the report consists mostly of excerpts from the submissions heard. There are 14 recommendations made by the Chair , and separate recommendations by Labor members and by Government Senators, who said: “The word ‘transition’ is a loaded term which necessarily involves preconceptions around the direction of the Australian economy. The issue surrounding the definition of ‘transition’ is one of the reasons why the committee could not reach agreement on recommendations.”

Nevertheless, the report and submissions are a valuable record of the current situation in Australia because they discuss examples of the technological innovations in current industry, and future job opportunities in renewable energy, biofuel, mining, lithium-ion battery manufacture, waste management, hydrogen energy export to Asia, and ecological services and natural infrastructure (including site rehabilitation and reef restoration).

Some excerpts:

“... the growth in renewable energy generation presents direct opportunities for increasing manufacturing activity: Installation and construction employs large numbers of people for short periods of time, but a globally competitive renewables manufacturing industry creates jobs for decades. The Victorian state government has only scratched the surface of the opportunity for Australia in this space. They have reopened the Ford plant in Geelong and allowed Danish multinational Vestas to start assembling wind turbines, but there is also Keppel Prince in Portland and Wilson Transformers in Wodonga, who have also been involved in the renewables supply chain, creating high skilled, meaningful manufacturing jobs.”

“.... the GFG Alliance in Whyalla which is proposing to revitalise the steelworks and bring down the cost of production with a variety of innovative and technologically advanced initiatives. Depending on the final configuration, a portion of the energy used at the steelworks would be sourced from a 280 MW solar farm in the Whyalla region..... Sun Metals, a solar electricity generation farm, supplies the existing zinc refinery with about 30 per cent of its electricity needs. That refinery is expanding its zinc production and is looking to expand its portfolio of renewable generation assets to further reduce its exposure to volatile electricity grid prices. Similarly, the development and commercialisation of the EnPot technology for aluminium smelting has the potential to redefine and expand the role of aluminium smelting in Australia as an electricity grid stabiliser as well as a value-adding base metal producer.”

Regarding future skills and labour market concerns:

The Centre for Policy Futures characterized the role of industry skills councils as critical to ensure that training matches the available jobs. "... These councils must be part of the community consultation process; work with the public authority to identify what future employment opportunities might look like; and determine the future employment, reskilling and retaining opportunities that might be available."

Concerns about the skill differences between workers currently employed in coal mines and power-stations were highlighted by the Institute for Sustainable Futures: "The nature of the workforce in coalmining means that the transition there is going to be more challenging than it is in power generation. Power generation has a lot of trades, technicians and professionals. One in two coalminers is a truck driver or a machine operator—the second-lowest skill category. So it is going to be a lot more challenging than power generation, where you've got a relatively skilled workforce.".... Regional Development Australia South West noted that: Average wages here in the mining sector are \$137,000. Average wages in tourism are \$49,000. You can't replace those mining jobs with tourism jobs."

Regarding Transition Planning :

Several submissions supported the creation of a National Transition Authority, with responsibility for planning and collaboration, but not replacing the need for local transition planning bodies.

The Next Economy (Submission #16 [here](#)) put forward a model for a national Transition Authority which would :

1. oversee funding and coordination of transition planning at both a national and regional level
2. coordinate with other authorities and government agencies to ensure that the scale, type and pace of the transition will enable us to meet international climate obligations to reduce emissions
3. coordinate an industry-wide, multi-employer redeployment scheme to provide retrenched workers with the opportunity to transfer to other power generators
4. ensure companies meet their responsibilities to workers in terms of redundancy payments and entitlements, retraining opportunities, and generating jobs through full decommissioning and rehabilitation of sites .

Sadly, these recommendations and examples hold little sway with the current government of Australia, as Prime Minister Morrison continues to support the development of new coal projects. The Senators' Comments in the Select Committee Report are a catalogue of government positions, summed up by this :

"In the view of the Government Senators, the majority report (approved by the Greens and the ALP Committee members) inadequately highlights the importance of jobs associated with coal mining and oil and gas production to the Australia's economy."

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [Green Economy](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Saskatchewan announces \$10 million aid for Estevan and Cornach coal transition

Posted on **March 6, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

A February 28 **press release** from the government of Saskatchewan announced funding to support the communities of Estevan and Cornach – the province’s principal coal-producing communities – as they transition after the federally- mandated phase-out of traditional coal-fired electricity generation by 2030. Estevan is scheduled to receive \$8 million and Cornach \$2 million in this provincial announcement – money that had **already been pledged in the government’s Throne speech** in October 2019 .

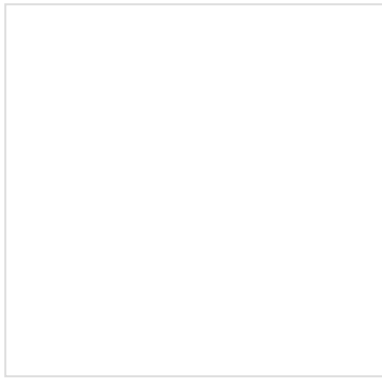
Climate Justice Saskatoon has studied and compiled research into the coal transition for these two communities as a project called **Future of Coal**. A useful timeline highlights key developments in the phase-out process from 2017 to 2019 and a report, ***Bridging the gap: Building bridges between urban environmental groups and coal-producing communities*** (2018), reports on “in-depth conversations with coal and service industry workers, town administrators, union representatives, and farmers” in Cornach and Estevan.

The federal **Task Force on a Fair and Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities** visited the two communities – briefly noted in their ***What we Heard*** report and reported at length by the Estevan Mercury newspaper **here**. The *Regina Leader Post* reported in detail on the anxiety and frustration of workers in “**‘Energy city’ feeling powerless as coal phase-out haunts Estevan**” (June 2019) . Workers are members of **United Mine Workers Local 7606** , and many are hoping that investment in carbon capture and storage (CCS) might prolong their working lives. A video explains their view of CSS **here** on the Local 7606 website .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **coal phase-out, coal transition, Saskatchewan** | **Leave a reply**

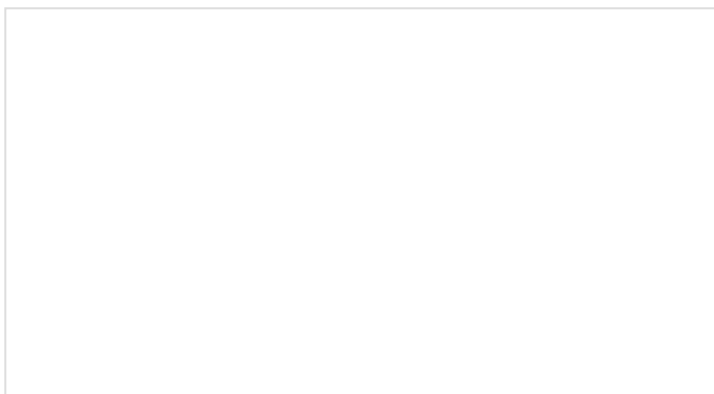
SEIU cleaners stage the first union-authorized climate strike in the U.S.

Posted on **March 6, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



To launch his new column, ***Strike: Jeremy Brecher's Corner*** at the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) website, Jeremy Brecher began with the theme “The Future of Climate Strikes”. On February 29, he posted **“First U.S. Union-Authorized Climate Strike?”** (re-published in *Common Dreams* as **“Did we just witness the first union-authorized climate strike in the United States?”**). The article describes a one day strike on February 27 by members of **Service Employees International Union Local 26**, employed by over a dozen different subcontractors to clean corporate buildings in Minneapolis. He states that it is, “as far as I have been able to discover, the very first—union sanctioned strike in the U.S. for climate protection demands.”

Brecher gives voice to many of the low-wage and immigrant workers who are the backbone of the strike, and traces their climate activism back to 2009, when Local 26 won contract language: to establish an Ad Hoc Committee of union and company representatives at each company, to “review the use of green chemicals”, to provide training to employees on the “use, mixing and storage” of cleaning chemicals, and that “The employer “shall make every effort to use only green, sustainable cleaning products where possible.” The SEIU Local 26 collective agreement for 2016-2019 is [here](#), with climate-related clause 18.13 on pages 39-40. Other examples of clauses related to toxic chemicals in Canadian collective agreements are available from the ACW Green Agreements database [here](#); clauses regarding green procurement are [here](#), and the full searchable database of 240 clauses is [here](#).



Although the main focus of **First U.S. Union-Authorized Climate Strike?** is on the climate-related demands, the strike is also important for its success in coalition-building and community support. Brecher characterizes it as exemplary of the growing trend toward “Bargaining for the

Common Good, ” as outlined in a September 2019 article in *The American Prospect* , “[How Workers Can Demand Climate Justice](#)” . An article by Steve Payne reported on the broader community justice issues in the strike in “[Twin Cities Janitors and Guards Feature Climate and Housing in Their Strike Demands](#)” in *Labor Notes* (Feb. 20) .

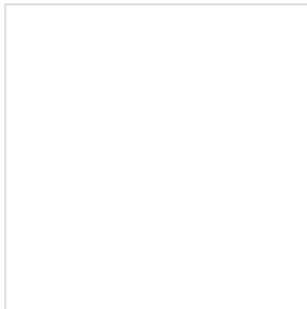
UPDATE:

Since Brecher’s article, the union has released [a press release](#) on March 14, announcing agreement with most employers and members’ approval of a contract which includes funding towards a Labor-Management Cooperation Fund for green education and training. Notably, given that these are the workers keeping airports and commercial buildings clean in the Covid-19 crisis, the agreement also provides for an increase for all full-time workers to six paid sick days by the second year of the contract.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [cleaners and janitors](#), [Climate Justice](#), [green bargaining](#), [green collective bargaining](#), [Green procurement](#), [Minneapolis](#), [Service Employees \(SEIU\)](#), [toxic chemicals](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Visions for green steel production in Canada and internationally

Posted on [March 6, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The [Canadian Steel Producers Association](#) released a “Climate Call to Action” for their industry on March 4 , with a goal to achieve net zero CO2 emissions by 2050. The [press release](#) calls that goal “the central plank” of their vision. More details are explained in a 19-page document, [Canada’s Steel Industry: A Sustainable Choice](#) , which states:

“Canada’s steel producers have the aspirational goal to achieve net-zero CO emissions by 2050. This means that we must significantly reduce net CO emissions including through removal or offsets. In order to achieve this aspirational goal, we need to work with stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, and government, to implement transformational changes and breakthrough technologies. This includes significant capital investments, public-private partnerships, and policies that support the industry during the transition.”

The Statement emphasizes technological breakthroughs and trade policy, and the words “workers”, “jobs” or “labour” do not appear anywhere. The most relevant section relates to operational efficiencies and manufacturing processes:

“We have also adopted process control technology and other innovative technologies, such as robotics, to improve our process reliability, production yields, and overall production efficiencies to reduce losses and the amount of energy used to produce each tonne of steel. However, there is limited room for further improvement based on existing technology. The adoption of new technologies to further advance and optimize steel manufacturing software control systems will continue to drive improvements in our sector.”

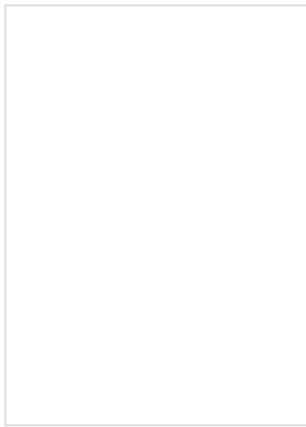
Internationally:

A useful and related report is ***Low and zero emissions in the steel and cement industries: Barriers, technologies and policies***, an Issue Paper prepared for the November 2019 OECD Green Growth and Sustainable Development Forum. The paper is meant for international audience, though its author, Chris Bataille, is a prominent researcher at Simon Fraser University as well as at the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI). He calls for an industry transition based on “well-designed policy packages and careful consultation with all parties involved and affected.” Specifically, regarding Just Transition, he states (p. 36) :

“To support change, we will need to make many modifications to existing institutions, and create new ones... A key element that is often overlooked is a transition plan for the management and labouring workforce, whose full support is required. This involves retraining for those already in the workforce, and redefinition of the curriculum in technical schools where electricians, pipefitters, heavy duty machinery specialists, etc. are trained. Oversight bodies are also required for the national transition plans, which have timetables of expected physical transitions against which they can measure progress and recommend policy adjustments and wholesale changes ... At present, the UK Climate Change Commission, which recommends five year carbon budgets and parliamentary advice as required, is the best practise example of a national oversight body. It has no statutory authority to change policy, as this is the prerogative of the British Parliament, but it can monitor progress and recommend changes.”

Notably, one of the “asks” of the Canadian Steel Producers Association **visioning document** is the creation of “a Canadian steel climate council with key government departments to monitor and report on the progress of the sector’s climate strategy, to share practices, to engage with other stakeholders, and to evolve the plan as new information and insights emerge”. (“Stakeholders” don’t include workers.)

Worldsteel, the global industry association, released its own position paper in 2020: ***Steel’s contribution to a low carbon future and climate resilient societies***, which emphasizes most of the same themes of technology, circular economy, energy efficiency, and a “level playing field” globally. Worldsteel also recently published the ***Sustainable Steel: Indicators 2019 and the steel supply chain***.



And from the U.K., academics at the University of Cambridge released ***Steel Arising: Opportunities for the UK in a transforming global steel industry*** in April 2019. The report was commissioned by **GREENSTEEL Council** which “promotes sustainable production methods and a revitalisation of engineering and the economy” in the UK. ***Steel Arising*** calls for greening by “moving away from primary production towards recycled steel made with sustainable power.” The report states: “Not only will this create long-term green jobs, it will lead to world-leading exportable skills and technologies and allow us to transform the highly valuable scrap that we currently export at low value, but should be nurturing as a strategic asset. With today’s grid we can do this with less than half the emissions of making steel with iron ore and with more renewable power in future this could drop much further.”

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction, steel industry, Trade Policy** | **Leave a reply**

Addressing environmental racism through legislation and through activism

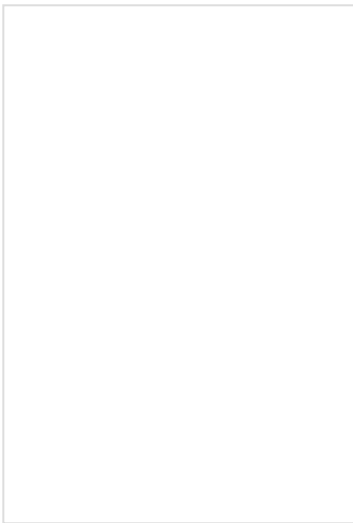
Posted on **March 2, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

Bill C-230, ***An Act respecting the Development of a National Strategy to Redress Environmental Racism*** is a private members bill introduced to the federal House of Commons on Feb. 26 by Nova Scotia MP Lenore Zann, seconded by Elizabeth May of the Green Party. The Bill calls on the government to develop a national strategy which will address the disproportionate number of Indigenous or racialized people who live in environmentally hazardous areas. If passed, the Bill would require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change “to consult with representatives of provincial and municipal governments, of Indigenous communities and of other affected communities, as well as with any other affected persons and bodies.” Further, the strategy must:

- (a) *examine the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk;*

- (b) collect information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards;
- (c) collect information and statistics relating to negative health outcomes in communities that have been affected by environmental racism;
- (d) assess the administration and enforcement of environmental laws in each province; and
- (e) address environmental racism including in relation to
 - (i) possible amendments to federal laws, policies and programs,
 - (ii) the involvement of community groups in environmental policy-making,
 - (iii) compensation for individuals or communities,
 - (iv) ongoing funding for affected communities, and
 - (v) access of affected communities to clean air and water.

Member of Parliament Zann had previously introduced **Bill 111, The Environmental Racism Prevention Act** in 2015, when she was a member of the provincial legislature



of Nova Scotia . An [article in Saltwire](#) (Feb. 28) explains how Nova Scotia has become a centre for research and action on environmental racism – led by the research of Dr. Ingrid Waldron of Dalhousie University. Dr. Waldron’s book, ***There’s Something in the Water***, was published by Fernwood Press in 2018 and has been turned into a **documentary** co-directed by Halifax-born star Ellen Page. In 2017, the **East Coast Environmental Law Association** proposed an innovative **Nova Scotia Environmental Bill of Rights** which states that the people “have a right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment”, and recognizes 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”.

Green is Not White

On the same day as Bill C-230 was introduced, Medium’s *Asparagus magazine* took up the issue of racism in the environmental movement. “**Too White to Solve the Climate Crisis?**” (Feb. 26) discusses the white elitism of the environmental movement, and offers the example of the **Green is Not White project**, which educates



trade unionists about environmental racism and advocates for the rights and inclusion of Black, Asian, and Indigenous workers in a zero-carbon economy. The Green is Not White project was begun in December 2016 by the Ontario branch of the **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU)**, led by Chris Wilson of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, in collaboration with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW). Its work engages community and labour activists in **workshops and participative research**, and has also been **highlighted in *Rabble.ca*** (Feb. 29) and in ***Our Times***.

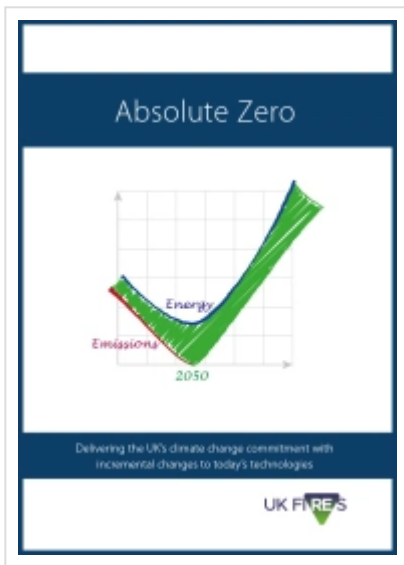
The Twitter account at [#EnvRacismCBTUACW](#) posts frequently, and the ACW website compiles previous articles, resources, videos, and handouts [here](#) – including descriptions of the workshops and free downloads of a **Workshop Guide**, a detailed (35-page) **Facilitator's Notes** and a **Presentation** which concludes with this statement:

“If Canada’s racialized and indigenous communities are not engaged in the struggle, the transition to a green economy will not be just. There can be no change without a struggle.”

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Environmental Justice, environmental racism, First Nations** | [Leave a reply](#)

UK researchers call for absolute zero reduction policy, greening of the steel industry

Posted on **February 28, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Absolute Zero , released by the University of Cambridge in November 2019, warns that the U.K. will not reach zero emissions by 2050 without significant changes to policies, industrial processes and individual lifestyle choices – including closing all airports in the UK by mid-century. (Perhaps the impact of this report can be seen in the [U.K. court ruling on February 27](#) that Heathrow airport’s third runway is a legal violation of the country’s climate change commitment under the Paris Agreement.) Although **Absolute Zero** was released in November 2019, it was [debated in the British House of Lords](#) on February 6 , and was the subject of a [Research Briefing by the House of Lords Library](#) in support of that debate.

The prestige of the authors also may have contributed to the impact of its ideas. They are members of **UK Fires** (UK Future Industrial Resource Efficiency Strategy), a research collaboration between the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Nottingham, Bath and Imperial College London, and funded by the UK’s Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. They contend that the UK should aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to absolute zero, rather than the “net zero” target specified in the Climate Change Act 2008 , and by the U.K. Committee on Climate Change in its report, **Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming** (May 2019) and its **2019 Report to Parliament of the U.K. Committee on Climate Change** (July 2019) .

Absolute Zero also parts company with the Committee on Climate Change in its view that emerging technologies will not be scalable in time to meet emissions targets by 2050. It builds its analysis on “today’s technologies”, striking an optimistic tone while calling for fundamental changes in individual behaviour, government policy, and industrial processes. Some excerpts

“We need to switch to using electricity as our only form of energy and if we continue today’s impressive rates of growth in non-emitting generation, we’ll only have to cut our use of energy to 60% of today’s levels....

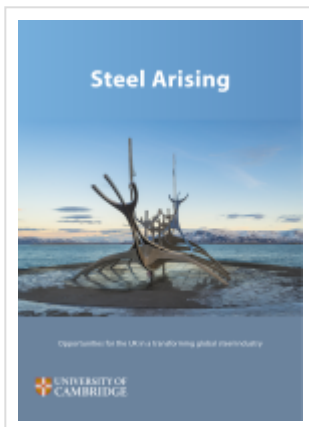
“The two big challenges we face with an all electric future are flying and shipping. Although there are lots of new ideas about electric planes, they won’t be operating at commercial scales within 30 years, so zero emissions means that for some period, we’ll all stop using aeroplanes. Shipping

is more challenging: although there are a few military ships run by nuclear reactors, we currently don't have any large electric merchant ships, but we depend strongly on shipping for imported food and goods....

"Absolute Zero creates a driver for tremendous growth in industries related to electrification, from material supply, through generation and storage to end-use. The fossil fuel, cement, shipping and aviation industries face rapid contraction, while construction and many manufacturing sectors can continue at today's scales, with appropriate transformations.....

"Committing to zero emissions creates tremendous opportunities: there will be huge growth in the use and conversion of electricity for travel, warmth and in industry; growth in new zero emissions diets; growth in materials production, manufacturing and construction compatible with zero emissions; growth in leisure and domestic travel; growth in businesses that help us to use energy efficiently and to conserve the value in materials.....

"Protest is no longer enough – we must together discuss the way we want the solution to develop; the government needs to treat this as a delivery challenge – just like we did with the London Olympics, ontime and on-budget; the emitting businesses that must close cannot be allowed to delay action, but meanwhile the authors of this report are funded by the government to work across industry to support the transition to growth compatible with zero emissions."



The **UK Fires** collaboration officially launched in October 2019. It is building on previous related research, including the April 2019 report **Steel Arising** which it highlights on the UK Fires website. **Steel Arising** envisions greening of the UK steelmaking industry by “moving away from primary production towards recycled steel made with sustainable power.” It states: “Not only will this create long-term green jobs, it will lead to world-leading exportable skills and technologies and allow us to transform the highly valuable scrap that we currently export at low value, but should be nurturing as a strategic asset. With today’s grid we can do this with less than half the emissions of making steel with iron ore and with more renewable power in future this could drop much further.”

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **air transportation industry, Climate change policy, electrification, Ghg emissions reduction strategies, greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, industrial strategy, shipping industry, steel industry, United Kingdom** | **Leave a reply**

Harvard scholars propose labour law reforms including the right to bargain over our shared environment

Posted on February 17, 2020 by elizabethperry493



Clean Slate for Worker Power: Building a Just Economy and Democracy is a far-reaching analysis and set of recommendations for labour law reform, released in January 2020 by the **Harvard Law School Labor and Worklife Program**. Its purpose is to offer “an intervention that promises to help stop the vicious, self-reinforcing cycle of economic and political inequality. By proposing a fundamental redesign of labor law, we aspire to enable working people to create the collective economic and political power necessary to build an equitable economy and politics.” The report – the result of discussions with 70 academics, union leaders, workers, activists and others over a period of two years – offers detailed and specific recommendations for changes to labour laws in the U.S., starting with the fundamental premise that “Labor law reform must start with inclusion to ensure that all workers can build power and to address systemic racial and gender oppression.” In its long list of recommendations comes basic freedoms such as the right to organize and protection from strikebreaking, as well as more innovative proposals for sectoral bargaining, worker representation on company boards, support for digital organizing and cyber-picketing – and of most interest to those working for environmental progress – this recommendation:

“Workers deserve a voice in the issues that are important to them and their communities....To ensure that workers can bargain over the corporate decisions that impact their lives, Clean Slate recommends that the new labor law: • Expand the range of collective bargaining subjects to include any subjects that are important to workers and over which employers have control,

including decisions about the basic direction of the firm and employers' impact on communities and our shared environment."

More detail comes on page 69, where the report states:

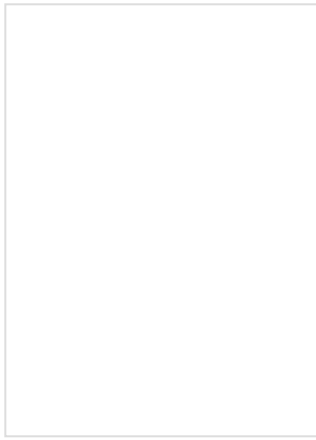
"Accordingly, and taking inspiration from the **Bargaining for the Common Good** movement, Clean Slate recommends that when an employer has influence beyond the workplace over subject matters that have major impacts on workers' communities, such as pollution and housing, the bargaining obligation ought to extend beyond the terms and conditions of employment and encompass these "community impact" subjects. Moreover, when bargaining over community impact subjects, the workers' organization involved in collective bargaining should have the right to bring community organizations—those with members and expertise in the relevant area—to the bargaining table. ... for example, the worker organization would be entitled to bring community environmental justice groups to bargain over pollution controls and abatement and to bring housing groups and tenants unions to bargain over affordable housing development."

Clean Slate for Worker Power is a project of Harvard Law School's Labor and Worklife Program, led by Professor Benjamin Sachs and Sharon Block, Executive Director, Labor and Worklife Program. The 15-page Executive Summary is [here](#) ; the 132-page full report is [here](#) . The report is summarized by noted labour journalist and author Steven Greenhouse in "**Overhaul US labor laws to boost workers' power, new report urges**" in *The Guardian* (Jan. 23), and also in "**Clean slate for worker power' promotes a fair and inclusive U.S. economy**" from the Washington Center for Equitable Growth (Jan. 29), which includes links to a range of academic articles related to the Clean Slate proposals. The authors are interviewed about the Clean Slate framework in a Harvard press release [here](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate Justice](#), [green bargaining](#), [green collective bargaining](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pollution](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. energy workforce will need 400,000 workers to reach net-zero emissions by 2050

Posted on **February 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The U.K. has a target of net-zero emissions by 2050. A new report, [***Building the Net Zero Workforce***](#), forecasts the likely employment and skills impacts of that goal for the energy industry, assuming that it will require a 50% increase in low carbon electricity generation; installation of low carbon heating systems in approximately 2.8 million homes; installation of 60,000 charging points to power 11 million electric vehicles (EVs); and development of carbon capture usage and storage technology as well as hydrogen networks – all by 2030.

To accomplish all this, the report projects that the energy industry will need to recruit for 400,000 jobs between 2020 and 2050 – 260,000 in new roles, and 140,000 to replace those who will be leaving in what is an anticipated retirement crunch. The report forecasts both time dimensions and regional needs, concluding that jobs will be available in all regions of the U.K. and for a diverse range of skills, “from scientists and engineers, to communications professionals and data specialists.” More specifically, “The roles included in this analysis are those involved in the operation, generation, transmission, distribution and retail of energy in the UK, as well as those in the supply chain related to building, upgrading, maintaining or operating infrastructure required to reach net zero.”

The report emphasizes the role of young people and a need to encourage women in STEM professions. In general, there is a need for training and re-training for the emerging technologies such as AI. The report notes, without details, that : “ By investing in retention and retraining, and working collaboratively with government and unions, the sector can help ensure a fair energy transition, one in which workers of all ages and backgrounds and from every community in the UK can play their part.”

The report was written by an independent research company, Development Economics, under a commission by [**National Grid**](#), a U.K. organization which owns and operates electricity transmission in parts of the U.K., and invests £7.5 million per year in training.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Labour Market Planning](#), [Retraining](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Sciences received 770% more funding than the social sciences for climate change research

Posted on **February 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A new and innovative study measures the problem of underfunded social science research into climate change. “**Misallocation of climate research funding**” addresses an important issue, since the social sciences seek to understand human and societal attitudes, norms, incentives, and policies – without which understanding, scientific facts seem insufficient to motivate change. The authors analyzed a new dataset of research grants awarded in 37 countries, including Canada, from 1950 to 2021- a database which represents a cumulative budget of \$1.3 trillion U.S. Included in the category of social sciences research grants were those relevant to the world of work: economics, sociology, business and management, psychology, and law.

The researchers report that:

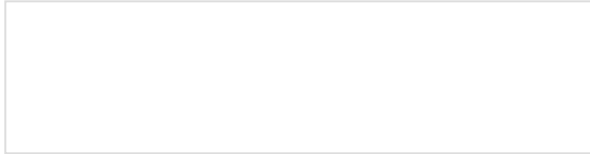
“Between 1990 and 2018, the natural and technical sciences received 770% more funding than the social sciences for research on issues related to climate change. Only 0.12% of all research funding was spent on the social science of climate mitigation.” Even the countries identified as spending the most on social science climate research in absolute terms—the UK, the USA, and Germany—spent between 500% and 1200% more on climate research in the natural and technical sciences than on social sciences.

The authors discuss the challenges and potential solutions to promote and improve social science research, including:

- Funding for climate mitigation needs to match the magnitude of the threat and the narrow window of opportunity for dealing with it.
- There is a need for better global coordination and oversight of funding for climate research....most obviously, this could reduce redundancy and serve as a mechanism for research teams to identify synergies and possible collaborators.
- More rigorous social science research is needed...the authors state “[Brandt et al.](#) noted that methods were often chosen based on familiarity or specialization of the researchers involved, rather than their suitability for a given research question.”
- Better alignment with emissions sources and trends... “Some of the funding for climate change-related social science research follows the thematic logic of natural science funding, which does not necessarily fit the social sciences.”
- Climate change is a global challenge, and therefore, the authors advocate the use of “the problem, challenge, or mission-based approach”. They use the example of one such project, the Global Challenges Research Fund in the United Kingdom, which asked “How can sustainable development be achieved for all while addressing global climate change?”. They

urge putting research into the context of challenging, “big picture” questions, to promote “focused but interdisciplinary social science work.”

“**Misallocation of climate research funding**” is available online now as an Open Access article, and will appear in print in the April 2020 issue of *Energy Research and Social Science*. It describes the details of the database analysis and lists the funding agencies from 37 countries, which included all major member states of the OECD, as well as Brazil, China, India, and Russia. The relatively few agencies listed from Canada are overwhelmingly science and health –related, with the notable exceptions of the Fonds de Recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC), the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (ACCFRC), and by far the largest, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC),

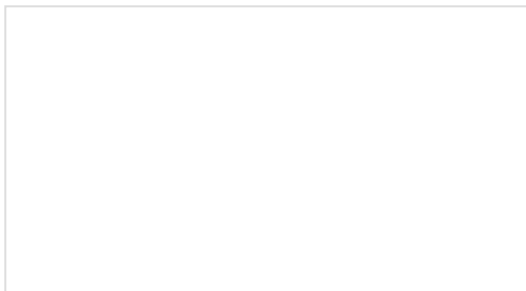


which funds the **Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW) research project**.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change research** | [Leave a reply](#)

Clean Energy B.C. : reports reflect little progress in jobs and training; new Climate Solutions Council appointed

Posted on **February 14, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



At the showcase Global 2020 conference in Vancouver on February 10, the government of British Columbia **released** the **2019 CleanBC Climate Change Accountability Report**, titled **Building a Cleaner, Stronger B.C.**. The report is a comprehensive summary of the policies under the **Clean BC plan**, especially focused on energy efficiency in the built environment, waste management, and electrification of transportation. Amongst the statistical indicators reported: The

carbon intensity of B.C's economy has gone down 19% over the last 10 years while jobs in the environmental and clean tech sectors have doubled. The report provides detailed emission forecasts and breakdowns by sector. Ironically, given the current Canada-wide protests in solidarity with the [Coastal GasLink dispute with the Wet'suwet'en people](#), Section 7 highlights co-operative relations with Indigenous People. Section 4 reports on the oil and gas industry.

Jobs and job training under Clean BC:

The [2019 Accountability Report](#) briefly mentions the “**CleanBC Job Readiness Plan**”, for which consultations were held for one month, in November 2019 (discussions archived [here](#)). It states: “Our job readiness plan will respond to feedback from stakeholders, assessments of labour market conditions and economic trends in a low-carbon economy—providing a framework for sector-specific actions and guiding investments in skills training. Consultations will continue into 2020.” The named sectors of interest are: clean buildings and construction, energy efficiency, transportation, waste management, sustainable tourism, sustainability education, and urban planning.

Indicators to measure “affordability, rural development, the clean economy and clean jobs, reconciliation and gender equality” are promised for future reports. Until then, there are no statistical measures of the impact of the CleanBC policies on jobs, incomes, or workers. In Appendix A, which summarizes current initiatives and their GHG emissions reduction impact, the category of “Economic Transition” does not measure jobs or income. Another sector-specific chart in Appendix A includes the category: “Helping people get the skills they need”, but it does not quantify how that would impact GHG emissions reduction, and consists of two entries: • “Develop programs like Energy Step Code training and certification, and Certified Retrofit Professional accreditation • Expand job training for electric and other zero-emission vehicles.” Elsewhere in the text, two programs are briefly highlighted: the new EV Maintenance Training Program at B.C. Institute of Technology, and the Sustainable energy engineering program at Simon Fraser University's Surrey campus. On page 64, the report highlights skills training programs for small business, citing the BC Tech Co-op Grant, (up to \$10,800 for hiring new coop students in clean tech).

Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council releases a final report and recommendations to end its mandate; New Climate Solutions Council appointed

The February 10 [government press release](#) also announced the appointment of a new Climate Solutions Council to act as an independent advisor, and to track progress on Clean BC Phase 2. The new Council replaces the Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council, which completed its 2-year mandate at the end of 2019 with the publication of a final report and recommendations, [here](#). While attention now shifts to the new Council, the detailed recommendations of the original Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council merit consideration – although they reflect a primary concern with business, and particularly natural resources (worth noting here: the Council was co-chaired by the Senior VP, Sustainability & External Affairs of Teck Resources – the same company whose controversial Frontier oil sands mine project in Alberta is awaiting a federal cabinet decision in February 2020.) The voice of labour comes through most clearly in the Recommendations regarding the proposed

Implementation Plan (p. 7), which calls for “ Stronger focus on just transition planning, including the Labour Readiness Plan: Government needs a stronger plan for labour readiness and adjustment. This would take the form of more funding and details regarding the assessment, timeline, output and desired outcomes, and the Ministry or Ministries responsible.” The Council also notes that “enduring support will necessitate ongoing engagement with Indigenous and nonIndigenous communities, industry, civil society, youth and young adults, organized labour, and utilities.”

The new **Climate Solutions Council** is Co-chaired by Merran Smith, executive director of Clean Energy Canada, and Colleen Giroux-Schmidt, vice-president of Corporate Relations, Innergex Renewable Energy Inc. Along with environmentalists, First Nations, and academics such as Marc Jaccard and Nancy Olewiler, the new Climate Solutions Council includes Labour representation by David Black, (President of MoveUP), and Danielle (DJ) Pohl , (President of the Fraser Valley Labour Council). Industry representatives include Tom Syer, (Head of Government Affairs , Teck Resources), Skye McConnell, (Manager of Policy and Advocacy, Shell Canada), and Kurt Niquidet, (Vice-President of the Council of Forest Industries). All members are listed and profiled [here](#) .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia, provincial climate change policies, Training** | [Leave a reply](#)

Toronto Labour Council’s new Plan of Engagement for Unions shares sample climate change resolutions

Posted on **February 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council approved its 2020-2022 Strategic Plan in November of 2019, as announced in [a press release](#) in January, and in full [here](#). Continuing the Labour Council’s longstanding leadership on climate justice, Plan item #3 is “Tackle climate change”, which states that the Labour Council will:

- Work to counter the efforts to sabotage climate action by polluters and conservative politicians, including their “carbon tax revolt” which is promoted by Conservative premiers and climate change deniers
- Establish a climate justice labour network
- Provide educational material to highlight the real cost of inaction by governments and businesses, and get young members engaged by using new, creative approaches
- Continue to work in coalition with key environmental organizations including youth and student-led groups

- Work with affiliates, local governments and school boards to adopt serious climate action policies
- Continue promoting the creation of Joint Labour-Management Environment Committees and ask affiliates to bargain for their establishment
- Help to popularize the key elements of a Green New Deal for All.



Putting these goals into action, the Labour Council hosted its **2nd Climate Justice Network Roundtable** on February 12. It also released a 3-page **Plan of Engagement for Unions** which includes the a sample climate change resolution for affiliate unions, and a sample resolution to take to convention. The sample resolution for affiliates is also published (page 17) in the Winter 2020 issue of the Labour Council's magazine, **Labour Action** .

The sample resolution asks affiliate unions to join the fight for climate justice through the following actions:

- Ask the employer to detail their plans to climate-proof the workplace;
- Bargain contract language on climate, and a union role in sustainability;
- Seek the establishment of Joint Workplace Environment Committees;
- Establish training programs for members to be actively involved in greening the workplace;
- Utilize an equity lens to ensure new job opportunities benefit all of our communities;
- Engage in campaigns for climate justice – including Just Transition legislation for workers and communities impacted by changes to a low-carbon economy;
- Support public services that deliver quality programs and good jobs while ensuring public control and operation.

Also in the Winter issue of **Labour Action** : a profile on page 16 of the many activities of the Labour Council's Labour Education Centre , which include a strong component of training programs for climate change literacy. In addition, the LEC has researched Just Transition experiences after closing of coal-fired electricity plants in Alberta, Australia and Ontario, and is publishing those results. Finally, LEC continues to support a Joint Labour Management Committee at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that has made a number of recommendations to dramatically decrease the GHG emissions in the Board.

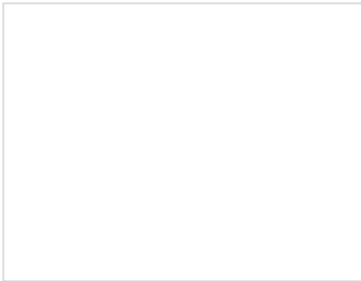
The Toronto and York Region Labour Council shares [climate justice resources](#) at a dedicated website, including social media shareables, links to articles and documents such as the pioneering 2016 [Greenprint](#), and all the documents mentioned above.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change resolutions](#), [labour union policies](#), [Toronto and York Region Labour Council](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Is the Just Transition fund in Europe's Green New Deal funded adequately?

Posted on **February 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Europe's landmark **Green New Deal** was unveiled on December 11 2019, but



criticisms abound over the structure, ambition, and particularly the funding. **“Question marks raised over scale of EU's new climate fund”** in *Euractiv* (Jan. 14) discusses the Just Transition Mechanism funding, and **“Commission warns of Green Deal failure if Transition Fund not well financed”** (February 12) states that the European president warned Members of the European Parliament that “she would ‘not accept’ any result that does not guarantee at least 25% of the budget devoted to the fight against global warming and to proper funding of a just transition for regions and workers.”

A more general criticism comes in **“The EU's green deal is a colossal exercise in greenwashing”**, an Opinion piece in *The Guardian* on February 7. Authors Yanis Varoufakis and David Adler compare the €1tn (over 10 years) allocated for the GND with an estimated €4.2tn spent to support the European financial sector after the 2008 recession. Furthermore, they state that the €1tn GND money “is mostly smoke and mirrors”...“composed of reshuffled money from existing EU funds and reheated promises to mobilise private-sector capital down the road.” As for the Just Transition mechanism itself, they state: “the deployment of just transition funding in the green deal is a pork-barrel payoff to rightwing governments that supported Von der Leyen's election and who she fears might throw a spanner into her signature proposal.” (*Euractiv* helps to explain this in **“Poland, Germany get largest slices of Just Transition Fund”**).

Yanis Varoufakis and David Adler are part of the [Democracy in Europe Movement 2025](#), a coalition of European scientists, activists and trade unionists. Their [Blueprint for Europe's Just Transition](#) outlines a strategy for a radical, activist pan-European movement for a Green New Deal: "The climate movement today — whether it takes the form of student strikes, Extinction Rebellion, or the Gilet Jaunes — has articulated a shared enemy: climate and environmental breakdown. But it has yet to come together to articulate a set of shared demands.... It advocates "channeling the energies of activists across the continent to clash with the institutions that sit at the Belgian capital — through strikes and sit-ins, occupations and demonstrations: the full arsenal of direct action and civil disobedience."

[The Blueprint](#) is built around three major actions: 1. Green Public Works: ("an investment programme to kickstart Europe's equitable green transition"); 2. an EU Environmental Union: ("a regulatory and legal framework to ensure that the European economy transitions quickly and fairly, without transferring carbon costs onto front-line communities"); and 3). an Environmental Justice Commission: ("an independent body to research and investigate new standards of 'environmental justice' across Europe and among the multinationals operating outside its borders").

Further, with emphasis on the democratic, grass-roots activism demanded:

.... This Blueprint provides a general framework for Europe's just transition, but it must be complemented by deliberation at the ground level to decide where the resources raised by the Green Public Works programme will be directed. No campaign, movement, union, NGO, or political party can devise a climate plan on its own; the People's Assemblies for Environmental Justice offer a common process by which to develop it.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [EU](#), [European Union](#), [Green New Deal Europe](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to engage your union in the fight for a Green New Deal

Posted on [February 13, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [January 2020 issue](#) of the Labor Network for Sustainability newsletter refers to a recent article, "[A Green New Deal can win even among Building Trades Unions](#)", which appeared in *The Jacobin* (Jan 30 2019). It is written by an IBEW tradesman who led a successful effort to pass a Green New Deal resolution at the 60th Annual Texas AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention. The author describes how he was inspired by a resolution from the Alameda California Central Labor Council, and how he moved his own resolution from that model to the one which passed in Texas. He outlines a process of internal discussion and education which created a broader resolution, and one which had to compromise by replacing the highly emotive term "Green New Deal" with "Federal Environmental Policy".

The article concludes:

“What does the labor-focused segment of the climate justice movement need to do next? First, we must repeatedly engage labor, from the local level on up to the national/international level, in as many places as we can — both through defined democratic processes like the one I experienced, as well in the rank-and-file space of our locals. The goal is not to simply push resolutions through, but to educate and build a base of support in the process....In order for the Green New Deal to move forward, it must become a standard demand from organized labor. The task for us now is to replicate this kind of effort at each and every one of our locals .”

The article is one of the latest written by unionists to instruct and inspire direct action. To cite a few: **“Calling All Union Members”** , in *The Trouble* (May 2019), which begins: “Teachers, construction workers, nurses, miners, frycooks—you have an indispensable role to play in the passage of the Green New Deal. Here are five concrete steps to take.” An earlier U.S. article by Nato Green **“Why Unions Must Bargain Over Climate Change”** appeared in *In these Times* (March 2019).

Labor Network for Sustainability maintains an ongoing compilation of **GND resolutions by U.S. unions**, and has written numerous articles. The WCR has written previously about union actions for a Green New Deal in both the U.S. and Canada, **here**.

Posted in **Uncategorized, United States** | Tagged **Green New Deal, labour union policies, United States** | **Leave a reply**

Fossil fuel and LNG subsidies in B.C., and an alternate viewpoint on the issue

Posted on **February 11, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) maintains an ongoing initiative, the **Global Subsidies Initiative** , to research fossil fuel subsidies worldwide. Their most recent publication relating to Canada is **Locked In and Losing Out: British Columbia’s fossil fuel subsidies**. The authors calculate that BC’s fossil fuel subsidies reached \$830 million Cdn. in 2017–2018, with no end in sight. Despite B.C.’s clean energy image, the report documents the significant new support granted by the current B.C. government to encourage the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry. **Locked In and Losing Out** calls for the provincial government to create a plan to phase-out its own subsidies, and coordinate with the federal government in its current **G20 Peer Review of fossil fuel subsidies**, launched in 2019 and administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada. In August 2019, the IISD also released its **Submission to Environment and Climate Change Canada’s Consultation on Non-Tax Fossil Fuel Subsidies**

, calling for Canada to re-affirm its long-standing G7 commitment to reform fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 and provide a detailed action plan to achieve the goal.



An alternate view

Sean Sweeney of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy takes an alternate view on fossil fuel subsidies in “**Weaponizing the numbers: The Hidden Agenda Behind Fossil-Fuel Subsidy Reform**” appearing in the January 2020 issue of *New Labor Forum*. As might be expected, Sweeney challenges the findings and assumptions of the International Monetary Fund (for example, in a **2019 working paper** by David Coady). He also takes issue with some progressive analysis – notably, he cites *Fossil Fuel to Clean Energy Subsidy Swaps: How to Pay for an Energy Revolution* (2019) and *Zombie Energy: Climate benefits of ending subsidies to fossil fuel production* (2017) – both published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). After a brief discussion of the main concepts, Sweeney concludes:

“For activists in the North, making fossil-fuel subsidies a key political target is a mistake. It buys into the IMF’s obsession with “getting energy prices right” which targets state ownership and regulation of prices. Such an approach may lead to a more judicious use of energy, but it would not address the mammoth challenges involved in transitioning away from fossil fuels, controlling and reducing unnecessary economic activity, or reducing emissions as expeditiously as possible.

The problem is fossil fuel dependency, not underpriced energy. Raising the price without alternative forms of low-carbon energy available for all will not produce the kind of emissions reductions the world needs. This does not mean that progressive unions and the left should support subsidies for fossil fuels—especially when the beneficiaries are large for-profit industrial users or billionaire Lamborghini owners cruising the strips in Riyadh or Shanghai. But there is a need to be aware of what the IMF and the subsidy reform organizations are proposing, and what these proposals might mean for workers and ordinary people, especially in the Global South.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia, Canada](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Liquified Natural Gas, LNG](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Transit Equity and Free Transit: addressing social justice, climate justice and workplace justice

Posted on **February 10, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Transit Equity Day in the United States was held on February 4 – a date chosen to honour Rosa Parks, whose refusal to yield her seat on a bus in 1955 was the catalyst in the U.S. struggle against the segregation of public transit. Now in 2020, Transit Equity Day’s main goal is “to promote environmentally-sustainable and affordable transit accessible to all, regardless of income, national origin, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, or ability,” and in all communities, rural or urban. In addition to social justice goals, it also promotes climate justice and workplace justice, calling for good, union jobs for transit workers and those who manufacture transit equipment, as well as a just transition for workers and communities in the transition to an electrified, non-polluting transit system. **Transit Equity Day is organized by the Labor Network for Sustainability**, in cooperation with environmental and labour groups already working to promote public transit – including the **Amalgamated Transit Union**, **Transport Workers of America**, **Connecticut Roundtable for Climate and Jobs**, Metropolitan Washington District AFL-CIO, and **Jobs to Move America**.

Transit Equity Day also supports the growing free public transit movement – described, with global case studies, in ***Free Public Transit: And Why We Don’t Pay to Ride Elevators***, a book published in Canada by Black Rose books in 2017. Since then, advocates have focused mainly on the social justice arguments: for example in “**Free and Accessible Transit Now: Toward A Red-Green Vision for Toronto**” (*Canadian Dimension*, May 10 2018). This continues to be the focus in the July 2019 call for free transit **by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 2**, representing Toronto Transit Commission workers, and **endorsed by CUPE**

Ontario. Also in a January 2020 **blog by the Amalgamated Transit Union in Canada** , which stated:

“....successful examples of fare free transit around the world demonstrate that this model of public transit service may not be radical or utopian. However, there are real concerns implementation of fare free transit.

ATU Canada advocates for fares to be affordable for all, and advocates for progress toward creating a fare-free transit. Incremental pricing actions (such as fare-freezes and reductions) are realistic in lieu of immediate fare-free transit subsidized by government. In our advocacy, we prioritize efforts to eliminate cost barriers to accessing jobs, education, health care, and other services, through the implementation of low-income passes. A gradual approach to fare reduction is sorely needed in many municipalities across Canada, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that transit is safe, reliable, and affordable for all.”

Free transit and climate change

The Richochet published two articles which marry concern for social justice with the well-established environmental benefits of transit over cars: **“Advocates say decommodified housing and free transit needed to fight climate emergency”** (Oct.9) describes activism in Montreal, and **“Free public transit is key to any Green New Deal worthy of the name”** (Oct. 19) which is an overview of the growing activism Canada-wide. **“The case for free public transit in Toronto”** in *Now Magazine* (Dec. 2019) only begins to discuss the fraught transit politics in Toronto. In December 2019, members of the Free Transit Edmonton movement published an Opinion piece: **“Make transit free for the sake of our climate and community”** in the *Edmonton Journal*. For a recent U.S. summary, see **“Should Public Transit Be Free? More Cities Say, Why Not?”** in the *New York Times* (Jan. 14).

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Environmental Justice, free transit, labour union policies, Transit Policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

Green Jobs Oshawa still fighting for GM plant conversion; EV investment goes to Detroit-Hamtramck plant

Posted on **February 7, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



An article by former CAW Research Director Sam Gindin appeared in The Socialist Project newsletter *The Bullet* on Feb. 3. “**Realizing ‘Just Transitions’: The Struggle for Plant Conversion at GM Oshawa**” describes the ongoing work of **Green Jobs Oshawa** to fight back against the closure of the GM Oshawa plant with a proposal to convert the plant to electric vehicle manufacture. Green Jobs Oshawa commissioned an economic study in 2019, ***The Triple Bottom Line Feasibility Study*** which estimated that the plant conversion could create 13,000 jobs with modest government investment and a worker ownership model. Gindin’s new article seeks to explain why the **Green Jobs Oshawa** campaign hasn’t succeeded yet, and suggests new thinking and new roles for workers, Unifor at the local and national level, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the government. (A related, good-news article, “**The man of wind, water and sun**” in *Corporate Knights* (Jan. 16) profiles Toronto lawyer Brian Iler and describes his efforts, along with the **Canadian Worker Co-op Federation** to retool GM Oshawa. Iler is described as “the creative legal mind behind a host of cutting-edge renewable energy projects, social ventures and co-ops that have challenged received wisdom.”)



In the meantime, on January 27, General Motors announced “**Detroit-Hamtramck to be GM’s First Assembly Plant 100 Percent Devoted to Electric Vehicles**” , promising creation of 2,200 jobs. Production of an all-electric pick-up truck will start as soon as late 2021, to be followed by an all-electric Cruise Origin self-driving shuttle, and an electric Hummer. Like Oshawa GM, the Detroit Hamtramck plant had been slated for closure, but the corporate press release states that GM will invest \$2.2 billion in the U.S. plant and an additional \$800 million in supplier tooling and other projects. Encouraged by favourable tax treatment by the state, GM has committed more than \$2.5 billion toward electric vehicle manufacturing in Michigan since Fall 2018 – recent news of GM’s corporate push to electric vehicles appears in *The Detroit Free Press* in “**GM bids to buy land for a new battery factory in Lordstown**” (Jan. 15) ; “**GM commits to \$2.2 billion investment and 2,200 jobs at Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly** ” (Jan. 27) and in the *New York Times*, “**G.M. Making Detroit Plant a Hub of Electric and A.V. Efforts**” (Jan. 27).

Canadians are trying to find a silver lining, as reported by the *Windsor Star* newspaper in “**GM’s first all-electric vehicle plant in Detroit will have Canadian spillover benefits**” . The article quotes the president of Canada’s Automobile Parts Manufacturing Association: “if GM meets the volume expectations of the vehicles in the Hamtramck re-launch, Southwestern Ontario suppliers may pull in up to 30 per cent of the content opportunities that will arise.”

Posted in **Green Economy, Uncategorized** | Tagged **auto manufacturing, Electric Vehicles, General Motors, GM Oshawa, Just Transition, plant closings** | **Leave a reply**

Which Canadian companies rank as Sustainable or as Clean Tech innovators?

Posted on **February 7, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



Canadian magazine *Corporate Knights* recently published the 2020 edition of its annual **Global 100**, which ranks the 100 most sustainable corporations in the world. This **overview article** describes the environmental and social responsibility indicators which are considered in the rankings, including average CEO pay ratio, the number of women on their boards and female executives, linking executive compensation to targets related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and “the carbon-productivity measure” of revenue per tonne of CO2 emitted. The **ranked list** is topped by Orsted of Denmark (formerly DONG (Danish Oil and Natural Gas) – profiled **here**. The top-ranked Canadian corporation, at 10th position, is **Algonquin Power & Utilities Corp.**, which describes itself as: “a growing renewable energy and regulated utility company with assets across North America. The Corporation acquires and operates green and clean energy assets including hydroelectric, wind, thermal, and solar power facilities, as well as sustainable utility distribution businesses (water, electricity and natural gas) through its two operating subsidiaries: Liberty Power and Liberty Utilities.” The Global 100 issue also include general articles which focus on Canadian sectors: “**Hydro-Quebec plugs into China’s EV push**”; “**The EV Revolution will take batteries, but are they ethical**” ; “**Financing our future with a green building bonanza**”, and “**The ultimate guide to responsible investing**”.

The **Global Cleantech 100** report, published in San Francisco, is an industry-based annual ranking of private companies judged “most likely to make significant market impact globally over the next five to ten years.” An Expert Panel of cleantech investors reviewed over a thousand possible private companies and selected 100, of which 12 are Canadian. Although U.S.

companies dominate the list, the twelve Canadians which were judged to be global leaders are : **Axine** industrial waste-water technologies ; **Carbicrete** in Montreal (cement-free, carbon free concrete); **Carbon Engineering** in Calgary (Developer of technologies for the capture of carbon dioxide at industrial scale); **Carbon Cure** of Dartmouth N.S., (manufactures a technology for concrete producers that introduces recycled CO2 into fresh concrete); **Ecobee** ,developer of Wifi smart thermostats for home and commercial applications; **Enbala** (provider of demand side energy management systems); **GaN Systems** of Ottawa (Developer of gallium nitride (GaN) semiconductors); **LiCycle** of Mississauga (developer of lithium ion battery recycling technology); **Minesense** of Vancouver (developer of sensor technology for mine operation) ; **OpusOne** of Richmond Hill Ontario (developer of optimization solutions for distributed electricity grid systems) ; **Semios** of Vancouver (Developer of precision crop management systems); and **Svante** of Burnaby B.C. (commercial scale carbon capture).

More innovative Canadian companies are profiled at the website of **Sustainable Development Technology Canada**, an arms-length agency overseen by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry . On January 15, the Minister announced government investment of \$46.3 million in 14 start-up cleantech companies. The list of companies is provided in the [press release](#).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [carbon capture and storage](#), [Clean Technology](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change and health: U.K. National Health Service launches new campaign for greener health care; more medical associations divest from fossil fuels

Posted on **February 6, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

England's National Health Service (NHS) is the country's largest employer with 1.3 million staff, and its operations are responsible for approximately 4-5% of England's carbon footprint. On January 25, the Chief executive officer of the NHS **announced** a new campaign to tackle the global climate change health emergency through a greener health care system. A [website for the new campaign](#), "For a Greener NHS", focuses on a goal of a net zero national health service, with an Expert Panel to compile experiences and make recommendations in an interim report due in summer 2020, and a final report scheduled for Fall 2020. In the meantime, the Greener NHS campaign will encourage such initiatives as switching from coal or oil-fired boilers to renewable heat sources for buildings; switching to less polluting anaesthetic gases and better asthma

inhalers in treatment; and introducing technological solutions to reduce the number of patient visits and travel miles.

Another part of the initiative is a grassroots campaign for front-line workers, supported by the [UK Health Alliance on Climate Change](#) – which includes representative bodies covering over 650,000 NHS staff, including the union UNISON . The NHS [press release](#) quotes UNISON:

“Involving staff is crucial if the NHS is to help the UK meet its emissions targets in good time. They know more than anyone how the health service ticks and so are best placed to make practical green suggestions to get the NHS to where it needs to be.” Examples of existing staff-oriented programs are described in case studies : reducing the use of [disposable plastic gloves](#); an [electric bike courier system](#) for delivery of medical and laboratory samples; and a [sustainable travel initiative](#) to encourage staff use of transit, shuttle buses, bicycles and walking for journeys to work.

British medical associations and organizations are also acting at the societal level. In January, the prestigious British Medical Journal (BMJ) published an editorial: [“Investing in humanity: The BMJ’s divestment campaign”](#) , which calls on individuals and organizations to act immediately, stating: “Divestment offers health professionals and medical organisations, for the duty is both individual and collective, an opportunity to influence politicians and industry towards behaviours that are better for the planet and people’s health.” While urging divestment, the BMJ states: ” we will not accept advertising or research funded by companies that produce fossil fuels. We will also explore how else our business might be dependent on fossil fuel companies and take steps to end any such reliance. The BMA has no direct holdings in tobacco or fossil fuel companies.” (Note that The Guardian newspaper in the U.K. also announced in February 2020 that [it will ban any fossil fuel advertising](#).) According to a [press release from the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change](#), six constituent groups of the Alliance have announced an intention, or are already divesting, from fossil fuels: the [British Medical Association](#), the [Royal College of General Practitioners](#), the [Faculty of Public Health](#), the [Royal College of Emergency Medicine](#) and the [Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health](#), and in January 2020, the [Royal College of Physicians](#) . The [Canadian Medical Association](#) has also divested from fossil fuels.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [health care professionals](#), [Hospitals](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian doctors call for moratorium on fracking for gas

Posted on [January 30, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On January 29, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) [released](#) a report which documents the serious health and environmental dangers associated with fracked natural gas, calling for the phase-out of existing fracking operations and a moratorium on any new

fracking projects. CAPE also calls for Just Transition plans to help workers and the communities which would be affected. Canada is the world's fourth largest producer of natural gas, and in 2018, 71% of that was "fracked gas", mostly produced in northeastern British Columbia. *The Narwhal* offers a good (though now dated) [explainer about fracking in Canada](#), and offers [several in-depth articles](#), including "[Potential health impacts of fracking in B.C. worry Dawson Creek physicians](#)" (April 2019). *The Narwhal* has also published recent articles by [Ben Parfitt](#) of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C., who has also written extensively about fracking and LNG in B.C. Most recently, [Peace River Frack-up](#) was released by CCPA-BC in January, calling for an immediate ban on fracking activity for operations close to BC Hydro's two existing Peace River dams and the Site C dam, because of the risk of dam failure from fracking-caused earthquakes.

The CAPE report, [Fractures in the Bridge: Unconventional \(Fracked\) Natural Gas, Climate Change and Human Health](#) documents the environmental and climate change impacts of fracking, with an over-riding concern about the significant health dangers, especially for communities and workers. The report notes: "Data from the US show that the risk of death among workers in this sector is two-and-a half-times higher than the risk for workers in construction and seven times higher than the risk for industrial workers as a whole." "[America's Radioactive Secret](#)" is a troubling article which appeared in *Rolling Stone* on January 21, summarizing a journalistic investigation of the unregulated trucking of fracking waste: "Oil-and-gas wells produce nearly a trillion gallons of toxic waste a year. An investigation shows how it could be making workers sick and contaminating communities across America."

[Fractures in the Bridge](#) provides a Canadian perspective on the overwhelming evidence from established studies which have reported "negative health outcomes including adverse birth outcomes, birth defects including congenital heart defects and neural tube defects, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, dermal effects, gastrointestinal symptoms, neurological effects, psychological impacts and respiratory illnesses." [Fractures in the Bridge](#) also provides a very complete bibliography as well as an appendix showing how fracking is regulated in each province in Canada.

An important related source of information, updated in 2019, is the [Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking \(Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction\)](#), published by the Concerned Health Professionals of New York (CHPNY) and Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [BC LNG](#), [British Columbia](#), [Fracking](#), [Fracking Moratorium](#), [LNG](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Amazon employees lay their jobs on the line to protest how Big tech

enables Big oil

Posted on **January 29, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



Updated on February 18 re the announcement of the Bezos Earth Fund.

Amazon workers have risen up again, at the risk of their own jobs. “**Defying Company Policy, Over 300 Amazon Employees Speak Out**” in *Wired* (Jan.27) was one of many media articles about the most recent incident in the employees’ campaign for climate action. A new protest stems from Amazon’s communication policy which threatened to fire employees who speak out to the public about climate change without company authorization. (A *Washington Post* article of January 2 summarizes all that). In response, as **detailed in Wired**, 363 Amazon employees intentionally violated that company policy by signing their names to posts about their own opinions and experiences. The **posts were compiled by Medium** on January 26. The protest was organized by the activist group Amazon Employees for Climate Justice (AECJ) which posted **an explanation** on their Facebook page, stating that employees feel a “moral responsibility to speak up”. It continues:

“The protest is the largest action by employees since Amazon began threatening to fire workers for speaking out about Amazon’s role in the climate crisis. It signals that employees are convinced that the only right thing to do at this time is to keep speaking up. AECJ has continued to call on Amazon to commit to zero emissions by 2030, stop developing AWS products and services to accelerate oil and gas extraction, and end funding of climate-denying politicians, lobbyists, and think tanks.”

UPDATE:

On February 17, Jeff Bezos, billionaire owner of Amazon, announced the creation of the Bezos Earth Fund, which will provide \$10 billion in grants to scientists and activists to fund their efforts to fight climate change. The announcement was made on Instagram and **reported by the Washington Post**, which Bezos also owns. Amazon Employees for Climate Justice reacted with

this statement :

This morning, Jeff Bezos announced he is donating \$10 billion to his new "Earth Fund." Following that news, Amazon Employees for Climate Justice issued the following statement:

"The international scientific community is very clear: burning the oil in wells that oil companies already have developed means we can't save our planet from climate catastrophe.

As history has taught us, true visionaries stand up against entrenched systems, often at great cost to themselves. We applaud Jeff Bezos' philanthropy, but one hand cannot give what the other is taking away. The people of Earth need to know: When is Amazon going to stop helping oil & gas companies ravage Earth with still more oil and gas wells? When is Amazon going to stop funding climate-denying think tanks like the Competitive Enterprise Institute and climate-delaying policy? When will Amazon take responsibility for the lungs of children near its warehouses by moving from diesel to all-electric trucking?

Why did Amazon threaten to fire employees who were sounding the alarm about Amazon's role in the climate crisis and our oil and gas business? What this shows is that employees speaking out works--we need more of that right now. Will Jeff Bezos show us true leadership or will he continue to be complicit in the acceleration of the climate crisis, while supposedly trying to help?"

Their statement shows that AECJ is not letting up on the link between Amazon and Big Oil, and also, not letting up. Follow them on Twitter at @AMZNforClimate.

"Why did Amazon threaten to fire employees who were sounding the alarm about Amazon's role in the climate crisis and our oil and gas business? What this shows is that employees speaking out works--we need more of that right now."

Big Tech and Big Oil?

Although a general perception might be that Amazon need only reduce packaging or improve logistics to reduce transportation-related emissions, there is another big climate-related issue raised by Amazon Employees for Climate Justice. As noted briefly in Vox on January 3: **"Google and Amazon are now in the oil business"** (Jan. 3) explaining that "big tech companies are developing AI for oil companies, even as they publicly celebrate their sustainable initiatives." A much more detailed explanation appears in **"Amazon's New Rationale For Working With Big Oil: Saving the Planet"** in *Motherboard* (Jan. 10) .

This is all happening in plain sight. Amazon itself describes its **"Digital Oilfields"** on its own website, and **"Cenovus joins Big Oil's push into Big Data with Amazon and IBM deals"** appeared in the *Financial Post* in November 2019, giving insight into how data-driven oil and gas is growing in Canada. And Suncor boasts in a November 2019 press release from Calgary, **"Suncor accelerates digital transformation journey through strategic alliance with Microsoft"**, quoting Microsoft's president: "Suncor is embarking on a journey to transform the energy industry. They are creating new business value for their customers, empowering and upskilling their workforce, and innovating for a sustainable future".

U.S. cities are training young workers for clean energy jobs

Posted on **January 29, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The American Council for and Energy-Efficient Economy released their **2019 City Clean Energy Scorecard** in the summer of 2019 , surveying and ranking clean energy policies amongst U.S. cities. Workforce development programs were included in the survey, and the report found that 37 out of 75 cities surveyed had clean energy workforce development programs, many in partnerships with utilities, non-profits, colleges, and others. The programs include clean energy and energy efficiency job training directed at traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as clean energy contracting programs promoting minority- or women-owned businesses.

In January 2020, the ACEEE released an update in a Topic Brief titled **Cities and Clean Energy Workforce Development** . It offers an overview of best practices, along with brief case studies of Orlando, Florida and Chattanooga, Tennessee. An accompanying blog, "**How are US cities prepping workers for a clean energy future?**" summarizes other equity-driven initiatives – for example: the Work2Future program in San Jose California which trains young adults from disadvantaged populations in energy-efficient building construction, achieving an 82% job placement rate; and Birmingham, Alabama, which offers energy efficiency training opportunities to Minority Business Enterprise contracting partners.

The blog and Topic Brief update a larger 2018 ACEEE report, **Through the Local Government Lens: Developing the Energy Efficiency Workforce**, available from [this link](#) (free, but registration required). Even more information is available from an ongoing ACEEE database, **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Workforce Development** , which lists cities by name and provides descriptions of their programs.



— From the ACEEE at <https://aceee.org/blog/2020/01/how-are-us-cities-prepping-workers>

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Clean Energy**, **energy efficiency**, **renewable energy**, **Skilled Workers**, **Training** | [Leave a reply](#)

Launch of Canadian Institute for Climate Choices promises “rigorous research and original analysis”

Posted on **January 28, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Canadian Institute for Climate Choices** was launched on January 21 – described in their own **press release** as an independent national institute with an aim “to establish a strong foundation for decision-making on climate change policies.” CBC commentator **Aaron Wherry** likens the new body to the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), disbanded by the Harper government in 2013.

Supported by \$20 million funding over 5 years from the federal government, the Institute promises to “Produce rigorous research, original analysis and evidence-based insight”. It will do this through engagement with experts, business and policy leaders, as well as Canadians – and by cultivating a national network of experts from a range of disciplines.

Those experts are currently organized into three **Expert Panels**, to write and conduct peer review of the promised three research reports per year. Members named so far include: Dale Beugin, Alain Bourque, Don Drummond, Stewart Elgie, Blair Feltmate, Kathryn Harrison, Sara Hastings-Simon, Glenn Hodgson, Mark Jaccard, Richard Lipsey, James Meadowcroft, Nancy Olewiler, and Nic Rivers.



The launch of the Institute was accompanied by a report, *Charting our Course*, which uses the extended metaphor of Canada as a ship navigating to safety on the stormy seas of climate change, and requiring “all hands on deck” to reach a safe destination. It is offered as a starting point for discussion, and includes a new analytical framework, visualized in the accompanying diagram (left).

Charting our Course makes four recommendations:

#1: Canadian governments should broaden objectives for climate policy – which acknowledges that all levels of government are involved, and their policy design needs “to go beyond the narrow lenses of mitigation, adaptation, and clean growth”... By linking objectives more directly to the welfare of Canadians, this approach can also build a broader coalition of support for action.”

#2: Canadian governments should embrace Canada’s role in global outcomes.

#3: Canadian governments should expand the scope, scale, and pace of climate policies. (“This means expanding the coverage of policies across regions, issues, and sectors, ramping up the

magnitude of change, and tightening the timeframe for achieving results.”)

#4: Those analysing and developing policy options should seek out integrated solutions that drive multiple benefits.

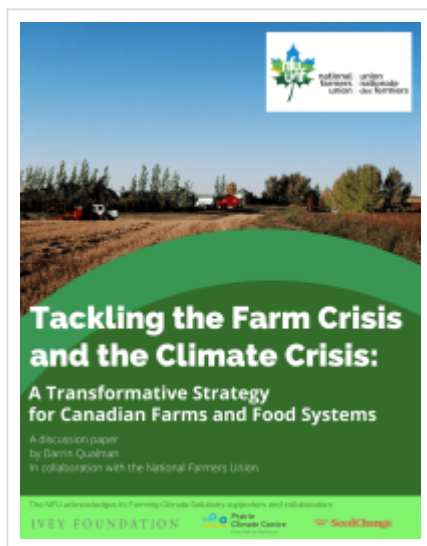
Although funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Institute will operate independently, overseen by an eleven-member Board of Directors – including former Privy Council Clerk Mel Cappe, former Ecofiscal Commission Chair Chris Ragan, Dave Collyer, former president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Bruce Lourie, now President of the Ivey Foundation, and Sybil Seitzinger, Executive Director, Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions. A separate Advisory Council includes Catherine Abreu, Executive Director of the Climate Action Network – Réseau action climat (CAN-Rac) Canada.

The Institute has already released [six blogs](#) to flesh out the general statements. More details also appear in articles [in the National Observer](#), the [Toronto Star](#), the [CBC](#), and [The Energy Mix](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

National Farmers Union recommends mixed farming systems to reduce GHG emissions

Posted on **January 20, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Agriculture generates about eight per cent of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions. In November 2019, the National Farmers Union of Canada released what they characterize as “one of the most

comprehensive analyses of the linkages between agriculture and climate change written to date in Canada.” [***Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis: A Transformative Strategy for Canadian Farmers and Food Systems***](#) “considers both the impacts of the climate crisis on agriculture and the realities of the vulnerable financial situation of farm families.” Consumer demand and expectation for cheap food works against small farmers and can drive them into bankruptcy – a concern which runs throughout the report (and is documented in a statistical appendix). A [**CBC Edmonton article**](#) emphasizes the fine line of profitability for farmers, and “[**The fight against climate change down home on an Alberta farm**](#)” at CBC Calgary summarizes the NFU recommendations, with a human face.

[***Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis***](#) states that “the farm crisis and the climate crisis share many of the same causes, and many of the same solutions. It concludes that the most impactful way to cut agriculture-related GHG emissions in half by 2050 would be to move away from the agribusiness model to “mixed-farming systems that utilize natural nutrient cycles, diverse animal and plant mixes and best-possible grazing methods to restore soils, raise carbon levels, protect water, enhance biodiversity and support sustainable livelihoods.” The report also considers specifics such as the optimal design of a carbon tax for farmers; use of biofuels and electrification; on-farm renewable power generation; and more efficient use of technology for farm production.

Agriculture’s role in climate change is a complex topic, and it should be noted that the National Farmers Union does not speak for all Canadian farmers – for example, their positions differ from those of the [**Canadian Federation of Agriculture**](#) and the [**Ontario Federation of Agriculture**](#) . Recent publications to help understand the global issues and impacts include: the 2019 IPCC 6th Climate Assessment Report [***Climate Change and Land***](#) and [***Creating a Sustainable Food Future***](#) , by the World Resources Institute (WRI) in partnership with the World Bank, UN Environment Programme , UN Development Programme , and France’s Agricultural Research for Development and National Institute for Agricultural Research .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Agriculture](#), [Farmers](#), [Sustainable Agriculture](#) | [1 Reply](#)

New Roadmap for German coal phase-out includes worker payments till 2043

Posted on [January 20, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

After intensive negotiations, on January 16 the German government, its coal mining states and several major utilities agreed on a roadmap for shutting down the country’s lignite-fired power plants, making Germany the first country in the world with an actual plan to end both nuclear and coal-fired power production. Most critics say that the roadmap deadline of 2038 is too slow,

although it adheres to the deadline recommended by Germany's [Coal Exit Commission](#) in 2019. Analysts also criticize an exception which allows a new coal-fired power plant – Datteln 4 – to come online in summer 2020. ([Activists pledge to oppose it](#)). A [summary of the agreement](#) is provided by *Clean Energy Wire*, as well as in [“Bye Bye Lignite: Understanding Germany’s Coal Phase-out”](#) in *Deutsche Welle* (Jan. 16), or [“How Hard Is It to Quit Coal? For Germany, 18 Years and \\$44 Billion”](#) in the New York Times (Jan. 16) . Reaction to the plan appears in [“Hambach Forest: Germany’s sluggish coal phaseout sparks anger”](#) in *Deutsche Welle* which states that, although the iconic Hambach forest will be saved, activists and local residents are “appalled” because surrounding villages will not. General reactions from German media appear in English in [“‘Historic compromise’ or ‘pact of unreason’? – media reactions to Germany’s coal exit deal”](#) (Jan. 17).

An estimated 20,000 people are employed in Germany’s lignite industry — of which 15,000 work in open-pit mines and 5,000 in lignite power plants. For them, adjustment payments (not yet quantified) will be provided until 2043, following the pattern of provisions for workers in the hard coal sector phase-out which ended in 2018. The coal workers’ union, Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau, Chemie, Energie (IG BCE), said the agreement would “set the benchmark” for a socially acceptable and climate-friendly transformation and would “lay the groundwork for linking social and climate justice.” The leader of the IG BCE stressed that the phase-out roadmap has to be complemented by a “phase-in roadmap” for renewables, which needs to be done urgently.

In addition to billions in compensation to the utility companies such as giant RWE, there are to be support payments for the affected states of Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia – a total of 14 billion euros until 2038 for direct investments in the regions, and another 26 billion euros provided by the federal government for “further measures” to strengthen local economies.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [coal transition](#), [Germany](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Labour working for a Green New Deal in Canada and the U.S.

Posted on [January 17, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Updated on January 20 to include Naomi Klein’s new article, “Care and Repair: Left Politics in the Age of Climate Change” in Dissent (Winter 2020 issue).



In the January 2020 issue of *Our Times* magazine, “**Save this House: A Green New Deal for Canada, Now!**” provides an overview of Canadian labour’s initiatives around a Green New Deal. It highlights the on-the-ground activism of two unionists: Tiffany Balducci, (CUPE member, president of the Durham Region Labour Council and in that role, part of the **Green Jobs Oshawa** coalition seeking to re-purpose the shuttered General Motors plant for socially beneficial manufacturing) and Patricia Chong, (member of the **Asian Canadian Labour Alliance** and co-facilitator of the “**Green is Not White**” **environmental workshops** which are co-sponsored by the ACW research project).

Asked to define and envision what the Green New Deal will look like, Chong states:

“If the climate crisis is defined as a problem where we need to move money from greenhouse-gas producing industries to non-GHG producing industry, then the answer is to move the money around. If the climate crisis is defined more broadly as a problem that also includes environmental racism, Indigenous genocide, and capitalism, then the solution is also going to be very different. When we talk about a Green economy, we do not want to replicate the inherent inequities we already have.”

The article also names the unions which support a Green New Deal for Canada: “Unifor, Amalgamated Transit Union, British Columbia Teachers Federation, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and CUPE Ontario. The article concludes with a reference to the Private Member’s Motion on a Green New Deal for Canada, introduced in the new 43rd session of Parliament by Peter Julian, the NDP Member of Parliament for New Westminster-Burnaby British Columbia. His **motion**, introduced on December 5, defines a Green New Deal as a 10-year national mobilization to: • reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions • create millions of secure jobs• invest in sustainable infrastructure and industry • promote justice and equity for Indigenous peoples and all “frontline and vulnerable communities.” Specifically concerning GND jobs, it calls for :

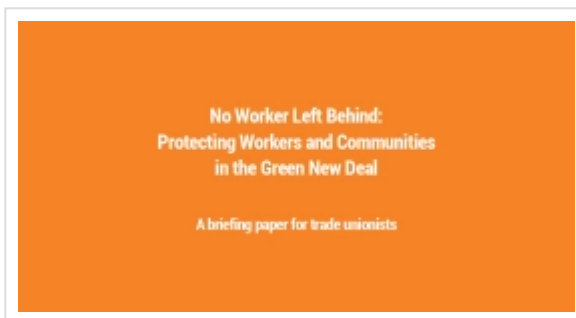
.....(vii) ensuring that the Green New Deal mobilization creates high-quality union jobs that pay prevailing wages, hires local workers, offers training and advancement opportunities, and guarantees wage and benefit parity for workers affected by the transition, (viii) guaranteeing a job with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations, and retirement security to all Canadians, (ix) strengthening and protecting the right of all workers to organize, unionize, and collectively bargain free of coercion, intimidation, and harassment, (x)

strengthening and enforcing labour, workplace health and safety, antidiscrimination, and wage and hour standards across all employers, industries, and sectors, (xi) enacting and enforcing trade rules, procurement standards, and border adjustments with strong labor and environmental protections to stop the transfer of jobs and pollution overseas, and to grow domestic manufacturing in Canada.... More details are at the [Our Time website](#) ; Julian was one of the candidates endorsed by Our Time in Canada's 2019 federal election.



The youth-led organization Our Time exists to campaign for a Green New Deal. An overview of their approach appears in **“The future is in our hands— not theirs”** in the January/February issue of CCPA’s *The Monitor* (pages 22- 23). Written by two Manitoba organizers from the Our Time campaign , it includes the youth-led actions of Canada’s Fridays for Future climate strikers, and focuses on the Our Time campaign in the West. The authors conclude: “Our Time and the CCPA-Manitoba recognize the need to build stronger relationships with the Indigenous community and beyond. We know that any struggle for a Green New Deal must take direction from those who are most dispossessed by fossil capitalism and most exposed to climate change. We do not wish to reproduce in our organizing spaces the undemocratic relationships of exploitation that have gotten us to this point. We need to unlearn the oppressive practices we frequently deploy, often unconsciously, even when our hearts are in the right place.”

Green New Deal proposals in the U.S.:



In late December 2019, Labor Network for Sustainability released its latest paper regarding the Green New Deal: a briefing paper written by Jeremy Brecher , ***No Worker Left Behind: Protecting Workers and Communities in the Green New Deal*** . From the introduction: “This paper aims to identify policies that could be actionable by GNDs at national and state levels.... It focuses only on: “GND policies specifically designed to protect workers and communities whose jobs and livelihoods may be adversely affected by deliberate managed decline of fossil fuel burning and other GND policies.” The document does not endorse one plan over the other – the purpose is to identify and inform trade unionists so that they can make their own determinations.

No Worker Left Behind includes relevant excerpts from the following U.S. plans: • Colorado Just Transition law • Center for Biological Diversity Presidential Action Plan • Washington State Initiative 1631 • Senator Bernie Sanders “The Green New Deal – Sanders Details” • Governor Jay Inslee “Community Climate Justice Plan,” adopted by Sen. Elizabeth Warren after Inslee withdrew from the presidential race. • Vice-President Joe Biden “Plan for a Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice” • BlueGreen Alliance “Solidarity for Climate Action” • Sunrise Movement “Candidate Scorecard Framework” • Peter Knowlton “Jobs for Climate Justice Demands” • Sens. Bernie Sanders, Jeff Merkley, and Edward Markey “Clean Energy Worker Just Transition Act” • Political Economy Research Institute, “The Economics of Just Transition” • Institute for Energy and Environmental Research and Labor Network for Sustainability, “Beyond a Band-Aid”.

A broader discussion of the Green New Deal appears in **Naomi Klein’s new article, “Care and Repair: Left Politics in the Age of Climate Change”** in *Dissent* (Winter 2020 issue). Although the article focuses on the U.S. Green New Deal in a historical and political context, Klein continues to cite her “favourite example” of the GND as the Canadian Union of Postal Workers initiative, **Delivering Community Power**, which she describes as “a bold plan to turn every post office in Canada into a hub for a just green transition.” She continues “....To make the case for a Green New Deal—which explicitly calls for this kind of democratic, decentralized leadership—every sector in the United States should be developing similar visionary plans for their workplaces right now.”

Klein also repeats themes from previous writing, including :

“A job guarantee, far from an opportunistic socialist addendum, is a critical part of achieving a rapid and just transition. It would immediately lower the intense pressure on workers to take the kinds of jobs that destabilize our planet, because all would be free to take the time needed to retrain and find work in one of the many sectors that will be dramatically expanding...This in turn will reduce the power of bad actors like the Laborers’ International Union of North America, who are determined to split the labor movement and sabotage the prospects for this historic effort.”

Finally, her concluding call to action:

“The Green New Deal will need to be subject to constant vigilance and pressure from experts who understand exactly what it will take to lower our emissions as rapidly as science demands, and from social movements that have decades of experience bearing the brunt of false climate solutions, whether nuclear power, the chimera of carbon capture and storage, or carbon offsets.”

“Care and Repair: Left Politics in the Age of Climate Change” is adapted from Klein’s



chapter in ***We Own the Future: Democratic Socialism—American Style***, a new anthology edited by Kate Aronoff, Michael Kazin, and Peter Dreier and released by the New Press in January 2020. Several other recent articles have appeared in *The Intercept* are available on her own website [here](#), and her book, ***On Fire: The Burning case for a Green New Deal*** was published in September 2019.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [labour union policies](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

One more time: can Canada meet its GHG emissions targets if oil and gas continues to expand?

Posted on **January 17, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Canadian [government pledged to exceed 2030 emissions reduction targets and reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050](#) at COP25 in December 2019, and on January 13, the Minister of Finance [announced](#) pre-Budget consultations that will include [climate change as a “central focus”](#). Encouraging as all this sounds, it contrasts with the government’s 2018 purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline ([recently critiqued](#) by B.C. economist Robyn Allan, and [pictured with new “pipe in the ground”](#) in December), and its mixed signals over whether Cabinet will approve the enormous Teck Frontier oil sands project in February – explained in a Narwhal Backgrounder: [“Why the proposed Frontier oilsands mine is a political hot potato”](#). (Hint: because it has the potential to produce 260,000 barrels of bitumen every day until 2060).

Recent forecasts for expansion of oil and gas industry production are also at odds with Morneau’s “focus on climate change” :

Oil, Gas and the Climate: An Analysis of Oil and Gas Industry Plans for Expansion and Compatibility with Global Emission Limits, published by the Global Gas and Oil Network (December 2019) describes how “new oil and gas development in Canada between now and 2050 could unlock an additional 25 GtCO₂, more than doubling cumulative emissions from the sector.” The report is summarized in a separate WCR post [here](#).

Canada's Energy Future 2019: Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2040 , released in December by Canada Energy Regulator (CER) (formerly the National Energy Board) states "Canada is making progress in transitioning to a low-carbon future" **but** :

"From 2018 to 2040, crude oil production grows by nearly 50%, to around seven million barrels per day.

Natural gas production increases by about 30%, to over 20 billion cubic feet per day over the next 20 years.

In 2005, wind and solar made up 0.2% of Canada's total generation. Combined they now make up 5%, and that share grows to nearly 10% by 2040. Over the outlook period, installed capacity of wind nearly doubles, while solar more than doubles. This depends on many factors, including costs of wind and solar power continuing to fall. EF2019 assumes that the cost of wind power falls by 20% and solar by 40% from 2018 to 2040."



The Pembina Institute responded with **"Why Canada's Energy Future report leads us astray"** on January 9th, which states: "How does the government's long-term decarbonization plan square with its projections for energy production? The simple answer is that it doesn't. The report's implication is that Canada will blow past our climate targets as our oil and gas sector effectively continues on a business-as-usual trajectory....The report has real implications for federal planning and decision-making and, perhaps most significantly, the overall vision of the energy sector in this country." **Canada's Energy Future 2019: Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2040** is available in **PDF format** and in an **interactive version** .

Amid the distraction of the Christmas season, the government of Canada released **Canada's GHG Emissions Projections to 2030** , as required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and as part of **Canada's 4th Biennial Report to the UNFCCC**. The December 20 **press release** from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change claims that Canada will achieve an "historic level of emissions reductions" ... projected to be 227 million tonnes (Mt) *below what was projected in 2015* [italics by WCR]. " The summary provides details of anticipated reductions by sector in 3 scenarios: 2019 Reference Case (policies currently in place);

a 2019 Additional Measures Case, which considers the Reference Case and those that have been announced but not yet fully implemented as of September 2019 (for example, the Clean Fuel Standard); and a Technology Case, an “exploratory scenario that includes more optimistic assumptions about clean technology adoption in a number of sectors.” A summary of the Emissions Projections document is [here](#) ; the full details are in the 4th Biennial Report to the UNFCCC, in English [here](#) and [here](#) in French .

And for an example of how Industry is framing their emissions vs. growth dilemma:

Cenovus Energy issued a [press release](#) on January 9 announcing “Bold Sustainability Targets” which “position us to thrive in the transition to a lower-carbon future”. The company states: “Cenovus is targeting to reduce its per-barrel GHG emissions by 30% by the end of 2030, using a 2019 baseline, and hold its absolute emissions flat by the end of 2030”, with a “long-term ambition is to reach net zero emissions by 2050.” This, despite a separate investor release which promises: “Total production increase of 7% compared with 2019 guidance, as Cenovus’s crude-by-rail program, coupled with the Government of Alberta’s Special Production Allowances, positions the company to move to unconstrained production levels.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [GHG emissions targets](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Students benchmark the climate change content of curriculum in Canadian medical schools

Posted on [January 15, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The [Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task Force \(HEART\)](#) is a group within the 8,000 member [Canadian Federation of Medical Students](#) . Its core purpose is to advocate for improvements in the medical curriculum to include the crucial links between health and climate and environmental change. In January 2020, HEART released Canada’s first-ever [National Report on Planetary Health Education](#) , meant to establish a benchmark on planetary health education in Canadian medical schools, and to provide schools with best practices and recommendations for improvements. Some of the practical examples cited: incorporating “the effects of air pollution with respiratory health teaching, discussing climate-related displacement within teaching on refugee and migrant health, and exploring the increasing burden of heat stress on health-care systems. Furthermore, case-based sessions can highlight the effects on specific individuals. Examples could include considering isolated older people at risk of heat stroke or of

being in extreme weather events, or discussing the effects of flooding or poor water quality on Indigenous communities.”

The HEART analysis identified the University of Alberta, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and Dalhousie University as leaders, “where environmental issues are covered at greater length through lectures, assignments and extracurricular opportunities.” The report is based on survey responses from “nearly 50 students” and 10 faculty members representing all 17 Canadian medical schools, and includes brief best practice examples.

The students also published a Commentary in *Lancet Planetary Health* on January 7 , **“Training Canadian doctors for the health challenges of climate change”**, which announces their report and aligns themselves with the Fridays for Future youth movement. It also puts their advocacy within the context of global campaigns by medical students (for example, the **International Federation of Medical Students Associations**) and the **Call to Action on Climate Change and Health** in Summer 2019 by the Canadian health professionals’ associations, led by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and health, climate change and youth, Education and Training, physicians, Youth and climate** | [Leave a reply](#)

Answering Mark Carney: What are the climate plans for Canada’s banks and pension funds?

Posted on **January 15, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

On December 18, the Bank of England was widely **reported** to have unveiled a new “stress test” for the financial risks of climate change. That stress test is a proposal contained in an official BoE Discussion Paper, **2021 biennial exploratory scenario (BES) on the financial risks from climate change** , open for stakeholder comments until March 2020. Mark Carney, outgoing Governor of the Bank of England, has led the BoE to a leadership position on this issue in the financial community and will continue in his new role as **United Nations special envoy on climate action and climate finance** in 2020. In a December **BBC interview** reviewing his legacy, he warned the world yet again about stranded assets and asked: “A question for every company, every financial institution, every asset manager, pension fund or insurer: what’s your plan?”

What are the climate plans for Canada’s pension funds ?



In their June 2019 report, **Canada's Pension Funds and Climate Risk: A Baseline For Engagement**, ShiftAction concludes: "Canadian pension funds are already investing in climate solutions, but at levels that are far too low relative to the potential for profitable growth, consistent with levels required to solve this challenge." The report provides an overview, and importantly, offers tips on how to engage with and influence pension fund managers.

Since then.....

The sustainability performance of the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)** continues to be unimpressive, as documented in ***Fossil Futures: The Canada Pension Plan's failure to respect the 1.5-degree Celsius limit***, released in November



2019 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis-B.C. (CCPA-BC). According to the **CPPIB Annual Report for 2019**, (June 2019) the CPPIB is aiming for full adoption of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures recommendations by the end of fiscal 2021 (page 28).

Canada's second largest pension fund, the **Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ)**, announced in November that CEO Michael Sabia will retire in February 2020 and move to the University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. The **press release** credits Sabia with leading the Caisse to a position of global leadership on climate change, beginning in 2017 with the launch of an investment strategy which aims to increase low-carbon assets and reduce the carbon intensity of investment holdings by 25%. In 2019, the Caisse announced that its portfolio would be carbon-neutral by 2050. **Ivanhoé Cambridge**, the real estate subsidiary of the Caisse de dépôt, has **a stated goal** to increase low-carbon investments by 50% by the year 2020

and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by the year 2025. In December 2019, Ivanhoé Cambridge **announced** that it had issued a \$300 million unsecured green bond to finance green initiatives – the first real estate corporation in Canada to do so. Shawn McCarthy reviewed Sabia's legacy in "**Canada's second largest pension fund gets deadly serious about climate crisis**", in *Corporate Knights* in December.

AIMCo, the Alberta Investment Management Corporation is a Crown Corporation of the Government of Alberta, with management responsibility for the public sector pensions funds in Alberta, along with other investments. In November 2019, the Alberta government passed Bill 22, which unilaterally transfers pension assets from provincial worker plans to the control of AIMCo (see a CBC summary [here](#)). The Alberta Federation of Labour and the province's large unions protested in a joint statement, "**Union leaders tell UCP: 'The money saved by Albertans for retirement belongs to them, not to you!'**" (Nov. 20) . The unions state: "we're worried that what you're attempting to do is use other people's money to create a huge slush fund to finance an agenda that has not yet been articulated to the public – and which most people would not feel comfortable using their life savings to support." And in December 2019, those worries seem to come true as AIMCo **announced** its participation in a consortium to buy a 65% equity interest in the controversial LNG Coastal GasLink Pipeline Project from TC Energy Corporation. [Rabble.ca](#) **reported** on the demonstrations at AIMCo's Toronto offices regarding the Coastal Gas project in January .

On January 8, the *Toronto Star* published "**Toronto asks pension provider: How green are our investments?**" – revealing that the city has asked for more details from the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement fund (OMERS). OMERS, with assets of over \$100 billion, manages the pension savings of a variety of Ontario public employees, including City of Toronto and Toronto Police, Fire, and Paramedics. On January 8, OMERS **announced** the latest consolidation of Toronto pension plans with its consolidation of the Metropolitan Toronto Pension. Its Sustainable Investment Policy statement is [here](#) .

What are the climate plans for Canada's private Banks?

The 10th annual edition of ***Banking on Climate Change: the Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card*** was released in October 2019 by Banktrac, Rainforest Alliance Network and others . It states that \$1.9 trillion has been invested in fossil fuels by the world's private banks since the Paris Agreement, led by JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi and Bank of America. Canadian banks also rank high in the world: RBC (5th), TD (8th), Scotiabank (9th), and Bank of Montreal (15th). Also in October, the World Resources Institute



published ***Unpacking Green Targets: A Framework for Interpreting Private Sector Banks' Sustainable Finance Commitments***, which includes Canadian banks in its global analysis and provides guidance on how to understand banks' public documents. "**How Are Banks Doing on Sustainable Finance Commitments? Not Good Enough**" is the WRI blog which summarizes the findings.

Since then....

On September 14, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce **announced** the release of their first climate-related disclosure report aligned with the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures. ***Building a Sustainable Future*** highlights the CIBC's governance, strategy, and risk management approach to climate related issues. It provides specific metrics and targets, especially for its own operational footprint, but also a commitment: "to a \$150 billion environmental and sustainable finance goal over 10 years (2018-2027)."

Scotiabank also **announced** climate-related changes in November, including "that it would "mobilize \$100 billion by 2025 to support the transition to a lower-carbon and more resilient economy"; ensure robust climate-related governance and reporting; enhance integration of climate risk assessments in lending, financing and investing activities; deploy innovative solutions to decarbonize operations; and establish a Climate Change Centre of Excellence "to provide our employees with the tools and knowledge to empower them to act in support of our climate commitments. This includes training and education, promoting internal collaboration, and knowledge and information sharing." Their 4-page statement on climate commitment is [here](#). Their ***2018 Sustainable Business Report*** (latest available) includes detailed metrics and description of the bank's own operations, including that they use an Internal Carbon Price of CAD\$15/tonne CO₂, to be reviewed every two years.

RBC, ranked Canada's worst fossil-fueling bank in the 2019 edition of ***Banking on Climate Change***, released a 1-page statement of their **Commitment to Sustainable Finance** (April 2019) and an undated ***Climate Blueprint*** with a target of \$100 billion in sustainable financing by 2025. However, in their new research report, ***Navigating the 2020's: How Canada can thrive in a decade of change***, the bank characterizes the coming decade as "Greener, Greyer, Smarter, Slower", but offers little hope of a change in direction. For example, the report states "Canada's

natural gas exports can also play a role in reducing emissions intensity abroad. LNG shipments to emerging economies in Asia, where energy demand is growing much faster than in Canada, can help replace coal in electricity production, just as natural gas is doing here in Canada. ...As climate concerns mount, Canada's challenge will be to better sell ourselves as a responsible, cleaner energy producer."

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Banking Industry](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Divestment](#), [financial institutions](#), [Financial Risk](#), [government workers](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [OMERS](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Stranded Assets](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Financial giants targeted by new U.S. divestment campaign; Youth challenge the Davos elites to stop investing in the fossil fuel economy immediately

Posted on [January 14, 2020](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

OUR TOP TARGETS		
		
JPMorgan Chase is the world's top banker of fossil fuels; the bank has provided \$196 billion in financing to fossil fuel companies since 2016.	BlackRock is the world's largest investor in fossil fuels and deforestation-linked commodities, and manages nearly \$7 trillion in assets worldwide.	Liberty Mutual is a top insurer of and investor in massive fossil fuel projects, like the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Launched at Jane Fonda's final #FireDrillFriday event in Washington D.C. on January 10, the [Stop the Money Pipeline](#) , according to [a Sierra Club press release](#) , will consolidate a number of existing divestment campaigns and target the worst climate offenders in each part of the financial sector. The first campaign round consists of three major targets: amongst banks: JP Morgan Chase; amongst insurance companies: Liberty Mutual; and amongst asset managers, BlackRock. Groups involved in Stop the Money Pipeline are: 350.org, Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Sierra Club, Greenpeace USA, Sunrise Project, Future Coalition, Divest Ed, Divest-Invest, Native Movement, Giniw Collective, Transition U.S., Oil Change International, 350 Seattle, EarthRights International, Union of Concerned Scientists, Majority Action, The YEARS Project,

and Amazon Watch.

The **Stop the Money Pipeline website** has archived some of the arguments for their campaign – including Bill McKibben’s September Commentary in the *New Yorker* “**Money Is the Oxygen on Which the Fire of Global Warming Burns**”, and “**Why Big Banks Are Accused Of Funding The Climate Crisis**” in *HuffPost* in October 2019. The campaign launch has been described in “**Climate Movement Takes Aim at Wall Street, Because ‘Money Is Only Language Fossil Fuel Industry Speaks’**” in *Common Dreams* (Jan. 9); , and in “**Want to do something about climate change? Follow the money**” in the *New York Times* on Jan. 11. In that Opinion piece, Bill McKibben and Lennox Yearwood Jr. describe their arrest at a sit-in at the Chase Bank which was part of the campaign launch. *Democracy Now* also covered the events in “**Stop the Money Pipeline”: 150 Arrested at Protests Exposing Wall Street’s Link to Climate Crisis**” on January 13 .

Are campaigns having any effect?

Perhaps it is just coincidence, but on January 9, BlackRock **announced** it is signing on to **Climate Action 100+**, a global investor network formed in 2015 and which includes California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS), HSBC Global Asset Management, and Manulife Asset Management. BlackRock also announced a new investment strategy, summarized in “**BlackRock Will Put Climate Change at Center of Investment Strategy**” in the *New York Times* (Jan. 14) . The NYT article emphasizes the company’s influence as the world’s largest investment fund with over \$7 trillion under management, and states that “this move ... could reshape how corporate America does business and put pressure on other large money managers to follow suit.” The new strategy is outlined in two Annual Letters from BlackRock’s CEO Larry Fink: ***Sustainability as BlackRock’s New Standard for Investing*** , the letter to corporate clients states, “Our investment conviction is that sustainability-integrated portfolios can provide better risk-adjusted returns to investors”. The second letter, titled ***A Fundamental Reshaping of Finance***, acknowledges that protests have had an impact on their position: “Climate change has become a defining factor in companies’ long-term prospects. Last September, when millions of people took to the streets to demand action on climate change, many of them emphasized the significant and lasting impact that it will have on economic growth and prosperity – a risk that markets to date have been slower to reflect.” He continues: “... awareness is rapidly changing, and I believe we are on the edge of a fundamental reshaping of finance.... climate change is almost invariably the top issue that clients around the world raise with BlackRock. In the near future – and sooner than most anticipate – there will be a significant reallocation of capital.” However, this urgency seems somewhat at odds with another statement in the Letter to CEO’s: “... While the low-carbon transition is well underway, the technological and economic realities mean that the transition will take decades. Global economic development, particularly in emerging markets, will continue to rely on hydrocarbons for a number of years. As a result, the portfolios we manage will continue to hold exposures to the hydrocarbon economy as the transition advances.”

Other divestment developments:

Urgency is a key theme in a new public call by Greta Thunberg and other youth leaders. “**At Davos we will tell world leaders to abandon the fossil fuel economy**” – an Opinion piece

carried by *The Guardian* on January 10, directed to the world's economic elite scheduled to gather at the **World Economic Forum in Davos** at the end of January. The core message is urgent: "We call upon the world's leaders to stop investing in the fossil fuel economy that is at the very heart of this planetary crisis. Instead, they should invest their money in existing sustainable technologies, research and in restoring nature.. ...Anything less than immediately ceasing these investments in the fossil fuel industry would be a betrayal of life itself. Today's business as usual is turning into a crime against humanity. We demand that leaders play their part in putting an end to this madness. Our future is at stake, let that be their investment. [An article in Common Dreams](#) on January 10 highlights the youth campaign and notes that it aligns with Stop the Money Pipeline .

C40 Cities released a new toolkit on January 7: *[Divesting from Fossil Fuels, Investing in Our Future: A Toolkit for Cities](#)*. The toolkit is directed at city officials, outlining steps required to divest their pension funds from fossil fuels. It includes eight successful case studies – from **Auckland, Berlin, Copenhagen, London, Melbourne, New York City, Oslo, and Stockholm** – all of whom have divestment experience and none of whose city pension funds were negatively impacted by divestment. **C40 Cities** is a network of 94 municipalities with a population of over 700 million people, active in promoting climate change action at the municipal level.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Cities and Climate Change](#), [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and youth](#), [Divestment](#), [financial institutions](#), [Financial Risk](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Municipal Government](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The Australian bushfire disaster: what does it mean for firefighters and workers?

Posted on **January 13, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

There are many themes amid the story of the horrifying Australian bushfires of 2019/20: destruction of habitat and homes, the reality of climate change, and the resilience and self-sacrifice of Australians, exemplified in their [unique tradition of community volunteer firefighters](#), or "furies". The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) recognized their contribution in [a statement](#) which includes: "Workers in the emergency services and volunteers in their own communities are on the front lines of defending people, their homes and community infrastructure. We thank them profusely for their efforts and their courage. They are working heroes."



“Australia’s Volunteer Firefighters Find It Hard to Pause, Even for Christmas” in the *New York Times* (Dec. 24 2019) describes the self-sacrifice displayed by these volunteers, but it also questions how sustainable such a system can be in such a long-running and widespread disaster. Exhaustion is one constraint; financial necessity to earn money is another. Only under public pressure did the government finally **announce compensation** for the volunteers in December. The *Sydney Morning Herald* offers a detailed **“Explainer: How the Bushfire Compensation Scheme works”** (Jan. 12), which notes that some union leaders “have called for amendments to the Fair Work Act to ensure workers have the right to paid emergency services leave as part of the National Employment Standards.” This idea is taken up in **“Unions and employers join forces to demand increased bushfire relief for workers and fires”**, also in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Jan. 12), which highlights the “fine print” limitations for firefighters’ :

“The federal government and some state governments have said they will provide eligible volunteer firefighters with up to \$300 per day capped at a total of \$6000 as compensation for time off work to fight bushfires, but fires can only claim from day 11 and the hours spent on patrol must align with their normal working hours...This means if a volunteer firefighter normally works from 9am to 5pm, but is out fighting blazes from midday to midnight, they can only claim five hours’ pay.”

Occupational health and safety concerns:

The Australian Council of Trade Unions issued a December call for change in **“Laws must adapt to keep workers safe in changing climate”**, focussed on the occupational health and safety issues of extreme heat and smoke for all workers. Their call for change was accompanied by two Fact Sheets: ***Smoke Haze – Bushfires and Air Quality*** and ***Working in Heat***. Another important occupational health issue, the emotional and psychological toll of such disasters, is described in **“Black Saturday firefighters want you to listen to them, not call them ‘heroes’”** from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Jan. 3).

On January 7, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) released **this statement and call for government action** :

“No workers should ever be required to work in dangerous environments. Smoke levels are well beyond the hazardous range in huge areas of the country. Any workers, especially those who work outside, who have concerns about their safety should contact their union.

Workers should be aware that the NES provides for unpaid leave for the full period of time that workers are engaged in volunteer firefighting or other emergency service work. Union negotiated Enterprise Bargaining Agreements will also often provide additional paid leave provisions.

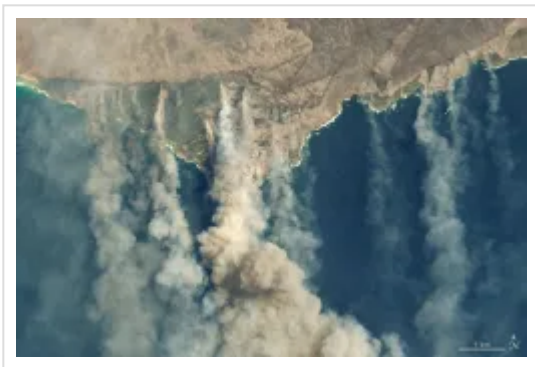
In some circumstances, workers will also be able to access personal leave if they are unable to return to work due to being evacuated or having nowhere to live, for instance if they or a family member have suffered mental or physical injury as a result of the fires.

Under no circumstances can a worker or their employer already dealing with this devastating crisis face the added insult of being left without an income or a bill they cannot pay for a service they have not used or received.

To make sure this happens, the Federal Government's response needs to make it clear that everyone impacted by this crisis is entitled to support and assistance and should not be left worse off. This should include ensuring that there is comprehensive relief from debt repayments, mortgages and utility bills while families get back on their feet.

Any worker who faces issues with their bank, other lending institutions or who is fired from their job due to the fallout from these fires should immediately contact their union."

The ACTU has established a [Bushfire Relief Fund here](#) , where donations can be made to support union members who may need more than the government support, and another campaign, [here](#), for Australians to volunteer their skills and time in the rebuilding effort. The National Construction Division of the CFMEU also announced their own \$100,000 donation to the bushfire recovery effort in [a press release](#) .



A few other recommended articles about the Australian Bushfires : from *The Guardian*, **"We are seeing the very worst of our scientific predictions come to pass in these bushfires"** (Jan. 3); **"Australia's fires have pumped out more emissions than 100 nations combined"** (MIT Technology Review, Jan. 10) ; **"Terror, hope, anger, kindness: the complexity of life as we face the new normal"** (Jan. 11, *The Guardian*); **"In Australia, the air poses a threat; people are rushing to hospitals in cities choked by smoke"** (*Washington Post*, Jan. 12); **"Australia's bushfires offer heated view into longstanding misinformation on climate change"** (*National Observer*, Jan. 7); **"Bushfire emergency leads thousands to protest against PM and climate**

change policies “(Australian Broadcasting Corp.,Jan. 10) , and the latest political development: **“Scott Morrison to take proposal for bushfire royal commission to Cabinet ”** reported on January 12 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, also reported as **“Australia’s Leader Calls for Inquiry Into Government Response to Fires”** in the *New York Times* (Jan. 12).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Australia, firefighters, forest fires, labour union policies, wildfires** | **Leave a reply**

Unifor’s campaign to defend Northern Pulp mill jobs in Nova Scotia

Posted on **January 10, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



A January 8 general news release, **“Nova Scotian forestry workers already struggling as Northern Pulp prepares to close ”** summarizes the union’s position in a quote from Atlantic Region Director Linda MacNeil: ““We all agreed Boat Harbour had to close. That closure did not have to come at the cost of thousands of rural jobs – there was a solution for the mill to coexist, but there was no political will from McNeil to make it happen Our members and other forestry workers are not the ones responsible for any wrong-doing here. ... They deserve better than to be blamed and sacrificed due to the government’s lack of leadership, consultation or clear regulatory expectations.”

The context:

The “years of controversy” over the Northern Pulp mill is summarized in a **Backgrounder in the Halifax Chronicle Herald** on December 10 2019, published just before the government of Nova Scotia announced that it would enforce a 2015 law which would require the mill to stop pumping effluent in Boat Harbour. **Paper Excellence Canada** , the owner of the Northern Pulp mill, stated almost immediately that it would close the mill, but apparently the years of controversy are not over yet. As reported on January 9 in **“NS effluent dumping mill to move ahead with environmental process”** in the *National Observer* , Paper Excellence has issued a new statement: “Our team is currently focused on supporting our employees, developing plans for a safe and environmentally responsible hibernation, and working with the government of Nova Scotia and stakeholders to determine next steps.”

Unifor's role in the controversy:

Unifor represents approximately 230 workers at the mill and has been actively engaged in advocating to protect its members' jobs by allowing the mill owners, Excellence Paper, to improve the environmental performance of the mill by building a new effluent treatment plant. Unifor's **Save Northern Pulp Jobs** campaign includes "**Why Mill Jobs Matter**" as a summary; in early 2019, the union commissioned **a detailed economic impact study** by consultants Gardner Pinfold which makes the case for the "keystone" importance of the mill in the region, profiling major businesses from the supply chain of 1,379 companies associated with the mill operation, and estimating that the mill accounts for approximately 2,679 full-time equivalent jobs, earning approximately \$128 million annually. (Note that Gardner Pinfold completed **an earlier economic impact study** for the industry group, Forest Nova Scotia, in 2016).

An ongoing series of **Updates** chronicle how Unifor has participated in the provincial environmental assessment process and in direct advocacy for their membership. The **January 3 update** reports to members on interactions with government, stating: "the best course of action for a viable and continued forest industry in the province is with Northern Pulp continuing to operate. We reiterated that the \$50 million should be used to assist all workers in the industry through a temporary shutdown of the mill to facilitate the construction of Northern Pulp's new effluent treatment facility (ETF).... We also suggested the idea of a third-party expert who could serve as intermediary between government regulators and the company to establish a firm and fair process and timelines for the necessary approvals to take place for construction of the ETF."

The update also states: "Premier McNeil announced a \$50 million transition fund for forestry workers that was of particular interest during the meeting, especially since the fund was never mentioned to the union, or anyone else, prior to his December 20 decision."

Work and Climate Change Report has summarized the \$50 million **Forestry Transition Fund** [here](#).

Further documentation: The March 2019 submission of Unifor Atlantic Region to the provincial Environmental Assessment process is [here](#), included in a compilation of all submissions; comments by Unifor's National Office to the environmental assessment process in October 2019 appears [here](#) (around page 14).

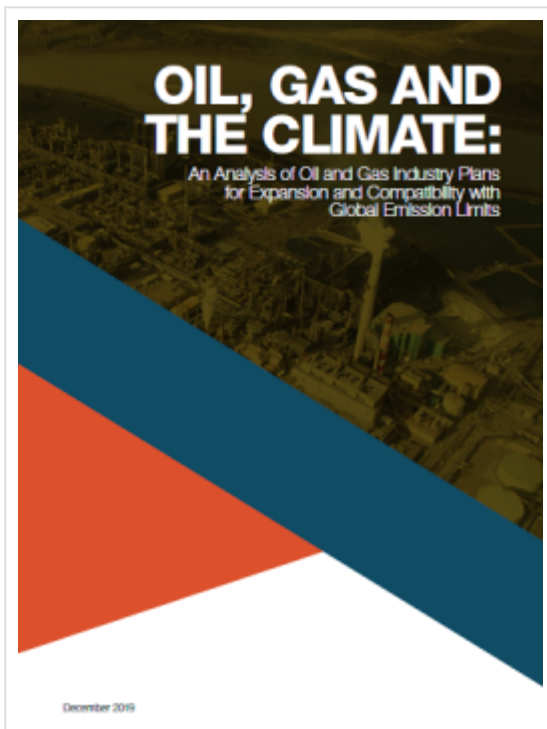


Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Environmental Justice](#), [Forestry Industry](#), [labour and the environment](#), [labour union policies](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Phase-out, not expansion of fossil fuels – some recommendations for Canada

Posted on **January 8, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Oil, Gas and the Climate: An Analysis of Oil and Gas Industry Plans for Expansion and Compatibility with Global Emission Limits was published by the Global Gas and



Oil Network (GGON) in December 2019. The report analyzes the expansion plans of the oil and gas industry in relation to the global Paris climate goal of a 1.5C warming limit, and concludes that “if the world uses all the oil and gas from the fields and mines already in production, it will push us beyond 1.5°C of warming. This is true even if global coal use were phased out overnight, and if cement emissions were drastically reduced.” This report is the latest to sound this alarm: for example, Oil Change International, part of the GGON, began to publish such warnings in 2016 with ***The Sky’s Limit: Why the Paris Climate Goals Require a Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production***, followed by ***Drilling towards Disaster*** in 2019.

Oil, Gas and the Climate states that from now until 2024, oil and gas companies are set to invest a further \$1.4 trillion U.S. in new oil and gas extraction projects – with 85% of that expansion in North America, and with the impact of the U.S. alone putting a 2 degree warming target out of reach. Further, it states that over 90% of U.S. expansion would be shale production dependent on fracking. It highlights that the Permian Basin (west Texas and southeastern New Mexico) would account for 39% of new U.S. oil and gas production by 2050. “It holds the greatest risk for new oil and gas development in the United States and in the world.”

Projected Canadian investment is a distant second to that of the U.S., but even so, the report states that “new oil and gas development in Canada between now and 2050 could unlock an additional 25 GtCO₂, more than doubling cumulative emissions from the sector.” The report highlights the approved Exxon Aspen Oil Sands project and the pending Teck Frontier Mine, but warns “...Shale gas extraction, particularly the Montney Shale Basin in British Columbia, is a major focus of the industry...From 2020 to 2050, new gas projects could be responsible for as much CO₂ as new oil projects.” (For a recent overview of the extent of Canada’s LNG infrastructure, see ***The New Gas Boom***, published by Global Energy Monitor in June 2019).

“A better future is possible”, and here’s how to get there:

Despite the grim projections, ***Oil, Gas and the Climate*** argues that “a better future is possible” and calls for “the launch of a well-planned phase-out of oil and gas production that addresses the needs of workers and communities impacted by fossil fuel developments. ” The report recognizes the impact of recent civil society actions such as Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion, and calls on governments and investors to catch up with such leadership.

Based on the findings of the report, **Environmental Defence makes the following recommendations** to support Canada’s phase-out:

Clear new federal rules under our environmental assessment law that review possible expansions of oil and gas projects against our commitment to climate goals. If we cannot credibly demonstrate how investing in a fossil fuel project is consistent with a 1.5C warmed world then the project should not be permitted to go ahead.

Institutional investors should apply a similar screen that will guide their decisions regarding whether to provide financing for new projects.

The federal government must invest in research and development of new energy technologies like geothermal electricity that have huge employment and energy production opportunities in places like Alberta and northern British Columbia. At a minimum, the government should make available an amount equivalent to the billions in subsidies that have been given to the fossil fuel industry through tax breaks or direct investment in pipeline infrastructure (e.g. Trans-Mountain) – subsidies that should be phased out rapidly. Success will create skills-linked jobs and massive supply of electrical energy for export to a North America that must replace the energy of fossil fuels.

Domestic demand for fossil fuels must be rapidly driven down through improved efficiency (e.g. buildings, appliances, manufacturing), electrifying transportation and home heating and increased renewables generation and storage.

The ***Oil, Gas and the Climate*** report is a project of the **Global Gas and Oil Network** , supported by Oil Change International; 350.org; Center for Biological Diversity; Center for International Environmental Law; CAN-Rac Canada; Earthworks; Environmental Defence Canada; Fundacin Ambiente y Recursos Naturales:FARN; Global Witness; Greenpeace; Friends of the Earth Netherlands (Milieudefensie); Naturvernforbundet; Observatorio Petrolero Sur; Overseas Development Institute; Platform; Sierra Club; Stand.Earth.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Budget, Energy policy, fossil fuel industry, Oil and gas industry** | **Leave a reply**

Canadians favour a shift away from oil and gas, 68% support federal help for worker transition

Posted on **January 7, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**



An online survey was conducted by Abacus Data in mid- December 2019 to gauge opinion about an energy transition and compare attitudes in Alberta with those in the rest of Canada. The summary was posted to the [Abacus website](#) on January 3 and to Clean Energy Canada, which commissioned the survey, [here](#) . Based on responses from a random sample of 1,848 adults, a majority of Canadians and Albertans recognize that energy transition is a global issue and a necessary development, although in Alberta, only 49% see it as beneficial for the province in the long-term.

Further insights:

72% across Canada, and 60% in Alberta would prefer to see Alberta's economy shift over time because "global demand will change and Alberta will be left behind if the province is more dependent on oil."

40% of Albertans want their Premier to "reject the idea of an energy shift and promote growth in Alberta's oil sector." (Nationally, only 32% support promoting Alberta's oil sector).

57% of Albertans said an energy transition should be done more slowly or not at all, and 45% see it as intended to punish Alberta's workers.

Nationally, 68% of respondents support federal government help for Alberta's workers seeking new opportunities. In Alberta, only 49% support such federal help for transitioning workers, while 51% want the federal government to help grow the province's oil sector.

Canadian Energy Centre: promoting the message that “Canadian oil and natural gas can make this country and the world better”

Posted on **January 7, 2020** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On December 11, the Alberta government of Jason Kenney launched its “rapid-response war room” – deceptively called the Canadian Energy Centre – using \$30 million to argue for the benefits of the oil and gas industry and attack any criticism as “misinformation”. By January 6, in [an article in the *Edmonton Journal*](#), the provincial NDP party reviews the agency’s performance to date and calls for it to be shut down. Chris Turner also describes the inept launch of the CEC in an [Opinion piece in the *National Observer*](#), calling it a “\$30 million bonfire”, and the criticism reaches its peak in “[The Silly, Scary Truth about Alberta’s New Ministry of Truth](#)” by Andrew Nikoforuk in *The Tyee* (Jan. 1) .

Despite the ridicule and criticism it has earned, the publicly-funded Canadian Energy Centre continues to post supportive, good news stories about Teck’s Frontier oil sands mine, the Trans Mountain pipeline, Enbridge Line 3, Coastal GasLink, and more – using its [Twitter account](#) with almost 5,000 followers, [Facebook](#), and its [web site](#) . Readers should be aware that in an unguarded moment in an [interview with Global News](#), CEO Tom Olsen explained: “*We are not about attacking, we are about disproving true facts.*”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and Gas Lobby](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

\$50 million Forestry Transition Fund to retrain and support workers following closure of Nova Scotia's polluting Northern Pulp plant – Updated

Posted on **January 6, 2020** by **elizabethperry493**

This blog has been updated on January 10 to reflect the company announcement that a new environmental assessment process may yet keep the mill alive. It also expands on Unifor's position in supporting the mill and the opposition by environmental groups and First Nations.

After years of controversy, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil **announced** on December 20 that the province will enforce a January 31 2020 deadline for B.C.-owned Northern Pulp plant to stop pumping effluent in Boat Harbour, near Pictou Landing First Nation. The deadline had been set by legislation in 2015, and will not be extended, despite the company's threat to shut down the mill. Acknowledging the job loss and economic hardship which will result from the decision, the Premier's announcement included a \$50-million transition fund for forestry sector workers and businesses "to support displaced workers across the province, small contractors and all those whose livelihoods will be affected. The transition fund will be used for retraining and education, and for emergency funding to help those in immediate need." On January 3, the Premier's Office **announced** the composition of the Forestry Transition Team. A previous announcement had designated the provincial deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade as the team lead; members announced on January 3 include more government representatives as well as industry management – noticeably absent, any worker representation.

After the first meeting of the Forestry Transition Team, **CBC reports** that the government has fired an industry member. The Premier **has announced** \$7 million to assist silviculture and forest road building operations in the central and western regions of the province. The **January 10 article** in the *National Observer* also states that the Premier is working to ensure the stability and accessibility of the mill's pension plan.

Company enters new environmental assessment process which may yet keep the mill alive

On January 10, **an article in the National Observer** reported on a statement by **Paper Excellence Canada**, the owner of the Northern Pulp mill: "... Our team is currently focused on supporting our employees, developing plans for a safe and environmentally responsible hibernation, and working with the government of Nova Scotia and stakeholders to determine next steps." Plant closure has been at least temporarily averted as the company has informed the government that it will continue the environmental assessment process for its proposed effluent treatment plant. In response, the Nova Scotia Environment Ministry **released draft Terms of**

Reference for that assessment on January 8, giving the public and government reviewers 30 days to comment on the draft. Following a period for company response, the terms of reference will be provided by early April, and the company will be given another two years to complete the environmental assessment report. The government webpage dedicated to the environmental assessment is [here](#) , providing the new draft terms of reference, how to make a submission, and an archive of past documentation in this long-running project.

Opposing viewpoints in a long controversy

The *Halifax Chronicle Herald* has published many articles describing the long history and competing interests in this dispute, for example in [a Timeline of the dispute](#) ; **“Nova Scotia sticks to Boat Harbour deadline; Northern Pulp confirms shutdown”**; and **“Northern Pulp mill will close without extension to Boat Harbour Act, company says”** (Dec. 19).

Unifor, which represents 230 workers at Northern Pulp in Local 444 , has maintained an ongoing **Save Northern Pulp Jobs campaign** , described in WCR’s separate **blog post**. After the government’s December 20 announcement, the union issued a press release, **“Premier McNeil throws away 2,700 rural jobs in Nova Scotia”** . Another press release on **January 3** is more detailed, reporting to members on subsequent interactions with government, and stating: “the best course of action for a viable and continued forest industry in the province is with Northern Pulp continuing to operate. We reiterated that the \$50 million should be used to assist all workers in the industry through a temporary shutdown of the mill to facilitate the construction of Northern Pulp’s new effluent treatment facility (ETF)... We also suggested the idea of a third-party expert who could serve as intermediary between government regulators and the company to establish a firm and fair process and timelines for the necessary approvals to take place for construction of the ETF.”



In contrast to Unifor’s support for the company’s proposal for an alternate effluent treatment plant, which was rejected in a provincial environmental assessment on December 17, it had been **widely opposed** – by the Pictou Landing First Nation, as well as **fishermen’s associations** from all three Maritime provinces , tourism operators, cottagers, boaters and others whose livelihoods would be affected by the proposed dumping of treated effluent into the Northumberland Strait.

Environmental advocacy and First Nations groups also oppose the mill. **“Northern Pulp decision validates rights, First Nations lawyer says”** summarizes the position of the Pictou Landing First Nations and praises the Premier’s courage in “righting an injustice spanning five decades.” And while acknowledging the hardship ahead for forestry workers, the **Ecology Action Centre of Nova Scotia calls** the decision “courageous” and “forward-thinking”, saying : “For the **first time in Nova Scotia’s history**, a government has said no to a pulp mill’s coercive demands in defence of environmental protection, Indigenous rights and human health. It is a watershed moment — a turn away from the old ways of allowing mass extraction and the pollution of the air, land and water. This decision could mark the start of a new, cleaner future and a livable planet for our descendants.”

Posted in **Environmental Policy** | Tagged **Boat Harbour, Environmental Protection, First Nations, Forestry Industry, Just Transition, Nova Scotia, Water pollution** | **Leave a reply**

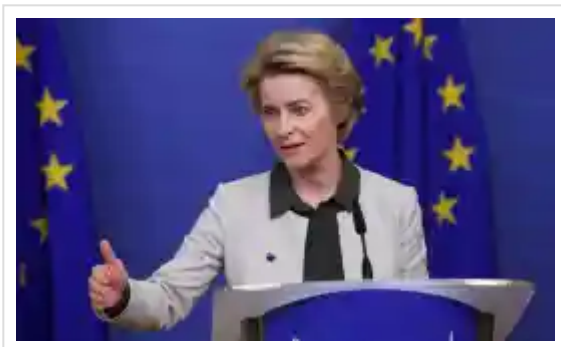
Work and Climate Change Report

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

YEARLY ARCHIVES: 2019

Historic European Green New Deal includes funding for a Just Transition Mechanism

Posted on **December 18, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



New European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented the **European Green Deal** on December 11 ([here on YouTube](#)), calling it “Europe’s man on the moon moment”. The 10 key points are outlined [here](#), with the flagship commitment that the EU will aim to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, a goal that will be enshrined in a ‘Climate Law’ to be presented in March 2020. To achieve net-zero, EU’s ambitions must rise to a 50-55% cut in greenhouse gas emissions, replacing the current 40% objective.

In “**Europe’s Green New Deal**“, Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University writes for Project Syndicate that it “is the first comprehensive plan to achieve sustainable development in any major world region. As such, it becomes a global benchmark – a “how-to” guide for planning the transformation to a prosperous, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable economy.” **Clean Energy Wire compiles reaction** from German politicians, NGO’s and think tanks: reactions are mixed – like Sachs, most commend the symbolic and political achievement of the EU statement, while tempering their enthusiasm with concerns for implementation details. **An**

[article in The Guardian](#) also summarizes the deal with some sense of the opposition and difficulties ahead.

The [Euractiv summary](#) quotes EU Commissioner von der Leyen on the proposal for a Just Transition Mechanism: “We have the ambition to mobilise €100 billion precisely targeted to the most vulnerable regions and sectors” and describes the initiative as having three “legs”: 1. A just transition fund that will mobilise resources from the EU’s regional policy budget; 2. An “InvestEU” programme, with money coming from the European Investment Bank (EIB); and 3. EIB funding coming from the EU bank’s own capital. The EU Commission website provides [Details of the Just Transition Mechanism](#) for download.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change policy](#), [EU](#), [Green New Deal Europe](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Redefining green jobs to include healthcare and educational workers in the Green New Deal

Posted on **December 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A thoughtful new contribution to the “green jobs” debate comes in [Re-defining Green Jobs for a Sustainable Economy](#) , released by The Century Foundation, in cooperation with Data for Progress, on December 2. Co-author Greg Carlock is currently Senior Fellow and Research Director for Climate at Data for Progress, and was one of the authors of the original visioning document [A Green New Deal](#) , published in 2018 and leading to the current U.S. movement

launched by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. [Data for Progress](#) continues to monitor public opinion and publish important contributions to the Green New Deal debate – in November, exploring the issue of a Green New Deal for Public Housing.

[Re-defining Green Jobs for a Sustainable Economy](#) outlines an interesting history of the “green jobs” definition and measurement in the U.S., but the main purpose of the report is to propose an expanded definition and framework of green jobs which would encompass the principles of equity and sustainability. Ultimately, the report recommends how an expanded definition can be integrated into U.S. public policy.

Perhaps most importantly, [Re-defining Green Jobs for a Sustainable Economy](#) focuses in detail on demonstrating why health care and educational workers should be considered as part of the green workforce, stating that including them in the green workforce definition “would go a long way toward gender and racial equity, and toward ensuring all workers green, family-sustaining jobs.”

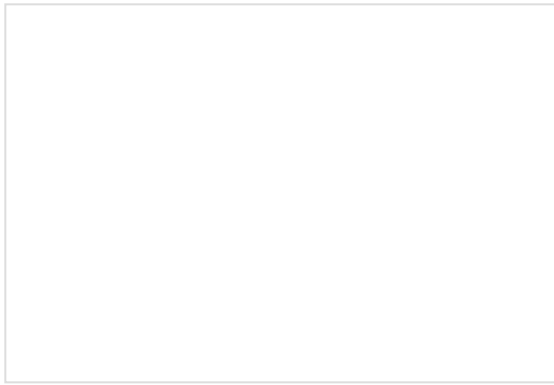
An expanded definition of a green job, from the report:

“A green job should refer to any position that is part of the sustainability workforce: a job that contributes to preserving or enhancing the well-being, culture, and governance of both current and future generations, as well as regenerating the natural resources and ecosystems upon which they rely. And in order for green jobs themselves to be sustainable, they need to be good, living-wage jobs.... These green job occupations stand in contrast to work—even decent-paying work—in industries that result in the depletion or degradation of ecological systems and the social, cultural, and political institutions that support them.”

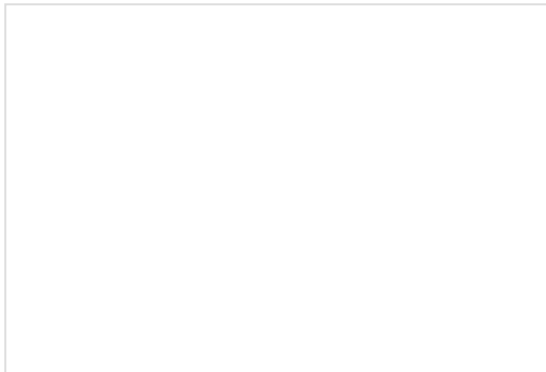
Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Education](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Green New Deal](#), [health care professionals](#), [teachers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian government commits to a Just Transition Act, but COP25 deemed a failure

Posted on [December 16, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The 25th gathering of the UN Conference of the Parties (COP25) took place from December 2 to 15 in Madrid, and despite [official UN press releases](#) and statements (curated by IIDS [here](#)), a general feeling of frustration was present almost immediately. Early on, Greta Thunberg labelled the meetings “clever accounting and creative PR” in [her speech to delegates](#). Demonstrations and discontent by youth, Indigenous, and other civil society activists on December 11 are [described by Common Dreams](#); [an article in The Guardian newspaper](#) describes the “unfortunate security incident” on December 11 when civil society demonstrators were expelled by COP security guards. The article quotes #FridaysForFuture member Angela Valenzuela, who stated that the rough treatment was typical of the treatment of women, Indigenous people, and workers in a COP process dominated by government officials and corporate



vested interests. “The doors closed in our faces were a very powerful metaphor for what is happening here and what has happened for the last 25 years”. Reinforcing this theme, Common Dreams highlights new research by Corporate Accountability, [The Big Polluters Bankrolling COP25](#), which names the corporations sponsoring and lobbying COP25 and concludes: “Enough is enough — we cannot let corporations use the climate talks as a marketing campaign to greenwash without accountability.”

In the end, after the longest sessions in COP’s long history, the final result achieved nothing regarding the main purpose: international carbon markets and greater ambition for national emissions reductions targets. The Canadian [government official press release](#) casts a positive light on the results, and general reaction and summary appears in *The Guardian* in [“The UN climate talks are over for another year – was anything achieved?”](#). [Good COP Bad COP](#) by Kate Aronoff and David Adler was published by Data for Progress on December 11, with a detailed

summary of the proceedings from a U.S. point of view. *Inside Climate News* explains the carbon markets discussion in **UN Climate Talks Stymied by Carbon Markets' 'Ghost from the Past'** .

Canadian headlines reflect strong disappointment:

Even mainstream Toronto *Globe and Mail* states: **“Madrid climate talks end in near failure as crucial decisions are bumped into 2020”** (Dec. 15). In *The National Observer* Chris Hatch and Barry Saxifrage ask **“Global climate summit. COP or Cop-out?”** on Dec. 12 , followed by **“UN climate negotiations end in ‘demoralizing, enraging’ failure”** on Dec. 15. In *The Energy Mix*: **“U.S. Declared ‘Climate Criminal’ as ‘Stalemated’ COP 25 Limpes to a Close”** (Dec. 13) and **“Disgraceful COP 25 Shows Big Emitters ‘Betraying People Across the World’ in The Energy Mix** (Dec. 16).

Climate Action Network Canada compiled statements from some of its member organizations on December 15 under this headline: **“COP25 derailed as polluters prioritized over people and planet”** . Among the statements:

from Catherine Abreu, Executive Director of Climate Action Network Canada : On every issue of significance, COP25 has delivered a mediocre or non -outcome that betrays the millions of people around the world calling for real climate action. While Canadian negotiators were largely constructive on the ground, Canada has a lot of work to do at home to address the gap between its climate goals and its ongoing commitment to expand the fossil fuel industry, which got a lot of international attention here in Madrid. Minister Wilkinson must increase Canada’s climate finance contributions and deliver on his government’s election promise to bring a new, more ambitious Paris pledge to COP26 in 2020.”

Dale Marshall, National Climate Program Manager, Environmental Defence Canada

“It wasn’t just that the COP25 outcome was a disaster. It was also demoralizing and enraging to see countries erase human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, not only in the text but in reality, and erode the environmental integrity of the Paris Agreement. It will be up to people in Canada and around the world to continue to mobilize and push governments to take real climate action.”

Denis Bolduc, secretary general of the FTQ (Quebec Federation of Workers)

“We see once again the lack of ambition of States to respond to the climate emergency. The Quebec Federation of Workers (FTQ) demands that the voices of billions of people be heard. We demand a robust framework in which the Just Transition can take place. Workers and their communities must be at the heart of the solutions. Only a social dialogue where everyone has an equal voice will allow us to get out of this crisis. Although the states failed to answer the call, the FTQ joins all the groups of civil society to implement a real energy transition. What we want is a Just Transition and there will be no Just Transition without the workers.”

Julee Sanderson, 1st National Vice-President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers

“... Stuck in the past and unwilling to act on ambitions, governments that have aligned

themselves with industry and capital have shown once again how simple it is to sidestep responsibility. In the face of all humanity and on a global stage it appears marching orders have come from the petroleum industry lobbyists rather than the millions watching from around the globe. Governments have managed to commit only to infinite growth and colonialism models. It is evident the message of civil society, its workers, its youth, its scientists, human rights groups, and Indigenous land, water, and air protectors have been inconvenient afterthoughts. Civil society must redouble its efforts on the front lines. There can be no ambition without human rights and a sustainable just transition for everyone.”

Labour achieves public promise of a Just Transition Act from Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change



The [Canadian Labour Congress Twitter feed](#) has been active in posting – especially December 11 events regarding the Workshop on Just Transition. Sharing the stage with CLC’s Tara Peel, Canada’s New Minister of Environment and Climate Change publicly committed to the election promise of federal legislation: a Just Transition Act at that event.

CLC Twitter feed also highlights the [Powering Past Coal Just Transition Task Force](#), launched in July 2019 with these [Terms of Reference](#) . This is an international group, unrelated to the Government of Canada’s Just Transition Task Force which has already reported. Members include academics, including Linda Clarke, (ProBE, University of Westminster and Co-Director, ACW) and Lori Thorlakson (University of Alberta) as well as unionists, including Hassan Yussuff, (president of the Canadian Labour Congress), Samantha Smith (ITUC Just Transition Centre), Bill Adams (

Trades Union Congress), Suzanne Jeffreys (One Million Climate Jobs/Campaign against Climate Change).

During COP25, the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) released a new series of three Backgrounders with the theme: **We must all be part of the solution on climate change**. The series consists of: **Governments must take Action**; **The Public Sector will be Part of the Solution**, and **The National Union will be Part of the Solution**, the union's commitment for its own action, as presented at the 2019 Triennial NUPGE Convention in June 2019.



Internationally, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) maintained a **COP25 blog**. Going into the meetings, the ITUC **Topline Demands for COP25** were published as a Frontline Briefing. They consist of “1. Greater ambition for Just Transition, with greater ambition in the new government climate plans, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that are due in 2020; 2. Governments must sign on to the “**Climate Action and Jobs Initiative**” launched at the September 2019 Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019; 3. Commit to financing for the most vulnerable: governments must live up to their promise to mobilise US \$100 billion annually by 2020.”

From the ITUC **Frontline Briefing**:

“Our message for all country leaders: we have just 10 years. Talking is no longer enough – ambition and Just Transition plans are urgent to secure the trust of people in every nation. • Stop the delaying measures, increase ambition in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) • Start implementing the social dialogue vital for agreements that deliver Just Transition for all. • Legislate for climate action including procurement rules. • Green New Deals must mean a new social contract in every country with labour rights, climate ambition and Just Transition at the core.”

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **COP25, International cooperation, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Just Transition, Just Transition Act** | [Leave a reply](#)

Philippines Human Rights Commission delivers landmark decision, holding the Carbon Majors

accountable for climate damages – Updated

Posted on **December 12, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

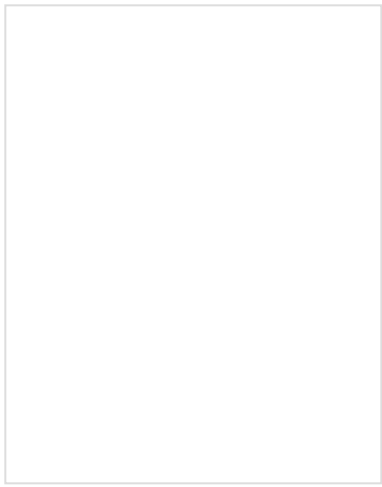
The Human Rights Commission of the Philippines has concluded its three-year investigation of a complaint led by Greenpeace South-East Asia , and has found that the collective contribution to global heating by 47 coal, cement, and oil and gas companies has violated Filipinos' basic human rights to life, water, food, sanitation, adequate housing and self-determination. Although the full decision is not yet available – but promised by the end of 2019 – the announcement made by one of the Commissioners at the COP25 meetings stated that it would be up to individual countries to pass strong legislation and establish legal liability in their own courts, but that “there was clear scope under existing civil law in the Philippines to take action.”

The Director of Greenpeace Philippines is quoted in the **Greenpeace press release**:

“The findings are a landmark victory for communities around the world who are at the frontlines of the climate emergency. This is the first ever finding of corporate responsibility for human rights harms resulting from the climate crisis. The outcome goes beyond the Philippines and can reach every single human being alive or yet to be born. However, this is only the beginning. We believe the findings provide very strong basis not just for future legal actions against big polluters, but also for citizens and communities to confront inaction by companies and governments in the streets and in the hallways of power.”

Greenpeace maintains **an archive of documents** related to this long-running investigation, including corporate responses and expert opinions. *Climate Liability News* has published a number of articles, including “**Carbon Majors Can Be Held Liable for Human Rights Violations, Philippines Commission Rules**” and “**Philippines Climate Case Could Find Fossil Fuel Companies Violate Human Rights**” (2017), which provides more background to the case.

Update: On December 18, *The Tyee* published “**Oilsands Firms ‘Morally Responsible’ for Deaths and Destruction from Climate Disasters**”, an interview by Geoff Demicki with Greenpeace’s Naderev Yeb Saño , which “explains what a Philippines human rights investigation means for the fossil fuel industry in Canada.”



Related: An authoritative chronicling of the human rights dimension in UNFCCC decisions and the Paris Agreement appears in [Rights in a Changing Climate](#) by the Centre for International Environmental Law, published on December 5. It includes examples of Just Transition and decent work. The CIEL also operates a Working Group on Climate Rights, with a dedicated website [here](#).

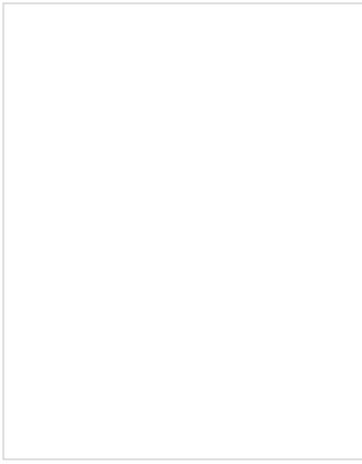
Updates on climate litigation:

“Fossil Fuels on Trial: Where the Major Climate Change Lawsuits Stand Today” was published by *Inside Climate News* on November 29, providing a good sum-up of the year, but too early to reflect the landmark Philippines decision, nor the December 10 decision in the suit by the New York Attorney General against Exxon. The surprising victory for Exxon is described in **“Judge Clears Exxon in Investor Fraud Case Over Climate Risk Disclosure”** in *Inside Climate News*, as well as in a [New York Times](#) article.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Change Liability](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Human Rights](#), [natural disasters](#), [Philippines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Newly-elected government in Canada outlines its climate priorities; faces first major test in the Frontier mine decision

Posted on **December 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Canada's minority government is back in session after the October 2019 election, launched by the ***Speech from the Throne*** on December 5. The Throne Speech traditionally is used to outline government priorities, and signals that Justin Trudeau and his Liberal party will try to stay in power by balancing the demands of the oil and gas proponents in Alberta against the environmental concerns of the rest of the country. The *Toronto Star* parsed the speech in "**What does it mean? The Throne Speech Interpreted**".

On the issue of climate change, here are the actual words of the Throne Speech:

"In this election, Parliamentarians received a mandate from the people of Canada which Ministers will carry out. It is a mandate to fight climate change, strengthen the middle class, walk the road of reconciliation, keep Canadians safe and healthy, and position Canada for success in an uncertain world."... A clear majority of Canadians voted for ambitious climate action now. And that is what the Government will deliver. It will continue to protect the environment and preserve Canada's natural legacy. And it will do so in a way that grows the economy and makes life more affordable.

The Government will set a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This goal is ambitious, but necessary – for both environmental protection and economic growth.

The Government will continue to lead in ensuring a price on pollution everywhere in this country, working with partners to further reduce emissions.

The Government will also:

help to make energy efficient homes more affordable, and introduce measures to build clean, efficient, and affordable communities;

make it easier for people to choose zero-emission vehicles;

work to make clean, affordable power available in every Canadian community;

work with businesses to make Canada the best place to start and grow a clean technology company; and

provide help for people displaced by climate-related disasters.

The Government will also act to preserve Canada's natural legacy, protecting 25 percent of Canada's land and 25 percent of Canada's oceans by 2025. Further, it will continue efforts to reduce plastic pollution, and use nature-based solutions to fight climate change – including planting two billion trees to clean the air and make our communities greener.

And while the Government takes strong action to fight climate change, it will also work just as hard to get Canadian resources to new markets, and offer unwavering support to the hardworking women and men in Canada's natural resources sectors, many of whom have faced tough times recently."

Reaction from environmentalists and Opposition party leaders appeared in the *National Observer*, in "**Liberals commit to carbon-pollution target of net-zero by 2050**" (Dec. 5); and in "**Throne speech climate commitments dwarfed by spending on Trans Mountain**" by the Dogwood Institute .

The Canadian Labour Congress **reacted** with this generally supportive statement: "We need bold targets to fight climate change, we owe that to our children "We also owe the next generation good jobs and commitments to minimize the impact on workers. Today's commitments move us towards a greener economy." In advance of the Throne Speech, **the Green Economy Network**, a union network of which the CLC is one member, had made a harder-hitting statement: "The GEN is demanding that the Prime Minister make climate job creation a priority through investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and green buildings, public transit and higher speed rail transit."

Also in advance of the Throne Speech, a group led by the Smart Prosperity Initiative **delivered an Open Letter** outlining detailed demands for clean economy initiatives. The twenty-six signatories include leaders from business, environmental advocacy groups, and the United Steelworkers and BlueGreen Canada.

One of the first major tests for the minority government, should it last that long, will be the decision required by the end of February on whether to approve the application by Teck Resources for the massive Frontier oil sands project – a \$20-billion, 260,000-barrel-per-day open-pit petroleum-mining project near Fort McKay in northern Alberta. The **Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency website** provides official documentation, including the July 2019 **Joint Review Panel Report** , which includes discussion of the economic and employment impacts of the project (beginning page 883). Critiques of the Joint Review Panel approval were published in July by *The Narwhal* **here** and the Pembina Institute **here** .

And now, as Parliament reconvenes and the COP25 meetings are underway, the Frontier mine is becoming the litmus test of Canada's climate change policy, as laid out in "[Trudeau will fuel the fires of our climate crisis if he approves Canada's mega mine](#)", an Opinion piece by Tzeporah Berman which appeared in *The Guardian* on December 10. Also on December 10, Greta Thunberg and fourteen other young people released an Open Letter to government leaders of Canada and Norway, calling on them to block any new oil and gas projects and quickly phase out existing ones. The *National Observer* explains in "[Greta Thunberg and other youth call on Trudeau to ditch fossil fuels](#)" (Dec.9) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change policies](#), [Frontier Mine](#), [Green Economy](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Oil Sands](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How to communicate “Just Transition” to union members and communities

Posted on **December 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Climate Outreach, a U.K.-based organization of social scientists and communication specialists, has published new research, summarized in the handbook for a general audience, [How to Have Conversations about Climate Change](#), released on December 5. An earlier handbook released in September was aimed at NGO's, policymakers and academics who seek to communicate better about Just Transition. [Broadening engagement with Just Transition: Opportunities and Challenges](#) is an 18-page handbook with practical recommendations for the language and imagery which reaches people across the political and economic spectrum – with very specific attention to union members. It is based from experience since 2010, including 55 workshops in Alberta in 2017 (7 of which were with oil workers), and interviews with UK union leaders about just transition in 2019. The full reports concerning the Alberta Narratives project is [here](#).

Recommendations from [Broadening engagement with Just Transition](#) include:

.....The idea of just transition prompts negative reactions amongst some union representatives, who see it as a conversation about job losses, with little realistic chance of recompense.

.... In previous testing, the imagery and language of 'justice' has not resonated well across the political spectrum with centre-right audiences, suggesting that 'just transition' may prompt the same response. The subtly different framing of 'fairness' may work better with people who hold these values. Fairness is about doing right by everyone involved; justice, by contrast, may imply wrongdoing in the past that must be atoned for.

...People's sense of identity is often closely bound up with the work they do. Extractive industries like coal mining are often, for example, closely associated with pride and a strong sense of place. Demonstrating gratitude and respect for the contribution of fossil fuels can create a strong basis for mutual discussion in the future – with renewables and natural resources as an extension of that pride.

....When people feel criticised and devalued, they are much less likely to engage. Approaching a conversation without a sense of blame is an important part of a productive dialogue.

...Many communities are turned off by the imagery and stereotypes associated with environmentalism, and will speak more openly with trusted members of their own community. In successful communications, trust between all parties is essential.

A good Canadian example of some of these principles recently appeared on the CBC website in the form of an OpEd by Rylan Higgins, now a professor at St. Mary's University in Halifax, but formerly an oil worker. He writes about his experiences in the oil fields in **“It's pretty brutal, pretty unforgiving': Why the West should move beyond an oilpatch economy”** (Nov. 15), and argues that the fossil industry has “long been one based on inequality, bootstrap individualism, and high-octane opportunism.” Importantly, he urges those working to transition Canada into the green economy “to consider the workers and families in the industry as we do so.” He adds that “the next economic arrangement should put workers [to whom he “tips his hard hat”], families, and the environment first—and investors and corporate bigwigs last.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate change in the Media](#), [communicating climate change](#), [Just Transition](#), [Oil and gas industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Australian companies are moving to renewable energy to meet employee expectations for climate action

Posted on **December 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



REenergising Australian business: the corporate race to 100% renewable energy was released by Greenpeace Australia Pacific on December 4.

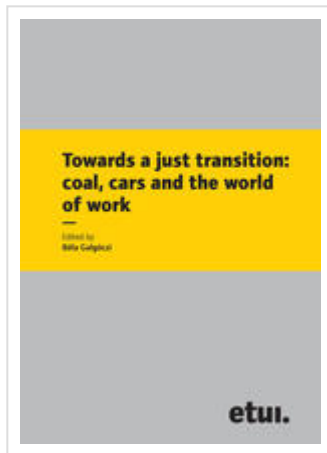
Drawing on public information as well as 34 responses to a survey sent to 80 “big-brand” companies, the report presents analysis of the corporate move to renewable energy, covering seven major industry sectors, as well as case studies of individual companies. Of the 80 companies profiled: 30% have committed to move to 100% renewable energy ; 26% have signed a corporate power purchase agreement , and 65% have invested in rooftop or onsite solar.

Regarding job creation: The report estimates the impact if companies moved to 100% renewable energy to power their operations: for 3 of Australia’s largest companies (Woolworths, Coles and Telstra) it would create 4194 construction job-years and 232 ongoing jobs ; the 10 largest companies in the property and construction sector would create more than 1000 construction job-years, and the 14 largest telecommunications, IT, and technology companies would create around 2000 construction job-years.

What is driving the corporate move to renewables? “The UComms polling found 67% of Australians would prefer to work for a company that uses renewable energy, rather than one that doesn’t, while 100% of companies surveyed by Greenpeace reported that a key reason for shifting to renewable energy is employee expectation. In 2019, the Edelman Trust Barometer found 67% of employees “expect that prospective employers will join them in taking action on societal issues” and 76% say “CEOs should take the lead on change rather than waiting for government to impose it.”

Just transition for the Coal and Car Industries – a period of “revolutionary” change in Europe

Posted on **December 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Towards a just transition: Coal, cars and the world of work is a new and unique report edited by Béla Galgóczi, senior researcher at the European Trade Union Institute, a member of the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) research project, and the author of several previous reports on Just Transition, including ***Phasing out Coal – A Just Transition approach*** (2019) and ***Greening Industries and Creating Jobs*** (2012).

In his introduction, he states:

“‘Just transition’ has become the main concept and strategy tool for managing the transformation towards a net zero-carbon economy in a way that is both balanced and fair, but it is also clear that this concept is developing in a too broad and general, and often even over-stretched, manner. In order to discuss it meaningfully, we need to turn to specific case studies. Coal-based energy generation on the one hand and the automobile industry on the other do not only represent two sectors that are responsible for a large part of total GHG emissions, they also illustrate what is really meant by the different contexts of just transition.”

The report chapters, available individually for download [here](#), are written by European experts, and will provide English-speaking readers with access to some of the research written in the European languages.

Part 1 updates the well-researched decarbonization of the coal industry, in Poland, Germany, France and Italy.

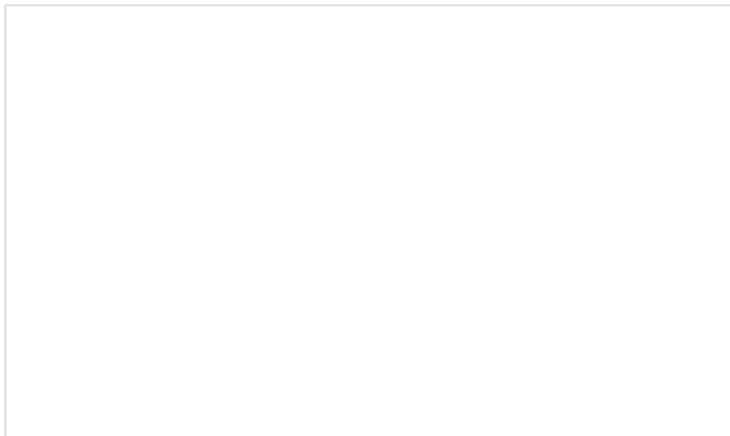
Part 2 breaks newer ground, as it “delivers an account of the revolutionary change taking place in the automobile industry, proceeding from a European overview (chapter 6) to insights both from France (chapter 7) and from Germany, the latter with its central eastern European supply chains (chapter 8). Chapter 9 then gives the view of IG Metall, a trade union which has a key role in managing change in the automobile industry in an active and forward-looking way.” Regarding the automobile industry, the introduction states: “With digitalisation and decarbonisation, the industry faces unprecedented challenges in the near future that will re-write its entire business model, redefine work and redraw its value chains. Managing this change requires innovative approaches from the main actors and new forms of relationships between the actors.” Germany’s social partnership bargaining structure is the framework for the innovative initiatives described at the EU, federal, regional and plant level.

The report is summarized by Mr. Galgóczi in [“Why should just transition be an integral part of the European Green Deal?”](#), which appeared in Social Europe on December 4.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Automobiles](#), [Coal Industry](#), [coal transition](#), [European Union](#), [IG Metall](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Psychologists pledge to expand their role in combating climate change

Posted on **December 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Joining professionals from many other disciplines who are directing their skills and knowledge to the climate crisis, the leader of the Canadian Psychological Association, along with those from more than 40 other countries, signed a proclamation which pledges to use their expertise to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts – not only at the individual level to help

people cope with the mental health aspects such as eco-anxiety, but also at the societal level, as a proactive force to encourage communication, research, and to spark behaviour change and action.

Excerpts from the ***Proclamation on Collaboration***, reproduced at the website of the Canadian Psychological Association , and signed at the **International Summit on Psychology and Global Health** in Lisbon on November 14 – 16, 2019.

WHEREAS climate crisis has a disproportionate impact on already vulnerable groups with fewer resources, including low-income individuals or those who live in rural areas, people of color, women, children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities;

WHEREAS research shows that climate change-related events can result in major acute and chronic adverse mental health outcomes, including stress, trauma, and shock; post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of anxiety; depression; and substance use disorder, which have been a secondary consideration in climate change communication and action;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that our psychology organizations will advocate for and support international and cross-disciplinary collaboration to mitigate and facilitate adaptation to climate crisis.

We will inform our respective members and the public about climate crisis, emphasizing scientific research and consensus on its causes and short- and long-term harms, and the need for immediate personal and societal action;

We will encourage our members and other mental health leaders to be vocal advocates concerning the necessary preparatory and responsive adaptations to climate crisis and to invest more in research and practice in this area;

We will advocate for Universities and other entities could include formation on societal challenges and, particularly, climate crisis for psychologists and other mental health professionals;

We will increase the availability of services and supportive interventions to help minimize harm to mental health and well-being, especially among vulnerable populations, and increase community resilience;

We will advocate for the rights of those most susceptible to the negative health, and mainly, mental health impacts of climate crisis, for example, by encouraging policymakers to fully fund programs to aid those who suffer harm from severe climate crisis-related events;

We will support the development of a public awareness campaign to encourage individuals and communities to adopt behaviors to help prepare for and recover from gradual climate change and acute climate crisis events;

We will encourage governmental, educational, health, and corporate leaders to use more psychological science in policy designs as well as to adopt norms, values, and policy to promote

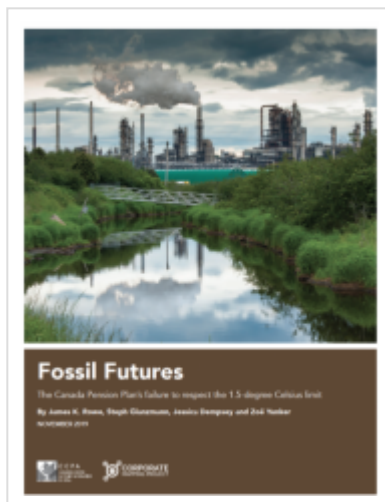
sustainable preventive and corrective behaviors in individuals, groups and communities”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [behaviour change](#), [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and mental health](#), [Professional Associations](#), [psychologists](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Moral failure and financial risk at the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board

Posted on **December 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Mark Carney will leave his role as Governor of the Bank of England in January 2020 and return to live in Canada as he takes up his [new job as the United Nations’ special envoy on climate action and climate finance](#). According [to the BBC](#), “Mr Carney will be tasked with mobilising private finance to take climate action and help transition to a net-zero carbon economy for the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting in Glasgow in November 2020. This will include building new frameworks for financial reporting and risk management, as well as making climate change a key priority in private financial decision making.”



Required reading on the topic: [Fossil Futures: The Canada Pension Plan's failure to respect the 1.5-degree Celsius limit](#), released on November 19 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Analysis-B.C. (CCPA-BC). The report reveals new evidence in the long-standing criticism of the management of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPIB), which manages the fund on which all Canadians rely when they retire. *Fossil Futures'* major finding is that the CPIB is failing to consider the Paris agreement target of 1.5 degrees C., stating: “Within its public equities portfolio, it has over \$4 billion invested in the top 200 publicly traded fossil fuel reserve holders (oil, gas and coal). To stay within 1.5 degrees, these companies can extract only 71.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide, yet the companies the CPIB is invested in have 281 billion tonnes in reserve, meaning they have almost four times the carbon reserves that can be sold and ultimately burned

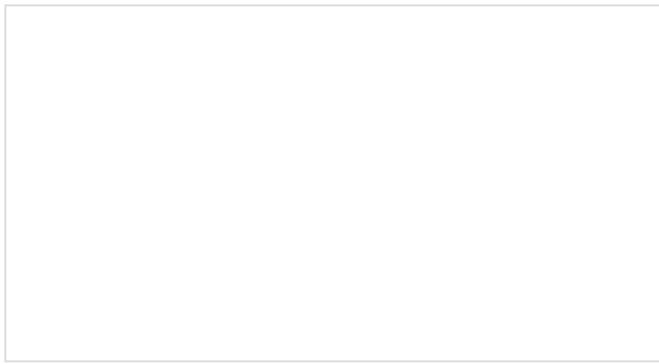
to stay within 1.5 degrees. Since reserves are factored into current company valuations, this means the CPPIB has invested billions of dollars in companies whose financial worth depends on overshooting their carbon budget.” This aspect of the report was highlighted in [an article in *The Narwhal*](#).

Fossil Futures also considers why the CPPIB has lagged the rest of the world in climate responsibility, stating that “the board of directors and staff are entangled with the oil and gas industry. For example, one of the CPPIB’s managing directors of energy and resources sits on the board of nine oil and gas companies.” And as for its traditional position that it has not divested from fossil fuel companies so that it can influence their direction on environmental issues, *Fossil Futures* concludes: “The CPPIB’s attempts to draw on proxy voting as a central tool to address climate in its portfolio appears ineffective at best, but at worst may misinform beneficiaries expecting a more stringent and meaningful climate strategy.”

Fossil Futures makes recommendations for both the CPPIB and the Canadian government:

- **The CPPIB should:** 1. Carry out a portfolio-wide risk analysis in the context of the climate emergency and disclose all findings to pension members. 2. Divest and reinvest. The surest way to address the financial and ethical risks associated with investment in the fossil fuel industry is to start the process of divestment. This means freezing any new fossil fuel investment, developing a plan to first remove highrisk companies from portfolios such as coal, oil sands and fracked gas producers, and finally, moving toward sector-wide divestment and reinvestment of capital into renewable energy sources. 3. Advocate for strong climate policy. Scientific and economic experts predict that climate change beyond 1.5 degrees will result in widespread political, social and economic decline, with the attendant impacts on pension returns. While pension plans are incapable of preventing such changes on their own, managers of these plans can become strong advocates for climate policy that is in alignment with their intergenerational fiduciary duty.

- **The Canadian government should:** 1. Require full public disclosure of climate risk—including disclosure of all fossil fuel holdings—for all pension funds. California recently passed a law requiring that its major public pensions disclose climate risk. The Canadian government should do the same with the CPPIB. 2. Provide regulatory clarity to ensure that executing fiduciary duty means avoiding shortterm economic gains that imperil long-term climatic security for Canadians and the global community. 3. Revise the CPPIB’s “investment-only” mandate so that social and ecological values are better represented in investment decisions. It is unclear that securing retirement income by investing in tobacco companies, weapons manufacturers, private prisons and the fossil fuel companies responsible for the climate emergency is aligned with the interests of current or future beneficiaries.



Action item: Tides Canada campaign has launched a new campaign, called **Shift your Pension**, for individuals who are concerned about their pensions – both the financial health and the impact on the climate crisis. It allows you to send your own message to the CPPIB as well as provincially-managed public sector pension funds.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)**, **Mark Carney**, **Pension Fund management** | **Leave a reply**

Ontario updates: Advisory Panel on Climate Change appointed; Auditor General pans climate policies; Ontario youth launch new lawsuit

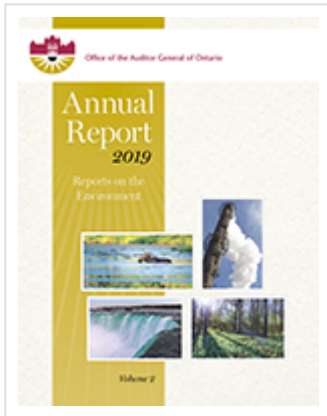
Posted on **December 2, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

Post updated November 6:

In a November 28 press release, Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the **appointment of an Ontario Advisory Panel on Climate Change**. The press release quotes the new Chair, Paul Kovacs who states: "The knowledge exists to prevent losses from flooding, wildfire and other climate extremes.... "Members of the advisory panel on climate change look forward to working with the Government of Ontario to champion climate resilience. Working together, we can break the alarming trend of rising severe weather damage to homes, businesses and public infrastructure. Action on climate resilience is a critical element of a comprehensive strategy on climate change."

Members of the Advisory Panel come from a variety of sectors including non-profits, agriculture, insurance, and reflect the Panel's focus on adaptation and conservation concerns. Neither green advocacy groups nor workers are represented. The brief bios of panelists are **here**: Chair Paul Kovacs is founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction at Western University; Vice-Chair Lynette Mader is the Manager of Provincial Operations for Ontario

for Ducks Unlimited Canada and an expert on species-at-risk. The other eight Panel members include Blair Feltmate, head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo and Chair of the Government of Canada Expert Panel on Climate Adaptation and Resilience Results.



The Advisory Panel was announced on the one-year anniversary of the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. On December 4, that policy initiative was reviewed when the provincial Auditor General tabled her annual report in the Legislature, including ***Volume 2: Reports on the Environment***. In 183 pages and three chapters, the report provides an overview of 1. environmental issues in Ontario; 2. Operation of the Environmental Bill of Rights, and 3. Climate Change: Ontario's plan to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The report details the government's performance and finds that it has double-counted emissions reductions in some cases, over-estimated potential impacts of its own policies, and is nowhere near able to meet its own 2030 emissions reductions targets. The *National Observer* summarizes the report in "**Ontario Auditor General slams Doug Ford's climate policies**" and an analysis at the TVO website tells a similar story in "**Ontario's Auditor General gives the Tories' climate plan a failing grade**". This latest report follows on the previous highly-critical report of the outgoing Environmental Commissioner, ***A Healthy, Happy, Prosperous Ontario: Why we need more energy conservation*** (March 2019), and the ***Failure to Launch*** report in October 2019 by Environmental Defence.

Youth launch lawsuit against Ontario government

All of these negative findings won't help the government as they prepare to defend themselves against a new **climate change lawsuit by Ontario youth** who claim that the Ford government's softening of emissions reductions targets "will lead to widespread illness and death," and thus has violated their charter rights under Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Seven applicants from communities across Ontario, ranging in age from 12 to 24, are represented by lawyers from Ecojustice and Stockwoods LLP. Details are in the Ecojustice **Case Background**; an overview of the action appears in the *National Observer* in "**These Ontario kids are taking climate protest from streets to courthouse**" (Nov. 26).

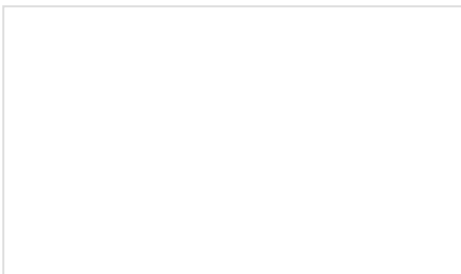


Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

66 recommendations from Special Advisor in investigation of Ontario's 2019 record-setting floods

Posted on **December 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Disastrous and **record-setting flooding** occurred across the province of Ontario between April and July 2019, with 23 municipalities declaring states of emergencies. In July 2019, the government appointed **Doug McNeil**, an experienced public servant from Manitoba, as Special Advisor on Flooding, with a mandate to consider the flood management and land use systems in Ontario. His report was submitted to the government on October 31 and made public on November 28 – the press release is [here](#).



The 157-page ***Report of an Independent review of the 2019 flood events in Ontario*** describes in detail the complex administrative and regulatory system which governs the province's flood management, and concludes that "the government and its partners were effective at reducing and mitigating flood risks.... the flooding was caused by a combination of weather conditions and found no human error or negligence in the operation of "water control structures" (translation: dams).

Reaction to the report includes "**Doug Ford government ducks fiscal responsibility for severe flooding**" in the *National Observer* (November 28) – which points out: "The first Ford budget had

slashed by 50 per cent the flood management funds given to conservation authorities by his ministry to protect Ontario's watersheds and canceled tree-planting efforts that limit flood damage." A Toronto *Globe and Mail* article focuses on the home-owners perspective in their overview "**Ontario homes at risk of flooding should be made public: report**". The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority reacted positively— their **press release** notes that many of their recommendations and comments about urban flooding were incorporated in the Special Advisor's recommendations. It is notable that the **Chair of the TRCA was appointed** on the same day as a member of Ontario's new Advisory Panel on Climate Change.

The Special Advisor makes sixty-six recommendations for improved action and coordination by the provincial ministries and conservation authorities, and calls for sustained funding for budgets related to flood management . Recommendations include:

- #3: "That the following be incorporated into the Provincial Policy Statement: • The reference to "impacts of a changing climate" throughout the Provincial Policy Statement helps to bring it to everyone's attention and should be included in the Preamble as well."
- #15: That the Province consider adopting legislation that will require flood risk properties to be identified in some way that is publicly accessible, at the very least on the property title, to ensure that prospective buyers are aware.
- #16 That municipalities consider utilizing local improvement charges to help finance and install (or upgrade) shoreline protection works, and if necessary, that the Province provide municipalities with enhanced authority to do so.
- #52: That the Province continue the dialogue with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the federal government on the steps needed to make flood insurance more available to more Ontarians.
- #66: That the Province maintain, at a minimum, the current level of funding in departmental budgets and programs related to everything flood (i.e. existing approval processes and associated policies and technical requirements, floodplain mapping, maintenance of flood infrastructure, satellite imagery, etc.).

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **disaster management, Flooding, natural disasters, Ontario** | **Leave a reply**

B.C. Building Step Code credited with the province's top rank in Canada for energy efficiency

Posted on **November 27, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



With a view to encouraging cooperation amongst provinces, **Efficiency Canada** launched Canada's first-ever **Provincial Energy Efficiency Scorecard** on November 19, accompanied by an interactive **database** which is promised to be updated regularly. The full Scorecard report is a free download from **this link** (registration required). Provinces were scored out of 100 for their energy efficiency programs, enabling policies, building, transportation, and industry, between January 2018 and June 2019. British Columbia ranks #1 (56 points), followed by Quebec (48), Ontario (47) and Nova Scotia (45). Saskatchewan was last with only 18 out of 100 possible points. But beyond the gross numbers and overview comparisons, the report, at 190 pages, provides a wealth of detail and policy information provided about best practices and achievements in each jurisdiction – especially about electrification, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, and building policies and codes.

Two of the study co-authors, Brendan Haley and James Gaede, have written "**Canadians can unite behind energy efficiency**" published in *Policy Options*, providing context and highlights.

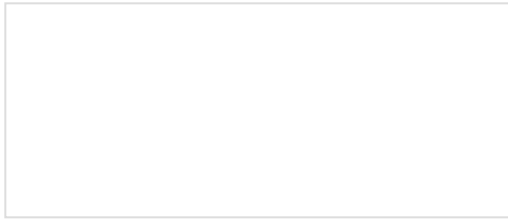
Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **B.C. Step Code**, **British Columbia**, **Building Codes**, **Electric Vehicles**, **energy efficiency**, **provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Final report from Canada's Ecofiscal Commission recommends stringent

carbon pricing to reach 2030

GHG goals

Posted on **November 27, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



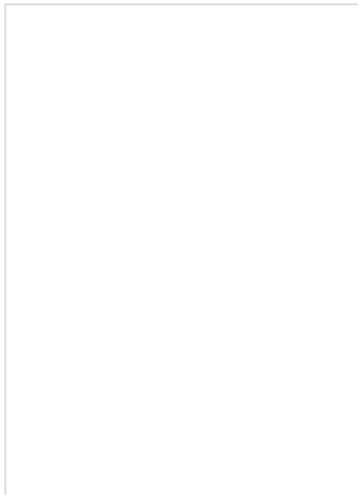
On November 27, the Ecofiscal Commission announced that their latest research report, ***Bridging the Gap: Real Options for Meeting Canada's 2030 GHG Target*** will be their last. This final report brings to an end five years of research and publication which has centred largely on the cost effectiveness and optimal design of carbon pricing for Canada. ***Bridging the Gap*** recommends that "If governments wish to meet their climate goals at least cost, they should rely on increasingly stringent carbon pricing" – steadily increasing the carbon price by around \$20/tonne every year from 2023 until 2030. The next best option is increasingly stringent, well-designed, flexible regulations, including for example, the Clean Fuel Standard. The report argues that "It's tempting to think that alternatives to carbon pricing will cost us less. But their costs are hidden and actually cost us more. Our modelling shows that carbon pricing will grow Canadian incomes on average by \$3,300 more in 2030 relative to a policy approach that relies on a mix of subsidies and industry-only regulations...No matter what policy tool—or combination of tools—we use to achieve Canada's 2030 target, policies will have to be significantly more stringent than they are today. The regulatory approaches we model, for example, require halving the emissions intensity of industrial production by 2030."

The report provides new forecast results using Navius Research's GTECH General Equilibrium economic model, to cost and evaluate three options for climate policy which would allow Canada to meet its 2030 GHG target: #1: Carbon pricing with revenues recycled toward percapita dividends and output-based pricing for EITE sectors; #2: A range of regulations and subsidies applied across the entire economy; #3: A range of regulations and subsidies, excluding those that would result in direct costs for households. Although the authors acknowledge that impacts will be felt on jobs, especially in emissions intensive industries, employment impacts are not estimated or discussed.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [climate change policies](#), [Ecofiscal Commission](#), [Ghg emissions reduction strategies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European Investment Bank stops fossil funding; Bank of Canada acknowledges the dangers of stranded assets

Posted on **November 25, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The long-awaited decision came on November 13, when the European Investment Bank (EIB) issued [a press release](#) announcing that “ We will stop financing fossil fuels and we will launch the most ambitious climate investment strategy of any public financial institution anywhere.” Also, “.....The EIB will work closely with the European Commission to support investment by a Just Transition Fund. The EIB will be able to finance up to 75% of the eligible project cost for new energy investment in these countries. These projects will also benefit from both advisory and financial support from the EIB.” *The Guardian* summarizes the policy [here](#) ; details are in the full document, [EIB Energy Lending Policy: Supporting the energy transformation](#).

The decision ends a long and contentious review process which received more than 149 written submissions and petitions signed by more than 30,000 people. National members of the EU negotiated and compromised – the German government had been expected to abstain from the vote but ended by supporting the measure. A [press release from WWF-Europe](#) is generally supportive, stating “All public and private banks must urgently follow suit” – while pointing out that the decision postpones the end of financing for gas projects until 2021, and allows for further financing for any gas infrastructure that could potentially transport so-called “green gas”. A [summary in Clean Energy Wire](#) quotes Claudia Kemfert, climate economist at the German Institute for Economic Research, who calls the EIB decision “a game changer”, and says, “Even if there’s still a backdoor for fossil gas included, this is an important and necessary step in the right direction.”

Bank of Canada acknowledges climate change risks to the economy

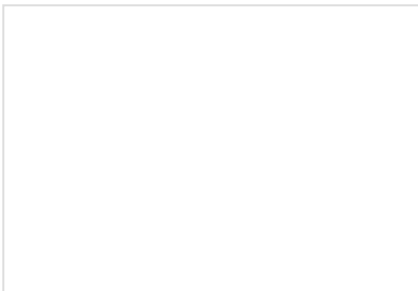
On November 19, the Bank of Canada published its most complete statement to date about the transitions and risks which climate change will bring, in [*Researching the Economic Effects of Climate Change*](#), a report prepared by Miguel Molico, senior research director at the bank's Financial Stability Department. On November 21, the Governor of the Bank of Canada followed up on this [by raising the issue of climate change and the risk of stranded assets](#) during an address to the Ontario Securities Commission. The *National Observer* summarizes the development in [“Bank of Canada warns of stranded assets and an abrupt transition to clean economy”](#) (Nov. 23).

Also in Canada, on November 19, the [**Institute for Sustainable Finance**](#) was launched. Housed at the Smith School of Business at Queen's University, Kingston Ontario: “The Institute for Sustainable Finance (ISF) is the first-ever cross-cutting and collaborative hub in Canada that fuses academia, the private sector, and government with the singular focus of increasing Canada's sustainable finance capacity.” A more formal statement comes in the Institute's launch report:

[*Green Finance: New Directions in Sustainable Finance Research & Policy*](#) which states: “the Institute will span a continuum of expertise from across varying disciplines, including finance, economics, environmental studies, political science and others, in order to foster innovative research, education, external collaborations and partnerships. The Institute's mandate is threefold:

- Generate innovative and relevant research on sustainable finance and effectively communicate this research to all pertinent stakeholders.
- Serve as a platform for collaboration between government, academia and industry.
- Provide educational opportunities and develop capacity in the field of sustainable finance.”

The [*Green Finance report*](#) summarizes the discussions by financial experts at a conference by the same name, held on June 14-15, 2019, following the release of the Report of the government's [**Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance – Mobilizing Finance for Sustainable Growth**](#). To help readers who are not financial experts, the Institute website offers useful “primers” to explain some fundamental concepts in sustainable finance, including [Climate-Related Financial Disclosures](#), [Divestment](#), and [Transition Bonds](#). Not to be confused with Just Transition funding, the primer explains that “Transition Bonds” are corporate financing tools, and the companies who issue them must use the proceeds to fund a business transition towards a reduced environmental impact or reduction in carbon emissions. (The example given is that a coal-mining company could issue a transition bond to finance efforts to capture and store carbon.)



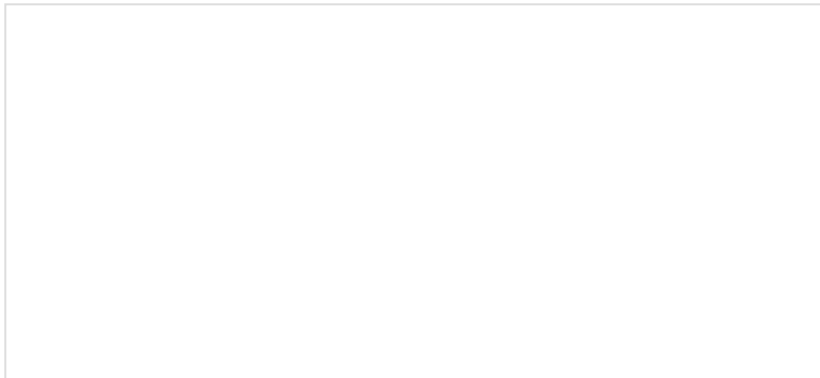
As one of its first actions, the ISF established the **Canadian Sustainable Finance Network (CSFN)** an independent formal research and educational network for academia, industry and government to bring together a talented network of university faculty members and relevant members from industry, government and civil society. A list of members, [here](#), includes multiple faculty from twelve Canadian universities, one from Yale in the U.S., and other individual academics from universities which are not institutional members (including UBC, HEC Montreal, and Memorial University).

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Bank of Canada, climate change activism, financial institutions, Financial Risk, fossil fuel industry, Green Finance, Stranded Assets** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change and health in Canada

Posted on **November 20, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Prairie Climate Centre at the University of Winnipeg maintains the Climate Atlas of Canada, and on November 20 launched a new section of their website devoted to **climate change and health in Canada**. So far, the webpages provide a general overview of the issues of air quality, diseases, extreme heat, and mental health – supporte

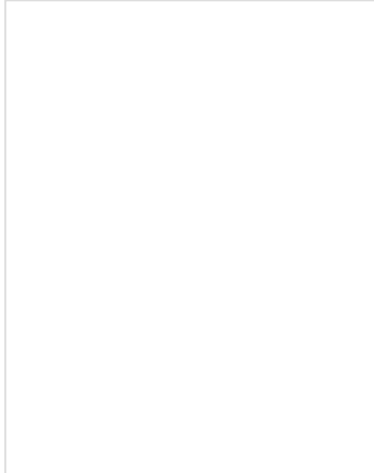


d by more detailed articles – for example, **Climate Change, Air Quality, and Public Health** ; **Wildfire Smoke and Health** ; and a new **4-minutes video about wildfires**, with impactful images which highlight the links between wildfires and mental health, especially relating to first responders and medical providers. The Prairie Climate Centre also published the **Heat Waves and Health** report, released in August 2019, and now part of the new section.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change and health, climate change and mental health, first responders, health care professionals, health effects of climate change, wildfires** | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta coal phase-out experience as a blueprint for just transition

Posted on November 20, 2019 by [elizabethperry493](#)



On November 20, the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta released a new report: ***Alberta's Coal Phase-out: A Just Transition?*** . Acknowledging that there is no single approach to just transition, co-authors Ian Hussey and Emma Jackson consider some common values and approaches expressed in the just transition literature: support for re-employment or alternative employment, income and benefit support, pension bridging and early retirement assistance, and retraining and educational programs for workers. The [press release](#) quotes Ian Hussey: "While far from perfect, the Alberta transition programs provide a blueprint that will become increasingly important in the coming decades as the world makes the shift away from fossil fuels."

The report evaluates the real-world experience of the coal phase-out in Alberta, which began in 2012 under the federal Conservative Harper government, and accelerated after 2015 under the provincial policies of the New Democratic Party. It describes in detail the events and context of the provincial transition policies, and uses case studies of three companies – TransAlta, ATCO, and Capital Power- as well as a community case study of Parkland County. The report concludes with an analytic discussion, evaluating the government's transition programs for workers and for coal communities. The full report is [here](#) ; an Executive Summary is [here](#) .

The report is a joint publication of the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta, and the Corporate Mapping Project, a joint initiative led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives BC and Saskatchewan Offices, and the Parkland Institute.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [coal phase-out](#), [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

2019 Lancet Countdown emphasizes climate impacts on children's health

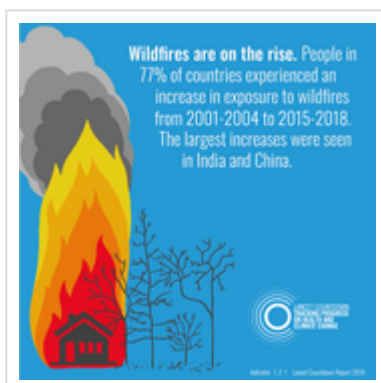
Posted on **November 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Since 2016, the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* has published an annual report, ***Countdown on Health and Climate Change*** . The 2018 Countdown report focused on work-related health impacts of climate change, especially heat effects, as summarized in the [WCR here](#) . The **2019 edition** just released in early November focuses on the impacts of climate change on the health of children, with this key message: it is possible to limit the global average temperature rise to well below 2°C, a situation which “would transform the health of a child born today for the better, throughout their lives. Placing health at the centre of the coming transition will yield enormous dividends for the public and the economy, with cleaner air, safer cities, and healthier diets.”

In addition to the global report, the Lancet also publishes country-specific Policy Briefing reports. The ***Policy Briefing for Canada*** (in French [here](#)) is written in cooperation with the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Public Health Association. The four highlighted results for Canada are:

1. “Exposure to wildfires is increasing in Canada, with more than half of the 448,444 Canadians evacuated due to wildfires between 1980 and 2017 displaced in the last decade;



2. The percentage of fossil fuels powering transport in Canada remains high, though electricity and biofuels are gaining ground. Fine particulate air pollution generated by transportation killed 1063 Canadians in 2015, resulting in a loss of economic welfare for Canadians valued at approximately \$8 billion dollars;
3. Canada has the third-highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions from healthcare in the world, with healthcare accounting for approximately 4% of the country's total emissions;
4. The health of Canadians is at risk due to multiple and varied risks of climate change..... An ongoing, coordinated, consistent and pan-Canadian effort to track, report, and create healthy change is required."

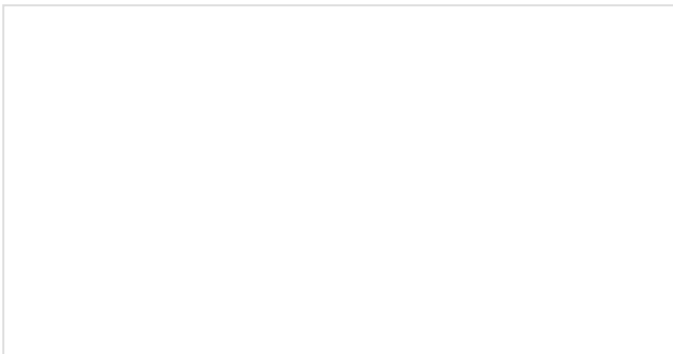
For each of the four problems, broad policy recommendations are made.

Some of the other countries for which Policy Briefs are available: [Australia](#) ; [European Union](#) ; the [United Kingdom](#) ; and the [United States](#) . Each one reflects the unique challenges of the country concerned. The full menu of all Country Briefs is [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [climate change and youth](#), [health care professionals](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green New Deal for Public Housing Act provides concrete proposals and benefits

Posted on **November 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On November 14, Bernie Sanders and Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez led a press conference to announce the introduction of the ***Green New Deal for Public Housing Act*** in the United States Senate, under Sanders' sponsorship. The Bill would eliminate carbon emissions from federal housing, invest approximately \$180 billion over ten years in retrofitting and repairs, and create nearly 250,000 decent-paying union jobs per year, according to the many summaries which appeared: for example, [in Common Dreams](#) . Bernie Sanders' press release is [here](#), linking to

the legislation, summaries, and a list of the 50 organizational supporters. Co-sponsors named are Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

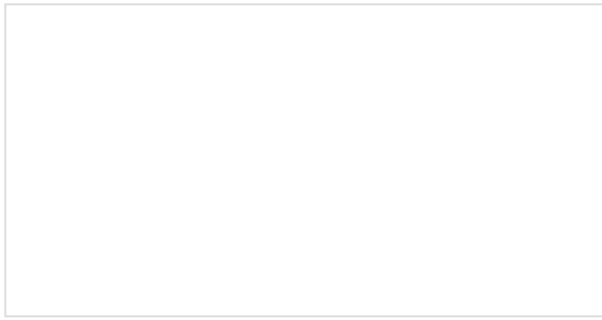
As stated in a [press release](#), progressive think tank Data for Progress “conducted policy and public opinion research to support this pathbreaking progressive legislation, which advances housing, racial, economic, environmental and climate justice together.” ***The Green New Deal for Public Housing Act can stand up to Scrutiny*** reports the results of the political polling done by Data for Progress. A related article, ***“Why Bernie Sanders and AOC are targeting public housing in the first Green New Deal bill”*** in Vox contends “By starting with housing, the legislators appear to be trying to make inroads with a broad political base and avoid some of the more contentious aspects of the Green New Deal, like the transition away from fossil fuels. That issue in particular has **divided labor unions** because it would lead to the end of mining and drilling jobs.”

Data for Progress also conducted economic research which “shows that a ten-year mobilization of up to \$172 billion would retrofit over 1 million public housing units, vastly improving the living conditions of nearly 2 million residents, and creating over 240,000 jobs per year across the United States. These green retrofits would cut 5.6 million tons of annual carbon emissions—the equivalent of taking 1.2 million cars off the road. Retrofits and jobs would benefit communities on the frontlines of climate change, poverty and pollution and the country as a whole. Our analysis shows the legislation would create 32,552 jobs per year in New York City alone. A large portion of the jobs nationally—up to 87,000 a year—will be high-quality construction jobs on site at public housing developments.” ***A Green New Deal for New York Housing Authority (NYHCA) Communities*** report is now available, and a National report is forthcoming- until then, data is available [here](#) .

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Alexandria Ocasio Cortez](#), [Bernie Sanders](#), [Construction Industry](#), [employment impacts](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green New Deal](#), [housing policy](#), [New York City](#), [public housing](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

International conference highlights union initiatives for public ownership and democratic control of energy

Posted on **November 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



An international conference, “[***The Green New Deal, Net-Zero Carbon, and the Crucial Role of Public Ownership***](#)“, brought together more than 150 trade unionists, activists and policy allies in New York City on September 28, 2019. In November, a 50-page summary of the conference was released by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), with summaries of presentations (including many links to related documents), as well as links to video of some sessions.

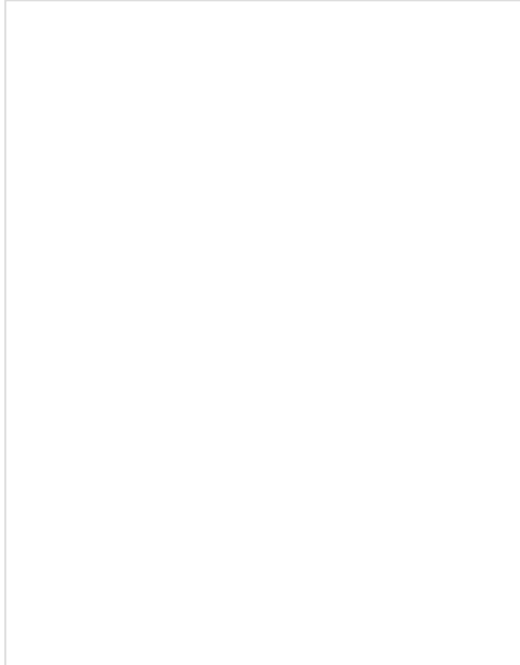
TUED Coordinator Sean Sweeney [**described**](#) the context of the conference: “The world is completely off-track to avoid catastrophic climate change, and we can’t wait any longer. Fortunately, unions and their allies around the world increasingly recognize that only comprehensive public ownership and democratic control of energy gives us a chance to achieve the scale of change needed in the time available.” Speakers from the U.K., South Africa, South Korea, Zimbabwe, the U.S., among others, addressed the key themes through their own experiences, including: “Privatization of State-Owned Electricity Utilities Has Failed, But Alternatives Exist”; “Defending and Reclaiming Public Energy Requires Building Union Power”; “The Transition Must Take into Account the Development Needs of the Global South”. As for next steps, Peter Knowlton, outgoing President of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), proposed a specific mobilization for 2020: “to bring millions of workers into the streets for Earth Day on April 22, 2020. But we need to have a continuous series of actions, ... A week of activity between the “bookends” of Earth Day and May Day could be a wonderful opportunity to bring the labor and environmental movements together in a way we haven’t seen before.”

The conference was organized by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), with support from Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (New York Office) and the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Labor and Urban Studies, in partnership with unions – from Canada, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE). Local [**32BJ SEIU**](#) hosted a two-day retreat in advance of the full gathering.

Posted in [**Green Economy**](#) | Tagged [**Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE\)**](#), [**energy democracy**](#), [**Green New Deal**](#), [**international labour activities**](#), [**National Union of Public and General Employees \(NUPGE\)**](#), [**privatization**](#) | [**Leave a reply**](#)

Calls for improvements to Ontario's failed climate policies

Posted on **November 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Environmental Defence released a one-year progress report on the climate change policies of the Ontario government in early October. [Failure to Launch](#) reviews each of the promises/actions proposed by the Conservative government of Doug Ford under its much-criticized “[Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan](#)”, which lowered Ontario’s target for GHG emissions reductions from 37 to 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and cancelled renewable energy programs.

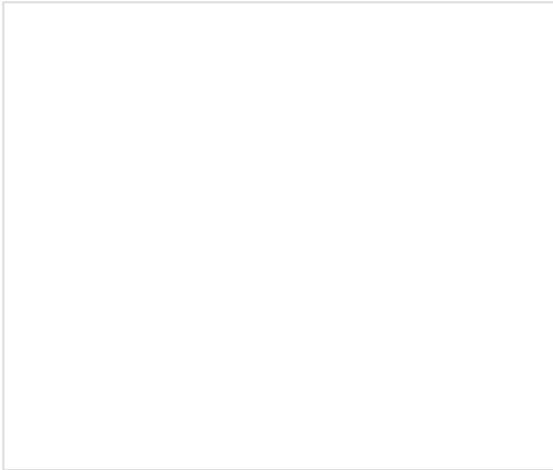
Environmental Defence finds that the government has not even made sufficient progress in its first year to meet the diminished GHG reduction goals, and makes specific recommendations for accelerated action. A summary appears in the Environmental Defence [blog](#). Then, on November 7, thirty environmental advocacy groups, including Environmental Defence, posted an [Open Letter](#) to the members of Ontario’s provincial parliament on November 7, with specific demands which would take serious action on climate change. This coincides with the recall of the legislature after an historic 4-month recess.

The government led the new session with its [2019 Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review](#) under a new banner: “A Plan to Build Ontario Together”. Although analysts note many “about face” policy changes to some programs, the climate/environmental file hasn’t benefitted, as described in [an article](#) in the *National Observer*. It notes that there was no mention in the budget of the previously announced Ontario Carbon Trust, a fund of \$400 million over four years to support the private sector in developing clean technologies.

Ontario to pursue carbon tax case, and dragging its feet on action

According to [analysis of the Economic Outlook from TVO](#): “Anyone looking for signs of reasonableness from the Tories on carbon pricing will be disappointed: despite the recent federal-election results, the fall economic statement reiterates that the government will keep fighting the federal carbon tax in court. The Supreme Court of Canada is expected to hear the case in March 2020.”

On October 31, this [press release](#) proposes to expand fines for environmental regulations, reinvesting that revenue “to support projects that provide local solutions to environmental issues”. Environmentalists [were not impressed](#).



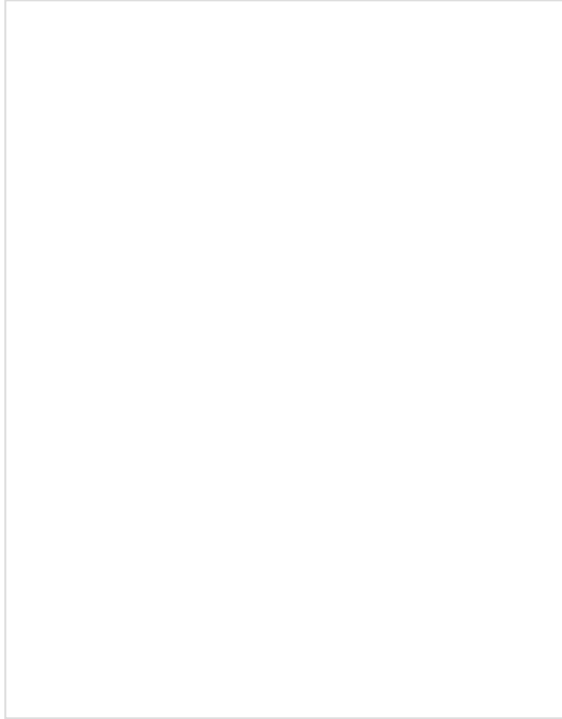
The White Pines wind farm decommissioning began in October, with the government following through on its 2018 decision to cancel the almost-completed project, despite [an estimated cost to taxpayers of \\$100 million in costs](#) and penalties. The local press of Prince Edward County reported on October 31 “[Sadness for green energy supporters as dismantling begins on turbine project](#)”. The *National Observer* published a related article concerning the costs of cuts to clean energy programs, including White Pines: “[Doug Ford ‘throwing away’ millions to kill Ontario clean energy programs](#)” (Nov. 19). The article cites a cost to the taxpayer of \$230 million from killing more than 750 renewable-energy projects.

A [government press release](#) on November 7 announced a “Multi-Sector Impact Assessment Will Help Communities Identify Climate Change Risks and Strengthen Resilience”. Apparently there’s no urgency: the private sector contract for this assessment will be tendered in 2020 for 2 years, producing a final report in 2022.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Success stories from Appalachian coal mining communities

Posted on **November 11, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



A new report was released on October 31 by the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition, a group which seeks to spur coal mine reclamation projects throughout Central Appalachia. ***A New Horizon: Innovative Reclamation for a Just Transition*** profiles 19 projects in Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia, including data centres, a YMCA Wellness Centre, as well as many ecotourism projects. Although much is specific to the U.S. funding opportunities, the case studies offer instructive descriptions of the challenges and obstacles faced by the communities, and also attempt to quantify the economic impacts of each project.

The **press release** describes the progressive approach used to create a “new horizon”: “In the past, efforts to reuse old mine sites too often resulted in sparse, lasting economic activity. Surface mined areas near population centers became shopping centers, hospitals and other standard uses, but more remote sites were either completely abandoned, converted to low-productivity cattle grazing lands, or developed into speculatively built industrial parks or golf courses at great taxpayer expense. Those “if you build it, they will come” projects now largely sit empty. To break from this unsuccessful approach to coal site reclamation, the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition established six guiding principles to identify optimal repurposing projects, including ensuring they are appropriate to the place in which they are occurring, that they include non-traditional stakeholders in decision-making, and are environmentally sustainable and financially viable long-term.”

The report was published as part of the launch of a new website, [ReclaimingAppalachia.org](https://reclaimingappalachia.org), by the Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition, which consists of organizations in four states — Appalachian Voices in Virginia, Appalachian Citizens' Law Center in Kentucky, Coalfield Development Corporation in West Virginia, and Rural Action in Ohio — and a regional technical expert, Downstream Strategies, based in West Virginia. The website as a whole is intended as an information and education resource, providing best practices and information about potential U.S. funding sources.

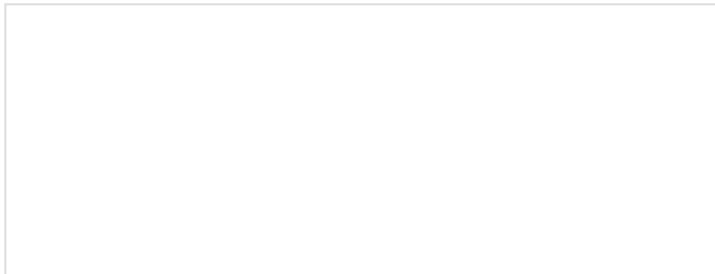
Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#), [land reclamation](#), [mining industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Australian unions support offshore wind development as a means for Just Transition

Posted on **November 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Putting the 'Justice' in 'Just Transition': Tackling inequality in the new renewable economy

is a report released on November 7, co-written by the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, the Electrical Trades Union, the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council and the Victorian Trades Hall Council. This is the latest development in a [union campaign to promote Australia's offshore wind industry](#), focusing on the Star of the South project, Australia's first proposed offshore wind farm. The report calls



for government policies to support the emerging industry and to make the Star of the South “the best possible example of a just transition” by diversifying the job opportunities for workers and communities currently reliant on coal, oil and gas.

Specifically, the new report recommends:

- the Commonwealth establish an energy transition authority to work with states and regions, develop a stand-alone Offshore Renewables Act, and create an agency responsible for facilitating the development of offshore renewable energy in Commonwealth waters;
- the development of offshore and onshore renewable energy master plans that incorporate assessments of supply chains, procurement and infrastructure;

- ensuring renewable energy financing, targets, contracts, licensing and approvals require the maximising of local jobs, including planning for direct redeployment of workers from fossil fuel industries;
- the Victorian Government establish a just transition group to ensure a well-planned energy transition with the best possible social outcomes by formally consulting with relevant stakeholders including trade unions, employers and communities;
- maximising the social benefit of the Star of the South project by requiring local design, manufacturing, and construction;
- funding of appropriate training and retraining through local TAFEs, along with minimum apprentice ratios; and
- maximising the number of jobs available by ensuring good rosters and reasonable hours of work.

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) represents seafarers supplying the offshore oil and gas industry, as well as workers in Newcastle's coal terminals, and port and tug workers in coal export ports in New South Wales and Queensland. The MUA is part of the [Offshore Alliance](#), which works to organise workers and improve conditions in the offshore oil and gas industry. The MUA position on renewable energy and a discussion of the Just Transition campaign are available [here](#); the MUA maintains a [petition here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Australia](#), [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Offshore Wind](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank commissions studies of climate change risks to the economy, impacts on labour productivity

Posted on **November 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

In “[Scared Central Banks Face Up to Threats From Climate Change](#)” (Sept. 23), Bloomberg News reported that “Most major central banks — with the exception of the U.S. Federal Reserve — are joining forces to promote sustainable growth, after realizing that climate change threatens economic output and could even sow the seeds of a financial crisis.” Now it appears that even the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, or at least one of its components, the San Francisco Fed., is catching up to the rest of the world. [Climate Change and the Federal Reserve](#) drew attention when it was published by the San Francisco Fed in March 2019, and a special climate change-themed [issue of the newsletter, Community Development and Innovation Review](#) was published by the San Francisco Fed in October, highlighting independent economic analysis it had commissioned. The

New York Times summarizes that research in [“Bank Regulators Present a Dire Warning of Financial Risks From Climate Change”](#).

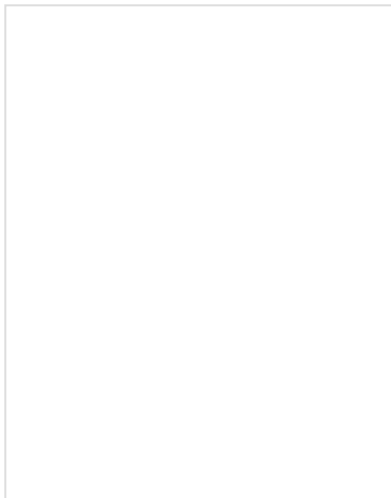
The economic research was also highlighted in a conference on November 8. Host Mary Daly, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, introduced the event with a speech entitled, [“Why Climate Change Matters to Us”](#). Two highlighted conference papers: [“Climate change: Macroeconomic impact and implications for monetary policy”](#) presented by Sandra Batten from the Bank of England, which explains why central banks care about climate change, and includes the warning that “for each degree the temperature rises above a daily average temperature of 59°F, productivity declines by 1.7%”. In [“Long-Term Macroeconomic Effects of Climate Change: A Cross-Country Analysis”](#), six academics from the U.S., U.K. and Taiwan modelled the links between historical levels of temperature and precipitation and changes in labour productivity. They conclude that global GDP per capita could fall 7% by 2100 in the absence of climate change mitigation effects, but that loss could be reduced to 1% by conforming to the Paris Agreement.

Of related interest: SHARE Canada (Shareholder Association for Research and Education) summarizes the position of the major Canadian banks in an October 10 blog post [“Responsible Banking – Part 2: Aligning finance with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement”](#).

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Economic impacts](#), [Economic Risk](#), [Federal Reserve Bank](#), [Financial Risk](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Social workers urged to advocate for a Green New Deal and climate justice

Posted on [November 8, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The November issue of the journal *Environmental Justice* includes [“Time is Up: Social workers take your place at the climate change table”](#) (free access only until November 22, 2019). The

authors maintain that “Social workers are uniquely situated to be involved, with their training in social policy, legislative advocacy, and community organizing, in combating the negative effects of climate change and the inherent social justice issues associated with this issue. However, ... they must be trained on topics such as disaster-specific trauma, bereavement, and resource disruption.

The article begins with a broad overview of policies related to climate change – including the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement, but the main focus is on social workers in the United States as actors in climate change. Based on reviews of the social work literature between 2008 and 2019, the authors conclude that what little has been written has focused on consequences and/or coping strategies after a natural disaster. They also conclude that most of the climate-related training of social workers is occurring outside of the United States in countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

The article reveals how the professional organization, the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, has viewed the climate emergency. The AASWSW issued its **12 Grand Challenges for Social Work** in 2016, and it included a goal to “Create social responses to a changing environment”. A separate **Policy Briefing** outlines ambitious goals, including: (1) adopt and implement evidence-based approaches to disaster risk reduction, (2) develop policies targeting environmentally induced migration and population displacement, and (3) strengthen equity-oriented urban resilience policies and proactively engage marginalized communities in adaptation planning. A 2015 background paper preceded the goal statement: ***Strengthening the Social Response to the Human Impacts of Environmental Change***.

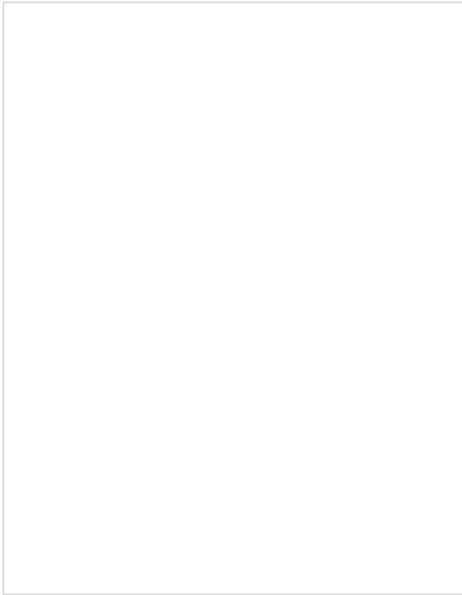
The latest issue of the Association's journal ***Social Work Today*** is a progress report on the Grand Challenges. Regarding the changing environment, it reports that the Association has been advocating for the Green New Deal, and will “examine the social work implications of the proposed Green New Deal and to call social workers to action around environmental justice policies.” It concludes:

“One of the greatest challenges toward continued progress is in making social workers aware of their role and responsibility in addressing both the causes and consequences of climate change,” Many social workers feel there are more immediate issues to deal with, even if they acknowledge the seriousness of the problem.”

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **Climate Activism, disaster response, Green New Deal, Professional Associations, social workers** | [Leave a reply](#)

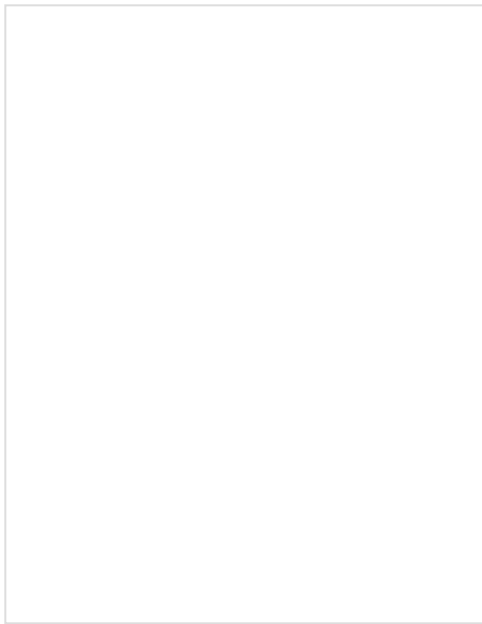
How nurses can contribute to climate and health justice

Posted on **November 8, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



written by Sean Sweeney, Irene Shen and John Treat of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED). (A summary appears in the September 2019 **Bulletin 90 of the TUED**). The report provides a brief overview of climate change issues, and an extensive chapter about the human health impacts of climate change. It concludes by outlining six key areas where nurses and their unions “can make use of their expertise and political strength in the fight against the climate and health emergency, and for climate and health justice.” The agenda for action includes: Resist new fossil fuel projects; Make Emergency Response and Recovery Services “Climate Ready”; Work with Allies at the Global Level on Preparedness; Fight Poverty and Racism. Defend Worker Rights and Protections; Articulate and Advocate for a Pro-Public Shift in Policy; and Extend Public Control Over Energy Generation and Use through Energy Democracy. Although the report was written for nurses’ unions, the authors express the hope is that it can be useful for the labor movement more generally, “to wage the struggle for climate protection and climate justice with a clearer understanding of the challenges that must be faced in order to achieve it.”

The report was written for **Global Nurses United** , a federation of the nurse and health care worker unions which has grown to represent 27 nations since its founding in 2016. The **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions** and **Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec** are members from Canada; **National Nurses United** is the member from the United States. The purpose of GNU is to fight against austerity, privatization, and attacks on public health, as well as to work for nurses’ and workers’ rights and improved patient care for all.



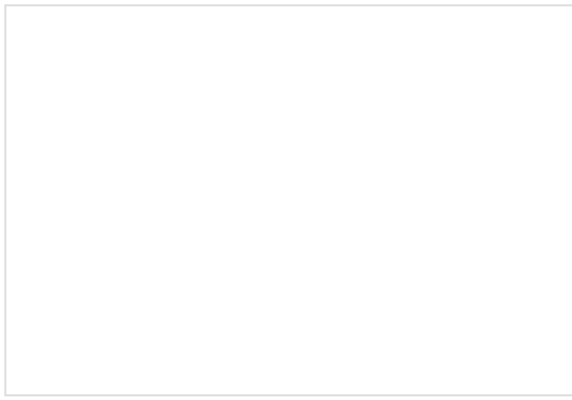
The Canadian Federation of Nurses released its own publication in June 2019, ***Climate Change and Health: It's Time for Nurses to Act***, “as a starting point for for advocacy and leadership”. It shares some content with the Global report, but focuses on Canadian examples, and outlines its own six recommendations for action. A summary appears [here](#) .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [health care professionals](#), [labour union handbooks](#), [nurses](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Workers who respond to wildfires – some news you might have missed

Posted on **November 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The *Columbia Journalism Review* published an article on November 1: **“What journalists miss when covering the California fires”** . It states “we discuss celebrities and show pyro-pornography to capture attention. journalists could also use the borrowed interest to discuss bigger environmental consequences impacting people inside (and sometimes outside) of California.”



Here are some articles which focus on the impacts for working people in California and Canada, especially first responders and health care workers. A previous WCR article, **[“What happens to workers when wildfires and natural disasters hit?”](#)** appeared in December 2017, after the Fort McMurray wildfires in Alberta.

California:

[“At PG&E, a workforce on edge — and under attack — as fire season arrives”](#) in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 8) describes how front line workers are suffering harassment because the public blames their employer, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, for the 2018 Camp fire, as well as for the disruptions of their planned power outages to avoid sparking more fires.

A blog post **[Power Shutoffs: Playing with Fire](#)** summarizes the issue of California power shutoffs and includes anecdotal reports from a focus group study of home health care and nursing home workers, which found that lack of communication was a common problem as they try to care for or evacuate their vulnerable patients. The focus group was convened by the Emerald Cities Collaborative and SEUI2015.

[Home healthcare in the Dark : Why Climate, Wildfires and Other Emerging Risks Call for Resilient Energy Storage Solutions to Protect Medically Vulnerable Households from Power Outages.](#) This report published by Clean Energy Group and Meridian Institute in June 2019 identifies the problems associated with unreliable power when the electric grid goes down either through disaster or through planned power outages to prevent wildfires. The report makes a series of recommendations directed at policy makers, including: “truly resilient power should be generated onsite, should not be dependent on supply chains that may be disrupted during catastrophic events”.

[“Getty fire: Housekeepers and gardeners go to work despite the flames”](#) in the *LA Times* which also highlights the chaos brought by lack of communication, and the need for low-wage workers to work, despite danger.

International Association of Firefighters press release **[“California Members Work around the Clock to Contain Wildfires”](#)** provides an overview of wildfire fighting by their members and points out that firefighters’ homes may also be in the path of destruction. (a fact that is true for other essential workers such as health care workers).

“As fires rage, California refines an important skill: Evacuating” in the *Washington Post* (Oct. 29). Describes the challenges of first responders responsible for vulnerable patients in hospitals.

“New threats put wildfire fighters health on the line” in the *New York Times* points out : “While burning wood poses some threat to lungs, man-made products and the gases and particles they produce when burned are far more dangerous...Unlike urban firefighters dealing with structural blazes, these wildfire responders do not wear heavy gear that filters air or provides clean air because the gear is unwieldy and too limited to allow the kind of multi-hour, high-exertion efforts demanded on the front lines of these large outdoor infernos.”

And from 2017, **“Suicide rate among wildland firefighters is “astronomical”** in *Wildfire Today* , based on a more substantial article in The Atlantic: **“A Quiet Rise in Wildland-Firefighter Suicides”**.

Canada:

“Climate change is making wildfires in Canada bigger, hotter and more dangerous” in *Maclean’s* (July 18 2019) is a quick overview of the Canadian experience.

“We were blindsided: Rappel firefighters criticizes UCP for axing program” in the *Edmonton Journal* (Nov. 7) and an article in the newspaper **Fort McMurray Today** react to the Alberta government cuts which will eliminate the 40-year-old rappelling program, which employs more than 60 firefighters who rappel from helicopters into forest fires. Staffing for close to 30 wildfire lookout towers and one air tanker unit will also be cut. The articles describe the dangerous job of fighting fires.

A British Columbia **government press release** at the end of October 2019 announces two research projects underway to study firefighter health and wellness (including its physical, mental and emotional dimensions). One at the University of Northern B.C. is a scoping study to contribute to a long-term research strategy for worker health by the B.C. Wildfire Service. The second, supported by the government of Alberta, is examining the nature and concentration of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in the air that firefighters breathe and accumulate on their skin. This study will also “explore the practicality and effectiveness of firefighters using respiratory protective equipment; and investigate whether wildland firefighters have more chronic lung disease than other people of the same age, gender and geographic location.” A progress report on the initial phase of this project is expected in March 2020.

“Fire-weary Western Canadians are picking up stakes and moving on” in the *National Observer* (June 24 2019) considers the impact of smoke as well as fire over the past two years in the West, discussing how “residents ... young and old, often on fixed or limited incomes, are making tough choices about where they want to live and to work. The decisions are being informed by many factors, but often the most pressing concern is the increasing frequency of

forest fires.” (This updates some of the themes of a 2017 Globe and Mail article [“Fort MacMurray wildfires leaves livelihoods in limbo”](#)).

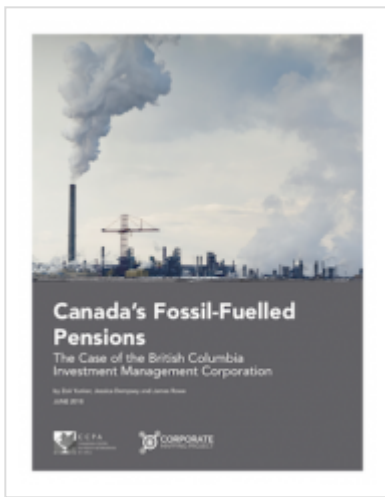
Unions have made consistent and significant donations to wildfire-affected communities. Some examples: [“Steelworkers Humanity Fund Contributes \\$69,000 to Fort McMurray Recovery”](#) (2016); [“Steelworkers Contribute \\$100,000 to B.C. Fire Relief”](#) (August 2017), and [Steelworkers Humanity Fund Contributes \\$58,950 to Support Disaster Recovery Here and Abroad](#) (June 2019) – which specifies a \$10,000 donation to the High Level Native Friendship Centre food bank in Northern Alberta after forest fires caused the evacuation of the town. Also, [“Unifor wildfire relief donations top \\$220k”](#) in 2017, and a [2018 press release](#) announced \$150,000 to the B.C. Fire Relief Fund of the Canadian Red Cross in 2018 through Unifor’s [Canadian Community Fund](#) as well as its Social Justice Fund .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [California](#), [evacuations](#), [firefighters](#), [first responders](#), [forest fires](#), [Fort McMurray](#), [health care professionals](#), [natural disasters](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta government proposes to snatch away joint governance of public sector workers’ pension funds

Posted on [November 7, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

The UCP government in Alberta has made the unilateral decision to consolidate Alberta public sector pensions under the control of the Alberta Investment Management Corporation, a crown corporation administered by the provincial government . According to an article in the *Calgary Herald*, [“Unions blast provincial decision to shift billions in public sector pension funds”](#) : “(The) government intends to reverse the option of public sector pension plans leaving AIMCo as a fund manager. Moreover, the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund, Workers’ Compensation Board and Alberta Health Services will be expected to transfer funds to AIMCo for management, reducing redundant administration.” More details appeared in [“Government contemplates changes to management of more than 400,000 Alberta workers’ pension plans”](#) in the *Edmonton Journal* (Nov. 1) which summarizes the opposition by the Alberta public sector unions on the grounds that the decision reverses a recent change that gave more than 351,000 public sector employees joint control of their pension funds, through a joint governance model that had been authorized by 2018 legislation and which only took effect in March 2019. The *Edmonton Journal* article also states that police and firefighter pensions might also be included in the government plans. [“Alberta’s public unions prep for a fight, whether in the streets or the courts”](#) is a broader overview from CBC Calgary which discusses the pension consolidation, as well as the wage cuts and workforce reduction included in [Bill 21](#) of the new budget under the new UCP government.



The attempt to shift Alberta workers' pension funds brings to mind the 2018 report, ***Canada's Fossil-Fuelled Pensions: The Case of the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation*** by the Corporate Mapping Project. The report found that despite its statements that it was a climate responsible investor, BCI had actually increased its fossil fuel investments – for example, by boosting investment from \$36.7 million in 2016 to \$65.3 million in 2017 in Kinder Morgan, owner of the Trans-Mountain pipeline. And although the new publication by the Corporate Mapping Project, ***Big Oil's Political Reach: Mapping fossil fuel lobbying from Harper to Trudeau***, examines the power of the fossil fuel industry at the federal level, some might argue that its influence could also extend to Alberta's pension management decisions.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [government workers](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [public sector works](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board shifting toward renewables; new study shows fossil fuel investments lose value

Posted on **November 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canadian workers can hope that climate change awareness is finally dawning at the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), responsible for the financial health of the Canadian public pension system. On November 4, a [CPPIB press release](#) announced that the Board entered into a purchase agreement with Pattern Energy Group Inc. ; the *Globe and Mail* describes the deal in "[CPPIB bets on renewable energy with \\$2.63-billion purchase of wind-farm operator Pattern Energy](#)".



This would demonstrate a big leap for the CPPIB, which reported in its **2019 Report on Sustainable Investing**, released on November 6, “CPPIB’s investments in global renewable energy companies more than doubled to \$3 billion in the year to June 30, 2019. This is up from just \$30 million in 2016.” The annual Report includes other details, including a description of the new climate change investing framework, launched in April 2019. *Bloomberg News* video channel (Nov. 5) offers **an interview with the CEO of CPPIB** discussing the CPPIB climate risk strategy, and providing the good news that the CPPIB will *not* participate in the expected blockbuster fossil fuel public offering by Saudi Aramco.

Changes to public sector pensions in Alberta

One hopes that the Alberta government may also invest in that province’s growing renewable energy industries, as it has made the unilateral decision to consolidate Alberta public sector pensions under the control of the Alberta Investment Management Corporation, a crown corporation administered by the provincial government . According to an article in the *Calgary Herald*, **“Unions blast provincial decision to shift billions in public sector pension funds”** : “(The) government intends to reverse the option of public sector pension plans leaving AIMCo as a fund manager. Moreover, the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund, Workers’ Compensation Board and Alberta Health Services will be expected to transfer funds to AIMCo for management, reducing redundant administration.” More details appeared in **“Government contemplates changes to management of more than 400,000 Alberta workers’ pension plans”** in the *Edmonton Journal* (Nov. 1) which summarizes the opposition by the Alberta public sector unions on the grounds that the decision reverses a recent change that gave more than 351,000 public sector employees joint control of their pension funds – a joint governance model that had been authorized by 2018 legislation under the previous NDP government, and which only took effect in March 2019. The *Edmonton Journal* article also states that police and firefighter pensions might also be included in their plans. **“Alberta’s public unions prep for a fight, whether in the streets or the courts”** is a broader overview from CBC Calgary which discusses the pension consolidation, as well as the wage cuts and workforce reduction included in **Bill 21** of the new budget under the new UCP government.

The dangers of investing pension funds to prop up the Alberta fossil fuel industry are indicated by a recent study of three major state public pension funds in California and Colorado (CalSTRS, CalPERS and PERA) . **“Study Shows Pension Funds’ Refusal to Divest From Fossil Fuels Cost Retired Teachers, Firefighters, and Public Workers \$19 Billion”** appeared in *Common Dreams* on November 5, summarizing a study by Canadian publisher Corporate Knights. Their

analysis concluded that those three pension funds collectively lost over \$19 billion in retirement savings for teachers, state troopers and public workers by continuing to invest in fossil fuels. The full reports are not available yet on the Corporate Knights website, but are on Google Drive [here](#) . A [response by 350.org](#) also summarizes the study, calls fossil fuel investments “a Losing Strategy for Retirement Savings — and the Planet” and asks “Why would any fund manager continue to invest in fossil fuels? Risky, harmful to our planet and shared future, and less profitable than many other investment opportunities, fossil fuel investments are a lose-lose choice.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [public sector workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Scientists, engineers, doctors protest the climate emergency

Posted on **November 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Scientists captured global attention with dire climate warnings in November when the mainstream media amplified their message contained in an article [published in the academic journal BioScience](#). The article itself is clear and direct, beginning with:

“Scientists have a moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat and to ‘tell it like it is.’ On the basis of this obligation and the graphical indicators presented below, we declare, with more than 11,000 scientist signatories from around the world, clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency.”

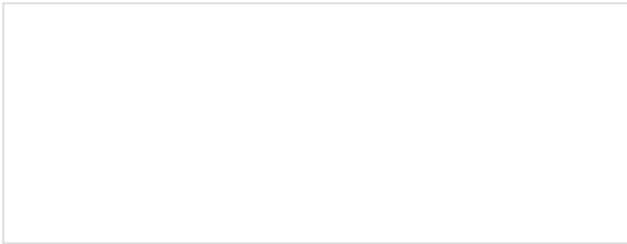
On the issue of The Economy, the article states: “Excessive extraction of materials and overexploitation of ecosystems, driven by economic growth, must be quickly curtailed to maintain long-term sustainability of the biosphere. We need a carbon-free economy that explicitly addresses human dependence on the biosphere and policies that guide economic decisions accordingly. Our goals need to shift from GDP growth and the pursuit of affluence toward sustaining ecosystems and improving human well-being by prioritizing basic needs and reducing inequality.”

The [Alliance of World Scientists](#) invites scientists from around the world to sign on to the message. Summaries about the warnings appeared in *The Guardian* [here](#) and in *Common Dreams* “[Warning of ‘Untold Human Suffering,’ Over 11,000 Scientists From Around the World Declare Climate Emergency](#)” . A Canadian viewpoint appears in an article in the Edmonton edition of the *Toronto Star* , “[5 Alberta scientists tell us why they joined 11,000 scientific colleagues in declaring a climate emergency](#)” .

Engineers:

Like the scientists, other professionals recently spoke up about their “moral obligation” to do what they can to fight the climate emergency. “**Leading Australian engineers turn their backs on new fossil fuel projects**” in *The Guardian* reports: “About 1,000 Australian engineers and 90 organisations – including large firms and respected industry figures who have worked with fossil fuel companies – have signed a declaration to “evaluate all new projects against the environmental necessity to mitigate climate change”. The article focuses on a new group, **Australian Engineers Declare**, which issued an **Open Letter** in September 2019, acknowledging that their professional organization, Engineers Australia, has a strong policy regarding climate change, but calling for faster action to address climate breakdown and biodiversity loss. **Engineers Declare** states that engineers are connected to 65% of Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions, and that “engineering teams have a responsibility to actively support the transition of our economy towards a low carbon future. This begins with honestly and loudly declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency...we commit to strengthening our work practices to create systems, infrastructure, technology and products that have a positive impact on the world around us.” The declaration continues to list specific actions, including: “Learn from and collaborate with First Nations to adopt work practices that are respectful, culturally sensitive and regenerative.”

Physicians:



On November 1, the editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*, one of the world’s most prestigious medical journals which has published a **Countdown Report on Climate Change and Health** since 2016. As reported in “**Protesting climate change is a doctor’s duty**”, the most recent remarks were made in a **video** which calls for health professionals to engage in nonviolent social protest to address climate change. The **video** cites the British professional standard, Duties of a Doctor, and lauds **Doctors for Extinction Rebellion**, four of whom have been arrested in London. The website of Doctors for Extinction Rebellion chronicles recent activities including that on October 17th 2019, the Royal College of Physicians committed to Divest from Fossil Fuels.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Australia, Climate Activism, doctors, Engineers, Extinction Rebellion, physicians, Professional Ethics, scientists** | **Leave a reply**

Plastics in a circular economy: Canadian and global updates

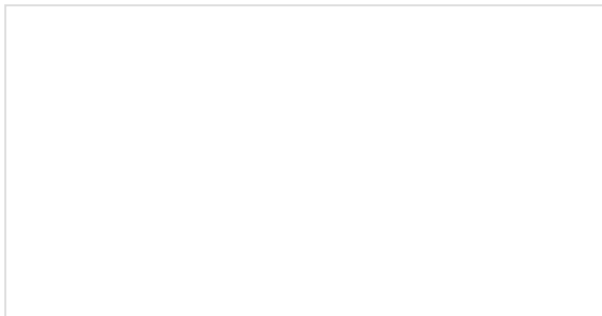
Posted on **November 6, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

In Oslo on October 23, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the UN Environment Programme published the first annual ***Progress Report on the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment*** . Part 1 provides a high-level overview of the Global Commitment and its achievements; Part 2 profiles of the programs reported by some of the 400 businesses, organizations and governments which have signed on to the Global Commitment since it launched in 2018. An overview of the Global Commitment, including a list of all participants, is [here](#) . The Progress Report states that the aim of the Global Commitment is to: “eliminate the plastic items we don’t need; innovate so all plastics we do need are designed to be safely reused, recycled, or composted; and circulate everything we use to keep it in the economy and out of the environment.” This first progress report sets a benchmark against which progress can be measured, and clearly calls for an increase in the ambition level, particularly to go beyond recycling, to encourage elimination and reuse. The Press release and [summary is here](#) .

Recent actions to reduce Plastic waste in Canada:

The Canadian government is not a signatory to the Global Commitment, although at least one Canadian organization, Sustainable Prosperity Institute at the University of Ottawa, is a signatory, and the global ***Progress Report*** provide other examples of initiatives by Canadian businesses and the provincial government of British Columbia.

Plastic waste is a high-profile policy issue for Canadians, though nearly 90% of plastic waste in Canada is not recycled, according to the ***Economic Study of the Canadian Plastic Industry, Market and Waste***, commissioned by Environment and Climate Change Canada and released in June 2019.



In October 2019, Greenpeace Canada conducted an audit of 13,822 pieces of plastic waste collected in volunteer shoreline clean-ups and identified the top five plastic polluters in Canada as Nestlé, Tim Hortons, Starbucks, McDonalds and Coca-Cola. CBC summarized the findings and the wider issue of plastic pollution in “***Nestlé, Tim Hortons named Canada’s top plastic polluters again***”.

Recent Actions on Plastic Waste:

On October 31, the government of Nova Scotia passed Bill 152, the ***Plastic Bags Reduction Act***, which also addresses other single-use plastics. This follows plastic bag bans by Prince Edward Island and some municipalities.

The government of British Columbia issued a **Plastics Action Plan Consultation Paper** which discussed four options for regulatory amendments, including single-use bans and extended producer responsibility. The **consultation process** was extended to September 30, with amendments to the regulations promised by the end of 2019.

In Ontario, where waste management has played an outsized role in the Conservative government's **Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan**, an August 2019 **government press release** announced next steps for recycling and plastic waste management. The government had appointed a Special Advisor on Recycling and Plastic Waste, who released recommendations in his report **Renewing the Blue Box: Final report on the blue box mediation process**. The report calls for a transfer of responsibility for the consumer stream Blue Box program to a new producer responsibility system across the province by December 31, 2025. These concluding remarks typify the business approach of the exercise:

“Investment in research and innovation to create the jobs from the recycled materials should be an interministerial responsibility. Garbage and recycling are not just an environmental issue – they are also economic opportunities.... More than 99 percent of the plastics collected by the city of Toronto are sold to recyclers right here in Ontario, going to facilities in Shelbourne, Sarnia, and Toronto. Steel and glass collected by Toronto’s recycling programs are processed in Hamilton and Guelph, respectively. This is a prime example of recycling creating jobs and adding value to Ontario’s economy.”

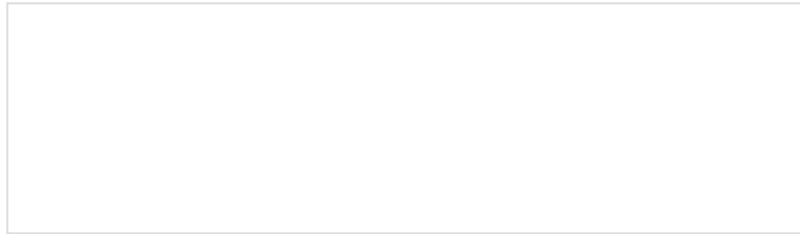
Earlier actions:

The federal-provincial body, the **Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment** (CCME), approved the Phase 1 statement of a **Canada-Wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste** in June 2019. Phase 1 focuses on product design, single-use plastics, collection systems, recycling capacity and domestic markets. The Council promises to release Phase 2 of the Action Plan in 2020, focusing on preventing plastic pollution in oceans, inland lakes and waterways, advancing science to monitor the impacts of plastics pollution within the environment, consumer awareness, clean-up and global action.

Also in June 2019, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development released **The Last Straw: Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution in Canada**, the result of a **consultation** which received nine briefs and testimony from 41 witnesses (some of which were environmental groups, and none of which were labour unions). *The Last Straw* made 21 recommendations, calling on the federal government to take the lead on developing standards for plastic products made or sold in Canada, as well as on a national model recycling system and an extended producer responsibility framework for plastics. Other recommendations: Canada should establish a more ambitious goal of reaching zero plastic waste by 2030; commit to banning harmful single-use plastic products – specifically straws, bags, cutlery, cups, cigarette filters and polystyrene packaging.

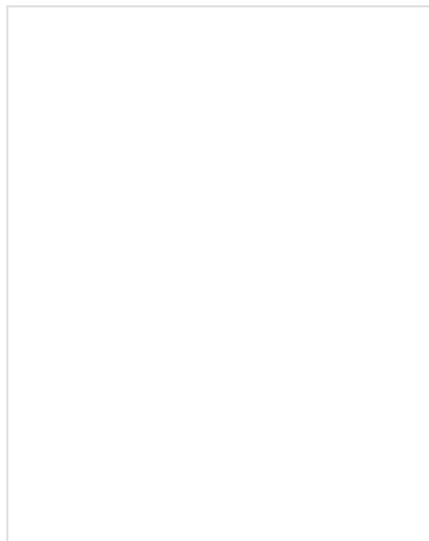


At the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) National Convention in Montreal in October, one of the environmental resolutions approved by delegates was a call for a ban on single-use plastics , according to [Notes from the Floor](#) . (Online access to the Resolutions is restricted to CUPE members) .



In April 2019, the Association of Postal Officials of Canada, the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and the Union of Postal Communications Employees reached a [formal agreement](#) with Canada Post to collaborate to reduce Canada Post's environmental footprint. The initial focus of activities will be towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste and single-use disposable plastics from Canada Post operations. In early 2020, the parties will publish an action plan for 2020-2022 , with agreed- upon targets for 2020-2030.

Canada's Circular Economy Leadership Council published a [Policy Brief](#) in the winter 2019 – with recommendations for government action. The Council includes advocacy groups such as IISD and the National Zero Waste Council, as well as corporations including Unilever, Walmart, Canadian Tire, and IKEA.



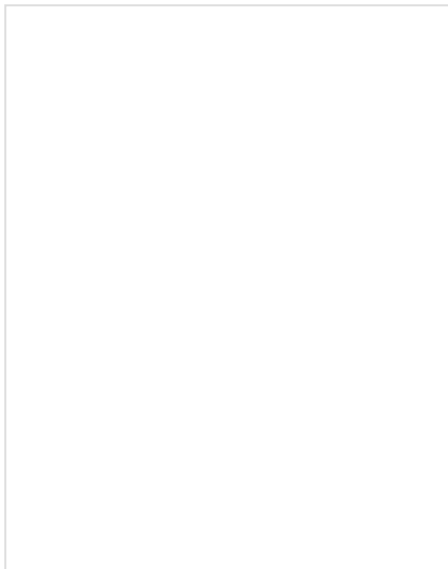
In February 2019, the Sustainable Prosperity Institute released [*A Vision for a Circular Economy for Plastics in Canada: The Benefits of Plastics Without the Waste and How We Get it Right.*](#)

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [plastic pollution](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [postal workers](#), [Recycling](#), [single-use plastics](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

30% of Canadians exposed to air pollution from road traffic – with SUV's and diesel trucks the top polluters

Posted on **November 4, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

The scientific journal *Nature* underscored the health dangers of air pollution in an April 2019 editorial titled, “**Stop denying the risks of air pollution**”, which stating that exposure to outdoor air pollution accounts for 4.2 million deaths globally each year, according to the World Health Organization. Although we face nothing like **the tragic current situation in Delhi India** , Canadians should not be complacent. A two-year study into traffic-related pollutant concentrations found that nearly 30 per cent of Canadians live near major roadways and thus are exposed to a “soup” of pollutants in their daily lives.



Scientists measured pollutants at six monitoring stations near Toronto, including Highway 401, and Vancouver between 2015 – 2017, and published their latest results in October, in ***Near-road air pollution Pilot Study*** . Findings include:

Highly polluting diesel trucks are making a disproportionate contribution and they represent the major source of key pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and black carbon. Data for these pollutants indicate that excessive exposure to diesel exhaust can occur near roads with a significant proportion of truck traffic.

Canada's cold winters can increase concentrations. Ultrafine particle concentrations, for example, are higher in winter. Nitrogen oxide concentrations are higher on cold winter days,

suggesting that the emission control systems for diesel vehicles may not perform well at low temperatures.

... non-tailpipe emissions of particles from brakes and tires have been rising in Toronto since 2012 and now exceed primary emissions through tailpipes. The cause is attributed to the growing popularity of SUVs and pickup trucks, which cause more tire and brake wear because they're heavier.

Many of the recommendations of the pollution study relate to strategies for continued scientific monitoring of transport-related pollution, but the report also recommends:

“Exposure to traffic-related air pollutants should be reduced where people live, work and play. Strategies should be taken to shape communities so that residents’ exposure to traffic-related air pollution is reduced. These strategies can contribute to existing plans for vibrant and compact communities. For example, a mix of land uses (e.g., commercial, retail, etc.) can be promoted within higher exposure areas; pedestrian and cycling infrastructure can be moved away from high exposure areas; and walkability, transit service quality and access, and parking management can be improved. Indoor exposure can be reduced by improving building design and operation, including ventilation and filtration systems.”

The research was conducted over a two-year period by The Southern Ontario Centre for Atmospheric Aerosol Research at the University of Toronto (SOCAAR), in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and Metro Vancouver. The lead author is Professor Greg Evans of the University of Toronto. The [full report](#) is available in English only; a Summary report is available in English or French [from this link](#) .

Although the results have been published previously in academic journals, the study was widely covered in the media – for example, in the [Toronto Globe and Mail](#) , and a thorough [summary by the CBC](#) .

The growing threat of SUV’s and Diesel trucks :

An October [blog](#) by the International Energy Agency highlighted “a dramatic shift” to SUV’s: “... there are now over 200 million SUVs around the world, up from about 35 million in 2010, accounting for 60% of the increase in the global car fleet since 2010. Around 40% of annual car sales today are SUVs, compared with less than 20% a decade ago.” The full analysis underlying the blog will be published in the forthcoming [World Energy Outlook 2019](#) in mid-November 2019.

In Canada, heavy duty trucks form the majority of the freight fleet, and freight transport accounts for 10.5% of our greenhouse gas emissions. The Pembina Institute published [Fuel savings and emissions reductions in heavy-duty trucking](#) in May 2019, to provide a roadmap to the technological solutions already available to reduce trucking emissions. On October 16, the Capital Plan for Clean Prosperity published recommendations for the transportation sector: [How](#)

greening transport can boost economy and curb GHGs. These policy recommendations deal with all personal transportation, public transit, and freight transportation; regarding freight, the Capital Plan recommends that a federal grant system be established to allow for 50% of new freight trucks to be zero emissions vehicles, at an estimated total cost of \$14.4B . Estimated benefits for the freight industry include emissions reductions, savings of \$53.8 billion in fuel and maintenance costs, and 24,800 to 50,000 new jobs in the freight industry alone.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [air pollution](#), [diesel cars](#), [freight industry](#), [Toronto](#), [Trucking Industry](#), [Vancouver](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Nova Scotia legislation targets “boldest” GHG emissions reduction targets in Canada

Posted on **November 4, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— Tidal turbine in the Bay of Fundy NS

Nova Scotia's Premier Stephen McNeil issued an [October 30th press release](#) to mark the end of the legislative session, stating: "We began the sitting by introducing a ban on single-use plastic bags at retail checkouts and calling for an emergency debate on climate change. We ended by bringing in the boldest greenhouse gas emission reduction target in the country and some of the strongest environmental legislation in North America." The "boldest" GHG emissions reduction target referred to is stated in Bill 213, the [Sustainable Development Goals Act](#) passed on Oct.30, calling for GHG emissions reduction of 53 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. The Act recognizes the urgency of a global climate emergency, and states that the goal of sustainable prosperity must include the elements of sustainable development, a circular economy, an inclusive economy, and "Netukulimk", which is defined as a Mi'kmaq First Nation concept: "the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the

community by achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity or productivity of the environment”.

A [press release](#) from the Ecology Action Centre of Halifax welcomes the new legislation; a more detailed [EAC Backgrounder](#) discusses the level of GHG emissions called for, and concludes: “..... A legislated target of 53% below 2005 levels by 2030, for Nova Scotia ... sets us on track to overshoot 2 degree C of global warming and it is not based on our differentiated responsibility and capability. For this reason, the EAC continues to advocate for a legislated target of 50% below 1990 levels by 2030 (equivalent to 58% below 2005 levels by 2030).”

Other initiatives introduced in the [Sustainable Development Goals Act](#) include: an extensive public consultation process to update the province’s climate strategy, to be called Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth and to be released by the end of 2020, and a Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund to help communities with mitigation and adaptation. Summaries of the legislation are provided by articles in the [National Observer](#) and the [CBC](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [First Nations](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta updates: Budget targets public sector, sets stage for new regime for oil and gas industry

Posted on **November 1, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

With the federal election over, the provincial government in Alberta released two important new policies: the Budget statement on October 26, and the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) regulation, a system for output-based carbon pricing for industrial GHG emissions.

Alberta Budget – a recipe for a “Kenny Recession”?:

A [government press release](#) announced the budget on October 26, with Highlights provided at a [Budget webpage here](#). The government states that social service programs: “will be redesigned methodically and responsibly to address economic, social and fiscal challenges, while continuing to support the most vulnerable. Countering that statement is [“Alberta wants to cut public service wages. It will hit everyone from teachers to hospital support staff”](#) in the *National Observer* (Oct. 30), as well as reaction from the unions, including [the Health Sciences Association of Alberta \(HSAA\)](#), which calls the Budget “incredibly dishonest” and details the cuts which form “the groundwork to justify a transfer of vital public services to the private sector”.

The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) campaign against the Budget flies under the flag of “**The Kenney Recession**” , with arguments built on a report prepared for the AFL by economist Hugh Mackenzie: ***The Kenney Recession: Proposed UCP cuts would hurt economy worse than oil price crash*** . The report considers four different scenarios and states “ “The loss of 50,000 jobs during the oil price crash from 2014 to 2017 will pale in comparison to the estimated 113,500 jobs that would be lost in Alberta if the Kenney government goes ahead with cuts of the magnitude being considered.” In an earlier press release, AFL President **Gil McGowan disputes** the findings of a government-commissioned report by Janice MacKinnon, saying “her report is filled with distortions and outright lies about public services, public-sector spending and public-sector wages.”

As for the Budget’s impact on the energy sector, the government’s Highlights state an allocation of \$601 million, yet do not directly mention the **Coal Workforce Transition Program** or Fund, initiated by the previous NDP government and flagged for concern in an **October 15 article in *The Energy Mix*** .

The Government’s Budget **Highlights** for the Energy industry are:

increase focus on natural gas and pipelines by implementing a strategic plan to help reinvigorate the industry and stand up for Alberta’s economic interests

work with industry to help streamline project approvals, improve pipeline access and facilitate the construction of infrastructure to get our natural gas to international markets

review the Alberta Energy Regulator to identify changes and enhancements to its mandate, governance and operations so Alberta remains a predictable place to invest and a world leader in responsible resource development

extend the royalty credit model under the Petrochemicals Diversification Program to incent future projects and cancel the Partial Upgrading Program and Petrochemicals Feedstock Program to reduce the financial risk to Albertans

cancel the transition to a capacity market and end the rate cap program – saving Albertans about \$270 million

cancel the crude-by-rail program, saving Albertans at least \$300 million

establish the Canadian Energy Centre corporation to implement the “Fight Back Strategy” to proactively defend our critical energy industry and the people who work in it

TIER – the proposed new Emissions Reduction Regulation for industrial emitters:

On October 29, the **government announced** the introduction of Bill 19, the ***Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act (TIER)*** , characterized in the press release as “ the centrepiece of government’s upcoming climate strategy, .. an improved system to

help energy-intensive facilities find innovative ways to reduce emissions and invest in clean technology to stay competitive and save money. TIER is a unique solution that allows the province to reduce emissions without interference from Ottawa.”

Reaction comes in “[Alberta bets the house on technology to help province slash carbon pollution](#)” in the *National Observer* , and in a lengthy Opinion piece by Andrew Leach, “[Alberta’s TIER regulations good on electricity, not so good on oilsands](#)” at the CBC.

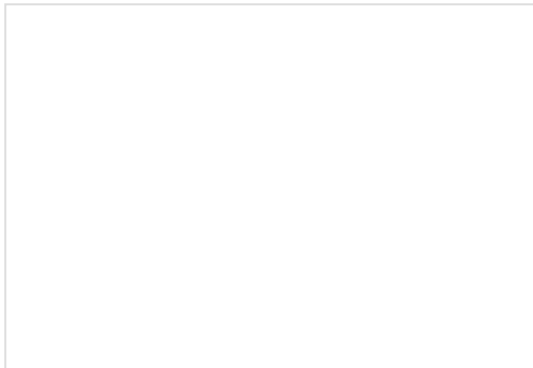
Leach characterizes the TIER policy as “a serious greenhouse gas policy in Alberta” but states that it is “backwards”: “TIER makes emissions-reducing innovation less advantageous than it would be under CCIR [the existing system], since the better performing your new facility is, the lower your emissions credits will be every year for as long as the policy remains in place. “

The Smart Prosperity Institute provides an explanation of the complexities of the proposed system, which if passed, would take effect in January 2020: “[TIER in a nutshell – The Alberta Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction regulation](#)” (Oct. 30) . More briefly, CBC published “[How Alberta will keep its \\$30-per-tonne carbon tax but make it easier for some big emitters to avoid paying](#)” .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Energy policy](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [output based pricing](#), [privatization](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C. climate change legislation improves transparency, breaks cycle of “setting targets then missing them”

Posted on [October 31, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A press release from the government of British Columbia announced “[Climate action gets new teeth with accountability act](#)”, describing Bill 38, *The Climate Change Accountability*

Amendment Act introduced in the provincial legislature by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy on October 30. The press release summarizes the main provisions, including:

- Government will set an interim emissions target for GHG emissions by no later than Dec. 31, 2020, on the path to the legislated 2030 target – which remains unchanged at 40% in greenhouse gas reductions below 2007 levels.
- No later than March 31, 2021, separate 2030 sectoral targets will also be established following engagement with stakeholders, Indigenous peoples and communities, to “make sure carbon pollution is reduced effectively across B.C.’s economy, homes, workplaces and transportation choices”.
- Every fifth year, the climate change accountability report will include an updated provincial climate risk assessment, which will build on **B.C.’s Preliminary Strategic Risk Assessment**, published in July 2019.
- A new independent advisory committee will be established, consisting of no more than 20 members, of which at least half must be women. The new committee is to be modelled on the Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council, now completed.

Initial response have been published by the **Pembina Institute**, which states: “We applaud the government for taking concrete steps to break the cycle of setting goals and missing them.” and “The reforms put forward by the B.C. government should form a blueprint for transparency and accountability on climate action at the federal level.” Also, from the **Business Coalition for a Clean Economy** (an initiative of the Pembina Institute): “As businesses committed to acting on climate change, we commend the government for its willingness to be accountable for its climate action promises.”

Less favourable reaction is reported by **CTV News**, which highlights reaction from the West Coast Environmental Law Association, (full statement [here](#)) and also the Georgia Straight Alliance, whose spokesperson states: “We are disappointed that B.C. did not choose to put a mechanism in place to reassess their climate targets in the light of the best available science, and will continue to advocate for them to do so.”

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **British Columbia, Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction, provincial climate change policies** | [Leave a reply](#)

A proposal to convert GM Oshawa to electric vehicle production under public and worker ownership



Triple Bottom Line Preliminary Feasibility Study of the GM Oshawa Facility: Possibilities for Sustainable Community Wealth was released in September 2019 by **Green Jobs Oshawa** – a coalition of workers, community leaders, environmentalists, labour and social justice advocates whose goal is to re-purpose the soon-to-be-shuttered GM Oshawa auto assembly plant “for socially beneficial manufacturing.”

The call to convert GM Oshawa to electric vehicle production has been made before – notably by **Sam Gindin**, as part of a Lucas Plan-style conversion, and by journalist Linda McQuaig, most recently in her new book ***The Sport & Prey of Capitalists***. But the new **Triple Bottom Line feasibility study** fleshes out these goals with facts and figures: it estimates that a public investment of \$1.4 to \$1.9 billion would be required to acquire and retool the Oshawa assembly plant for Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) production, which, when supported by government procurement of the vehicles, would result in financial break-even by year 4, and create over 13,000 jobs (up to 2,900 jobs in parts supply and manufacturing) and over 10,000 multiplier jobs.

The *Triple Bottom Line* study was written by Russ Christianson, a consultant and active proponent of worker cooperatives. He uses “a triple bottom line evaluation”, including: 1. an economic analysis of the current and future auto industry market, capital investment required, skills and equipment available at the GM facility and in the community, and the potential new products that could be manufactured. 2. Social needs in the Oshawa community for well-paid, dignified work, and 3. “How production at the plant can address the defining issue of our times, climate catastrophe”.

Some Highlights from the report:

“By paying a good wage to auto workers – this study proposes the existing GM Oshawa tier 1 wage of \$35 per hour for assembly workers – it will be possible to gain the workers’ commitment by investing in their jobs through shared-ownership of the new organization.”

“Governments will need to negotiate alongside the workers and community to gain public ownership of the GM Oshawa plant. The financial forecasts include a start-up investment of \$10,000 from each of the workers combined with community investment for a total of \$37.5

million in Scenario 1, and Scenario 2 estimates \$25 million in investment from workers and the community.”

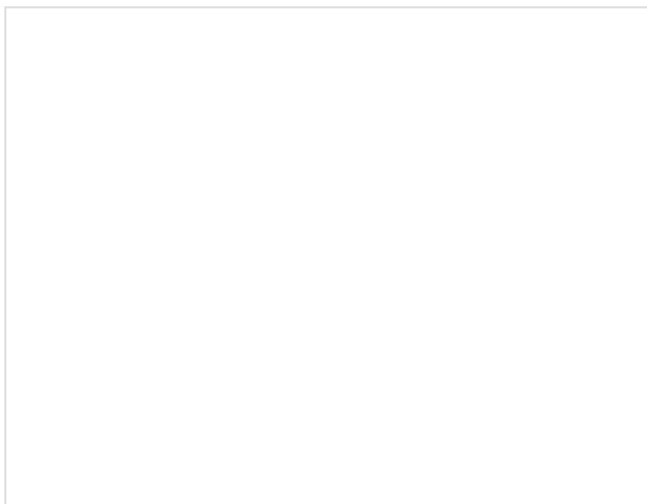
“By the end of year 5, the forecasts show that BEVs will represent 30 to 40 percent of these governments’ total fleets, except for Canada Post, which (like the U.S. Postal Service) is expected to replace the majority of their delivery fleet vehicles with BEVs.”

The CBC reported on the launch of the feasibility study on September 21 in **“Autoworkers at GM’s Oshawa plant ask feds for more than \$1B to build electric vehicles”** and included commentary from supporters and detractors. In support, the article quotes from an email by Olivier Trescases, head of the University of Toronto’s **Electric Vehicle Research Centre**, which stated: “I think that aiming for government owned EV fleets and electrified public transportation is strategically very important and more logical than trying to produce passenger cars through a Crown corporation.”

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Automobiles, car manufacturing, cooperatives, Electric Vehicles, GM Oshawa, worker ownership** | **2 Replies**

Canadian youth sue federal government seeking stronger climate action

Posted on **October 29, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Just days after the federal election, on October 25, fifteen Canadians aged 10 to 19 launched a lawsuit in federal court, seeking a court-ordered plan for climate change based on the best available science. The plaintiffs, from seven Canadian provinces and the Northwest Territories, announced their suit in Vancouver at **the Fridays for Future climate strike alongside Greta**

Thunberg and recounted their personal experiences, including asthma, Lyme disease, mental health challenges, and injuries from wildfire smoke.

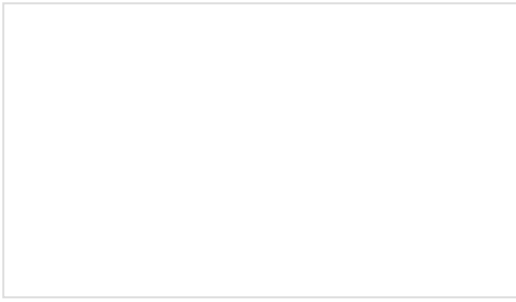
The **Statement of Claim** in *La Rose v. Her Majesty the Queen* alleges that by failing to protect essential public trust resources like air and water, the Canadian government has violated the children's right to life, liberty and security of the person under Section 7 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It also alleges that the government has violated Section 15 of the *Charter*, since youth are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change. A **press release** from the David Suzuki Foundation includes quotes from some of the individuals involved; the case was widely reported in the following sources: the **CBC**, **The Energy Mix**, the **National Observer**, **Toronto Star**, and the **Vancouver Star**.

This is the second climate change case brought by Canadian youth: in 2019, ENvironnement JEUnesse brought a class action suit on behalf of Quebecers under the age of 35, which argued that the Canadian government was violating the class members' fundamental rights by failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to ensure a safe climate. **In July 2019, the Quebec Superior Court dismissed** the petitioners' motion because it rejected the nature of the class, namely, the age limit of 35 years. The case is under appeal.

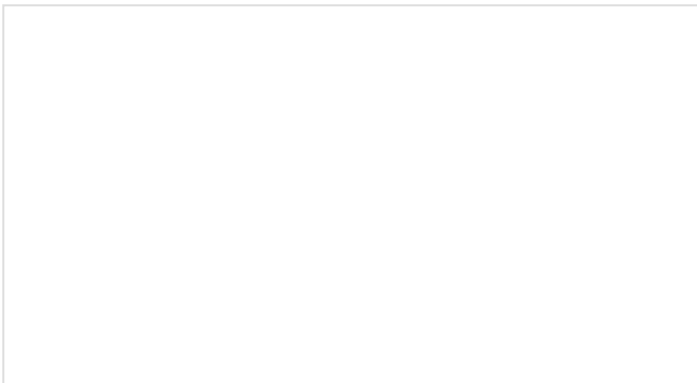
The children in *La Rose v. Her Majesty the Queen* are represented by the B.C. law firms of Arvay Finlay LLP and Tollefson Law Corporation, and supported by the **Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation (CELL)**, the **David Suzuki Foundation**, and **Our Children's Trust** in the U.S., which pioneered the pending landmark youth case of *Juliana vs. United States*. Our Children's Trust compiles information on climate change **lawsuits around the world** including Australia, Belgium, Columbia, France, India, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. The **Sabin Center for Climate Change Law** at New York's Columbia Law School maintains a database of cases in the U.S., and a separate database from the rest of the world – approximately 1400 climate lawsuits against governments and fossil fuel corporations in more than 25 countries.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canada**, **climate change and youth**, **Climate change Law**, **Climate litigation**, **Youth and climate** | **Leave a reply**

Protesters arrested as they demand Green New Deal policies from newly- elected Members of Parliament in Canada



The Liberal party of Justin Trudeau was returned to power in the Canadian federal election on October 21 as a minority government. Enthusiasts such as the **Washington Post** called the **election** “a victory for the planet”, based on the fact that climate change was a key issue and that a strong majority of the popular vote went to the four parties with serious plans for action (Liberals, Greens, NDP, and the Bloc). Catherine Abreu, executive director of Climate Action Network Canada, sums up a more complex situation in a **National Observer article** : “With at least 63 per cent of voters casting ballots for parties that put forward strong climate platforms, it is clear that a majority of Canadians asked for more ambitious and urgent climate action...People voted out of fear of the Conservatives today, rejecting their threats to roll back climate policy. At the same time, voters did not have enough confidence in the Liberal climate record to hand them another majority.”



Environmental activists are determined to press the Liberal government to forge ahead with strong climate action – as evidenced by the arrest of 27 protesters on October 28. Youth activists organized by **Our Time for a Green New Deal** were arrested and served with a 30-day ban from Parliament Hill after holding a sit-in in the House of Commons in an attempt to deliver “mandate letters” to newly-elected members of Parliament. The letters call for a Green New Deal, including strong climate action, respect for Indigenous rights, job creation, and adherence to the IPCC target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. The **CBC** and **Common Dreams** describe the protest demonstration. The mandate letter is **here**, as part of the Our Time ongoing **news reports**.

What do environmentalists want from the new government?

In “**Climate Community Declares the Win as Polling Shows Climate Concern Driving Vote**” , *Energy Mix* compiles reactions from representatives of Climate Action Network-Canada, Smart

Prosperity, Clean Energy Canada, and others across Canada and the U.S.

“Canada to Trudeau – We expect more on climate” is a press release from Oil Change International which lays out four core demands: Legislate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; Promote a just transition for oil and gas workers and communities; Say no to Trans Mountain Pipeline, and Eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies.

“With Climate On The Agenda, Advocates Call For Legislated Targets, Fossil Industry Phasedown” is an Opinion piece by Mitchell Beer in The Energy Mix which surveys responses of environmentalists, including that of Environmental Defence Executive Director Tim Gray, calling for: “a legislated and more ambitious greenhouse gas target, an accountability mechanism to keep emission reductions on track, a swift end to fossil fuel subsidies, and reform of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act as first orders of business for the new government.”

“McKenna wins, Sohi loses in mixed result for Liberals on green, energy files” in the *National Observer* comments on the results of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the loss for the Minister of Natural Resources, both of whom have carried the torch of Liberal climate policy.

“What a Liberal minority government means for Canada’s environment” in *The Narwhal* predicts the likely policies which will survive in the minority position, including a carbon tax, incentives for electric vehicles, a ban on single use plastics, and “sooner rather than later”, a phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies.

“Minority government an opportunity for progressives”, a press release by Jerry Dias, president of Unifor, states that the union is “already making plans, in fact, to go to Ottawa and push progressive causes, including labour law reform, infrastructure funding, green transition, pharmacare, electoral reform, affordable housing and more.”

Articles addressing the election’s other take-away, regional divisions:

“Why are Albertans so damned angry?” in *The Straight* (Oct. 25) has been widely praised in the Twittersphere. The article is by Eric Denhoff, a self-described “Prairie boy” and a former deputy minister in B.C. and Alberta under Liberal, NDP, Conservative, and Social Credit governments. He writes that “Trudeau and his Ottawa team are mystified that having factually delivered much more cash to Alberta in four years than Harper in nine-plus, buying a pipeline at considerable political expense, they face this level of hostility.” But sparing no criticism of Alberta Conservative Premier Jason Kenney, Denhoff concludes that “politicians find it easy to trade in a province with a median family income 25 percent or so higher than the rest of the country, with no sales tax, lower income and corporate taxes, and services Ontarians could only dream about. So, the battle will continue... more intense than ever. Ottawa will have to give, and Alberta will have to adjust. As in any relationship.”

“Liberal win stokes talk of separation in Alberta” from the *Calgary Herald* and **“Oilpatch market reaction muted after election of minority Liberal government”** in *The Star*.

“A landslide win for climate politics. Now beware its nemeses” (Oct. 22) in the *National Observer* states: “We have got to be self-reflective at an important moment like this, and we should beware the twin nemeses of victory — factionalism and triumphalism....We can’t allow the parties’ activists and operators to go on placing politics above planet....we need to raise the chorus demanding deeper, faster action and simultaneously convince sensible, normal people that the policies needed are completely reasonable.”

“Of course Canada is divided- that’s the whole point of elections” by Crawford Kilian in *The Tyee* (Oct. 24) calls for us to focus on the self-diagnosis in the election results, “and explore possible remedies for all our ailments: Progressive Narcissism, the Tories’ Prairie Victimization Syndrome, the Bloc’s Passive-Aggressive Separatism, and the Liberals’ High-Functioning Climate Denialism.”

“Politicians Offered a Choice between Climate Fantasies as Our Future Grows Bleaker” (Oct. 25) in *The Tyee* in which Andrew Nikofoeruk grimly states: “Our pathetic politics reflects the inertia in the fossil fuel system, the moral poverty of the status quo and a popular denial about the scale of change required to prevent an unending emergency.”

Shawn McCarthy, former Globe and Mail reporter, writes in the *National Observer* – **“What Trudeau needs to do to win the West”**. He calls for “a multi-pronged approach to address the seemingly contradictory realities: the urgent need to reduce emissions, and the uneven cost that effort imposes across the country.” He argues “We tend to focus on — and argue over — the supply side of the energy equation, especially oil and gas versus renewables. The demand side requires far more attention. There is a vast amount of progress that can be made in improving our national efficiency and reducing energy consumption, thereby saving businesses and consumers money over the medium term.”

In a similar vein, Bruce Lourie, Director of Canadians for Clean Prosperity wrote in the *National Observer* before the election: **“If Scheer wins, Albertans can kiss their economic future goodbye”**. He promotes a Capital Plan for Clean Prosperity and states: “The only option for Canada is to understand and embrace the complexity of how to finance the transition to a clean economy through a measured, long-term transition investment strategy that sees the cleaning up of the fossil fuel sector in a way that demonstrates global leadership. Politicians pitting different parts of Canada against each other is about the worst possible outcome for Canadians and a sad reflection on the narrow-mindedness of our Balkanized politicians. We need to be competing with the world, not each other.”

For readers from the international community seeking more insight into Canadian politics, the *New York Times* focuses on the regional differences in **“Trudeau Re-election Reveals Intensified Divisions in Canada”** and Jeremy Wildeman of the University of Bath, England explains **“Justin Trudeau’s political setback: A surprise to the world, but not to Canada”** in *The Conversation*.

Just Transition Initiative among positive developments at U.N. Climate Action Summit 2019

Posted on **October 15, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



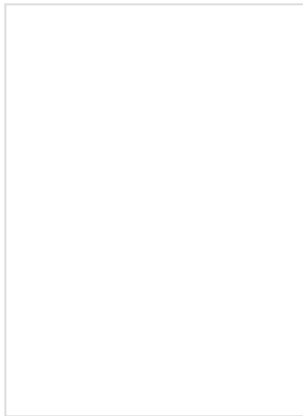
The **United Nations 2019 Climate Action Summit** in New York at the end of September has been viewed as a disappointment by many because it failed to deliver new and dramatic commitments from the major polluting countries, as summarized by *Inside Climate News* in “**Small Countries Step Up While Major Emitters Are Silent, and a Teen Takes World Leaders to Task**” . But **CBC provides a more optimistic view in its summary** of the “Big Takeaways” from the meetings, including news that the Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance, composed of pension fund managers and insurers (and including La Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec) **committed to carbon-neutral investment portfolios by 2050** . A **compilation of UN Press releases** reveals many new initiatives announced at the Summit.

Climate Action Jobs Initiative to promote Just Transition

One important such initiative: the Climate Action Jobs Initiative, aimed at the creation of decent jobs and protecting livelihoods as part of climate action. The Initiative will be led by the International Labour Organization (ILO), along with International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organisation of Employers, and will build on the **ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition**, released in 2016. According to the **press release** of September 18, almost 50 countries have committed to forming Just Transition Plans, with suggested specific measures including skills development and upgrading, social protections, and mechanisms for inclusive social dialogue to achieve consensus for transformative change.

“The commitments represent a significant engagement by governments, employers organizations, trade unions, UN agencies and civil society to pursue a common agenda to advance a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.”

Other Reports announced before and during the U.N. Climate Summit included:



The Heat is On: Taking Stock of Global Climate Emissions, released by the UNFCCC and the U.N. Development Program in advance of the Summit meetings. It analyses trends in the international progress to “ratchet” the emissions reductions goals under the Paris Agreement and emphasizes the urgency for countries to put plans in place for the 5-year review of the Paris targets in 2020... “While climate action has accelerated since Paris, it still falls far short of an unprecedented transformation needed to limit impacts of climate change. ...Many developed economies are mapping out long-term plans to eliminate GHGs by 2050, even as they have yet to clarify plans for shorter-term NDC revisions.” Regarding “Long Term Strategies”: “12 countries have submitted LTS to the UNFCCC since 2016 – Canada, Germany, Mexico, the United States, Benin, France, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Marshall Islands, Fiji and Japan.”

The ***United in Science*** report, which is composed of a number of reports from such agencies as the World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Global Carbon Project, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The reports state that the world is currently on track for a more than 10 per cent rise in emissions above 2016 levels by 2030, and concluded that governments must triple their 2015 pledges to keep global warming well below 2 C by 2100, or increase them fivefold to hold it to 1.5 C . The WMO’s greatest concern is with sea level rise, which has averaged 3.2 millimetres per year since 1993 but hit 5.0 millimetres per year between 2014 and 2019. It also found that the oceans had the highest heat content on record in 2018.

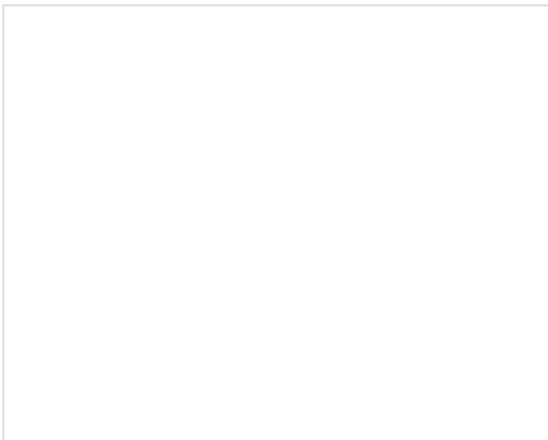
Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) : this IPCC report presenting the work of 104 scientists from 36 countries, synthesizing 7,000 publications – the most comprehensive study to date of the current and future impacts of the climate crisis on Earth’s oceans and the cryosphere (the parts of the planet that are covered in ice). Rising ocean temperatures means more intense tropical cyclones, with more powerful storm surges and downpours, leading to more extreme weather along the coasts and potentially devastating loss of

marine ecosystems. Summaries are provided by the [National Observer](#) , [Inside Climate News](#) and international NGO [OneOcean](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [decent work](#), [Greenhouse gas emissions](#), [Just Transition](#), [Ocean Protection](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [United Nations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change litigation in Canada: ENvironnement JEUnesse is under appeal

Posted on **October 15, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A September [blog published by legal firm Aird Berlis](#) summarizes the July 2019 decision of the Quebec Superior Court in Canada's youth climate change litigation: *ENvironnement JEUnesse v. Canada*. The environmental group [ENvironnement JEUnesse](#) also summarizes the progress of the case, which sought to represent Quebecers under the age of 35 in a class action suit, arguing that the Canadian government was violating the class members' fundamental rights by failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to ensure a safe climate. In July 2019, the Quebec Superior Court dismissed the petitioners' motion because it rejected the nature of the class proposed by the petitioners, namely, the age limit of 35 years. Lawyers for ENvironnement JEUnesse filed an appeal of the decision in August and await a hearing. The French-language decision is [here](#) ; an unofficial English-language translation posted by Columbia Law School is [here](#) . ENvironnement JEUnesse sees itself as part of the global movement of climate litigation begun with the Urgenda decision in The Netherlands, and summarizes other cases around the world on its [English-language website](#). The [French-language website](#) is much more informative – in addition to updates on the case, it posts news on the Quebec climate youth movement and [its annual conference](#).

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Climate change Law](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Quebec](#), [Urgenda Decision](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Court rules that government broke the law by failure to consult on repeal of Cap and Trade regulations

Posted on **October 15, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A suit against the Conservative Ford government of Ontario was dismissed by the Ontario Divisional Court on October 11, but in the decision, a majority of judges wrote that the government breached Ontario's *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR) by repealing the province's Cap and Trade regulations without the required public consultation. The CBC [summarizes the decision](#) and the [National Observer writes](#),

"the judges found the Ford government was in "clear breach of the EBR" and that "its apparent efforts to avoid judicial review of this conduct raises serious concerns – not about whether the government had the lawful authority to repeal the Cap and Trade Act, but of its respect for the Rule of Law and the role of the courts, as a branch of government."

The suit was brought by Greenpeace and Ecojustice in 2018. The [Greenpeace reaction](#) on October 11 states:

"Scrapping cap-and-trade not only undercut a successful program that was helping Ontario reduce climate change-causing greenhouse gas emissions, it also cancelled 227 clean energy programs that would have benefit schools, hospitals, small businesses and public housing projects. It's especially concerning that the Ford government did this in a way that silenced groups like Greenpeace and Ontario's youth – who do not have a voice to vote, but stand to lose the most from climate inaction... Ontarians are marching in the streets demanding real action in response to the climate emergency and we call on the Ford government to listen to the people this time, starting with an abandonment of its challenge of the federal carbon tax."

The Greenpeace statement also refers to [Failure to Launch](#), a progress report on climate action in Ontario released on October 10 by Environmental Defence. A blog [summarizes the findings](#);

the full report is [here](#) , describing the destruction of climate change policies from the previous Liberal government, and making recommendations for improved future action.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Cap and Trade](#), [Climate change Law](#), [Ontario](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

How are workers affected by PG&E power outage in California?

Posted on **October 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The California utility company largely blamed for the catastrophic Camp Fire in 2018 is making headlines again. In the midst of dry, windy weather conditions, Pacific Gas & Electric shut off power to approximately 800,000 accounts (translating into 1.8 million people) on October 8, in an effort to reduce the risk of another wildfire caused by sparking from their electricity transmission lines. The *Los Angeles Times* provides a general overview in [“Gov. Newsom slams PG&E over ‘unacceptable’ power outages and failure to fix systems”](#) (Oct. 10) and [“Millions Brace for Unprecedented Power Cuts in California”](#) in *Bloomberg News* reports that shutoffs will affect major cities in the San Francisco Bay area, including Oakland, San Jose and Berkeley, with a possible duration of up to 6 days.

The chaos, anger and inconvenience has additional significance for workers, described briefly in [“Confusion reigns as California utility cuts power in 34 counties to reduce wildfire risk”](#)

(Oct. 10) in *Energy Mix* . More details appear in **“What happens when a power company decides to turn off the electricity for millions of residents?”** in *Wildfire Today* which states: “The indirect effects of having no electricity expand to a much larger population when you consider traffic lights not working, tunnels on highways being shut down, plus the closure of gas stations, schools, and businesses At some point, cellular telephone towers and infrastructure may exhaust their emergency power supply systems, not to mention the batteries in the public’s cell phones....And in an emergency, firefighters’ communications could be hampered by the disabling of their radio repeaters on mountaintops. Notifying residents of approaching fires and conducting evacuations in order to save lives could be challenging.”

And what of the PG&E workers? The local *Sacramento Bee* newspaper reported **“PG&E employee shot at ahead of utility’s massive Northern California power shutoff”** (Oct. 9) as residents take out their frustrations on employees doing their jobs. The *Washington Post* reported **“PG&E pleads for employee safety amid outage after police report egging, gunfire at vehicle”** . One worker’s wife is widely reported to have issued **a social media plea** stating that utility workers “are simply employees and have no say in any decision making so shouting profanities or resorting to violence towards PG&E workers will never do any good but it would instead hurt someone’s father, mother, brother, sister, husband or wife. ” Truly a dark time.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [climate change and violence](#), [electricity sector](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [Pacific Gas and Electric](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Norway municipal pension fund divests from Canada’s oil sands

Posted on **October 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On October 7, the *National Observer* reported **“Norway public pension fund severs final link with Canada’s oilsands”** . The article describes that KLP, which manages the pensions of Norway’s 900,000 nurses, firefighters and other local and state government employees, has sold off US\$33 million worth of equity holdings and US\$25 million in bonds from Canada’s Cenovus Energy, Suncor Energy, Imperial Oil (majority owned by ExxonMobil) and Husky Energy, as well as Russia’s Tatneft PAO. This follows the June 2019 vote by the Norwegian Parliament to to tighten the coal exclusion criteria of Norway’s Government Pension Fund Global (GPFG), and the **October 1 decision** by the GPFG to divest from oil exploration companies (although it still maintains investment in downstream and integrated ventures). The moves are seen as reflective of the instability of oil and gas investments, and it is notable that the KLP fund has had a 22.8 percent return so far this year, 1.5 per cent ahead of its benchmark.

In contrast to the Norweigan pension administrators, the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB)** as recently as March 2019 **invested \$1.34 billion** in a joint venture which will expand fracking in the western Marcellus and Utica shale basins of the U.S.. The CPPIB manages

\$400 billion to support the public pensions of Canadians, and continues to hold hundreds of millions of dollars in oil and gas companies, including Enbridge , Suncor and Pembina Pipeline. The Green Party of Canada platform in the 2019 election commits to “regulate the CPP Investment Board to require divestment of coal, oil and gas shares and ensure that all investments are ethical and promote environmental sustainability.”

Another recent, high-profile divestment: The University of California announced that by the end of September, the university’s \$70 billion pension fund and \$13.4 billion endowment fund will have divested all investments related to fossil fuel extraction. The reason given: “*The reason we sold some \$150 million in fossil fuel assets from our endowment was the reason we sell other assets: They posed a long-term risk to generating strong returns for UC’s diversified portfolios.*” A September 18 [article in Vox](#) is one of many reporting on this high-profile decision.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Divestment](#), [Fossil Fuel Divestment](#), [Norway](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Calls for public banks to finance a Green New Deal and Just Transition

Posted on [October 10, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new reports in September call for a greater role for public banks to finance a Green New Deal and just transition.

A US Green Investment Bank for All: Democratized finance for a Just Transition was published by the Next System Project in September, proposing a new, democratically- managed structure for financial institutions so that they function in the public interest to achieve a green and just transition. From the report: “Of the \$454 billion in climate finance invested in 2016, the private investment sector, which controls 80 percent of all banking assets, contributed \$230 billion, while the public sector contributed \$224 billion. That is, with only 20 percent of total assets, public banks invest nearly as much as all private banks combined. The short-term, return-maximizing horizons of private finance have failed, utterly, to drive anything like a green transition. The future of climate finance must look to the public sphere, not the private.” “ The key political-economic decision in the design is the balance between concessionary lending (nonprofit and loss-making operations) and non-concessionary lending (that is, for-profit). The answers must follow from the bank’s public interest mandate and triple bottom line.” The full report is summarized in “***We need a democratized Green Infrastructure Bank for a Just Transition***” in Open Democracy.

A second report also cites the failures of the international global market-based financial system. The ***2019 Trade and Development Report: Financing a Global Green New Deal*** was

released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on September 25, and states: “We can meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, but only if we find the political will to change the rules of the international economic game and adopt policies that scale up the resources needed for a big investment push led by the public sector and set the global economy on an expansionary course.”

UNCTAD economists project that a net increase in global employment of at least 170 million jobs, with an overall reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, if total green investment were increased annually by around US\$1.7 trillion, which they estimate at one third of what is currently spent by governments on subsidizing fossil fuels. Although each country will require a unique policy mix, the report calls for changes for all to include fiscal stimulus, public investment in infrastructure and green energy, and measures to boost wages. The report also contends that the 2030 Agenda goals to eradicate poverty and meet nutrition, health and education goals will impose unsustainable financial burdens on many developing countries, also requiring reforms to the international trade, financial and monetary system.

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [Green Finance](#) | [21 Replies](#)

Will the fossil fuel industry hijack energy policy in Canada’s election?

Posted on **October 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

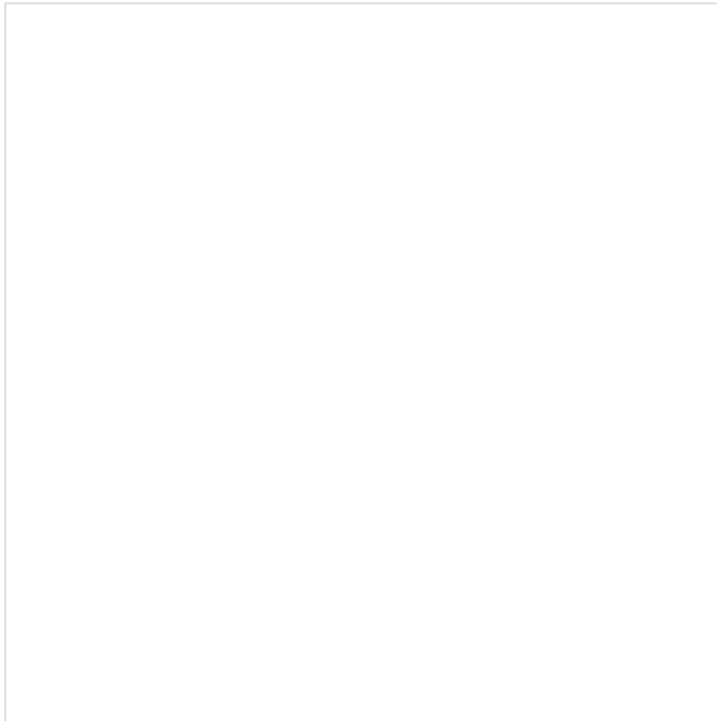
As the Canadian federal election campaign counts down to October 21, *The Narwhal’s* [Explainer](#) from September remains one of the most readable and interesting overviews of the parties’ energy and environmental platforms; the [survey responses](#) from a consolidated questionnaire from the major environmental advocacy groups remains the most complete. Climate activism has been a backdrop to the campaign: according to [Fridays for Future Canada](#), over one million Canadians in 245 communities participated in climate strikes between September 20 to September 27 (a [summary from Energy Mix](#) gives more details). On October 7, Extinction Rebellion began their demonstrations, blockading bridges in Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, Edmonton and Halifax – and [according to the Vancouver Star](#), pledging to escalate actions.

New publications regarding the fossil fuel industry:

Canada’s relationship with its oil and gas industry was the subject of a [country profile of Canada](#) published by Carbon Brief on October 8, providing the basic facts and figures. *The Narwhal* published an Opinion Piece highlighting the issue of fossil fuel subsidies: “[Canada’s fossil fuel subsidies amount to \\$1,650 per Canadian. It’s got to stop.](#)” The article is based on a [May 2019 report](#) from the International Monetary Fund which estimated Canada’s fossil fuel subsidies at close to \$60 billion in 2015, despite the government’s G20 commitments to phase out “inefficient” fossil fuel subsidies. A related report by Environmental Defence and the International Institute for

Sustainable Development in February, ***Doubling Down with Taxpayer Dollars*** , examined \$2Billion in fossil fuel subsidies in Alberta.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) **Energy Platform** – essentially a “wish list” from the fossil fuel industry – calls for expanded production for oil and gas and Liquefied Natural Gas. In report released on October 7, Environmental Defence estimates that the CAPP proposals would increase oil and gas emissions by 60% from 2017 to 2030. The report, ***The Single Biggest Barrier to Climate Action in Canada – the Oil and Gas Lobby***, documents the two types of barriers created by the oil and gas lobby: 1. the actual carbon emissions of the sector, which are responsible for 27% of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions and for 80 % of the increase in Canada’s overall emissions; and 2. Industry campaigns and lobbying to block or weaken climate change policies.



Regarding the economic benefits which the oil and gas industry claims, Environmental Defence states: “... job creation in oil and gas is far from guaranteed even as the industry expands and reaps significant corporate profits. Despite growing production since 2014, almost 30,000 jobs (10 per cent of the workforce) have been axed in the oil patch in the following four years, with another 12,000 expected to be cut in 2019. That’s because oil and gas companies are moving increasingly towards automation, with the stated goal to “de-man” the industry. Meanwhile, the CEOs of companies such as Suncor, Encana, TransCanada, and CNRL rake in salaries north of \$10 million per year.”

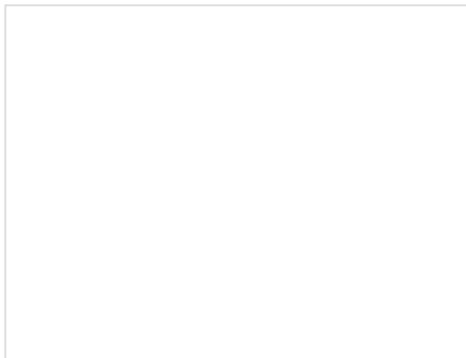
The report concludes: “ Canada is bigger than oil. The opportunities that are available to Canadian businesses, citizens, and governments get shortchanged when one industry is able to hijack public policy on energy development and environmental protection.” Or, as Richard Heede wrote more bluntly in a new series in *The Guardian* called **The Polluters: “It’s time to rein in the fossil fuel giants before their greed chokes the planet”** . Heede’s Opinion article is based on the **latest**

[research](#) about the global fossil fuel industry by the Climate Accountability Institute. The research found that “chiefly from the combustion of their products, the top 20 companies have collectively produced 480bn tonnes of carbon dioxide and methane since 1965 – 35% of all fossil fuel emissions worldwide in that time.” The [press release](#) names the top 20 polluters, led by Saudi Aramco, Chevron, ExxonMobil, GazProm, and BP. All research and data is [here](#) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [carbon majors](#), [climate change and politics](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Environmental injustice for Canada’s First Nations – updated

Posted on **October 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



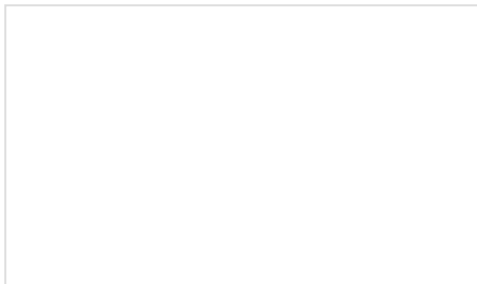
An overview of the state of environmental injustice in Canada appears in [***The Statement of United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances and wastes***](#), issued following his visit in May/June 2019. The full report will be presented to the United Nations in Fall 2020. The preliminary information presented in the Statement identifies “a pervasive trend of inaction of the Canadian Government in the face of existing health threats from decades of historical and current environmental injustices and the cumulative impacts of toxic exposures by indigenous peoples.” The Statement commented on the specific cases of the oil sands (Fort McMurray, Fort MacKay and Fort Chipewyan), Sarnia, Muskrat Falls, and mining sites such as Elk Valley. He noted that Canada has “the second highest number of known mining accidents from 2007-2017, increasing significantly from previous years.”

The Special Rapporteur concluded: “It was clear during the course of my visit that many communities in Canada continue to be exploited by toxic exposures. Some key concerns include: (1) the limited degree of protection of human health and ecosystems under various legislation; (2) the lack of environmental information and monitoring in areas of high risk; (3) long delays or absence of health impact assessment for affected communities; (4) the inadequate compliance with and enforcement of laws and policies; (5) systemic obstacles to access to justice, in particular for cases of health impacts due to chronic exposures; and (6) the recalcitrance to ensure that victims can realize their right to an effective remedy. The situation of affected communities

outside Canada is of equal concern in many of these regards, including the inordinate power imbalance faced by communities in low- and middle-income countries relative to Canadian corporations.”

The Special Rapporteur visited Sarnia’s “Chemical Valley” and highlighted it in his Statement. This area has been identified as a “pollution hot spot”, and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation have long fought for redress – including a **legal challenge** under the Environmental Bill of Rights in 2007. More recently, on October 9, the *Toronto Star* published “**Whistleblower alleges province failing to protect First Nations community in ‘Chemical Valley’ from ‘dangerous’ air pollutants**”, a senior engineer employed by the provincial Ministry of the Environment alleges that ministry executives withheld technical and scientific information about sulphur dioxide impacts, failed to properly consult the Aamjiwnaang First Nation representatives, and that he was subject to workplace reprisals for raising the issues. His grievance, filed with the labour board, details his accusations and asks for \$186,000 to compensate for the reprisals, and for the ministry to begin discussions with him and Aamjiwnaang representatives “with the goal of providing capacity funding and to develop a program” that would transfer authority from the ministry to the Aamjiwnaang to enforce Ontario air pollution requirements that impact their territory.

Other examples are described by reporters at *The National Observer* – for example, “**How Alberta kept Fort McKay First Nation in the dark about a toxic cloud from the oilsands**” (April 2019) and “**Alberta officials are signalling they have no idea how to clean up toxic oilsands tailings ponds**” (Nov. 2018) . *The Narwhal* maintains an archive of articles concerning **Canadian mining examples**, including the Mount Polley and Taesko mines. One example, “**This is not Canada’: inside the Tsilhqot’in Nation’s battle against Taseko Mines**” (August 2019) . The APTN News article “**Amnesty uses World Water Day to highlight environmental racism in Canada**” provides an overview of First Nations actions as of March 2019.



Another example of long-standing concern, mercury pollution at Grassy Narrows, has emerged as an election issue, with the **Chief of Grassy Narrows running for the NDP** in the riding of Kenora. Dozens of other Indigenous leaders are running in the current election to bring attention to their own areas, according to a **CBC report** : for the NDP, 10 candidates; for the Liberals, 12; for the Conservatives, 7, and for the Greens, 6.

Related reading:

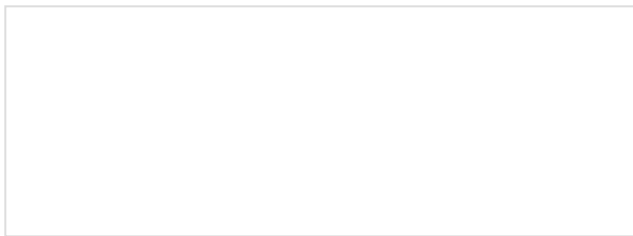
The Alberta Environmental Law Centre published a blog in September, ***Access to Environmental Justice: Costs and scientific uncertainty raise barriers to protecting communities*** . This brief blog acts an introduction to the issue of environmental injustice by providing brief overviews

(with links to further readings) of case studies which illustrate the barriers to legal action experienced by Alberta First Nations. The specific cases described are Kearl Oil Sands Environmental Assessment (2007), Fort McKay (2016) and the Beaver Lake Cree Nation. Looking beyond Alberta, the blog also notes examples of Sarnia Ontario's Chemical Valley, and Africville Nova Scotia, and briefly discusses the concept of climate justice.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Environmental Justice](#), [First Nations](#), [Oil Sands](#), [toxic chemicals](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The right policy mix determines the extent of job creation for California's proposed offshore wind industry

Posted on **October 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



California Offshore Wind: Workforce Impacts and Grid Integration is a report released on September 27 by the Center for Labor Research and Education at University of California, Berkeley, in partnership with Energy and Environmental Economics Inc. The report seeks to quantify what benefits for workers and communities would emerge from a major offshore wind power sector, given that the depth of California's waters require floating platform wind installations, and floating wind is in its infancy. (According to the report, the only commercially operating project now is the 30 MW **Hywind project**, opened in 2017 off the coast of Aberdeen, Scotland). The author interviewed union leaders, offshore wind industry participants, workforce training professionals, and port and transportation specialists for their firsthand accounts of the impacts of offshore wind, as well as analyzing the research to date on the economic and employment impacts of the fixed-bottom offshore wind industry around the world. A [press release](#) provides an executive summary of the report.

The conclusion: state policy intervention is a crucial determinant of the level of benefit for offshore wind. Excerpts from the report: The largest economic benefits would occur "if an in-state supply chain were developed for the primary components of wind turbine generators—blades, nacelles (hubs), and towers—as well as the floating platforms, thus creating thousands of manufacturing and construction jobs. But the offshore wind industry is highly globalized, with its

supply chain centered in Europe, and by the mid-2020s, China is likely to become a major exporter of wind components. ... policymakers should set a clear goal for offshore wind as part of the long-term renewable energy planning process (for example, a mandate for at least 8 GW over a decade). If the offshore wind planning process were to evolve in a more piecemeal basis, without strategic direction or fixed targets, wind developers and manufacturers would lack incentive to make major California investments.... Although the state has a strong workforce training system, including the construction industry's state-certified apprenticeships, skills gaps are likely to be a challenge for offshore wind on the North Coast. The state should consider creating a High-Road Training Partnership (H RTP) for offshore wind to fill these gaps and broaden community access to offshore wind jobs. H RTPs are a new state program of industry-specific training programs that prioritize job quality, equity, and environmental sustainability."

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [California](#), [employment impacts](#), [Offshore Wind](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

City of Toronto declares climate emergency

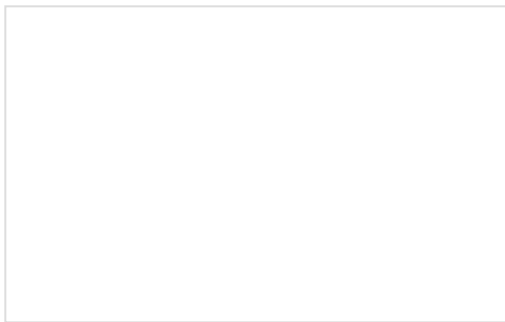
Posted on **October 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Canada's largest city, Toronto, has unanimously adopted a **climate emergency resolution** on September 20, joining hundreds of other municipalities across Canada. The city's **TransformTO Climate Action Plan**, passed in 2017, had a target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 80 per cent below 1990 city levels by 2050. The emergency resolution passed in September speeds up that timetable, with a new commitment to net zero emissions before 2050. (As of July 2019, the **city was ahead of schedule** with a 44% reduction below 1990 levels). The action was precipitated by a **Call to Action**, which includes a call for a "Just Economic Transition" and for "Equity and Inclusion" is described in a press release from the Toronto Environmental Alliance: **"Forty-seven organizations call on Toronto City Council to declare a climate emergency"**

(Sept. 20). The **Call to Action** statement is [here](#) , the list of signatories is [here](#) , and it includes Toronto and York Region Labour Council, Toronto Community Benefits Network, Good Jobs for All, and BlueGreen Alliance. A spokesperson for the Toronto Environmental Alliance states: “The good news is that just about everything that Toronto needs to do will improve our quality of life. For example, properly insulating our buildings will make them more energy efficient and safe from extreme weather, and create jobs for people in the skilled trades.... If developed in a thoughtful and well-coordinated way, green workforce strategies can be inclusive and reduce poverty.”

The mayor’s voluntary Green Ways Initiative is described in “**Mayor John Tory enlists major institutions in emissions plan as Toronto declares ‘climate emergency’**” in the *Toronto Star*. Developers, hospitals, and universities are being urged to cut their energy consumption and emissions – and one of those volunteer entities, the University of Toronto, announced its **Low Carbon Action Plan** on September 27. The University of Toronto maintains 266 buildings on three campuses, and more than half of those are over 80 years old. Other participants in the Green Ways Initiative include include Oxford Properties, Ryerson University, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Toronto Community Housing, and the University Health Network.



The major criticism of the climate emergency resolution is outlined in “**Toronto just declared a climate emergency, so why is it still fixing up the Gardiner?**” at the CBC (Oct. 4), referring to the major highway artery across Toronto’s downtown. Journalist John Lorinc also pursues this in his [article](#) in *Spacing* (Sept. 30), which contends that the Gardiner Expressway redevelopment project accounts for 5% of the city’s entire \$40.7 billion ten-year capital budget, which is money which could be better used to fund transit, such as the Queen’s Quay East LRT, or to finance the retrofitting of the city’s portfolio of buildings, including community housing. To these criticisms, the mayor is quoted [in the Toronto Star](#) and the CBC with this statement: “The amount we’re spending on rebuilding a small part of the Gardiner Expressway pales in comparison to what we’re investing in public transit to get people out of their cars entirely”.

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [climate emergency](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Toronto](#), [TransformTO](#), [Transit](#), [transportation policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European and U.S. studies discuss training needs for green and greenable jobs

Posted on **October 4, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

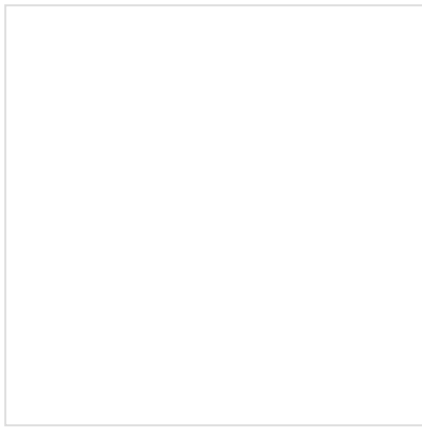
The 2019 edition of the European Commission's flagship analytical report ***Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE)*** was released in July, dedicated to the theme of sustainability. On September 10, the European Trade Union Institute hosted a **conference** to discuss Chapter 5 of that report, titled "Towards a greener future: employment and social impacts of climate change policies". The chapter, **downloadable from this link**, focuses on three aspects of environmental and social sustainability in the EU: 1. the definitions and discussion framework of green jobs and occupations in the EU economy; 2. the key findings of recent studies of the expected impacts on employment, skills, income and task structures of jobs in a clean transition; and 3. energy poverty and the link between climate action, air pollution and human health. In general, the chapter states that the transition to a climate-neutral economy is expected to provide additional jobs in growing, green(ing) sectors both in industry and services, including construction, waste management and sustainable finance, but will require significant reskilling and labour reallocation across sectors and occupations, with careful and early policy intervention required to ensure success. Opinions from the ETUI discussants is **summarized here**, including the view that the chapter may underestimate the costs of transition.

Training for "greenable jobs"

Chapter 5 of the EU report states that "Analysis of task content also shows that green jobs vary in 'greenness', with very few jobs only consisting of green tasks, suggesting that the term 'green' should be considered a continuum rather than a binary characteristic. While it is easier to transition to indirectly green rather than directly green jobs, greening is likely to involve transitions on a similar scale and scope of existing job transitions. Non-green jobs generally appear to differ from their green counterparts in only a few skill-specific aspects, suggesting that most re-training can happen on-the-job."

Appendix 1 of Chapter 5 (p. 36) highlights four recent studies on the "greenness of jobs" with one North American study: Bowen et al. "**Characterising green employment: The impacts of 'greening' on workforce composition**" which appeared in *Energy Economics* in May 2018.

Using the U.S. O*NET database and its definition of green jobs, the paper estimates that "19.4% of U.S. workers could currently be part of the green economy in a broad sense, although a large proportion of green employment would be 'indirectly' green, comprising existing jobs that are expected to be in high demand due to greening, but do not require significant changes in tasks, skills, or knowledge."



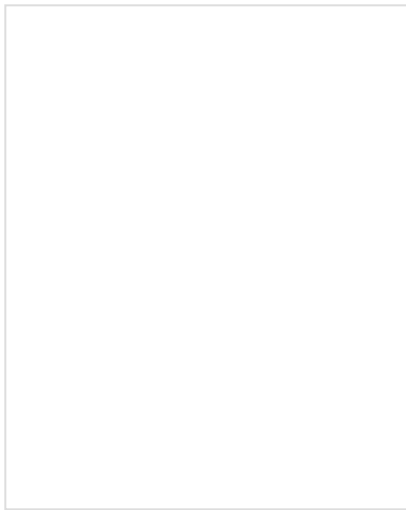
O*NET describes itself as “the primary source of occupational information” for the United States, part of the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration. O*NET counts any occupation that will be affected by greening as a greenable job, and defines three subcategories, according to the effect that greening will have on the tasks, skills, and knowledge required for the job – namely changing skill green occupations (e.g. construction workers and farmers); higher demand green occupations (e.g. bus and train drivers and renewable energy engineers); and new green occupations (e.g. energy and sustainability auditors and sustainable finance managers).

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Green Jobs](#), [green jobs definition](#), [Retraining](#), [skills training](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

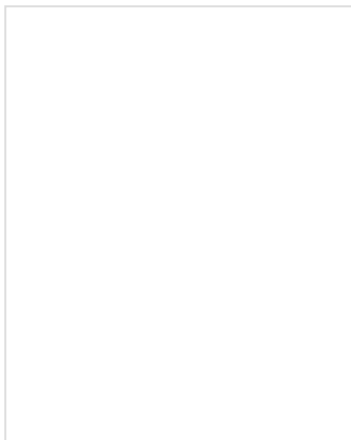
With progressive policies, Canada’s clean energy sector will provide over 500,000 jobs by 2030

Posted on **October 4, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new economic studies project the potential for growth in the clean energy sector to 2030 in Canada and in Nova Scotia.



On October 3, Vancouver-based Clean Energy Canada **announced** its new report, ***The Fast Lane***, which predicts that “Canada’s clean energy sector will employ 559,400 Canadians by 2030—in jobs like insulating homes, manufacturing electric buses, or maintaining wind farms. And while 50,000 jobs are likely to be lost in fossil fuels over the next decade, just over 160,000 will be created in clean energy—a net increase of 110,000 new energy jobs in Canada.” That translates into a job growth rate of 3.4% a year for clean energy from 2020, compared to an overall job growth rate of 0.9% for Canada as a whole and a decline of 0.5% a year for the fossil fuel sector.



Navius Research conducted the economic modelling underlying ***The Fast Lane***, as well as a May 2019 Clean Energy Canada report, ***Missing the Bigger Picture***, which reports on clean energy investment and jobs from 2010 to 2017. The more detailed economic modelling reports by Navius are available as ***Quantifying Canada’s Clean Energy Economy: A forecast of clean energy investment, value added and jobs***, and ***Quantifying Canada’s Clean Energy Economy: An assessment of clean energy investment, value added and jobs*** (May).

The message for policy-makers is made clear in the introduction to ***The Fast Lane*** by Merran Smith, Executive Director of Clean Energy Canada: “The sector’s projected growth is modelled on policy measures either in place or announced in early 2019 at both federal and provincial levels. If climate measures are eliminated—as we’ve recently seen in Alberta and Ontario—our emissions will go up and Canadians working in clean energy could lose jobs.”

An [article in *The Energy Mix*](#) summarizes [The Fast Lane](#) . It quotes Liam Hildebrand, Executive Director of [Iron and Earth](#) , a worker-led non-profit which promotes upskilling and retraining for fossil fuel workers: “It’s really important for people to know that most fossil fuel industry workers are really proud of their trades skills and would be excited—and are excited—about the opportunity to apply those skills to building a sustainable energy future But they need support in making that transition.”

A similar message comes through in [“After oil and gas: Meet Alberta workers making the switch to solar”](#) , an article in *The Narwhal* which profiles three workers who have transitioned from jobs in the fossil fuel industry. The article also summarizes the policy environment in Alberta, where according to Statistics Canada, roughly **1 in every 16 workers** in Alberta is employed in the category described as “forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas.” *The Narwhal* quotes Rod Wood, national representative from Unifor, who states that the global energy transition “is going to happen in spite of Alberta... You’re either part of the conversation or you’re lunch. It’s just going to steamroll over you.” And Mark Rowlinson of the United Steelworkers Union and BlueGreen Alliance Canada states: “ The market tends to move with its own feet. If the market sees that the future of the fossil fuel industry is not looking great, it will move quickly... And it will move without a plan. That means there will be wreckage left behind it, and that’s what we need to try to avoid.”

Clean economy policies could bring 180,000 jobs to Nova Scotia by 2030:

Nova Scotia’s [Ecology Action Centre](#) submitted what it calls a “Green Jobs Report” to the province’s [consultation on its proposed Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act](#), just ended on September 27. EAC proposed six policy choices, including supplying 90% of the province’s electricity from renewables by 2030, with a summary [here](#). A detailed report, [Nova Scotia Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act: Economic Costs and Benefits for Proposed Goals](#) was prepared by economic consultants Gardner Pinfold and estimates the benefits of each proposal, with the conclusion that the proposed policies could create over 15,000 green jobs per year in Nova Scotia, for a total of just less than 180,000 job-years between now and 2030.

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [Clean Energy](#), [employment impacts](#), [fossil fuel industry](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Just Transition](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [renewable energy industry](#) | [2 Replies](#)

Election updates: Liberal platform calls for Just Transition Act, national flood insurance plan for high risk homeowners

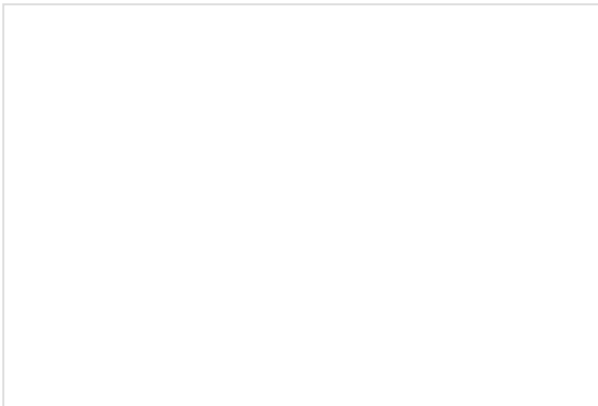
With the federal election only weeks away on October 21, Justin Trudeau began to flesh out the Liberal Party **climate change platform** with a campaign speech in Burnaby B.C. on September 24. His speech, titled ***A Climate Vision that Moves Canada Forward***, promised that Canada would achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and announced that a re-elected Liberal government would halve the corporate tax rate for clean-technology businesses – from 9% to 4.5 % for small business, from 15% to 7.5% for larger companies. The *Energy Mix* summarized the clean tech proposals **here**.

In French only, Trudeau also promised a Just Transition Act: “On va donc introduire une Loi sur la transition équitable, qui fera en sorte que les travailleurs aient accès à la formation et au soutien dont ils ont besoin pour réussir dans une économie plus verte. ... Ensemble, on peut continuer de bâtir un pays où les entreprises de technologies propres sont prospères, où nos citoyens sont encouragés à faire des choix plus verts et où nos travailleurs s'épanouissent alors qu'on amorce notre transition écologique.” An unofficial English translation of that promise might read: “We will be introducing a law on Just Transition, where there's access for workers for the training and support that they'll need if they are to take part in an economy becoming steadily greener. Together, we can continue to build a country where our own high tech businesses prosper, where citizens choose green and greener ways of living, and where workers fulfill their goals while they make the choices that will shape Canada's environment of the future.”



A **CBC article** provides a summary of a second round of Liberal climate change announcements which came on September 25. Trudeau, like the other leaders, promised financial incentives to encourage energy efficiency retrofits, but also promised to address the human costs of flood disasters through: creation of a low-cost national flood insurance program for homeowners in high-risk flood zones without adequate insurance protection; a national action plan to help homeowners at highest risk of repeat flooding with potential relocation; efforts to design an Employment Insurance Disaster Assistance Benefit to help people whose jobs and livelihoods are negatively affected by disaster; and to work with provinces and territories to update and complete flood maps to guide Canadians in home-buying decisions.

Looking for guidance on how to vote?



Although **Elections Canada made the ground shaky** for environmental groups to speak publicly in the current election, some are stepping up with information. **Fourteen of Canada's major environmental advocacy groups** consolidated their priorities to produce a questionnaire, sent to the federal parties in July 2019. The responses from five parties are [here](#) ; the People's Party of Canada did not respond . Questions included: "Will you immediately legislate a climate plan that will reduce Canada's emissions in line with keeping warming below 1.5°C?; Will your climate plan clearly and precisely describe programs to reduce emissions from transportation, buildings and the oil and gas sector? Will you ensure that workers and their families thrive during the transition to a low-carbon economy, by extending the Task Force on Just Transition to include all fossil fuel industries?; Will you create a Federal Environmental Bill of Rights that formally recognizes the legal right to a healthy environment?".

Climate Action Network Canada was one of the fourteen, and had released ***Getting Real about Canada's Climate Plan*** in June, intended as "a baseline against which we can assess federal parties' climate plans." EcoJustice was also part of the collaborative questionnaire, but has posted its own analysis of the party platforms [here](#) . *Maclean's* magazine has compiled their own guide to the platforms on [all issues here](#) ; on [environment and climate change issues here](#) and on [energy policy \(including pipelines\) here](#) .

A sampling of Opinions:

"Climate change the sword as Liberal and Conservatives battle for power" in the *National Observer* <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2019/09/25/news/climate-change-sword-liberal-and-conservatives-battle-power> (Sept. 25), which describes the competing political rhetoric in the wake of Trudeau's first announcement;

Clean Energy Canada issued a **press release** on October 1, stating: "The platform identifies similar areas of focus as the NDP and Green plans: more and cleaner public transit, increasing the number of zero-emission vehicles on the road, generating more clean power, and building and retrofitting more energy efficient homes. While not as aggressive as those plans, the proposed policies, programs, and investments are generally laid out in greater detail....The Liberal plan is unique, however, in its identification of electrification as a strategic opportunity to make Canadian industries and manufacturing the cleanest in the world, supported by a proposed \$5-billion Clean Power Fund sourced from the Canada Infrastructure Bank. "

Simon Donner, professor of climatology at the University of British Columbia **writes in *Policy Options*** (Oct. 1): "Despite lofty claims and aspirational goals, there is no Canadian plan consistent with avoiding 1.5°C or 2°C warming. Wherever you are on the political spectrum, the rhetoric of your party on climate change does not match the numbers." His article was featured **in the *Toronto Star*** .

"This week in climate inaccuracy: Climate strike poses" by Chris Turner in *The National Observer* (Sept. 30) is the first in a promised series of critiques of all parties.

“[On climate change, the Liberal plan \(mostly\) adds up](#)”, an Editorial in the *Globe and Mail* (restricted access) (Oct.1).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Flooding](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

What if the financial sector moved away from fossil fuel investments?

Posted on [September 30, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 17, Bill McKibben, a leader of the divestment movement, wrote [Money is the oxygen on which the fire of global warming burns](#), published in *The New Yorker*. The essay traces the progress of the divestment movement and asks, *What if the banking, asset-management, and insurance industries moved away from fossil fuels?*. On the same day came the announcement that “[University of California drops fossil fuels from its \\$80 billion portfolio](#)”. An [article in Rolling Stone](#) quotes the UC representatives, stating “it wasn’t moral or political pressures that convinced them to phase UC’s hundreds of millions of dollars in fossil-fuel investments. Instead, they say, it was the growing realization that fossil fuel investments no longer made financial sense and weren’t a worthwhile investment.”

Investment performance of Fossil fuel companies

In what has been seen as an historical turning point, ExxonMobil lost its spot on the S&P Index list of “Top Ten Companies” in August 2019 – the first time it had not appeared since the Index launched in 1957. In 1980, the energy sector as a whole represented 28% of the S&P 500 Index; as of August 2019, it represents 4.4%. According to [a summary](#) by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), the energy sector claimed last place in the S&P rankings of sector performance in August 2019, following similar results in 2018 and 2017. “This is not some temporary aberration. The oil and gas sector is in decline, profits are shrinking and investment options problematic This is true even for companies like ExxonMobil that historically have deep pockets.”

The full Briefing Note, [ExxonMobil’s Fall From the S&P 500 Top Ten: A Long Time Coming](#) (August 2019) also includes discussion of the role Canada’s oil sands have played in the decline of the industry. Carbon Tracker Initiative provides further information in [Exxon’s New Clothes – the tale of why Exxon lost its prized position in the S&P 500](#).

Are the banking, asset-management, and insurance industries moving away from fossil fuels?

New initiatives launched at U.N. Climate Summit in New York in September point in that direction:

1. 130 banks from 49 countries signed on to the **Principles for Responsible Banking** (PRBs), committing to align their business operations with the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the fact that the **Bank of Canada issued a report** flagging the investment risks of climate change in May, the only signatories from Canada were the **National Bank of Canada and the Desjardins Group** . Hardly surprising, given the April 2019 **Fossil Fuel Report Card from Banktrack** , which showed that Canada's big banks rank 5th, 8th, 9th and 15th in the world for fossil fuel investment since the Paris Agreement in 2015. In response to the PRI pledge, civil society groups issued a statement, **"No More Greenwashing: Principles must have Consequences"** which highlights the lack of concrete plans and the slow time frame: signatory banks are allowed up to four years to demonstrate their implementation of the principles. A thorough discussion published by Open Democracy asks **"The UN banking principles are welcome – but do they go far enough to stop climate destruction?"**
2. A new **Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance** was launched, convened by the U.N. Environmental Program's Finance Initiative and the Principles for Responsible Investment, and supported by WWF as part of its Mission 2020 campaign. The Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance signatories are insurance and pension fund management companies which hold approximately \$2.3 U.S. Trillion. Their **commitment document** pledges to re-balance those investment portfolios to make them carbon neutral by 2050, with intermediate targets set for 2025, 2030 and 2040. Founding members include German insurer Allianz, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), Swedish pension fund Alecta, PensionDanmark, Swedish pension manager AMF, Nordea Life & Pension, Norwegian insurer Storebrand, and Swiss RE.



The European Investment Bank **strengthened its climate commitments** at the U.N. Climate Summit pledging to “position the EIB as an incubator for climate finance and expertise to mobilise others, helping our societies and economies transform to a low carbon future.” Specifically, the bank pledged that 50% of new investments will be for climate action and environmental sustainability by 2025 (previously the target had been 30% by 2020). Also, “we aim to align all our financing activities with the principles and goals of the Paris agreement by the end of 2020. As an important first step, we will phase out energy projects that depend solely on fossil fuels.”



The **Climate Finance Leadership Initiative** (CFLI) , chaired by Michael Bloomberg, released **Financing the Low Carbon Future** , a thorough but readable analysis of how

clean energy investment works globally, with practical recommendations . The CFLI is composed of senior executives of seven major private-sector financial institutions— Allianz Global Investors, AXA, Enel, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Japan’s Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF) and Macquarie.

5. Over 500 environmental and advocacy groups from 76 countries supported the Lofoten Declaration at the U.N. Climate Action Summit. The **Lofoten Declaration** , (named after the Lofoten Islands of Norway where it was first drafted in 2017) states in part: “It is the urgent responsibility and moral obligation of wealthy fossil fuel producers to lead in putting an end to fossil fuel development and to manage the decline of existing production.” Canada is one of those countries, and Catherine Abreu of Climate Action Network Canada was one of the supporters, stating: “True leadership in response to the climate emergency means having the courage to commit to ending the expansion of oil and gas production and make a plan to transition communities and workers to better opportunities.” A summary appears in “**If a House Is on Fire, You Don’t Add Fuel’: 530 Groups Back Call to Rapidly Phase Out Fossil Fuels Worldwide**” in *Common Dreams* (Sept. 23); Background to the Lofoten Declaration [here](#) .

Much remains to be done: Consider the September 2019 report by Carbon Tracker Initiative. ***Breaking the Habit*** – *Why none of the large oil companies are “Paris-aligned”, and what they need to do to get there.* The report examines oil company investment activities , and concludes:

- Last year, all of the major oil companies sanctioned projects that fall outside a “well below 2 degrees” budget on cost grounds. These will not deliver adequate returns in a low-carbon world. Examples include Shell’s \$13bn LNG Canada project and BP, Total, ExxonMobil and Equinor’s Zinia 2 project in Angola.
- No new oil sands projects fit within a Paris-compliant world. Despite this, ExxonMobil sanctioned the \$2.6bn Aspen project last year – the first new oil sands project in 5 years.
- The oil and gas in projects that have already been sanctioned will take the world past 1.5°C, assuming carbon capture and storage remains sub-scale.

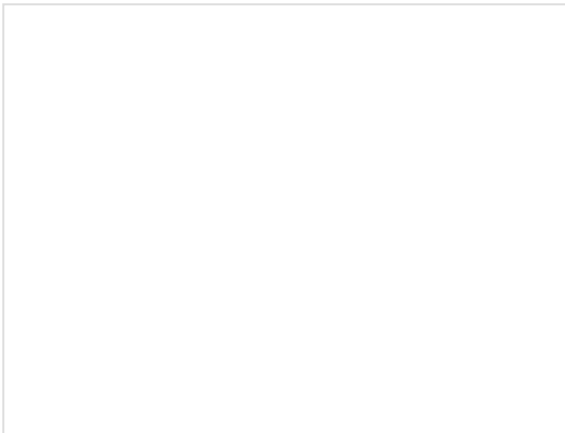
And ***Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2019*** , commissioned by the United Nations, was published in September, reporting the good news that global investment in new renewable energy capacity, led by solar power, “ is set to have roughly quadrupled renewable energy capacity (excluding large hydro) in the decade ending in 2019. Renewables accounted for 12.9 percent of global electricity in 2018—and if hydropower is also included, the renewable’s share of global electricity production is measured at 26.3%. Cost-competitiveness of renewables has “risen spectacularly over the decade, as the levelised cost of electricity has been steadily decreasing, down 81 percent for solar photovoltaics and 46 per cent for onshore wind since 2009.”

Yet despite this good news, the report states: “Overall, we note that these figures represent a small share of the overall economic transition required to address climate change.... global power-sector emissions are likely to have risen by at least 10 percent between the end of 2009 and 2019.”

16 young people file landmark petition for climate action under the U.N. Rights of the Child

Posted on **September 23, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On September 23, climate activist Greta Thunberg made an emotional, unforgettable speech to the on the U.N. Climate Summit in New York City. The full Youtube video is [here](#) ; her words are reproduced by *The Guardian* in an Opinion Piece titled “**If world leaders choose to fail us, my generation will never forgive them**”, and stating: “We are in the middle of a climate breakdown, and all they can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth.” A summary from The Guardian is [here](#) .



New landmark climate litigation

Also on September 23, Greta Thunberg and fifteen other young people from around the world submitted a groundbreaking legal petition to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Respondent countries Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, and Turkey are the largest polluters amongst the 45 countries in the world which have ratified the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and agreed to an additional protocol that allows children to petition the UN directly about treaty violations.

The young people contend that these five countries are violating their rights under the Convention by failing to curb emissions and promoting fossil fuels, despite have known about the risks of climate change for decades. They are asking the U.N. Committee to make specific recommendations to the five nations about what they need to do to meet their treaty obligations, including changing laws to speed up the response to climate change and applying more diplomatic pressure on big polluters like the United States and China.

The complaint was prepared and filed on behalf of the youth petitioners by the international law firm [Hausfeld LLP](#) and the nonprofit environmental public interest law organization [Earthjustice](#) – whose press release is [here](#) . A dedicated website, [Children vs Climate Crisis](#) provides biographies and statements from each of the children, a copy of the 101-page [Petition](#) ,and a 338-page [Appendix](#) with detailed statements of the impacts on the petitioners' lives.

The [Earthjustice website](#) is hosting a petition in support of the children's case.

Posted in [Climate Change Law and Litigation](#) | Tagged [climate change and youth](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Unions, tech workers, and even some employers set to Climate Strike in September

Posted on [September 17, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

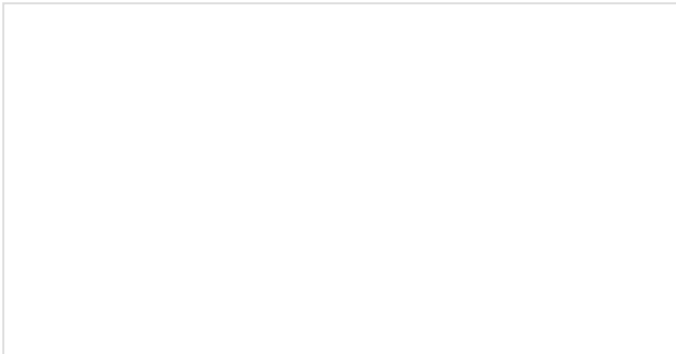


The [wave of support for the youth-led Global Climate Strike](#) has become an ocean. The strike has focal points: on September 20 in the U.S. and most of the world, where iconic climate activist Greta Thunberg will participate outside the United Nations headquarters in New York; on September 27, [Greta will participate the strike in Montreal](#) . Indicative of the enthusiasm: the [New York City School District announced](#) that its 1.1 million students will be free to leave school on September 20, with parental consent. The Toronto District School Board also [posted a policy statement](#) on September 16, allowing students in Toronto with parental permission to be absent on September 27 without academic penalty. Schools and universities in Montreal (excluding McGill University) are also cancelling classes, [as reported by CBC](#).

And as organizers emphasize, “everyone is welcome and everyone is needed”. Parents, teachers, and the general public are [all invited to participate](#) in one of the hundreds of strikes around the world. For information and news about Canadian strikes, check [#Fridays for Future Canada](#) or [#Climate Strike Canada](#) Twitter feeds.

Climate Strike in Canada, September 27:

According to the [on-going list](#) being maintained by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy Canadian unions supporting the climate strike include Unifor, The Toronto Labour Council, and the British Columbia Teachers Federation. Some others are listed below.



Unifor approved a resolution supporting the Global Climate Week of Action at [their constitutional convention in August](#), and according to TUED, Unifor's National President sent a letter to the union's members on September 10, encouraging them to "take part in these important events." Their press release to members is [here](#).

The **Toronto Labour Council** has [posted a statement](#) on the Climate Emergency on their website, calling on Labour Councils across Canada to be involved in local and national efforts on climate action, including on September 27th. The statement carries on with the initiatives outlined in their 2016 action plan, [Greenprint for Greater Toronto: Working Together for Climate Action](#). The Toronto Labour Council is part of the S27 coalition of Toronto activists in support of the strike: their [list of demands](#) includes "no worker left behind." The list of members is [here](#).

The **B.C. Teachers Federation** Resolution in support of the strike is [here](#), along with links to teaching resources related to the climate strike. The **Vancouver Secondary Teachers Association** also supports the strike and has posted [a detailed position](#) to guide teachers on their responsibilities.

The **Confederation Syndicats Nationaux** in Quebec are planning to coordinate union support across the province, according to their Convention document from June 2019, [La Planete s'invite au travail](#) (in French only).

The **Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo** has [announced](#) their support, and the University's administration is expected to follow.

Climate Strikes in the United States and other countries: September 20

The Labor Network for Sustainability is working hard to support the Climate Strikes, including publishing a [Climate Strike Special Issue](#) of their newsletter on September 12. LNS highlights climate strike initiatives by: Service Employees International Union; Amazon Employees for Climate Action; American Federation of Teachers; Alameda Labor Council; Labor Rise; and international initiatives, including support from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Also included in the LNS Newsletter: links to resources, including social media tools, for anyone who wants to support the student climate strikers.

An on-going [list of international union initiatives](#) is maintained by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy.

The **International Trade Union Confederation** statement regarding the global week of climate action is [here](#) , and a **video statement** by Sharan Barrow was released on September 11, calling the climate strike as a “gamechanger” and stating that “our 200 million members around the world are totally behind you” .

An OpEd by Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary of the global federation, **Public Services International** appeared in *Common Dreams* on September 12, titled “**Unions: We must back the climate strike**”, stating “Under sustained attacks from the right across the world, we were forced to fight to preserve our achievements rather than expand social justice, ... The climate strike provides an opportunity to break out of our constraints, to reinvigorate our movement, to learn from young people on the front lines, and to redefine what is possible.” Another *Common Dreams* article, “**We Must Be Bolder Than Ever’: Labor Federation Representing 30 Million Workers Calls on All Unions to Join Global Climate Strike**” describes the support from PSI and other unions.

The September/October issue of the **Greener Jobs Alliance newsletter** reports on similar sentiments amongst unions in the United Kingdom. From the GJA: “Unions will be backing the Youth Climate Strike on 20 September. The plan, agreed at the Trades Union Congress (TUC) annual conference in Brighton (September 10th), is for ‘30-minute workday campaigns’ across the UK. As Jo Grady, University and College Union, told the conference, ‘The Youth Climate Strikes movement is one of the most impressive forms of mass action in recent years.’ The education union’s general secretary asked, ‘How will young people forgive us if we let them down, whilst they are building a movement at this pivotal moment for the world’s climate?’ Or, as Unite’s Steve Turner put it, ‘Unions will back the school strikes on September 20th. If we don’t, we will be seen as irrelevant.’ Support for the climate strike was part of the composite motion, **Climate Crisis and a Just Transition** .

In Australia, government employees of Victoria **have been given formal permission** to ask for leave or flexible hours on September 20 to attend the climate strike, and the Australian Education Union, representing teachers, has endorsed the rally.

Technology workers take a stand with a Digital Strike:

Amazon Employees for Climate Justice have established themselves in the past with a shareholder’s resolution urging climate action and an Open Letter to their boss, Jeff Bezos. Now they are also supporting the September 20 climate strike: here is their [press release](#) , here is an [article in Wired](#) , and here is [an interview by CNBC](#) with one of the strikers.

Other tech workers are joining in support of the climate strike, including [Google Workers for Climate Action](#) , [Facebook Employees for Climate Action](#) , and [Microsoft Workers for Action](#) .

Not only the workers, but some tech companies are joining in, according to [a report from Common Dreams](#) (September 16). A planned “digital strike” is being organized with many of the largest websites in the world participating, including Imgur, Tumblr, and WordPress, as well as the websites of the Sunrise Movement, Greenpeace, Burton, and many others. An [organizational website](#) offers free coding so that these companies can use their social media platforms to spread the climate strike message by donating ad space, or putting climate change banners on their websites which, on September 20th, will expand to fullscreen so that the website will effectively be “on strike”.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate strikes](#), [labour union policies](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change and oil economics threaten Canadian fisheries industry

Posted on [September 16, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

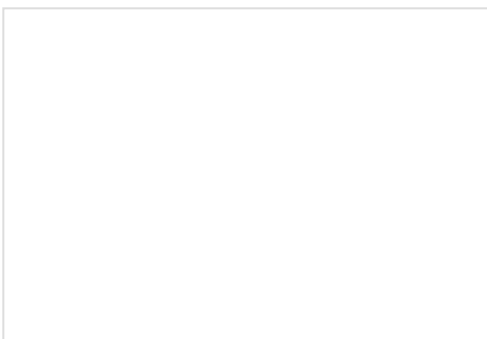
In its [July 2019 report](#), the Expert Panel on Climate Change Risks and Adaptation Potential identified fisheries as one of the top “domains” at risk from climate change between 2020 to 2040 in Canada. The experts recognized the complexity of the issue, stating: “the economic, social, and cultural context varies across Canada’s fisheries, and the choice of adaptation measures should be informed by the local situation Adaptation can be particularly challenging for communities that rely heavily on a single fishery, and can have widespread economic and social consequences.... A combination of approaches, including catch quotas, community management, regulations on fishing gear, ocean zoning, and economic incentives, can help manage and restore marine fisheries and ecosystems.”



Ocean Law Developments in Canada 2015-2019 , published at the end of August, summarizes the significant legal progress that has been made in four relevant areas of regulation: ocean governance, protection, marine protection, and marine spills . Improvements noted in the report: the G7 Ocean Plastics Charter; Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean; the Coastal First Nations Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement; creation of eight new Marine Protected Areas; Bill C-55, which amended the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act; the new Oil Tanker Moratorium Act, passed in June 2019; orders issued under the Species at Risk Act to protect the critical habitat of orcas, Right whales, bottlenose whales, belugas, leatherback turtles, abalone and seals; a series of measures to protect orcas on the West Coast, and rolling fisheries closures and seasonal speed restrictions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence to reduce industrial pressure on North Atlantic Right whales; new **Fisheries Act**, which among other things, includes prohibitions on habitat alteration, damage and destruction (HADD). The report was published by **SeaBlue Canada** , an alliance of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Oceans North, West Coast Environmental Law, and WWF-Canada, dedicated to protection of the oceans.

Will these changes be sufficient for the scale of the problems faced by Canadian fisheries industry? While general reaction to the legislative changes has been favourable, as reviewed in this **May article** from the *National Observer*, many problems remain.

Fish or Oil for Newfoundland?



On September 5, CBC News reported on a press conference from Atlantic Canada, with the headline: **"FFAW vows to stop oil and gas exploration in crab fishing area"**. The Fish, Food and Allied Workers union (FFAW), a division of Unifor, claims that oil interests were again put

ahead of the interests of the fishery, when the regulator, the [Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board](#), opened bids by oil companies for offshore areas in August. The union is demanding that the bidding process be halted, claiming that it was not consulted, even though the call threatens prime fishing areas on which their livelihoods depend. In November 2018 FFAW [also protested](#) when the C-NLOPB approved five successful bids by the oil and gas industry which, in two cases, allowed oil and gas exploration in marine refuge areas where fishing activity was restricted.

In August, the Federation of Independent Sea Harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador (FISH-NL), which represents independent inland fishers, [supported a call for an independent authority](#) to oversee the environment in the province's offshore oil and gas industry. In spite of the [C-NLOPB statement](#) that "Offshore safety and environmental protection are paramount in all Board decisions.", the Sea Harvesters concern seems understandable, given the recent history of oil spills from the Hibernia offshore oil platform in August, just days after it had resumed production following a spill in mid-July, and after [the largest oil spill in Newfoundland's history](#) in November 2018. The Federation of Independent Sea Harvesters have also protested the damage done by the seismic testing related to oil exploration, as described by iPolitics in "[Seismic testing concerns ignored in oil 'obsessed' NFLD and Labrador: union](#)" in April 2018.

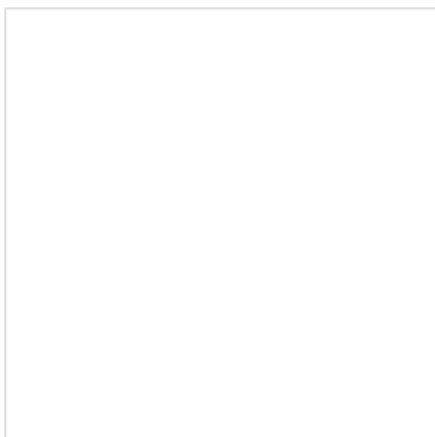
West Coast salmon fishery and First Nations communities face "the worst commercial fishery in 50 years"

On the West Coast, the [State of Canadian Pacific Salmon 2019: Responses to changing climate](#) was published by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, summarizing a 2018 workshop of scientists which discussed the impacts of marine heatwaves, changes to marine food webs, warmer freshwater conditions, more extreme rain and drought, and various human activities. It concludes that "No single factor can explain all of the recent observed patterns in salmon abundances. Along with ecosystem changes, fisheries, hatcheries, disease, and contaminants can also affect salmon." On September 6, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans [announced \\$15 million](#) in additional annual funding to support wild Pacific salmon research and management, but meanwhile, 2019 has been reported as the worst commercial fishing season in 50 years, in "[Advocates sound alarm on unfolding disaster in B.C. salmon fishing industry](#)" (CBC, Sept. 9) and the Globe and Mail published "[Labour and First Nations groups call for federal disaster relief for West Coast Fishery](#)" (Sept. 9) which states: "As well as wanting immediate relief for struggling workers, the groups called on the federal government to develop a long-term strategy to conserve wild salmon in the face of climate change, which they described as a dire and growing threat to the species."

Some of the "other factors" at play in the salmon crisis in 2019: a [massive obstruction of the Fraser River](#), caused by a rockslide; sea lice infestation from farmed salmon (see "[Sea Lice Plagues Return and Threat to Wild Salmon Increases](#)" in *The Tyee* (June 11); and shipping dangers, described in "[Fraser River Chinook jeopardized by shipping terminal's expansion](#)" (July 29) in the *National Observer*.

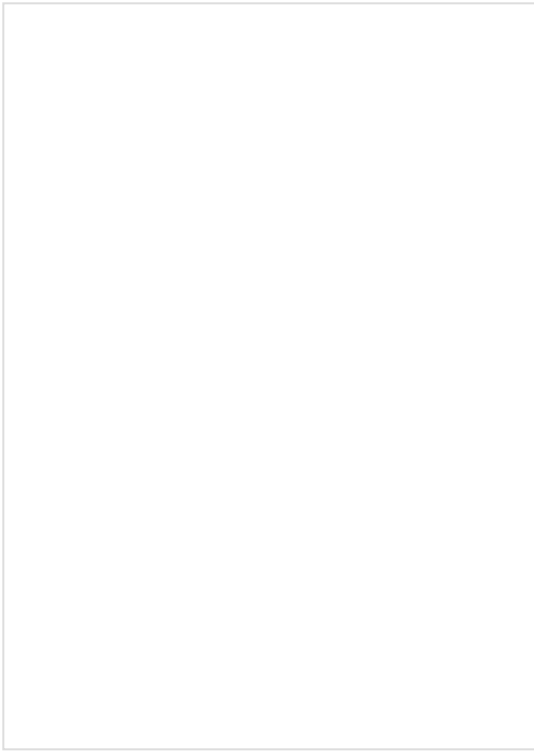
Mining and the Low carbon economy: Human and Labour Rights in the Supply chains of electric vehicles, wind turbines and solar panels

Posted on **September 12, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Mineral Tracker is a special project of the London-based Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, with the goal of “tracking the human rights implications of the mineral boom powering the transition to a low-carbon economy.” The website provides analysis, data, and case studies focused on the allegations of violations against mining multinationals, relating to environmental damage, access to water, health impacts, indigenous rights and labour rights in the mining of the cobalt, copper, lithium, manganese, nickel and zinc. The website monitors the mineral supply chains in the manufacture of **Electric vehicles** , **Wind Turbines** , and **Solar Panels** .

Geographically, Southern Africa leads in the number of allegations made, followed by South America, Asia Pacific, North America – where four allegations have been made regarding nickel mining, three regarding cobalt and two regarding zinc. A special report is dedicated to practices in **Southern Africa** , where half of the top companies mining these minerals have been accused of serious human rights abuses, from violating access to water and land rights to corruption, violence and deaths. An overview **global analysis and summary** was released in August 2019, charting the number of human rights allegations by mineral, and identifying the top five companies and their countries of operation. Of these, only Teck Resources has Canadian Headquarters, with operations in Peru and the USA. Teck is cited for seven human rights allegations in zinc mining used in wind turbines and solar panels.



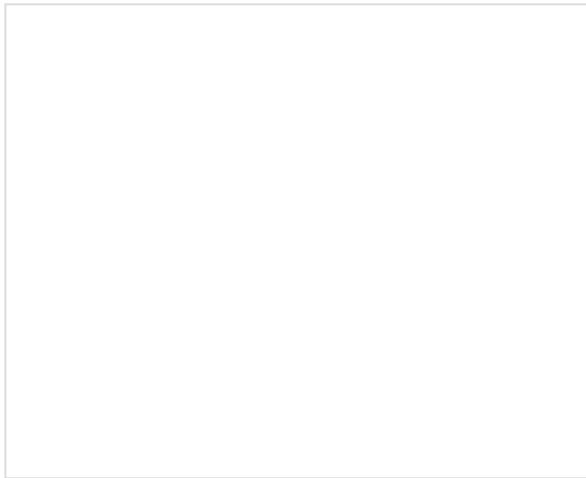
Mineral Tracker maintains [an archive of important articles](#) and reports from other organizations. Some other reports available there: *[Responsible minerals sourcing for Renewable Energy](#)* (2019) by Earthworks, and *[Green Conflict Minerals: The fuels of conflict in the transition to a low-carbon economy](#)* (2018) published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

The parent organization, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre published *[Renewable Energy Risking Rights & Returns: An analysis of solar, bioenergy & geothermal companies' human rights commitments](#)* in 2018. Read the WCR summary of that report [here](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [conflict minerals](#), [Labour Rights](#), [mining industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change will be a top issue as Canada votes on October 21

Posted on [September 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On September 11, Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau **officially kicked off the federal election**, with voting set for October 21. Throughout the summer, polls have consistently shown that climate change and environmental issues will be a high priority for voters – an August **survey by Abaca Data** showed 82 per cent of Canadians say climate change is a serious problem and 42% think it is an emergency, ranking concern about climate change second only to the rising cost of living. In September, researchers from the Université de Montréal and the University of California Santa Barbara released **estimates of Canadian opinion on climate actions** in almost every single riding across the country, with an **online interactive tool** enabling anyone to see how their local riding compares to others across the country.

The Liberal government will be running on their climate change record – characterized by their “we don’t have to choose between the economy and the environment” approach, brought to life in their handling of the **Trans Mountain pipeline**. The other party platforms are here: Green Party: **Mission Possible: The Green Climate Action Plan**; New Democratic Party: **Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs**, and Conservative Party: **A Real Plan to Protect Our Environment**. **“Where the four main parties stand on climate issues”** is a *Globe and Mail* “Explainer” by Shawn McCarthy and Marieke Walsh (Sept 8), which quotes academic experts from all sides of the issue: Andrew Leach, University of Alberta; Jennifer Winter, University of Calgary; Mark Jaccard, Simon Fraser University; Kathryn Harrison, University of British Columbia, and Chris Ragan, chair, Ecofiscal Commission.

How to choose amongst the platforms?

Some commentators urge voting by your conscience – for example, Arno Kopecky in his Opinion Piece, **“So What’s a progressive voter to do?”** in *The Tyee*. Others urge strategic voting – such as Mark Jaccard, energy economist and professor at Simon Fraser University, who stated in his **August 1 Blog**: “Climate-concerned Canadians need to vote strategically this fall to make sure they don’t elect a climate-insincere government. At the time of writing this blog, the most likely outcome is that the 65% of Canadians who tell pollsters they want a climate-sincere government will split their vote among three parties and enable the election of a climate-insincere government, just as in 2006-2015.” Activist Tzeporah Berman also warns against a split vote in a *Toronto Star* article **“David Suzuki on climate change: ‘We have to address it as if it’s war’”** (Sept. 3), and

Sandy Garossino wrote in July, “**Despite Pipeline Approval, \$70-Billion Federal Plan Is Canada’s Best Shot at Decarbonizing**” in *The Energy Mix*. Garossino’s arguments were almost immediately challenged by UBC Professor Kathryn Harrison in “**How ‘Serious’ is a Climate Plan that relies on Pipelines**”.

Unions are also Opinion Leaders

The Canadian Labour Congress election positions are gathered under their webpage banner: “**A Fair Canada for Everyone**”, which prioritizes Pharmacare, Retirement Security, Climate Action, Good Jobs, and Equity and Inclusion. A statement re **Climate positions** calls for green manufacturing and infrastructure, better transit and electric vehicles, and green building and retrofits.

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) launched their **CUPE Votes** website in August, endorsing the New Democratic Party and offering information and tools for locals and individuals to get involved in the election. Informational “Notes” lay out positions on key issues, including, **Climate Change and the Environment**.

Unifor launched a “massive” **member-to-member campaign** for the election on September 4 under the banner of “Stop Scheer”. At the national constitutional convention in August, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland **addressed the full convention**.

The United Steelworkers have endorsed the New Democratic Party – their **Election 2019 webpage** offers news and resources, including their May 31 statement, “**NDP Climate Plan Protects our Planet and our Jobs**”. View the Steelworkers’ TV election ads **here**.

SOME WEBSITES TO FOLLOW FOR CLIMATE-RELATED ELECTION COVERAGE:

The National Observer Election 2019 Special Report: will compile stories throughout the election, in addition to a **special Election Integrity Project** which aims to highlight and call out disinformation – for example, on September 6 “**How Maxime Bernier hijacked Canada’s #ClimateChange discussion**”. These special features all feed from *National Observer’s* highly-regarded on-going reporting and Opinion pieces about climate change and the environment. One relevant recent article: “**Who were the winners and losers under Liberal climate policy?**” (Sept. 9)

The Energy Mix will monitor and compile news items from other sources, and publish original content under their special Canada Election 2019 banner.

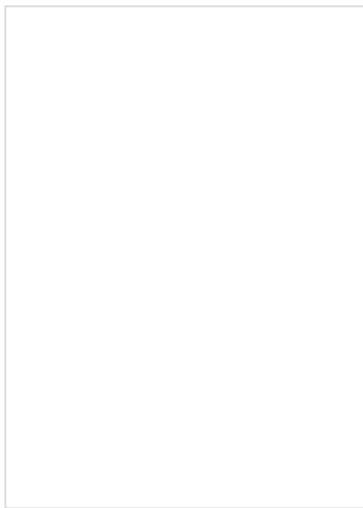
The Tyee in Vancouver offers an **Election 2019 section** as well as a free election newsletter, called **The Run**. It’s worth noting that *The Tyee* **joined the global network** Covering Climate Now over the summer of 2019, and in addition to its special topic on Environmental stories, promises another special section on the Climate Crisis.

Shake Up The Establishment is a non-partisan website run by youth volunteers, dedicated to monitoring and comparing the climate and environmental commitments of the main parties. It publishes a monthly newsletter and maintains active social media sites.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [climate change and politics](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. updates on Just Transition: Statement, Resolutions from the Trades Union Congress, and a training module from Greener Jobs Alliance

Posted on **September 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Trades Union Congress (TUC), the labour union central in the United Kingdom, published [A just transition to a greener, fairer economy](#) in July. According to the [accompanying press release](#), the document sets out principles “to take the whole trade union family towards that new economy.” (This seems to be a reference to the divisive nature of the Just Transition debate during the 2018 TUC Congress, reported by the WCR [here](#)).

These excerpts from [A just transition to a greener, fairer economy](#) summarize the main demands:

“Companies and organisations moving to a lower carbon model should put in place Transition Agreements – agreed with unions – that cover a range of issues, including the overall number of jobs or workers employed, pay and conditions, job security, working time, job descriptions,

duties assigned to job roles, training and skills, apprenticeships, retirement policy, monitoring and surveillance, performance management, health and safety implications and equal opportunities. Companies should also work with unions to identify and deliver best environmental practice at a workplace level.”

...”we’re calling for a cross-party commission on long term energy strategy, involving affected workers, unions, industries and consumers, to set out the path towards clean, affordable and reliable energy. The commission should study the social impacts of the transition, its regional impacts and necessary mitigation measures. Investment – in infrastructure, in new skills for workers, and in services such as public transport – is vital.”

...“Government has a key role in making this happen, as a funder and procurer of new energy and broader infrastructure. When government invests in new infrastructure it should use its procurement powers to ensure that jobs generated benefit workers in the local community and throughout the supply chain. It must also insist that jobs created provide workers with trade union recognition, and that employers have fair recruitment, industrial relations and pay policies for all workers. Companies winning government contracts must adhere to agreed standards of corporate behaviour; for example, contracts should not go to companies based in tax havens and companies must be registered in and pay tax in the UK.”

Trades Union Congress passes resolutions on Just Transition, endorses Student Strike on Sept. 20

The **151st Congress of the Trades Union Congress** was held from September 8 to 11, 2019 . Understandably, **debate about Brexit** loomed large over the meetings, but there were several motions related to climate change, most notably Composite Motion 02 **Climate crisis and a Just Transition**, which was approved on September 10, and resolves: “that the TUC calls for a 30-minute workday campaign action to coincide with the global school strike on 20 September. 2. to campaign for national and regional Just Transition Commissions including full union and education representation to develop, monitor and implement the process.” **An article in The Guardian** also summarizes the Congress vote; the TUC press release on student strikes is [here](#); the University and Colleges Union position on the student climate strike is [here](#);

Other climate change related motions at the TUC Congress: “**Buses and a green transport system**” moved by ASLEF ; “**Public ownership of energy**” moved by Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union ; and **Securing Green UK Jobs**, moved by GMB.

New training module on Just Transition available

Discussions and panels were held at the **Fringe Meetings** , most notably by the **Greener Jobs Alliance** , which used the occasion to launch their new, free, online **Just Transition Training Module** . Other Fringe sessions included: How Can We Grow The UK’s Aviation Sector whilst Meeting Climate Change Targets?; Action on the Climate Emergency: How Should Trade Unions Respond?; sponsored by the Campaign Against Climate Change, Trade Unionists And Climate Strikes: Responding to the Climate Emergency.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate strikes](#), [Just Transition](#), [Labour Training](#), [labour union policies](#), [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

“Business as usual” could lead to 13% loss in growth for the Canadian economy.

Posted on **September 9, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

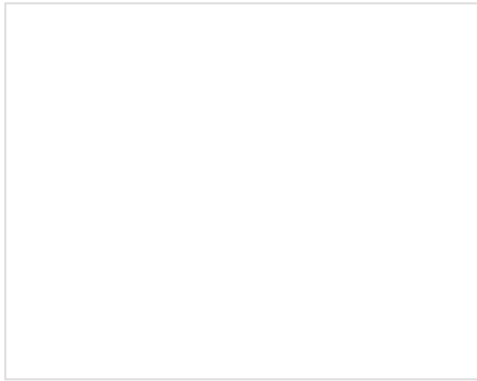
According to a study published in August by both the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#) and by U.K.’s Cambridge University Institute for New Economic Thinking, the overall the global economy could shrink by 7% unless the world’s nations meet the Paris Agreement targets for GHG emissions reductions. **“Long-Term Macroeconomic Effects of Climate Change: A Cross-Country Analysis”** analyses data from 174 countries over the years 1960 to 2014 to model changes in output growth related to temperature and precipitation. The result: “Our counterfactual analysis suggests that a persistent increase in average global temperature by 0.04°C per year, in the absence of mitigation policies, reduces world real GDP per capita by 7.22 percent by 2100. On the other hand, abiding by the Paris Agreement, thereby limiting the temperature increase to 0.01°C per annum, reduces the loss substantially to 1.07 percent.”

The effects differ widely across countries. For Canada, the analysis finds that a “business as usual” scenario could result in a 13% loss in growth for the Canadian economy. A summary for non-economists [from the Climate News Network](#) quotes one of the authors of the study: “The idea that rich, temperate nations are economically immune to climate change, or could even double or triple their wealth as a result, just seems implausible.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change impacts](#), [Economic impacts](#), [Paris Agreement](#), [Productivity](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada Post and its unions will collaborate to reduce environmental footprint

Posted on **September 9, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



From an August 30 [press release](#) on the website of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers(CUPW) comes the news that as of April 2019, Canada Post and its unions have reached a formal agreement to collaborate to reduce Canada Post's environmental footprint. The joint statement outlines six principles for collaboration, including long-term commitment, good faith, meaningful participation, and openness and transparency. The full 2-page [statement is here](#) , signed by the Association of Postal Officials of Canada, the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and the Union of Postal Communications Employees, as well as Canada Post.

The initial focus of activities will be towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste and single-use disposable plastics from Canada Post operations. In early 2020, the parties will publish an action plan for 2020-2022 , with agreed- upon targets for 2020-2030. After identifying a process and timelines, the parties will implement joint initiatives, "Working together with bargaining agents to develop methods of engaging all employees on local opportunities to reduce waste, emissions and energy."

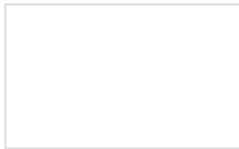
At the CUPW Convention in May 2019, the union approved its own [Action Plan 2019-2023](#) with detailed objectives, with environmental objectives including: research and prepare detailed proposals to reduce the environmental impact of Canada's postal operations, utilizing the provisions of Appendix "T" of the [Urban Postal Operations \(UPO\) collective agreement](#) ; Ensure new jobs for servicing new vehicles and equipment to reduce the environmental impact; Conduct a thorough environmental analysis of CUPW operations at the Local, Regional and National levels and ensure structural changes include an environmental impact assessment; Work with the academic and environmental communities on initiatives beyond the postal system; Participate in conferences and organizations dealing with the impact of climate change and solutions to halt and reverse the damage to our planet.

Many of these environmental objectives spring from CUPW's innovative [Delivering Community Power](#) initiative, first unveiled in 2016, and also including a high-profile campaign for a [national postal banking system](#) . The latest progress on the Community Power initiative is summarized in a [Report to the Convention](#) in May 2019.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Canada Post](#), [Canadian Union of Postal Workers](#), [postal workers](#), [Workplace Environment Committees](#), [Workplace greening](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Just Transition and Green New Deal as policy and bargaining issues for Unifor

Posted on **September 6, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



According to their website, “Unifor is Canada’s largest oil, gas and chemical sector union, representing over 11,800 members in nearly every province, from offshore platforms off Newfoundland’s outer banks to Suncor in Alberta’s oil sands; from energy crown corporations in Saskatchewan to private refineries in every region of Canada.”

The union’s 3rd Constitutional Convention was held in Quebec City in August , gathering delegates to debate **Resolutions** , including Resolution #5, submitted by the autoworkers of **Local 222** in the Oshawa area regarding a Worker’s Green New Deal...“defined as “a massive government jobs program and investment in clean energy, green technology and electrification.” A Workers’ Green New Deal must include just transition protection for workers whose jobs are affected and fair labour standards. BECAUSE: • This program meets the needs of and has the potential to unite the labour movement, environmentalists and all those who have been the victims of inequality, discrimination, racism and now, climate change.”

and Resolution #21 regarding Just Transition, submitted by the energy workers of **Local 707A** from Fort McMurray, Alberta: “.....UNIFOR NATIONAL WILL: 1. Launch and promote a nationally-coordinated awareness and action campaign that will include: a. Awareness materials to the attention of Unifor members explaining the idea of just transition and how it can apply to workers in Canada today to build a more sustainable, fair future for working people with workers at the table when planning for a Just Transition to a regenerative economy. b. A call to all levels of governments to: i. support strategic investments in infrastructure, ii. A recognition of climate change needs and a commitment to meeting international greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, iii. A national strategy on Just Transition for workers c. Unifor’s inaugural Just Transition Conference scheduled for September, 2019 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. 2. Encourage all local unions to take part in the campaign in solidarity with Unifor’s energy workers in all provinces...”

Just as the resolutions regarding Green New Deal and Just Transition call for advocacy and action campaigns, the 50-page **Collective Bargaining Program** approved at the Convention deals with these issues not as bargaining priorities, but as policy challenges: “...we demand that governments: • Bolster our public health care and education systems; • Secure industries and

workplaces most vulnerable to ongoing trade disputes; • *Establish more rigorous income assistance and just transition supports for workers adjusting to labour market changes (including those that are climate-related)* (italics added by WCR); • Invest in public and social infrastructure, including long-overdue universal public Pharmacare and Child Care programs; • Develop a coordinated national, sustainable industrial development strategy.”

The **National Unifor Just Transition Conference** is scheduled for September 22 -24 in Saskatoon, and is described in [this July letter](#) from the National Health, Safety and Environment Director . “The Conference plenaries, workshops and discussions will focus on the importance of climate policies aimed at reducing emissions along with those aimed at building resilience and adaptive capacity. These large table discussions that will take place at the conference will set the tone for Unifor’s position on carbon footprint reduction and job security as the entire country moves forward to address the need for climate change initiatives.” Unifor’s previous lobby document, *The International Climate Crisis and Just Transition*, from 2018, is [here](#).

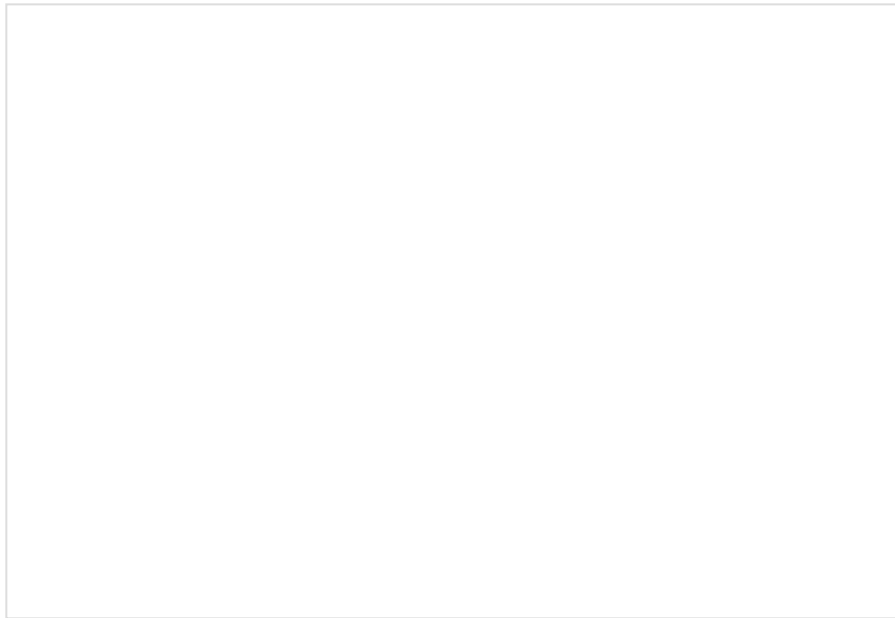
A June press release, “**Unifor energy workers ratify historic national agreement**” announced a new pattern-setting four-year collective agreement with Suncor Energy, and highlights gains in wages, severance, and a new framework for addressing domestic violence. The Suncor agreement will set the pattern for all energy sector employers in Canada – the text is not publicly available as of early September 2019.

Unifor’s Energy Council met in June, as summarized [here](#) , to discuss the new pattern bargaining and the union’s new promotional campaign for the sector, anchored around a [YouTube video](#) produced by Unifor.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [green bargaining](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [Just Transition](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

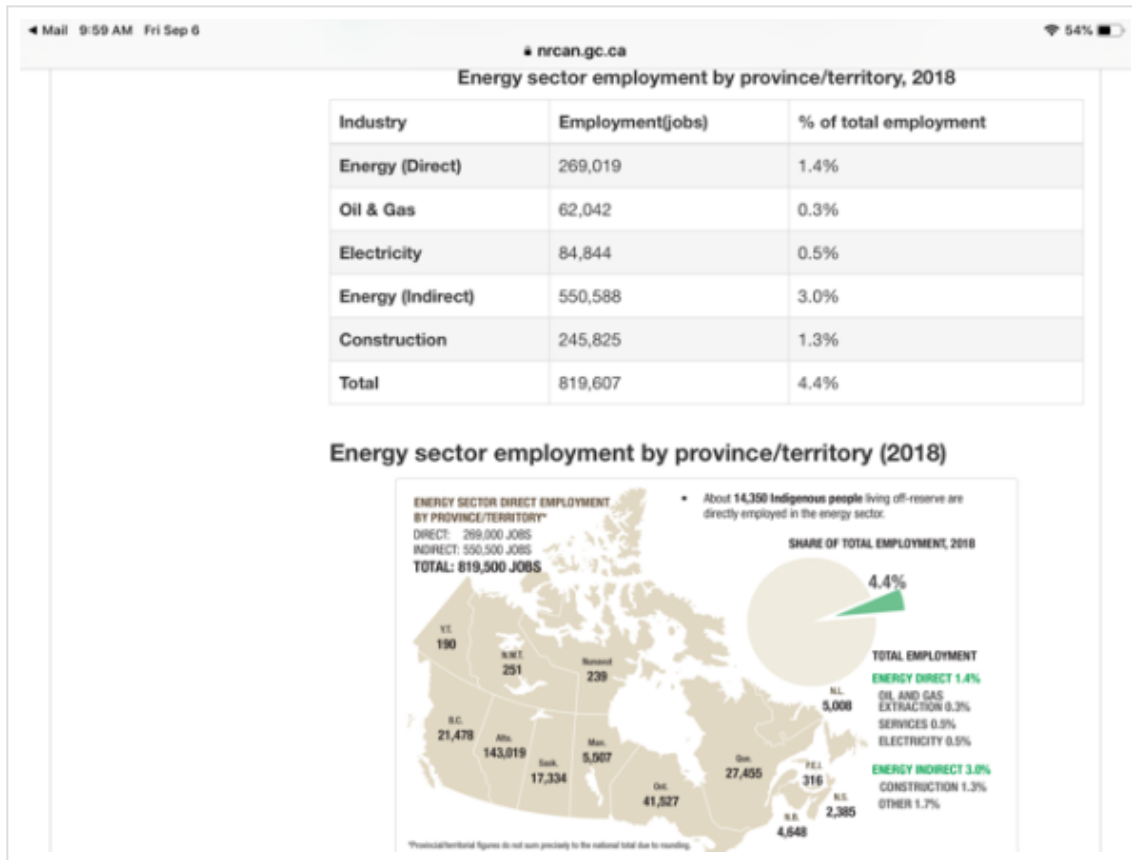
Canada’s new, free Energy Information website

Posted on **September 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Canada finally has a new, consolidated source of data about energy in our country. The **Canadian Energy Information Portal** launched in August – bringing together “reliable government data on Canada’s energy mix, including electricity, renewable energy and oil and gas.” The portal, housed at Statistics Canada, was developed in partnership with the National Energy Board, Natural Resources Canada, and Environment and Climate Change Canada , and according to the **August 26 press release** , “will be guided by a joint federal-provincial-territorial steering committee and will seek advice from Canadians, Indigenous peoples, industry, academics and municipalities.” The new website offers an interactive dashboard, maps, data and analysis regarding the following topics: [Clean technology](#); [Economic accounts](#); [Energy efficiency](#); [Energy markets](#); [Greenhouse gas emissions](#); [Imports and exports](#); [Investment and research](#); [Labour](#);

Prices; Sustainable Development Goals; and Transportation. One example:



\$15.2 million over five years was set aside in Budget 2019 to support the new Centre, in response to long-standing acknowledgement that Canada's energy data collection has been fragmented and inefficient – for example, in [a 2017 report](#) by the Canadian Energy Research Institute, and the 2018 Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources, *Rethinking Canada's Energy Information System: Collaborative Models In a Data-Driven Economy* .

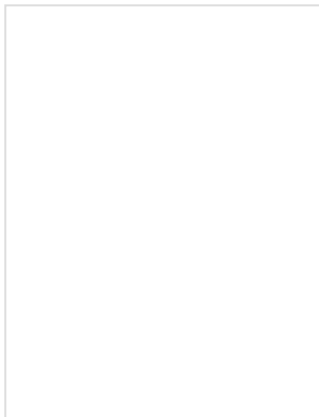
Two new articles provide history and context for the new data initiative, and emphasize the potential for accessible, reliable, impartial energy data and information to improve the polarized and sometimes misinformed energy policy discussions in Canada: “[How the launch of the Canadian Energy Information Centre could fill major gaps in energy data](#)” in *The National Observer* (September 5) , and “[Canada's Energy Data Problem](#)” in *Policy Options* in July.

The Summer of 2019: Flooding, hurricanes, wildfires and heatwaves

Posted on **September 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The world has awoken to the real-life manifestations of climate change in 2019, and we have been bombarded with media images of extreme weather disasters. July 2019 was approximately 1.2°C warmer than the pre-industrial era, according to a [summary of international heat waves](#) by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on August 1. The WMO also published [“Unprecedented wildfires in the Arctic”](#) (July 29) and [“Widespread fires harm global climate, environment”](#) on August 29, including information about the Amazon wildfires. [“Global heating made Hurricane Dorian bigger, wetter – and more deadly”](#) by scientists Michael Mann and Andrew Dessler appeared in *The Guardian* on September 4 and [“Is climate change making hurricanes stall?”](#) at the PBS website both offer clear summaries of the climate change connection to the most recent extreme weather disaster the world has seen.

In Canada, flooding was the predominant weather disaster: In a [July 2019 press release](#), the Insurance Bureau of Canada described the flooding events of April and May and estimated that spring flooding in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick caused close to \$208 million in insured damage. In the same press release, the IBC advocates that all political parties in the upcoming federal election commit to a National Action Plan on Flooding. (The IBC published [Options for Managing the Flood Costs of Canada’s Highest-risk Residential Properties](#) in June, the result of national consultations with the Working Group on the Financial Management of Flood Risk, co-chaired by Public Safety Canada and the IBC. The report is summarized in the [IBC press release](#) and in the *National Observer* [“Who should bear the financial risk of flooding? Report lays out three options”](#) in the National Observer June 19 .)

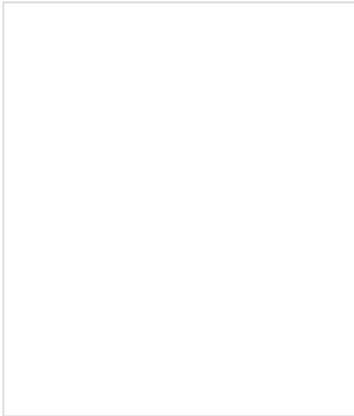


In what it calls the first report of its kind in Canada to examine climate risks at the provincial level, the British Columbia government published a [Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment for British Columbia](#) in July 2019. The report evaluates the likelihood of 15 climate risk events and considers their health, social, economic and environmental consequences, concluding that the greatest risks to B.C. are severe wildfire season, seasonal water shortage, heat wave, ocean

acidification, glacier loss, and long-term water shortage. A [compilation of forty-six articles concerning Wildfires](#) is available from the *National Observer*, and includes [“‘Climate change in action:’ Scientist says fires in Alberta linked to climate change”](#) (June 10).

In late June, [Healthy Climate, Healthy New Brunswickers: A proposal for New Brunswick that cuts pollution and protects health](#) was released, written by Louise Comeau and Daniel Nunes. The report describes how climate change will affect the physical and mental health of all New Brunswickers, especially children, seniors, the isolated, and those living on low incomes. The report combines climate projections and existing community health profiles for 16 New Brunswick communities, emphasizing the risks of more intense precipitation, flooding and heat waves.

EXTREME HEAT IN CANADA AND BEYOND:



The Prairie Climate Centre at the University of Winnipeg released [Heat Waves and Health](#) in August – a brief and practical guide to the health impacts of heat waves, drought and wildfires in Canada. The report predicts future heat waves in Canada, based on data newly updated the [Climate Atlas of Canada](#). Previous projections were published as Chapter 4 in the federal government’s 2019 report *Canada’s Changing Climate Report*: [“Changes in Temperature and Precipitation Across Canada”](#).

Heat is a much more widespread danger in the United States, with Phoenix Arizona experiencing 128 days at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit in 2018 – one of the hottest and fastest-warming cities in the country, according to an article in the New York Times, [“As Phoenix heats up, the night comes alive”](#). The *Times* article describes how citizens and workers must re-schedule their lives and their job duties to avoid the killing heat of the day. Phoenix is also the main focus of a lengthy article, [“Can we survive extreme heat”](#) in the *Rolling Stone* (Aug. 27).



Killer Heat in the United States: Climate Choices and the Future of Dangerously Hot Days

was released in July by the Union of Concerned Scientists, directed to a non-technical audience, and includes interactive maps and downloadable data [here](#). The report offers national and regional projections and in Chapter 5, addresses the particular implications for outdoor workers, as well as city and rural dwellers, and those in low-income neighbourhoods. A more technical version of the research appeared as **“Increased frequency of and population exposure to extreme heat index days in the United States during the 21st century”** in the Open Access journal *Environmental Research Communications*.

The accuracy and sensitivity of occupational exposure limits to heat is examined in **“Actual and simulated weather data to evaluate wet bulb globe temperature and heat index as alerts for occupational heat related illness”**. This important article, published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene in January 2019, analysed the cases of 234 outdoor work-related heat-related illnesses reported to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 2016 and concluded that wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT) should be used for workplace heat hazard assessment. When WBGT is unavailable, a Heat Index alert threshold of approximately 80 °F (26.7 °C) could identify potentially hazardous workplace environmental heat.

Finally, **“Can the Paris Climate Goals Save Lives? Yes, a Lot of Them, Researchers Say”** in the *New York Times* (June 5) summarizes a more technical article which appeared in the journal *Sciences Advances* on June 5. **“Increasing mitigation ambition to meet the Paris Agreement’s temperature goal avoids substantial heat-related mortality in U.S. cities”** reviews the literature about heat-related mortality and concludes that achieving the 1.5°C threshold of the Paris Agreement could avoid between 110 and 2720 annual heat-related deaths in 15 U.S. cities.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [Heat Stress](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business responsibilities for climate change: U.S. Roundtable nods, U.N. sets a high bar

Posted on **September 5, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

The U.S. Business Roundtable generated headlines and surprised reaction with the August 19th **release of a new Statement of Purpose**, signed by 181 CEO's of high-profile companies including Amazon, Walmart, Bank of America, Lockheed Martin, Morgan Stanley, UPS, and others. That statement redefines their shared, overarching corporate goal from "delivering value for shareholders" to promoting "An Economy That Serves All Americans" – including by: "supporting the communities in which we work. We respect the people in our communities and protect the environment by embracing sustainable practices across our businesses." ... "Investing in our employees. This starts with compensating them fairly and providing important benefits. It also includes supporting them through training and education that help develop new skills for a rapidly changing world. We foster diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect."

The full Business Roundtable **Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation**, with signatories, is **here** ; case studies of member corporations' social responsibility initiatives are outlined in **Building Communities, Meeting Challenges** .

A HIGHER BAR FOR BUSINESS

In contrast to the Business Roundtable statement, scant attention was paid to an international call for human rights and climate justice, released in July. The **Safe Climate Report** provides a guide to the obligations of States *and the responsibilities of businesses* under international agreements and law, regarding the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation, rights of the child, right to a healthy environment, and rights of vulnerable populations.

The Safe Climate Report, as well as the June 2019 U.N. **Report on extreme poverty and climate change** by Philip Alston, are the subject of a September 4 article in *The Conversation* Canadian edition, "**Climate change, poverty and human rights: an emergency without precedent**". The authors state that "The Alston report suggests that the only way to address the human rights dimensions of climate crisis is for states to effectively regulate businesses and for those harmed by climate change to successfully sue responsible companies in court. "the Safe Climate report goes further..."

Specifically, the **Safe Climate Report** states:

*"Businesses must adopt human rights policies, conduct human rights due diligence, remedy human rights violations for which they are directly responsible, and work to influence other actors to respect human rights where relationships of leverage exist. As a first step, corporations should comply with the **Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** as they pertain*

to human rights and climate change.... **The five main responsibilities of businesses specifically related to climate change** are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their own activities and their subsidiaries; reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their products and services; minimize greenhouse gas emissions from their suppliers; publicly disclose their emissions, climate vulnerability and the risk of stranded assets; and ensure that people affected by business-related human rights violations have access to effective remedies.⁹⁰ In addition, businesses should support, rather than oppose, public policies intended to effectively address climate change.” (page 19/20).

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF STATES:

The discussion in this report is also highly relevant to any litigation against states or companies regarding climate change, as well as for the rights of Indigenous peoples and children. Boyd concludes:

“A failure to fulfill international climate change commitments is a prima facie violation of the State’s obligations to protect the human rights of its citizens. As global average temperatures rise, even more people’s rights will be violated, and the spectre of catastrophic runaway climate chaos increases. There is an immense gap between what is needed to seriously tackle the global climate emergency and what is being done.

A dramatic change of direction is needed. To comply with their human rights obligations, developed States and other large emitters must reduce their emissions at a rate consistent with their international commitments. To meet the Paris target of limiting warming to 1.5°C, States must submit ambitious nationally determined contributions by 2020 that will put the world on track to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 45 per cent by 2030 (as calculated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). All States should prepare rights-based deep decarbonization plans intended to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 19, of the Paris Agreement. Four main categories of actions must be taken: addressing society’s addiction to fossil fuels; accelerating other mitigation actions; protecting vulnerable people from climate impacts; and providing unprecedented levels of financial support to least developed countries and small island developing States.”

The **Safe Climate Report** (formally titled *The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment*) was submitted to the U.N. General Assembly, written by Canadian human rights scholar and U.N. Special Rapporteur David R. Boyd, whose 2012 book, **The Environmental Rights Revolution: A Global Study of Constitutions, Human Rights and the Environment**, stands as a landmark study in environmental law. The Special Rapporteur’s Report was informed by a consultation period in 2019 in which States and organizations were invited to participate – the few which did are posted [here](#) . (Neither Canada nor the U.S. were among the countries which submitted). Two noteworthy organizational submissions available are from Canada’s Ecojustice, and **Our Children’s Trust** (U.S.) on the issue of intergenerational responsibility and youth. A separate report by Special Rapporteur John Knox discussed **The Children’s Rights and the Environment** in 2018, and it may be significant the concluding sentence of the **Safe Climate**

Report uses Greta Thunberg's famous words, "I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is."

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Business attitudes](#), [Climate litigation](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [Human Rights](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ICYMI – More Labour support for a Green New Deal in the U.S.

Posted on **September 3, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

"Hardhats vs hippies: how the mainstream media misrepresents the debate over the Green New Deal" appeared in *In these Times* (June 18) and was **re-posted to [Common Dreams](#)**. It responds to the negative image in **"Labor anger over Green New Deal greets 2020 contenders in California"** (*Politico*, June 1), and states "...though building-trades workers may fit Trump's image of working-class America, they are not representative of labor or the working class as a whole when it comes to green issues. The future of labor will be helmed by service workers, women, immigrants and people of color. Accordingly, the Green New Deal or other strong climate change policies have won endorsements from [SEIU](#), [Los Angeles County Federation of Labor](#) and [National Nurses United](#), along with various locals like New York State Nurses Association and American Federation of Teachers – Oregon. A survey released by Data for Progress this month [found](#) that "union membership is one of the factors most highly correlated with support for Green New Deal policies as well as the Green New Deal framework as a whole."

"Blue Collar Workers – let's support the Green New Deal" in *Resilience* (July 18 2019) also takes issue with the *Politico* article. Author Steve Morse states: "I am a blue-collar worker – a retired member of Sheet Metal Workers Local 104, which represents workers throughout Northern and Central California. The union leaders quoted in that article certainly don't speak for me, nor for tens of thousands of other building trades workers." The article points out examples of positive union retraining initiatives, and calls for union workers to support the Green New Deal.

"Unions are finally learning to love the Green New Deal" appeared in *The Nation* on July 12, in which author Bob Massie profiles the recent Convergence meeting organized by Labor Network for Sustainability to discuss action strategies for a Green New Deal. He notes key leaders amongst unions, including SEIU and the Association of Flight Attendants, and also notes that a contentious resolution concerning racial and economic justice emerged on the final day of meetings, and explains: "The tension arose in part because the leaders committed to racial and economic justice—like the rest of their union counterparts—are waking up to the vast potential power of the Green New Deal as a set of ideas and as force for political change. They were not rejecting it; quite the opposite. They wanted to be certain that their concerns were not overlooked."



The Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) is an active supporter of the Green New Deal, and maintains a compilation of labour union endorsements of the Green New Deal [here](#) , and a compilation of other GND articles and tools [here](#) . The most recent article appeared in June, by Jeremy Brecher, Director of Research and Policy at LNS. He presented an essay at [The Climate Movement, What's Next?](#) , a forum organized by the Great Transition Initiative (GTI). Brecher's essay, "[The Green New Climate Deal](#)," characterizes the Green New Deal as the third and current phase of the climate movement. He considers the GND as unique for several reasons: like the Extinction Rebellion and the Student Strike for Climate movement, it represents a shift to using direct action techniques against governments and politicians; it calls for strong government leadership and authority; it is specifically directed to the needs of the working class (for example, calling for universal job guarantees and labour rights protection); and finally, it is uniquely ambitious by calling for public policies to meet the targets as laid out by climate science.

Brecher acknowledges many dangers to the Green New Deal initiative: "Opposition from the friends of fossil fuels, combined with tepid support from the supposed friends of climate protection, workers, and justice, could easily turn the GND into one more inadequate, toothless, feel-good public relations fig leaf. In a worst-case scenario, the initiative could morph into a cover for expanding nuclear energy, geoengineering, "clean coal," and other environmental nightmares. Fortunately, we have the start of a GND movement that is alert to these dangers and mobilizing to push back against them. The outcome is likely to be largely determined by how hard those of us who should be fighting for the GND actually do so." He calls for that fight to begin, knowing that "The truth is that we don't know how compatible effective climate protection is with capitalism.... The rational thing to do under such conditions of uncertainty is to start implementing the measures that are necessary to protect the climate while compensating for the negative consequences we can clearly anticipate."

Brecher's essay was part of a forum, [The Climate Movement, What's Next?](#) , organized by the Great Transition Initiative (GTI). In his [overview/introduction](#) to the forum, Bill McKibben asks "Do we need a meta-movement?". Among the many other contributors: Guy Dauncey of the British Columbia Sustainable Energy Association, with [Charting how we get there](#) ; Gus Speth of the Next System Project with [Imploding the Carbon Economy](#) ; climate justice expert Tom Athanasiou, with [Globalizing the Movement](#) ; and Anders Wijkman, chairman of the Swedish

Association of Recycling Industries, with [A Climate Emergency Plan](#) . The [Great Transition Initiative](#) (GTI) has a long history as a worldwide network of visionary thinking and writing. Most recently, in 2014, it was relaunched by the Tellus Institute as an online forum , “offering a rolling series of essays, viewpoints, reviews, and interviews.”

And further discussion of a Green New Deal:

[Decarbonizing the U.S.economy: Pathways towards a Green New Deal](#) was released in June 2019 by the Roosevelt Institute. In this detailed (80-page) report, three economists argue that the Acasio-Cortez/Markey Green New Deal proposals are based on sound economic policy, and make detailed proposals to move to a low-carbon economy based on 1) large-scale public investments; 2) comprehensive regulations to ensure decarbonization across the board; and 3) a cap-and-dividend system that puts a price on carbon while offsetting the regressive effects on income distribution.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Green New Deal](#), [labour union policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Equity for marginalized workers needed in Canada’s Just Transition policies

Posted on [September 3, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A new discussion of Just Transition in Canada was released in August 2019, [Who is included in a Just Transition? Considering social equity in Canada’s shift to a zero-carbon economy](#).

Co-authors Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, senior researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Zaez Deshpande provide this introduction: “After establishing a conceptual framework for just transition, including a distinction between reactive and proactive approaches, we analyze Canada’s existing transition policies to determine who is benefiting from them and who

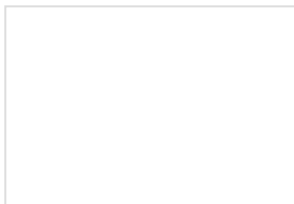
is excluded. We specifically consider gender identity, Indigenous status, racialized identity and immigrant status in our analysis of coal communities covered by the transition. We find that the main beneficiaries of present just transition policies are Canadian-born white men, which reflects their disproportionate presence in the coal workforce. However, many socially and economically marginalized people also face costs and risks from the same climate policies but do not share in the benefits of transition policies, which means these policies may lead to further marginalization.” The conclusions are supported by the labour market analysis based on Statistics Canada employment data, combined with a synthesis of federal and Alberta Just Transition policies currently in place for the coal industry. The paper makes a series of policy recommendations including targeted training, apprenticeship and education for people from marginalized groups.

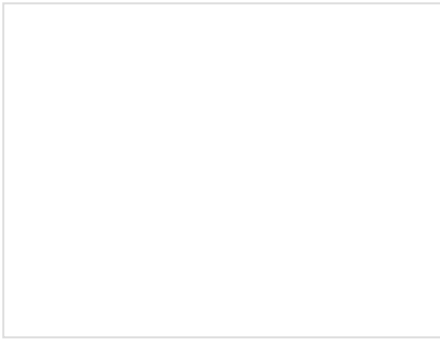
The August report was co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy and Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change project (ACW), as was a 2018 report by Mertins-Kirkwood, ***Making decarbonization work for workers: Policies for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy in Canada***, in which he sets out the distinctions between “reactive” and “proactive” Just Transition policies. In November 2019, a related article by Mertins-Kirkwood and Ian Hussey, “A top-down transition: A critical account of Canada’s government-led phase-out of the coal sector,” will appear in the forthcoming international book *Just transition(s): social justice in the shift towards a low-carbon world*, to be published by [Pluto Press](#).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta Coal Phase-out](#), [coal phase-out](#), [First Nations](#), [Gender Equality](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Youth-led Global Climate Strike in September asks for workers’ support – updated

Posted on [August 21, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)





What a difference a year makes!

The #FridaysforFuture youth movement began in August 2018 when the Swedish teenager, Greta Thunberg, [began her solitary climate strike](#). Since then, millions of students (and their adult supporters) have been inspired to copy her action in almost every country in the world, including Canada. In May 2019, Thunberg and other young climate activists sent out [a call for a global climate strikes](#) in the week of September 20 – 27, timed to coincide with the [United Nations Climate Summit](#) in New York on September 23.

The youth movement has explicitly called for the support of adults and workers in the global climate strike. One of the first unions to offer support was Ver.di in Germany, as reported in [“Youth and Workers Uniting Behind This Crisis’: German Labor Union Urges 2 Million Members to Join Global Climate Strike”](#) in *Common Dreams* (Aug. 6). The Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS), in cooperation with [350.org](#), has issued [an appeal on the LNS website](#), asking unions to participate and providing [A Climate Strike Toolkit for Workers: How to Support the Young People Who Are Striking to Save Our Planet](#). The [Global Climate Strike website](#) also offers their own [Guide to organizing a workplace climate strike](#). The [University and Colleges Union in the U.K.](#) is submitting a resolution at the Trades Union Congress conference in early September, asking all members to support the Sept. 20 action with a 30-minute strike.



From the state of Victoria Australia, the Victoria Trades Hall Executive Committee posted on Facebook with their August 9 resolution which endorses the September 20 global climate strike and “commits to organize our members to participate as much as possible.”

Updates, as of August 30:

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), in its [Bulletin #88](#), has compiled statements and actions from unions around the world in support of the calls for a “Global Climate Strike”, with ongoing updates [here](#). For Canada, the TUED list includes the B.C. Teachers Federation, who will be using their September 23 Professional Development Day to hold a [“Rally & Teach-in for Climate Justice”](#) in Victoria; and the Toronto and District Labour Council is included for its endorsement of the global strike at the General Delegates Meeting on August 1, 2019.

The Toronto Labour Council has [posted a statement on the Climate Emergency](#) on their website, calling on Labour Councils across Canada to be involved in local and national efforts on climate action, including on September 27th. The statement carries on with the initiatives outlined in their 2016 action plan, [Greenprint for Greater Toronto: Working Together for Climate Action](#). Not included in the TUED list, but also from Canada: the Confederation Syndicats Nationaux in Quebec are planning to coordinate union support across the province, according to their Convention document from June 2019, [La Planete s'invite au travail](#) (in French only).

Management attitudes to Climate Strikes: “[Workers’ strike will reveal if firms really care about climate change](#)” in *The Irish Times* (July 8) reports on the results of a journalist’s informal emailed survey to 20 global companies, asking about their company policies concerning climate protests. Either vague responses or no response was received from Apple, Amazon, Facebook, Google, Bloomberg, IKEA, BP, Exxon Mobil, BlackRock, and Virgin Group. Of the few who responded: Patagonia is quoted as saying that it “actively encourages its employees to take part in environmental protests and has a global policy of providing bail for workers arrested during such actions. In September it plans to expand digital efforts to connect customers with local green groups.” Germany’s GLS ethical bank said “it will close on September 20 so all employees can march ‘against the climate catastrophe’”. And Shell stated that “it backed peaceful protest and its employees could seek leave to join such action.”

For updated news, check the [Global Climate Strike website](#), and for Canada, the [#Fridays for Future Canada](#) or [#Climate Strike Canada](#) Twitter feeds. And even the mainstream media will be awake to the global climate movement. The “[Covering Climate Now](#)” initiative, led by the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *The Guardian*, has gathered commitments from print and online newspapers and magazines, as well as television, to run one week of focused climate coverage, to begin September 16 and culminate September 23. Canadian participants include [Maclean’s magazine](#) and [The Tyee](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Business positions on climate change](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [climate strikes](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada’s Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance recommends incentives to green pensions, RRSP’s

Posted on [July 10, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada’s Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance released its final report on June 14, [Mobilizing Finance for Sustainable Growth](#). The report makes fifteen recommendations, stating “....

climate change opportunity and risk management need to become business-as-usual in financial services, and embedded in everyday business decisions, products and services.” Although the Panel’s main focus was on institutional investments, they also made recommendations which would help individuals to make greener personal investments.

*Tiff Macklem, Chair of the Expert Panel, summarizes and simplifies the message of the Panel Report in “**Climate change should be part of regular savings and investment decisions**” in The Conversation on July 3. Concerning individual actions, he states: “To accelerate climate-conscious investment, we ... recommend actively engaging Canadians in the climate opportunity and making their stake in fighting climate change more tangible...To engage them, we recommend the federal government create an incentive for Canadians to invest in accredited climate-conscious products. Specifically, we recommend that the Minister of Finance create additional space in RRSPs and defined contribution pension plans for these investments and offer a “super deduction” — in other words, a taxable income deduction greater than 100 per cent —on eligible investments.” This proposal was further explained in “**Expert panel on sustainable finance recommends super tax deduction to incentivize green savings**” in Benefits Canada magazine.*

Other recommendations in the final Report include: Establish a standing Canadian Sustainable Finance Action Council (SFAC), with a cross-departmental secretariat, to advise and assist the federal government in implementing the Panel’s recommendations; Establish the Canadian Centre for Climate Information and Analytics as an authoritative source of climate information and decision analysis; Define and pursue a Canadian approach to implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). Although the recommendations include goals for private financing of the building retrofit market and clean tech industry, they also include a call to support Canada’s oil and natural gas industry “in building a low-emissions, globally competitive future.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [financial institutions](#), [Green Investment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Pact for a Green New Deal gathers input across Canada

Posted on **July 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Canada’s [Pact for a Green New Deal](#) has issued a new blog titled, “**What we heard**”, summarizing the input from 150 town hall events held since it launched in May 2019. “...All told, with groups ranging in size from four in Iqaluit to more than 300 in Edmonton, the town halls have

attracted more than 7,000 participants, each representing environmental groups, labour unions, faith groups, political parties, city councils, community and neighbourhood associations, Indigenous organizations, women's organizations, the Fight for \$15 and Fairness, student unions, [and] local media."

The report is organized according to twelve "Green Line" themes (topics which participants want to see included in a Green New Deal). Most frequently raised amongst "Green Lines": Economy and Government, Green Infrastructure, Social Justice, and Indigenous Sovereignty (others included Nature, Agriculture, Democracy, Plastics, Climate Science, Decent Work, Climate Debt, and Rights) . Workplace issues appear in the recommendations under "Economy and Government", including: "Creating millions of good, high-wage jobs through a green jobs plan, ensuring fossil fuel industry workers and directly affected community members are guaranteed good, dignified work with the training and support needed to succeed. Increasing unionization and implementing workers' rights, including at least a \$15 minimum wage, pay equity, paid emergency leave, job security, protections for migrant workers, and the right to organize and unionize."

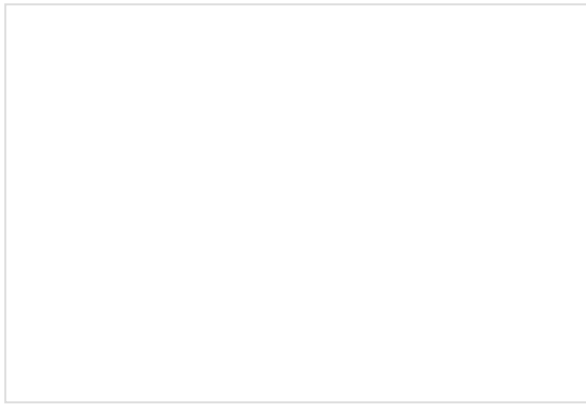
The highlighted Red Lines (or themes which are negatives) the fossil fuel industry, extraction and pollution, plastics, and a failing democracy.

Under "Next Steps", the report states: "The communities and organizations represented by people who attended town halls did reach beyond the "green bubble" that typically exists within mainstream environmental events and campaigns. That being said, there is much room for improvement in reaching out to the labour movement, social justice movements, Indigenous peoples, and those who are marginalized or who have been most impacted by the current and historical harms a Green New Deal must address." More town hall meetings are promised.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Green New Deal Canada](#), [labour union policies](#), [Pact for a Green New Deal](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

First Nations, environmentalists file court challenges to Trans Mountain pipeline

Posted on [July 10, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



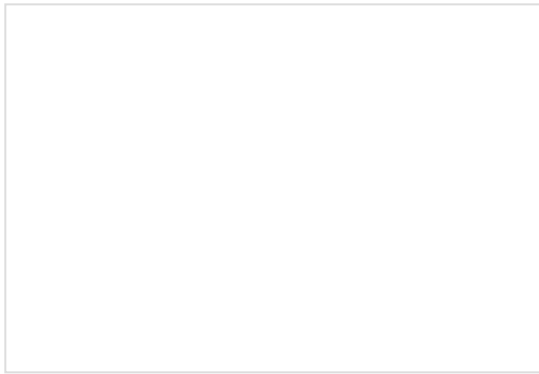
On June 18, as described in an earlier WCR post, [***Government gives the go-ahead to Trans Mountain pipeline despite declaring a climate emergency***](#). By July 8, two court challenges have been filed against the decision. Six First Nations, led by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, filed a court challenge on the grounds that the federal government failed in the requirement to adequately consult them. More details are described in [**First Nations launch new court challenge to Trans Mountain pipeline**](#) at the CBC (July 9), and [**First Nations renew court battle to stop Trudeau and Trans Mountain**](#) in the *National Observer*.

Another separate appeal was also filed on July 8 by EcoJustice on behalf of Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Living Oceans Society, on grounds that the government decision doesn't comply with the responsibility to protect endangered southern resident killer whales, whose survival would be threatened by increased tanker traffic. CBC reports [**here**](#), the *National Observer* also reports in "[**Conservationists file legal challenge to Trans Mountain reapproval over whales**](#)."

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [First Nations](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Strong community advocacy brings landmark climate legislation to New York State

Posted on **July 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 18, the New York State Assembly passed the ***Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act*** – what the ***New York Times*** calls “one of the world’s most ambitious carbon plans” (June 18) . Originally tabled in 2016 as the *Climate and Community Protection Act* , the *Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act* calls for the state to achieve 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2040 and economy-wide, net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The final legislation was a compromise – stripped of measures on prevailing wages, apprenticeship programs, preferences for women- and minority-owned businesses, and investment for disadvantaged communities. The **NY Renews** coalition, comprised of unions, community and environmental groups issued a **statement** which reads, in part: “Ultimately, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act is a partial victory for New Yorkers. The fight for true climate justice demands transformative change, and we will bring that fight until our communities win...We stand strong knowing that as recently as last week, the Governor dismissed any funding for frontline communities, and in his Climate Leadership Act, refused to set a timeline for economy-wide emission reductions. This new legislation does both, and that is a direct result of years of tireless organizing by the members of the NY Renews coalition.”

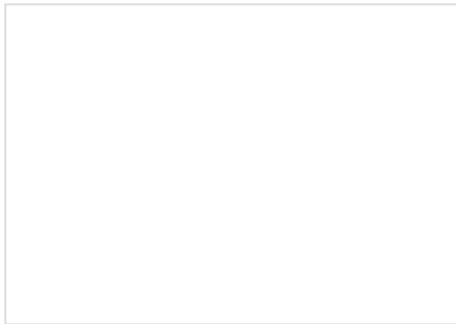
“**New York Is About to Pass One of the Most Ambitious Climate Bills in the Land**” in *The Nation* (June 19) describes the political battles and compromises involved, and states “the real heroes of the fight for the CCPA are the hundreds of protesters who stormed the state Capitol on a recent Tuesday in June, and the dozens who staged a “die-in” outside the governor’s office to illustrate the consequences of failing to pass climate legislation.” An **article** by David Roberts in Vox (June 20) also summarizes the nitty gritty of the bill and its evolution.

Planning under the new legislation will be led by a 22-member Climate Action Council, composed of the heads of various New York state agencies, along with members appointed by the governor, the Senate, and the Assembly. The Council will convene advisory panels on, for example, transportation, land use and local government, and will also convene working groups on Just Transition and Climate Justice.

Posted in **Government Policy, United States** | Tagged **Climate Justice, Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction, New York State** | **Leave a reply**

Climate apartheid and chaos – U.N. official warns that only the rich will escape poverty, disease and displacement

Posted on **July 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



It appears that Greta Thunberg is not the only person willing to speak truth to power. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights for the United Nations, officially tabled a report at the U.N. on June 28. Although the title, ***Climate Change and Poverty***, sounds like another bureaucratic exercise, his language is urgent and blunt.

The full report is available from [this link at the U.N. press release](#). Some excerpts :

“Climate change threatens to undo the last 50 years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction. ...It could push more than 120 million more people into poverty by 2030 and will have the most severe impact in poor countries, regions, and the places poor people live and work....

We risk a ‘climate apartheid’ scenario where the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger, and conflict while the rest of the world is left to suffer... The risk of community discontent, of growing inequality, and of even greater levels of deprivation among some groups, will likely stimulate nationalist, xenophobic, racist and other responses. Maintaining a balanced approach to civil and political rights will be extremely complex...

...Staying the course will be disastrous for the global economy and pull vast numbers into poverty. Addressing climate change will require a fundamental shift in the global economy, decoupling improvements in economic well-being from fossil fuel emissions. It is imperative this is done in a way that provides necessary support, protects workers, and creates decent work.

Governments, and too many in the human rights community, have failed to seriously address climate change for decades. Somber speeches by government officials have not led to meaningful action and too many countries continue taking short-sighted steps in the wrong direction.....Although climate change has been on the human rights agenda for well over a decade, it remains a marginal concern for most actors. Yet it represents an emergency without precedent and requires bold and creative thinking from the human rights community, and a radically more robust, detailed, and coordinated approach.

... incremental managerialism and proceduralism ..are entirely disproportionate to the urgency and magnitude of the threat. Ticking boxes will not save humanity or the planet from impending disaster.”

Summaries from the media appear in: **“To Prevent ‘Climate Apartheid Scenario’ Where Rich Escape and Poor Suffer, UN Report Issues Urgent Call for Global Economic Justice”** in *Common Dreams* (June 25) and **“‘Climate apartheid’: UN expert says human rights may not survive”** in *The Guardian* .

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **climate change impacts, Climate Justice, Human Rights** | [Leave a reply](#)

How to break the green ceiling in the U.S. environmental movement

Posted on **July 5, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

Leaking Talent: How People of Color are Pushed out of Environmental Organizations is the latest publication of **Green 2.0** (formerly the Green Diversity Initiative), a U.S. NGO whose purpose is “to stimulate the demand for, and demonstrate the supply of, talented leaders of all backgrounds” in the mainstream environmental movement.

Leaking Talent reports on a 2018 survey which determined that, amongst the 40 largest green NGOs in the U.S., only 20% of the staff and 21% of the senior staff identified as “People of Color”. The survey results for environmental foundations were similar: 25% of the staff and 4% of the senior staff identified as People of Color. To determine the factors related to retention and promotion, the author examined qualitative and quantitative data from employees, their HR or diversity managers, and their CEOs. Results showed that a focus on employee development and transparency in the promotion process had the most consistent impact on intent to stay for all employees. For top-level leaders, the strongest effect came from diversity and inclusion commitments stated in the organization’s mission, vision and values .

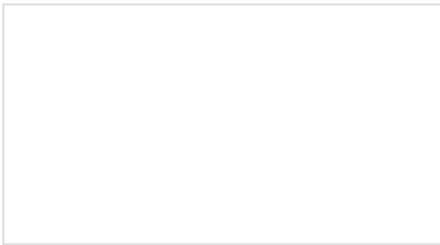
Green 2.0 established a baseline of data, and coined the term “green ceiling” in 2014 with ***The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations: Mainstream NGOs, Foundations &***

Government Agencies . That survey concluded that unconscious bias, discrimination, and insular recruiting were the top three barriers to hiring and retention in the mainstream movement. Other publications are: ***Beyond Diversity: A Roadmap to Building an Inclusive Organization*** (2017) , and in January 2019, the 2017 ***Transparency Report Card*** was updated.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **climate change activism, discrimination, diversity, Environmental Justice, environmental organizations** | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Court of Appeal rules against the provincial challenge to the federal carbon price – Seven provinces will intervene in the Supreme Court appeal

Posted on **July 4, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



On June 28, the Ontario Court of Appeal issued their **Decision** , 4 to 1 in favour of the federal government's right to impose a system of carbon pricing across Canada, under the ***Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act***. Some important excerpts from the majority decision:

“Parliament has determined that atmospheric accumulation of greenhouse gases causes climate changes that pose an existential threat to human civilization and the global ecosystem The need for a collective approach to a matter of national concern, and the risk of non-participation by one or more provinces, permits Canada to adopt minimum national standards to reduce [greenhouse gas] emissions...

The Act does this and no more. It leaves ample scope for provincial legislation in relation to the environment, climate change, and GHGs, while narrowly constraining federal jurisdiction to address the risk of provincial inaction.

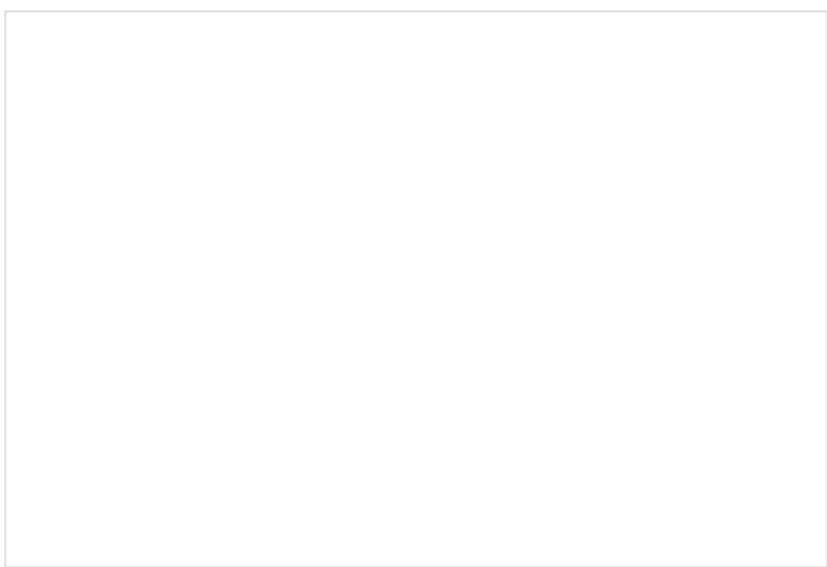
The charges imposed by the Act are themselves constitutional. They are regulatory in nature and connected to the purposes of the Act. They are not taxes.

The Act is the product of extensive efforts – efforts originally endorsed by almost all provinces, including Ontario – to develop a pan-Canadian approach to reducing GHG emissions and mitigating climate change. This, too, reflects the fact that minimum national standards to reduce GHG emissions are of concern to Canada as a whole. The failure of those efforts reflects the reality that one or more dissenting provinces can defeat a national solution to a matter of national concern”

The Ontario government **immediately announced** that it will appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. The Premier of Alberta, part of the Canada-wide Conservative opposition to the federal carbon tax, said that Alberta is reviewing the decision in his **press release**. Saskatchewan, which **lost its own court challenge** to the GGPPA in May 2019, has already filed an appeal in the Supreme Court of Canada, scheduled for December 5 2019 – notably after the coming federal election, in which climate change issues are widely expected to be a top priority for voters.

For a thorough discussion of the decision and compilation of reactions, read: “**Doug Ford loses carbon tax battle with Trudeau**” in the *National Observer*. “**Ontario Court of Appeal Upholds Federal Carbon Tax**” appeared in *The Energy Mix* on July 2 and also compiles reaction from many sources. “**Federal Carbon Pricing Regime Now Two-for-Two**” (July 2) in *Lexology* offers a more lawyerly perspective. And for the mood in Ontario, read “**Doug Ford’s \$30 million carbon tax fight is money down the drain but it keeps his brand afloat**” in the *Toronto Star* (July 3) or in the *Globe and Mail*, “**The real carbon tax is the money provinces are spending on lawyers.**”

Provinces line up to participate in Supreme Court appeal: (Updated as of July 10): As of July 8, seven provinces are registered as intervenors in the Saskatchewan challenge to the carbon tax, scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in December 2019. On July 8, CBC reported that **New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs abandons planned carbon tax court fight**, stating that the province will not waste taxpayers’ money on their own carbon tax court case, but will act as an intervenor in the Saskatchewan’s appeal. Prince Edward Island is also intervening, as explained in **P.E.I. intervening in Saskatchewan’s carbon tax court challenge**” (July 5). The Premier of PEI states they are “absolutely not” joining the fight against a carbon tax, but are intervening as a way to reserve the right to participate in future. Even more surprisingly, “**Quebec intervenes in Saskatchewan’s challenge of carbon tax**”, as reported in the *Montreal Gazette* on July 8. Quebec has joined the case to ensure its provincial rights are upheld in any court decision, and to protect Quebec’s existing cap and trade system.



Aaron Wherry of CBC posted an analysis of the Conservative premiers' positions against the federal carbon price in [*Premiers say they want a 'co-operative' approach to climate policy. Are they serious?*](#) (July 10). It discusses the differences amongst Alberta's Jason Kenney, Ontario's Doug Ford, Saskatchewan's Scott Moe, New Brunswick's Blaine Higgs and Bob McLeod of the Northwest Territories, who are meeting separately, in advance of the formal [Council of the Federation meeting](#) in Saskatoon, July 9 to 11.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Ontario](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Federal government announces \$275 Million subsidy to LNG Canada in B.C.

Posted on [July 3, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Despite the ongoing contentious development of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in British Columbia and commitments to end fossil fuel subsidies, on June 24 federal Finance Minister Morneau announced that the federal government will invest \$275 million into LNG Canada's \$40 billion liquefied natural gas project in Kitimat: \$220 million to be spent on energy-efficient gas turbines for the project, and \$55 million spent on replacing the Haisla Bridge in Kitimat. The announcement is summarized by the CBC in ["Feds announce \\$275M 'largest private sector investment in Canadian history' — Kitimat, B.C.'s LNG project"](#)

The Narwhal maintains an ongoing archive of excellent articles which chronicle the controversy over fracking and LNG in B.C, [here](#) . Two recent “must read” articles from: **“6 Awkward Realities behind B.C.’s big LNG Giveaway”** (April 6) which discusses the B.C. government’s move to bundle tax exemptions and cheap electricity rates into a \$5.35 billion incentive package for LNG Canada in March 2019, and **“B.C. government quietly posts response to expert fracking report”** (June 28) which discusses the government’s response to the **report of its own independent Scientific Review of Hydraulic Fracturing in British Columbia**, released in February 2019. As noted in the Narwhal article, the panel was mandated to assess the potential impacts of fracking on water quantity and quality; on seismic activity, and on fugitive emissions – but not on public health, despite concerns raised and the known scientific evidence. According to the government news release, a working group has been established to address the 97 recommendations made by the expert panel.

Some recent relevant reading about LNG and the fracking associated with its production:

RE the Emissions of LNG: *The New Gas Boom* , published on July 1 by the Global Energy Monitor, an international non-governmental organization that catalogues fossil-fuel infrastructure. The report states that a growing global supply of natural gas is on a “collision course” with the Paris Agreement, and that the increase in natural gas is driven largely by the North American fracking boom- with 39% of new development occurring in the U.S., 35% in Canada. The GEM report is discussed from a Canadian viewpoint in **“Global boom in natural gas is undermining climate change action: report”** *National Observer* (July 2) and **“‘Clean’ natural gas is actually the new coal, report says: Don Pittis”** at CBC . Previous to the Global Energy Monitor report, Marc Lee had weighed in on the high GHG emissions of fracked natural gas in **“LNG’s Big Lie”**, an article in the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Policy Note (Lee’s arguments were also published in ***The Georgia Straight***, (June 17) and an ***OpEd in The Globe and Mail*** .)



In the U.S. in June 19, The sixth edition of the ***Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking*** was published by **Physicians for Social Responsibility** and Concerned Health Professionals of New York. Written by scientists, doctors and journalists, it is an analysis of original research studies published from 2016-2018 on

the health impacts of fracking . One of the most impactful statements from the press release: “The notion that natural gas can serve as an intermediate “bridge fuel” between coal and renewable energy is fallacious and now disproven by new scientific evidence showing that methane is a more powerful greenhouse gas than formerly appreciated and escapes in larger amounts from all parts of the extraction and distribution process than previously presumed, including from inactive, long-abandoned wells. Grossly underestimating methane emissions threatens to undermine the efficacy of efforts to combat climate change.” A summary press release is [here](#) , or see the *Common Dreams* article “[‘We Need to Ban Fracking’: New Analysis of 1,500 Scientific Studies Details Threat to Health and Climate](#)” (June 19).

International Energy Agency report, [LNG Market Trends and their Implications](#) (June 20) provides statistical analysis of the changing Asian markets for LNG.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [British Columbia](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Fracking](#), [Liquified Natural Gas](#), [LNG](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Coal transition funds announced for Alberta and Saskatchewan communities

Posted on [July 2, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 28, the federal government announced funding of \$4,489,100 through the Canada Coal Transition Initiative. Details of the funded projects – four in Alberta and five in Saskatchewan – are listed in the [Background](#) . The Saskatchewan projects include establishing a solar installation training program in Estevan; development of business retention and expansion plans for Weyburn, Estevan, Moose Jaw and Coronach; and an economic and employment impact analysis with a regional strategic economic mitigation plan to support the Coronach & Region Coal Transition Initiatives. The Canada Coal Transition Initiative is a \$35 million, five-year strategic fund to support skills development and economic diversification activities for workers and communities impacted by the government’s February 2018 decision to phase out traditional coal-fired electricity generation by 2030.

Since the June 28 announcements, brief reactions have appeared: “[Federal government gives \\$1.2M to Sask. groups to phase out coal](#)” at CBC Saskatchewan; “[Feds announce funding for coal energy transition in Saskatchewan, Alberta](#)” which quotes a United Mineworkers spokesperson and the official province of Saskatchewan response; “[Leduc, Parkland counties among recipients of federal coal transition handout](#)” in the *Edmonton Journal*, and “[Edmonton-area counties get help from Ottawa for coal transition](#)” at CBC Edmonton.

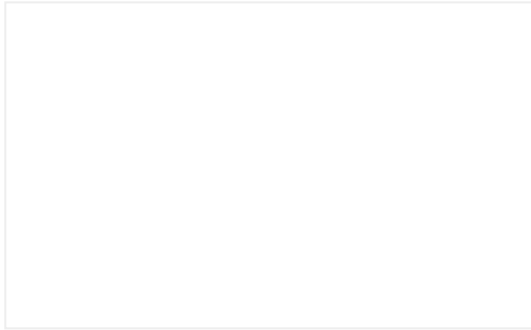
The [June 28 funding press release](#) also states:

In response to the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, the Government of Canada intends to:

Create worker transition centres (funded through Budget 2018);

Explore new ways to protect wages and pensions; and

Create a \$150 million infrastructure fund, beginning 2020-21, for impacted communities, administered by Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.



— Boundary Dam facility in Estevan -photo
by Don Healy / Regina Leader-Post)

How the coal transition is impacting the communities across Canada is evident from the [What we heard from Canadian coal power workers and communities](#) report which accompanied the release of the [Final Report](#) of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities in January 2019. Climate Justice Saskatoon has also published the results of its interviews with people in Estevan and Coronach in its [Bridging the Gap project](#). Articles have also appeared: “[Estevan, Sask. preparing for coal phase-out putting hundreds of jobs at risk](#)” at *Global News* (May 2019) is a profile of the community; “[Saskatchewan reaches agreement with Ottawa to cut power-generation emissions](#)”(January 2019) outlines the agreement reached between the federal and provincial government, allowing Boundary Dam Three near Estevan to continue beyond 2030, thanks to its nearly \$1.5 billion Carbon Capture and Storage retrofit.

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [coal transition](#), [Just Transition](#), [Retraining](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [1 Reply](#)

New ILO report estimates productivity effects of working at over 35

degrees C.

Posted on **July 2, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Released on July 1 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), ***Working on a warmer planet: The impact of heat stress on labour productivity and decent work*** presents estimates of the current and projected productivity losses at national, regional and global levels, and recommends policy and workplace actions. The report defines heat stress as “heat in excess of what the body can tolerate without suffering physiological impairment.” Roughly, it occurs at temperatures above 35°C, in high humidity. A growing body of research show that it restricts workers’ physical capabilities and work capacity and thus, productivity, and can lead to potentially fatal heatstroke.

The report projects that the equivalent of more than 2 per cent of total working hours worldwide will be lost every year by 2030. Agriculture and construction are the two sectors which will be worst affected, especially in south Asia, where job losses due to heat are projected to be 43 million jobs by 2030, and western Africa, where 9 million jobs are predicted to be lost. Other sectors especially at risk are environmental goods and services, refuse collection, emergency, repair work, transport, tourism, sports and some forms of industrial work. And as with so other climate change impacts, low-income countries are expected to suffer the worst, and people in the poorest regions will suffer the most.

Solutions: From the report introduction: “Solutions do exist. In particular, the structural transformation of rural economies should be speeded up so that fewer agricultural workers are exposed to high temperatures and so that less physical effort has to be expended in such conditions. Other important policy measures that can help are skills development, the promotion of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, public investment in infrastructure, and improved integration of developing countries into global trade. **At the workplace level,** enhanced information about on-site weather conditions, the adaptation of workwear and equipment, and technological improvements can make it easier for workers and their employers to cope with higher temperatures. Employers and workers should discuss together how to adjust working hours, in addition to adopting other occupational safety and health measures.

Accordingly, social dialogue is a relevant tool for improving working conditions on a warming planet.”

The report chapters include a global overview, as well as chapters for Africa, The Americas (composed of 4 sub-regions: North America, Central America, South America, and The Caribbean) , Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia. The Americas discussion reiterates our favoured situation, with low levels of heat stress and relatively high labour standards, although the patterns remain consistent: “Whereas the impact of heat stress on labour productivity in Canada is practically zero, the United States lost 0.11 per cent of total working hours as a result of heat stress in 1995 and is projected to lose 0.21 per cent in 2030. The expected productivity loss in 2030 is equivalent to 389,000 full-time jobs. This effect is concentrated in the southern states of the country and concerns mostly outdoor workers, such as construction workers and farm workers in California.”

Outdoor workers and cancer: *Working on a warmer planet* includes a highlight section regarding North American farm workers which cites the “**Sun Safety at Work Canada**” programme , which began in 2016 and is funded by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. In 2014, as many as 7,000 skin cancers in Canada were attributed to work-related sun exposure, and outdoor workers have a 2.5-3.5 times greater risk of developing skin cancer than indoor workers. The Sun Safety at Work program focuses on skin cancer but also includes information about heat stress and eye damage in its **Resource Library** Downloadable publications for employers and individuals include fact sheets, videos and presentations .

Other recent, relevant reading:

“**Changes in Temperature and Precipitation Across Canada**” : Chapter 4 in the federal government’s *Canada’s Changing Climate Report*, released in 2019. It assesses observed and projected changes for Canada.

The *Urban Heat Island Effect* at the Climate Atlas of Canada website discusses the issue and provides links to some of the adaptive municipal programs.

Healthy Climate, Healthy New Brunswickers: A proposal for New Brunswick that cuts pollution and protects health, by Louise Comeau and Daniel Nunes, released by The Conservation Council of New Brunswick on June 25. It predicts that average temperatures in the 16 communities studied could rise 1.9 to 2.1 degrees Celsius between 2021 and 2050, and the number of days over 30 degrees are modelled to increase in the range of 122 to 300 per cent .

“**Life and Death under the Dome**” (May 23) in the *Toronto Star* , documents the summer of 2018 when at least 66 deaths in Montreal were attributed to heat.

Climate Change and Health: It’s Time for Nurses to Act published by the the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions includes heat stress in its overview of health-related dangers of climate change in Canada, and highlights the heat waves in Ontario and Quebec in 2018.

Internationally:

The Imperative of Climate Action to protect human health in Europe” released on June 3 by the European Academies Science Advisory Council is mostly focused on the general population, but does include discussion of heat stress and of its effects on productivity.

“**Can the Paris Climate Goals Save Lives? Yes, a Lot of Them, Researchers Say**” in the *New York Times* (June 5) summarizes an article from the journal *Sciences Advances* (June 5) .

“**Increasing mitigation ambition to meet the Paris Agreement’s temperature goal avoids substantial heat-related mortality in U.S. cities**” reviews the literature about heat-related mortality and concludes that achieving the 1.5°C threshold of the Paris Agreement could avoid between 110 and 2720 annual heat-related deaths in 15 U.S. cities.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Construction Industry](#), [Farmers](#), [Heat Stress](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [outdoor workers](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

BlueGreen Alliance releases historic climate action platform

Posted on **June 28, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 24, the Blue Green Alliance in the U.S. released a platform document titled ***Solidarity for Climate Action***. According to the [press release](#), Leo Gerard, retiring International President of the United Steelworkers, stated: “This historic moment in labor and environmental cooperation is the culmination of more than a decade of work.... The platform we are unveiling today is a roadmap to address both the climate crisis and growing income inequality in a way that leaves no workers or communities behind.” The press release includes endorsement statements from: The Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Utility Workers Union of America, Service Employees International Union, Union of Concerned Scientists, Environmental Defense Action Fund, and the League of Conservation Voters. Others whose logos appear on the document include: Communications Workers of America, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, American Federation of Teachers, and the United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing & PipeFitting Industry.

In a [blog](#), the [National Resources Defense Council](#) calls the platform a “defining moment in the fight against climate change” and states: “[Solidarity for Climate Action](#) marks a significant milestone in the relationship between the labor and environmental movements regarding climate action. We’ve had our disagreements, to be sure, but there is more agreement than most might realize, particularly around the need for climate action and income equality, which is one of the reasons this platform was created. It is an expression of hope that our movements will begin a renewed cooperation from a foundation of broad agreement. ” The Center for American Progress also [endorsed the platform](#).

Here are the issue areas, as stated in the 8-page [Solidarity for Climate Action](#) document:

Climate Stability: “Limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society... This global effort to address climate change and inequality must happen at the speed and scale demanded by scientific reality and the urgent needs of our communities.”

High-Quality Jobs: “We must strive to create and retain millions of high-quality jobs while putting forward bold solutions to climate change. Unions are a primary vehicle to confront the economic insecurity most Americans face.”

Community Resilience: “We must dramatically increase the capacity of the public sector, the health care system, and community-based nonprofit sectors to prepare for and respond to the demands our changing climate places on first responders, healthcare workers, social workers, and others who deal with climate-induced disasters.....”

Repair America: “We cannot address climate change with derelict infrastructure. Infrastructure must be designed in ways that reduce emissions and that reflect projected conditions over its lifespan, including the ability to withstand the increased frequency and severity of climate-driven natural disasters.”

Rebuild American Manufacturing: “A comprehensive national commitment to sustainably manufacture the next generation of energy, transportation, and other technologies in the United States will fully capture the benefits to workers and communities.”

Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe and Healthy Workplaces and Communities: “Tackling climate change goes hand in hand with ensuring that all workers and communities have access to clean air and water. We must also guarantee that our workplaces and communities are safe, clean, and free of hazardous chemicals and toxic pollution. This must include stepping up workplace protections and improving our industrial infrastructure through improved process safety and investments in inherently safer technologies.”

Equity for Marginalized Communities: “Generations of economic and racial inequality have disproportionately exposed low-income workers, communities of color, and others to low wages, toxic pollution, and climate threats. We must inject justice into our nation’s economy by ensuring

that economic and environmental benefits of climate change solutions support the hardest hit workers and communities.”

The platform offers multiple, specific recommended policies for each of these areas of concern.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [BlueGreen Alliance](#), [labour environment cooperation](#), [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

European Industrial Policy report calls for social dialogue, shared responsibility for skills training in transition

Posted on **June 28, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A Vision for the European Industry until 2030, released by the European Commission on June 27, is the final report of a High-Level Industrial Roundtable working group of 20 members from business and academia, and also including the General Secretary of industriAll Europe and the former Deputy General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The press release from the ETUC is titled “**Industry 2030 report is a step towards just transitions**”, and states: “The comprehensive report puts European industry on a path to an “innovative, sustainable, competitive and human-centered collaborative economy [that] respects planetary boundaries.... It proposes an action plan which includes massive investment in innovation on digital and zero or low-carbon technologies, a commitment to fair and rules-based international trade and to social inclusiveness that leaves no worker or region behind.”

The report is wide-reaching, and includes a strong awareness of environmental and climate change imperatives – for example, amongst the the “game-changing actions” recommended are: Carbon-leakage 2.0 plan: ; a Green Deal with industry which shares risks and benefits, drawing on

the principles of the “Entrepreneurial State” concept outlined by Mariana Mazzucato; standardized carbon reporting; and a Circular Economy leadership role for Europe by 2030.

Some statements on the issue of Social Dialogue:

“Climate, energy, raw materials, and bio-economy policies are key areas considered essential for the future of EU industry in terms of challenges and opportunities. They need to go hand in hand with industrial policy and a societal dialogue on what emission reduction and other environmental policies mean in terms of costs, benefits and behavioural changes for everyone. (p. 13)

Considering the speed with which technologies and new business models transform entire industries, planning structural disruption regularly and proactively is key. The establishment of a culture of social dialogue at all levels (company, sector, regional, national) becomes imperative to ensure smooth and just workforce transitions, to help re-train those whose jobs are at risk and to support the regeneration of adversely affected regions.”(p. 19)

Ensure social fairness of industrial transition: Foster a culture of constructive and effective social dialogue at all levels of the economy (company, sector, country), according to national industrial relations systems and timely information and consultation processes as key elements for anticipating and managing change, i.e. skills.”

Selected statements from the extensive proposals re education and training:

“Link education and training policy more strategically to the industrial policy for instance by reinforcing cooperation between companies (especially SMEs), social partners & industry and education and training providers.

Enhance industry’s active role in upskilling and skills development. EU citizens of all ages need to be sensitized to engage in lifelong learning. At the same time, private sector, in collaboration with EU, national and European social partners, should be encouraged to provide training and life-long learning opportunities for all workers. This could be done by establishing new and innovative educational programmes and solutions to complement the role of academia and scaling-up successful existing initiatives, e.g. work-based learning and dual systems , modularized learning offer, e-learning; promotion of quality and effective apprenticeships; promotion of sector-specific training initiatives; providing adult learning opportunities to prevent skills obsolesce and support employability; installing a culture of lifelong learning, including through the promotion of the internal mobility of workers inside the company....

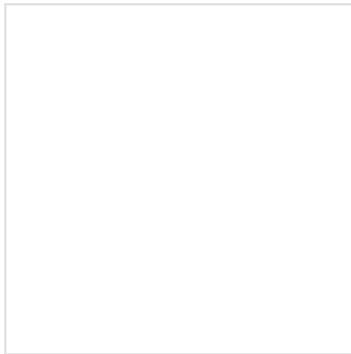
Maintain or increase the employability of the workforce, especially in sectors in transition, by up- and reskilling of the workforce to the jobs of the future, and supporting a smooth transition from one job to another (group outplacement, employment cells, tailor-made training programmes, job search assistance). This should be a shared responsibility between industry and the public sector.” (p.32)

Build a pan-European coalition involving the EU, Member States, regions, industry, education and training systems and trade unions to take a systemic approach to skills.... Under the coalition, the EU will build on existing instruments to further facilitate flexibility and fast response mechanisms to react to changing labour market needs through procedures for the certification and compatibility of skills and qualifications across borders and industrial sectors, e.g. using skills badges, which shall recognize informal learning, e.g. by working in a company. (p.33)

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Circular Economy](#), [Education and Training](#), [Europe](#), [European Union](#), [industrial strategy](#), [Just Transition](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [social dialogue](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Government gives the go- ahead to Trans Mountain pipeline despite declaring a climate emergency

Posted on **June 27, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 18, in a controversial but expected move, the federal cabinet approved the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which would triple the capacity of the existing pipeline, and allow up to 890,000 barrels per day of bitumen to travel from the Alberta oil sands to a marine terminal in Burnaby, British Columbia. The approval was described by *The Energy Mix* as “the height of cynicism” because the House of Commons had only 24 hours previously approved **a government resolution declaring a climate emergency**. Although the government put on a positive face by predicting that “shovels will be in the ground” by September, the project still has to satisfy conditions set out by the National Energy Board, including negotiated approval from First Nations. As described in **“Why we’ll be talking about the Trans Mountain pipeline for a long while yet”** in *The Narwhal*: “The embattled oilsands pipeline has become a proxy battle, pitting the urgency of the climate crisis against near-term economic concerns”.

A sampling of Reaction and Analysis:

An Angus Reid poll, *Shovels in the Ground* was released on June 21. It reports that 56% of Canadians agree with the government's approval of TMX, compared with 24% who disagree. The primary concerns for Canadians, both those who support and oppose the TMX, are the possibility of a tanker spill due to increased traffic in the Burrard Inlet (68%) and the increased burning of fossil fuels from pipeline expansion (66%).

"Canada approves Trans Mountain pipeline expansion for second time" in the *National Observer* (June 18). This general overview of the decision is part of the ongoing ***Special Report on Trans Mountain*** by the *National Observer*.

"Trans Mountain approval makes mockery of climate emergency declaration" press release from the Council of Canadians.

"Cognitive Dissonance: Canada declares a national climate emergency and approves a pipeline" by Warren Mabee of Queen's University in *The Conversation* (June 20).

"Trudeau Declared a Climate Crisis, then Backed Trans Mountain Again" in *The Tyee* (June 18), which summarizes reactions from British Columbia, and states that B.C. will take its **case to the Supreme Court of Canada** as it seeks the legal right to regulate the shipment of materials (including oil and gas) within the province.

"Transmountain pipeline approval triggers lawsuits leaves fossils unsatisfied" in *The Energy Mix* (June 19).

"Business leaders welcome pipeline approval but fear it may not be completed" in *The National Observer*. The article states: "Mark Scholz, CEO of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, who said in a statement the pipeline approval is "trivial" and will do little to help a suffering western Canadian drilling sector. Approval doesn't make up for the federal government's pursuit of Bills C-69 and C-48, bills reviled by the industry to revamp the regulatory system for resource projects and impose an oil tanker ban on the B.C. coast, he said."

"Minister Morneau in Calgary to talk about the Trans Mountain Expansion project and the future of Canada's Energy Sector" (June 19) a press release that lays out the government's best case for Albertans, and states that: "Every dollar the federal government earns from the project will be invested in Canada's clean energy transition. The Department of Finance estimates that additional corporate tax revenues could be around \$500 million per year once the project is online. These funds and any profits earned from the sale of the pipeline will be invested in the clean energy projects that power our homes, businesses and communities for years to come."



A substantial analysis from a different viewpoint, ***Billion Dollar Buyout: How Canadian taxpayers bought a climate-killing pipeline*** was just published by the Council of Canadians. Written by Gordon Laxer, professor emeritus at the University of Alberta, the report summarizes the long history of the Trans Mountain project, with a special interest in how it fits in to the United States Mexico Canada trade agreement (USMCA) and the energy goal of integrating Canadian oil and natural gas into the U.S. market. Laxer also authored an OpEd in the *Toronto Star* on June 12, ***Don't waste any more money on the Trans Mountain pipeline*** .

Not all First Nations Oppose the Trans Mountain pipeline: The *National Observer* summarizes First Nations opposition in ***“As Trans Mountain gets shovels ready for pipeline, First Nations vow to protect territory”*** (June 19), which states that the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Squamish Nation will use “all legal tools” available to challenge the TMX approval. The Tsleil-Waututh Nation has commissioned an independent **environmental assessment** and an economic study which estimates that TMX expansion will cost Canada \$11.8 billion, in addition to the environmental costs. It also predicts lower demand than the government has anticipated and unused capacity. The 127-page economic study, ***Public Interest Evaluation of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project*** is dated June 2019 and was written by Thomas Gunton, a professor at the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University, and by Chris Joseph, a B.C. consultant.

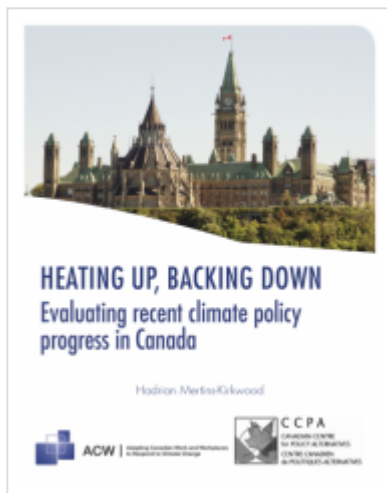
Project Reconciliation is an Indigenous-led coalition which aims to buy part of the pipeline and direct any profits to a Sovereign Wealth and Reconciliation Fund. Their **press release** on June 18 applauds the government’s TMX decision. A January 2019 **article by CBC** gives background on the group. The Indian Resource Council is another group, composed of 134 First Nations bands most of whom are also interested in the economic benefits of pipelines. CBC describes their meeting in ***“More than 100 First Nations could purchase the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline”*** (Jan. 2019). More recently, in June, the **Iron Coalition** launched – “an Alberta-based Indigenous-driven organization with the sole purpose of achieving ownership in the Trans Mountain Pipeline (TMX).” Iron Coalition leaders are from the Nakota Sioux Nation, the Papaschase First Nation and the Fort McKay Métis, and state that “all profits generated by Iron

Coalition will be directed back to each member community to bring lasting economic benefit to Métis and First Nations in Alberta.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [climate emergency](#), [First Nations](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate policy progress in Canada suffers from an overemphasis on carbon pricing, an absence of supply-side energy policies

Posted on **June 27, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Heating up, Backing Down by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood was released on June 13, updating the author's previous 2017 report ***Tracking Progress: Evaluating government plans and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada***. It analyzes emissions data and policy announcements in the last two years to assess federal, provincial and territorial governments' progress toward Canada's domestic and international greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets. The report identifies and discusses two new important issues in the Canadian climate policy discussion: an overemphasis on carbon pricing and an absence of supply-side energy policies. These are in addition to the three key obstacles to effective climate policy identified in the 2017 report, and still considered relevant: (1) an ambition gap between government policies and official targets; (2) Canada's deep economic dependence on fossil fuels, and; (3) an under-appreciation of the need to support workers in the transition to a cleaner economy.

Following a succinct overview of policy developments and emissions statistics for each province, the author concludes that positive progress in British Columbia and Quebec is outweighed by backsliding in the rest of Canada, and future progress is further threatened by the legislative reversals enacted by the recently-elected conservative governments in Alberta and Ontario, which are Canada's two biggest carbon polluting provinces.

Heating up, Backing Down is co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change research program (ACW) .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Canada](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction](#), [Infrastructure](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Brunswick launches consultation on industrial emissions – updated

Posted on **June 26, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The Government of New Brunswick opposes the federal government carbon tax and maintains a “**We can’t afford a carbon tax**” page on the government website – which estimates the costs (but none of the benefits) of the federal carbon backstop in effect in the province. On June 13, New Brunswick introduced its own ***Made-in-New Brunswick Regulatory Approach for Large Emitters*** , an output-based pricing system which will cover roughly 50 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in the province and will require large industrial emitters, including electricity generators, to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 10 per cent by 2030.

The CBC summarized the plan and reaction in “**Province proposes carbon tax on tiny fraction of emissions from big industrial polluters**” (June 13) . CBC states that the proposed system would tax only 0.84 percent of greenhouse gas emissions from the province’s biggest emitters, such as Irving Oil, far below the 20 per cent in the existing federal system. However, it covers the same industrial sectors, applies to the same gases and applies the same price scale of \$20 per tonne this year, rising to \$50 per tonne in 2022.

A Discussion paper , ***Holding Large Emitters Accountable: New Brunswick’s Output-Based Pricing System*** forms the basis of a public comment period about the proposed system, which runs from June 13 to July 12. One public response has been published by the Ecofiscal Commission in ***Exception to the Rule: Why New Brunswick’s Industrial Carbon Pricing System is Problematic*** (June 19) , which contends that under the proposed regulations, “firms

can very easily achieve their emissions intensity benchmark, because it will be essentially set to current levels.”

The **Conservation Council of New Brunswick** reaction was quoted **by the CBC**, and also states that the proposed regulations are too weak. Emphasizing the importance of the issue, on June 25 the Council released ***Healthy Climate, Healthy New Brunswickers: A proposal for New Brunswick that cuts pollution and protects health***, by Louise Comeau and Daniel Nunes. The Council characterizes the report as “the first comprehensive look at how climate change will affect the physical and mental health of all New Brunswickers, but particularly the very young, seniors, the isolated, and those living on low incomes.” The report combines climate projections and existing community health profiles for 16 New Brunswick communities, emphasizing the risks of more intense precipitation, flooding and heat waves. It includes recommendations for action and attempts to end on a hopeful note. The report is available in English and French versions from **[this link](#)** .

Updates on New Brunswick’s carbon tax: On July 8, CBC reported “**New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs abandons planned carbon tax court fight**” , which explains that the province will save taxpayers’ money by supporting Saskatchewan’s Supreme Court of Canada challenge to the carbon tax as an intervenor, since Saskatchewan’s arguments are the same as New Brunswick’s. Also in July, an historical and political analysis appeared in *Policy Options*, “ **New Brunswick’s timid foray into carbon pricing**”, as part of the week-long series , **The Evolution of Carbon Pricing in the Provinces** .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, climate change and health, Extreme Weather Events, Flooding, New Brunswick, provincial climate change policies** | **[Leave a reply](#)**

A standard to measure party platforms in Canada’s upcoming climate change election

Posted on **June 26, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

In the lead-up to the autumn federal election, climate change platforms have now been released by the Green Party: ***Mission Possible: The Green Climate Action Plan***; the federal New Democratic Party: ***Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs***, and most recently, on June 20, by the Conservative Party: ***A Real Plan to Protect Our Environment*** . The WCR has summarized these platforms as they were released, **[here](#)** and **[here](#)** .

Advocates are also releasing their own views about these climate proposals. On June 14, Climate Action Network Canada **released a report** intended as “a baseline against which we can assess federal parties’ climate plans.” ***Getting Real about Canada’s Climate Plan*** calls for a plan which is comprehensive, effective and accountable and which will legislate new, more ambitious, GHG reduction targets for “politically-relevant short-term periods, such as interim 2025 targets, or create carbon budgets to define needed progress between 2020 and 2030.” Other policies called for: eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, and “Leave no community, group, or worker behind. Canada needs to offer real assistance to communities and workers grappling with the inevitable decline of fossil-fuel-dependent sectors, and improve consultation of Indigenous groups by integrating the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into future climate policy.” The more detailed policy discussion appears in the Appendix, which calls for the recommendations of the Just Transition Task Force to be implemented fully and swiftly, and expanded beyond coal workers and communities to include all GHG intensive sectors where employment impacts from environmental regulations are anticipated.

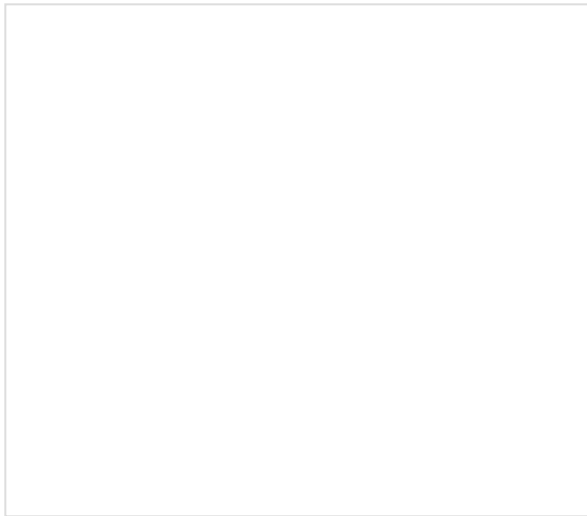
Climate Action Network-Canada also issued a statement on June 5, on behalf of itself and the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, the David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Environmental Defence, Équiterre, and Greenpeace Canada. The press release, ***All Federal Parties Must Reject CAPP’s Election Demands on Energy Development and Climate Change Say Environmental Groups***, summarizes and rejects the election proposals from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), as outlined in ***Oil and Natural Gas Priorities: Putting Canada On The World Stage: An Energy Platform for Canada***. Catherine Abreu, Executive Director at Climate Action Network-Canada states: “Any party that borrows from such a proposal is a party with no sincere interest in the future of Canadian society.” Notably, in ***“Scheer touts industry friendly climate plan”*** (June 20) in the *National Observer* the Conservative Party platform is linked to the CAPP demands.

Although not focused on election platforms, a thoughtful and related overview of Canadian climate change policies appears in ***Heating Up, Backing Down: Evaluating recent climate policy progress in Canada***. The report is written by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood and was co-published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change research program (ACW) on June 13.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Conservative Party climate change platform released to strong criticism

Posted on **June 26, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On June 20, Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada released the party's long-promised climate change policy document: ***A Real Plan to Protect Our Environment*** . The plan is organized and presented around three guiding principles: 1. Green Technology, Not Taxes; 2. A Cleaner and Greener Natural Environment; and 3. Taking the Climate Change Fight Global.

“Green Technology, Not Taxes” relies on the established Conservative criticism that carbon taxes make life more expensive for all, but not all Canadians have cleaner alternatives available to them. The document asks “how high will your carbon tax go?”, and cites the discredited June 13 study by the Parliamentary Budget Office, ***Closing the Gap: Carbon pricing for the Paris target*** to predict that the carbon tax would need to be \$102 per tonne to reach Canada's emissions reductions targets under the Paris Agreement. The Conservatives advocate a number of general measures, including a Green Investment Standard instead of a carbon tax, by which companies will be required to reduce their emissions to the government's emission standards, and those which exceed that Green Investment Standard (not specified) will be required to invest in research, development, and adoption of emissions-reducing technology related to their industry. The ***National Observer analysis*** points out the similarities of the Green Investment Standard to proposals made by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers in its recent election-related release: ***Oil and Natural Gas Priorities: Putting Canada On The World Stage: An Energy Platform for Canada*** .

Other proposals in the Conservative party platform: a two-year Green Homes Tax Credit for homeowners who make energy-saving renovations which cost more than \$1000, to a limit of \$20,000; a Green Patent Credit that will reduce the business tax rate from 15% to 5% on income that is generated from green technology developed and patented in Canada; consultation with government and industry stakeholders to encourage innovation in the transition to cleaner personal transportation, and for heavy-duty fleets; support for the strategic interconnection of electricity grids, on a project by project basis to connect regions, or through the creation of a national energy corridor. Also, the plan promises to ban plastics waste exports unless there are recycling commitments, and “work with producers to minimize the plastic packaging of products.” And as for oil and gas, it states that Canada should export more oil and gas in order to replace “dirtier foreign energy sources.”

The *National Observer* reaction in “[Scheer touts industry friendly climate plan](#)” (June 20), in addition to pointing out the similarities with the CAPP proposals, states that Scheer refused to provide estimates of the emissions reductions that would result from his plan, and his staff did not provide any academic studies or background documents to support any of the proposals. “Several environmental groups, including Greenpeace Canada, Stand.Earth, and Clean Energy Canada, decried the Conservative announcement, saying it would not do enough to address the climate crisis, possibly making it worse.” Even the mainstream press are shrugging off the Conservative plan, with such headlines as “[Andrew Scheer’s climate plan leaves a lot to voters’ imaginations](#)” by Aaron Wheery at the CBC (June 20) ; “[The Scheer Climate Plan, whatever](#)” by Paul Wells in *Macleans* ; and a *Globe and Mail* [Opinion piece by Gary Mason](#) which calls the plan a “sad joke”. Even John Ivison, a columnist with the *Calgary Herald*, states in [his opinion piece](#) that the platform document is “a missed opportunity”, and “It should come as no surprise that the new Conservative climate plan is a Potemkin village of a policy, designed to give the impression of solidity to a fake, precarious construction.”

In “[How real is Andrew Scheer’s ‘real plan’ to tackle climate change](#)” in *The Narwhal* , author Sarah Cox provides detailed discussion of key issues in the plan, including input from experts Kathryn Harrison and Laura Coristine. Kathryn Harrison provides this assessment: “I think it is a plan that is designed to appeal to a subset of voters who want to be convinced that Canada can step up and do its part without actually doing anything. It is devoid of detail.”

And [The Tyee](#) on June 26 combined the results of two interviews with two experts: Isabelle Turcotte, the director of federal policy for the Pembina Institute, and Cam Fenton , communications and strategy manager for 350 Canada. Each weighs in on aspects of the climate plans from the Conservatives, Liberals, NDP, and Green Party.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [Climate change policy](#), [Conservative Party](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

USW Workshop Guide – and other climate change training resources

Posted on [June 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



The United Steelworkers Union in Canada produced a workshop guide, ***Climate Change and Just Transition: What will workers need?***. The guide was piloted at the United Steelworkers National Health, Safety, Environment and Human Rights Conference in 2017, and released to the public in May 2019 by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW), which was a partner on the project. The 47-page guide is designed to lead union members through discussion topics and activities, including general introduction to climate change concepts and vocabulary, and how climate change contributes to the world of work, particularly in the forestry, mining, and transportation industries where USW membership is concentrated. The Guide also discusses Just Transition and the Canadian experience, as well as areas of action for unions: Collective Agreements; Political Lobbying; Green Procurement; Training; and Employment Insurance.

A 2018 resource, ***Communicating Climate Change and Energy in Alberta***, focuses on how to talk to people effectively, and gives specifics about vocabulary and themes that are participative and non-confrontational. Some highlights are cited in ***“Lessons in talking climate with Albertan Oil Workers”*** (Feb. 21), including:

“In Alberta, recognising the role that oil and gas has played in securing local livelihoods proved crucial. Most environmentalists would balk at a narrative of ‘gratitude’ towards oil, but co-producing an equitable path out of fossil fuel dependency means making oil sands workers feel valued, not attacked. Empathetic language that acknowledges oil’s place in local history could therefore be the key to cultivating support for decarbonisation.

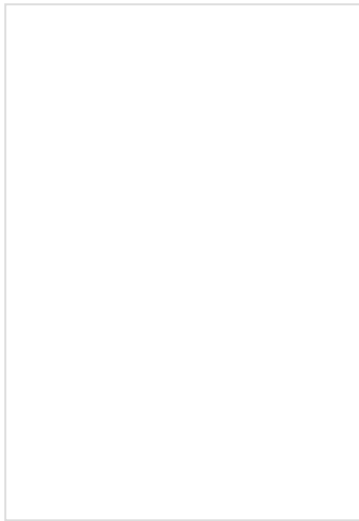
.....This project was also one of the first to test language specifically on energy transitions. While participants were generally receptive to the concept, the word ‘just’, with its social justice connotations, proved to be anything but politically neutral. In an environment where attitudes towards climate are bound to political identities, many interviewees showed a reluctance to the idea of government handouts, even where an unjust transition would likely put them out of a job. Rather, the report recommends a narrative of ‘diversification’ rather than ‘transition’, stressing positive future opportunities instead of moving away from a negative past.”

The report was produced by the **Alberta Narratives Project**, whose lead partners are The Pembina Institute and Alberta Ecotrust. It is part of the global **Climate Outreach Initiative**,

whose goal is to understand and train communicators to deliver effective communications which lead to cooperative approaches.



The ACW also partnered with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists to produce the training materials used for an Environmental Racism and Work workshop at the Indigenous and Workers of Colour Conference organized by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council on June 1st. The 2-hour workshop was co-delivered by Patricia Chong (Asian Canadian Labour Alliance) and Chris Wilson (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists) – the Facilitator's notes for the 2-hour workshop are [here](#). Related training materials on environmental racism are described, with links, [here](#).

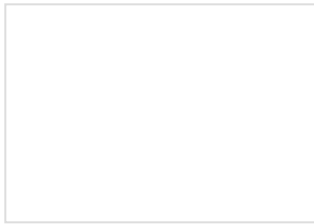


The ***Climate Resistance Handbook*** was released by 350.org in May 2019, and meant to be used with their [library of free training resources](#). This handbook is directed at a general audience, especially young climate strikers, with very basic principles of building relationships, tactics, and moving from actions to strategic campaigns. It includes the example of an organized action in 2014 at the National Energy Board against TransCanada's Energy East pipeline.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [environmental racism](#), [Just Transition](#), [Training](#), [training materials](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada's new plastics initiatives and their impacts on jobs and emissions

Posted on [June 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



As widely reported, Canada announced plans on June 10 to enact a ban on single-use plastics starting in 2021. No list of specific products was released, but the **Government Backgrounder** suggests shopping bags, straws, cutlery, plates, and stir sticks will be included, and states that the full list of “harmful products” will be identified through a “science-based approach”. Although most news reports zeroed in on the “banning plastic straws” angle, the initiative covers much more, as set out in the government’s **Backgrounder**:

1. Ensuring that companies that manufacture plastic products or sell items with plastic packaging are responsible for managing the collection and recycling of their plastic waste
2. Working with industry to prevent and retrieve abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear, known as ghost fishing gear – a major contributor to marine plastic debris
3. Investing in new Canadian technologies (through Innovation Challenges)
4. Mobilizing international support to address plastic pollution (continuing the work of the international **Oceans Plastics Charter** launched in 2018 at the G7 Summit)
5. Reducing plastic waste from federal operations (strengthening government procurement policies and a plastics diversion goal of 75 per cent of plastic waste from federal operations by 2030)
6. Reducing plastic microbeads in freshwater marine ecosystems (a ban on the manufacture or import of cosmetics with microbeads takes effect July 1 2019)
7. Launching Canada’s Plastics Science Agenda

What are the Job Impacts of the Plastics Ban? Consultants Deloitte and ChemInfo prepared an **Economic Study of the Canadian Plastic Industry, Markets and Waste** (2018), commissioned by Environment and Climate Change Canada. The report valued the plastics-manufacturing industry in Canada at \$35 billion in 2017 and estimated that it supported approximately 93,000 jobs – compared to the recycling industry, which they valued at \$350 million, with employment of about 500). According to the National Observer, in “**Bottle makers could pay under federal plastics plan**”, the federal government claims that the combination of its proposed actions will create approximately 42,000 jobs, reduce 1.8 million tonnes of carbon pollution and “generate billions of dollars in revenue.” The **CBC** quotes the executive vice-president of the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada, who says that the proposed ban “likely won’t affect billions of dollars in new petrochemical projects coming on stream in Alberta and Ontario”, and cites examples: “in Alberta, Inter Pipeline Ltd. and Pembina Pipeline Ltd. are building polypropylene projects to turn propane into plastic at a cost of \$3.5 billion and \$4.5 billion, respectively. Nova Chemicals Corp. in Ontario is in the midst of a \$2 billion expansion of its Sarnia polyethylene plant.” Nevertheless, as stated in *The Energy Mix*, “**Fossils See Circular Economy, Backlash Against Plastics Cutting Demand For Oil And Gas**”, which summarizes some of the

news from the Global Plastics Summit in Houston in June, and *Inside Climate News* reports on “**What’s worrying the plastics industry?**” .



GHG Impacts of Plastic: Ultimately, reducing single use plastics is about more than marine litter and recycling challenges. **The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet** (May 2019) calculates the climate costs through the life cycle of extraction and transport of fossil fuels; refining and manufacturing; managing waste; and plastic pollution in the environment. It concludes that in 2019, producing and incinerating plastic will emit an estimated 850 million metric tons of greenhouse gases, the equivalent of 189 coal-fired power plants. If production continues at the same pace, plastic-related greenhouse gas emissions will reach 1.34 gigatons per year by 2030 (equivalent to 295 coal plants) and 2.8 gigatons per year by 2050 (equivalent to 615 coal plants). *The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet* was produced by the Center for International Environmental Law, the Environmental Integrity Project, FracTracker Alliance, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, 5Gyres, and #BreakFreeFromPlastic; it is summarized by *Environmental Health News* in “**From making it to managing it, plastic is a major contributor to climate change**” (May 15) .

Discussion of Waste Management and Extender Producer Responsibility has been an active issue in Canada, described in “**Extended Producer Responsibility reduces waste and impacts the workplace**” (2018) in the *WCR*, which includes highlights of the Ecofiscal Commission report, **Cutting the Waste** . In the summer of 2018, environmental groups and labour unions sent a joint letter to the Prime Minister and Minister of Environment and Climate Change – **Towards a Zero Plastic Waste Canada** , including detailed demands for a national waste reduction strategy by 2025. The Ford government in Ontario published **Ontario’s Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario: Building the Circular Economy** in March 2019 and conducted a public consultation built around a discussion paper, **Reducing Litter and Waste in Our Communities** . Most recently, the *Globe and Mail* published a detailed national summary in “**Reduce, reuse, recycle: why Canada’s recycling industry is in crisis mode**” (May 14) . The New Democratic Party’s platform document, **Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs** was released on

May 31 and includes a call for a national ban on single use plastic by 2022, as well as extended producer responsibility.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [ocean pollution](#), [Plastics Industry](#), [single-use plastic](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Youth continue their slow battle through the courts for a livable climate: Updates for Environnement Jeunesse and Juliana

Posted on **June 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

On June 6, [lawyers](#) presented an application to the Superior Court of Quebec on behalf of [ENvironnement JEUnesse](#). The application seeks authorization to bring a class action against the Canadian government on behalf of Quebecers aged 35 and under, on the grounds that the government is infringing on their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms by inadequate action to prevent climate change.

ENvironnement JEUnesse is asking the Court to order the government to implement a greenhouse gas reduction target and the measures necessary to respect the group members' fundamental rights, and to pay an amount equivalent to \$100 per member of the class action. The application suggests that the money, an estimated \$340 million, could be invested in measures to address the climate crisis. The Court is now considering the application, with no date given for an expected decision.

[“The path to climate justice is intergenerational”](#) is an Opinion piece co-authored by a member of ENvironnement JEUnesse, appearing in the *Montreal Gazette*. It puts the ENvironnement JEUnesse case in the context of the worldwide Fridays for Future movement, and the Intergenerational Climate Coalition in Canada. The [ENvironnement JEUnesse website](#) provides French and English documentation and a timeline, as well as a summary of related cases, such as the Urgenda case of the Netherlands and the Juliana case in the U.S.. The [best summary](#) appears in the *National Observer*. A Canadian Press article, [“Young Quebecers present arguments seeking class action against Ottawa”](#) appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* on June 6 and incorrectly states that this is the first such case in the world by young people – an error which coincides with the latest court appearance on June 4 by the most famous young people's suit, the Juliana case.

Juliana vs. United States Government: In the case [Juliana vs. United States](#), lawyers for children and young adults in the U.S. rely on the public trust doctrine, accusing the federal government of violating their constitutional rights by failing to take action on climate change and continuing to promote and subsidize fossil fuels. The case originated in 2015 against the Obama government, and continues under the more hostile Trump administration, which argues that court doesn't have the authority to order the political branches of government to act. Juliana has been called "the trial of the century" and is expected to be precedent-setting – accordingly, it is moving glacially and judges are being cautious, with no date set for a decision. On June 4, one of the three judges, Judge Andrew Hurwitz stated, "You present compelling evidence that we have a real problem. You present compelling evidence that we have inaction by the other two branches of government. It may even rise to the level of criminal neglect. But the tough question for me is do we get to act because of that."

Reports of the June 4 appearance are in the *New York Times* in "[Judges give both sides a grilling in Youth Climate Case Against the Government](#)" (June 4); "[Ninth Circuit judges seem skeptical of role in kids climate suit vs U.S. government](#)" in *Climate Liability News*; and "[Kids Face Rising Health Risks from Climate Change, Doctors Warn as Juliana Case Returns to Court](#)" in *Inside Climate News* (June 4). An historical summary appears in "[Question of the century: do we have a right to a livable climate?](#)" in *Resilience*.

The case is being argued by [Our Children's Trust](#), which has compiled [news and detailed documentation](#) over the four years spent so far.

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [Climate litigation](#), [Environnement Jeunesse](#), [Juliana vs United States](#), [Quebec](#), [Urgenda Climate Case](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian nurses' unions issue a call for action on the climate health emergency

Posted on [June 10, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



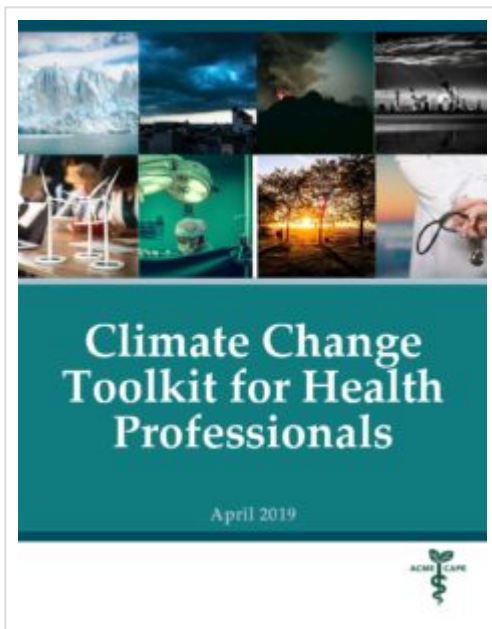
The **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU)** is the umbrella organization representing approximately 200,000 nursing and front-line health professionals in unions across Canada. At their Biennial Convention in Fredricton in June, representatives passed **Resolution #3**, calling on the CFNU and its Member Organizations: ... to recognize within their position statements that climate change is “a global crisis and health emergency”; ...to support sustainable health care practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in health care settings; ...to “engage with community stakeholders, such as the Canadian Labour Congress, in initiatives and campaigns that raise the public’s awareness about the serious health implications of climate change”; and to call on the federal and provincial governments to undertake the necessary policies to meet Canada’s obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Paris Agreement)....

Also at the convention, the CFNU released a discussion paper: ***Climate Change and Health: It's Time for Nurses to Act***. It is described as “a starting point for for advocacy and leadership”. It summarizes the well-established health impacts related to climate change in the Canadian environment – for example, heat stress, increased allergies and asthma, cardiorespiratory distress from air pollution due to wildfires, Lyme disease. It includes a special focus on mental health and anxiety impacts. It also highlights three practical examples from 2018 : wildfire smoke exposure in B.C., flooding in Atlantic Canada, and heat waves in Ontario and Quebec.

The report concludes with these six recommendations for nurses:

1. Work with your employers, unions and associations to reduce emissions and to “green” your workplace. (sub-recommendations include “Promote the divestment of pension plans from

- high-emission sectors and the investment in clean technologies and low-emission sectors;”)
2. Know about climate change science, and help educate patients and the general public about it. (sub-recommendations include “Campaign for the ecological determinants of health to be included in nursing education to prepare future generations of nurses, who will see the greatest effects of climate change. Nursing education should support a basic level of climate change literacy.”)
 3. Call for meaningful federal and provincial actions to reduce and eliminate climate change-causing emissions to ensure Canada leads the world in implementing its obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (The Paris Accord). (Sub-recommendation: Promote transitioning away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy. By investing in renewal energy rather than in fossil fuels we are committing to a healthier future.)
 4. Be aware and plan for the emerging needs of patients resulting from climate change and help them take action to support a healthy planet. (Sub-recommendation: “ Be aware and prepare your workplaces for future influxes of climate refugees coming to Canada. This population may have experienced trauma or extreme environmental conditions and taken risks to enter this country.”)
 5. Be prepared for extreme weather events.
 6. Promote active transportation and local healthy agriculture and food systems to reduce emissions.



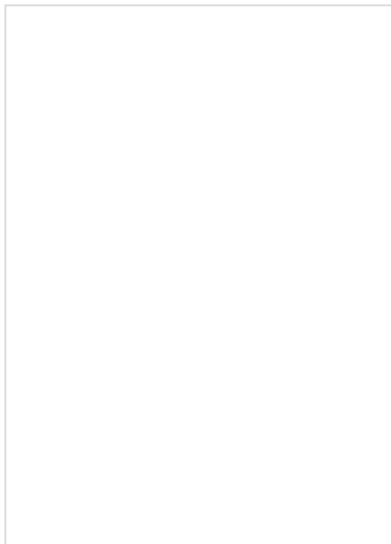
The Discussion paper was launched as part of a panel which included Dr. Courtney Howard, president of the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment**. CAPE issued their latest **Call to Action** in February 2019 , in collaboration with the Canadian Medical Association , the Canadian Nurses Association, the Urban Public Health Network , and the Canadian Public Health Association. On April 30, CAPE released a ***Climate Change Toolkit for Health Professionals***, which is available for download in either **English** or **French** , and offers eight stand-alone modules with seven factsheets. Topics include Climate Change Health Impacts Globally and Across Canada; ***Taking Climate Change Action at Health Facilities*** ; Preparing for

Climate Change in our Communities; and [*Engaging in Climate Change as Health Professionals*](#), which highlights, for example, CAPE's role in the campaign to phase-out coal in Alberta. As part of their active advocacy campaign, CAPE makes frequent media statements and was part of the health delegation which [met with the federal Minister of Health](#) on June 7 .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [health care professionals](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [Hospitals](#), [labour union policies](#), [nurses](#) | [2 Replies](#)

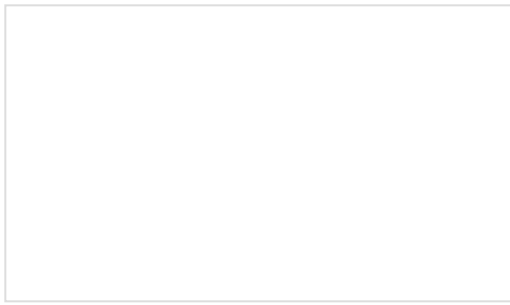
Climate change and health: more evidence of the dangers of extreme heat for workers

Posted on **June 5, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

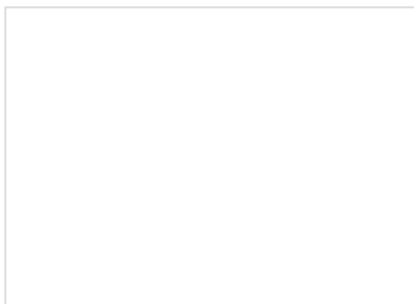


[*The Imperative of Climate Action to Protect Human health in Europe*](#) was released on June 3 by the European Academies Science Advisory Council, urging that adaptation and mitigation policies give health effects a greater emphasis, as well as proposing priorities for health policy research and data coordination in the EU. The report also acts as a comprehensive literature review of the research on the present and future health impacts of climate change in EU countries.

It documents studies of direct and indirect health effects of extreme heat, forest fires, flooding, pollution, and impacts on food and nutrition. Some of these impacts include communicable infectious diseases, mental illness, injuries, labour productivity, violence and conflict, and migration. It identifies the most vulnerable groups as the elderly, the sick, children, and migrating and marginalized populations, with city dwellers at greater risk of heat stress than rural populations.



Heat as a Health risk for workers: Although the report doesn't highlight outdoor workers such as farmers and construction workers as a high risk group, it does weigh in on heat effects on labour productivity for indoor and outdoor workers. For example, "Even small increases in temperature may reduce cognitive and physical performance and hence impair labour productivity and earning power, with further consequences for health. Earlier analyses had concentrated on the effects of heat on rural labour capacity, but now it is appreciated that many occupations may be affected. For example, **recent analysis** by the French Agency for Food, Environmental, Occupational Health and Safety (**ANSES 2018**) concludes that productivity and health of workers in most business sectors will be affected in European countries by 2050. The effects of indoor high temperatures in terms of altered circadian rhythms were recently reported (**Zheng et al. 2019**) as part of a broader discussion of the literature on indoor high temperatures and human work efficiency. For temperature rises greater than 2°C, labour productivity could drop by 10–15% in some southern European countries (Ciscar et al. 2018). Meta-analysis of the global literature confirms that occupational heat strain has important health and productivity outcomes."



Also: "with 1.5°C global temperature change, about 350 million people worldwide would be exposed to extreme heat stress sufficient to reduce greatly the ability to undertake physical labour for at least the hottest month in the year; this increases to about one billion people with 2.5°C global temperature change ."

And also: Hot and humid indoor environments may result in "mould and higher concentrations of chemical substances. Health risks include respiratory diseases such as allergy, asthma and rhinitis as well as more unspecific symptoms such as eye and respiratory irritation. Asthma and respiratory symptoms have been reported to be 30–50% more common in humid houses."

Calls to improve heat standards for U.S. workers : A report in 2018, ***Extreme Heat and Unprotected Workers*** , stated that heat killed 783 workers in the U.S. and seriously injured nearly 70,000 between 1992 and 2017. The report was published by Public Citizen, a coalition of social justice groups and labour unions. They continue to campaign for a dedicated federal standard regarding heat exposure – most recently with a **letter to the U.S. Department of Labor**

on April 26, 2019 which states: we “call on you to take swift action to protect workers from the growing dangers of climate change and rising temperatures in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has an obligation to prevent future heat-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities by issuing a heat stress standard for outdoor and indoor workers.” The campaign is described in [“Worker advocates burned up over lack of federal heat protections”](#) in *FairWarning* (May 9), with examples of some U.S. fatalities. Notably, the death of a 63-year-old postal worker in her mail truck in Los Angeles in July 2018 resulted in [H.R. 1299, the Peggy Frank Memorial Act](#), which was introduced in the House of Representatives in February 2019 and would require any Postal Service delivery vehicle to include air conditioning within three years. (It has languished in the House Standing Committee on Oversight and Reform since.)

The article also reports that in April, California released a draft standard: [Heat Illness Prevention in Indoor Places of Employment](#) which, if approved, would make California the first U.S. jurisdiction to cover both indoor and outdoor job sites. The proposed standard would require water and rest breaks for workers when indoor temperatures reach 82 F degrees, with additional requirements when temperatures hit 87 F. It is noteworthy that this is a slow process – even in progressive California, which has had heat protection for farm workers on the books since 2006, the Advisory Committee leading this initiative has been meeting since 2017, and the draft standard still under consideration has been revised numerous times .

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [climate change and health](#), [European Union](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Heat Stress](#), [indoor air quality](#), [Occupational Health and Safety](#), [outdoor workers](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Updated: U.S. Labour views on climate strikes and the Green New Deal

Posted on [June 5, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Speakers, listed [here](#), addressed the issues of Just Transition, the Green New Deal, public ownership of energy production, and an appropriate role for labour in climate activism at the New York Labor History Association Annual Spring Conference on May 11, under the banner “Taking the Lead: Labor and Global Warming: Our History, Activism and Challenge”. [“New Calls for a General Strike in the Face of Coming Climate Catastrophe”](#) appeared in the *Labor Press* (May 13) ([re-posted to Portside](#) on May 22) , summarizing some of the discussion, especially the statement by Bruce Hamilton, VP of the Amalgamated Transit Union, that a general strike “should never be taken off the table”. The article notes that “A general strike, however, requires a level of unity around the question of climate change and the Green New Deal that presently does not exist inside organized labor.” On May 30, *Portside* published a lengthy compilation of [“Reader](#)

Responses” , both pro and con, about using a general strike as a tactic. (Note that the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is calling for “a day of global action on climate change” on June 26 as part of their **Climate Proof our Work campaign** , and the Fridays for Future student strike movement has called for a **worldwide general strike** by adults and youth for September 20).

Union differences around the Green New Deal have been noted before in the WCR: in **“Labor’s voice in support of the Green New Deal”** (May 14) , and **“AFL-CIO Energy Committee releases letter opposing the Green New Deal”** (Mar 14). On May 22, **“The Green New Deal is fracturing a critical base for Democrats: unions”** appeared in Vox, providing a broad overview of national and state-level examples.

Service Employees International Union endorses GND: On June 6, the Service Employees International Union issued a **press release** announcing that the International Executive Board had passed a **resolution in support of the Green New Deal** , which states in part: “the Green New Deal supports the right of all workers to have unions, no matter where they work; makes unions central to accomplishing the ambitious goal of an environmentally responsible and economically just society; and commits to providing universal healthcare and a good, union job with family-sustaining wages and benefits for everyone who wants one.” The **Resolution** affirms the goals of the GND, commits to political action, and to cooperation with other advocacy partners in environmental, immigrant, health care, and economic justice movements.

On the issue of transitions, it states:

4. “SEIU stands in solidarity with all in the labor movement who share our desire to create family-sustaining union jobs and a healthy and safe environment. Workers who have built and are dependent upon the fossil fuel industry must have:

- *a. Access to good union jobs, training and advancement if their current jobs cease to exist;*
- *b. Guaranteed pensions and a bridge of wage support and healthcare until impacted workers find comparable employment or reach retirement;*
- *c. Financial support for local community public services during a transition period*

Green New Deal and Labour in California: There is support for the Green New Deal in



California – as evidenced by **“Packed Bay Area Convergence on Climate Plans for Green New Deal”** and other articles in the Green New Deal compilation by the **Labor Network for Sustainability**. Yet **“Labor anger over Green New Deal greets 2020 contenders in California”** appeared in *Politico*, focusing on the opposition to the **Los Angeles Green New Deal** announced on April 29, chiefly by California’s building trades unions. Those unions fear job loss and the costs members may face from higher gas taxes, as well as congestion pricing for tolls on freeways during rush hour. They have differed with environmentalists in the past over environmental justice and pollution regulation at the State level . In **“The Green New Deal- Be-labored?”** in *Resilience* (May 11) and originally in *Civil Notion*, author Joel Stronberg describes the California divide in even greater detail and quotes a professor from Loyola Law School, who assesses that “the Green New Deal...divides the Democrats on a fault line, which is more of the elites against the working class Democrats who are concerned about losing their jobs.” Stronberg also states that the **Association of Flight Attendants is a second union which has endorsed the Green New Deal**, and cites a **recent survey** by Data for Progress between March 30 and April 7, 2019 which measured **union members’ (not leadership) attitudes**. According to Stronberg, it shows 52 percent of current union members approve of the Green New Deal, 22 percent were opposed, 21 percent didn’t know about it, and five percent were neutral.

Canadian unions: In Canada, unions have not yet been as vocal about the Green New Deal – although **“Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s Green New Deal: The Canadian Connection”** in *The Tyee* (June 3) describes the close ties between the U.S. GND and Canadians Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein of The Leap. **Some unions have endorsed** the uniquely-**Canadian Pact for a Green New Deal** – and the **United Steelworkers** have endorsed the New Democratic Party’s newly announced climate change platform – **Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs** .

Posted in **Green Economy, United States** | Tagged **California, climate change and politics, climate strikes, Green New Deal - U.S., Just Transition, labour union policies, Service Employees International Union** | **Leave a reply**

Canada's Green Party and NDP prepare to fight the October election with newly-released Climate Change plans

Posted on **June 3, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

With unprecedented importance of climate change in the upcoming October 2019 election, and the weakness of the governing Liberal party on the issue, the NDP and Green Party are keenly competing for votes, as described in Aaron Wherry's analysis for the CBC, "**With Singh's environment plan, the left-centre climate change bidding war begins**" (June 1) . On May 16, Canada's Green Party released a five-page plan called ***Mission Possible: The Green Climate Action Plan*** , built on the foundation of the Green Party's overall policy **Vision** . On May 31, the leader of the New Democratic Party released ***Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs*** .



Green Party Proposal: The Green Party's ***Mission Possible Plan*** (press release is [here](#)), "incorporates all the requirements for economic justice, just transition, the guarantee of meaningful work, while also respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People." It endorses the ***Pact for a Green New Deal***, and promises to go beyond it, stating: "Canadian Greens applaud their commitment and enthusiasm and wholeheartedly endorse their demands for decisive action on the climate emergency, mainly because we have been describing and promoting this exact thing sometime past forever."

Specifically, *Mission Possible* calls for Step #1 to "Declare a Climate Emergency: Accept, at every level of government, that climate is not an environmental issue. It is the gravest security threat the world has ever seen." The 20 action items in *Mission Possible* include: double the country's 2030 emissions reduction target to 60%; maintain carbon pricing; abolish fracking; green and modernize the east-west electricity grid; complete a national building retrofit; ensure that all new vehicles are

electric by 2030 and address emissions from international shipping, aviation and the military. Without using the term “Just Transition”, the recommended actions reflect a recognition of the need for jobs in the new greener economy, the role of re-skilling, and the need for a gradual transition for workers in the fossil fuel sector. The controversial bit: Although the Greens oppose new fossil fuel projects and fracking in Canada and propose to end all foreign oil imports, the plan supports new pipelines to transport Alberta’s oil. They call for a shift for all Canadian bitumen from fuel to feedstock for the petrochemical industry by 2050, and state that “ pipelines would be needed to transport refined product (gasoline, propane, diesel) instead of diluted bitumen.”

The *National Observer* summary of the plan is [here](#) , and CBC summarizes it in “[Greens call for a doubling of Canada’s carbon emissions reduction target](#)”. CBC also discusses the most controversial elements in “ [Elizabeth May wants to only use Canadian oil — a plan Quebec’s Green Party leader can’t support](#)” .



New Democratic Party: [Power to change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs](#) was released by the NDP on May 31 – a plan which aims to reduce Canada’s emissions to 38 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, achieve net carbon-free electricity by 2030, and create at least 300,000 good jobs. Proposals to reach the targets include: Immediate elimination of fossil fuel subsidies (valued at \$3.3 billion, which would be reinvested in clean strategies); a Low Carbon Industrial Strategy which would, for example, use Buy Canadian procurement; establishment of a new Canadian Climate Bank, capitalized with \$3 billion from the federal government to invest in clean technologies; a Clean Communities Fund to support investments in innovative community-owned and operated clean energy projects; make all new buildings in Canada “net-zero ready” by 2030 and retrofit existing buildings by 2050; continuation of the federal electric vehicle purchase subsidies with \$5,000 federal purchase incentive (rising in time to \$15,000 for made-in-Canada vehicles), plus exemption on the federal sales tax for working families; electrification of Canada’s transit fleets by 2030, and a commitment to work with municipalities towards establishing fare-free transit. Other important proposals: enact an Environmental Bill of Rights guaranteeing clean air, land, and water for Canadians, and tackle pollution with a ban on single-use plastics by 2022, and develop extended producer responsibility legislation to hold companies responsible for the entire lifecycle of their plastics products and packaging. The platform is [summarized](#) in the *Toronto Star* and in the *National Observer* in “[NDP climate plan hinges on electrification, helping workers impacted by climate change](#)”.

The NDP tries to differentiate itself from the Green Party chiefly by its emphasis on jobs and workers, promising to create at least 300,000 good jobs in energy efficiency retrofits, affordable housing, renewable energy, infrastructure, and transit. Specifically, it pledges to make the Employment Insurance system more responsive to the realities of transition by making easier to qualify for EI, and giving workers the option of taking EI-based training before being laid off , and to receive EI if they leave a job to go back to school. The plan further promises to address injustice for Indigenous communities in training opportunities and education, as well as injustice for women, racialized Canadians, Indigenous peoples, and other under-represented groups for apprenticeships. The plan also pledges to create a framework for enshrining Community Benefits

Agreements in federally-funded infrastructure projects. The controversial position for the NDP occurred before the release of *Power to Change*, and is described by *The Energy Mix* in “[Singh discovers new interest in climate, declares against oil and gas fracking in wake of B.C. byelection loss](#)” (May 14) . As a result of the NDP’s position opposing the LNG terminal in Kitimat and the Coastal Gas pipeline project, [some union leaders in B.C.](#) are “not happy with Jagmeet Singh, according to *The Toronto Star* (May 15).

“[NDP Reveals ‘Ambitious’ Climate Change Plan](#)” in *Vice* (May 31) quotes positive reaction from spokespersons from Environmental Defence and 350.org , but includes the criticism of the Liberal Minister of Environment and Climate Change: “The NDP would do almost as much harm to the economy as the Conservatives want to do to the planet,” ... “The NDP want to do some of the things we are already doing to fight climate change, but their approach would threaten jobs and hurt workers.” Similarly, the *Toronto Star* published “[NDP’s \\$15-billion climate plan greeted with mixed reviews](#)” , which gives voice to the criticisms of the Green Party and Liberal political leaders , as well as Chris Ragan of the Ecofiscal Commission. From the *Globe and Mail*, “[NDP Climate Policy is serious but not radical](#)“.

In contrast, the United Steelworkers issued a [press release](#) calling the NDP plan “the most comprehensive environmental platform of any of the parties”... “This climate plan is worker-oriented and jobs-centred. ... this plan specifically mentions working with labour and refers to the recommendations of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate change and politics](#), [climate change policies](#), [Green Party](#), [New Democratic Party \(NDP\)](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Deep decarbonization is possible: Suzuki Foundation presents a litmus test for climate change policies in Canada’s 2019 election

Posted on [June 3, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



If, as a new article in *The Conversation* argues, “**To really engage people, the media should talk about solutions**” (May 30) , then the report published by the David Suzuki Foundation on May 29 is right on target. ***Zeroing in on Emissions: Charting Canada’s Clean Power Pathways*** argues: “Responding to the urgency of climate change can feel overwhelming, but our research confirms we have the solutions and strategies needed to drive national actions and innovations to meet our climate commitments.” It is important to note that the commitment under consideration is reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent or more by 2050, and the study focuses only on energy policy, not all sectors of the economy.

The report examines academic, government and business models and studies related to deep decarbonization for Canada, with special reference to the **Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project** , the **Trottier Energy Futures Project** and the **Perspectives Énergétiques Canadiennes** . The full list of referenced publications takes up 15 pages of the report. Based on this review of expert research, recommendations are presented, in ten essential policy priorities: 1. Accelerate clean power 2. Do more with less energy 3. Electrify just about everything 4. Free industry from emissions 5. Switch to renewable fuels 6. Mobilize money 7. Level the playing field 8. Reimagine our communities 9. Focus on what really matters and # 10. Bring everyone along, which opens with a quote from Canada’s 2018 **Task Force on Just Transition Report**. The section states: “If well-managed, the clean-energy transition can be a strong driver of job creation, job upgrading, good jobs and reducing inequality. Conversely, a poorly managed transition risks causing unnecessary economic hardship and undermining public support for needed emission-reduction policies. Transition should be seen as part of a broader green economic development strategy that supports community economic development and diversification.” The discussion includes the issues of justice and equality, and Indigenous rights.

According to the **press release**, this report is meant to influence the discourse in the upcoming election: “These 10 strategies are a litmus test that all climate plans during the 2019 federal election should be held accountable to.... “Actions such as pricing and limiting carbon pollution, prioritizing electrification with clean energy sources and accelerating industry investment in zero carbon solutions must be part of any credible climate plan in 2019.” In addition, it lays the

foundation for a three-year project called **Clean Power Pathways**, “to transition Canada’s energy system at a scope, scale and speed in line with the scientific consensus to avoid climate breakdown.” The report has grown out of collaborative research sponsored by the **Trottier Family Foundation**, which remains involved in the upcoming Clean Power Pathways research.

Zeroing in on Emissions: Charting Canada’s Clean Power Pathways is accompanied by a 4-page **Executive Summary** and was also summarized by *The Energy Mix* [here](#) (June 2).

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Clean Energy**, **Climate change policy**, **Decarbonization**, **Energy policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

International clean energy experts discuss investment levels, zero emissions vehicles, building emissions, gender equality in Vancouver meetings

Posted on **May 31, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



In the week of May 27, representatives from global government, industry, and NGO’s met as Canada hosted the **10th Clean Energy Ministerial** in Vancouver. Several announcements were made against that backdrop:

Investment support for clean energy: The federal government **announced** it will contribute up to \$30 million to Breakthrough Energy Solutions Canada (BESC), a public-private initiative to support “cutting-edge companies to deliver game-changing clean energy innovations to the market.” This **Canadian program** will be administered by Natural Resources Canada – in collaboration with **Breakthrough Energy Ventures**, a \$1 billion investment fund launched in 2016 by billionaires such as Bill Gates and Michael Bloomberg. The **Canadian press release** quotes Gates: “ We are hopeful that this Breakthrough Energy partnership with Canada will be a model for developing more collaborations...” A summary appears in “**Canada launches homegrown version of Bill Gates-led clean energy fund**” in the *National Observer* (May 27).

The *National Observer* hosted a panel discussion on clean energy investment on May 28. The panel included the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank, the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources, and Céline Bak, president of Analytica Advisors and author of the 2019 report, ***Leveraging Sustainable Finance Leadership in Canada***. A summary and video of the panel's discussion is [here](#). The discussion revealed that, unbeknownst to Canada, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank have also reached agreement with Breakthrough Energy Ventures on a new €100 million fund to support clean energy investments – ***described in a May 29 press release***.

Clean energy investment trends are worrying, as reported by the International Energy Agency in ***World Energy Investment 2019*** (May 14) : “Global energy investment stabilised in 2018, ending three consecutive years of decline, as capital spending on oil, gas and coal supply bounced back while investment stalled for energy efficiency and renewables.” In May, BankTrack and others published ***Fool's Gold – the Financial Institutions Bankrolling Europe's Most Coal-dependent Utilities***, naming the financial institutions behind almost €16 billion in support to the coal industry since the Paris Agreement was signed in December 2015.



Zero emissions vehicles: The International Energy Agency released the 2019 edition of one of their flagship publications, ***Global EV Outlook***, which provides historical analysis, projections to 2030, and insights on electric vehicle and charging infrastructure deployment, ownership cost, energy use, carbon dioxide emissions and battery material demand. As part of the discussions on electrification of transportation at the CEM10, Canada became the first national government to endorse the ***Global Commercial Vehicle Drive to Zero (Drive to Zero)*** campaign, with British Columbia and the City of Vancouver also signing on. A ***press release*** explains “Drive to Zero is a strategic international initiative designed to catalyze the growth of the zero-emission (ZE) and near-zero-emission (NZ) medium- and heavy-duty vehicle sector (MHDV), which includes everything from transit buses to eighteen wheelers to box trucks to school buses. Pledge partners promise to collaboratively put in place supporting mechanisms to speed the early market for these vehicles and equipment.” Drive to Zero is a program of ***CALSTART***, a nonprofit consortium with offices in New York, Michigan, Colorado and California, and international partners which include Clean Energy Canada. As Canada's Minister of Natural Resources stated in the ***press release***, this is in line with Canadian priorities: the ***Final Report of the Advisory Council on Climate Action*** (May 28) recommends policies concerning zero-emissions vehicles, including “The Government of Canada, working with partners and stakeholders, should develop an integrated strategy to reduce emissions across modes of transportation, including actions to support modal shifts.” Related: on May 2, the Pembina Institute published ***Fuel Savings and Emissions Reductions in Heavy-Duty Trucking : A blueprint for further action in Canada***.

Gender Equality in Clean Tech: Over 100 organizations have now signed onto the [Equal by 30 initiative](#), an international campaign begun in 2018. It “ encourages companies and government to adopt gender-equal principles, advance the participation of women in the clean energy transition and take concrete actions to support women in the sector.” A summary of the Gender Diversity participants and events is [here](#) .

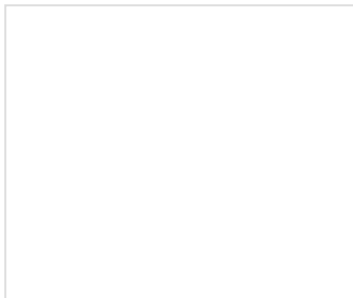
Hydrogen as a source of clean energy: A new “[Hydrogen Initiative](#)” was announced under the leadership of Canada, the United States, Japan, the Netherlands and the European Commission, with the International Energy Agency as co-ordinating body. The initiative is intended to drive international collaboration on policies, programs and projects to accelerate the commercial deployment of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies across all sectors of the economy, especially industrial and transportation applications.

Building efficiency: *[Heating and cooling strategies in the clean energy transition: Outlooks and lessons from Canada’s provinces and territories](#)* is a report released at the Clean Energy Ministerial meetings on May 27. It is the result of collaborative research between the International Energy Agency and the National Energy Board of Canada. Using Canadian provincial data, it examines energy demand patterns and energy policies regarding heating and cooling services in buildings, urging policies to move from natural gas to existing, cleaner technologies. The *National Observer* summarizes the report in “[Cutting fossil fuels could save Canadians \\$24 billion a year by 2050](#)” .

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Clean energy industry](#), [Clean Energy Investment](#), [Clean Technology](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Gender Equality](#), [Green Building](#), [Trucking Industry](#), [zero emissions vehicles](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New Alberta government all-in for oil and gas, beginning with repeal of carbon tax

Posted on **May 30, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The new UCP government of Alberta, led by Premier Jason Kenney, kicked off its legislative session agenda on May 22 with a **Throne Speech** promising to “show the world that Alberta is open for business by restoring investor confidence and re-establishing the province as a job-creating investment magnet.” That “open for business” approach, applied to the oil and gas sector, includes some ominous statements : ...”Protect and maximize the value of Alberta’s resources – including using, as necessary, the **Preserving Canada’s Economic Prosperity Act**” (Rachel Notley’s law which gives Alberta the right to restrict oil and gas exports to British Columbia).... “Challenge those who misrepresent our industry and launch a public inquiry into campaigns to landlock Alberta’s energy”...and “Make life more affordable for Albertans by repealing the carbon tax and focusing climate change action on large emitters.” More positively, “Be transparent and honest about how Alberta produces energy to the highest environmental, labour and human rights standards on earth””Take action on climate change by introducing the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Fund through regulation targeting large emitters.” Columnist Chris Varcoe provides one Alberta viewpoint in “**Throne speech ‘roadmap’ to revive oilpatch hinges on pipelines**” in the *Edmonton Journal* (May 23) .

The first legislation to be introduced, on May 22, was Bill 1, **An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax** . The government **press release** claims that “Scrapping the carbon tax will free up nearly \$1.4 billion of tax burden, create 6,000 jobs, save the average small business \$4,500 annually and save Alberta families up to \$1,150 a year.” Even before the Bill was passed in the legislature, the Kenney government **ended collection of the tax**, on May 30. In a press release titled “**Albertans lose more than they gain with carbon tax repeal**”, the Pembina Institute disagrees: “With the tabling of Bill 1 to repeal the Climate Leadership Act, the Alberta government is cutting existing jobs, stunting innovation, removing financial benefits for small- and medium-size businesses, families and communities, and is allowing greenhouse gas emissions to continue to increase. The government has yet to produce a plan that will make up for these losses and build on previous progress.” The National Observer summary is **here** . And of course, there is also the issue that, by repealing Alberta’s own carbon tax, the government has made **the province subject to the federal backstop carbon levy**.

Without the revenue stream of the carbon tax, energy efficiency programs initiated by the NDP government are in jeopardy. On May 24, the *Calgary Herald* reported “**UCP steps back from scrapping NDP’s Energy Efficiency Alberta; will look at programs ‘with an open mind’**” .

Although Jason Kenney derides the **Energy Efficiency Alberta** programs as “subsidizing showerheads and lightbulbs”, in fact, the agency supports major economic programs, including those encouraging the growth of Alberta’s solar industry. Efficiency Canada **documents the benefits for Alberta** and points out that Alberta would be the only jurisdiction in North America not to have an energy efficiency program if it is scrapped .

On May 23, the Alberta legislature gave unanimous **approval of a motion** condemning federal bills C-69 , **An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act**, and C-48, the **Oil Tanker Moratorium Act** . The Alberta government claims that the legislation “poses a very real threat to hundreds of thousands of jobs in Alberta and across Canada, and the \$16 trillion in economic potential within Alberta’s oilsands that could be lost if they proceed.” After the Senate Committee tabled its controversial amendments to C-69, the Alberta

party leaders sent a joint letter to Prime Minister Trudeau on May 28, stating: “While we remain concerned about the overall spirit of Bill C-69, we believe that with the inclusion of all these amendments, that the bill would be acceptable to the interests of Albertans” . The letter is summarized by Energy Mix in “[Alberta Party Leaders Unanimously Back C-69 Amendments from Unelected Senate Committee](#)”. The [marked-up version of Bill-69](#) with the Senate Committee amendments is dismaying to environmentalists; a 2018 analysis of the original Bill-69 by Environmental Defence is [here](#) . (The complicated issue of the unelected Senate's hearings and recommendations regarding Bill C-69 will be the subject of a future WCR report.)

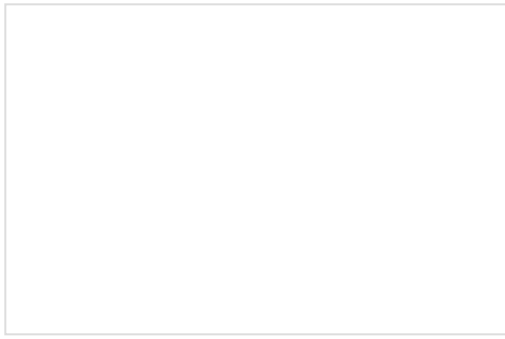
Other new Alberta legislation in the “Open for Business” agenda: On May 27, [Bill 2, the Open for Business Act](#), promises to “reduce unfair burdens on businesses and give workers more rights in unionized workplaces. Recent changes to employment rules, such as requiring employers to provide holiday pay even if they are not open that day, created an unfair cost burden on job creators.” The [Alberta Federation of Labour](#) reacted, as did The Parkland Institute in a blog: “[Bill 2 grinds wages, complicates payroll, and impedes union drives](#)” . On May 28, [Bill 3: the Job Creation Tax Cut \(Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment\) Act](#) was introduced, promising to lower the corporate tax rate from 12% to 8% over the next 4 years. The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees calls the tax cuts “corporate welfare” in [Bill 3 Is UCP's Second Gift In As Many Days To Wealthy Corporations](#). And on May 29, [Bill 4, The Red Tape Reduction Act](#) was introduced.

None of these Bills have been passed or enacted as of May 30, although Premier Kenney announced that Albertans were “liberated” from the carbon tax as of May 30, according to a [CBC report](#) , and retailers were forbidden from collecting it.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [Bill C-69](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Energy policy](#), [Environmental Assessment](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Proposals to “Electrify Quebec” will bring cleaner transportation; Montreal proposes standards for heating buildings

Posted on [May 28, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



On May 26, at the party conference of the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ), Premier Francois Legault announced intentions to “electrify Quebec”, reduce oil consumption by 40 per cent by 2030, and reduce the province’s greenhouse gas emissions by 37.5 per cent by 2030. According to [a report from iPolitics](#), Legault stated “The greatest contribution Quebec can make to save the planet is by helping our neighbours replace their coal-fired, gas fired generators with clean hydroelectricity,” and he is working to increase hydro-electric exports to New York State. Regarding electrification of transportation, he proposed to extend Montreal’s electrified light rail network already under construction to the off-island suburbs; to complete a proposed extension of the Montreal’s subway; new tramways for Montreal and Quebec City; a commuter train link in Gatineau; and greater use of electric buses. He noted that two Quebec companies, Bombardier and Alstom, have the capacity to supply the rolling stock for new rail cars and electric buses. He also announced that Quebec’s electric vehicle subsidies will continue, benefitting rural Quebecers without access to transit options. Although plans are far from specific, Legault promised to finance his green plans from the proceeds from Quebec’s Green Fund, with the revenues from its cap and trade auctions.

In response to the recent proposal for an “energy corridor” from Alberta’s new Premier Jason Kenney to bring western crude oil across Canada, Legault stated “There is no social acceptability for an oil pipeline in Quebec.”

Montreal announces 2030 targets to phase out oil heating in buildings: The city of Montreal is one of hundreds of Canadian municipalities which has [declared a climate emergency](#) – and has been under [flood emergency warnings throughout May](#). On May 6, in a [press release](#), Montreal Mayor Valerie Plante announced that the city is developing a plan to reach carbon neutrality for all municipal buildings by 2030, for all new buildings by 2030, as well as for all existing buildings, by 2050, and have earmarked \$4 million by 2021 for the effort. A [CBC report](#) states that environmentalists are disappointed at the slow pace and weak level of ambition, and one of the key city councillors resigned, calling for stronger “war measures” against climate change, including a tax on meat, no airport expansion, and planting a half-million trees. The tree-planting proposal seems particularly urgent, given the heat wave deaths in Montreal in 2018 – 42 officially attributed to heat [by Quebec’s chief coroner](#), but with that number still under investigation, and the possibility of a public inquiry. [“Life and Death under the Dome”](#) (May 23) in the *Toronto Star* quotes Montreal Public Health official estimates of 66 heat-related deaths that summer. It also explains what the city’s public health officials have done to analyse the causes and

patterns – identifying vulnerable populations and areas – and calling for a greening of the city on a massive scale, including trees, roofs and architecture .

Update: On May 22, the Government of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities **announced** an investment of \$2,777,960 in four green infrastructure projects in the Greater Montreal Area, including Laval. Most of the investment will go to infrastructure and re-naturalization through tree planting, to mitigate the heat island effect and flooding in the city.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Extreme Weather Events](#), [Flooding](#), [heat waves](#), [Montreal](#), [Municipal Government](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Quebec](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Are the media getting the message?

Mainstream media begin to cover the climate emergency – updated

Posted on **May 27, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Re-written on May 28 to include an article appearing in *The Tyee*: “[Dear Journalists of Canada: Start Reporting Climate Change as an Emergency](#)” .

The traditional media have been criticized for their indifference to the climate change issue – recently, in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, “[The media are complacent while the world burns](#)”, and in *The Tyee*, “[Dear Journalists of Canada: Start Reporting Climate Change as an Emergency](#)”.

Both article refer to a [Media Matters report](#) that only 22 of the 50 largest newspapers in the U.S. even bothered to cover the landmark IPCC Report in October 2018. The article in *The Tyee* is presented as an open letter to media owners and journalists, and reports the author’s own search of [Canadian Newsstream](#) — a database which covers 569 different English language news sources – mostly newspapers, as well as national evening news broadcasts by CBC and CTV television. Giving examples, he identifies problems of lack of climate change coverage, failure to provide local context about international stories, and failure to seek accountability in story coverage. Finally, he calls upon Canadian journalists “to do these five things: properly *place*, *cover*, *contextualize*, and *localize* the biggest story of our time, and *hold public and private institutions to account* for their actions and inactions on climate change.”

Improvements are on the way: *The Guardian* newspaper in the U.K. has been called “one of the best-respected and most widely used international sources of information on the crises of the climate and the natural world” [by Climate Home News](#). In April 2019, *The Guardian* became the first newspaper to [publish global carbon dioxide levels](#) on its daily weather pages, and on May

17, it **announced** that it has updated its **internal Style Guide** to better reflect the reality and depth of the climate emergency. Now, instead of using the term “climate change” in its reports, the preferred terms will be “climate emergency, crisis or breakdown”. Other changes: “global heating” rather than “global warming” and “climate science denier” rather than “climate sceptic”. In its explanation, Editor-in-chief, Katharine Viner is quoted as saying: “The phrase ‘climate change’, for example, sounds rather passive and gentle when what scientists are talking about is a catastrophe for humanity.”

In a **follow-up report by *The Guardian***, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is cited as the furthest along amongst traditional news outlets (including the New York Times and Washington Post) in adopting *The Guardian’s* language: “Senior CBC management told staff they were able to use the terms “climate crisis” and “climate emergency” when covering the wide-ranging impacts of temperature rises around the world.” On CBC Radio, the host of Metro Morning interviewed a spokesperson from *The Guardian* on this issue **here** (9:34 minutes audio). Although the CBC guidance is permissive rather than prescriptive, it hardly seems possible to avoid the term “climate emergency”, when the parliaments of both the federal and the Ontario government formally **debated declaring a “climate emergency”** in May, and **municipalities across the country** have already done so (over 300 municipalities in Quebec alone).

Most recently, the *Toronto Star* began a new newsletter series in May, **Undeniable: Canada’s Changing Climate**. So far, topics have included: “**Toronto’s Ninja Storm**” (re the 2018 flooding) (May 21); “**Life and Death Under the Dome**” (when 66 Montrealers died in a heat wave) (May 23); and “**Open for Business**” (May 27) (re mining in Ontario’s North). Much more to come from *The Star*, which has previously collaborated with the *National Observer*, Global News, the Michener Awards Foundation, the Corporate Mapping Project and four journalism schools on a special investigative series, **The Price of Oil**, regarding the impacts of the oil and gas industry on Canadian communities.

Finally, the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *The Nation* announced a new international initiative in late April, the **Covering Climate Now project**, which aims to improve the media’s coverage of “the most urgent story of our time”. The project “will provide substantial resource guides for journalists, tutorials, source lists, and web briefings; we’ll gather the best of climate coverage in an online blog, and provide commentary on how other reporters can replicate it; and we will increase our own reporting on how news outlets are covering the climate crisis, highlighting what is working and calling out what isn’t.” The first big goal: to organize a week of concentrated climate coverage beginning September 16, in the lead-up to the UN climate Summit in New York City on September 23. They’ll have lots to cover, now that 350.org is also organizing a **one-day global strike** for September 20.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Climate change in the Media**, **climate emergency** | **Leave a reply**

Are there lessons for Newfoundland in a Just Transition strategy for the U.K. Offshore oil industry?

Posted on May 23, 2019 by elizabethperry493

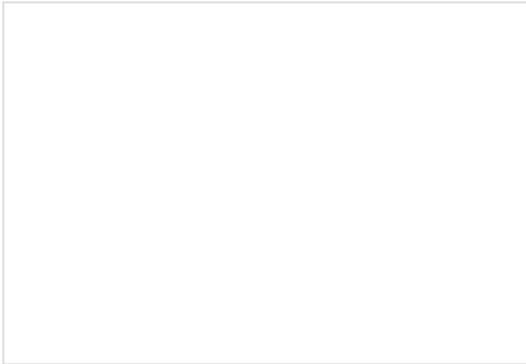


Sea Change: Climate Emergency, Jobs and Managing the Phase-Out of UK Oil and Gas Extraction was released on May 15 by Oil Change International, in partnership with Platform and Friends of the Earth Scotland. The press release summary is [here](#) . The report examines the offshore oil and gas industry in the U.K., with special attention to the transition for workers and communities currently dependent on oil – making it highly relevant to Canadians, especially Newfoundlanders. ***Sea Change*** argues that with the right transition policies, clean industries could create more than three jobs for every North Sea oil job at risk, which can enable an “equivalent job guarantee” for every oil worker.

The report contrasts two pathways available for the U.K. and Scotland to stay within Paris climate limits: 1. Deferred collapse, in which the countries “continue to pursue maximum extraction by subsidising companies and encouraging them to shed workers, until worsening climate impacts force rapid action to cut emissions globally; the UK oil industry collapses, pushing many workers out of work in a short space of time.” Or 2. Managed transition: in which countries “stop approving and licensing new oil and gas projects, begin a phase-out of extraction and a Just Transition for workers and communities, negotiated with trade unions and local leaders, and in line with climate change goals, while building quality jobs in a clean energy economy.”

To achieve the clearly superior “managed transition” pathway, the report recommends that the U.K. and Scottish Governments:

- Stop issuing licenses and permits for new oil and gas exploration and development, and revoke undeveloped licenses;
- Rapidly phase out all subsidies for oil and gas extraction, including tax breaks, and redirect them to fund a Just Transition;
- Enable rapid building of the clean energy industry through fiscal and policy support to at least the extent they have provided to the oil industry, including inward investment in affected regions and communities;
- Open formal consultations with trade unions to develop and implement a Just Transition strategy for oil-dependent regions and communities.



Offshore Oil and Gas in Newfoundland: In Newfoundland, the importance of the offshore oil industry is evidenced by the fact that a snap election was called shortly after the province reached agreement with the federal government on royalty payments on April 1. The two governments **announced agreement** on a “renewed Atlantic Accord” – including the “Hibernia Dividend Backed Annuity”, valued at \$2.5 billion for the province, according to **a CBC report**. This is new money that comes from Ottawa’s 8.5 per cent stake in the **Hibernia offshore** project, and will be paid out in annual installments over 38 years. According to the **Q1 2019 Company Benefits Report**, Hibernia operations employ 1,458 workers, of which 90.8% are Newfoundlanders.

The federal and provincial governments are also closely intertwined in a new consultation process which was launched for the **Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador** in April, along with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board. The provincial Minister is quoted in the **federal press release**: “Our government is committed to working collaboratively with our federal partners to ensure responsible development of our oil and gas industry. The Regional Assessment is an important step towards exempting routine, low impact activities, such as exploration wells, where potential impacts and standard mitigations are well known, from federal assessment. This is another step we are taking to achieve the vision we set out in Advance 2030 to benefit all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.”

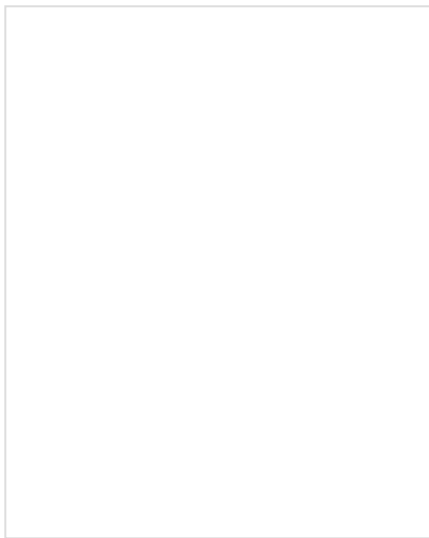
The **Advance 2030** document, released in 2018, is subtitled: *A Plan for growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil and Gas Industry*, and is based on the government’s commitment “to resource development as a key economic driver and to positioning the industry for continued growth.” In **releasing the Advance 2030 report**, the government announced some long-term targets, including the direct employment of at least 7,500 people in operations, drilling of over 100

new exploration wells by 2030, and doubling oil production by 2030. That same Liberal government was returned to power as a minority government on May 16, and compiles news of oil and gas development [here](#) .

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Environmental Assessment](#), [Newfoundland](#), [North Sea](#), [offshore oil and gas industry](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Scotland](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [1 Reply](#)

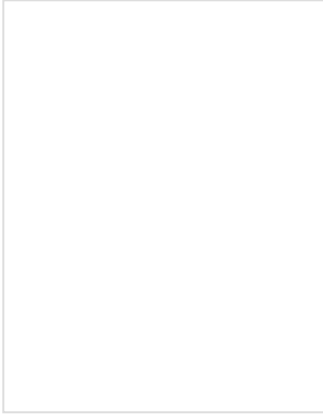
298,000 workers in Canada's clean energy sector in 2017 according to new Navius report

Posted on **May 23, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Released on May 23, ***Missing the Bigger Picture: Tracking the Energy Revolution 2019*** summarizes research commissioned by Clean Energy Canada and conducted by Navius Research. The report emphasizes the healthy growth of Canada's clean energy sector – which employed 298,000 people in 2017, representing 2% of Canadian employment. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of clean energy jobs grew by 2.2% a year, economic value grew by 4.8% per year (compared to 3.6% for the economy as a whole), and investment in the sector went up by 70%. The 15-page report calls the clean energy sector “the mountain in our midst”, emphasizing that it includes many industries, all provinces, and defining it broadly as “companies and jobs that help to reduce carbon pollution— whether by creating clean energy, helping move it, reducing energy consumption, or making low-carbon technologies.” The findings report includes “sector spotlights” for: electric vehicles, batteries and energy storage, wind power, and building control and HVAC systems.

The accompanying, 118-page report by Navius Consulting explains the methodology and presents the details of employment, economic value, and investment. [***Quantifying Canada's Clean Energy Economy: An assessment of clean energy investment, value added and jobs***](#) ranks "Clean transport" as the largest employer, with 171,000 jobs in 2017 – 111,000 of those in transit. Jobs in renewable and alternative energy supply grew from 54,000 to 60,000 between 2010 and 2017. The report also states that the clean buildings sector employed only 19,000 people in 2017, mostly in green architecture and construction services.



Definitions are clearly important to this issue. The [**Navius technical report**](#) provides details about its definitions and methodology, including the use of the gTech energy economy model. This will no doubt be required reading in order to compare these findings with those of [***Energy Efficiency Employment in Canada***](#), the April report from Eco Canada, which estimated that Canada's energy efficiency goods and services sector directly employed an estimated 436,000 permanent workers in 2018 (summarized by [**WCR here**](#)).

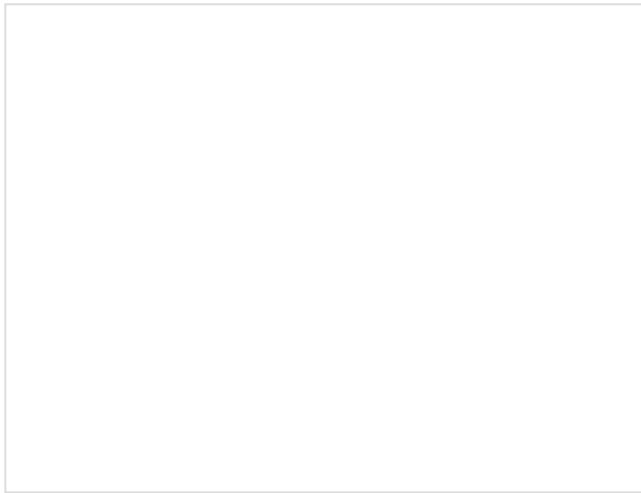
Posted in [**Green Economy**](#) | Tagged [**Clean Energy**](#), [**economic modelling**](#), [**Green Building**](#), [**Green Economy**](#), [**Green Jobs**](#), [**Transit**](#) | [**Leave a reply**](#)

Amazon Employees for Climate Justice vow to persist despite defeat of their resolution and snub by Jeff Bezos

Posted on [**May 23, 2019**](#) by [**elizabethperry493**](#)

In the end, approximately 7,700 Amazon employees publicly signed their names to an **employee-shareholder resolution calling for stronger climate change action** by the company, as well as worker protection in situations related to extreme weather disasters. The entire Board opposed the resolution (and all other shareholder resolutions presented at the meeting), despite the strong employee support and the endorsement by two of the largest proxy advisory firms in the U.S., which cited the financial and reputational risks from being heavily dependent on cheap fossil fuels.

“Amazon and CEO Jeff Bezos challenged on climate change. Here’s how shareholders voted on it and other issues” in the *Seattle Times* is full, business-like news account of the meeting, including that Amazon intends to release its carbon footprint later in 2019, and that it intends to meet the net zero carbon emissions goals of the **Shipment Zero initiative** largely through direct emission cuts, not through buying carbon offsets. However, according to **“Jeff Bezos Wouldn’t Even Come On Stage to Listen to His Employees Who Want Amazon to Address Climate Change”** in Gizmodo, Bezos and other executives dodged most climate-related questions in the Q&A at the end of the meeting.



The group leading the climate resolution, **Amazon Employees for Climate Justice**, issued their own **press release** about the meeting, which states: “Because the Board still does not understand the severity of the climate crisis, we will file this resolution again next year. And we will announce other actions in the coming months. We – Amazon’s employees – have the talent and experience to remake entire industries with incredible speed. This is work we want to do.” Follow further developments at the Amazon Employees for Climate Justice **Twitter feed** .

Tellingly, Jeff Bezos declined the direct invitation of one of the leaders to join her on stage as **she introduced the resolution**, a fact which has been widely reported, not only **by Gizmodo** , but also in **“World’s Richest Man Jeff Bezos Hides Backstage as Amazon Workers Demand ‘Bold, Rapid’ Climate Action”** in *Common Dreams* and even in **“Jeff Bezos blew off Amazon employees’ proposal at the shareholder’s meeting and they were miffed: ‘This is not the kind of leadership we need’”** in *Business Insider*.

Other, briefer reports of the meeting appeared in ***The Guardian*** , ***Los Angeles Times*** and in ***Vox*** .

Labor's voice in support of the Green New Deal

Posted on **May 14, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

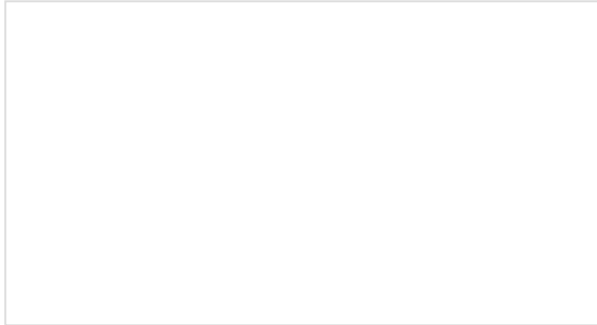
Joe Uehlein of [Labor Network for Sustainability \(LNS\)](#) was interviewed by Counterspin Radio on May 3 concerning his views on the Green New Deal; a transcript was published by FAIR on May 8 as [“Climate Change is the Real Job Killer”](#). Uehlein and colleague Jeremy Brecher have written numerous articles on this theme – including [“12 reasons why labor should support a Green New Deal”](#), which appeared in *Working In These Times* in 2018. LNS monitors the situation and posts new GND endorsements by U.S. labour unions in a dedicated [“Green New Deal”](#) section of its website, building a compilation of documents. Labor Network for Sustainability co-hosted a [Labor Convergence on Climate](#) on April 13, along with the Alameda Labor Council in California; the next Labor Convergence will take place in Chicago at the end June, with the theme *Strengthening Labor's Voice to Help Shape the Green New Deal*. Details are [here](#).

For those interested in the issue of how the Green New Deal is being communicated in mainstream media, [“Establishment Media and the Green New Deal: New Wine in Old Bottles”](#) appeared on May 1 in FAIR. The article tracks mainstream U.S. newspaper and network coverage of the announcement by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ed Markey on February 7 (and 8th), and a subsequent snapshot of coverage two weeks later. It documents the chronology with sample headlines and quotes, with some analysis. While none of it is surprising, taken together it condenses the tone and atmosphere of the GND launch. The conclusion: “To meet that level of public concern, the mainstream media should be covering how to leverage climate action quickly and broadly enough to make a dent in the crisis, as well as probing how and if solutions can also bring a clean and just energy economy into existence.”

One might also add that mainstream media should be seeking out the voices outside of political and academic circles – such as Joe Uehlein's and those of other labour leaders. One such article, [“Labor Unions are skeptical of the Green New Deal, and they want activists to hear them out”](#) appeared in *The Intercept* in February, and describes the complex conflict within the labour movement – a topic also addressed by Naomi Klein in [“The Battle lines have been drawn on the Green New Deal”](#), which appeared in *The Intercept* (Feb. 13).

U.K. Parliament declares climate emergency; Government committee calls for Net Zero Emissions by 2050

Posted on **May 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The government of the United Kingdom became the **first national government to declare an environment and climate emergency** on May 1 when it passed a motion by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn (and **Ireland followed suit** with its own vote in Parliament on May 10) . Many agree with the headline from *Common Dreams*, “**Activism works: UK Parliament makes history in declaring climate emergency**”, reflecting on the huge impact made by the April demonstrations of the School Strikes and **Extinction Rebellion** in the U.K.



On the heels of the symbolic victory of the climate emergency declaration, on May 2 the U.K. government’s **Committee on Climate Change delivered its long-awaited landmark report**, requested by the U.K., Scottish and Welsh Governments in 2018. **Net Zero: the U.K.’s contribution to stopping Global Warming** calls for net zero emissions by 2050, with Scotland to target net-zero by 2045 and Wales to target a 95 per cent reduction by 2050 relative to 1990. The

net-zero target would cover all greenhouse gases, including international aviation and shipping, and allow for the use of emissions credits. The Committee estimates the cost at equivalent to 1-2% of GDP each year, made possible by the rapidly falling cost of new technologies – and balanced by the benefits of a cleaner environment and improved health. In calling for more ambitious targets than the existing one of 80% emissions cut by 2050 (set out in the 2008 *Climate Change Act*), the Committee states that “Current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets”, and calls for “clear, stable and well-designed policies to reduce emissions ... across the economy without delay”.

Links to the research reports supporting the Committee’s report are [here](#) . *The Guardian* released a brief overview in “**‘This report will change your life’: what zero emissions means for UK** . More substantial reactions come from: Carbon Brief, with a [detailed summary](#); and from The Grantham Institute “**What is Net Zero?**” , and a political wish list in “**Urgent response needed from U.K. government on Net Zero Emissions**” .

The [Greener Jobs Alliance](#) , a coalition of U.K. unionists and environmentalists, also summarizes what the new report may mean, acknowledging that “The 2050 target date for zero emissions will disappoint many demonstrating across the UK.”, but focusing especially on the breakthrough of the Committee’s call for Just Transition. The GJA states: “It should now reinforce this message by setting up a Just Transition Advisory Group, with union representation from the industrial, energy, public and voluntary sectors....” and “...the absence of a strategic advisory role for unions in the work of the committee is no longer tenable.”

Below is the GJA overview of what the Net Zero report will mean for workers, as published in their [news release](#):

- Up to one in five jobs across the UK will be affected by a Zero Carbon Britain strategy.
- Major moves away from fossil fuels – with job losses across oil and gas extraction, power and heating industries, as well as job losses in supply chains for these sectors.
- Some gas fired power stations could be needed, but they will need to run using hydrogen or Carbon Capture & Storage. All coal-fired stations close.
- Huge job growth is expected in sectors like renewables, electric vehicles, home insulation and domestic heating.
- Employment in offshore wind, for example, is predicted to quadruple to 27,000 jobs by 2030. The big prize comes when all three main parts of a wind turbine – the tower, the cell at the top and the blades – are made in the UK. The UK is currently a big importer of renewable technology. The UK has to develop full supply chains across the renewable energy sector.
- By 2025 at the latest all new cars and vans should be electric, or use a low- carbon alternative such as hydrogen. The automotive industry must transition to electric vehicles, with major implications for jobs, skills and investment.
- No new homes should be connected to the gas grid after 2025.
- Retrofitting homes with energy efficiency measures and installing low-carbon heat into new and existing homes will require new skills. This programme could generate many more high-skilled jobs in the installation and construction industries.

FTQ shareholder resolution calls for GHG targets aligned with the Paris Agreement; corporations respond with a charge of “micromanagement”

Posted on **May 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As part of its stated [Action Plan for Engaging in a Just Energy Transition](#), the [Fonds de Solidarité des Travailleurs du Québec](#) (FTQ) (an investment fund controlled by Quebec trade unions) put forward the following shareholder’s resolution at the Cenovus Energy Annual Meeting in Calgary in April. (The [text of the resolution](#) appears on page 51, as Appendix A in the company’s Information Circular):

Resolved: That Cenovus Energy Inc. (“Cenovus”) set and publish science-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets that are aligned with the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit global average temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels. These targets should cover the direct and indirect methane and other GHG emissions of Cenovus’ operations over medium and long-term time horizons. Such targets should be quantitative, subject to regular review, and progress against such targets should be reported to shareholders on an annual basis.

The Board’s written response and recommendation states “.....Cenovus has always and will continue to assess our approach to climate change risk management with a view to maximizing shareholder value. Achieving the level of commitment contemplated by the Paris Agreement requires an integrated plan at a national and global level, with policies to guide the actions of governments, individuals and corporations to collectively work together toward the desired outcome. Our view is that it is an overly demanding request, and contrary to the best interests of shareholder value, to require an individual company to unilaterally set targets.... As such, we recommend voting against the proposal.” And sure enough, as expected, the FTQ proposal was defeated by an 89% vote against. The news is summarized and in [The Energy Mix](#) and by the [CBC](#).

The Fonds de Solidarité des Travailleurs du Québec (FTQ), along with the Canadian shareholders’ non-profit SHARE, was also part of the recent resolution to Exxon. That resolution, filed in the U.S. by a group of investors led by the New York State Common Retirement Fund and the Church Commissioners for England, proposed that the company develop “short-, medium- and long-term greenhouse gas targets aligned with the goals established by the Paris Climate

Agreement to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C.” In response, ExxonMobil applied for and received permission from the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), allowing it to exclude the resolution from its Proxy Circular. In retaliation, SHARE states in a blog, [Why we’ll vote against Exxon’s entire board of directors](#), that it is “recommending to our proxy voting clients that they withhold their support for all Exxon directors at the upcoming annual general meeting on May 29th.”

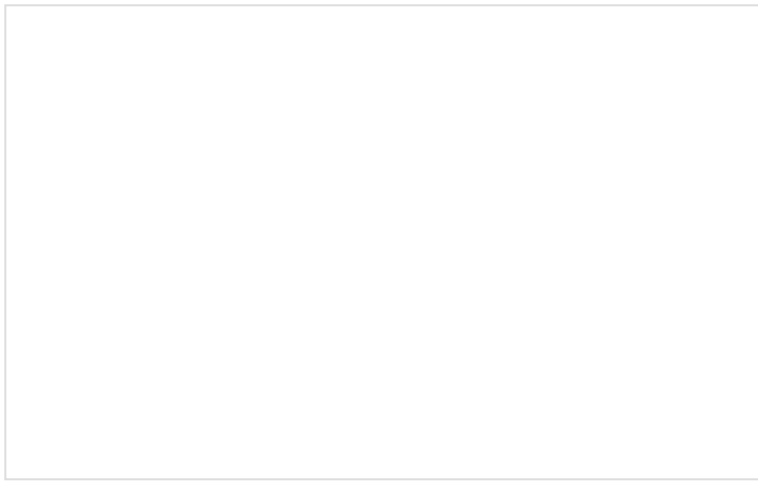
The “Micromanaging” argument: [“Investors Worried About Climate Change Run Into New SEC Roadblocks”](#) from *Inside Climate News* (May 3), in addition to providing a good overview of shareholder actions, explains: “The term “micromanage” has become the linchpin to objections by companies seeking to block these resolutions. The precedent was set last year when the SEC agreed with EOG Resources, a Texas-based oil and gas exploration company, that a resolution asking the company to adopt emissions goals had sought to “micromanage” the company.” More in [“Exxon Shareholders want action on climate change: SEC calls it micromanagement”](#) in the *Washington Post* (May 8). According to the [CBC report](#) about the FTQ resolution at Cenovus, the corporate CEO called the proposal “overly demanding”, and said “we had challenges with the prescriptive nature of the proposal”, echoing the industry’s language and strategy.

To stay up to date: The U.S. non-profit [As you Sow](#) monitors corporate environmental and social responsibility, including climate change and the energy transition – through [press releases](#) , reports, and an up-to-date [database of resolutions](#) .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Cenovus Energy](#), [Corporate Climate Policy](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#), [ExxonMobil](#), [Fonds de Solidarite](#), [Green Investment](#), [Pension Fund management](#), [Shareholder Activism](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The clean economy workforce in the U.S. and proposals to make it more inclusive

Posted on **May 13, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Advancing inclusion through clean energy jobs is a report released by the Brookings Institution in April 2019, with a goal to determine “the degree to which the clean energy economy provides labor market opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups, with a particular focus on equity”. It examines a range of occupations, not just the traditionally-identified “green jobs”, identifying approximately 320 unique occupations in three major industrial sectors: clean energy production, energy efficiency, and environmental management. The report includes detailed discussion of its methodology and data sources, and emphasizes the size of the clean energy economy and its potential to make an impact on the equity of the U.S. labour market.

Some highlights about the “nature” and “quality” of clean energy economy jobs:

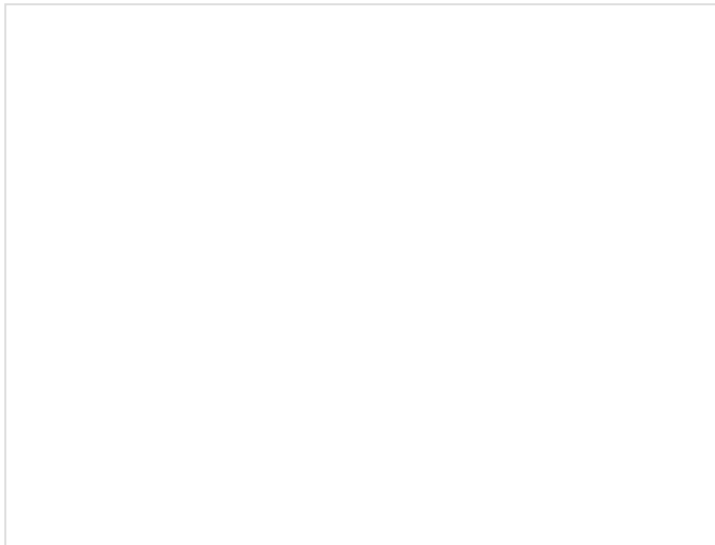
- Workers in clean energy earn higher and more equitable wages when compared to all workers nationally. Mean hourly wages exceed national averages by 8 to 19 percent.
- Roughly 50 percent of workers in the clean energy economy have a high school diploma yet earn higher wages than similarly-educated peers in other industries – for example, plumbers, electricians, and carpenters.
- Some occupations within the clean energy production and energy efficiency sectors require greater scientific knowledge and technical skills than the average American job.
- The clean energy economy workforce is older, dominated by male workers, and lacks racial diversity when compared to all occupations nationally. Fewer than 20 percent of workers in the clean energy production and energy efficiency sectors are women, while black workers fill less than ten percent of these sector’s jobs.

In the accompanying **press release**, first author Mark Muro states: “Clean energy occupations are varied, accessible to workers without a bachelor’s degree, and good paying, but they are not yet as inclusive as they should be. To deliver on the sectors’ full promise for economic inclusion, more work needs to be done in front-line communities to ensure under-represented communities and women are more widely included.” The report concludes with proposals directed at state and local policy makers, education and training sector leaders, and community organizations. Broadly, the policy proposals include: “modernizing and emphasizing energy science curricula, improving the alignment of education and training offerings, and reaching underrepresented workers and students.”

Activists are mobilizing to push for a Canadian Green New Deal in the 2019 elections

Posted on **May 9, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The push for a Canadian Green New Deal is a rising tide with **strong public support**, and a number of different activist groups are gathering in different coalitions to push our politicians to action. “**Canadian Coalitions’ Election Platforms Call For Faster Action On Climate**” (May 7) in *The Energy Mix* summarizes three prominent initiatives that launched in early May. Here are a few more details:



The Pact for a Green New Deal launched on May 6 with a very high profile campaign in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. An Executive summary called **10 Questions** states: “it is a non-partisan, grassroots initiative supported by individuals, scientists, unions, Indigenous and civil society organizations and youth from across the country.” It has been endorsed by over 67 organizations, including many of Canada’s largest environmental advocacy groups, and the following labour unions: CUPE Ontario, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec, London and District Labour Council, and Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation. Amongst youth, endorsers include: Climate Strike Canada, PowerShift: Young and Rising, ENvironnement JEUnesse (ENJEU), iMatter Halifax, and Students for Direct Action. It also includes a number of influential celebrities, including David Suzuki, Naomi Klein, Stephen Lewis, Michelle Landsberg,

and dozens of musicians and artists – even K.D. Laing, but not Margaret Atwood! The full list of endorsers is [here](#).

The **10 Questions document** also states that the The Pact for a Green New Deal (P4GND) is NOT a copy of the U.S. campaign so widely identified with the Sunrise Movement and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. This Canadian initiative was inspired by **Le Pacte** that was started in Quebec in November 2018 by Dominic Champagne (who endorses this new initiative). The Pacte has attracted over 270,000 signatories who pledge to make personal lifestyle changes to address the climate emergency, including citizen engagement, and who endorse a definite list of priorities. In contrast, **The Pact for a Green New Deal** is a visionary process, as set out in a **3-page statement**:

“We Invite All Sectors of Society to Launch The Year of The Green New Deal: We call on workers, Indigenous communities, students, trade unions, migrants, community organizations and people across the country to gather, define and design a plan for a safe future and more prosperous present. The conversation about a Green New Deal for Canada must be led from the ground up. We call on all politicians and political parties to respond to the demands of the people with a Green New Deal that rests on two fundamental principles: 1. It must meet the demands of Indigenous knowledge and science and cut Canada’s emissions in half in 11 years while protecting cultural and biological diversity. 2. It must leave no one behind and build a better present and future for all of us.”

An interactive map [here](#) shows all the planned locations for the Pact for a Green New Deal cross-country tour, starting in Toronto in May.

Environmental Asks for the October 2019 Election: Many of the endorsers of the Pact for a Green New Deal are also endorsing another initiative, **announced** on May 7, presenting 20 **“asks” for Party Platforms**. “These platform recommendations represent the collective priorities of all of the organizations listed below and will form the basis of joint-venture communication concerning each political parties’ commitments in the lead-up to the 2019 Federal election.” The group will also evaluate and compare the party platforms once they are announced. There are 14 groups involved are: Canadian Environmental Law Association, CPAWS, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, ecojustice, équiterre, Environmental Defence, Greenpeace, Nature Canada, Pembina Institute, Sierra Club Canada Foundation, West Coast Environmental Law Association, Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, and WWF-Canada. In addition, the United Steelworkers have announced their support via an article in the *Toronto Star*, **“Labour a key partner in a Green New Deal”** (May 6), also issued as a USW press release.

Younger Canadians launched their own political initiative to fight for a Green New Deal on April 17. The group, **Our Time**, states its goal is “to organize and mobilize a generational alliance of young and millennial voters that’s big enough and bold enough to push politicians to support a Green New Deal in the lead up to the 2019 election.”

And without using the term “Green New Deal”, the youth organization **Climate Strike Canada**, inspired by the Fridays for Future movement, has set out a list of political demands in an

Open Letter and online petition :

“We, as citizens, therefore call upon all political parties and politicians to create and commit to a science-based and human rights focused Emergency Plan for Climate Justice that limits global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

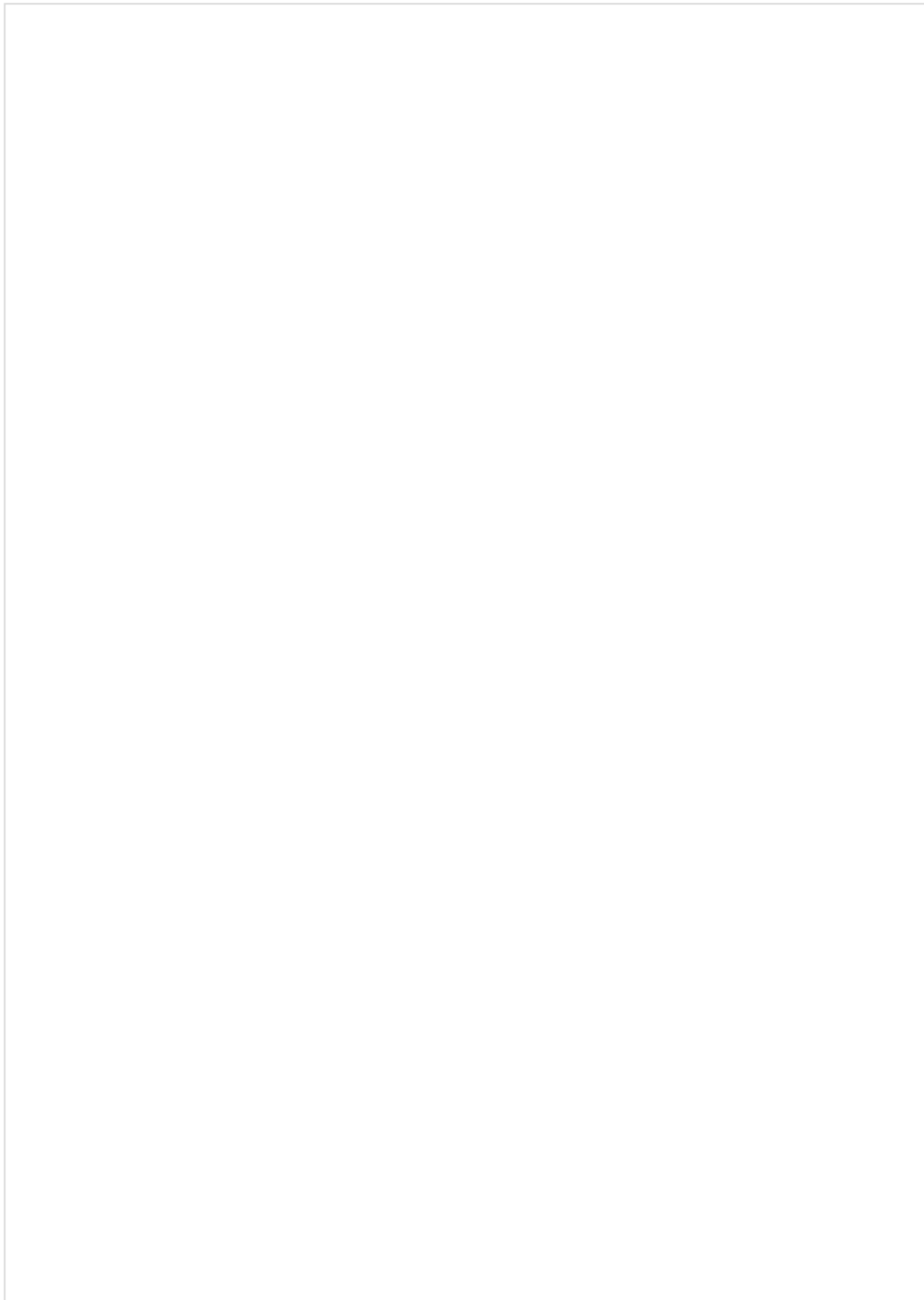
We, as citizens, pledge to vote only for political parties and politicians that include the following demands in their Emergency Plan for Climate Justice.

- Bold Emissions Reductions Targets
- Separation of Oil and State
- A Just Transition
- Environmental rights
- Indigenous rights
- Conservation of Biodiversity
- Protection for Vulnerable Groups

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [climate change activism](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [labour union policies](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian youth continue climate strikes and join the political push for a Canadian Green New Deal

Posted on **May 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Students in approximately 95 towns and cities across Canada went on strike from school on May 3, continuing their **Fridays for Future campaign** . As was the case after the huge **March 15 demonstrations** , mainstream press coverage was limited, but included a **front-page story in the Sudbury Star** . Other coverage: **Corner Brook Newfoundland** ; **Regina Saskatchewan** , **Edmonton** , and Vancouver, where **an article** in *The Straight* (May 3) summarizes the strike in Vancouver and notes others across Canada and the world. In **Halifax**, CBC News reported that 400 students marched, despite threats of suspension from at least one high school . In **“Thousands march for action on climate change in Montreal as city braces for flooding”**, the CBC reports that intergenerational demonstrations were held in Quebec on April 27, and states

“Quebec’s largest unions took part in similar marches in Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Rimouski, Rouyn-Noranda, Alma, Gaspé, Mont-Laurier and Ottawa.”

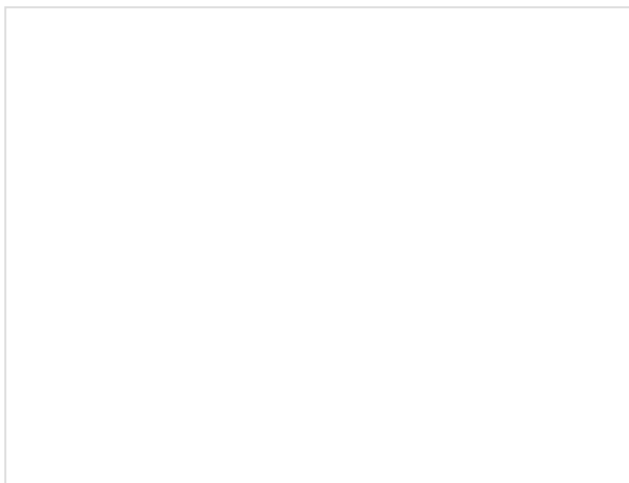
Youth are driven by fear: The *National Observer* has launched a new series on Youth, Parents and the Climate Crisis with “[Climate strikes and the youth mental health crisis](#)” (May 2). Similarly, “[Meet the millennials grieving for the future of planet Earth](#)” describes ecological grief circles in Montreal . The words of a sampling of youth leaders are revealing in the interviews from “[Canadian Teens Told Us Why They’re Striking Over Climate Change](#)” (May 2) in *Vice* .

What’s Next? The Federal Election and a Green New Deal: Students say they will continue their school strikes, and in addition, some are now joining the political fight, despite being too young to vote in many cases. Climate Strike Canada has posted an [Open Letter and online petition](#) which lists their demands:

“We, as citizens, therefore call upon all political parties and politicians to create and commit to a science-based and human rights focused Emergency Plan for Climate Justice that limits global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We, as citizens, pledge to vote only for political parties and politicians that include the following demands in their Emergency Plan for Climate Justice.

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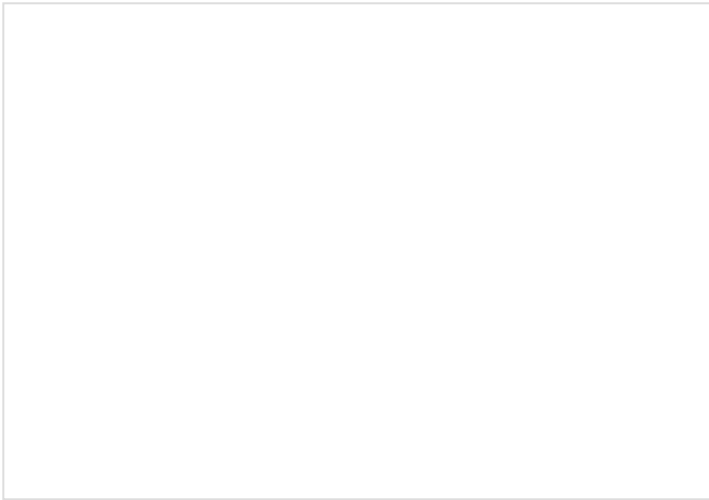
Several youth organizations are among the 67 groups who announced for a [Green New Deal for Canada](#) on May 6, launching another political movement to fight for climate change action in the coming election. *The Energy Mix* provides a summary of these new political campaigns in “[Canadian Coalitions’ Election Platforms Call For Faster Action On Climate](#)” (May 7).

Common Dreams also describes the new group in “**The Pact for a Green New Deal’: Visionary Roadmap From Canadian Coalition Launched**” (May 6).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Activism](#), [climate change and politics](#), [fridays for future](#), [Green New Deal Canada](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

GM Oshawa investment will save 300 jobs; Toyota announces new production in Cambridge

Posted on **May 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On May 8, General Motors Canada and Unifor held a joint press conference and issued a **statement** announcing that GM will invest \$170 million to save approximately 300 of the 2,600 union jobs at the Oshawa Ontario manufacturing facility, slated for closure by the end of 2019 as part of the North American **restructuring announced in November 2018**.

After a vigorous and high profile union campaign against the closure, an “**Oshawa Transformation Agreement**” has been reached, including:

- A \$170 million investment by GM to convert the plant from vehicle assembly to stamping, related sub-assembly, and “other miscellaneous activities for GM and other auto industry customers.”
- Part of the Oshawa Plant property will be converted into a test track for autonomous and advanced technology vehicles, to support GM Canada’s existing Canadian Technical Centre , in particular its Oshawa and Markham campuses where the company develops software and hardware for Autonomous Vehicle Systems, Embedded Controls, Active Safety Systems and Infotainment.

- The company will also donate the three-acre Fenelon Park and the 87-acre McLaughlin Bay wildlife preserve to the City of Oshawa “for the permanent benefit of all its citizens.”

But what about the workers?

A separate [*Jobs Transition Backgrounder*](#) states:

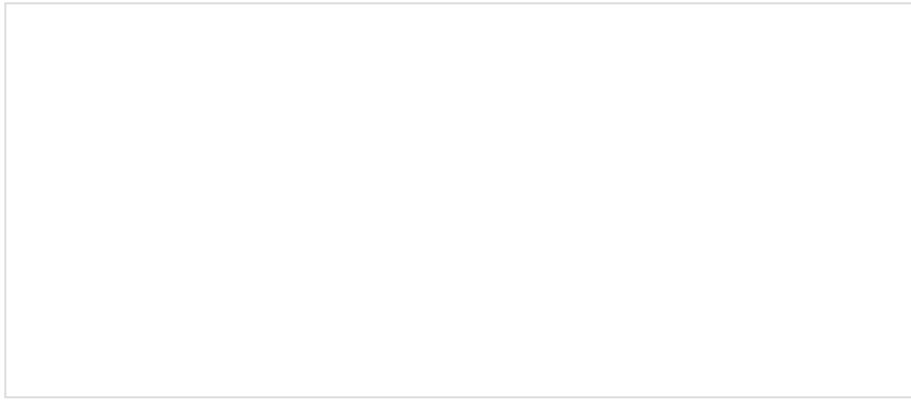
- GM Canada will offer special relocations to Oshawa employees for jobs at the St. Catharines propulsion plant or the Woodstock Distribution Centre;
- GM will offer enhanced retirement packages to retirement-eligible Oshawa Assembly employees “including vouchers toward the purchase of new GM vehicles, a benefit that will support both retiring employees and GM dealerships in Durham Region and surrounding areas.”
- In June 2019, GM Canada, Unifor and the Ontario government will open a Jobs Action Centre in Oshawa, offering personalized transition counselling, a skills / jobs matching database and “other supports.” Durham College, the local community college, will support the Job Action Centre with a dedicated jobs portal and several job fairs planned for 2019.
- Durham College, Centennial College, and Trent University Durham will offer training tailored to regional and GTA-based partner employers.
- “GM Canada will offer training support for qualified Oshawa Assembly hourly employees.” (no further details stated in the public release).

Unifor Local 222 , which represents the workers at the Oshawa plant, have [called](#) a meeting on May 9 to inform the membership about the resolution of their grievance against the company, which sought to increase incentives and severance packages.

In better news for Ontario’s auto industry: Starting in 2022, Toyota will begin to produce the luxury Lexus NX at its Cambridge plant, in both gasoline and hybrid versions . (Cambridge currently produces of the mid-size luxury Lexus RX and RX hybrid). According to a [report in the *Hamilton Spectator*](#) : “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Deputy Ontario Premier Christine Elliott, and a host of local mayors and dignitaries were at the Fountain Street facility Monday afternoon to announce the plant had secured the right to make the company’s Lexus NX gas and hybrid compact SUVs starting in 2022. The news came almost a year after the federal government partnered with the province — at the time led by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals — to each invest \$110 million in the company as part of an overall investment of \$1.4 billion by Toyota.”

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [GM Oshawa](#), [Oshawa](#), [plant closings](#), [Retraining](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Women and minorities still at a disadvantage in U.S. solar industry



The ***U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study 2019*** was released by **The Solar Foundation**, in partnership with the **Solar Energy Industries Association** on May 6, reflecting a growing industry awareness of the need to promote inclusion. The 2019 study is based on survey responses from 377 employers and 398 employees in the winter of 2018, and reports on job satisfaction, career paths and progression, and wages.

Some highlights:

- Among the senior executives reported in the survey, 88% are white and 80% are men.
- Three of the top five recruitment methods rely on professional and personal networks – putting minority applicants at a disadvantage to be hired (Only 28% of Hispanic, Latino, and African American respondents reported that they found their jobs through a referral or by word of mouth, compared to 44% of white respondents).
- There is a 26% gender wage gap across all position levels. 37% of men earn in the range of \$31 to \$74 per hour, compared to only 28% of women. The median wage reported for men was \$29.19, and for women it was only \$21.62.

The full report is available [here](#) (registration required). This is the second Diversity Report, but the first, in 2017, is no longer available online. An accompanying ***Best Practices Guide*** is a brief guide aimed at HR managers to encourage diversity and inclusion programs. A summary of the report appears in ***Think Progress***.

Other reports which confirm the need for more diversity in the solar industry:

Solar Empowers Some (February 2019) focused on the state of diversity and inclusion in Baltimore and Washington D.C.

Advancing inclusion through clean energy jobs (April 2019) by the Brookings Institution goes beyond just the solar industry to include all clean energy and energy efficiency occupations. It reports that fewer than 20 percent of workers are women, and less than 10 percent are black, confirming that the clean energy economy workforce is older, dominated by male workers, and lacks racial diversity compared to all occupations nationally. This report, importantly, also

documents skills and educational requirements, and is written in the context of labour market issues for a transition to a clean economy.

We have little comparable research in Canada. As reported in the [WCR previously](#), Bipasha Baruah at Western University in London researches the gender issue in the renewable energy industry, and in 2016 presented a report, [Creating and Optimizing Employment Opportunities for Women in the Clean Energy Sector in Canada](#), at Imagining Canada's Future, an SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Symposium at the University of Calgary.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [disadvantaged workers](#), [Gender Equality](#), [hiring practices](#), [Job Quality](#), [renewable energy](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [United States](#), [Wage gap](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Saskatchewan Court of Appeal rules for federal carbon tax program

Posted on [May 6, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

With implications across the country, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal handed down a 3-2 [decision](#) on May 3, ruling that the federal Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act (GGPPA) falls within federal government's "National Concern" constitutional power. The Saskatchewan Association for Environmental Law has compiled all the legal submission documents [here](#); the EcoFiscal Commission provides a summary of the 155-page Decision [here](#).

Local coverage and reaction appeared in the *Regina Leader Post* (May 3) in "[Court of Appeal: Saskatchewan government loses carbon tax challenge](#)", and the Premier of Saskatchewan immediately declared that the province will appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, which it must do within 30 days. As the *Globe and Mail* points out, "[Saskatchewan court rules federal carbon tax constitutional in first of several legal challenges](#)". According to [a CBC report](#), the Premier of New Brunswick is still considering his options, but newly-elected Premier Jason Kenny of Alberta will join the Saskatchewan Supreme Court action. The Premier of Manitoba announced that his government [will not abandon its own court challenge](#), which it [launched on April 3](#). In Ontario, the Ford government is [aggressively promoting](#) its own battle over the carbon tax: four days of [hearings ended](#) on April 18th, and the Ontario Court of Appeal is expected to render its own decision on the constitutionality of the carbon tax in several months – possibly not until after the federal election in October 2019.

The political significance of the Saskatchewan decision: Aaron Wherry at CBC summarizes the general situation in "[The carbon tax survived Saskatchewan. That was the easy part](#)" (May 4). The *Globe and Mail* states what is a widely accepted opinion in its editorial, "[Why conservatives secretly love the carbon tax](#)": "Round One goes to Ottawa. But the courtroom

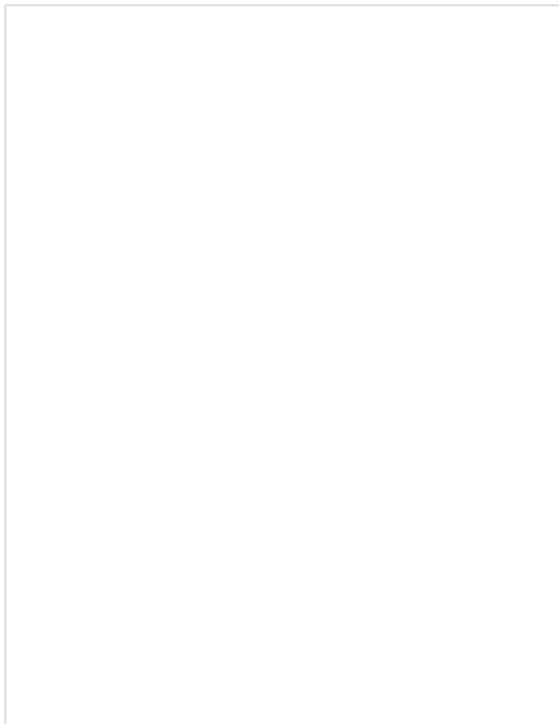
war against the federal carbon tax continues – waged by a fraternity of conservative provincial governments with more of an eye on immediate political returns than ultimate legal outcomes.”

Update: Three law professors- Jason MacLean (University of Saskatchewan), Nathalie Chalifour (University of Ottawa) and Sharon Mascher (University of Calgary) published a reaction to the Saskatchewan Court’s decision on May 7 in *The Conversation*. **“Work on Climate not weaponizing the constitution”** takes issue with some of the finer legal points of the decision, but welcomes the Court’s recognition of the urgency and scale of the climate emergency, and concludes: “We have to stop weaponizing the Constitution and start working together, across party lines at all levels of government, on urgent and ambitious climate action.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [climate change and politics](#), [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#), [Political parties and policies](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Saskatchewan](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

436,000 workers in energy efficiency jobs in Canada in 2018 – more than twice oil and gas industry

Posted on **May 2, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

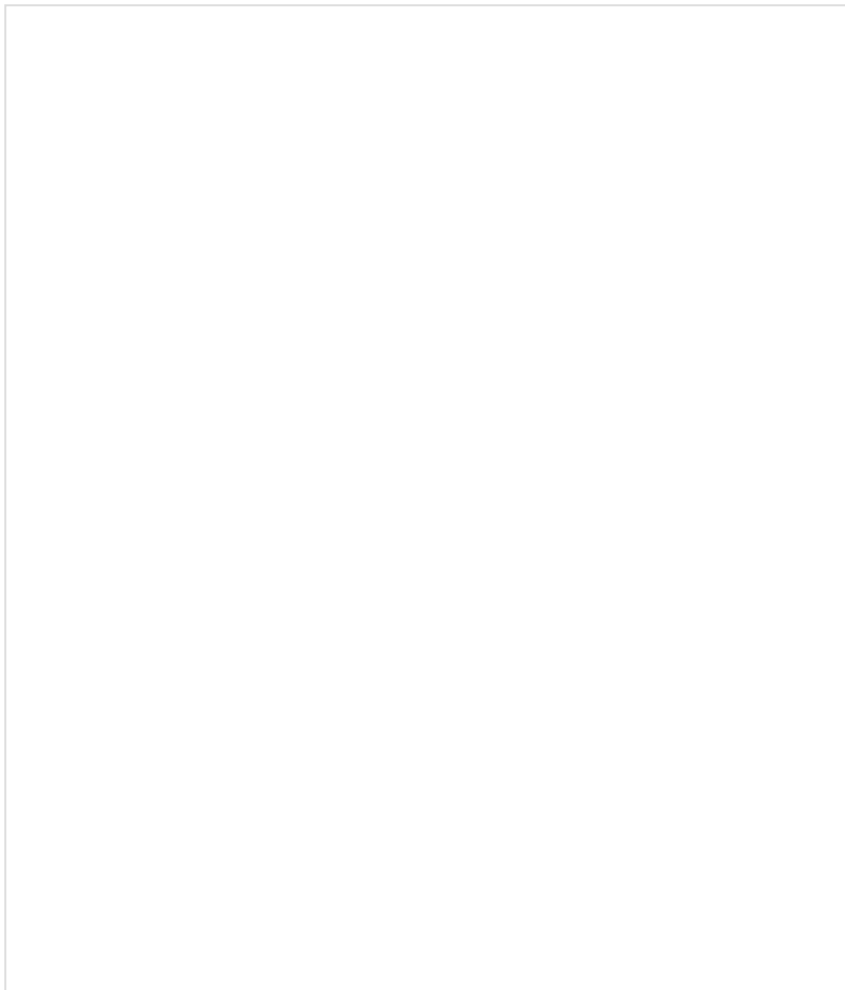


On April 29, Eco Canada released a new report, [Energy Efficiency Employment in Canada](#), stating that “Canada’s energy efficiency goods and services sector directly employed an estimated 436,000 permanent workers in 2018 and is poised to grow by 8.3% this year, creating over 36,000

jobs.” According to the agency’s [press release](#), this is the first report of its kind in Canada to offer a comprehensive breakdown of revenue, employment figures, and hiring challenges. One of the key takeaways of the report is highlighted in an article in *The Energy Mix*: “**Energy Efficiency employs 436,000 Canadians – more than twice the total in oil and gas** ”

Some highlights from *Energy Efficiency Employment in Canada*:

- Energy efficiency workers in 2018 were employed across approximately 51,000 business establishments across six industries: construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, professional and business services, utilities, and other services.
- Construction is by far the largest employer with 287,000 jobs across 39,000 establishments – 66% of the energy efficiency workforce. The next largest industry is wholesale trade, with 47,836 jobs (11%).
- Among the direct and permanent energy efficiency workforce across all industries, approximately 29% spent all their time, 27% spent most of their time, and 44% spent a portion of their time on energy efficiency activities.
- Just under one-fifth or 18% of workers were female, and 2% were Indigenous, (both figures lower than national workforce averages).
- Approximately 58% of energy efficiency workers were 35 or older.
- 42% of energy efficiency workers were between ages 18 and 34 (compared to 33% in the national workforce).
- Energy efficiency employment grew by almost 2.8% from 2017 to 2018, compared to 1.0% for all jobs nationally.
- At 2.3% of Canada’s economy, Canadian energy efficiency employment makes up a greater share of the economy than it does in the United States, at 1.9% .



The report is a result of a comprehensive survey conducted in the Fall 2018 with 1,853 business establishments, and also relies on Statistics Canada data. It tracks the methodology of the United States Energy Employment Report (USEER), to make comparisons consistent. The research is funded by Natural Resources Canada and the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program.

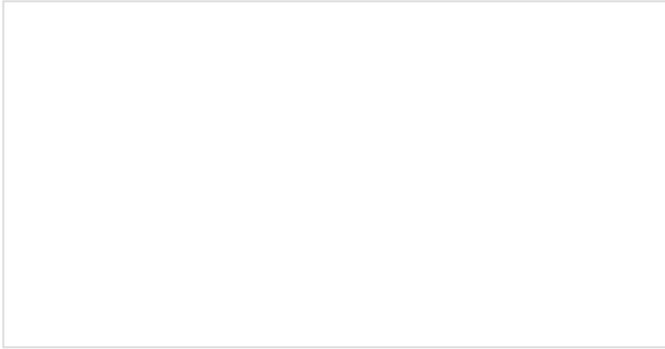
Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Construction Industry](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Green Building](#), [Green Jobs](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Job shifting effects of carbon pricing policy, with a focus on the Canadian construction industry

Posted on **May 1, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Construction and Carbon: The Impact of Climate Policy on Building in Canada in 2025 is a report released on May 1 by the Smart Prosperity Institute, with a title that doesn't reflect the full range of the study. The report actually models the effect of carbon pricing on GDP and employment in six sectors, although construction is the focal point since the research was financed by the **Canadian Building Trades Unions**. Author Mike Moffatt uses the general equilibrium model **gTech** to project two scenarios for the medium term (2025) : a "business as usual" case (which assumes federal and provincial carbon policies as they existed in 2018) and an "aggressive" case, which assumes carbon prices increasing over time so that Canada would achieve its Paris Agreement commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030.

Smart Prosperity emphasizes that "the construction sector is one of the 'winners' of carbon pricing, as escalating carbon prices unleash a wave of business and household investment." Specifically, raising the stringency of carbon prices (the aggressive scenario) shows that the total number of jobs in Canada would increase by an 39,500 – 19,000 of which would be in construction, and 55,000 of which would be in services. These gains are offset by job losses in the other sectors: utilities, resources, manufacturing, and transportation.



Projections are broken down by province: showing that for construction jobs, Saskatchewan would see the greatest growth, followed by Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Alberta, and British Columbia.

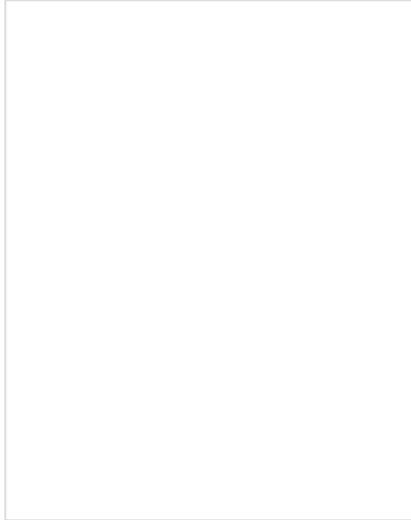
The report also provides forecasts for: Investment by sector; Impact of Higher Carbon Policies on Business Investment by Type (e.g. renewable energy, CCS, public transit); and Impact of Higher Carbon Policies on Household Investment by Type (building efficiency, low-carbon vehicles).

The differentiated effect of carbon taxes by sector is a theme explored in an earlier Smart Prosperity working paper ***Do Carbon Taxes Kill Jobs? Firm-Level Evidence from British Columbia***, released in March 2019 as part of the **Clean Economy Working Paper series**. The Smart Prosperity Institute is based at the University of Ottawa.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, Construction Industry, employment impacts, provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

The potential of worker ownership to finance Just Transition – and other inspiring Canadian examples

Posted on **April 30, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Saskatchewan's *Briarpatch* magazine has published a ***Special Issue on Just Transition***. It is a treasure trove of inspiring on-the-ground perspectives and information from Canadians working for an economic Just Transition.

All the articles are worth reading, but here are some highlights:

"How will we pay for a Just Transition" expresses doubt that we can rely on the usual government policies to finance meaningful transition – for example, it reviews the One Million Climate Jobs campaign of the Green Economy Network and the inadequate response by the Trudeau government. Instead, the article provides examples of more innovative models of worker ownership and cooperation which support redistribution of wealth and financial capital. First, **The Working World**, which launched in 2015 in Buenos Aires to finance employee ownership of non-extractive businesses, and now administers a "financial commons" **Peer Network**. The Working World has inspired other projects, such as the Just Transition Loan Fund and Incubator and the **Reinvest in Our Power projects**, being launched by the **U.S. Climate Justice Alliance**. The article discusses the role of philanthropy, specifically the U.S. **Chorus Foundation**, which states that it "works for a just transition to a regenerative economy in the United States." In Canada, a much smaller similar philanthropic initiative is the **Resource Movement**, a project of Tides Canada, which gathers "young people with wealth and class privilege working towards the equitable distribution of wealth, land and power."

Other articles:

- **“What’s in a Just Transition”**, which reports on a roundtable of social justice activists from different movements (immigrant, first nations, climate justice, and BlueGreen Canada) . Speakers provide their own definitions of Just Transition, and cite examples, including: Canada’s **Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities** ; **Lubicon Solar** , a renewable energy project on First Nations territory in Alberta’s Peace River; the **Black Mesa Coalition** of the Navajo Nation; and **Souladarity** , an energy democracy coalition in Highland Park, near Detroit.
- **“This is what Indigenous energy sovereignty looks like”** which profiles Indigenous Climate Action and Lubicon Solar;
- **“Decentralizing climate justice in Halifax”** , which describes the climate justice community of the city, including the Imagining 2030 Network;
- **“Bridging the gap with Saskatchewan’s coal communities: A just transition case study”** a brief description of the interaction between climate activists and 17 people in the coal mining communities of Estevan and Coronach (the full report , ***The Future of Coal in Saskatchewan***, was published by Climate Justice Saskatoon in late 2018);
- **“Confronting economic barriers to a Just Transition”**, a conversation amongst six economists from Concordia, McGill, York, and St.-Paul University, as well as the Co-Executive Director of The Leap. It ends with this quote: “A just transition in Canada may seem like a huge, insurmountable task,” “But actually, if you look, there are so many stories of deindustrialization, of reinvention, of shifting economies, of redistributions, of land reform. Our imagination can be fuelled by sharing these stories. We need to recuperate these histories of transformation to help us remember what’s possible.”

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate Justice](#), [cooperative enterprises](#), [First Nations](#), [Green Finance](#), [Just Transition](#), [worker ownership](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Recommendations for Just Transition coal phase-out in Europe

Posted on [April 30, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



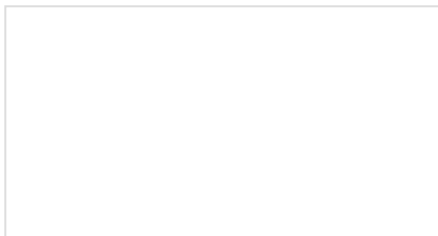
Phasing out coal – a just transition approach was released as a Working Paper by the European Trade Union Institute in April – the latest of several publications on the topic by ETUI Senior Researcher and ACW associate Béla Galgóczi . Following a summary of the role of coal in the European economy and the current employment structure of the broader coal sector, the paper provides an up-to-date summary of energy policies and just transition policies in France, Germany, Poland and Spain, and also looks at lessons learned from past phase-out experiences in the Ruhr Valley of Germany, Hazelwood coal plant in Australia, and ENEL, Italy. He notes that a clear distinction should be made between hard coal regions, like the German Ruhr or Silesia in Poland, which are strongly-industrialized regions with a high level of urbanization and a greater economic diversity, and brown coal regions such as German Lusatia or the Polish Lodzkie region, which are rural areas with low population densities and employment concentrated in the mining and energy sectors. The paper concludes that successful just transition requires, amongst other things: specific and targeted just coal transition policies with government involvement at the central and regional level; a properly-funded, specific mine closure agency, or a specialized agency for employment transitions for several years; individualized active labour market policies and personal coaching; and active EU-level financial support.

The author has made similar arguments in a 5-page ETUI Policy Brief, ***From Paris to Katowice: the EU needs to step up its game on climate change and set its own just transition framework*** (2018), and in his detailed report published by the ILO in October 2018 : ***Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All***, previously **summarized in the WCR**.

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

Our Time launches youth Campaign for a Green New Deal in Canada

Posted on **April 26, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



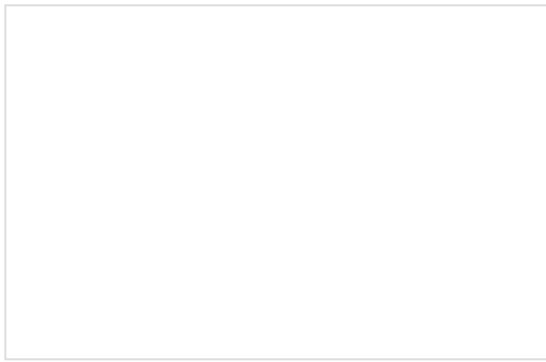
On April 17, young people and millennials **launched** a new national campaign to work for a Green New Deal for Canada, in a “massive economic and social mobilization”. The stated goal of the group, **Our Time**, is “to organize and mobilize a generational alliance of young and millennial voters that’s big enough and bold enough to push politicians to support a Green New Deal in the lead up to the 2019 election.”

Our Time is supported by 350.org and launches with “hub groups” already established in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, and Halifax. (A brief article by the Halifax organizer is [here](#)). It aims to form a national network from across different communities, causes, movements, and generations –it states clearly that older people are welcome in a supporting role.

“**What do we mean when we say we want a “Green New Deal for Canada?”**” traces the growth of the priorities, from the Good Work Guarantee outlined in December 2018 to the policies under consideration as of March 2019. These include four pillars for a GND for Canada: “it meets the scale and urgency of the climate crisis; it creates millions of good jobs; it enshrines dignity, justice, and equity for all, ensuring climate solutions lift up all communities and reflect the reality that frontline, marginalized and Indigenous communities are bearing the brunt of fossil fuel and climate impacts; it works in service of real reconciliation — respecting the rights, title and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples.”

The Our Time campaign has been described in “**As Youth-Led Campaign Kicks Off, Poll Shows Majority of Canadians Want a Green New Deal, Too**” in *Common Dreams* (citing a North99 poll on Canadian attitudes to Green New Deal in early April 2019, [here](#)). Another recent poll, by Ipsos was reported in “**Climate And Environment Emerge As Top Public Concerns Before Canadian, Australian Elections**” in *The Energy Mix* (April 24) , and shows the timeliness of the Our Time focus on political action. Ipsos reports that Canadian concern about climate change at 48% is higher than the global average (37%), and Canadians ranked their top five policy issues as: health care, the economy, housing, taxes, and climate change (in that order).

Climate activism in Quebec: An update on activism in **Quebec’s social contract for the climate** comes in “**Quebec’s ‘Climate Spring’ speaks to broad support for environmental action**” published in *iPolitics* on April 17. “In the span of a few months, 317 Quebec municipalities, representing almost 74 per cent of the population of Quebec, have endorsed a Declaration of Climate Emergency; close to 268,000 individuals have **signed a pact** to individually and collectively minimize their footprint and pushing for the adoption of a climate law; and **a class action on behalf of all Quebecers** **35** and under has been filed against the federal government for inaction on the climate file. Thousands marched twice in the bitter cold of late 2018 to demand climate action.” And as the **WCR reported**, the greatest turnout in Canada’s Fridays for Future demonstrations on March 15 was in Montreal, with 150,000 marchers . The presence of the Extinction Rebellion in Quebec is reported by the Montreal Gazette in “**The clock is ticking and environmentalists aren’t going to take it anymore**” (April 22). Extinction Rebellion held its first meetings in Montreal in January, held workshops on civil disobedience and on the psychological toll of climate change, and demonstrated in Montreal on April 17. The article also profiles Sara Montpetit, a 17-year-old student who “has emerged as Montreal’s answer to Greta Thunberg” and has been **leading weekly strikes** as part of the Fridays for Future movement. Finally, the article highlights the French-language website **Chantiers de la Duc** which proposes 11 action plans, related to the **Citizens’ Declaration of Climate Emergency**.



Youth climate activism across Canada keeps growing: WCR covered Canadian youth climate activism for the March 15th global Fridays for Future strike [here](#) . Some more recent articles have appeared in advance of the **Canada-wide Fridays for Future strike scheduled for May 3** :

“Meet the youth climate strikers leading Canada’s Fridays for Future movement” from Ecojustice (April 24)

“Student organizers report back on March 15 climate strike” in *Rabble.ca* (March 21)

“2019 is the year young people rise for climate justice” in *Medium* (April 9) – which describes the **Powershift: Young and Rising** event in Ottawa in February 2019.

“Young people banding together to demand more action on climate change” in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* (April 22) – which includes the Halifax activities of the global youth climate group **iMatter**.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Climate Activism, Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, Green New Deal Canada, Quebec, Youth and climate** | [Leave a reply](#)

Amazon employees use their power as shareholders to request corporate

policies on climate change

Posted on **April 25, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



In what a [New York Times article](#) characterizes as “the largest employee-driven movement on climate change to take place in the influential tech industry”, almost 7,000 employees of tech giant Amazon have now signed their names to an [Open Letter](#) to Jeff Bezos and the Amazon Board of Directors, released on April 10. The Letter states: “we ask that you adopt the climate plan shareholder resolution and release a company-wide climate plan that incorporates the principles outlined in this letter.” It then outlines a thorough list of desired actions, including: a complete transition away from fossil fuels rather than relying on carbon offsets; prioritization of climate impact when making business decisions; prioritizing the most vulnerable communities in pollution reduction initiatives related to Amazon locations; and “fair treatment of all employees during climate disruptions and extreme weather events. Unsafe or inaccessible workplaces should not be a reason to withhold pay, terminate, or otherwise penalize employees—including hourly and contract workers.” Amazon Employees for Climate Justice provides updates at their [Twitter account here](#).

According to [an article in Gizmodo](#) : “Employees from seemingly every background and department have signed on, from UX designers to biz dev managers to systems development engineers and beyond. A number of senior employees are on board, too—in addition to the VP, at the time of writing, I counted at least eight directors on the list. It’s part of [a growing trend towards worker advocacy in the tech industry](#), coming on the heels of the Google Walkout for Change and the We Won’t Build It effort, also at Amazon.” The culture of empowerment behind the Open Letter is evident in an interview published in Gizmodo, [“One of the Amazon Workers Behind the Push to Get Jeff Bezos to Address Climate Change Speaks Out”](#) . *Wired* also describes the culture of shareholder activism in [“Amazon Employees Try A New Form Of Activism, As Shareholders”](#) .

Amazon has more than 65,000 corporate and tech employees in the United States, who are awarded shares as part of their compensation program. In late November and early December, 2018, 16 current and former Amazon employees exercised their rights as shareholders by tabling a shareholder resolution – which has been seen as the trigger for Amazon’s Shipment Zero initiative, a vision to make all Amazon shipments net-zero carbon, with 50 percent of all shipments

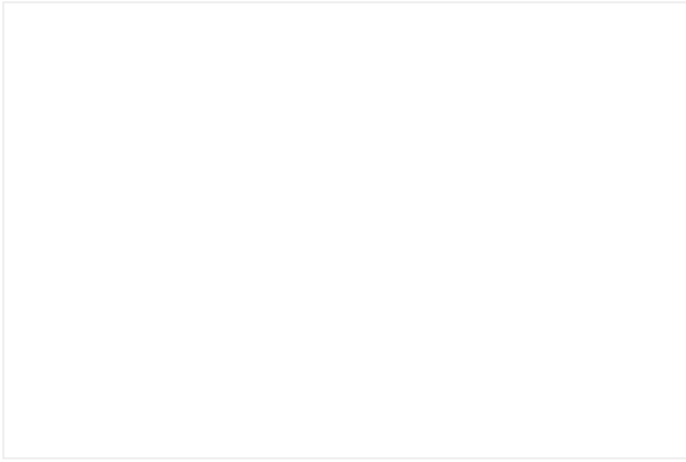
net zero by 2030. Amazon's response to the latest Open Letter is partly reproduced in the Gizmodo article, and states: "We have a long history of commitment to sustainability through innovative programs such as [Frustration Free Packaging](#), [Ship in Own Container](#), our [network of solar and wind farms](#), solar on our fulfillment center rooftops, investments in the [circular economy](#) with the Closed Loop Fund, and numerous other initiatives happening every day by teams across Amazon. In operations alone, we have over 200 scientists, engineers, and product designers dedicated exclusively to inventing new ways to leverage our scale for the good of customers and the planet. We have a long term commitment to powering our global infrastructure using 100% renewable energy." Amazon's [corporate website](#) details all its sustainability efforts – and on April 8th, just before the Open Letter was published, a [press release](#) announced 3 new wind energy projects, to augment the current level of 50% renewable energy power for the Automated Web Services part of the business.

Posted in [Business Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [Amazon](#), [attitudes to climate change](#), [employee initiatives](#), [Information Technology](#), [Shareholder Activism](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New York City announces its Green New Deal – including innovative building efficiency requirements and job creation

Posted on [April 24, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

In a [press release on April 22](#), New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced "New York City's Green New Deal, a bold and audacious plan to attack global warming on all fronts....The City is going after the largest source of emissions in New York by mandating that all large existing buildings cut their emissions – a global first. In addition, the Administration will convert government operations to 100 percent clean electricity, implement a plan to ban inefficient all-glass buildings that waste energy and reduce vehicle emissions." The full range of Green New Deal policies are laid out in [OneNYC 2050: Building a Strong and Fair City](#), which commits to carbon neutrality by 2050, and 100% clean electricity. The full One NYC strategic plan is comprised of 9 volumes, including Volume 3: [An Inclusive Economy](#), which acknowledges the shifting, precarious labour market and envisions green jobs in a fairer, more equitable environment.



— Photo by Anthony Quintano, from Flickr

A global first – Energy Efficiency mandates for existing buildings: The *Climate Mobilization Act*, passed by New York City Council on April 18, lays out the “global first” of regulation of the energy efficiency of existing buildings. Officially called **Introduction 1253-C** (unofficially called the “Dirty Buildings Bill”), 1253-C governs approximately 50,000 existing large and mid-sized buildings- those over 25,000 sq feet- which are estimated to account for 50% of building emissions. The bill categorizes these buildings by size and use (with exemptions for non-profits, hospitals, religious buildings, rent-controlled housing and low-rise residential buildings) and sets emissions caps for each category. Buildings which exceed their caps will be subject to substantial fines, beginning in 2024. The goal is to cut emissions by 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050.

Seen as historic and innovative, the energy efficiency provisions have been highlighted and summarized in many outlets: “**New York City Sets Ambitious Climate Rules for Its Biggest Emitters: Buildings**” in *Inside Climate News* ; “**Big Buildings Hurt the Climate. New York City Hopes to Change That**” in the *New York Times* (April 17); “**A New Day in New York’: City Council Passes Sweeping Climate Bill**” in *Common Dreams*; and best of all, “**New York City’s newly passed Green New Deal, explained**” (April 23) in *Resilience*, (originally **posted in Grist** on April 18).

Job Creation in Retrofitting and Energy Efficiency: The **New York City Central Labor Council** strongly supports **Introduction 1253-C** and cites job creation estimates drawn from ***Constructing a Greener New York, Building By Building*** , a new report commissioned by Climate Works for All. The report found that 1253-C would create 23,627 direct construction jobs per year in retrofitting, and 16,995 indirect jobs per year in building operation and maintenance, manufacturing and professional services. The report includes a technical appendix which details how it calculated the job estimates, based on the job multipliers developed by Robert Pollin and Jeanette Wicks-Lam at the University of Massachusetts Political Economy Research Institute.

The Mayor’s **Green New Deal press release** also states “The City, working with partners, will pursue 100 percent carbon-free electricity supply for City government operations with the building

of a new connection linking New York City to zero-emission Canadian hydropower. Negotiations will begin right away, with the goal of striking a deal by the end of 2020 and powering city operations entirely with renewable sources of electricity within five years. ” *The National Observer* describes reaction from Quebec and Hydro Quebec in “[New York City’s Green New Deal music to Quebec’s Ears](#)” (April 23).

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [energy efficiency](#), [Green Job Creation](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Job Creation](#), [New York City](#), [retrofitting](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta elects United Conservative Party, promising a new climate policy, and to fight for the oil and gas industry

Posted on [April 17, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Citizens of the province of Alberta woke up to a new government on April 17th, with the election of the United Conservative Party (UCP), led by Jason Kenney. After what *Macleans* magazine called “[The most visceral Alberta election campaign in memory](#)” and CBC called “[toxic](#)” and “[divisive](#)”, the UCP election platform, [Alberta Strong and Free](#) will begin to unfold, based on the promise to “fight without relent to build pipelines. We will stand up for Alberta and demand a fair deal in Canada. We will fight back against the foreign funded special interests who are trying to landlock our energy.” Ontarians will recognize much of the same rhetoric as that of the Doug Ford Conservative government, including cancellation of the “[job-killing carbon tax](#)”; an “[open for business](#)” approach to “cut red tape”, including worker protection; and [creating jobs](#) – in Alberta’s case, oil and gas jobs.

The CBC analysis of the election outlines further implications for the rest of Canada in “[Jason Kenney won big — and the Ottawa-Alberta relationship is about to get unruly](#)”,

which highlights Kenney's combative style, his antipathy to the current Liberal government of Justin Trudeau, and his close connections with the federal Conservative party (having served in Stephen Harper's government). *The National Observer*, on the morning after, sums up what to expect: "**Jason Kenney's United Conservatives issue warning to Suzuki Foundation after winning Alberta majority**", which also touches on what progressives can expect: "... the premier-designate delivered a warning to environmentalists, accusing them of being funded by foreign interests who are trying to shut down the Alberta oil and gas industry. He pledged to launch a public inquiry into their activities, singling out several charitable organizations including the **David Suzuki Foundation** and the **Tides Foundation** ..."

From Alberta: *Calgary Herald* **election coverage** is triumphant, including Columnist Chris Varcoe with "**Expectations are high as Kenney gives voice to Alberta's angst**"; Lucia Corbella with "**Kenney the Ironman performs miracle on the Prairies**". In "**Jason Kenney's united right wins big, dashing NDP dreams of a Rachel Notley repeat**", David Staples from the *Edmonton Journal* acknowledges that growing the oil industry is "a difficult, complex, multi-dimensional battle" but "when it comes to oil and gas policy Alberta hasn't been this united in a generation." The majority of his Opinion piece discusses "the malignant force that helped to divide us, the "Tar Sands campaign" which saw tens of millions in funding coming from U.S. foundations dedicated to demonizing the oilsands and landlocking Alberta oil." He calls on the NDP to support the UCP plan for a public inquiry into "foreign interference" and states that the NDP, the federal Liberals, and groups such as the Pembina Institute and Greenpeace are tarnished by association with that "Tar Sands Campaign".

Union voices were strong in the Alberta Election: The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) was extremely active in support of the NDP, with a "**Next Alberta**" campaign built around the AFL **12 Point Plan**. With a very pragmatic orientation, the Plan makes no mention of "Just Transition" or coal phase-out, and emissions reduction is proposed in these terms: "Reduce carbon emissions, as much as possible, from each barrel of oil produced in Alberta so, we can continue to access markets with increasingly stringent emission standards. ..Our goal should be to make sure that Alberta is last heavy oil producer standing in an increasingly carbon constrained world." The AFL also commissioned a report by Hugh Mackenzie: ***The Employment Impact of Election Promises: Analysis of budgetary scenarios of UCP and NDP platforms***, which concluded: "Under the Notley budget plan, 5500 jobs would be lost. Under the Kenny budget plan between 58,000-85,000 jobs would be lost – more than were lost in the recession of 2015-16." President of the AFL, Gil McGowan, discussed the report in an Opinion Piece, "**How NOT to fix Alberta's hurting jobs economy**" in *The Tyee*.

Unifor, the union which represents thousands of workers at oil producers Suncor, Imperial, Husky and Shell, also mounted an active **Unifor Votes** campaign which acknowledges that "in oil and gas, our biggest customer has become our biggest competitor". Unifor calls for policies for "Next Generation Energy Jobs" to invest in new pipeline infrastructure; diversify and upgrade in the oil and gas sector and "Use our resource wealth as a springboard to the future."

Stepping back, here are some of the articles which appeared during the election campaign, and which summarize the environmental and economic issues: "**Eleven Ignored Issues that**

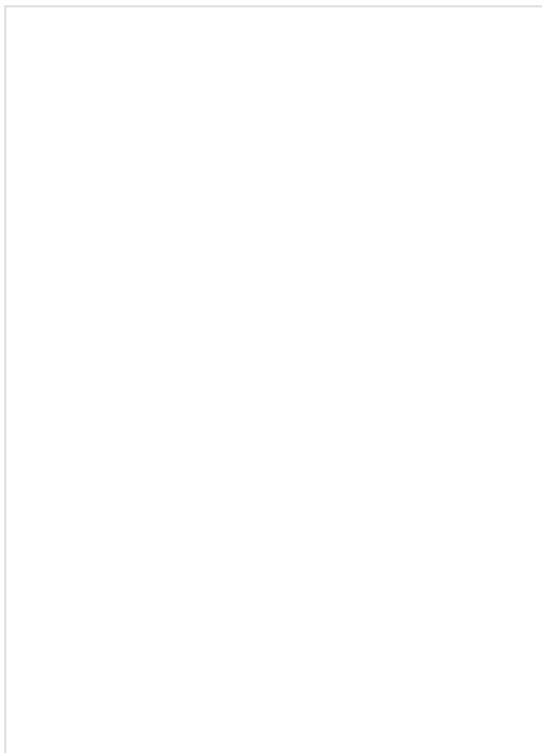
Albertans Should Think about Before They Vote” (April 12), by Andrew Nikoforuk, outlining : the risks of global oil price volatility; the need for economic diversification; the growing fiscal pressure on oil-producing states; the cost of climate change; the need to promote a leaner and more local economy as opposed to the boom-and-bust one; Alberta’s failure to collect its fair share of profits from bitumen production; and, hanging over them all, the risk of economic collapse.” In **“Analysis: Alberta Misses Out On Grown-Up Conversation About Fossil Transition”** , Mitchell Beer of *The Energy Mix* compiles the statements from Nikoforuk, as well as economists Mark Jaccard, Vaclav Smil, and columnist Gary Mason, concluding with: “ Smart, resourceful, and tech-enabled a place as it is, “too many in Alberta want to believe that a new pipeline will fix all that ails the province,” Mason writes . “That’s a fantasy, one that even the political leaders running to govern the province understand (but won’t admit publicly).” And **several blogs from the Parkland Institute** examine the implications for workers, including **“UCP Platform will drive down wages”**

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Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Alberta Federation of Labour, Carbon Tax, Oil and gas industry, Political parties and policies, provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Just Transition guidebook includes case studies, methods of measuring employment impacts

Posted on **April 16, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Called both a strategy document and a guidebook, ***Real People Real Change: Strategies for Just Energy Transitions*** was officially launched at the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue event on April 10, although published by The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in December 2018. The IISD says “it is intended to support governments of both developed and developing countries in their efforts to make energy transitions just. It brings together political and communications strategies for a just transition, building on research and case studies of energy transitions that have happened or that are happening in Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Poland and Ukraine.” The report highlights what it calls “a common “4C” framework that has been critical to several successful transitions: understanding the local context; identifying champions that can drive transition with various groups; making the case through transparent and effective stakeholder engagement; and developing complementary policies that support those who will be directly impacted by transition.

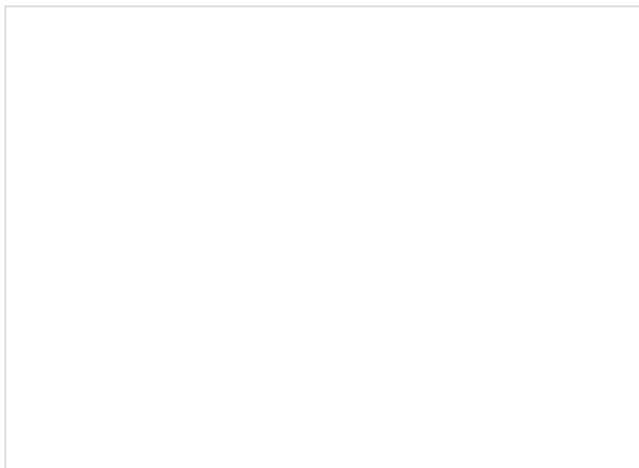
The report also includes *Annex 1: Quantitative approaches for estimating employment impacts*, which provides a brief overview and critical analysis of the unique challenges of measuring the transition pathway through its stages.

The **5th Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue (BETD)** included a side event, *Shifting to Below 2°C Economies: Strategies for just energy transitions*, summarized [here](#). Amongst the speakers: Hassan Youssef, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Samantha Smith, Director of the Just Transition Centre.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [case studies](#), [employment impacts](#), [employment modelling](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian banks still investing in yesterday's economy – fossil fuels

Posted on **April 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Banking on Climate Change – Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card 2019, the 10th annual report by BankTrack and a coalition of advocacy groups, has been expanded to include coal and gas investors, as well as oil, as it ranks and exposes the investment practices of 33 of the world's largest banks. The newly-released report for this year reveals that \$1.9 trillion has been invested in these fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement, with the four biggest investors all U.S. banks – JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi and Bank of America. But Canadian banks rank high: RBC ranks fifth, TD ranks 8th, Scotiabank ranks 9th, and Bank of Montreal ranks 15th. Among those investing in tar sands oil: “five of the top six tar sands bankers between 2016 and 2018 are Canadian, with RBC and TD by far the two worst.”

In addition to the investment tallies, the report analyzes the banks' performance on human rights, particularly Indigenous rights, as it relates to the impacts of specific fossil fuel projects, and climate change in general. The report also describes key themes, such as tar sands investment, Arctic oil, and fracking.

In response to the Banking on Climate Change report, SumofUs has mounted an online petition ***It's time for TD, RBC and Scotiabank stop funding climate chaos.*** An Opinion piece in *The Tyee*, “**How Citizens can stop the big five**” calls for a citizens strike on Canadian banks – particularly by young people and future mortgage investors, and points out the alternatives: credit unions, non-bank mortgage brokers, and ethical investment funds, (such as **Genus Capital** of Vancouver). But while individual Canadians can make ethical choices, that doesn't seem to be the path of our public pension plan, the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board**, which manages \$356.1 billion of our savings. On March 19, **Reuters reported** that the CPPIB will invest \$1.34 billion to obtain a 35% share in a \$3.8 billion joint venture with U.S. energy firm Williams to finance gas pipeline assets in the Marcellus and Utica shale basins.

Investment attitudes are shifting away from fossils: The Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund continues to lead the way: In March, **it announced** it would divest almost \$8 billion in investments in 134 companies that explore for oil and gas; in April, it announced it will invest in renewable energy projects that are not listed on stock markets – a huge market and a significant signal to the investment community, as described in “**‘Historic breakthrough’: Norway’s giant oil fund dives into renewables**” in *The Guardian* (April 5).

In Canada, with **the Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance** scheduled to report shortly, the Bank of Canada **announced** on March 27 that it has joined the **Central Banks’ and Supervisors’ Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS)**, an international body established in December 2017 to promote best practices in climate risk management for the financial sector. (This is despite the fact that Bank of Canada Governor Stephen Poloz discussed the vulnerabilities and risks in Canada’s financial system in his **year-end progress report** in December 2018 – without ever mentioning climate change.) In the U.S., on March 25, the head of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco released ***Climate Change and the Federal Reserve***, which states: “In this century, three key forces are transforming the economy: a demographic shift toward an older population, rapid advances in technology, and climate change.” A discussion of both these developments appears in “**Bank of Canada commits to probing climate liabilities**” in *The National Observer* (March 27).

And if we needed more proof that coal is a dying industry: The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis released [*Over 100 Global Financial Institutions Are Exiting Coal, With More to Come*](#) in February, drawing on the ongoing and growing [list of banks](#) which have stopped investing in new coal development, as maintained by BankTrack. The detailed IEEFA report states that “34 coal divestment/restriction policy announcements have been made by globally significant financial institutions since the start of 2018. In the first nine weeks of 2019, there have been five new announcements of banks and insurers divesting from coal. Global capital is fleeing the thermal coal sector.” Proof: global mining giant Glencore announced on February 20 that it would cap its coal production at current levels in [“Furthering Our Commitment to the Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy.”](#)

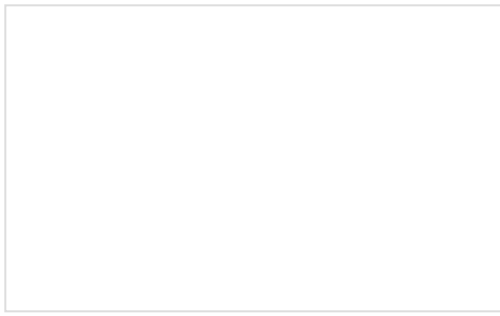
Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Banking Industry](#), [Canada Pension Plan Investment Board \(CPPIB\)](#), [Coal Industry](#), [Energy Investment](#), [Green Investment](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pension Fund management](#) | [2 Replies](#)

English language version of Germany’s Coal Transition Report now available, with independent analysis of employment impacts

Posted on **April 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The final [report of the German Commission for Growth, Structural Change and Employment \(Coal Exit Commission\)](#) was delivered in January 2019, and is now available in [an English language version](#). The [Clean Energy Wire](#) is a German news service written in English, and updates the implementation of the Report’s recommendations. For example, [an article from April 4](#) states that Germany’s federal government and coal mining states have agreed on a programme worth 260 million euros to provide fast support to regions affected by the coal exit – a first step in the estimated 40 billion euros needed over the next 20 years. On April 8, it published [“Mining union wants more efforts to unleash energy transition’s job potentials”](#), providing an English language summary of German statements by the leader of IG BCE.

The Wuppertal Institute commented on the Commission’s findings and made its own recommendations in [Assessment of the Results of the Commission on Structural Change](#). The report commends the Commission for finding a consensus path forward amidst very strong competing interests, but looking ahead, it calls for public education and acceptance, as well as policy tools “to push ahead vigorously with the expansion of renewable energies, to create the necessary framework conditions with the expansion of the electricity grid and to implement a holistic approach to the energy transition which, above all, takes the potential of energy efficiency into account to a much greater extent than before.”



Also in the wake of the Coal Exit Commission report, researchers at the [German Institute for Economic Research](#), the [Wuppertal Institute](#) and the [Ecologic Institute](#) released a detailed joint report explaining why the coal phase-out is needed and how it can become a success. It also provides facts and figures on the German coal industry, including a list of all large coal plants. The summary press release is [here](#). ***Phasing Out Coal in the German Energy Sector: Interdependencies, Challenges And Potential Solutions*** argues that the benefits of phasing out coal exceed the costs and will provide new economic opportunities, with jobs in demand-management, storage, “power-to-x applications”, and efficiency technologies. Of particular interest is Section 4 of the report, which includes statistics and discussion of employment effects. Approximately 18,500 persons are employed directly in lignite-fired power plants and lignite mining, with another 4,000 to 8,000 in coal-fired power plants. The report finds that, by 2030, approximately two thirds of the direct employees would be eligible for normal retirement, and another 10% would be eligible for early retirement schemes at the age of 55. For younger employees, some jobs will be created in dismantling power plants and for remediation. For others who will need to find new jobs, the report holds up the example of Vattenfall in Berlin, where trainees under a rotation scheme can learn different skills in various functions. The report acknowledges that the wage level in the lignite industry is far higher than comparable new employment. It also discusses the availability of EU, German Government and Federal State funds to finance structural change in the lignite regions. EU support includes policy support under the [Platform for Coal Regions in Transition](#), established in December 2017, as well as [EU funds](#).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Germany](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta election on April 16: economy and the environment face a better

future with an NDP win

Posted on **April 11, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

The **Alberta provincial election** takes place on April 16 – in an atmosphere of economic anxiety, as summarized by “**Albertans prepare to elect a government in a climate of deep anxiety**” and “**No pedal to floor: Experts say no government can bring back Alberta bitumen boom**” . And *Macleans* sums up election coverage in “**The most visceral Alberta election campaign in memory**” .



Given the radically different policies and futures at stake, the Alberta Federation of Labour has been active in this election campaign, with a “**Next Alberta**” campaign and an information rich website. Most recently, the AFL commissioned and released a report by Hugh Mackenzie: ***The Employment Impact of Election Promises: Analysis of budgetary scenarios of UCP and NDP platforms*** . The report compares the economic and employment impacts over the next four years of the fiscal scenarios implied by the strategy of the Rachel Notley NDP government, as set out in its **2018 Budget**, and the election platform of Jason Kenney’s United Conservative Party (UCP), ***Getting Alberta Back to Work*** . Mackenzie’s conclusion: “Under the Notley budget plan, 5500 jobs would be lost. Under the Kenny budget plan between 58,000-85,000 jobs would be lost – more than were lost in the recession of 2015-16.”

*President of the AFL, Gil McGowan, discusses the report in an Opinion Piece, “**How NOT to fix Alberta’s hurting jobs economy**” in The Tyee. He states: “The UCP plan, which hollows out government revenue with a large corporate tax cut, requires more than \$7 billion in annual program spending to be cut by the fourth year of the UCP’s plan, in order to meet their goal of eliminating the deficit by 2023. The fiscal strategy proposed by Jason Kenney would cut employment in Alberta by nearly 60,000 over a four-year period, with 27,700 job losses in the public sector and 30,600 job losses in the private sector.*

The UCP’s stated longer-term objective of reducing Alberta’s per capita public services investment to the level in B.C. would push job losses even higher, to a total of nearly 85,000.

Looking at the likely bottom-line impacts, it is clear that the point of the UCP’s fiscal strategy is not to address the deficit or debt, since the UCP’s stated debt load after four years of \$86 billion is not far off from the NDP projection of \$95 billion. The big difference between the NDP and the

UCP is that the NDP will spend on people, while the UCP will spend on tax breaks for corporations.”

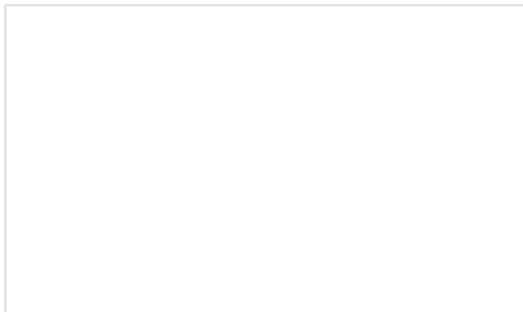
From an environmental perspective, *The Narwhal* has published thoughtful discussions of the issues at stake in the Alberta election: “**Notley vs. Kenney on how to deal with Alberta’s 167,000 inactive and abandoned oil and gas wells**” (April 3) and “**Eight environmental issues at stake in the Alberta election (that are not pipelines)**” (April 11) – including reclamation and oil and gas liabilities, carbon taxes, methane regulation, energy efficiency, and the oilsands emissions cap.

Another substantial discussion comes from the Pembina Institute blog, ***Climate policy is economic policy: party platforms must address climate action***, which states, “Both parties need to commit to more to protect the current and future interests of Albertans, and prepare the province for a 21st-century economy. ” The Pembina outlined its preferred vision in March, ***Energy Policy Leadership in Alberta***.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, jobs vs environment, Political parties and policies, provincial climate change policies** | **Leave a reply**

Amnesty International campaign calls for better mining, manufacture, and disposal of electric vehicle batteries

Posted on **April 10, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

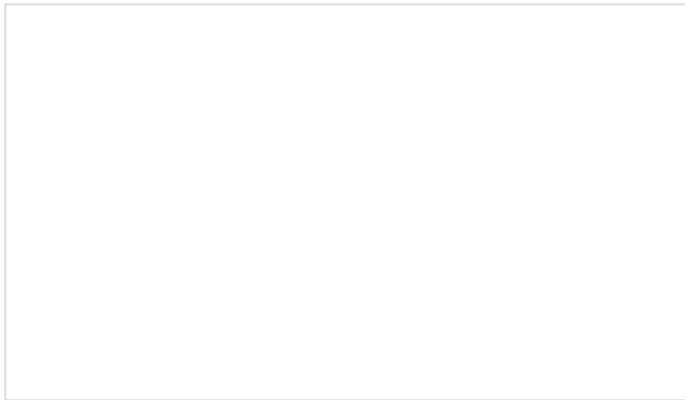


While the **Nordic EV Summit** in March 2019 showcased progress on the adoption of electric vehicles, Amnesty International used that backdrop to **issue a challenge** to leaders in the electric vehicle industry – to produce the world’s first completely ethical battery, free of human rights abuses within its supply chain, within five years.

It is not news that the mining of cobalt and lithium, the two key minerals in batteries, has been linked to human rights abuses, environmental pollution, ecosystem destruction and indigenous rights violations. Amnesty was amongst the first to document the child labour and human rights abuses with a report ***This is what we die for*** in 2016, updated in 2017 by an article, ***“The Dark Side of Electric Cars: Exploitative Labor Practices”***. More recently, ***“Indigenous people’s livelihoods at risk in scramble for lithium, the new white gold”*** appeared in *The Ethical Corporation* (April 9), describing the human rights situation in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, which hold 60% of the world’s lithium reserves. The environmental impacts of deep-sea mining are also of concern.

In addition to the mining of raw materials, battery manufacturing has a high carbon footprint, with most of the current manufacturing concentrated in China, South Korea and Japan, where electricity generation remains dependent on coal and other polluting sources of power.

Finally, the issue of electronic waste, including batteries, has been the subject of several reports: From the International Labour Organization : in 2012, ***Global Impact of E-waste: Addressing the Challenge*** and more recently, ***Decent work in the management of electrical and electronic waste (e-waste)***, an Issues paper produced for a Global Dialogue Forum on Decent Work in the Management of Electrical and Electronic Waste in April 2019. The 2019 report provides estimates of the workforce involved in some countries – led by China, with an estimated 690,000 workers in 2007, followed by up to 100,000 in Nigeria, followed by 60,000 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The report deals mainly with occupational health and safety issues and includes an overview of international e-waste regulation, as well as case studies of the U.S., Argentina, China, India, Japan, Nigeria. Similar discussions appear in ***A New Circular Vision for Electronics Time for a Global Reboot***, released by the E-waste Coalition at the 2019 World Economic Forum, and in a blog, ***Dead Batteries deserve a Second Life*** published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development on April 9.



Clearly, there are labour and environmental problems related to lithium-ion batteries and the green vehicles and electronic devices they power. Recognizing all these concerns, the new Amnesty International campaign is calling for: improvement in human rights practices in mining, and a prohibition on commercial deep-sea mining; disclosure and accounting for carbon in manufacturing, and for legal protection and enforcement of workplace rights such as health, equality and non-discrimination; finally for products to be designed and regulated to encourage re-use and penalize waste, with prevention of illegal or dangerous export and dumping of batteries.

Canadian government funds new Climate Change research network

Posted on **April 10, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

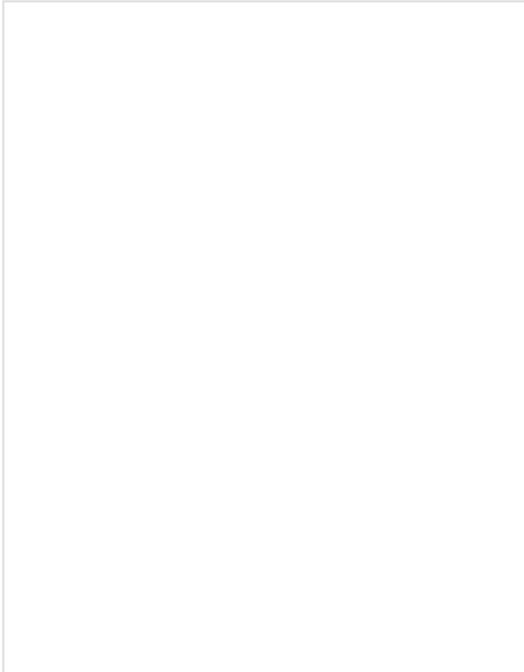
Environment and Climate Change Canada announced a new consortium on April 9, to be called the **Pan-Canadian Expert Collaboration**, and to be chaired by **Blair Feltmate**, Head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo. The Collaboration brings together fifteen Canadian research institutes, to provide independent, informed advice to policy-makers, mainly on the issues of clean energy, carbon pricing and adaptation. The researchers were chosen after an extensive competition, begun in October 2018, and the project will be eligible to receive up to \$20 million over five years – assuming the Liberal government remains in power in Ottawa after the 2019 election.

The real nitty-gritty about the goals of the initiative are contained in the **Discussion Paper** issued to solicit interest in the competition. The briefer government **Background** on April 9 sets out the goals of the Collaboration, and lists the fifteen research organizations chosen to participate. **The goals:** “provide credible and authoritative advice to Canadians and their governments; develop and provide independent and expert-driven analysis to help Canada move toward clean growth in all sectors and regions of the country; develop advice and analysis spanning climate change mitigation, adaptation, and clean growth; set its own agenda and operate independently from government; and fill existing information gaps and help translate research into useful information for policy decision-making.”

The membership:

- **Adaptation to Climate Change Team, Simon Fraser University** ;
- **Alberta Innovates** ;
- **Canada’s Ecofiscal Commission** ;
- **Canadian Energy Systems Analysis Research, University of Calgary** ;
- **Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources**
- **Evergreen and Future Cities Canada** ;
- **Foundation for Environmental Stewardship** ;
- **Institut de l’énergie Trottier, Polytechnique Montréal**
- **Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation and the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change, University of Waterloo**
- Ivey Foundation (no active website)
- **Labrador Institute, Memorial University**

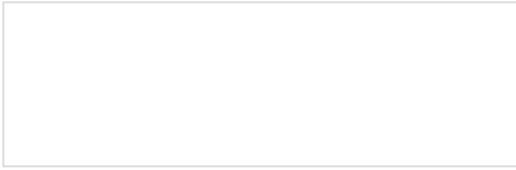
- **MaRS Discovery District**
- **National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development, University of Victoria**
- **Ouranos**
- **Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, University of Victoria**
- **Prairie Climate Centre, University of Winnipeg**
- **Smart Prosperity Institute**
- **Switch (l'Alliance pour une économie verte au Québec)** (English website [here](#))
- **Trottier Family Foundation**
- **World Resources Institute**
- **Yukon College**



So far, the media have taken little notice of the group, despite the fact that it was announced only a week after the release of the landmark and alarming government report, ***Canada's Changing Climate***, which showed that Canada is warming at twice the global rate. As of April 10, the only item published comes from *The National Observer*, "**Skeptical of Trudeau's carbon pricing? There's an institute for that**" (April 9) , which focuses on the reaction from Ontario's Ford government – attempting to brand the group as elite academics with no understanding of the costs of climate change policies.

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Canada, Climate change policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

B.C.'s Energy Step Code estimated to generate 1,700 jobs by 2032 while improving energy efficiency



The **B.C. Energy Step Code**, enacted in April 2017, is a voluntary standard which outlines an incremental approach to achieving more energy-efficient buildings in the province of British Columbia, over and above the requirements of the B.C. Building Code. According to a report **released** on March 7 by the Vancouver Economic Commission, the Energy Step Code has created a local market of \$3.3 billion for green building products and the potential to create over 1,700 manufacturing and installation jobs between 2019–2032.

Green Buildings Market Forecast : Demand for Building Products, Metro Vancouver, 2019–2032 was written for “manufacturers, suppliers, investment partners and other industry professionals to help them understand and prepare for changes in building product demand and performance requirements ...” Along with a companion technical report , ***BC Energy Step Code Supply Chain Study – Final Report*** (March 2019), it describes the basics of the Energy Step Code, and provides regional data and demand estimates for various products such as high-performance windows, lighting, heat pumps and renewable energy systems. Employment impacts are not the main focus, but the report also estimates the potential job creation impact to be 925 sustainable manufacturing jobs throughout B.C., as well as 770 ongoing installation jobs in Metro Vancouver. The Market Demand Forecasting Tool which underlies the report was developed by Vancouver Economic Commission in consultation with real estate and construction industry experts over eight months in 2018; modelling for the report was done by The Delphi Group. The details of the forecasting tool are documented in Appendix One of the report.

Two related, earlier reports: 1. ***Energy Step Code Training and Capacity*** , a consultants report from 2017, discusses the competencies required by professions (including architects and engineers) and trades, and provides an extensive inventory of training agents in the province.

The State of Vancouver’s Green Economy (June 2018) by the Vancouver Economic Commission, which states that the largest segment of jobs in Vancouver in 2016 were in the Green Building sector, with 7,689 jobs. The total Green Economy job count, encompassing Green Building; Clean Tech; Green Mobility; Materials Management; and Local Food was estimated at 25,000 jobs.

The B.C. Energy Step Code launched **a new website** in 2019.

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **Building Codes, energy efficiency, Green Building, Green Job Creation, Green Jobs, Job Creation, retrofitting, Vancouver** | **Leave a reply**

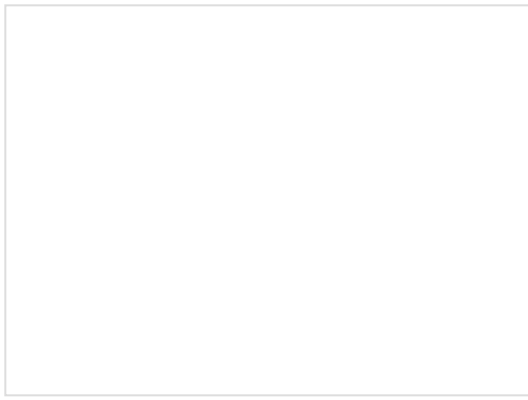
Canada is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world – what should we do?

Posted on **April 3, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



— *Observed temperature changes
1948 -2016*

Canada's Changing Climate Report (CCCR), was released on April 2, documenting the consensus of scientific experts from the federal government and academia, about how and why Canada's climate has changed to date, with projections for the future. The main message is tipped by the title of the government's press release: "**Canada's climate is warming twice as fast as global average**". Canada's annual temperature over land has warmed on average 1.7 degrees Celsius between 1948 and 2016 (compared with the the IPCC assessment of average global warming between 0.8 C and 1.2 C). Worse, in the Arctic, temperatures have risen by 2.3C – about three times the global average. In some parts of the Northwest Territories, temperatures have risen by between 4 C and 5 C .



Like the careful scientific style of the *IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C* (Oct. 2018), the Canadian report offers two different scenarios, based on low and high emissions futures. The general statement about the future, however, states: “The effects of widespread warming are already evident in many parts of Canada and are projected to intensify in the near future. A warmer climate will affect the frequency and intensity of forest fires, the extent and duration of snow and ice cover, precipitation, permafrost temperatures, and other extremes of weather and climate, as well as freshwater availability, rising of sea level, and other properties of the oceans surrounding Canada.” “Scenarios with limited warming will only occur if Canada and the rest of the world reduce carbon emissions to near zero early in the second half of the century and reduce emissions of other greenhouse gases substantially.”

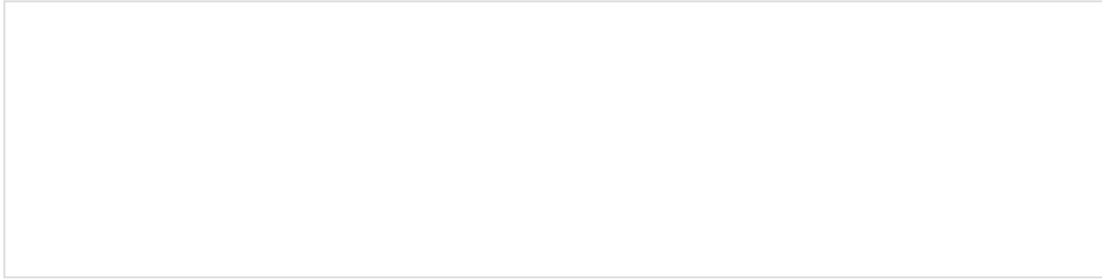
The report is available in [English](#) and in [French](#), with a 17-page **Executive Summary** in [English](#) and in [French](#). This is the first in a series of National Assessment reports to be rolled out until 2021, including a National Issues report on climate change impacts and adaptation; a Regional Perspectives report about impacts and adaptation in six regions, and a Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate report, assessing risks to health and to the health care system.

Are Canadians panicking? Sorry Greta, not yet anyway: Summaries of the [Changing Climate Report](#) include: “[Canada says global carbon pollution must be reduced to ‘near zero’ to limit harsh impacts](#)” in *The National Observer*; “[Environmentalists hope for action in wake of ‘shocking and utterly unsurprising’ climate-change report](#)” (consisting mostly of embedded audio interviews); CBC’s “[What you need to know about the new climate report](#)”; an [Energy Mix summary](#) by Mitchell Beer; and Crawford Kilian in *The Tyee*, “[New Climate change report should be a wake-up call](#)” which focuses on British Columbia.

Two Opinion Pieces may explain the lack of panic with which this report has been greeted: Thomas Walkom in the *Toronto Star*, “[Canadian politicians are obsessed with the wrong crisis](#)” and Neil Macdonald at CBC “[Report on devastating Canadian climate change a far bigger issue than Jody Wilson-Raybould](#)”.

Reaction from the Council of Canadians Blog is constructive: “[Canada is warming faster than we thought. What can we do about it?](#)” —urging readers to take individual action, including support for a Canadian Green New Deal. Such political action will be necessary, according to Julie Gelfand, Canada’s Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, who tabled her Spring 2019 audit reports in Parliament on April 2. The [environmental audits](#) cover

the topics of aquatic invasive species, the protection of fish and their habitat from mining effluent, and subsidies to the fossil fuels sector. In the accompanying “**Perspective**” statement as she leaves her position after five years, she reflects on lessons learned and concludes: “it’s the slow action on climate change that is disturbing. Many of my reports focused on climate change from various angles. We looked at federal support for sustainable municipal infrastructure, mitigating the impacts of severe weather, marine navigation in the Canadian Arctic, environmental monitoring of oil sands, oversight of federally regulated pipelines, funding clean energy technologies, fossil fuel subsidies, and progress on reducing greenhouse gases. For decades, successive federal governments have failed to reach their targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the government is not ready to adapt to a changing climate. This must change.”



Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Arctic](#), [Canada](#), [climate change impacts](#), [Climate Science](#), [Extreme Weather Events](#), [forest fires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Ontario Environmental Commissioner report falls on deaf ears as Ford government slashes energy efficiency programs,attacks carbon pricing (again)

Posted on **March 29, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A Healthy, Happy, Prosperous Ontario: Why we need more energy conservation is the final report of Ontario's Environmental Commissioner Dianne Saxe, released on March 27. The report documents the province's energy use, argues for the value of energy conservation, and makes recommendations: for improving utility conservation programs and energy efficiency programs for homeowners, and for urban planning policies to promote greater population density in "compact, complete communities" with jobs, transit and housing. The official summary of the report is [here](#) ; **a summary** was published by *The National Observer* on March 27.

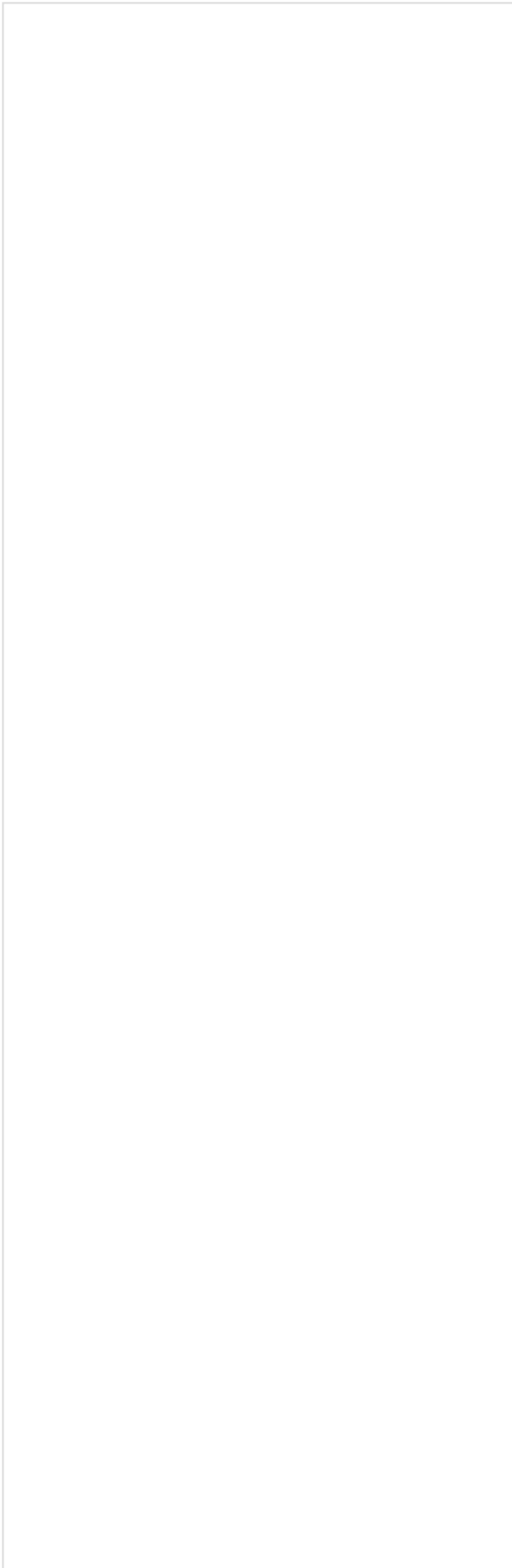
This is the final report of the Environmental Commissioner because the **ECO Office** has fallen to the pro-business agenda of the Doug Ford government: after April 1, it no longer acts as an independent agency reporting directly to the Legislature, but will be merged into the Office of the Auditor General. The Commissioner has been critical of government policies – for example, in the annual Greenhouse Gas Reduction Progress Report for 2018, ***Climate Action in Ontario: What's next?*** (September 2018). With the 2019 Energy Conservation Progress report, ***The Happy Health report***, she states that current government policies encourage the use of fossil fuels in the province and will result in higher energy costs for consumers, higher greenhouse gas emissions, and increased air pollution, with associated adverse health impacts.

The "Government of the People" slashes energy efficiency, promotes P3's: Despite the blunt criticism and recommendations of the Environment Commissioner (**and many others**), the Ford government continues to implement its "pro-business" agenda. It is planning cancellations to consumer energy efficiency programs, as reported by *The National Observer* on March 20, **"Exclusive: Doug Ford's government slashing programs designed to save energy in buildings"** (March 20) and in **"Ontario Slashes Energy Efficiency Programs, Delays Promise to Cut Hydro Rates"** in the *Energy Mix* (March 25), which summarizes the *Globe and Mail*

article, **“Ontario Pulls the plug on energy conservation programs”** (subscription required). A day later, the *Globe and Mail* said the cutbacks will include “subsidies for modern lighting, such as LED bulbs, more efficient air conditioners and furnaces, and upgrades to commercial refrigeration equipment. The government will also centralize the delivery of eight programs aimed at businesses, low-income seniors, and First Nations communities...”

On March 19, the government posted **“Ontario Moving to Increase Innovation and Competition in Infrastructure Market”** (March 19) , stating that it is “ working for the people to make the province a leading destination for investment and job creation by increasing innovation and competition in its public-private partnership (P3) market.” This will include action to “Open P3 projects to greater innovation by making output specifications less prescriptive and rebalancing the Infrastructure Ontario bid evaluation criteria to better reward design innovation.” Incidentally, the Ontario’s government is also willing to take credit for federal infrastructure programs: as described in the March 12 press release, **Ontario Launches \$30 Billion Infrastructure Funding Program** . In fact, the \$30 billion refers to combined federal, provincial, and local funding over the next 10 years through the federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The provincial share is a maximum of 33% .

And finally, the Ford government continues its attacks on carbon pricing: A March 25 press release, **“Ontario closes the book on cap and trade carbon tax era”** announces that “the total compensation amount is \$5,090,000 for a total of 27 participants” as a result of the the **Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018** (Oct. 2018) . The press release continues: “But in one week, the federal government will impose a brand-new job-killing carbon tax, punishing the hardworking people of Ontario... Our government remains part of a growing coalition of provinces across Canada that oppose this cash-grab, which raises the cost of essentials like home heating and gasoline.” The reality is that as of April 1st, the federal carbon pricing backstop will take effect in Ontario and the three other provinces that failed to design their own carbon pricing system under the Pan-Canadian Framework — Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick.



The EcoFiscal Commission is the latest to defend carbon pricing, with ***10 Myths about Carbon Pricing in Canada*** – saying “Myths and misleading statements, however, continue to damage the debate over carbon pricing. A debate based on poor information does a disservice to

Canadians....this new report will improve the quality of the debate by drawing on the best available evidence to debunk ten common myths. The report aims to serve as a resource for Canadians who want to learn what the evidence says about carbon pricing and its impacts on emissions, the economy, affordability, and jobs.”

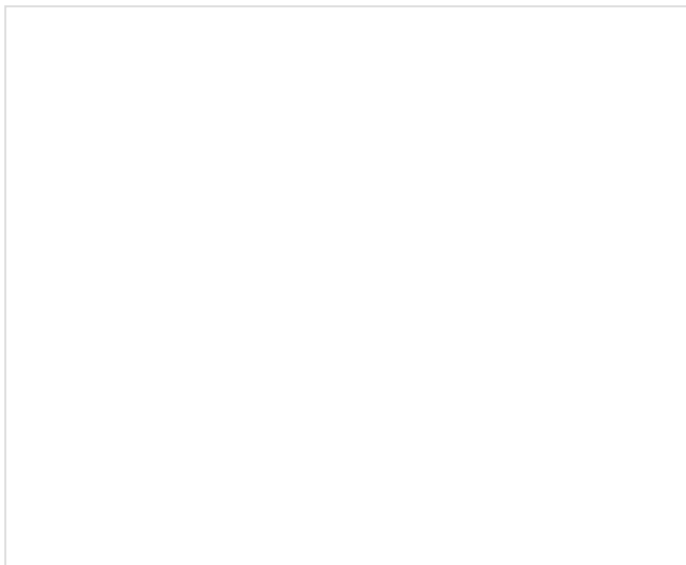
The constitutional challenge to the carbon backstop is awaiting the court's decision in Saskatchewan, and in Ontario, the court case will begin in late April. All related court documents are [here](#) . Also in April, the Ontario government [releases its budget](#) on the 11th.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Pricing](#), [energy conservation](#), [Energy policy](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Ontario](#), [P3's](#), [provincial climate change policies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. makes progress on a Green New Deal amid the chaos of Brexit

Posted on [March 27, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Understandably, the Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom are preoccupied with the chaos of the Brexit crisis – which in itself, has huge implications for environmental policy in the country. [“How Brexit will impact the UK’s environmental policy”](#) provides a good summary of the specifics, and an [active website](#) publishes analysis by “a network of impartial academic experts analysing the implications of Brexit for UK and EU environmental policy and governance” . [Greener UK](#), a network of 14 environmental NGOs, is also focused on Brexit “in the belief that leaving the EU is a pivotal moment to restore and enhance the UK’s environment. ”



Progress on a Green New Deal amidst the chaos: But while Brexit rages, and the country awaits the May 2 publication of recommendations on long term net zero emission targets by the [Committee on Climate Change](#) (CCC), the [Decarbonisation and Economic Strategy Bill](#) was

tabled in the House of Commons by two members of Parliament – Green Party member **Caroline Lucas** and Labour Party member **Clive Lewis**. Although the bill doesn't use the term "Green New Deal", Caroline Lucas does in her Opinion piece in *The Guardian*, "**The answer to climate breakdown and austerity? A green new deal**" (March 27). She states: "Our bill would introduce a "green new deal" – an unprecedented mobilisation of resources invested to prevent climate breakdown, reverse inequality, and heal our communities. It demands major structural changes in our approach to the ecosystem, coupled with a radical transformation of the finance sector and the economy, to deliver both social justice and a livable planet... This is purposely radical territory. We must push the boundaries of what is seen as politically possible. Because climate justice and social justice go hand in hand." The official summary of the Bill appears on page 7 of the parliamentary **Order Paper for March 26** including a 10-year time line with reporting requirements, and a stated goal for community and employee-led transition from high-carbon to low and zero-carbon industry, and the eradication of inequality.



Green Party MP Caroline Lucas has a long history with the concept of "green new deal", as part of the **Green New Deal Group** which was founded in the U.K. in 2007 and published its first policy statement : ***A Green New Deal Joined-up policies to solve the triple crunch of the credit crisis, climate change and high oil prices*** in 2008.

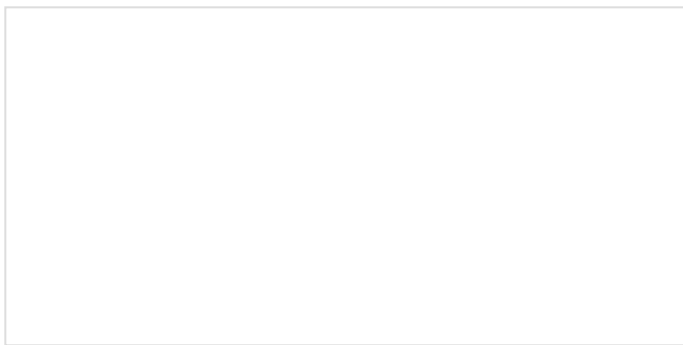
The Labour Party has also been in the news recently for its new grassroots initiative, the Labour Green New Deal. For example, "**Labour scrambles to develop a Green New Deal**" in *Climate Change News* (Feb. 14); "**Labour members launch Green New Deal inspired by US activists**" in *The Guardian* (March 22) ; and "**Our new movement aims to propel Labour into a radical Green New Deal**" (March 22) in *The Guardian*, an Opinion piece by Angus Satow, co-founder of the coalition, who states that the party's ***Green Transformation Environmental policy statement***, is a starting point, but " a GND means a new settlement for Britain. It would give local communities the funding and power to control their future, while democratising industry and the economy. Communities with control of utilities will have great power over their lives, while tackling fuel poverty, as the profits go to ordinary people, not shareholders." "**Labour for a Green New Deal – because climate change is a class issue**" by Chris Saltmarsh at *Labourlist*(March 22) lays out the role of unions in the initiative, with specific and detailed plans: "A Green New Deal in the UK is therefore nothing without participation and leadership from our unions. Rank-and-file trade unionists across the country are ready to organise for this from below. We'll work with them

to build support, host events, pass motions from branches to policy conferences, and develop regional plans for a Green New Deal that put workers first.”

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Brexit](#), [California](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Labour and Greens](#), [labour union policies](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian-made Pacifica van priced out of Electric Vehicle incentives in Budget 2019-Update: layoffs announced at Windsor van plant

Posted on **March 25, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Updated March 29 re associated layoffs at Windsor plant

Canada’s **federal Budget 2019** delivered on March 19, included a **number of policies aimed at speeding up EV adoption**: a 2040 deadline to phase out new internal combustion vehicle sales, \$130 million over the next five years to build electric vehicle charging stations, and consumer rebates for purchases of electric and hybrid vehicles (\$5000 for purchases under \$45K). On March 22, **CTV Windsor** reported on a protest rally by **Unifor Local 444** and local NDP politicians, who are infuriated that the EV consumer incentives program carries a price limit set at \$45K – which excludes the Canadian-built Pacifica Hybrid, priced at \$54,000. The CBC also reported **“Federal rebate on electric cars will push consumers to buy American, NDP says”**.

Brian Masse, NDP Member of Parliament for Windsor-West is **promoting a petition** demanding to have all Canadian-built hybrids, including the Pacifica Hybrid, added to the list of incentive-eligible vehicles.

Update: On March 28, the Windsor Star reported **“FCA Canada to stop third shift at Windsor Assembly Plant, cutting 1,500 jobs”**. The article quotes a company email which states: “In order to better align production with global demand at its Windsor Assembly Plant, FCA notified Unifor

today that it intends to return the plant to a traditional two-shift operation, beginning Sept. 30, 2019....Retirement packages will be offered to eligible employees. The Company will make every effort to place indefinitely laid off hourly employees in open full-time positions as they become available based on seniority.” The plant will also be on shutdown for the weeks of April 8 and 15. Although Premier Ford is quoted as saying that the government will “fight tooth and nail” for the workers, there is no mention of restoring the electric vehicle [purchase incentives which the Ford government discontinued](#) in Summer 2018.

In **further critiques** of the electric vehicle incentive package: Almost immediately, [critics pointed out](#) that there were no sales mandates for auto manufacturers, despite previous findings that car dealers were failing to meet a high consumer demand- for example, in [Batteries Not Included](#) (2018).

“**Stalled: why North American lags as China and Europe lead the way on electric vehicles**” is an Opinion piece by Will Dubitsky in the *National Observer* (March 20), which calls the EV purchase incentives “a halfway measure offering less than the consumer rebate programs elsewhere,” and judging the \$130 million over five years for charging and refuelling stations “mediocre” compared to equivalent commitments in California and the EU.

Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood calls the incentives “modest” in his overall analysis of Budget 2019, “**Budget fiddles while climate crisis burns**” (March 20).

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [consumer incentives](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Budget 2019 provides modest funding for climate change improvements – Just Transition, electric vehicles, energy efficiency

Posted on **March 20, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Updated March 25, 2019 with reactions.

No clean economy vision is evident in the [pre-election budget , *Investing in the Middle Class*](#), delivered by Canada's Finance Minister on March 19. The *National Observer* has a [Special Report on Budget 2019](#) , composed of twelve focused articles covering the range of notable provisions. Mitchell Beer provides a good summary of the Budget's climate-related provisions, in "[Morneau's Pre-Election Budget Boosts ZEVs and Energy Retrofits, Extends New Fossil Subsidy](#)" in the *Energy Mix* (March 20). Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party is quoted in that article, and says that the climate provisions are "pathetic" – a similar reaction to that of [Environmental Defence](#), which states more diplomatically that "funding for climate change in this budget does not match the scale of the challenge". Similarly, the [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reaction](#) judges the climate provisions as "modest efforts to move forward on greening the economy", although calls the just transition plan "an important precedent." The [Canadian Labour Congress reaction](#) is a lengthy commentary on many worker-related initiatives – including the issue of Just Transition.

UPDATED: Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood weighed in with his overall analysis, in "[Budget fiddles while climate crisis burns](#)" (March 20), judging the initiatives as modest and inadequate to the urgent task – with the greatest disappointment being the ongoing support to the oil and gas industry. Similarly, [Climate Action Network Canada states](#) that "business as usual policy is no longer acceptable to respond to the climate crisis and the level of climate action that citizens, students, workers and communities are urgently demanding."

On the issue of Just Transition: The [Budget plan text](#) on Just Transition reiterates the previous Budget's pledge of \$35 million over five years for Just Transition of coal workers. In its [reaction, the Canadian Labour Congress](#) acknowledges the new pledge of \$150 million in infrastructure funding to directly assist resource-based municipalities, but quotes Hassan Yussuff, Co-Chair of Canada's Task Force on Just Transition: "... Canada's unions are looking forward to working with the Minister of Natural Resources as the newly named lead minister, but are disappointed to see that the government has not addressed key Task Force recommendations to support workers, in terms of income, training and reemployment needs. Without this, workers will be left behind."

More details appear in “[Coal workers get cash in budget but lack of details risks ‘major blowback’](#)” in the *National Observer* (March 19), including that the \$150 million infrastructure funding will not flow until the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Funds will be delivered by Western Economic Diversification Canada at a rate of \$21 million a year over 4 years, and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, at a rate of \$9 million a year for 4 years.

On the issue of fossil fuel subsidies: The government reaffirmed its long-standing (and unfulfilled) commitments to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, and pledged to establish an expert committee to examine the issue. Here is the [reaction from the Stop Funding Fossils Initiative](#): “This year marks the tenth anniversary of Canada’s G20 commitment to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. Yet, despite moderate progress in the 2017 budget, Canada remains the largest provider of fiscal support to oil and gas production in the G7 relative to the size of its economy.... the Government of Canada has doubled down on fossil fuels by introducing billions of dollars in new subsidies in the past year. Budget 2019 allocates a further \$100 million over four years to the Strategic Innovation Fund, aiming to help the oil and gas industry reduce emissions. ”

(Coincidentally, the 2019 [Annual Fossil Fuel Report Card](#) was released on March 20, revealing that global banks have invested nearly US\$2 trillion in fossil projects since the Paris Agreement was signed, and Canada’s Bank of Montreal, RBC, ScotiaBank and CIBC are amongst the worst offenders.)

On the issue of electric vehicles: Budget 2019 included a number of policies aimed at speeding up EV adoption, including a 2040 deadline to phase out new internal combustion vehicle sales, and consumer rebates for purchases of electric and hybrid vehicles (\$5000 for purchases under \$45K). Despite recent reports that EV supply is restricting purchases, the government did not institute a mandatory sales mandate for car manufacturers. Businesses will be allowed to deduct the full value of a new ZEV worth up to \$55,000 in the year they purchase it. The government also pledged \$130 million over the next five years to build electric vehicle charging stations – specifically including workplaces in the named locations. The *National Observer* summarizes these proposals in “[Canada proposes rebates for electric cars, voluntary sales mandate](#)”.

UPDATED: Unionists and local politicians staged a protest rally at the Windsor plant which manufactures the Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid on March 22. [CTV Windsor reported](#) that leaders of [Unifor Local 444](#) and local NDP politicians are infuriated that the consumer incentives carry a price limit set at \$45K – excluding the Canadian-built Pacifica Hybrid, priced at \$54,000. The CBC also reported “[Federal rebate on electric cars will push consumers to buy American, NDP says](#)”. And an Opinion piece by Will Dubitsky, “[Stalled: why North America lags as China and Europe lead the way on electric vehicles](#)” in the *National Observer* (March 20) calls the EV purchase incentives “a halfway measure offering less than the consumer rebate programs elsewhere,” and judging the \$130 million over five years for charging and refuelling stations “mediocre” compared to equivalent commitments in California and the EU.

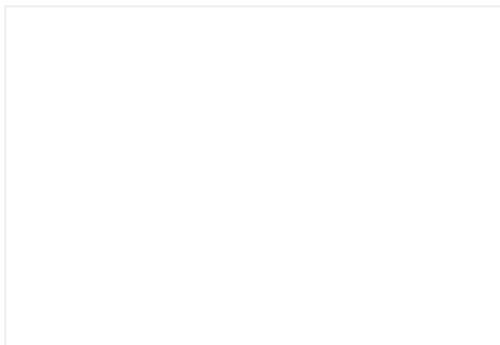
On the issue of infrastructure and the built environment: The text of the government’s announcement relating to energy efficiency is [here](#), and a [Backgrounder: Strong Communities](#),

Affordable Electricity and a Clean Economy is also relevant. Initiatives include \$1.01 billion in funding, immediately, to increase energy efficiency in residential, commercial and multi-unit buildings – in the form of financing and grants to retrofit community buildings, financing for municipal initiatives to support home retrofits, and financing to improve energy efficiency and support on-site energy generation in affordable housing developments . Funds will be administered through the Green Municipal Fund of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. *Macleans* magazine summarizes this, as well as infrastructure funding, in “**Cities are billion-dollar winners in Budget 2019**” which states that “the biggest single new spending item in the budget is a \$2.2 billion “one-time transfer” through the federal Gas Tax Fund. That money doubles the usual federal-municipal transfer through that mechanism. The windfall is intended to address “serious infrastructure deficits” in municipalities and First Nations communities.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [energy efficiency](#), [Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#), [Government Policy](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian kids out in force for the global Fridays for Future climate strike on March 15

Posted on **March 19, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



— **Montreal climate strike**

The global movement that is the **#Fridays for Future** climate strike, inspired by Greta Thunberg, exceeded all expectations for the number of demonstrators and the number of locations on March 15. In Canada, students marched in 55 cities, with the greatest showing in Montreal – 150,000 strikers – a greater turnout than Paris, London, Sydney , or almost any of the hundreds of cities and towns which participated. The *Energy Mix* highlights the global successes in “**1.4 million students in 128 countries make March 15 #schoolstrike a global phenomenon**” (March 15) .

Here are some accounts of the strike in Canada: From the *National Observer*: “[Canadian children school adults about climate crisis](#)” (March 15), which reports particularly on Montreal and Vancouver; “[Quebec students join global marches to demand climate change action](#)” (March 17) which reported that 150,000 students were on strike, representing 120 student associations. This amazing number is widely confirmed – including by [an article in La Presse](#) (in French). Also, “[CCL Youth join March 15 youth strike for climate](#)” from the Citizens Climate Lobby; “[We know we are at a crossroads](#)” in *The Tyee* (unique photos of the Vancouver strike); “[Students in Canada prepare to strike for the climate](#)” (March 14) in *Rabble.ca* .

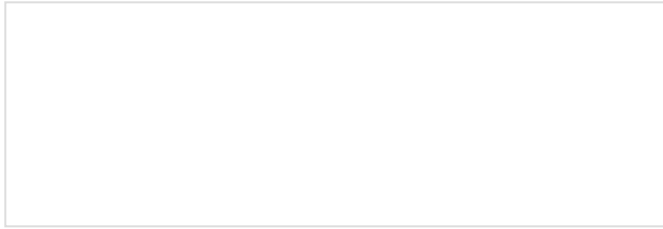


CBC coverage consisted mainly of photos and brief interviews from across Canada, including: “[Tens of thousands rally in Montreal](#)”, and “[Montreal students block schools ahead of climate protest](#)” (which prompted the school board to cancel classes). From [Halifax](#) ; [New Brunswick](#) ; [Ottawa](#) ; [Regina](#) ; [St. John’s Newfoundland](#) ; [Toronto](#); and Vancouver [here](#) and [here](#) .

Who are these young Canadian strikers? Of the many youth organizers across Canada, two have received special attention. [Sophie Mathur](#) of Sudbury, aged 11, was the first Canadian to take up the call of Greta Thunberg and has been profiled several times, even before the March 15 global strike. Early articles: “[Strike For Climate: Fridays For a Future](#)” appeared in *Below 2C* on October 31 2018 and “[Young climate activist to strike Friday in Sudbury](#)” in the *Sudbury Star* on November 2, 2018 . Most recently, on March 8, Sophie was one of five climate strikers [interviewed by Sierra Club International](#), for International Women’s Day.

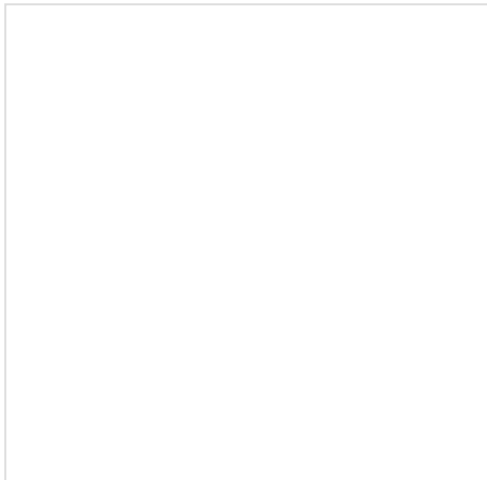
[Rebecca Hamilton](#) of Vancouver, aged 16, is a founding member of [Sustainabiliteens](#) , which organized the school strike in Vancouver. She is profiled in a new Greenpeace Canada series “[12 Questions with #YouthClimateStrike organizer Rebecca Hamilton](#)”. Both Sophie Mathur and Rebecca Hamilton were interviewed by CBC Radio in “[Ignoring climate change is like ‘putting off homework,’ says teen in School Strike for Climate](#)” on *The Current* on March 15

(transcript and audio), and also on CBC radio *Day 6* on February 2, along with Dominique Deveaux of Fredericton, [here](#) .



Politicians Reactions and support for student strikers: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded to the strikers on Twitter, as did Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna on her personal Facebook account, but there was no official reaction from the Canadian government. George Heyman, British Columbia's Minister of Environment and Climate Change also used [his Twitter account](#) to express that he is “inspired by the concern and commitment of the students”. Elizabeth May, leader of Canada's Green Party, issued [a statement of support](#) which lists Green Party candidates who are supporting strikes in their local ridings.

Reactions from Unions: In Canada, the B.C. Teachers Federation [tweeted](#) a thanks to the students from their Annual Meeting , and at that AGM, activist Seth Klein [addressed](#)

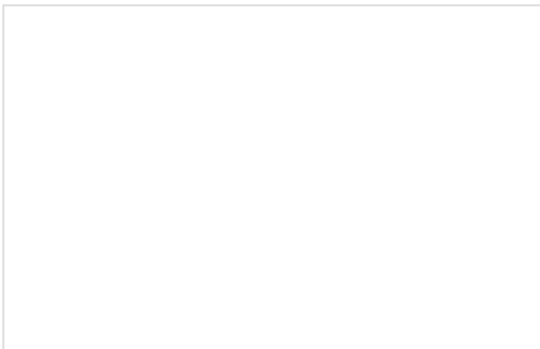


[the meeting](#) about the role of teachers in fighting climate change. The international confederation of teachers' unions, Education International, has also supported the student climate strikers, with this [Statement of Support](#) (Feb. 28, 2019) and this [blog post](#) of February 22. A [CBC report](#) of March 1 also states that staff and faculty of Laurentian University in Sudbury have signed a letter of support for the strikers.

The International Trade Union Confederation issued a [statement of support](#) which states that “Unions in Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, the UK and elsewhere are taking part and many others are active in mobilising their members” and “Taking inspiration from young people, **union representatives in workplaces will, in the last week of June, invite employers to sit down with the workers in workplaces to discuss plans to reduce emissions and climate proof workplaces.**”



Canada's next big student protest has been set for **May 3**. Updates will be posted on the Facebook Events page [here](#). In the meantime, 350.org has posted "[5 ways you can support the school climate strikes](#)".



And last word goes to Nobel-nominee Greta Thunberg, from [her Facebook post](#) following the March 15 strikes:

Once you have done your homework, you realize that we need new politics. We need a new economics, where everything is based on our rapidly declining and extremely limited carbon budget.

But that is not enough. We need a whole new way of thinking. The political system that you have created is all about competition. You cheat when you can because all that matters is to win. To get power. That must come to an end. We must stop competing with each other. We need to start cooperating and sharing the remaining resources of this planet in a fair way. We need to start living within the planetary boundaries, focus on equity and take a few steps back for the sake of all living species.

We are just passing on the words of the science. Our only demand is that you start listening to it. And then start acting.

So please stop asking your children for the answers to your own mess.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [climate strikes](#), [Greta Thunberg](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [labour union policies](#), [teachers](#), [Youth and climate](#) | [1 Reply](#)

United Nations reports warn of health impacts of climate change, thawing Arctic

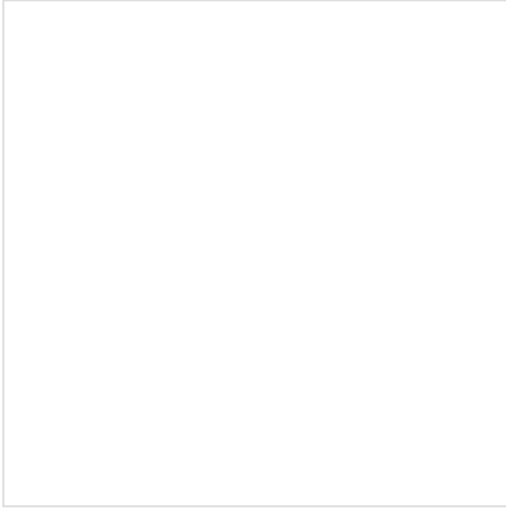
Posted on **March 18, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) convened from March 11 – 15 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the sombre cloud of the crash of Ethiopian Airlines **which killed many, including Canadians**, on their way to attend the meetings.

The flagship report, produced by 250 global scientists and experts, is the ***Sixth Global Environmental Outlook***, which the UN press release calls “the most comprehensive and rigorous assessment on the state of the environment completed by the UN in the last five years .. warning

that damage to the planet is so dire that people's health will be increasingly threatened unless urgent action is taken.” It warns that, without such urgent action, cities and regions in Asia, the Middle East and Africa could see millions of premature deaths by 2050, with pollutants in freshwater systems leading to deaths through increased anti-microbial resistance, as well as impacts on male and female fertility and impaired neurodevelopment of children, from endocrine disruptors. A 28-page [Summary for Policymakers](#) is available in multiple languages besides English, including [French](#) .



The official documents from the UNEA meetings are compiled [here](#) , including the closing press release summary, “[World pledges to protect polluted, degraded planet as it adopts blueprint for more sustainable future](#)” .

Other reports relevant to Canada:

1.The [Assessment and Data Report for North America](#) is one of the regional reports, all of which are compiled [here](#) .

2. [Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want](#) examines the economic benefits and environmental costs of resource use, and finds that all resource sectors combined (including agriculture, mining, forestry) account for 53% of the world's carbon emissions. Extraction and primary processing of metals and other minerals is responsible for 20% of health impacts from air pollution and 26% of global carbon emissions. The report warns that without change, resource demand would more than double to 190bn tonnes a year, greenhouse gases would rise by 40% and demand for land would increase by 20%. A [summary](#) of the report appeared in *The Guardian*.

3. With a forecast even more dire than the 2018 IPCC report, [Global linkages: A graphic look at the changing Arctic](#) warns that even if global emissions were to halt overnight, winter temperatures in the Arctic would still increase 4 to 5°C by 2100 because of greenhouse gases already emitted and ocean heat storage. The UNEA report warns of the dangers of thawing permafrost, predicting that by 2050, four million people, and around 70% of today's Arctic infrastructure, will be threatened. However, a [critique by the Carbon Brief](#) disputes this particular conclusion within the UNEA report, and states that if humanity can mobilize to hit a -2

degrees C target, “future Arctic winter warming will be around 0.5 to 5.0°C by the 2080s compared to 1986-2005 levels, much lower than the 5.0 to 9.0°C values stated in the report.” ... “This means that much of the future warming in the Arctic will depend on our emissions over the 21st century, rather than being ‘locked in’, as the report claims.” The Carbon Brief analysis is [summarized in The Energy Mix](#) .

Posted in [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Arctic](#), [climate change and health](#), [extractive industries](#), [health effects of climate change](#), [mining industry](#), [United Nations](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Alberta Federation of Labour’s 12-point Plan, and the art of communicating Just Transition

Posted on **March 15, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The Alberta Federation of Labour has launched a campaign “by and for Alberta’s workers” in advance of the provincial election in Spring 2019. The [Next Alberta Campaign](#) website compares the [party platforms](#) of the NDP and the United Conservative Party (UCP) , characterized as “pragmatists” and “dinosaurs” – with a clear preference for the pragmatist NDP platform. In a [March 13 press release](#), the AFL also released their own [12 Point Plan](#) with this introduction by Gil McGowan, AFL President : “The old policy prescriptions of corporate tax cuts and deregulation .. are particularly ill-suited to the challenges we face today. And simply waiting for the next boom, as Alberta governments have done for decades, is not an option because it probably won’t happen. Like it or not, our future is going to be defined by change. So, the priority needs to be getting our people and our economy ready for that change, instead of sticking our heads in the sand.”

What exactly does the AFL propose? Their [12 Point Plan](#) includes initiatives around five themes: Support Alberta’s oil & gas industry; Diversify the economy; Invest in Infrastructure; Invest in people (by investing in public services, including expanding medicare, child care and free tuition, and expanding pension plans); and Protect Workers’ Rights. With a very pragmatic orientation, the document has no mention of “Just Transition” or coal phase-out, and emissions reduction is

proposed in these terms: “Reduce carbon emissions, as much as possible, from each barrel of oil produced in Alberta so, we can continue to access markets with increasingly stringent emission standards.”

On the issue of the **oil and gas industry**, the Plan states:

We need to build new pipelines to access markets other than the U.S.

We need to incentivize and support oil and gas companies in their efforts to reduce emissions so we can continue to access markets with increasingly stringent environmental standards.

Our goal should be to make sure that Alberta is last heavy oil producer standing in an increasingly carbon constrained world.

On the issue of **Infrastructure**, the 12-Point Plan calls for:

procurement policies need to be revamped, for example, to use Community Benefit Agreements which emphasize the public interest by awarding contracts to companies that hire local, buy local and achieve thresholds related to environmental, social, and economic factors.

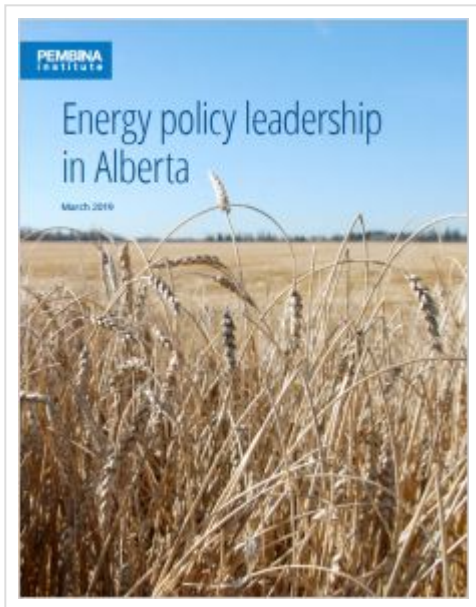
companies and contractors working on public infrastructure projects need to comply with labour standards, provide fair pay, and provide training for Albertans.

Research into communicating energy policies: The Alberta Narrative Project released a report, ***Communicating Climate Change and Energy in Alberta*** in February, documenting Albertan’s voices on issues of climate change, oil sands, politics, and more. Some highlights are cited in ***“Lessons in talking climate with Albertan Oil Workers”*** (Feb. 21), including:

“In Alberta, recognising the role that oil and gas has played in securing local livelihoods proved crucial. Most environmentalists would balk at a narrative of ‘gratitude’ towards oil, but co-producing an equitable path out of fossil fuel dependency means making oil sands workers feel valued, not attacked. Empathic language that acknowledges oil’s place in local history could therefore be the key to cultivating support for decarbonisation.

.....This project was also one of the first to test language specifically on energy transitions. While participants were generally receptive to the concept, the word ‘just’, with its social justice connotations, proved to be anything but politically neutral. In an environment where attitudes towards climate are bound to political identities, many interviewees showed a reluctance to the idea of government handouts, even where an unjust transition would likely put them out of a job. Rather, the report recommends a narrative of ‘diversification’ rather than ‘transition’, stressing positive future opportunities instead of moving away from a negative past.”

The **Alberta Narratives Project** is part of the global **Climate Outreach Initiative**, whose goal is to understand and train communicators to deliver effective communications which lead to cooperative approaches. The Alberta Narratives Project, with lead partners The Pembina Institute and Alberta Ecotrust, coordinated 75 community organizations to host 55 facilitated “Narrative Workshops” around the province, engaging an unusually broad spectrum of people: farmers, oil sands workers, energy leaders, business leaders, youth, environmentalists, New Canadians and others.



Pembina Institute communications seem to reflect the goal of an inclusive, constructive tone. For example, their pre-election report, ***Energy Policy Leadership in Alberta***, released on March 8, makes recommendations regarding renewable energy, energy efficiency, coal phase-out, methane regulation, and “legislating an emissions reduction target for Alberta that is consistent with ensuring Canada meets its international obligations under the Paris climate agreement.” Also, ***Pricing Carbon Pollution in Alberta*** (March 8), which places carbon pricing in the history of the province since 2007, stresses the benefits, and makes recommendations relevant to the current political debate.

Posted in **Energy Policy, Uncategorized** | Tagged **Alberta, Alberta Federation of Labour, communicating climate change issues, community benefits agreements, Energy policy, Just Transition, Provincial Elections** | **Leave a reply**

AFL-CIO Energy Committee releases letter opposing the Green New Deal

Posted on **March 14, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

A **letter**, dated March 8, was addressed to Senator Ed Markey and Representative Alexandra Ocasio Cortez, and signed by Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America , and Lonnie Stephenson, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, on behalf of the AFL-CIO's Energy Committee. The letter states : “..the Green New Deal resolution is far too short on specific solutions that speak to the jobs of our members and the critical sectors of our economy. It is not rooted in an engineering-based approach and makes promises that are not achievable or realistic.” “...We want to engage on climate issues in a manner that does not impinge on enacting other labor priorities, especially much-needed infrastructure legislation...”

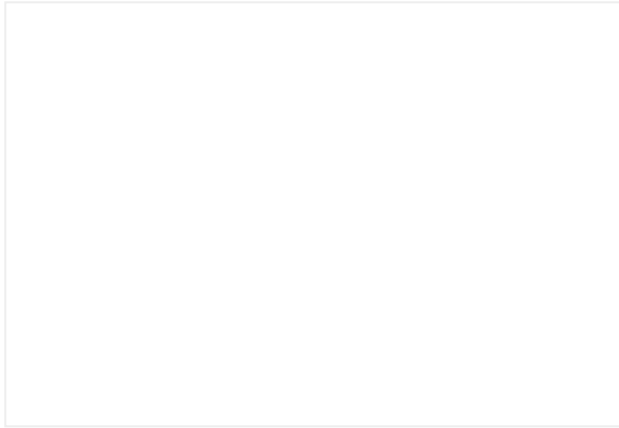


How they would engage and what they would propose is contained in a position paper posted on the IBEW website, and drafted by the IBEW, UMWA, and five other unions in the electric utility, construction, and rail transport sectors. The position paper, **Preliminary Labor Positions on Climate Legislation** , states their opposition to carbon tax legislation and grave concerns about the Green New Deal . It calls for comprehensive, economy wide climate legislation which would include an national emissions trading scheme, to be introduced no earlier than 10 years after enacting legislation, to allow for development of Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) technologies. It also calls for worker transition protections, including compensation and retraining. The policy document was submitted to the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee for the record of their February 6th meeting: **“Time for Action: Addressing the Economic and Environmental Effects of Climate Change”**.

Reaction: The *Washington Post* reported: **“AFL-CIO criticizes Green New Deal, calling it ‘not achievable or realistic’**” (March 12) and in a follow-up piece , **“Labor opposition to Green New Deal could be a big obstacle”** (March 14). The United Mine Workers **re-posted** the Washington Post article . Friends of the Earth, in its **reaction** to the March 8 letter, states “one-fifth of the unions that make up the AFL-CIO energy committee commented on the Green New Deal”, and, “With the energy committee’s position, the AFL joins climate deniers like the Koch brothers, the Republican Party and Big Oil. We encourage the AFL and other unions within it to rethink this position.”

Final Report released by Canada's Task Force on Just Transition

Posted on **March 12, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



— Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Catherine McKenna stands with Hassan Yussuff,
Co-Chair of the Just Transition Task Force and
President of the Canadian Labour Congress

The Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities **was appointed** by the Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change in April 2018. Their report, completed in December 2018, was released to the public on March 11, 2019 : ***A just and fair transition for Canadian coal power workers and communities*** – in French, ***Une transition juste et équitable pour les collectivités et les travailleurs des centrales au charbon canadiennes*** .

This report provides ten recommendations for the workers and communities affected by the federal government's 2016 policy decision to phase-out coal-fired electricity in Canada, as part of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. A 2030 timeline was decided in 2018, and final **Regulations** were released in November 2018. There are 16 coal-fired generating stations left in Canada and nine mines which produce the thermal coal that feeds them, located in Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Coal worker layoffs have already begun in Alberta, which has its own **Workforce Transition Program** in place. Workers in the metallurgical coal industry, which is used to make steel, are unaffected by the coal phaseout.

The new federal report, ***A Just and fair transition for Canadian coal power workers*** is built upon 7 principles, and makes 10 recommendations. Those principles of a Just Transition include: 1. Respect for workers, unions, communities, and families; 2. Worker participation at every stage of transition; 3. Transitioning to good jobs; 4. Sustainable and healthy communities; 5. Planning for the future, grounded in today's reality; 6. Nationally coherent, regionally driven, locally delivered

actions; and, 7. Immediate yet durable support. The report defines Just Transition, relates it to the Paris Agreement, provides an overview of coal mining work and provincial policies, and makes ten broad recommendations, largely based on what the Task Force heard in its public engagement sessions across the four provinces in the summer of 2018. “**What we heard**” is an accompanying report which summarizes submissions and lists the dozens of communities and organizations involved.

Recommendations: The Foundational recommendations of the Task Force include a call to “embed just transition principles in planning, legislative, regulatory, and advisory processes to ensure ongoing and concrete actions throughout the coal phase-out transition: 1. Develop, communicate, implement, monitor, evaluate, and publicly report on a just transition plan for the coal phase-out, championed by a lead minister to oversee and report on progress. 2. Include provisions for just transition in federal environmental and labour legislation and regulations, as well as relevant intergovernmental agreements. 3. Establish a targeted, long-term research fund for studying the impact of the coal phase-out and the transition to a low-carbon economy.” Recommendations concerning workers include: establish local transition centres to provide retraining, relocation and social supports; establish a pension-bridging program for those forced to retire early; create a detailed and publicly available inventory of labour market information regarding coal workers, and create a comprehensive funding program to assist workers in securing a new job – including income support, education and skills building, re-employment, and mobility. Recommendations relating to communities include: identify, prioritize, and fund local infrastructure projects in affected communities, and establish a dedicated, comprehensive, inclusive, and flexible just transition funding program ; meet directly with affected communities to learn about their local priorities, and to connect them with federal programs that could support their goals.

\$35 million was committed to Just Transition programs in 2018. The Task Force estimates that “direct and indirect costs of the phase-out will stretch well into the hundreds of millions of dollars and the timeframe will go beyond 2030.” It calls for “additional and more substantial investments in Budget 2019 and budgets thereafter.” Canada’s next **budget will be delivered** on March 19 – providing a gauge of the government’s intentions re Just Transition for coal workers and their communities.

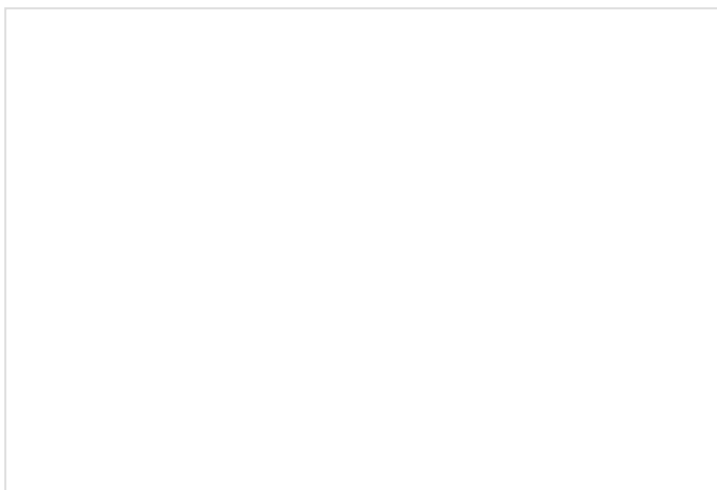
The Canadian Labour Congress announcement concerning the Task Force Report release is titled “**Just Transition Task Force report has potential to put people at the heart of climate policy**”, and pictures the **members of the Task Force**. In addition to Hassan Yussuff, President of the CLC and Co-Chair of the Task Force, union members included Gil McGowan (Alberta Federation of Labour), Mark Rowlinson (United Steelworkers), Scott Doherty (Unifor) , Tara Peel (Canadian Labour Congress), and Mark Wayland (IBEW).



Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [coal-fired electricity](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.K. Offshore wind energy investment promises jobs, but the example of Scottish workers leads unions to protest

Posted on **March 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



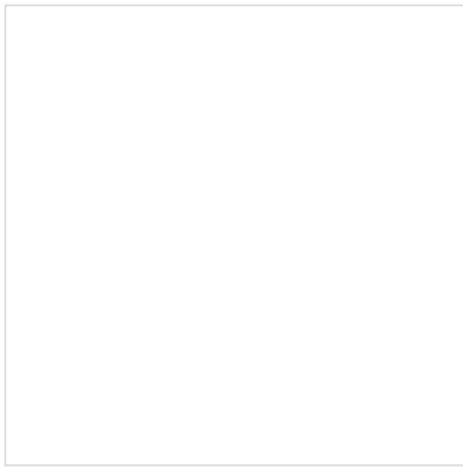
On March 7, the government of the United Kingdom announced a new [Offshore Wind Sector Deal](#) which aspires to provide 30% of the U.K.'s electricity by 2030 and, according to the [article in The Guardian](#), also promises that jobs in offshore wind will triple to 27,000 by 2030. The detailed government [press release](#) further states that the deal will increase the number of women in the industry, continue efforts by educational institutions to develop a sector-wide curriculum to facilitate skills transfer, prompt new targets for apprenticeships, and create an "Offshore Energy Passport", recognised outside of the UK, so that workers will be able "to work seamlessly across different offshore sectors." Unite the union reacted with [this statement](#), which included a warning that the Energy Passport "should not be used to attack workers' terms and conditions of employment, nor compromise health and safety regulations."

In the [same statement](#), Unite also called for a 'level playing field' for Scotland so that it can secure large-scale manufacturing contracts for its own offshore renewables sector. The concern follows the award of £2.8 billion in contracts for turbine manufacture to companies in Spain, Belgium and the United Arab Emirates, rather than to the BiFab yards in Fife, Scotland. As reported in "[Union fury as £2.8 billion wind turbine contract goes overseas](#)" in the *Greener Jobs Alliance newsletter* (March/April), the GMB and Unite unions are calling on the Scotland's Prime Minister and the Scottish Parliament to intervene, stating: "The Scottish Government and the public have a stake in BiFab and with it our renewables manufacturing future. We owe it to our communities to tackle the spaghetti bowl of vested interest groups that's dominating our renewables sector and to fight for Scotland's share'.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Offshore Wind](#), [renewable energy industry](#), [Scotland](#), [United Kingdom](#), [wind energy industry](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. Labour unions' climate change policies explained

Posted on [March 11, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



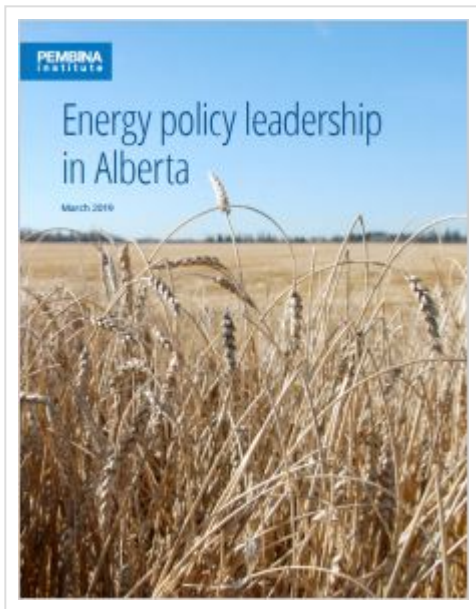
Labour Unions and Green Transitions in the USA: Contestations and Explanations is a new report by Dimitris Stevis, released on February 27 by the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Climate Change (ACW) project. Professor Stevis, from Colorado State University, identifies and provides details about 50 climate change-related initiatives by labour unions in the U.S. , up to May 1, 2018. In his own words: “This report outlines the deep cleavages with respect to climate policy but also argues that the views of unions are more complex and contradictory than the opposition-support dichotomy. Additionally, it seeks to understand what explains the variability in union responses to climate change and policy. What can account for the contradictions evident amongst and within unions?”

From his conclusion: “There is good evidence to suggest that unions can adopt initiatives to deal with climate change and can and have supported climate policy. But it is very unlikely that broader and deeper change can take place without some modification of the institutional and political economy dynamics of the country or, at least, some states. There is plenty of evidence that internal factors do shape the attitudes of unions as there is also good evidence that public policies can steer unions in one direction or another. For that reason strategies that aim at changing public policy at the level of cities, states and, even better, the whole country are necessary. In their absence the road of labour environmentalists will be that much harder.”

Posted in [United States](#) | Tagged [labour union policies](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

With an election coming, updates on Alberta energy policy

Posted on **March 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



With a provincial election looming large in Alberta, the Pembina Institute released a new publication, ***Energy Policy Leadership in Alberta***, on March 8, with this introduction: “Like most Albertans, we want to see the responsible development of oil and natural gas. The province’s policy and regulatory environment must ensure that our resources are produced in a manner that is both economically and environmentally sustainable. ... Alberta’s future as an energy provider is directly linked to an ability to demonstrate a demand for its products in a decarbonizing world. With the right policies, Alberta can be competitive, attract investment, spur innovation and remain a supplier of choice in the global energy market.” The **17-page document**, intended to reach across political partisan thinking, continues by outlining 23 policy recommendations “to unleash innovative technologies, deploy renewables, promote energy efficiency, continue greening our fossil fuel industries, and reduce climate pollution.”

The Alberta government itself is active in getting out its story about its energy policies. Most recently, the ***Alberta Climate Leadership Progress Report*** was released in March 2019, documenting the fiscal year of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 – the first year Alberta collected a carbon levy. The report states that a total of \$1.19 billion of carbon revenue was invested back into the economy that year, and a **press release** of March 7 catalogues the impacts, including:

- Climate Leadership Plan (CLP) investments have supported more than 5,000 jobs in 2017-18. CLP commitments, such as the Green Line in Calgary, will support a further 20,000 jobs in the coming years.
- Combining 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years, a total of \$978 million in rebates has made life better and more affordable for lower- and middle-income Albertans.
- The solar industry in Alberta has grown by more than 800 per cent.... About 3,100 solar installations have been completed across the province.
- Alberta is forecast to cut emissions by more than 50 megatonnes in 2030.

Further press releases from the government :

“Alberta solar on the rise”: (Feb. 15) announced a new contract for solar electricity with Canadian Solar, to run from 2021 to 2041, at an average price of 4.8 cents per kilowatt hour, sufficient to supply approximately 55 per cent of the government’s annual electricity needs while creating jobs in Southern Alberta.

“Premier’s plan unlocks \$2-billion energy investment” (Feb. 20) announced that the province will provide up to \$80 million in royalty credits, funded through the Petrochemicals Diversification Program, to support phase one of the a **Methanol production project by Nauticol Energy**. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2020, with a commercial operational date set for 2022; the government states that the project will create “as many as 15,500 construction jobs and an additional 1,000 permanent jobs.”

The **Alberta Community Transit Fund** announced a program which will provides \$215 million over 4 years. The press release lists 33 municipal projects awarded funding on March 7, 2019.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Energy policy, Oil and gas industry, Solar Energy, Transit Policy** | [Leave a reply](#)

U.S. energy employment report shows job growth in oil and gas, energy efficiency; decline in solar jobs

Posted on **March 8, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



The ***U.S. Energy and Employment Report 2019 edition*** (USEER) was released by the National Association of State Energy Officials and the think tank Energy Futures Initiative on March 6 , providing detailed statistics about the energy workforce and the industrial sectors in which they work. The 2019 USEER reports on the “Traditional Energy Sector” (composed of fuels; electric power generation; and electric power transmission, distribution and storage) as well as the energy efficiency sector. Those four sectors combined to employ approximately 6.7 million Americans, or 4.6 percent of the workforce, with an employment growth rate of almost 7 percent in 2018, outpacing the economy as a whole. The report also includes statistics on the motor vehicle and parts industry, (excluding automobile dealerships and retailers) – which grew at a rate of 3%, employing over 2.53 million workers. Of these, almost 254,000 employees worked with alternative fuels vehicles, including natural gas, hybrids, plug-in hybrids, all-electric, and fuel cell/hydrogen vehicles, an increase of nearly 34,000 jobs.

Noteworthy trends: the number of jobs in solar decreased by 4.2% in 2018 (the latest ***Solar Foundation Census*** reported a decrease of 3.2% for 2017- 2018); Oil and natural gas employers added the most new jobs in the fuel sector, nearly 51,000, most of which were in mining and extraction; the energy efficiency sector produced the most new jobs of any energy sector—over 76,000—with 2,324,866 jobs in total, and an anticipated growth rate of approximately 8%.

This is the second edition of the USEER Report to be published by the National Association of State Energy Officials and Energy Futures Initiative, and as before, it uses same the survey instrument and underlying methodology as was used when the U.S. Department of Energy was responsible, so that data is compatible for year-over-year comparisons. The survey was

administered to over 30,000 employers across 53 different energy technologies in late 2018. Data shows: Employment numbers and trends; Employer hiring expectations for the next 12 months; Hiring difficulty by technology and industrial classification; High demand jobs and skills gaps; Workforce demographics by race, ethnicity, gender, and veteran's status; highly detailed geographic location by state, county, congressional and legislative districts. A separate report on energy wage data is scheduled for release later in 2019. Reports are available in **several formats**: a Full Report, Executive Summary, and reports by State, as well as individual sections for **Fuels**; **Electric Power Generation Transmission, Distribution, and Storage**; **Energy Efficiency**; and **Motor Vehicles & Component Parts**.

Posted in **United States** | Tagged **auto manufacturing**, **Clean energy industry**, **Electric power generation**, **Electric Vehicles**, **energy efficiency**, **Energy Independence**, **Solar energy industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Generational justice and climate change: we can all strike for our future

Posted on **March 5, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

The constitutional challenge by the government of Saskatchewan to the Canadian government's **Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act of 2018** is underway – **hearings were held in February** and a decision is pending, with a similar challenge by Ontario to be heard in April. The main purpose of the court challenges is to nullify the federal government's national carbon tax program, the signature issue of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. But the case has also given youth activists an opportunity to address the intergenerational justice of Canada's climate change policies, as described in **"Canada obliged to protect future generations from climate change, test case on carbon tax hears"** (Feb. 20) in *The Narwhal*.

The preamble of the **Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act of 2018** states: "...Parliament recognizes it is the responsibility of the present generation to minimize impacts of climate change on future generations." This gave the Intergenerational Climate Coalition, led by **Generation Squeeze**, a platform, as recognized intervenors, to argue that: "Failure to price pollution discriminates against younger Canadians, because it puts in jeopardy our reasonable aspiration to thrive in 2030 and beyond" and "the health threats to children and future generations are vastly disproportionate to their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions". A **press release** in December 2018 describes the coalition and summarizes their arguments – mostly based on health consequences of climate change.

This issue of intergenerational justice was also addressed by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood in **“The all too ugly truth: Climate change is generational genocide”**, published in *Behind the Numbers* in February. Echoing the strong and direct tone we have come to expect from Greta Thunberg, Mertins-Kirkwood states: “For the generations poised to inherit our warming world, the complacency and greed of their predecessors is no longer being tolerated. From **Autumn Peltier’s presentation** to the United Nations to the climate strikes organized by **school children across Europe** to the **Quebec youth suing the government** for failing to protect the environment, young people are refusing to sit by while this existential crisis deepens.” He continues: “The perpetrators of the climate change genocide **include the fossil fuel industry** and **climate-denying politicians**, of course, but also the silent majority of fossil fuel consumers who actively ignore the mounting scientific evidence or otherwise take no responsibility for the path we are on. It is this generation’s campaign of destruction that is being inflicted upon all other and future generations.”

Youth are asking for help: The main point of Mertins-Kirkwood’s article is to urge us all to act: First, by recognizing and acknowledging how we have contributed to the problem; Second, by making climate change “a central concern for everyone in your life” ; and third, by supporting those fighting for a better future, through donations, but also by amplifying youth voices “online and beyond”. Greta Thunberg has also stated: “If you think that we should be in school instead, then we suggest that you take our place in the streets, striking from your work. Or, better yet, join us, so we can speed up the process.”

How to respond? “Intergenerational” organizations exist to support the actions of youth activists: for example, in Canada, **Canadian Parents for Climate Action**, and **For our Grandchildren Canada** ; in Australia, **Australian Parents for Climate Action** and **1 Million Women** . **Fridays for Future Canada** is coordinating the school strikes, but there are many more youth-led activist groups, many of whom are asking for support and donations. Some Canadian examples: **Canadian Youth Climate Coalition** ; **ENvironment JEUnesse** (Quebec group for under-35’s suing the government) ; **PowerShift Young and Rising** ; **Youth Climate Lab** ; **The 3% Project** .

Youth in at least 22 communities in Canada are participating in the Global Fridays for the Future climate Strike on March 15. As George Monbiot wrote in Resilience, **“Young climate strikes can win their fight. We must all help”**.



An excellent example: At their most recent climate strike, elementary school students in Sudbury were presented with a **letter of support from the faculty members** of Laurentian University.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Carbon Tax, Climate Activism, Climate litigation, Greta Thunberg, intergenerational justice, Saskatchewan, school strikers, Youth and climate** | [Leave a reply](#)

Reports on the future of Ontario's auto industry: one by experts, one by the Ontario government

Posted on **March 4, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

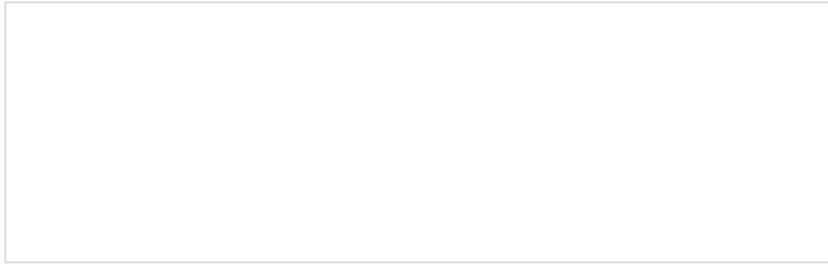


In ***The Future of Canada's Auto Industry***, released on February 26, co-authors Charlotte Yates and John Holmes assess the sector's current state – focusing on trade agreements and technological innovation – and recommend a suite of policies to boost competitiveness and avoid plant closures, especially timely in the aftermath of the “shocking” closure **announcement of GM Oshawa**. Although concentrated in Ontario, the industry is important nationally: “The automotive industry contributes significantly to Canada’s economic prosperity through investment, employment and technological innovation. Currently, it is Canada’s second largest manufacturing industry, adding \$18.28 billion a year to GDP, \$86.58 billion a year to Canadian exports (17% of total merchandise exports), and employing over 126,000 people directly and half a million people indirectly.”

The authors acknowledge the importance of the future trend to electric and autonomous vehicles, and propose a green industrial policy with targeted supports for companies that commit to building green vehicles sustainably. They point out current shortages of skilled workers and the aging workforce in the industry, and call for a workforce development plan that will invest in engineering, technical and data analytic skills, including trades and apprenticeships and income supports for skills retraining towards a just transition for workers. They acknowledge the challenges of global competitiveness and the need for research and development, and call for financial incentives, including tax credits and grants, and better access to capital for small- and medium-sized Canadian technology companies, as well as more focused R & D investments. In general, they call for deep collaboration between the federal and Ontario government, rising above bureaucratic and jurisdictional interests. Flagged as the most important condition for future success for the industry: “government policy needs to prioritize the North American automotive platform centered on the Great Lakes. Canada–U.S. auto production and trade could be further integrated to create even greater competitive advantages of efficiency associated with a larger regional production footprint. Canada continues to need preferential tariff access to the American market for finished goods for this model to succeed.”

The Future of Canada's Auto Industry was published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. A summary article which appeared in the *Toronto Star* on February 26, “**Electric, driverless vehicles key to survival of Canada's auto industry**” gives short shrift to the trade

relationships and the complex global dynamics of the auto industry, which figure more prominently in the actual report. The authors, John Holmes and Charlotte Yates, are both members of Canada's **Automotive Policy Research Centre (APRC)**, with long and deep knowledge of Canada's auto industry.



Ontario government discussion paper recommends less red tape and “pro-jobs labour reforms”:

In a second report, the same issues are discussed but with much different emphasis and level of analysis. The Ontario government's discussion paper, ***Driving Prosperity: the Future of Ontario's Automotive Sector*** was released in February under the “Open for Business” mandate. The government describes the paper as: “... a 10-year vision for how industry, the research and education sector, and all three levels of government, can work together to strengthen the auto sector's competitiveness and bring new jobs to the province.” In the introduction, the government states “We are driving prosperity in the industry and creating a pro-jobs environment by cutting red tape, eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax, allowing businesses to write off job-creating capital investments faster, and embracing pro-jobs labour reforms.”

Although the government report acknowledges technological disruption and trade issues as challenges, there is no direct mention of the GM Oshawa plant closing – and in fact, most of the statistics provided are from 2017. The issue of retraining and skills upgrading is raised in the general context of changing technologies, stating: “ We also want to minimize the disruption caused to workers and their families by technology and production mandate changes. We need to find new ways to respond to complex challenges. We need to establish new relationships with government partners in labour and academia to help Ontarians find faster and smarter training solutions.”

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing, Electric Vehicles, GM Oshawa, Retraining** | **[Leave a reply](#)**

The Green New Deal and Labour – updated with March 8 letter by AFL- CIO Energy Committee

Posted on **February 27, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



The Labor Network for Sustainability in the U.S. published a new Discussion Paper written by Jeremy Brecher in late February. **18 Strategies for a Green New Deal: How to Make the Climate Mobilization Work** states that initial discussion of the **Green New Deal resolution** was rightly focussed on values and goals, but this Discussion paper moves on to the “how”- in 18 specific proposals which are itemized individually, but are intended to work together. The paper explains and consolidates many of the goals and strategies which have been proposed before by LNS, including: protect low-income energy consumers and empower communities; mobilize labour and leave no worker behind; ensure worker rights and good union jobs, and yes, provide a “job guarantee.” The **18 Strategies** Discussion paper is summarized as **“The Green New Deal can work: Here’s How”**, which appeared in *Commons Dreams* on February 25 and was re-posted in *Resilience* on Feb. 26. In the article, Jermeý Brecher states: “A GND will not pit workers against workers and discourage the growth of climate-protecting industries and jobs abroad. It will oppose both escalating trade wars and the free trade utopia of neoliberalism.”

The Labor Network for Sustainability has worked to build solidarity behind the Green New Deal, and on February 26, published a **Special Issue** of their newsletter, which profiles the GND endorsements and initiatives of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council in California, SEIU Locals 32BJ in New York, SIEU Local 1021 in San Francisco, and the Business Manager of IBEW Local 103 in Dorchester, Massachusetts, along with other examples and resources. The LNS website also hosts a new blog by Todd Vachon, **Green New Deal is a Good Deal for New Jersey workers**, in which he argues for the GND and cites some of **his research** which shows that union members are more likely than the general population to support environmental action.

Sean Sweeney, the Director of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, has published **“The Green New Deal’s Magical Realism”** in *New Labor Forum*, which rejects the “far-fetched” label that many have used for the GND, and argues that “the magnitude of the climate crisis makes the half-measures and failed ‘market mechanisms’ of the mainstream in fact more unrealistic than the bold plans put forward by the Green New Deal.” He further argues that the GND deserves to be defended by the Left, not least because it does not call for carbon pricing. “If it can be sustained, this exclusion will amount to a massive policy breakthrough, because it flies in the face of almost 30 years of investor-focused climate policy.”

Another voice for consensus: David Roberts, the climate change journalist at Vox, who wrote **“This is an emergency, damn it: Green New Deal critics are missing the bigger picture”** (Feb. 23). Roberts states: “..... So that’s the context here: a world tipping over into catastrophe, a political system under siege by reactionary plutocrats, a rare wave of well-organized grassroots enthusiasm, and a guiding document that does nothing but articulate goals that any climate-informed progressive ought to share. Given all that, for those who acknowledge the importance of decarbonizing the economy and recognize how cosmically difficult it is going to be, maybe nitpicking and scolding isn’t the way to go. Maybe the moment calls for a constructive and additive spirit.”

On the other hand, Naomi Klein attacks Republicans, but also unions, in her article **“The Battle lines have been drawn on the Green New Deal”**, which appeared in *The Intercept* (Feb. 13). Klein praises the Canadian Union of Postal Workers for their climate change vision in **Delivering Community Power**, but singles out “bad actors like the Laborers’ International Union of North America who are determined to split the labor movement and sabotage the prospects for this historic effort.” Calling LIUNA “a fossil fuel astroturf group disguised as a trade union, or at best a company union”, Klein states: “The time has come for the rest of the labor movement to confront and isolate them before they can do more damage. That could take the form of LIUNA members, confident that the Green New Deal will not leave them behind, voting out their pro-boss leaders. Or it could end with LIUNA being tossed out of the AFL-CIO for planetary malpractice.”

The **LIUNA official response** to the Green New Deal was posted on February 7, and states: “It is exactly how not to successfully enact desperately needed infrastructure investment. It is exactly how not to enact a progressive agenda to address our nation’s dangerous income inequality. And it is exactly how not to win support for critical measures to curb climate change.... threatens to destroy workers’ livelihoods, increase divisions and inequality, and undermine the very goals it seeks to reach. In short, it is a bad deal.”

UPDATE: On March 8, the Energy Committee of the AFL-CIO released a letter they sent to Senator Ed Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, opposing the Green New Deal. The *Washington Post* reported: **“AFL-CIO criticizes Green New Deal, calling it ‘not achievable or realistic’**” (March 12) and in a follow-up piece, **“Labor opposition to Green New Deal could be a big obstacle”** (March 14). More details are [here](#), along with a link to a policy paper submitted by IBEW, United Mine Workers of America and others to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce in February 2019.

For all those who are still wandering through the mountains of Green New Deal articles and opinions: Canada's *National Observer* published a very brief summary in "[What is the Green New Deal and how would it benefit society?](#)" (reprinted from *The Guardian* in the U.K.). A more detailed explanation appears in *The Green New Deal: Mobilizing for a Just, Prosperous and Sustainable Economy* , a 14-page paper written by the originators of the concept, Rhianna Gunn-Wright and Robert Hockett at New Consensus, or their [2-page summary](#) . And here is the text of the GND Resolution tabled in the House of Representatives on February 7 2019: *Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal* .

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [AFL–CIO](#), [Green New Deal](#), [Labor Network for Sustainability](#), [Laborers International Union](#), [labour union policies](#), [LiUNA](#), [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

NEB rules that Trans Mountain pipeline is in public interest, despite marine dangers and ignoring climate impacts

Posted on [February 25, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

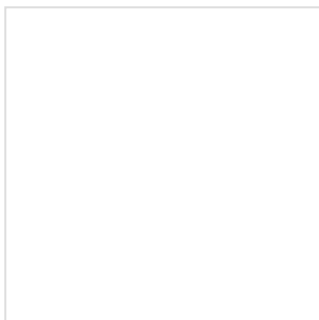


In headline news on February 22, Canada's National Energy Board released the *[Report of its Reconsideration](#)* process ([here](#) in French), and for the second time, approved construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The NEB states: "...Project-related marine shipping is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects on the Southern resident killer whale and on Indigenous cultural use associated with the Southern resident killer whale. The NEB also found that greenhouse gas emissions from Project-related marine vessels would likely be significant. While a credible worst-case spill from the Project or a Project-related marine vessel is not likely, if it were to

occur the environmental effects would be significant. While these effects weighed heavily in the NEB's consideration of Project-related marine shipping, the NEB recommends that the Government of Canada find that they can be justified in the circumstances, in light of the considerable benefits of the Project and measures to minimize the effects."

The decision was expected, and reaction was immediate: From *The Energy Mix* "[NEB Sidesteps 'Significant' Impacts, Recommends Trans Mountain Pipeline Approval](#)" , which summarizes reaction; from the *National Observer* in "[For a second time, NEB recommends approval of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion](#)" (Feb. 22) and "[NEB ruling sparks new vows to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline](#)". An Opinion piece by Andrew Nikoforuk in *The Tyee* is titled, "[NEB 'Reconsideration Report' a New Low for Failing Agency](#)" and from the Council of Canadians, "[The fight to #StopTMX Continues as feds approve their own pipeline](#)". From British Columbia, where the government has appeared as an **intervenor** against the pipeline , the Sierra Club reaction is [here](#) ; the **Dogwood Institute** pledged opposition (including a rally against the decision in Vancouver) and pledged to make the Trans Mountain project a major part of the federal election scheduled for Fall 2019; and West Coast Environmental Law [press release](#) also pledged continued opposition. Albertans see it differently, with Premier Rachel Notley [releasing a statement](#) which sees the decision as progress, but not enough to be a victory, and states: "We believe these recommendations and conditions are sound, achievable, and will improve marine safety for all shipping, not just for the one additional tanker a day that results from Trans-Mountain." It is important to note that not all Albertans are pro-pipeline: Climate Justice Edmonton is protesting with a "[People on the Path](#)" installation along the route, and **Extinction Rebellion Edmonton** actively protests fossil fuel development.

Meaningful Indigenous consultation still needed : The NEB Reconsideration process was triggered by an August 2018 decision of the Federal Court of Appeal, which ordered the NEB to re-examine especially the potential impacts of marine shipping on marine life, and the potential damages of an oil spill. The Reconsideration report has resulted in 16 new recommendations on those issues, along with the existing 156 conditions. Although the final decision on the project rests with Cabinet, the issue of meaningful Indigenous consultation is still outstanding from the order of the Court of Appeal. According to the CBC, "[Ottawa has met already with three-quarters of Indigenous communities during Trans Mountain consultation reboot](#)" as of Feb. 20, but also [according to the CBC](#), the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs says "We still say no to the project."



Even if one nation, one community says no, that project is not happening" . And the **Tiny House Warriors** continue to occupy buildings along the pipeline path, to assert their authority over the

land.

Canada ignores GHG impacts while Australia rules against a coal mine on GHG grounds....

A motion was brought by the environmental group Stand.earth, demanding that the NEB reconsideration of Trans Mountain include consideration of its upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions, as had been done in the Energy East consultation. Stand.earth stated: “The board cannot possibly fulfill its mandate of determining whether the project is in the public interest without considering whether the project is reconcilable with Canada’s international obligations to substantially reduce GHG emissions.” An article in the *National Observer*, **“IPCC authors urge NEB to consider climate impacts of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion”** summarizes the situation and quotes Tzeporah Berman, international program director at Stand.earth, as well as Marc Jaccard and Kirsten Zickfeld, two professors from Simon Fraser University. On February 19, the National Energy Board **ruled on the Stand.earth motion**, refusing to expand the scope of their reconsideration. Council of Canadians reacted with **“NEB climate denial another Trudeau broken promise”** .

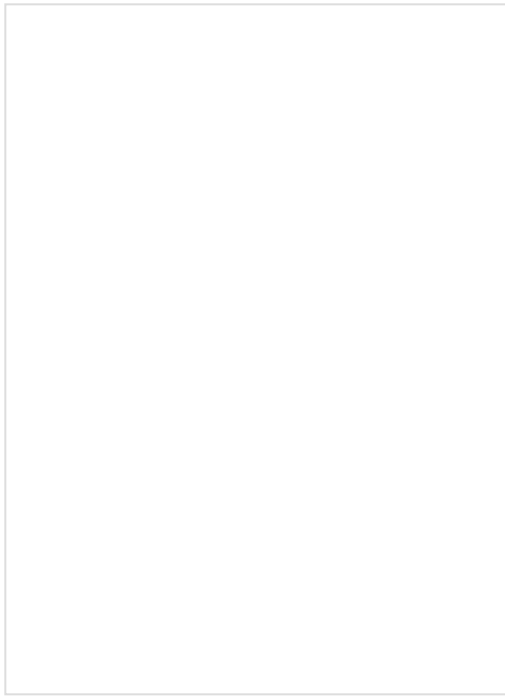
It is doubly disappointing that Canada’s National Energy Board declined to include climate change impacts in its assessment, in the same month that the Land & Environment Court of New South Wales, Australia upheld the government’s previous denial of a permit for an open cut coal mine.

According to **a report in *The Guardian***, the decision explicitly cited the project’s potential impact on climate change, writing that an open-cut coalmine in the Gloucester Valley “would be in the wrong place at the wrong time.... Wrong time because the GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions of the coal mine and its coal product will increase global total concentrations of GHGs at a time when what is now urgently needed, in order to meet generally agreed climate targets, is a rapid and deep decrease in GHG emissions.” The decision was also covered in: **“Court rules out Hunter Valley coal mine on climate change grounds”** (Feb. 8) in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and from the Law Blog of Columbia University: **“Big Climate Win Down Under: Australian Court Blocks Coal Mine Citing Negative Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions”**.

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Australia, British Columbia, Environmental Assessment, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, National Energy Board, Ocean Protection, Oil pipelines, Trans Mountain Pipeline** | **Leave a reply**

One more time – how best to train workers in green construction?

Posted on **February 25, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



The U.K.'s **Committee on Climate Change** released a new report on February 21, ***U.K. Housing – Fit for the Future?***, assessing how well U.K. housing is prepared for the impacts of climate change, including heat waves and flood risks. Energy use in Britain's 29 million homes accounts for 14% of current GHG emissions, and the report concludes that the U.K. cannot meet its present climate targets without major improvement in the housing sector. The report states that energy use in homes actually increased between 2016 and 2017, with many energy efficiency initiatives stalled and standards and policies weakened or not enforced. The report identifies 5 priorities and makes 36 recommendations to improve that performance, with a goal to reduce emissions by 24 % by 2030 from 1990 levels.

One of the five priority areas needing urgent change is “the skills gap”. The report states: “Regular changes to key policies have led to uncertainty and poor focus on new housing design and construction skills in the UK. The UK Government should use the initiatives announced under the **Construction Sector Deal** to tackle the low-carbon skills gap. Professional standards and skills across the building, heat and ventilation supply trades need to be reviewed, with a nationwide training programme to upskill the existing workforce, along with an increased focus on incentivising high ‘as-built’ performance. There is an urgent need for further work to ensure that low-carbon heat and mechanical ventilation systems are designed, commissioned and installed properly, and that householders are supported to use them effectively. Similar efforts are needed to develop appropriate skills and training for passive cooling measures, water efficiency, property-level flood resilience and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).”

The Paper Trail of Government Reports: The **Construction Sector Deal** referred to is a 2018 policy paper, part of the larger Industrial Strategy exercise, which includes a “**People” section**, which describes very specific proposals to improve training and apprenticeship programs under the industry-led **Construction Industry Training Board** (which was itself **reviewed** in 2018). The

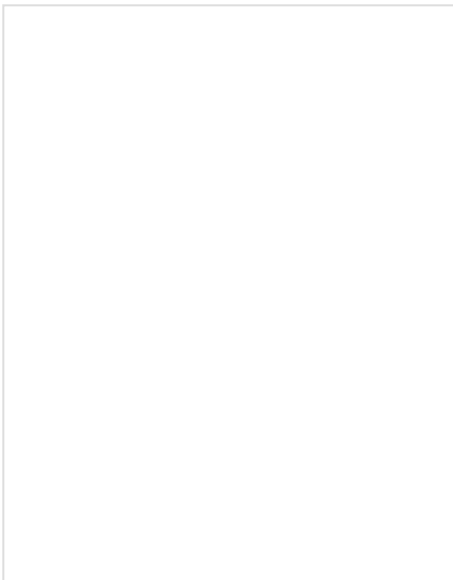
2018 Construction Sector Deal built upon [Construction 2025](#), which was a vision paper of government and industry working together, released in 2013.

A different perspective from the government-industry reports appears in an article by Linda Clarke, Colin Gleeson, and Christopher Winch in 2017, “[What kind of expertise is needed for low energy construction?](#)” which appeared in the journal *Construction Management and Economics*. The authors, from ProBE, the Centre for the Study of the Production of the Built Environment at University of Westminster, sketched out the essence of the problem, stating: “There is a lack of the expertise needed for low energy construction (LEC) in the UK as the complex work processes involved require ‘energy literacy’ of all construction occupations, high qualification levels, broad occupational profiles, integrated teamworking, and good communication.” Their proposed prescription for low energy construction was “a transformation of the existing structure of VET provision and construction employment and a new curriculum based on a broader concept of agency and backed by rigorous enforcement of standards. This can be achieved through a radical transition pathway rather than market-based solutions to a low carbon future for the construction sector.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Apprenticeship](#), [Green Building](#), [retrofitting](#), [Skilled Workers](#), [Training](#), [United Kingdom](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Architects, planners, and engineers working for climate change mitigation and adaptation

Posted on **February 22, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



A joint statement, “***Advancing Integrated Climate Action***” was released in Fall 2018 by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects , Canadian Institute of Planners , Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and the Canadian Water & Wastewater Association, acknowledging their ethical and civic responsibilities to address climate change issues, undertaking to improve professional development, and calling on all levels of government and Indigenous leaders to show meaningful leadership in “advocating for integrated climate action and upholding commitments in the Paris Agreement.” The 3-page Joint Statement, which includes much more, is [here](#).

What lies behind this statement? A team of researchers at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, in cooperation with the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) in Victoria, surveyed and interviewed planning professionals in British Columbia, and provincial and national professional associations on the issue of “low carbon resilience (LCR)”. The final report of their research, ***Low Carbon Resilience: Best Practices for Professionals – Final Report*** , was released in December 2018, providing case studies, tools and resources. The report includes a conceptual model of Low Carbon Resilience, as well as best practices case studies of how LCR can be mainstreamed – for example, local government planning in [the City of Hamburg, Germany](#) ; the [British Columbia Energy Step Code](#) ; and the construction and operation of a major health facility, the [Christus Spohn Hospital in Corpus Christie Texas](#) . The report also addresses the needs and possibilities for training and continuing professional development, and describes the database of key LCR-related tools and resources which is under construction.

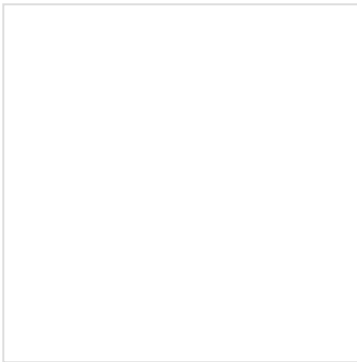
An earlier report, ***Professionals’ Best Practices for Low Carbon Resilience Summary of Phase One Engagement of Professionals and Professional Associations and Proposed Research Agenda*** summarizes the responses regarding individual attitudes and the role of professional associations . The report identified “siloe thinking among professions” as a barrier to climate change action – leading, for example, to a lack of awareness of the interconnections between zoning requirements, agricultural uses, biodiversity and infrastructure engineering in decisions about development and infrastructure planning.

The rationale behind the research: “This project focused on the key role professionals play as change agents in climate action, and what is needed for all sectors to advance uptake of LCR-based practices. Communities and businesses rely on professional planners, engineers, developers, lawyers, and other experts for guidance, design, development, implementation, operations, maintenance and replacement of all aspects of society’s systems. Professionals are seminal in supporting and supplementing capacity at the local scale, where climate change impacts are felt most prominently, and where the greatest burden of response typically resides. It is therefore urgent that professionals are equipped to help local governments think through cost-effective plans that transcend outdated planning.”

It should be noted that Canadian professional engineers are an important part of this system, and have long addressed their professional role related to climate change. Engineers Canada’s most recent ***Policy Statement on Climate Change*** details that history, sets out their position and makes recommendations for government. In May 2018, Engineers Canada issued comprehensive guidelines for standards, practice and professional development in ***National Guideline: Principles of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation for Engineers***.

B.C. Budget delivers \$902 million to fund Clean B.C. initiatives

Posted on **February 20, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The government of British Columbia **tabled its Budget** on February 19- officially detailed in ***Making Life Better- A Plan for B.C. 2019/20 — 2021/22*** . As summarized by the *National Observer* article, **“B.C. provincial budget funds nearly \$1 billion for climate action”** , it included \$902 million over the next three years to support the 2018 **Clean B.C. Plan** . Here are some of the big-ticket items: \$107 million for transportation initiatives – mostly providing incentives for zero-emission vehicle purchases (up to \$6000 per vehicle) and funding for new charging stations; \$58 million for making homes and commercial buildings more energy efficient – as a result, homeowners can get up to \$14,000 for energy efficiency improvements such as switching to high-efficiency heating systems or upgrading their doors or windows. \$168 million is dedicated to funding an incentive program to encourage large industrial polluters to reduce their emissions; \$15 million is dedicated to help remote communities transition to clean energy solutions, and \$299 million is unallocated as yet. In addition to the Clean B.C. funds, the budget includes \$111 million over three years to fight and prevent wildfires, another \$13 million for forest restoration, and \$3 million for the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative, to help First Nations communities build clean energy projects.

Reaction has generally been positive – for example, **from Clean Energy Canada** . The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. Office, in **“Nine things to know about the B.C. Budget”** commends the \$223 million which is budgeted to increase the climate action tax credit for low- and middle-income earners, but says, “action needs to be ramped up further—and fast”. CCPA’s **Special Pre-budget Feature** included an essay by Marc Lee **“Expand climate initiatives to reflect the urgency of the crisis”** (Feb. 1). Lee had called for the reinstatement of annual increases to the carbon tax, beginning in 2019 with an increase of \$10 per tonne – but no such

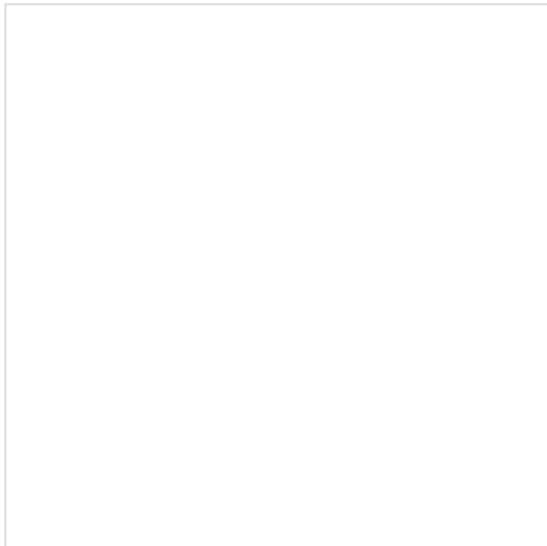
policy was announced. (Lee had also called for more realistic budget allocations for wildfire response, which was addressed).

Finally, [the Pembina Institute response](#) is generally positive, though it calls for an independent panel to publicly monitor accountability and report on progress annually, echoing the [Op-Ed “wish list”](#) it had released before the budget was handed down. . That had stated: “B.C.’s Climate Change Accountability Act needs more teeth. What’s required is a transparent process whereby the government forecasts carbon pollution (including reduction goals for each sector), tracks and publicly reports on our progress, submits this data for independent verification, and adjusts policies as necessary.” Other key items which Pembina had called for include stronger regulations than those [announced in January](#) to limit methane pollution, and a strategy to use clean electricity to power the controversial LNG production which threatens to make the province’s GHG emissions targets unreachable.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [BC LNG](#), [British Columbia](#), [Electric Vehicles](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [wildfires](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

A Roadmap to improve green building skills in Ontario

Posted on [February 19, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A report released by the Canadian Green Building Council (CaGBC) at the end of January is called “an action plan to close the low-carbon building skills gap in the Ontario construction industry”. [Trading Up: Equipping Ontario Trades with the Skills of the Future](#) estimates that the skills gap is costing Ontario C\$24.3 billion in annual economic activity, and limiting the province’s ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The report identifies where shortages in low-carbon skills training currently exist, and defines specific actions that labour, governments,

post-secondary institutions and industry organizations can take to optimize green building skills training. Although it focuses on the skilled trades, the report also calls for skills upgrading for designers, architects, engineers, buildings officials and buildings managers, highlighting that “Changes to the larger construction approach and acknowledgment of soft skills are necessary to deliver high-performing buildings. We therefore need to increase overall levels of ‘green literacy’ .” The 6-page Executive summary is [here](#) .

The CaGBC also released the **2018 LEED Impact Report for Canada** in January 2019 providing statistical snapshots of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified and Zero Carbon building in each province and territory – with measures for energy savings, GHG reductions, water savings, recycling, and green roofs.

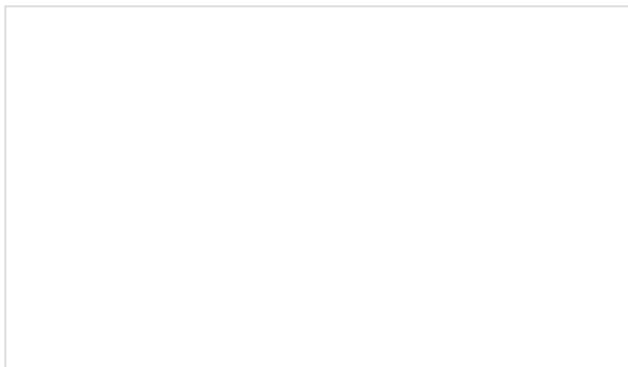
On February 13, the U.S. Green Building Council released its annual ranking of the Top 10 countries and regions of the world (excluding the U.S.) which have the highest cumulative gross square meters of construction which are LEED-certified. **Canada ranked 2nd** in terms of gross square metres of LEED certified space, after China, and ranked first in the number of certified projects, with 3,254 certified projects.

Posted in **Uncategorized** | Tagged **Canadian Green Building Council, Construction Industry, Green Building, LEED, Skilled Workers, U.S. Green Building Council** | [Leave a reply](#)

Public opinion polls: on carbon tax, pipelines, and a growing fear of climate change around the world

Posted on **February 19, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

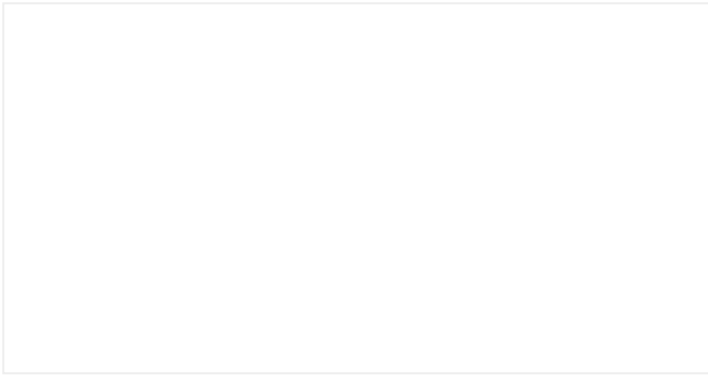
On February 8, Clean Energy Canada **released results** from an online survey of 2,500 Canadian adults, conducted by Abacus Data. Across Canada, 35% support a federal carbon tax, 37% say they are open to considering it, and 28% oppose it – with the highest opposition from Alberta (41%). When told that revenues would be rebated to households (the



Carbon Incentive Plan), support climbed by 9 points – and even more in Alberta. Asked if they agreed with Ontario Premier **Doug Ford's statement** that a carbon tax will bring a recession, **64% of Canadians and 63% of Ontarians disagreed** – and when asked a follow-up question asserting that many economists disagree with Premier Ford, 74% of Canadians and 73% of Ontarians stated they would trust the economists over the Premier.

The **Angus Reid Institute** has tracked opinion about a carbon tax in Canada since April 2015, and are due to release new survey results in winter 2019 . Their online survey conducted in October 2018 (just after the announcement of the federal Carbon Incentive plan), showed that **support for a carbon tax** had increased nationally from 43% in July 2018 to 54% in October.

The leading cause of opposition to the carbon plan is the sense that it is a “tax grab”, followed by the opinion that it will not help reduce emissions. Also notably, “six-in-ten Canadians say they do not trust information about climate change from their provincial government – with only 24% of Manitobans trusting their government. Who *do* Canadians trust on this issue? 78% trust university scientists; 56% trust “international organizations doing work in this field”.



— From Angus Reid Institute, “Duelling realities” poll

Other recent Angus Reid analysis of Canadians’ overall attitudes on climate change was released on November 30 in “**Dueling realities? Age, political ideology divide Canadians over cause & threat of climate change**”. Only 9% of Canadians do NOT perceive climate change as a threat, with 55% of 18 to 34-year-olds said they believe climate change to be a very serious threat. Yet a survey released in January 2019, “**Six-in-ten Canadians say lack of new pipeline capacity represents a crisis in this country**” details the polarized opinions about oil pipelines, showing that 53% of Canadians surveyed support both the Energy East and TransMountain pipeline projects, and six-in-ten say the lack of new pipeline capacity constitutes a “crisis”. Opinions are divided by region, ranging from 87% in Alberta and 74% in Saskatchewan seeing a crisis, versus 40% in Quebec.

Opinion in the United States: Results from the December 2018 national survey, **Climate Change in the American Mind** , reveal that 46% of Americans polled have personally experienced the effects of global warming, and a majority are worried about harm from extreme events in their local area – including extreme heat (61%), flooding (61%), droughts (58%), and/or

water shortages (51%). This longstanding survey (since 2013) is conducted by the [Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#) and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. It also updates the results in the series, “[Global Warming’s Six Americas](#)”, which categorizes attitudes from “Alarmed”, to “Concerned”, all the way to “Doubtful” and “Dismissive” – showing that in December 2018, the “Alarmed” segment is at an all-time high of 29% , while the “Dismissive” and “Doubtful” responses have declined to only 9%. The [full report](#) also includes responses concerning emotional responses to global warming, perceived risks, and personal and social engagement – which includes such questions as “How much of an effort do your family and friends make to reduce global warming?”

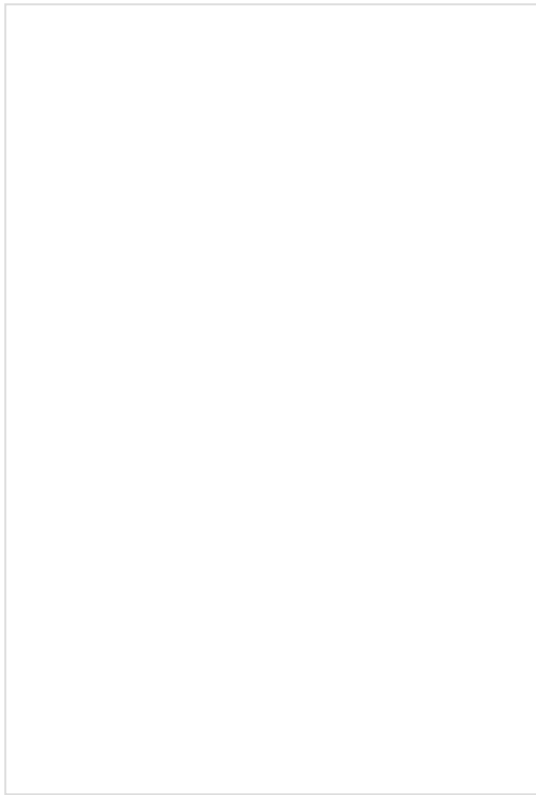
Australian women are re-considering having children: A survey released in February by the [Australian Conservation Foundation](#) and the [1 Million Women](#) organization reports on climate change attitudes of Australian women, in the lead-up to the country’s federal election in 2019. Of the 6514 Australian women who responded to the survey between September – October 2018, nearly 90% are extremely concerned about climate change. Again, concern is highest in the under-30 bracket, where one in three are so worried about what global warming that they are reconsidering having children. A four page summary of survey results is [here](#) .

Finally, international attitudes are reflected in a survey published in February by Pew Research Center: “[Climate Change Still Seen as the Top Global Threat, but Cyberattacks a Rising Concern](#)”. This top-level survey of 26 countries shows that climate change was perceived as the most important threat in 13 countries: including Canada, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Spain, Sweden, U.K., Australia, South Korea, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. In the U.S., the top threat was seen to be cyberattacks from other countries (74%), followed by attacks from ISIS (62%). Global climate change was the third-ranked threat at 59% .

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes to climate change](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Gender Differences](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [public opinion polls](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New modelling forecasts 46 million jobs by 2050 in a 100% renewable energy scenario

Posted on [February 8, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



A newly-released book, ***Achieving the Paris Climate Agreement Goals***, provides detailed discussion of the the implications, including job implications, of a transition to 100% renewable energy. The book's findings are summarized by Sven Teske of the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, in "**Here's how a 100% renewable energy future can create jobs and even save the gas industry**", which appeared in *The Conversation* (Jan. 23). That article states: "The world can limit global warming to 1.5°C and move to 100% renewable energy while still preserving a role for the gas industry, and without relying on technological fixes such as carbon capture and storage, according to our new analysis." The scenario is built on complex modelling – The **One Earth Climate Model** – and foresees a gradual transition from gas to hydrogen energy, so that "by 2050 there would be 46.3 million jobs in the global energy sector – 16.4 million more than under **existing forecasts**.... Our analysis also investigated the specific occupations that will be required for a renewables-based energy industry. The global number of jobs would increase across all of these occupations between 2015 and 2025, with the exception of metal trades which would decline by 2%."

The article summarizes a book with a daunting title: ***Achieving the Paris Climate Agreement Goals: Global and Regional 100% Renewable Energy Scenarios with Non-energy GHG Pathways for +1.5°C and +2°C***. It is the culmination of a two-year scientific collaboration with 17 scientists at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), two institutes at the German Aerospace Center (DLR), and the University of Melbourne's Climate & Energy College, with funding provided by the Leonard DiCaprio Foundation and the German Greenpeace Foundation. It was published in January 2019 by Springer as an **Open Access book**, meaning it is free to download the entire book or individual chapters without violating copyright. Of special interest: Chapter 9, **Trajectories for a Just Transition of the Fossil Fuel Industry**, which provides historical

production data for coal, oil and gas production, discusses phase-out pathways for each, and concludes with a discussion of the need “to shift the current political debate about coal, oil and gas which is focused on security of supply and price security towards an open debate about an orderly withdrawal from coal, oil and gas extraction industries.”

The data presented in Chapter 9 form the foundation of Chapter 10, **Just Transition:**

Employment Projections for the 2.0 °C and 1.5 °C Scenarios . This consists of quantitative analysis, (the overall number of jobs in renewable and fossil fuel industries) and occupational analysis – which looks into specific job categories required for the solar and wind sector, and the oil, gas, and coal industry. The chapter provides projections for jobs in construction, manufacturing, operations and maintenance (O&M), and fuel and heat supply across 12 technologies and 10 world regions. The conclusion: “Under both the 1.5 °C and 2.0 °C Scenarios, the renewable energy transition is projected to increase employment. Importantly, this analysis has reviewed the locations and types of occupations and found that the jobs created in wind and solar PV alone are enough to replace the jobs lost in the fossil fuel industry across all occupation types. Further research is required to identify the training needs and supportive policies needed to ensure a just transition for all employment groups.”

Posted in **Energy Policy** | Tagged **employment impacts, fossil fuel industry, Just Transition, Modelling, Natural Gas Employment, Paris Agreement, renewable energy industry, Solar PV Manufacturing, wind energy industry** | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate litigation in Canada – first youth, now Victoria B.C. may take to the courts

Posted on **February 7, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

Two new articles describe the first examples of climate change litigation in Canada. In “**Climate change litigation arrives in Canada**”, lawyers from Osler’s, a Toronto-based law firm, summarize two example of climate change litigation to arise in Canada: the claim by Quebec youth against the government of Canada, and the January 16 decision by the council of Victoria, B.C. to endorse a class action lawsuit against fossil fuel companies. The second article appeared in *Climate Liability News* , and provides more detail about the municipal movement for climate accountability.



As the [WCR blog reported](#) when the case was launched in November 2018, the first Canadian lawsuit was filed by [ENVironnement JEUnesse \(ENJEU\)](#) in the Quebec Superior Court on behalf of people under the age of 35 and resident in Quebec. They are claiming that the federal government has infringed on the rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms, by failing to take adequate action to prevent climate change. The [ENJEU](#) website places their action in the context of the global litigation movement begun by the Urgenda case in the Netherlands, and the Juliana case in the U.S., and like them, faces a long road of legal procedures.



Victoria endorses a class action lawsuit for climate change damages: The more recent example of Canadian climate litigation comes from Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia, which on January 17 endorsed a class action lawsuit against oil and gas producers for climate-related harms. This is described briefly in the [Osler article](#) (Feb. 5), in “[Next Climate Liability Suits vs. Big Oil Could Come from Western Canada](#)” in *Climate Liability News* on January 22, and in greater detail in a [Globe and Mail article](#) (Jan. 17). Also in January, Vancouver [city council voted to declare a climate emergency](#), and according to the *Globe and Mail* article, is considering whether to join with Victoria in the class action lawsuit. Also in January, the [city of Halifax in Nova Scotia](#) became the third major city to declare a climate emergency – with city staff tasked with figuring out how the city can set up a climate change directorate, with a goal of net zero carbon before 2050.

As both the Osler and the Climate Liability articles state, Vancouver and Victoria have been encouraged by the [Climate Law in Our Hands campaign](#) organized by West Coast Environmental Law – a campaign which began in 2017, and has enlisted 16 municipalities to send “Climate Accountability Letters” to the world’s largest fossil fuel companies, asking that these companies pay a fair share of local costs related to climate change adaptation. In September 2018, the [Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities](#) (of which Victoria is a member) sent a climate accountability letter on behalf of its 53 local government members.

Perhaps other Canadian municipalities should consider such actions. “[Evaluating the quality of municipal climate change plans in Canada](#)”, first published online in November 2018 in *Climatic Change*, catalogues and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of climate change plans in eight dimensions, in sixty-three Canadian municipalities. The conclusions: Canadian municipal climate change plans currently prioritize mitigation over adaptation; implementation, monitoring, and evaluation are relatively weak aspects; and municipalities have given insufficient

consideration to the element of stakeholder engagement in the climate change plan-making process. Highest ranked cities were in Ontario: Kingston, followed by the Waterloo Region, and Hamilton. New Westminster, British Columbia was identified as most needing improvement.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Climate litigation](#), [Halifax](#), [legal action](#), [Quebec](#), [Victoria B.C.](#), [youth litigation](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green New Deal Resolution introduced in U.S. House of Representatives

Posted on **February 7, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On February 7, 2019, freshman Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, in partnership with Ed Markey, tabled a Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives, titled, “**Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal**”. Here is the statement of goals (cut and pasted by WCR from the OAC version): “Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that (1) it is the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal— (A) to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers; (B) to create millions of good, high-wage jobs and ensure prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States; (C) to invest in the infrastructure and industry of the United States to sustainably meet the challenges of the 21st century; (D) to secure for all people of the United States for generations to come—(i) clean air and water; (ii) climate and community resiliency; (iii) healthy food; (iv) access to nature; and (v) a sustainable environment; and (E) to promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression of indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities, the poor, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities, and youth (referred to in this resolution as “frontline and vulnerable communities”)”.

David Roberts in his [article in Vox](#), states: “The resolution consists of a preamble, five goals, 12 projects, and 15 requirements. The preamble establishes that there are two crises, a climate crisis and an economic crisis of wage stagnation and growing inequality, and that the GND can address both. The goals — achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, creating jobs, providing for a just transition, securing clean air and water — are broadly popular. The projects — things like decarbonizing electricity, transportation, and industry, restoring ecosystems, upgrading buildings and electricity grids — are necessary and sensible (if also extremely ambitious).” Roberts

emphasizes the progressive, social justice core of the proposals, including that “the Green New Deal now involves a federal job guarantee, the right to unionize, liberal trade and monopoly policies, and universal housing and health care.”

Media coverage began immediately : **“Democrats Formally Call for a Green New Deal, Giving Substance to a Rallying Cry”** in the *New York Times* ; articles also appear in the *Washington Post* and *The Guardian* , and *Politico* compiles general reactions in **“Green New Deal lands in the Capitol”**. From Jake Johnson of *Common Dreams*, **“‘This Is What Hope Feels Like’: Green New Deal Resolution Hailed as ‘Watershed Moment’ for New Era of Climate Action”** .

By February 8, the *Washington Post* analysis appeared: **“No ‘unanimity’ on Green New Deal, says key House Democrat”** , which discusses the political odds of success for the Green New Deal – and cites the satirical headline which appeared in *The Onion*: “Nancy Pelosi Signals Support For Environmental Causes By Placing Green New Deal Directly Into Recycling Bin.” *Politico* also discusses the political opposition in **“The Impossible Green Dream of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez”** , referencing the “green dream” label given the plan by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

As of February 8, the AFL-CIO hadn’t posted a reaction. The Labor Network for Sustainability has been strongly in favour of the Green New Deal: see, for example, their post, **Twelve Reasons Labour should demand a Green New Deal** , written before the proposal was tabled in the House of Representatives.



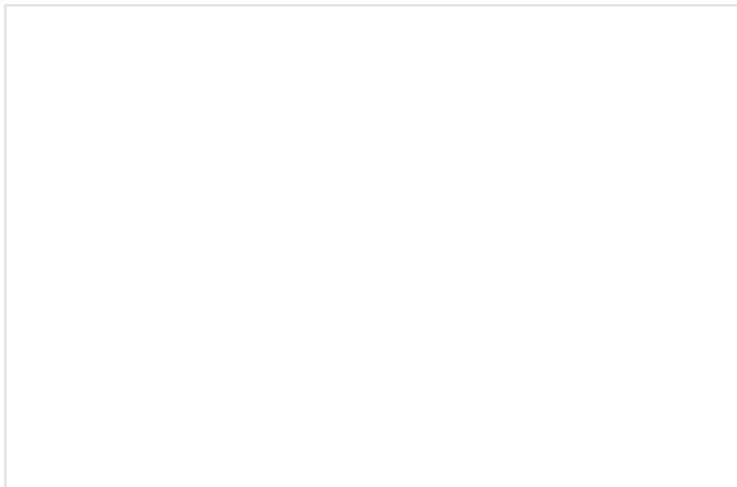
On February 11, the **Sunrise Movement**, the key mover behind the Green New Deal, posted **their reaction on Common Dreams** , pledging to assemble an “unprecedented coalition” , which already includes Justice Democrats, 32BJ SEIU, Green for All, 1199SEIU, Center for Popular Democracy, People’s Action, Working Families Party, Dream Corps, Presente.org, Demos, Sierra Club, [350.org](#), CREDO, Bold, Organic Consumers Association, Honor the Earth, Seeding Sovereignty, American Sustainable Business Council President, and NextGen. From Sunrise: “We’re planning over 600 Congressional office visits this week to kick start our campaign to build the political and public support for the Green New Deal, which will include getting thousands of organizations signed on to back the resolution.”

Posted in **Government Policy, United States** | Tagged **Environmental Justice, Green Economy, Green Job Creation, Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, United States** | [Leave a reply](#)

Skills and training for Clean jobs in the U.S. : Focus on infrastructure and auto manufacturing

Posted on **February 6, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

A January 25th blog by the Brookings Institution is a recent addition to a series of publications about the workforce implications of the transition to a clean economy. **“The Green New Deal promises jobs, but workers need to be ready to fill them”** (Jan. 25) broadly discusses the range of occupations which will be affected by the transition to a clean economy, and promises forthcoming research which “will delve deeper” into the workforce issues – going beyond simply job estimates and forecasts to look at skills and training requirements and barriers, as well as working conditions.



Specific to the transformation of the auto manufacturing industry, Brookings has published **“What GM’s layoffs reveal about the digitalization of the auto industry”** (Dec. 13 2018) and in February 2019, **“Equipping today’s AV workforce with skills to succeed tomorrow”**, which defines the “digital mobility workforce” to include truck drivers, automotive service technicians and mechanics, and many other jobs beyond the engineers we normally associate with autonomous vehicle production. The article cites the **Michigan Alliance for Greater Mobility Advancement (MAGMA)**, a component of the **Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan (WIN)**, which exists to identify the skill needs, and train for, “Michigan’s rapidly changing automotive industry as it moves towards CAV, cybersecurity, embedded software systems, and other emerging technologies.”

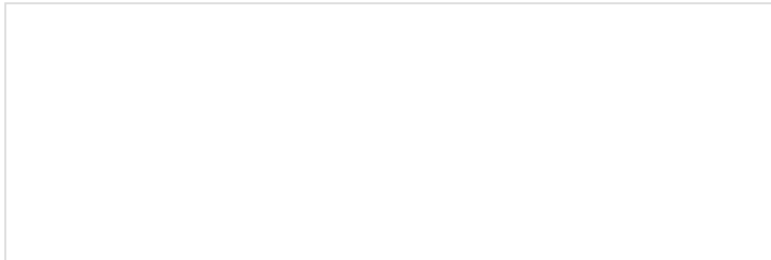
Earlier Brookings reports focus on infrastructure jobs, including **Infrastructure skills: Knowledge, tools, and training to increase Opportunity** (May 2016), and **Renewing the water workforce: Improving water infrastructure and creating a pipeline to opportunity** (June 2018). **Opportunity Industries: Exploring the industries that concentrate good and promising jobs in metropolitan America** (Dec. 2018) also provides an important look at the

potential to improve workforce development policies, although it focuses on “good jobs” and “promising jobs”, rather than green jobs,

Posted in [Government Policy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [autonomous vehicles](#), [Education and Training](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Retraining](#), [workforce development](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Supreme Court rules in Redwater: bankruptcy is no escape from “polluter pays”

Posted on **February 6, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 31, the Supreme Court of Canada released a long-awaited, precedent-setting decision which holds fossil fuel companies responsible for the clean-up costs of their abandoned operations, and gives environmental clean-up costs precedence over other creditors’ claims. The case arose from the 2015 bankruptcy of Redwater Energy, a small, Calgary-based oil and gas company; the agent managing the bankruptcy was proposing to sell the company’s profitable wells to pay off debts, and leave the clean-up costs of the other non-producing wells to the [Orphan Well Association \(OWA\)](#), a provincial, industry-funded agency. The Supreme Court provides its own “Case in Brief” summary of the the case, [Orphan Well Association v. Grant Thornton Ltd.](#) [here](#) , with links to all the official documents. The full decision is [here](#) ; French-language versions of the [Case in Brief](#) , and the [full decision](#) are also provided. The response by the Orphan Well Association is [here](#) .

For a brief reaction: “[Redwater decision reassuring, but we aren’t out of the woods](#)” by the Pembina Institute (Jan. 31) or from the *National Observer* special series [Legacy of Liabilities](#) , a [summary of the decision](#) and the more detailed, “[Alberta lauds court ruling but has no oil well cleanup plan](#)”.

Deeper background and analysis appears in “[Alberta’s Mega Oil and Gas Liability Crisis, Explained](#)” in *The Tyee* , in which Andrew Nikoforuk asks, “Just how will an increasingly indebted industry, hobbled by low energy prices and rising costs, find the up to \$260 billion needed to clean up its inactive pipelines, wells, plants and oilsands mines as it enters its sunset years?” He

concludes with words from Regan Boychuk, a founder of [Reclaim Alberta](#), an advocacy group which began in 2016 to propose an [Alberta Reclamation Trust](#), which would clean-up inactive wells and provide funding for job creation in the energy sector. Boychuk's own insider's view appeared in the *National Observer* as "[Putting the Supreme Court's Redwater decision in context](#)" (Feb. 1). (Boychuk also provided a briefer [Opinion piece](#) as a guest blogger in David Climenhaga's *Albertapolitics.ca*).

Other detailed articles: An Explainer from *The Narwhal*: "[What the Redwater ruling means for Alberta's thousands of inactive oil and gas wells](#)" or from a legal point of view, from Osler law firm, "[Supreme Court of Canada decision in Redwater: Early Implications](#)".

It is clear that the implications of this decision are huge and expensive, not only for Alberta, but for all extractive industries across Canada. As the Pembina Institute points out: "obligations have steadily grown, and now include over 80,000 inactive oil and gas wells, facilities, and pipelines as well as 1.4 trillion litres in fluid oilsands tailings. The Government of Alberta officially estimates it will cost CAD\$57 billion to cleanup these sites, though there are ongoing concerns about the accuracy of this figure. Conversely, only \$1.2 billion is currently held in securities to protect the public." (A [joint investigation](#) by the National Observer, Global News, the Toronto Star, and StarMetro Calgary in November 2018 estimated that the actual clean-up costs are approximately \$260 billion in Alberta alone).

Posted in [Energy Policy](#), [Environmental Policy](#) | Tagged [Alberta](#), [clean up costs](#), [Liability](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [Pollutor Pays Principle](#), [Redwater decision](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Can greener strategies like a Lucas Plan work for GM Oshawa?

Posted on **January 31, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Reaction to the November 2018 announcement by GM that it was closing five production plants in North America has been ongoing – as the WCR last reported in December in "[GM Oshawa closing – A sign of the disruption to auto manufacturing](#)". Unifor, the union representing most of the affected auto workers, has organized a vigorous [Save Oshawa GM campaign](#), involving demonstrations and rallies; a [plant walkout](#) on January 8; a boycott of GM products, including a [boycott of GM cars made in Mexico](#) (launched on January 24); and a [television ad campaign](#) which will include air time on the Super Bowl broadcast. Unifor also commissioned an independent [economic impact study](#) which found that the closure of GM would result in an immediate decline of \$5 billion in Ontario's GDP and a subsequent loss of \$4 billion per year to 2030. Both federal and provincial revenues would shrink, and job losses are projected to reach 14,000 in Ontario and a further 10,000 elsewhere across Canada by 2025. Unifor President Jerry

Diaz has met with Ontario Premier Doug Ford, but Premier Ford's January 14 press release , **"Ontario Advocates for Auto Sector Jobs and Investment"** , is silent on the GM closure. Federal Economic Development Minister Navdeep Bains and Premier Ford both met in **separate meetings with GM executives** during the Detroit Auto Show in January, but did not soften the company's position .

What role can greener strategies play? : **"High time for a green jobs strategy in Ontario"** in the *National Observer* (Dec.24) states: "Ontario is correct in supporting the transition of Oshawa plant employees with unemployment and retraining measures, accelerating the return to work of displaced workers. A more strategic approach by Ontario would have been an early response to GM's prior suggestion that its Oshawa production was guaranteed only until 2020, for example, by creating strategic retraining opportunities in alignment with emerging industries."

Several newspaper columnists have taken up the idea of re-tooling the Oshawa plant- beginning with David Olive's immediate reaction to the announcement in the *Toronto Star* in November, **"It's time for a truly Canadian automaker"**; Linda McQuaig in the *Toronto Star* with **"Trudeau should consider buying GM and making electric cars"**; and most notably, Jennifer Wells in the *Toronto Star* on January 15, **"For the GM Oshawa plant, hope is not a strategy"** .

Wells has based her brief article on a much more thorough piece by Sam Gindin **"GM Oshawa: Making Hope Possible"** , which appeared in the Socialist Project newsletter, *The Bullet*, on December 13. Gindin is a veteran of the labour movement and Ontario's auto industry, having served as the CAW's Research Director from 1974 to 2000. He argues that the current reactions are a dead end, and "larger, more radical aspirations [are]the only practical way out." He proposes a "Plan B", under which "the facility and its equipment should be placed under public ownership with no further compensation – the plant and its equipment have already been paid for by the sweat of workers and the \$3-billion in unpaid subsidies from taxpayers." Workers could stage "periodic industrial actions", including "days of action" and possibly occupation of the plant, to prevent GM from removing its equipment. And what to do with the plant in the future? Gindin proposes a **New Lucas Plan** , following the model of the famous industrial conversion project in the 1970's, when U.K. labour unions met management's plans to restructure and cut jobs at Lucas Aerospace with worker-generated proposals to re-tool and produce socially-useful products, using their existing skills. Among the unions' proposed products – in the 1970's !! – were heat pumps, solar cell technology, wind turbines and fuel cell technology. Gindin's 2019 list of socially-useful products includes the energy-related products that our current climate change crisis requires.

In the U.S., some of these same ideas appear under the "Green New Deal" label. The **Detroit Green New Deal** is a coalition of labor, environmental, and community groups protesting the GM plant closures; participants include the Democratic Socialists of America, two groups from Unifor Local 222 (the Oshawa local), Sunrise Michigan, Good Jobs Now, and many others. Their "rallying cry" is "Make Detroit the Engine of Green New Deal", and their **Official Statement** calls for GM to honour its labour contracts and its legal and moral commitments by keeping all the plants open, creating more union jobs, and contributing to the building of a green economy. If GM does not agree to keep the plants open, Detroit Green New Deal demands that the plants be seized and put to public use (similar to Gindin's "socially- useful products").

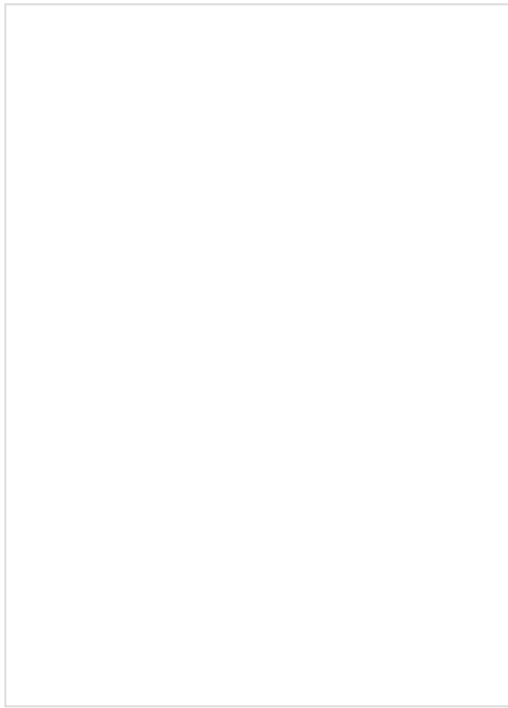
Looking beyond the GM workers and their immediate predicament, the Detroit Green New Deal coalition demands “a Green New Deal that takes us on a path to rapid decarbonization of the economy, implements a federal union jobs guarantee, and ensures a just transition for workers, people of color, the poor, and other marginalized groups.” These demands are more focussed , but reflect the social justice principles behind Sam Gindin’s closing argument: “...thinking outside the box, engaging in larger struggles and actively involving our members in the discussions and strategizing over what to do and how to do it, carries the promise – or at least the potential – to revive our movement. There is no other way to overcome the demoralization of so many of our members, move to set aside the destructive divisions between unions that are such a barrier, and play the kind of social role that can excite a new generation of leaders and activists.”

Bringing these arguments home to the issue of climate change and work, and the tensions of the green economy, is the 2010 article, “[Can trade unions become environmental innovators?: Learning from the Lucas Aerospace workers](#)” . Authors Nora Räthzel, David Uzzell, and Dave Elliott concluded with: “We believe that drawing on the Lucas experience – trusting in and building on workers’ skills and desire to produce something useful for themselves and the environment, developing strategies with workers (technicians, and academics), instead of for them – would create a greater chance for the realisation of socially and environmentally just policies.”

Posted in [Green Economy](#) | Tagged [auto manufacturing](#), [General Motors](#), [GM Oshawa](#), [Green New Deal](#), [industrial strategy](#), [Lucas Plan](#), [plant closings](#), [plant conversion](#), [Unifor](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

ILO report: “It is not action against climate change and environmental degradation that will destroy jobs, it is inaction that will destroy jobs”

Posted on **January 31, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



To mark its centenary in 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned a **Global Commission on the Future of Work** in 2015. On January 22, the Centenary was **launched** with the release of the Commission's report : ***Work for a Brighter Future*** , an aspirational document with recommendations for government policies to address the “ unprecedented transformational change in the world of work.” The ten recommendations in the report call for a universal labour guarantee that protects fundamental workers' rights, an adequate living wage, limits on hours of work and safe and healthy workplaces, a universal entitlement to lifelong learning , managing technological change to boost decent work, and greater investments in the care economy, green economy, and rural economy. The Executive Summary is [here](#) ; the full 66-page Report is [here](#) .

Work for a Brighter Future is a broad and visionary document, but its arguments and proposals are supported by a series of more detailed research papers, including ***The Future of work in a Changing Natural Environment: Climate change, degradation and sustainability*** (August 2018) . The Research Paper argues that “... on the one hand, environmental degradation destroys work opportunities and worsens working conditions. On the other hand, any efforts to achieve sustainability will entail a structural transformation. Crucially, this transformation can result in more and better jobs.”

The paper calls for a new development model that acknowledges that the economy, including the world of work, is a subsystem of the global ecosystem, and cannot expand beyond the confines of ecological limits. It concludes: “....For developing economies, it means adopting a development strategy based on sustainable principles in energy, transport, construction, resource-intensive manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and waste management. For developed economies, it means restructuring these industries so they become sustainable ... In advanced economies, it means, potentially, embracing zero growth... For both developed and developing economies, it means developing a service sector that is decoupled from material extraction or carbon emissions

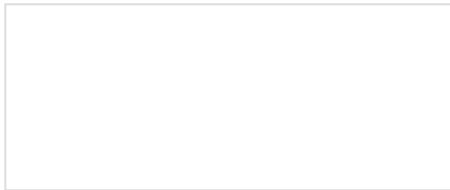
in addition to progress towards resource efficiency and low carbon intensity.....At a global level, if a tax on CO2 emissions were imposed and the resulting revenues were used to cut labour taxes, then up to 14 million net new jobs could be created.”

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder summed up some of these themes in [his address](#) to the [Ministerial Conference of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy](#) (PAGE), held on January 10 – 11 2019 in South Africa. He stated: “It is not action against climate change and environmental degradation that will destroy jobs, it is inaction that will destroy jobs. ...Economic activity and jobs depend on ecosystem services and a safeguarding of the natural environment. Around 1.2 billion jobs, or 40 per cent of world employment in 2014, were in industries that depend heavily on natural processes.... ultimately, environmental degradation will compromise livelihoods and magnify inequality. We must work around these highly interconnected challenges to devise workable solutions in specific country contexts. “

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Carbon Tax](#), [ILO](#), [Labour Rights](#), [Labour Standards](#), [zero growth](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

The latest analysis: What does Canada gain from the Trans Mountain Pipeline purchase?

Posted on [January 31, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

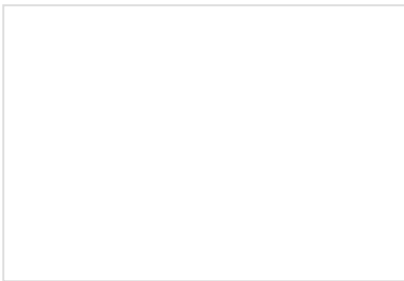


Into Canada’s highly sensitive and highly political debate over pipelines comes the report on January 31 from the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) : [Canada’s purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline – Financial and Economic Considerations](#) . The report provides an overview and timeline of the negotiations and federal government purchase of the pipeline and its assets from Kinder Morgan, in August 2018 . The PBO financial analysis estimates that the \$4.4 billion price paid by the government was at the high end of the value, and calculates the effects of construction delays or higher construction costs on the price that the Government could negotiate for its re-sale –for example, a one year delay would result in a loss of value \$693 million. The report finds that the economic benefits relate to the pre-construction and construction periods: impact on GDP is estimated to peak at 0.11 per cent in 2020; impact on employment is estimated at 7,900 in 2020, with both declining thereafter.

“The main benefit of the TMEP would arise from the increased capacity of Canadian producers to sell oil to export markets, which could lead to a reduction in the differential between Western Canadian Select (WCS) grade of crude oil and other grades, most notably West Texas Intermediate (WTI).” Stating “It is difficult to determine the impact of the TMEP on the price differential between WTI and WCS grades”, the report refers to estimates in its [December 2018 report to Parliamentarians](#), and flags the other factor which might affect the economic impact, which is “increasing transportation capacity.”

Coinciding with the PBO report, the *National Observer* has brought an article out of its archives, which critiques the economic arguments used by supporters of the Trans Mountain purchase.

“False oil price narrative used to scare Canadians into accepting Trans Mountain pipeline expansion” was written by Robyn Allen, and was originally published in November 2018. More recently, she has also written, **“What Bill Morneau didn’t tell Canadians about the Trans Mountain Purchase”** (Dec. 5 2018) and an Opinion piece **“Trudeau’s oilsands supply outlook reflects a future that doesn’t exist”** (Jan. 25 2019) , which concludes: “It is madness pretending that Trans Mountain’s expansion is financially or economically viable. A return to sanity begins with getting realistic about the supply of heavy oil in a world that knows — even if Trudeau won’t take his head out of the oilsands — that neither the economic system nor the ecosystem can, or will, support rapid oilsands growth.”



For coverage of both the economic and environmental aspects, follow the [National Observer Special Reports on Trans Mountain](#). An up-to-date review of the environmental arguments by experts Marc Jaccard and Kirsten Zickfeld appears there in **“IPCC authors urge NEB to consider climate impacts of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion”** (Jan. 21).

The National Energy Board documentation about all stages of the Trans Mountain Expansion project is [here](#) (and [here](#) for French documentation). Information about the current Reconsideration process is [here](#) (and [here](#) in French); the deadline for the Reconsideration report to the government is February 22, 2019.

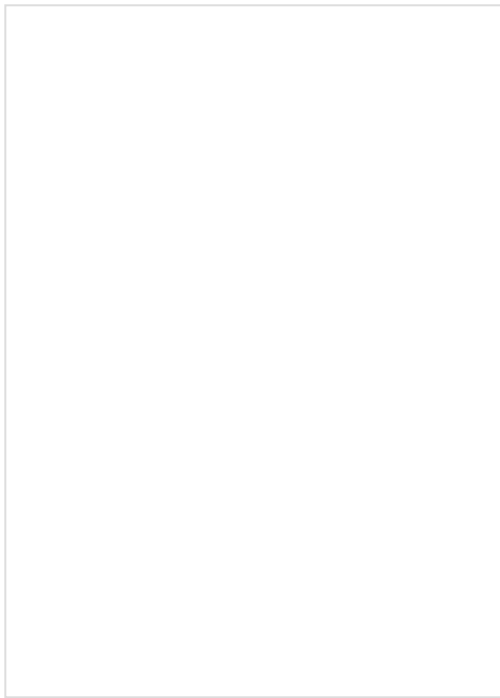
Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Kinder Morgan pipeline](#), [Oil and gas industry](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#), [Trans Mountain Pipeline](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Business looks at climate change: Davos publications include auto manufacturing, electronic waste

Posted on **January 30, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

The overall theme of the **World Economic Forum meetings** in Davos Switzerland in 2019 was the 4th Industrial Revolution. Climate change issues were top of mind in discussions, as the annual **Global Risks Report for 2019** had ranked the top global risks to the world as extreme weather and climate-change policy failures. Discussions, speeches, blogs and reports are compiled on the themes of **The Future of the Environment and Natural Resource Security** and **Climate Change**. Highlights include : “**6 things we learned about the Environment at Davos**” , an overview which highlights Japan’s pledge to use its G20 Presidency to reduce plastic ocean pollution; the launch of a new organization called **Voice for the Planet** to showcase the youth climate activist movement: and a pledge by 10 global companies have to take back the electronic waste from their products. Also of interest, the speech by Greta Thunberg, who is at the centre of the new youth climate activism – “**Our House is on Fire**” ; and “**Why income inequality is bad for the climate**”, a blog by the President of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation.

WEF Reports of interest: **Improving Traceability in Food Value Chains through Technology Innovations**, which offers technology as a means to make the current industrial food system safer (and possibly more sustainable). **Shaping the Sustainability of Production Systems: Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies for competitiveness and sustainable growth** discusses the coming world of manufacturing, focussing on the electronics and automotive industries of Andhra Pradesh, India and the automotive industry in Michigan U.S.A., including a discussion of Cobotics 2.0 (collaborative robots) , Metal 3D printing, and “augmented workforce”.



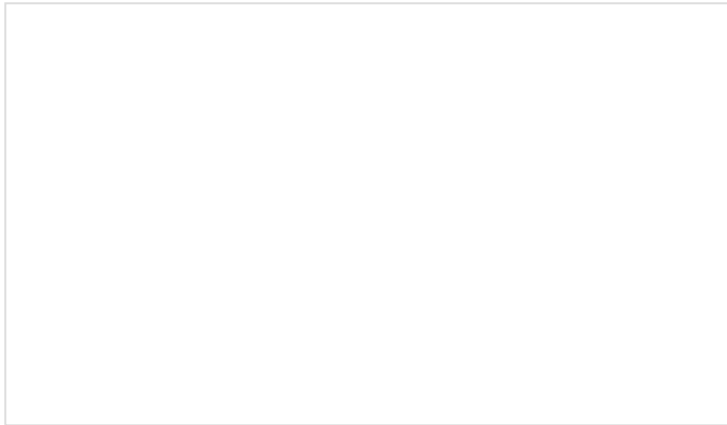
The circular economy was also discussed, with a spotlight **on electronic waste**, which is estimated at 50 million tonnes of produced each year currently. ***A New Circular Vision for Electronics Time for a Global Reboot*** was released by the **E-waste Coalition**, which includes the **International Telecommunication Union** (a UN organization), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and others. The report, summarized **here**, is an overview of e-waste production and recycling, and includes a brief discussion of labour conditions, calling for upgrading and formalization of the recycling industry as a “major opportunity”. It states: “the total number of people working informally in the global e-waste sector is unknown. However, as an indication, according to the ILO in Nigeria up 100,000 people are thought to be working in the informal e-waste sector, while in China that number is thought to be 690,000.” As for the dangers... “using basic recycling techniques to burn the plastic from electronic goods leaving the valuable metals (melting down lead in open pots, or dissolving circuit boards in acid) lead to adult and child workers, as well as their families, exposed to many toxic substances. In many countries, women and children make up to 30% of the workforce in informal, crude e-waste processing and are therefore particularly vulnerable.” According to the report, the International Labour Organization is scheduled to release a new report in March 2019, to be titled *Decent work in the management of electrical and electronic waste*.

Posted in **Business Policy** | Tagged **auto manufacturing, Circular Economy, Climate Activism, electronic waste, Manufacturing, Recycling, World Economic Forum** | **Leave a reply**

Greta Thunberg speaks truth to power at Davos, inspiring kids

around the world to strike for climate

Posted on **January 29, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



As it does every year, the world's business elite gathered in Davos Switzerland in January for the **World Economic Forum**, and as it does every year, the WEF released its **Global Risks Report**, reflecting what business opinion leaders lose sleep about. In 2019, the top long-term risks identified as the gravest threats to the world were extreme weather and climate-change policy failures. Blogs and reports were produced on the theme, including "**How should corporate boards respond to climate change?**", and "**Infrastructure around the world is failing. Here's how to make it more resilient**". British celebrity David Attenborough addressed the group, telling them that "**the Garden of Eden is no more**" – but the real call to action came from 16-year old Greta Thunberg, the Swedish activist who has inspired world-wide climate strikes by teenagers. Her appearance was reported in *The Guardian*, and re-posted at the *National Observer* as "**Teenage activist takes School Strikes 4 Climate Action to Davos**" (Jan. 25). "**The Climate Kids are Coming**" in *The Nation* (Jan. 28), describes Greta's Davos appearance and links the climate strikes movement to the Green New Deal movement in the U.S.

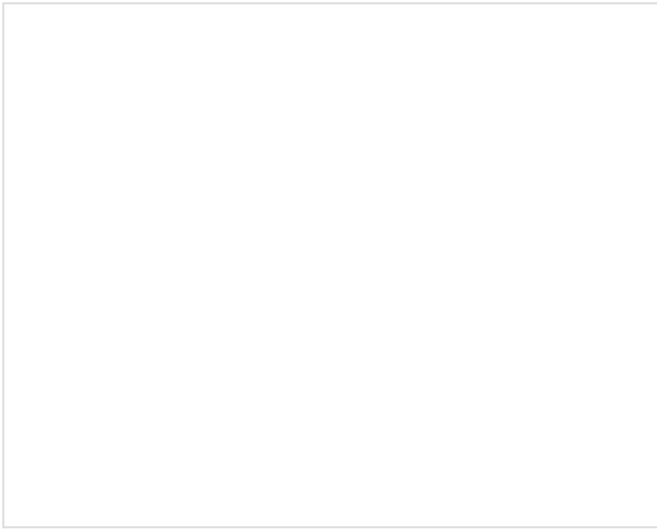
Our House is on Fire: The transcript and video of her speech, "Our house is on fire", is now widely available – **on Youtube**, in another article in *The Guardian* (with a transcript), and on her own Twitter feed, **@GretaThunberg**. The embodiment of speaking truth to power must be from Greta's speech: "Some people, some companies, some decision makers in particular have known exactly what priceless values they have been sacrificing to continue making unimaginable amounts of money. I think many of you here today belong to that group of people." And then: ... "Here in Davos – just like everywhere else – everyone is talking about money. It seems money and growth are our only main concerns....We all have a choice. We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations. Or we can continue with our business as usual and fail..... No other current challenge can match the importance of establishing a wide, public awareness and understanding of our rapidly disappearing carbon budget, that should and must become our new global currency and the very heart of our future and present economics.....We must change almost everything in our current societies. The bigger your carbon footprint, the bigger your moral duty. "



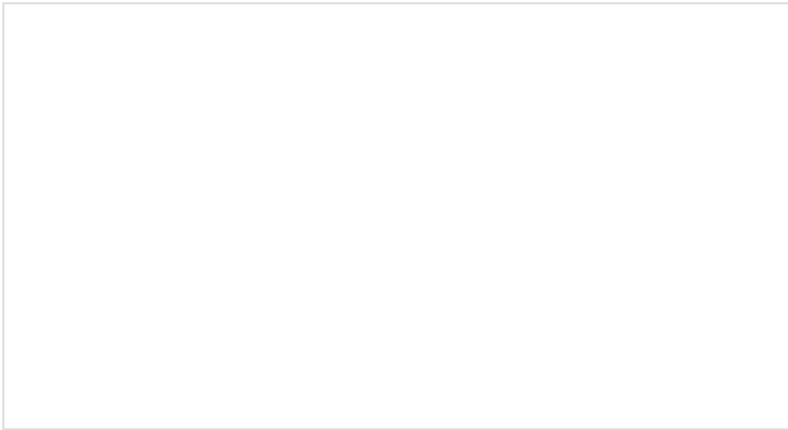
In Canada, there are now 12 cities in which kids have been inspired by Greta to stage climate strikes – the latest being **Extinction Rebellion Alberta** in Edmonton, which organized a climate strike at the provincial legislature on February 1. **TO Climate Strike** organized a protest at Queen’s Park on February 1, organized deputations to the City Council Budget discussions, and is **organizing a networking event on March 1** at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto, to gather together the many climate activist groups in Toronto. **The Climate Pledge Collective** reports on Toronto student activism, and is currently organizing a political campaign to press Toronto to declare a climate emergency, **as Vancouver has done**, followed by the cities of **Victoria** and **Halifax**. The **Montreal Gazette** has reported that Quebec post-secondary students will strike across the province on March 15 and September 27. According to **Sophia Mathur**, Sudbury’s next strike will be held on March 1 at Laurentian University, with “Canada’s next big strike” being organized for May 3. All the activity will be easier to follow when a new Canadian Twitter feed goes live on March 1: **Fridays for Future Canada**.

Around the World: Every week, **Greta Thunberg compiles and posts** news of the school strikes that have happened anywhere in the world in the past week. Her post on February 10 features photos from dozens of cities throughout the U.K. and Europe, and including New York, Seattle, and in Uganda, Nigeria, and the Faroe Islands! In the week of January 21, as reported by **The Guardian**, 30,000 students from 50 cities in Germany protested; 12,500 in Belgium, and more than 20,000 in Switzerland. Previously, the largest national student-led climate strike had been on **November 30th in Australia**, when estimated 15,000 students protested.

The first **nationwide strike in the U.K.** is planned for February 15 – *The Guardian* is anticipating the action **here**, with the National Association of Head Teachers in support, according to a **Daily Mail report**.



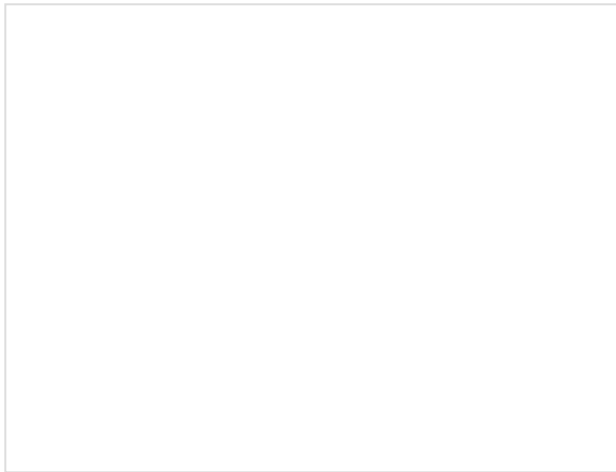
This movement is growing and acting so fast that social media is the best source of information : for example, [Global Climate Strike](#) Facebook page; [School Strikes 4 Climate](#) Twitter feed; [The Kids are Alright blog](#) ; [@Fridays for Future](#) on Twitter; and The Citizens Climate Lobby, which maintains [an interactive map of protests](#) around the world.



A global climate strike is planned for March 15.

Electric vehicle policy in Canada stalled by provincial opposition – 2018 market share at 2.2% of vehicle sales

Posted on **January 28, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Article updated on February 12:

Just as the cost of solar energy has steadily declined, so too has the total cost of ownership of electric vehicles, according to **new research** from Deloitte consultancy in the U.K. . Deloitte's forecast is that total cost of ownership of electric vehicles will match that of internal combustion cars as early as 2021 in the U.K., and by 2022 globally. By 2030, Deloitte's also forecasts global EV adoption will rise from two million units in 2018, to four million in 2020, to 21 million in 2030, driven by consumer demand and government incentives.

In Canada: Electric Mobility Canada, a non-profit advocacy network, released **2018 statistics for sales of electric and hybrid vehicles** on February 8. Their report shows that ev sales amounted to 2.2% of all new car sales in 2018 – disappointing, but a 125% increase over sales in 2017. There are now approximately 93,000 ev's in Canada, with almost all concentrated in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

A federal **Strategy for Zero Emissions Vehicles**, promised for 2018, was expected to be announced on January 21 at the meeting of the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety. The extent of a policy announcement was a quote which appeared in the *Toronto Star* article: "Ottawa wants to increase the number of zero-emission vehicles sold in Canada to 10 per cent of new cars sold in 2025, 30 per cent in 2030 and 100 per cent in 2040." Frustrated by the lack of progress, the David Suzuki Foundation is hosting a **petition** titled "Has Canada stalled on electric vehicles?" calling for mandatory targets for

electric vehicle sales, ramping up to 30 per cent by 2030 and a temporary purchase incentive program.

Both Ontario and Saskatchewan opposed a national plan at the January Ministers' meeting, as reported in the *Toronto Star* in "[Ottawa Queens Park spar over federal plan for more zero emission vehicles](#)" (Jan. 22). The *National Observer* examines their opposition in "[Electric vehicle strategy sputters as provinces battle it out on green policies](#)" (Jan. 18). The Ford government in Ontario [cancelled the EV purchase incentive program](#) in June 2018, and more recently, [EV charging stations](#) at the commuter parking lots of the GO regional transit have been removed.



Meanwhile, on February 11, the [federal government announced](#) a \$1.15-million investment to build 23 electric vehicle fast chargers across British Columbia , in partnership with funding from the provincial government. The funding comes from the federal [Electric Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Deployment Initiative](#) (EVAFIDI), which has budgeted \$182.5-million for fast-charging and natural gas stations across the country. That program has recently been criticized in a *National Observer* article, "[Close to half of Canadian program touted for electric cars is funding natural gas stations](#)"(Jan. 25) .

Relevant international research: An October 2018 Briefing paper from the International Council on Clean Transportation: [Electric vehicle capitals: Accelerating the global transition to electric drive](#)— which identifies the 25 cities worldwide with the highest electric vehicle uptake through 2017, and discusses the policies, actions, and infrastructure that have enabled their success. And in December 2018, the ICCT also published [Using vehicle taxation policy to lower transport emissions: An overview for passenger cars in Europe](#), which highlights the need for taxation incentives at the point of purchase and for gas/electricity consumption, as well as the importance of company fleets “as they make up the highest proportion of new-car registrations in markets such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.”

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Electric Vehicles](#), [provincial climate change policies](#), [Tax Incentives](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

German Coal Exit Commission recommends Just Transition measures but a 2038 deadline

Posted on **January 28, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 26, the **German Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment**, (better known as the Coal Exit Commission) delivered its highly-anticipated report and a “roadmap” for lignite coal plant closures in the country. The report calls for Germany to end coal-fired power generation by 2038 – subject to reviews by independent experts in 2026, 2029, and 2032, when it will be decided if the deadline can be advanced to 2035. The 28 official Commissioners, drawn from industry, unions, environmental NGOs, community leaders and government, negotiated for six months, with all but one voting in favour of the final recommendations. Greenpeace voted “yes”, but also issued a dissenting opinion, stating “Germany finally has a road map for how to make the country coal-free. There will be no further coal plants. [Greenpeace](#) and other groups made sure that the commission has clearly supported keeping Hambach forest. However, the report has a grave flaw: the speed is not right.” Other participants, including Sir Nicholas Stern, also criticized the slow speed of the plan. The **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, of which Canada and the U.K. were founding members, state that, in order to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, “a coal phase-out is needed by no later than by 2030 in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and in the European Union.”

A compilation of reactions from Commissioners is [here](#). From Michael Vassiliadis, head of the miners’ union [IG BCE](#): “We have found a compromise after 21 hours of negotiations that cannot make us happy, but leaves us overall satisfied. We managed to shield the employees in coal power generation from social hardships from the structural change. At the same time, the coal phase-out is closely tied to verifiable progress with the future energy mix, the expansion of renewables and the grids. The regions get money for structural change, to create new quality jobs. The commission laid the foundation for a new Energiewende of reason.”

The 336-page report is currently available in German only; , but it is well summarized in English in a [Fact Sheet](#) from Clean Energy Wire. According to CLEW, key issues addressed are the stability and pricing of energy supplies for Germany, CO2 reduction, and compensation to industry. Regarding Just Transition for workers and communities, the report devotes almost 40 pages to the economic measures for the regional economies and workers. While the report itself doesn't estimate those costs, [an article in Der Spiegel](#) states that communities will receive 40 billion euros in structural assistance over the next 20 years. The Commission calls for the coal mining regions to remain energy-oriented, through the development of innovative technologies, such as electricity storage, renewable energy, or power-to-gas production .

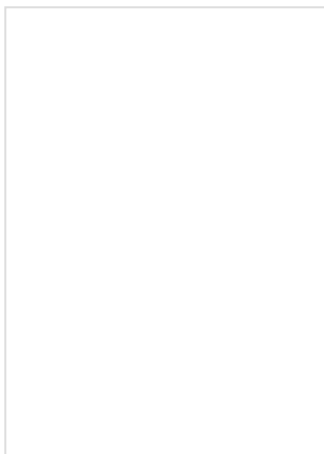
The Commission's recommendations are expected to be accepted by government, but there is a long road ahead in passing legislation and negotiating financing, as outlined in "[German government stands ready to move on coal exit proposal](#)" (Jan. 29). The coal exit will be one part of the government's [Climate Action Law package](#), promised for the end of 2019.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [Germany](#), [Just Transition](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Climate change and health: a new call to action for doctors

Posted on [January 22, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)

Two new articles appeared in the January issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, recognizing the health impacts of climate change and the gap in environmental justice. Most frequently cited, sometimes with alarmist headlines, is "[The Imperative for Climate Action to Protect Health](#)" (Jan. 17) (registration required). The authors state that the World Health Organization may have underestimated the health effects of climate



change when it predicted in a [2018 report](#) that climate change will kill 250,000 people per year between 2030 and 2050. The NEJM authors Haines and Ebi state: "We think the impact is more difficult to quantify because there is also population displacement and a range of additional factors

like food production and crop yields, and the increase in heat that will limit labour productivity from farmers in tropical regions that wasn't taken into account, among other factors. " They point to the need for investment and policies to promote adaptation to reduce health risks.

The other article in January's *New England Journal of Medicine* is an overview of the issue and a more direct call to action for doctors. " **Climate Change: A health emergency** " by Drs. Caren G. Solomon and Regina C. LaRocque states: "Disruption of our climate system, once a theoretical concern, is now occurring in plain view — with a growing human toll brought by powerful storms, flooding, droughts, wildfires, and rising numbers of insect borne diseases. Psychological stress, political instability, forced migration, and conflict are other unsettling consequences. In addition, particulate air pollutants released by burning fossil fuels are shortening human life in many regions of the world. These effects of climate disruption are fundamentally health issues, and they pose existential risks to all of us. People who are sick or poor will suffer the most....As physicians, we have a special responsibility to safeguard health and alleviate suffering. Working to rapidly curtail greenhouse gas emissions is now essential to our healing mission....

The authors' call to action includes: "working with medical students on climate action, supporting the undergraduate divestment movement, joining forces with like-minded health professionals, and speaking with our legislators. "

In Canada, the **Canadian Association for Physicians and the Environment (CAPE)** is leading the way on such education and advocacy – a **compilation of their press releases** reveals the broad range of their actions. Most recently, on January 15, **CAPE announced** that the Ontario Court of Appeal has granted intervenor status to the Intergenerational Climate Coalition, of which CAPE is a member, to defend the constitutionality of the federal pricing of climate emissions, challenged by the Ontario provincial government in a case to be heard in April 2019. Other members of the Intergenerational Climate Coalition are **Generation Squeeze**, **Saskatchewan Public Health Association**, the **Public Health Association of BC**, the **Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children** , and the **Youth Climate Lab**. The same group **announced in December 2018** that it has intervenor status in the Saskatchewan government's challenge to the federal carbon tax plan.

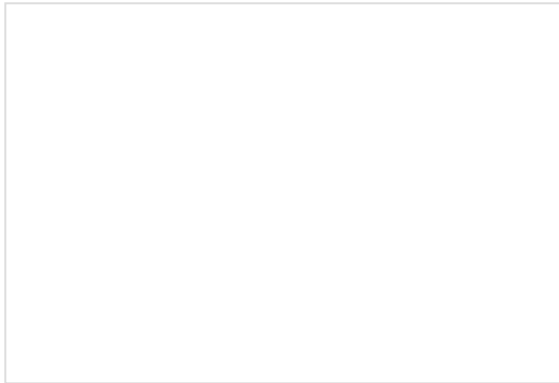
UPDATE:

A February 5 **press release** states: "Together, representatives from the **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)** , the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) , the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) and the Urban Public Health Network (UPHN) are calling for action: asking federal parties to recognize that climate change is the greatest public health challenge of the 21st century, and to make climate solutions a priority in the 2019 federal election."

Dr. Gigi Osler, President of the **Canadian Medical Association (CMA)** is quoted : "Climate change is no longer some abstract idea that may harm future generations or people on the other side of the globe; it's a reality that's already harming the physical and mental health of Canadians. We cannot afford to treat climate change as a wedge issue. We must treat it as the public health crisis that it is."

How transforming global food systems can reduce GHG emissions – in Canada, with a focus on food waste

Posted on **January 22, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



On January 15 in Oslo, the prestigious medical journal *Lancet* launched the results and recommendations of a commission it had established, the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#), composed of 37 experts from 16 countries. Their report, “[Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems](#)” analyzes human diet and food production in light of the Paris Agreement, and the fact that food production contributes about 30 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The Commission recognizes the enormity of their goals: “humanity has never aimed to change the global food system on the scale envisioned in this Commission.”

The Lancet report recommends cutting meat consumption in half, greatly reducing food waste, and replacing resource-intensive farming methods with approaches that require less fertilizer, and replenish the soil. The authors estimate that wide-spread adoption of plant-based diets could reduce agricultural emissions by up to 80 percent, and changes in food production practices could cut an additional 10 percent in 2050. Excellent summaries of the article appeared [from the American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) and from [Inside Climate News](#).

One of the recommendations of the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#) is to greatly reduce food waste. Coincidentally, a report released by Second Harvest Canada on January 17 is a thorough and detailed examination of that issue in Canada. “[The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste](#)” states

that Canada is one of the most wasteful countries in the world, generating the food waste equivalent to \$1,766 per household per year, with an estimated 58 per cent of all food produced in Canada lost or wasted. Through supply chain analysis, the report estimates that nearly \$21 billion worth occurs during the processing and manufacturing process, and more than \$10 billion worth at the consumer level. The report also estimates the environmental cost of such waste: food in landfills creates methane gas, the equivalent of 56.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. The report makes dozens of recommendations for industry and government in a [32-page “Roadmap”](#) for farmers, producers, retailers, restaurant owners, and government. The Technical report of how calculations were made is [here](#). A CBC summary is [here](#). A White paper by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, [Characterization and Management of Food Waste in North America](#) concurred with much of Second Harvest’s analysis when it was published in 2018.

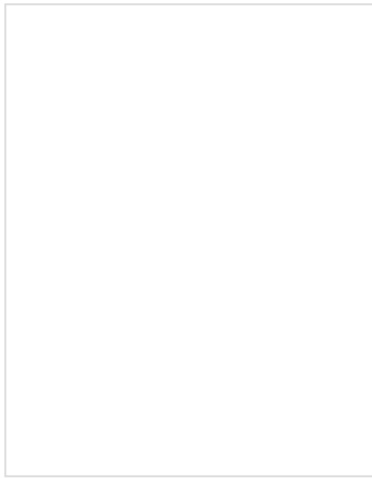
On January 17, eight of Canada’s leading food manufacturers and retailers- (Kraft Heinz Canada, Loblaw Companies Ltd, Maple Leaf Foods, Metro Inc, Save-On-Foods, Sobeys Inc, Unilever Canada and Walmart Canada) – [released a statement](#), committing themselves to cut food waste within their operations by 50% by the end of 2025, from 2016 levels. They will use the globally recognized [Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard](#), which addresses this issue on a global scale.

In Canada, the [2019 Food Guide](#) released on January 22, is the first update since 2007, and is intended as a consumer guide for a nutritious and healthy diet. To this end, it makes general recommendations about eating less meat and mostly plant-based foods, and has multiple recommendations for behaviour changes, such as “cook more often”, “eat with others” and “be aware of food marketing”.

Posted in [Government Policy](#) | Tagged [Agriculture](#), [Food Retail Industry](#), [Food Wastage](#), [Waste management](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

New report recommends mandatory financial disclosure of climate-related risks for Canadian companies

Posted on [January 18, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Though written mainly for a financial audience, a new report from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is relevant to the livelihoods and pensions of all Canadians. ***Leveraging Sustainable Finance Leadership in Canada: Opportunities to align financial policies to support clean growth and a sustainable Canadian economy*** was released on January 16, examining and making recommendations for Canadian companies to disclose climate change risks to their shareholders and to the public. A **press release** summarizes the report. Why is it so important? It concludes with an analysis of financial disclosure in the oil and gas industry, (found in Annex E), and this warning about the dangers to us all of stranded assets: “When these emissions are counted via proved and probable reserves, as disclosed by Canadian oil and gas companies, a picture emerges of significant, undisclosed—and therefore unaddressed—risks to Canadian companies, financial institutions, pension beneficiaries and savers.... Once the implications of the Paris Agreement are fully priced into the market, oil and gas asset valuations will shift. If this change is sufficiently large, debt covenants may be triggered in companies. This will in turn impact financial institutions, including banks, insurance companies and pension funds. Debt downgrading could ensue, and bank capitalization thresholds could be impacted.” (And a related risk for oil and gas companies: in December 2018, the Canadian Shareholders Association for Research and Education (SHARE) joined **an international campaign** for improved disclosure by oil and gas companies of the water-related risks of their operations).

What is to be done? Canada’s transition to a lower carbon economy requires private investment capital, and Canada’s financial markets cannot operate in isolation. Canada has a lot of regulatory “catching up” to do regarding climate risk, (outlined in **“Data Gap”** in *Corporate Knights* magazine in May 2018) , and evidenced by the examples given throughout the report of current practice amongst **European Union** , G7 and G20 countries. The report shows the state of Canadian regulation, with frequent reference to the two major Canadian studies to date on the issue: the **Interim Report** of the government-appointed Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance (Oct. 2018), and the **Canadian Securities Association Staff Notice 51-354** (April 2018). In ***Leveraging Sustainable Finance Leadership in Canada***, author Celine Bak, sets out a three-year policy roadmap for Canada, calling for Canadian laws and statutes to be updated to require mandatory disclosure of climate risk by 2021. The report also calls for the Toronto Stock Exchange to join the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative, and that the the Canada Pension Plan Investment

Board be required to report on the climate change risks which might affect its fully-funded status. Detailed and concise summaries are provided in the Annexes, titled: “An Overview of the Key Reports on Corporate and Financial Sector Climate- and Environment-Related Disclosure”; “G20 and G7 Precedents for Implementation of TCFD Recommendations in Canada”; and “Analysis of EU Sustainable Finance Proposed Actions, EU Laws and Canadian Equivalents”.

Expect more discussion and publications about sustainable finance issues, as Canada’s **Expert Panel** concludes its public consultations at the end of January 2019, and releases its final report later in the year. The European Union **Technical Expert group on Sustainable Finance (TEG)** is also expected to report in June 2019, and the international **Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures Task Force** will publish a Status Report in June 2019, updating its **first report**, published in September 2018, with analysis of disclosures made in 2018 financial reports .

Posted in **Green Economy** | Tagged **financial disclosure, Financial Risk, Oil and gas industry, Stranded Assets, Task Force on Climate-related financial disclosure** | **Leave a reply**

Growth and diversity in the U.S.clean energy industry

Posted on **January 14, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

Two new reports foresee employment growth in the U.S. renewable energy industry – despite the chilling effect of the tariffs on solar equipment imposed by the Trump administration, as described in a Solar Energy Industry Association **press release** in December. The first study, **Clean Energy sweeps across rural America** (November 2018) by the Natural Resources Defence Council examines job growth in wind, solar, and energy efficiency in rural regions throughout the Midwest U.S., and finds that the number of clean energy jobs grew by 6 percent from 2015 to 2016 (a higher rate than the economic in general), to a total of nearly 160,000 in 2017. In 2017, in the rural parts of every midwestern state except North Dakota and Kansas, more people worked in clean energy than in the entire fossil fuel industry. The report emphasizes the outsized impact of job opportunities in rural areas in which job growth is normally negligible or even negative. The report also profiles examples of community solar programs operated by co-ops and investor-owned utilities.

A second report models the impact of replacing Colorado’s coal plants with a mix of wind and solar backed by battery storage and natural gas. This report was prepared by consultants Vibrant Clean Energy and commissioned by energy developer Community Energy Inc., with a main focus on cost savings and carbon emissions. However, it also forecasts job impacts under three scenarios (keeping coal plants to 2040, gradually retiring coal plants, and retiring all coal plants in 2025), and overall, it forecasts a 52% increase in employment in the electricity industry.

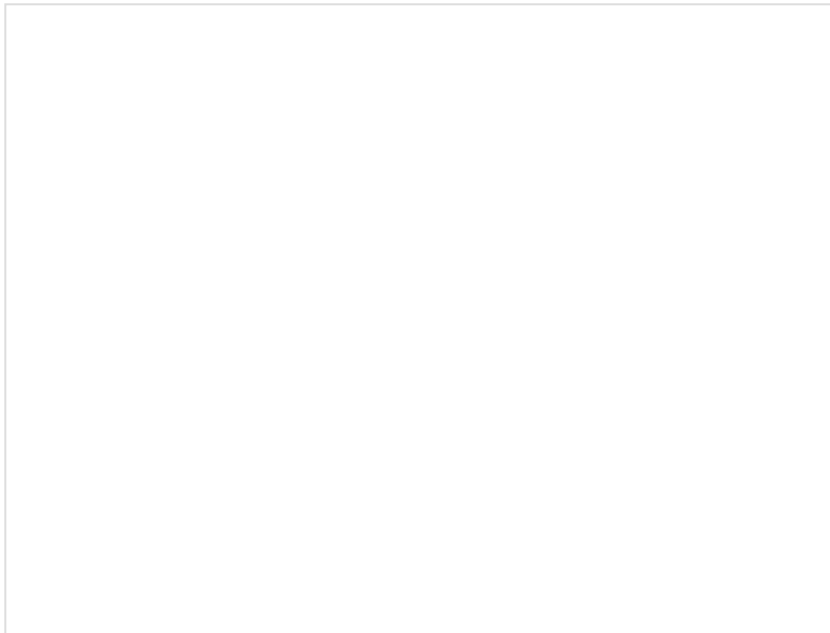
The January 9 [press release](#) quotes a representative from Community Energy Inc: “The key to unlocking these benefits is to create a legal framework that enables utilities to voluntarily retire the coal plants. Otherwise, it could take years to negotiate or litigate utility cost recovery, replacement power costs and impact on local communities.” The full Coal Plant Retirement study is [here](#) .

Finally, the Solar Energy Industries Association issued a [press release](#) in early December, highlighting its 2018 initiatives to improve gender equity and diversity – including the creation of the [Women’s Empowerment Initiative](#), which includes summits to increase women’s leadership and various industry opportunities. In September 2018, the SEIA [signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#) to help the solar industry recruit and employ more students from the 101 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This will include hosting a national jobs fair, individual jobs fairs at the HBCU schools and bringing solar companies to campuses for recruitment. A webinar series on diversity and inclusion is scheduled for SEIA member companies in 2019.

Posted in [Green Economy](#), [United States](#) | Tagged [coal phase-out](#), [diversity](#), [Gender Equality](#), [hiring practices](#), [Job Creation](#), [Solar energy industry](#), [United States](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canadian youth continue their climate strikes in frigid January weather

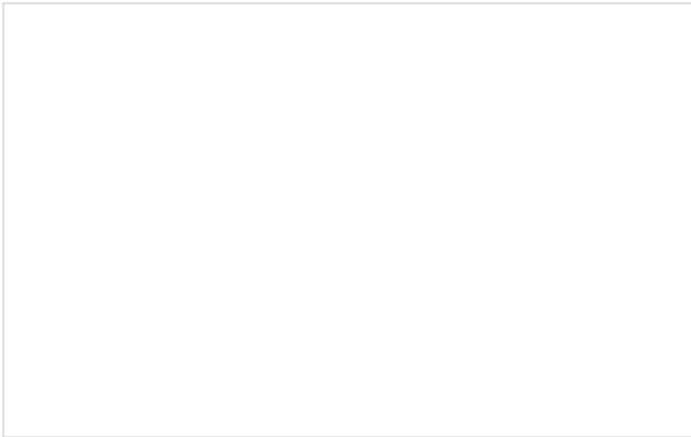
Posted on [January 14, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



Children in Canada and around the world continue to demand climate action from their nations’ policy leaders, following the example of the now-famous Greta Thunberg. In the first week of

January 2019, according [Greta's Twitter feed](#), climate strikes were held in "South Africa, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Czech Rep, Uganda, Nigeria, Faroe Islands, Italy and many more". As you would expect, social media plays a huge part in the campaigns, centred on the #Fridays for Future [Facebook page](#) and [@fridaysforfuture Twitter](#) account.

In Canada, Twitter accounts to watch are from [@Sophia Mathur](#) , (the 11-year old Sudbury girl who was the first to join the international campaign – profiled [here](#)); [@Student Climate Activist](#) , and [Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition](#) , both from Winnipeg, Manitoba; [Toronto Climate Future](#) from Toronto and the GTHA , also with a [Facebook page](#) here . The Citizens Climate Lobby is hosting an [interactive map](#) to track climate strikes around the world, and [The Climate Pledge Collective](#) offers free resources to help others organize FridaysforFuture events.



Traditional media have provided fairly limited coverage of the stoic students who protested in Canadian cities on January 11: from the *Waterloo Record*, "[On a bitterly cold day in Waterloo, a new type of protest begins](#)" (Jan. 12) and "[Children and youth strike against climate change in Waterloo Region](#)" at KitchenerToday.com (Jan. 11); "[Students, climate activists protest provincial climate plan at Queen's Park](#)" (Jan. 13) from *The Varsity*, the student newspaper of University of Toronto; and "[I want to know the earth will be ok](#)" from the *Winnipeg Sun* (Jan. 11). CBC Vancouver reported the [previous student climate strike](#) on December 7 ; others are listed in the [Work and Climate Change Report summary](#) from December .

And another Canadian youth group to watch: [PowerShift: Young and Rising](#), who are gathering in Ottawa on February 14 – 18 . From their announcement: "We will dig deep into discussions on topics including fracking, pipeline politics, Indigenous sovereignty, divestment, and green jobs. We will learn how to make lasting change through community organizing, direct action, art, storytelling, and using traditional and digital media. ... PowerShift aims to ensure that once the convergence is over, the youth climate movement continues to grow through our networks, continued capacity building, and strategic action."

Economists debate decarbonization: optimistic and pessimistic scenarios

Posted on **January 14, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

A [debate forum](#) , **Is Green Growth Possible?** was hosted by the Institute for New Economic Thinking in December, consisting of papers by economists debating whether catastrophic global warming can be stopped while maintaining current levels of economic growth. The arguments are summarized for the non-economist in [“The Case for ‘conditional optimism’ on climate change”](#) by David Roberts in Vox (Dec. 31) . Economists may be interested in the full papers, which include [“The Road to ‘Hothouse Earth’ is Paved with Good Intentions”](#) and [“Why Green Growth is an Illusion”](#), both by Enno Schröder and Servaas Storm. The authors conclude that “.. The world’s current economies are not capable of the emission reductions required to limit temperature rise to 2 degrees. If world leaders insist on maintaining historical rates of economic growth, and there are no step-change advances in technology, hitting that target requires a rate of reduction in carbon intensity for which there is simply no precedent. Despite all the recent hype about decoupling, there’s no historical evidence that current economies are decoupling at anything close to the rate required.... Without a concerted (global) policy shift to deep decarbonization, a rapid transition to renewable energy sources, structural change in production, consumption, and transportation, and a transformation of finance, ... the decoupling will not even come close to what is needed.”

[“The Inconvenient Truth about Climate Change and the Economy”](#) by Gregor Semieniuk, Lance Taylor, and Armon Rezai summarizes and analyzes the October 2018 IPCC report, [Global Warming of 1.5 °C](#) ., finding it overly optimistic about global productivity growth and fossil fuel energy use, and reiterating the argument that politics are holding back climate change solutions. They conclude that “a big mitigation push, perhaps financed by carbon taxes and/or reductions in subsidies, is possible macroeconomically even if the link between energy use and output is not severed. This, however, would require considerable modifications of countries’ macroeconomic arrangements. Needless to say, military establishments and recipients of energy subsidies wield political clout. Fossil fuel producers have at least as much. Whether national preferences will permit big shifts in the use of economic resources is the key question.”

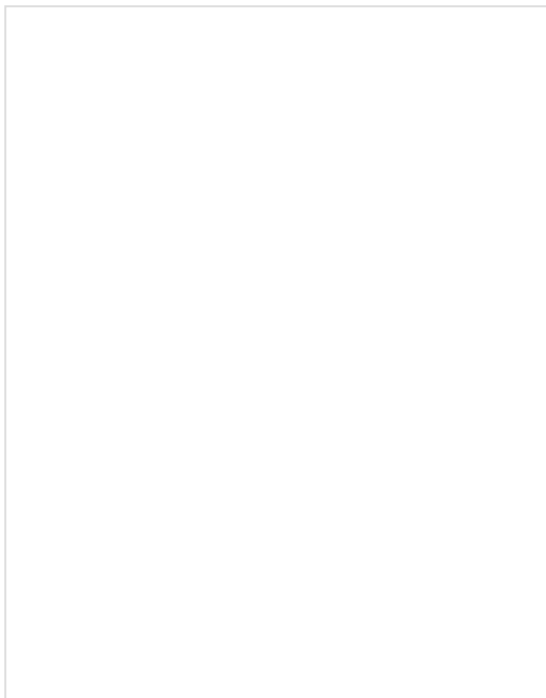
Finally, in [“Conditional Optimism: Economic Perspectives on Deep Decarbonization”](#), author Michael Grubb takes issue with Schröder and Storm, saying that their papers rely on historical data and rates of change, and thus are characterized by a “pessimism about our ability to change what matters fast enough. ” Grubb states that this “may be emblematic of a growing trend in energy-climate economics, of what we might term historical futures analysis.” He lays out a technical economic critique and suggests four fundamental principles for his own “conditional

optimism”, which relies on analysis based on the rate of displacement of carbon intensive energy supply by the growth of alternate sources.

Posted in [Energy Policy](#) | Tagged [Decarbonization](#), [Decoupling](#), [Energy policy](#), [Green Economy](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Can unions deliver good green jobs at Tesla?

Posted on **January 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



The “[Driving a Fair Future](#)” website has documented the complaints against Tesla for years – including [an analysis of Tesla injury rates](#) between 2014 and 2017 at its Fremont California plant, which showed that injuries were 31% higher than industry standards. In June 2018, the U.S. National Labor Relations Board began to hear some of the workers’ complaints of safety violations and anti-union harassment, with the United Auto Workers representing them. Two themes have emerged in the saga of Tesla’s bad labour relations: 1. how can the apparently “green jobs” become decent, good jobs? and 2. would unionization at Tesla give a foothold at other precarious Silicon Valley workplaces such as Google, Amazon, and their like.

“[Tesla’s Union Battle Is About the Future of Our Planet](#)” (Oct. 9) in *Medium* describes the union drive at the Fremont California electric vehicle manufacturing plant, in light of its environmental mission. The article contends : “ This case isn’t just about Tesla. It’s about the future of an industry that sees itself as key to addressing the climate crisis. Clean tech companies peddle

a progressive vision of a low-carbon future, but Tesla’s anti-union fervor suggests that some in the industry have lost sight of their work’s bigger point.”

Workers from Tesla’s solar panel factory in Buffalo New York expressed similar sentiments in [interviews with the local news organization](#) . Taking pride in their green jobs, they are seeking better pay, benefits, and job security through a unionization drive [announced in December](#) . The Tesla Gigafactory 2 in Buffalo received \$750 million in taxpayer funding for the state-of-the-art solar production facility, promising new jobs in a high unemployment area; the unionization campaign involves about 300 production and maintenance employees in a partnership between the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#) and the [United Steelworkers](#) . The drive is endorsed by the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) , which states: “We are hearing a lot about the need for a Green New Deal that will provide millions of good jobs helping protect the climate. These Tesla workers represent the Green New Deal in action.” Follow developments on the [Facebook page of the Coalition for Economic Justice Buffalo](#) .

Implications for High Tech workers: “[Why Elon Musk’s latest legal bout with the United Auto Workers may have ripple effects across Silicon Valley](#)” is a thorough overview about the UAW unionization drive at Tesla’s auto manufacturing plant at Fremont California, from CNBC in early December. Similar themes appeared in “[What Tesla’s union-busting trial means for the rest of Silicon Valley](#)” appeared in Verge in September 2018, chronicling the arguments of the UAW and Tesla management – including Elon Musk and his tweets – during the [NLRB hearings](#) in June 2018. The article concludes that “Tesla’s case [is] a bellwether — particularly for Amazon. ... Tesla might be a car company, but it’s also a tech company — and if its workers can unionize, tech workers elsewhere are bound to start getting ideas.”

What is life like for these high tech workers? [A New Kind of Labor Movement in Silicon Valley](#)” in *The Atlantic* (Sept. 4) gives a good overview, and introduces nascent groups as [Silicon Valley Rising](#) and [Tech Workers Coalition](#) .

Posted in [Business Policy](#) | Tagged [Green Economy](#), [Green Jobs](#), [Job Quality](#), [Silicon Valley](#), [Solar Industry](#), [Solar PV Manufacturing](#), [Tesla](#), [unionization](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Economists weigh in on deceptive carbon pricing messages

Posted on **January 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

Economist Brenda Frank contributes to the ongoing battle of ideas about carbon pricing in Canada with his January 9 blog : “[Carbon pricing works even when emissions are rising](#)”. Frank begins: “An old, debunked argument against carbon taxes has flared up recently: If total

emissions aren't falling, the tax must not be working. Let's quash that myth." Continuing the arguments he published in a 2017 blog, "[The curious case of counterfactuals](#)", his central question is, "if emissions are still rising, how fast would they have been rising without a carbon price?" He cites recent studies, such as "[The Impact of British Columbia's Carbon Tax on Residential Natural Gas Consumption](#)" (in *Energy Economics*, Dec. 2018), as well as the extensive carbon pricing reports produced by the Ecofiscal Commission, most recently [Clearing the Air: How carbon pricing helps Canada fight climate change](#) (April 2018). The conclusion: carbon pricing is more "complicated than something you can fit in a tweet", and complex analysis demonstrates that it *does* work.

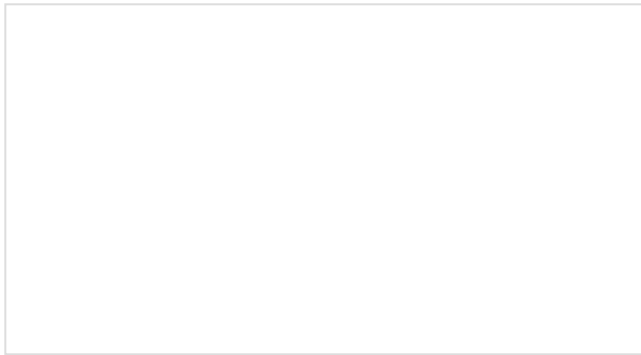
Marc Hafstead, U.S. economist and Director of the Carbon Pricing Initiative pursues a similar theme in "[Buyer Beware: An Analysis of the Latest Flawed Carbon Tax Report](#)" (November 28). Hafstead contends that "some papers can introduce confusion and misinformation", and demonstrates how this is done in [The Carbon Tax: Analysis of Six Potential Scenarios](#), a study commissioned by the Institute for Energy Research and conducted by Capital Alpha Partners. Hafstead critiques the modelling assumptions and concludes they are flawed; he also charges that the paper fails to explain its differences from the prevailing academic literature.

Even without Hafstead's economic skills, one might be wary of the U.S. paper after a check of the DeSmog's [Global Warming Disinformation Database](#), which provides mind-blowing detail about the financial and personnel connections between the Institute for Energy Research and Koch Industries. DeSmog maintains records on organizations and individuals engaged in "climate change disinformation" in the [U.S.](#) and the [United Kingdom](#).

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [B.C. Carbon Tax](#), [Carbon Pricing](#), [Carbon Tax](#), [Climate change in the Media](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Review of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan and carbon levy; updates on renewables and methane regulations

Posted on **January 11, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)



Environmental Defence released a report in December 2018, [***Carbon Pricing in Alberta: A review of its success and impacts***](#) . According to the report, Alberta's carbon levy, introduced in 2017 as part of the broader [**Climate Leadership Plan**](#), has had no detrimental effect on the economy, and in fact, all key economic indicators (weekly consumer spending, consumer price index, and gross domestic product) improved in 2017. The report also documents how the carbon levy revenues have been invested: for example, over \$1 billion used to fund consumer rebates and popular energy efficiency initiatives in 2017; support for Indigenous communities, including employment programs; a 500% growth in solar installations; funding for an expansion of light rail transit systems in Calgary and Edmonton; and prevention of an estimated 20,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution. The conclusion: the Climate Leadership Plan and its carbon levy is off to a good start, but improvement is needed on promised methane reduction regulations , and the regulations to enforce the legislated cap on oil sands emissions need to be released.

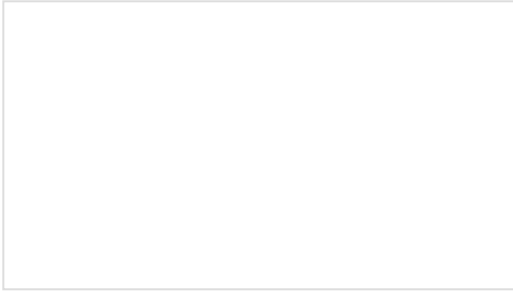
Methane Regulations: The Alberta Environmental Law Centre published [a report](#) in 2017 evaluating the province's methane emissions regulations. On December 13, the government released [**new, final regulations**](#) governing methane. On December 19, the Alberta Environmental Law Centre published a summary of the new Regulations [here](#) .

Since the Environmental Defence study, on December 17, the government [**announced**](#) agreement on five new wind projects funded by Carbon Leadership revenues, through the Renewable Electricity Program. Three of the five projects are private-sector partnerships with First Nations, and include a minimum 25 per cent Indigenous equity component to stimulate jobs, skills training and other economic benefits. The government claims that all five projects will generate 1000 jobs.

On December 19 the government also [**announced**](#) new funding of \$50 million from Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan for the existing [**Sector-specific Industrial Energy Efficiency Program**](#) , to support technology improvements in the trade-exposed industries of pulp and paper, chemical, fertilizer, minerals and metals facilities.

Balanced against this, a December 31 [government press release](#) summarized how its [**"Made in Alberta"**](#) policies have supported the oil and gas industry: including doubling of support for petrochemical upgrading to \$2.1 billion; creation of a [**Liquefied Natural Gas \(LNG\) investment team**](#) to work directly with industry to expedite fossil fuel projects; political fights for new pipelines

(claiming that “Premier Notley’s advocacy was instrumental in the federal government’s decision to purchase the Trans Mountain Pipeline”), and the ubiquitous **Keep Canada Working** advertisements promoting the



benefits of the Trans Mountain pipeline . The press release also references the November announcement that the province **will buy rail cars** to ship oil in the medium term, and the December 11 press release announcing that the province is exploring private-sector interest in **building a new oil refinery** .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **Alberta, Carbon Pricing, First Nations, Methane Emissions, oil and gas pipelines, provincial climate change policies, Renewable Energy Incentives** | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada joins the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

Posted on **January 10, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**

Canada **officially became a member** of the the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) on January 9th, on the eve of the 9th Session of the Assembly in Abu Dhabi, where 1,200 delegates from more than 160 governments, the private sector and civil society met. **IRENA describes itself** as: “an intergovernmental organisation that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future, and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation, a centre of excellence, and a repository of policy, technology, resource and financial knowledge on renewable energy. IRENA promotes the widespread adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy, including bioenergy, geothermal, hydropower, ocean, solar and wind energy in the pursuit of sustainable development, energy access, energy security and low-carbon economic growth and prosperity.”



Canada’s membership brings to 160 the number of countries participating in IRENA, and will make it easier for Canadians to place their renewable energy development in an international context, by inclusion such flagship publications , such as the **Renewable Energy and Jobs Annual Review** . Recently, Vancouver B.C. was profiled as a case study in the IRENA publication **Scaling up Renewables in Cities: Opportunities for Municipal Governments**

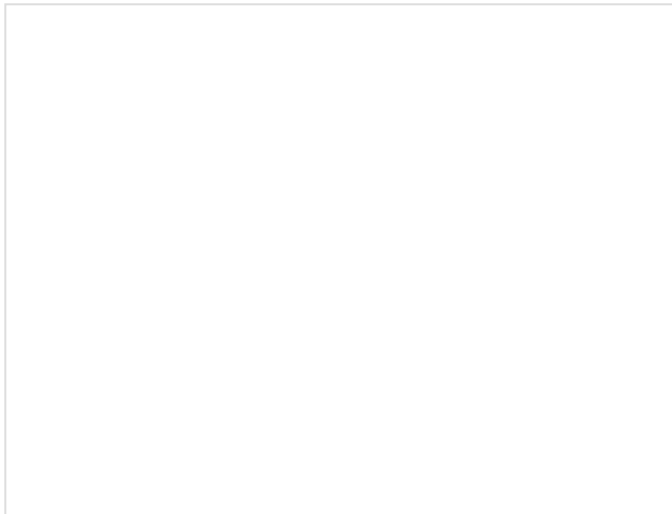


The **official press release** from Canada's ministry of Natural Resources was brief, and did not indicate any future plans for Canada's involvement in IRENA research activities. Some context is provided in a news item from the ***National Observer*** .

Posted in **Government Policy** | Tagged **International cooperation, IRENA, renewable energy** | **Leave a reply**

Updated: Agreement reached between RCMP and Wet'suwet'en First Nation protesters after arrests in B.C.

Posted on **January 9, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



Despite the high praise for British Columbia's new **Clean B.C. strategy** released on December 5, B.C. has a problem – supporting the \$40 billion LNG Canada facility makes it almost impossible for the province to reach its GHG reduction targets. (Marc Lee his most recent critique in “**BC's shiny new climate plan: A look under the hood**”.) And on January 7, **the headlines began screaming** about another problem related to LNG Canada, as the RCMP began to enforce **an injunction** granted by B.C.'s Supreme Court, arresting fourteen members of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation.

The Wet'suwet'en built a fortified barrier on a remote forest service road near Houston, B.C., about 300 kilometres west of Prince George, to prevent construction workers from TC Energy

(formerly TransCanada Corp.) and their pipeline subsidiary [Coastal GasLink](#). The company maintains that they have signed agreements with all First Nations along the pipeline route, but those agreements have been made with elected chiefs and councils of the five Wet'suwet'en bands. The [hereditary chiefs maintain](#) that the agreements do not apply to traditional lands. The *Vancouver Sun* provides good local coverage at ["Fourteen people arrested after RCMP break down anti-pipeline checkpoint"](#); *The Tyee* explains the background and issues in ["Nine Things You Need to Know about the Unist'ot'en Blockade"](#); *The Energy Mix* writes ["Negotiations Seek 'Peaceful Solution' At Unist'ot'en After RCMP Arrest 14 Blocking Coastal Gaslink Pipeline"](#) (Jan. 9) .

First Nations viewpoint appears in a series of posts at APTN News, including: ["An act of war': Gidimt'en clan prepares for police raid on Wet'suwet'en Territory"](#) (Jan. 5); ["Researchers say RCMP action against Wet'suwet'en would place corporate interests over Indigenous rights"](#) (Jan. 6) ; and ["RCMP set up 'exclusion zones' for public and media as raid on B.C. camps start"](#) (Jan. 7) . According to those reports, "The Gidmit'en Clan, whose members are at the second check point, have called any RCMP raid an "act of war."



Not all First Nations oppose the LNG Canada project. In a summary of a [Canada 2020 conference in Ottawa](#) on December 13 , First Nations speakers included Larry Villeneuve, Aboriginal Liaison with Local 92 of LiUNA, (involved in four training sites in western Canada for a skilled Indigenous workforce); Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, now Co-Chair of [Indigenous Affairs Committee at LiUNA](#); and Crystal Smith, Chief Councillor of the Haisla Nation. In [An open letter to opponents and critics of LNG development](#) on the Haisla Nation website, Crystal Smith writes: "We urge you to think strongly about how your opposition to LNG developments is causing harm to our people and our wellbeing. Opposition does nothing towards empowering our Nation, but rather dismisses our Rights and Title and works towards separating our people from real benefits." As this issue has heated up, on January 8 she posted ["Investing in ourselves is not selling out"](#) .

Rallies in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en resistance have been coordinated through a Facebook campaign, [International Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en](#) , and reports indicate turnout across Canada, including Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax, Montreal, New Brunswick, Whitehorse, and Calgary. The [APTN News](#) (Jan. 9) includes photos and video; Regional CBC outlets have also covered the story: ["Protesters across Canada support Wet'suwet'en anti-pipeline camps"](#) (Jan. 8); ["Protesters, counter protesters gather in downtown Calgary after B.C. pipeline arrests"](#) ; ["Protests in Regina, Saskatoon show solidarity with B.C. First Nation fighting pipelines"](#) (Jan. 8). The [National Observer](#) reports that the Prime Minister was forced by protesters to change the time and venue of his address to First Nations leaders in Ottawa on January 8th. [Prime Minister Trudeau is visiting Kamloops](#) on January 9 but has declined to visit the protest camp.

UPDATES: On January 9, the [National Observer reported](#) on a press conference with B.C. Premier Horgan, at which he asserted that "his government believed it had met its obligations to

consult with Indigenous nations in approving TransCanada's Coastal Gaslink project by receiving the "free, prior, and informed" consent that is referenced in United Nations declarations on indigenous rights." He sees sees "no quick fix" to the issue and did not set out any path forward.

An "uneasy peace" was reached between the RCMP and the Wet'suwet'en protesters on January 9, allowing workers access to the Coastal GasLink pipeline construction site in order to avoid a second RCMP raid on the protest camp. According to ["Peaceful Resolution' to Unist'ot'en Blockade Allows Access, Not Construction, Chiefs Say"](#) in *The Energy Mix* (Jan. 11) and a related [CBC report](#), "it's a temporary solution to de-escalate things while everyone figures out their next moves."

What comes next? Construction of the Coastal Gas Link pipeline is certainly not settled, not only because of the issue of Wet'suwet'en permission to build on hereditary lands (that issue explained [here](#)). There is also dispute over whether or not the pipeline falls under provincial or federal jurisdiction – an issue to be addressed by the National Energy Board in April. Read Andrew Nikofoeruk in ["Is Coastal GasLink an Illegal Pipeline?"](#) in *The Tyee* (Jan. 11) or ["Coastal GasLink pipeline permitted through illegal process, lawsuit contends"](#) in *The Narwhal*.

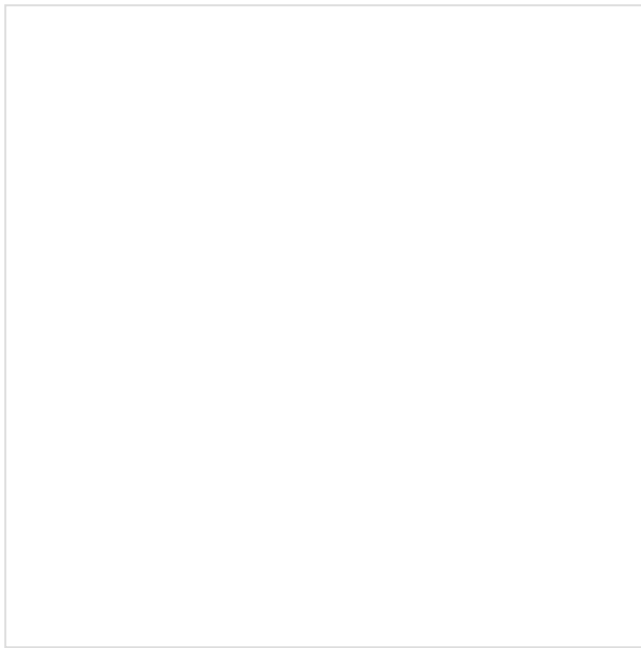
An analysis in *The Energy Mix*, ["Pipeline Investment 'Goes Palliative' in Wake of Unist'ot'en Blockade"](#) (Jan. 13) compiles responses to the blockade from several media outlets, and sketches out two themes. The first, Canada has provided yet another example of how unattractive and uncertain it is to energy investors; the second: First Nations concerns are represented by both hereditary and elected leaders. "As long as they [the government] are willing to resort to force instead of diplomacy, we haven't even begun to engage in meaningful reconciliation."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [Aboriginal people](#), [B.C. LNG](#), [British Columbia](#), [First Nations](#), [LNG Canada](#), [Protests & Rallies](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Green New Deal – an opportunity for the U.S. and for Labour

Posted on **January 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

As the U.S. Congress returned for its 116th Session in January 2019, newly-elected Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the Green New Deal have become the symbols of the "freshmen" class in Washington. The term is now everywhere – as shown



by [“What’s the Deal with the Green New Deal”](#) from the Energy Institute at Haas, University of California at Berkeley, which coins the acronym “GND” and shows a graph of the Twitter traffic on the topic. More substantially, the article critiques the economic, job creation proposals in the Green New Deal proposal, as does economist Edward B. Barbier in [“How to make the next Green New Deal work”](#) in *Nature.com* on January 1. From a Canadian, much less conservative viewpoint, Thomas Clayton-Muller discussed a Canadian version called the [“Good work Guarantee”](#), as proposed by 350.org. in [“Canada needs its own Green New Deal. Here’s what it could look like”](#) in the *National Observer* (Nov. 29) , and Matt Price urged unions to follow the lead in [“Unions Should Go Big on a Green New Deal for Canada”](#) in an Opinion piece in *The Tyee* (Dec. 10) .

Jeremy Brecher and Joe Uehlein of the Labor Network for Sustainability write “The Green New Deal provides a visionary program for labor and can provide a role for unions in defining and leading a new vision for America” in [“12 Reasons Labor Should Demand a Green New Deal”](#) in Portside. The article reviews the history of the original U.S. New Deal, but more importantly, shows how the Green New Deal can help U.S. labour unions reclaim bargaining power, political power, and good jobs. They conclude with a long list of Labour goals for any Green New Deal, including: Restore the right to organize: Bargain collectively and engage in concerted action on the job; Guarantee the Constitutional rights to freedom of speech and assembly in the workplace; Restore the right to strike; Guarantee the right to a safe and healthy work environment; Provide a fair and just transition for workers whose jobs may be threatened by economic change; Establish fair labor standards; Establish strong state and local prevailing wage laws; Encourage industry-wide bargaining; Establish a “buy fair” and “buy local” procurement policy. They conclude with suggestions for how unions can support a Green New Deal . [Héctor Figueroa](#) , President of 32BJ Service Employees International Union also urges other unions to support the GND, and describes its importance for his union in [“For the Future of Our Communities, Labor Support for The Green New Deal”](#) in *Common Dreams* (Dec. 13) .

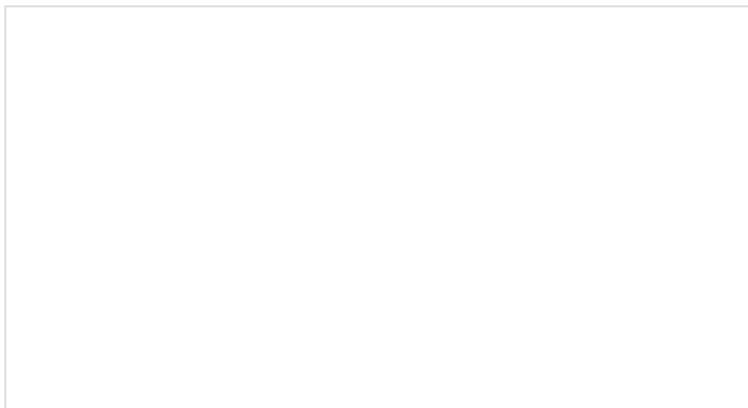
The political story of the Green New Deal revolves around the negotiations to form a House of Representatives Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, summarized in a great article from *Inside Climate News*, “[New Congress Members See Climate Solutions and Jobs in a Green New Deal](#)” (Jan. 3). [HR-1, the first Bill](#) tabled by the Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Democratic Party in the new House of Representatives is a 60-page statement, which establishes the mandate of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis in Section 104, (pages 46-49). [Reaction from the Sunrise Movement](#) stated: “The mandate for [@nancypelosi](#)’s Climate Select Committee is out, and it’s everything we feared. No mandate to create a plan on the timeline mandated by top scientists; No language on economic & racial justice, or a just transition; Allows members to accept fossil fuel money. As well, it lacks power to subpoena.” Sunrise co-founder Varshini Prakash is extensively quoted in “[They Failed Us Once Again’: House Democrats Denounced for Dashing Hopes of Green New Deal](#)” from *Common Dreams* (Jan. 3), and though disappointed, she states: “In losing this fight on the Select Committee, we have won the biggest breakthrough on climate change in my lifetime.”

The Select Committee is not the only political avenue to deal with climate change. The House Energy and Commerce Committee, led by Democratic Representative Frank Pallone, announced it will hold its first hearing on climate change, [as reported by The Hill](#). And prospective Democratic presidential candidates are under pressure, as described in “[Green Leftists Prepare to Give Democratic Candidates Hell](#)” in the *New Republic* (Jan. 4).

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Canadian press coverage of pipelines lacks workers’ voices

Posted on [January 8, 2019](#) by [elizabethperry493](#)



[Jobs vs the Environment? Mainstream and alternative media coverage of pipeline controversies](#) examines how the press—classified into corporate and alternative outlets —treats the relationship between jobs and the environment, and how frequent and influential are the voices

of workers and labour unions. The report uses two sophisticated methods of communications analysis – content analysis and critical discourse analysis – to examine two samples: The first sample comprises 129 articles about Canadian pipeline projects from the [Vancouver Sun](#), the [Edmonton Journal](#) and the Toronto [Globe and Mail](#) representing corporate media; articles from [Ricochet](#), [The Tyee](#), and the [National Observer](#) represent alternative media. The second examination was slightly different, made up of 170 articles about the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion which appeared in the *Vancouver Sun* and two commuter tabloids in Vancouver, and including [Rabble.ca](#) to the previously examined alternative sources of *Ricochet*, *The Tyee*, and *National Observer*.

The analysis is detailed and makes many interesting observations. Briefly, the authors conclude from these samples that both mainstream and alternative media frequently reinforce the assumption that there is a trade-off between environmental protection and job creation. Though alternative media are more critical of pipeline projects and provide more of the perspectives of Indigenous people and environmentalists, the authors conclude that “neither corporate nor alternative media gave much voice to the perspectives of workers and their unions.” And “while job creation is often touted as a rationale for pipeline projects, the actual workers and their unions—the presumed beneficiaries of fossil fuel expansion—appear to be largely missing from news reportage.”

To sum up, they write that : “... alternative media provide analyses and sources that help counterbalance the apparent extractivist orientation of the corporate press. They make a valuable contribution to well-rounded public discussion and offer perspectives on energy, climate and economic policies that are evidently under-represented in the corporate press.

The authors briefly discuss the labour press – mentioning [Rank and File.ca](#) specifically, and see a role for the labour media in the climate and energy debate. They state: “..... labour’s voice in the media system is muted. There are many reasons why a movement for a just transition has not gained greater traction. Governments have not sufficiently committed to retraining and other supportive measures, and thus there are few working examples for just transition advocates to highlight. But part of the problem lies in the lack of public arenas for exploring the common ground between workers and environmentalists regarding a low-carbon economy. Engaging the public imagination about such a necessary transition would be a valuable goal for corporate and alternative media, as well as media produced by the labour movement itself.”

The authors are Robert A. Hackett, a professor emeritus, and Philippa R. Adams, a PhD student, both from the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. The publisher is the [Corporate Mapping Project](#), a research and public engagement initiative investigating the power of the fossil fuel industry, jointly led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives’ BC and Saskatchewan Offices and the Parkland Institute.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [attitudes to climate change](#), [Climate change in the Media](#), [Journalism](#), [Labour Unions](#), [oil and gas pipelines](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

Canada: the year past and the battle over carbon pricing in the year ahead

Posted on **January 8, 2019** by [elizabethperry493](#)

The ***Energy Mix Yearbook Review for 2018*** is undoubtedly the most thorough and informed review of 2018 climate issues for Canadians. It compiles its newsletter coverage of 2018 stories and adds context and analysis, as well as a multitude of links to further reading. The sections of exceptional interest include “**Jobs and Just Transition: Renewables and Efficiency Jobs Surge while Fossil Employment Sags**”; “**Fossils go for Broke**” and “**Canada’s Contradiction: Low-Carbon Leader or Perpetual Petro-State?**”. Other, briefer overviews for Canada include “**State of Play 2018**” from EcoJustice, highlighting legal issues; “**10 wins for Canadian energy and climate action in 2018: Year in review**” with a positive slant from the Pembina Institute (Dec. 20); and from the Council of Canadians **2018 in Review: Offshore drilling** (December 21), a chronology from Atlantic Canada.

On December 20, easily overlooked because of the holiday season, Environment and Climate Change Canada published five separate review reports. ***Clean Canada: Protecting the Environment and Growing our Economy*** is a snapshot of Canada’s federal climate action policies and expenditures, and seems intended for a wide popular audience. ***Second Annual Synthesis Report regarding the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Action*** (French version [here](#)) is a more detailed accounting of the policies and programs by the federal and provincial governments in 2018, organized in chapters relating to carbon pricing, complementary measures (buildings, transportation, electricity, agriculture, etc.); adaptation and resilience; clean technology and innovation and jobs; reporting and oversight; federal engagement and partnership with Indigenous people. ***2018 Canada’s Greenhouse Gas and Air Pollutant Emissions Projections Report*** (French version [here](#)) provides, again, a policy overview but its main purpose is to continue the series of annual reports (since 2011) of detailed emissions data for economic sector and geographic region. It also includes emissions projections to 2030 under two different scenarios – (spoiler alert: oil and gas will be Canada’s leading source of emissions, followed by transportation and heavy industry).

Other substantial reports published on December 20 will form the basis for consultations in 2019. The new draft for the ***Federal Sustainable Development Strategy 2019 to 2022*** will inform a **public consultation** until April 2, 2019. (The companion ***2018 Progress Report on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*** evaluates the 2016 to 2019 strategy goals and the activities of 41 federal departments and agencies.)

The final ***Clean Fuel Standard Regulatory Design Paper*** focuses on the liquid fuels regulations, with comments requested by February 1, 2019. The draft regulation is scheduled to be published in 2019 and a final regulation by 2020, bringing to an end a complex consultation process that began in 2016 (summarized by [WCR](#) in January 2018). The Clean Fuel Standard will apply to the full life cycle of all fuels, gasoline and diesel, aviation fuel, natural gas for heating, and

metallurgical coal, and has been called the single most important policy tool to achieve Canada's emissions reductions target for 2030.

And finally, a regulatory proposal relating to the most publicized issue for 2019: carbon pricing. ***Next Steps in Implementing the Federal Pollution Pricing System for Large Industry (the "Output Based Pricing System")*** was released on December 20, and carries a deadline for public comments of February 15, 2019. The Output Based Pricing System registration system went live on November 1, 2018, with reporting and verification requirements starting on January 1, 2019.

The coming battles over Carbon tax in 2019: As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau **announced in late October 2018**, the federal government has not backed down on its determination to impose a carbon pricing policy across all Canadian jurisdictions in 2019, despite resistance and constitutional challenges led by the premiers of Saskatchewan and Ontario. In some provinces – **British Columbia**, **Alberta**, **Quebec** – established carbon pricing systems continue; in **Nova Scotia**, **Prince Edward Island**, **Newfoundland and Labrador** – newly approved systems which meet the government's benchmarks under the **Pan-Canadian Framework** will begin. In the other provinces who have opposed the federal plan – **Manitoba**, **Saskatchewan**, **New Brunswick** and **Ontario** – the federal backstop fuel charge will be imposed starting in April 2019, sweetened by a **"Climate Action Incentive"**, whereby all carbon revenue collected by the federal government will go directly back to people in the provinces from which it was generated. The Annex of the ***Second Annual Synthesis Report of the Pan-Canadian Framework*** provides up to date summaries for the situation in each province.

Public opinion supports the government's carbon tax actions, though barely, according to polling made public by **Global News** on January 3. Based on a November 9 internal poll conducted for the Liberal party, 46 per cent supported and 44 per cent opposed the plan in Saskatchewan and Manitoba; in Ontario, 43 per cent were in support and 32 per cent opposed. Nationally, support was at 47 per cent and opposition was at 29 per cent, with women more supportive than men.

Recently, one article appeared in the labour press, supporting carbon pricing: **"Pricing carbon first step to tackling climate change"** in CUPE's *Economy at Work* newsletter (Jan. 2). The mainstream press has been far more active, with general support for a carbon tax: for example, an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper is titled: **"Do you want a carbon tax, or do you want to be lied to?"** (Dec. 26). The editorial is critical of the Ontario government's Ontario Carbon Trust proposal, about which it states: "One emerging conservative alternative to carbon pricing is working with business to spur the development of green technology. What that usually means is taxpayers giving subsidies to business.... "Ontario's Progressive Conservatives say they will dish out \$400-million on a "Carbon Trust" that will collaborate with industry on emissions cuts. They can rail against carbon pricing all they want; spending taxpayer money has the same effect on pocketbooks as asking consumers to pay more."

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce was also widely cited as supporting a carbon tax, to the extent that they issued **a press release** on December 17 2018, clarifying their position: "While some of the [media] coverage notes the Chamber's support for carbon pricing, it neglects to

include that the support is contingent upon significant caveats. The report calls for government to take concrete steps to reduce the overall regulatory burden on businesses in Canada, and to return the revenues from the carbon tax to business to help them lower their carbon emissions and their energy costs.” The report referred to, outlining the full arguments, is [***A Competitive Transition: How smarter climate policy can help Canada lead the way to a low carbon economy***](#), which was published in December 2018.

Take it to the Courts! Saskatchewan [**filed its challenge**](#) to the constitutionality of the federal price on carbon pollution in April 2018; the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal announced that it will hear the case in February 13 and 14, 2019, and released the lengthy list of intervenors which it has allowed to appear. Intervenors include the provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick on the side of Saskatchewan, and the province of British Columbia on the side of the federal government; other intervenors include the [**Canadian Public Health Association**](#) ; [**EcoJustice**](#), representing the David Suzuki Foundation and the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation; and the [**Council of Canadians**](#) , as part of a group of seven other civil society groups, including the National Farmers Union and Climate Justice Saskatoon.

A [**separate case**](#) was filed by the Government of Ontario and will be heard by the Ontario Court of Appeal in April 2019. The full list of intervenors, as well as the court filings by the Ontario government, appear at the Court of Appeal website [**here**](#) . British Columbia and New Brunswick have also applied for intervenor status in this case.

How will the courts decide? [**“Courts should not have to decide climate change policy”**](#) appeared on December 21 in *Policy Options*, with a discussion of the carbon pricing cases as well as the [**recent litigation**](#) by Quebec’s [**ENvironnement JEUnesse**](#) . Co-authors Nathalie Chalifour and Jason Maclean argue that “only a collaborative approach to policy-making is capable of delivering the kinds of rapid, forward-looking and systemic changes in how industries and societies function that are necessary to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of climate change. Litigation, by contrast, is necessarily reactive and typically divisive, time-consuming and influenced by the incremental development of legal precedent.” Regarding the provincial carbon tax challenges, they state that “the federal [**Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act**](#) is an example par excellence of cooperative federalism.”.... “There’s little doubt that the courts will confirm the federal government’s [**jurisdictional authority**](#) to regulate GHG emissions. They may even decide that the Constitution obliges the government to take more serious climate action.”

A complex road is ahead, as indicated by a C.D. Howe Institute Memo published in October 2018: [**“Federal carbon-pricing backstop is new constitutional territory”**](#).

Posted in [**Government Policy**](#) | Tagged [**Carbon Pricing**](#), [**Ontario**](#), [**Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change**](#), [**provincial climate change policies**](#), [**Saskatchewan**](#) | [**Leave a reply**](#)

Canada at COP24: Summary and reaction

Posted on **January 4, 2019** by **elizabethperry493**



In the wee hours of Saturday December 16, after a dramatic extension of negotiations, the Katowice Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP24) [concluded with the adoption of the Katowice Climate Package](#). The meetings had brought together over 22,000 participants, including nearly 14,000 government officials, over 7,000 representatives from UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society organizations, and 1,500 members of the media. What was accomplished? IISD Reporting Services provides an [overview summary](#) of accomplishments, and a 34-page [compilation of official decisions](#). For a more readable general overview, the UNFCCC [summarizes and links to the highlights](#) in a release on December 14, including reports and developments of civil society participants. Next steps for the international negotiators: Another round at COP 25 in Chile in November 2019. In preparation, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will convene a [Climate Summit in New York City](#) in September 2019.

Canadian reaction to COP24: As characterized by Elizabeth May, leader of Canada's Green Party – there was a dual agenda at the COP24 meetings: first, to agree on the “Paris Rule Book”, which will govern a shared approach to calculating and reporting on the specific items required under the Paris Agreement, and secondly, to respond to the urgency and dire warnings of the October [IPCC report](#) to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees C. Recognizing the difficulty of achieving any level of agreement in the politically fraught atmosphere of 2018, reaction in Canada and internationally was generally positive and aimed to put the best light possible on the failure to resolve other points, such as more ambitious GHG reduction targets.

From Canadian sources: “[COP24 delivers progress, but nations fail to heed warnings of scientists](#)” (Dec. 15) from the Climate Action Network Canada; “[The Hard Work Starts Now as COP Delivers Incomplete Rule Book, Low Ambition](#)” from the *Energy Mix* (Dec. 18); “[Environmental activists frustrated COP24 deal not strong enough](#)” at CBC; and from Greenpeace Canada “[COP24 ends without firm promises to raise climate action and ambition](#).” More critical comments come in “[Trudeau government fails to take bold action at](#)

COP24 to avoid climate breakdown” (Dec. 16) and **“McKenna’s global carbon market plan more charade than genuine climate action”** both by Brent Patterson in *Rabble.ca*. On December 14, CBC broadcast an interview with Elizabeth May, where she asks **“Do we want to survive or not?”**, criticizing the focus on bureaucratic process which interfered with addressing the fundamental question of how to reduce emissions.

What did Canada achieve at COP24?: Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change pledged to improve Canada’s emission reduction targets on December 5 before she travelled to Katowice, and once there, signed on to **the statement of the “High Ambition Coalition”**, (along with the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Ethiopia, EU, Norway, U.K., Germany, New Zealand and Mexico), pledging to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement by 2020.

Regarding coal phase-out, the government’s **official statement** was issued on December 13, highlighting Canada’s continuing leadership role in the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, which was co-founded by Canada and the U.K. in 2017. On December 12, Canada made good on its 2016 pledge to phase out traditional coal-fired electricity by 2030 by publishing **the final regulations** for that effort in the *Canada Gazette*.

Regarding Just Transition: Previous WCR posts (**Dec. 6** and **Dec. 11**) summarized the many Just Transition publications and events at COP24. Canada, along with 40 other jurisdictions, was a signatory to the **Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration** put forth by host country Poland. In the Climate Action Network Canada press release at the conclusion of COP24, Donald Lafleur, Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress is **quoted by Climate Action Network** as saying: “Canada’s trade unions applaud Canada and other parties for signing on to the **Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration**. We hope to see a commitment to a just transition that is tied to human rights and helps drive a more ambitious climate action plan designed to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.” The Environment and Climate Change Minister joined the Canadian Labour Congress and the Just Transition Centre at the side event, Unions in Action on Just Transition, on December 10, yet she did not release the recommendations of the federal **Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities**. Personal testimony of Just Transition came from Roy Milne, a coal miner and the president of United Steelworkers Local 1595 in Wabamun, Alberta, who calls himself part of the first group at the first coal mine to be phased out in Canada. **“Some jobs in new energy industries come with a pay cut of \$50K: coal miner”** is an interview with Mr. Milne, was broadcast on CBC’s The Current on Dec. 13, in which he states that currently, “a basic operator earns \$80,000-\$100,000 per year, with additional benefits and a defined pension scheme. An electrician retraining as a renewable energy technician would go from that salary to \$45,000-\$50,000 per year.”

Other issues: The **Minister’s own Statement** at the conclusion of COP24 says that “Canada also played a leading role in laying the groundwork for a global carbon market, to help mobilize the billions of dollars of investments needed to tackle climate change” and “Canada took part in the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, encouraging all countries around the world to use the most cost-effective tool to reduce emissions.” The details of that global carbon market remain

unspecified. In another [press release](#), the government announced that it will support increased participation by Indigenous people in international climate talks, by providing \$800,000 over four years to enable the creation of the Indigenous Peoples Focal Point at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. “The Focal Point will coordinate and lead work on issues related to Indigenous Peoples and climate change, promote awareness of Indigenous perspectives on climate change, and serve as a technical expert and advisor.”

And yet, with all the pledges and announcements, it must be noted that right after COP24, on December 18, the government of Canada [announced](#) a \$1.6 billion aid package for Alberta’s oil companies. The *National Observer* article summarizes this in “[Sohi announces \\$1.6 billion to help Alberta oil patch](#)” and quotes Minister Sohi: “These are commercial loans, made available on commercial terms. We have committed to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2025, and we stand by that commitment.” However, as stated in [a press release from Environmental Defence](#) “At COP24 in Katowice, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna announced that Canada would increase the ambition of its targets to cut carbon pollution. Less than two weeks later, her Cabinet colleagues, Minister of Natural Resources Amarjeet Sohi and Minister of International Trade Diversification Jim Carr, are using public money to make Canada’s already-weak targets even harder to achieve.”

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